

Minutes

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 21 September 2021

Present

Councillors Mowat (Convener), Arthur, Cameron, Jim Campbell, Mary Campbell, Doggart, Gloyer, Main, Frank Ross (substituting for Councillor Dixon), Work (items 1 to 14) and Ethan Young (substituting for Councillor Bird, items 1 to 14).

1. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 10 August 2021 as a correct record.

2. Outstanding Actions

Details were provided of the outstanding actions arising from decisions taken by the Committee.

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
 - Action 4 – Internal Audit: Final Internal Audit reports supporting the 2019/20 Annual Opinion
 - Action 11 (1) – Outstanding Actions
 - Action 12 (2) – Work Programme
 - Action 13 (2) – Internal Audit Annual Opinion for the year ended 31 March 2021
 - Action 15 – Corporate Governance Code Self-Assessment 2020/21
- 2) To otherwise note the outstanding actions.

(Reference – Outstanding Actions 21 September 2021, submitted.)

3. Work Programme

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Work Programme for August 2021 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Work Programme for August 2021.
- 2) To request a report within two cycles on how the re-opening of Community Centres was taken forward during the pandemic up to the current date, including feedback from CCs themselves and a timeline of activity.
- 3) As a result of at P&S committee urgent decisions made around community centres not having been implemented as requested, and a Health and Social report not addressing the decision made by Council, GRBV would like to review the processes and protocols around how decisions are implemented, to ensure that communications and information are accurate and effective.
- 4) To request a report in two cycles covering:
 - how formal and informal committee and council actions are taken forward by officers following committee decisions and commitments made by directors and other officers in the course of committee business;
 - the process followed by Committee Services to notify directorates of actions to be taken forward from Council and Committee decisions and how they are tracked;
 - the protocols for officers carrying out agreed actions; and
 - A review of the two specific cases above and lessons learned.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Work Programme 21 September 2021, submitted.)

4. Internal Audit: Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 11 August

The report on Internal Audit: Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 11 August was presented. The report set out that the overall progress status for closure of overdue IA findings remained amber. This report supported the closure of an increased number of IA findings and management actions in the current period.

Decision

- 1) To note the status of the overdue Internal Audit (IA) findings as at 11 August 2021.

- 2) To approve that a further three-month extension date be applied to all open IA findings, recognising the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and other priorities and challenges currently faced by the Council.
- 3) To note the management commitment to implementation of the governance and assurance model and ensuring appropriate ongoing focus on closure of all high rated findings, and all findings that were more than one year overdue.
- 4) To approve the referral of the report to the relevant Council Executive committees and the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board Audit and Assurance Committee for information in relation to the current Health and Social Care Partnership position.

(Reference – report by the Chief Internal Auditor, City of Edinburgh Council, submitted.)

5. Internal Audit Update Report 1 May to 31 August 2021

The Internal Audit (IA) Update Report 1 May to 31 August 2021 was presented. The annual opinions were finalised for the City of Edinburgh Council, Lothian Pension Fund and the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and presented to the Committee for scrutiny.

Decision

- 1) To note the outcomes of the completed 2021/22 audit.
- 2) To note progress with delivery of the 2021/22 Internal Audit plan.
- 3) To note progress with delivery of IA key priorities and ongoing areas of focus.

(Reference – report by the Chief Internal Auditor, City of Edinburgh Council, submitted.)

6. Workforce Insight and Controls – Annual Report

On 12 August 2021, the Finance and Resources Committee considered a report which provided a summary of workforce insights for the core and flexible (agency and overtime) workforce for the 2020/21 financial year. The committee agreed to refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration as part of its work programme.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.

- 2) To note that a briefing note would be circulated on measures in place to support staff mental health and wellbeing.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 12 August 2021 (item 15); referral from the Finance and Resources Committee, submitted.)

7. Change Portfolio

The Committee noted the status of the Council's Portfolio of significant projects. The Committee received an overview of strategic delivery and the associated risks and issues managed within the Council's Change Portfolio of major programmes and projects.

Decision

- 1) To note the status of the Council's Portfolio of significant projects.
- 2) To request information on the process for reports being submitted to executive committees following decisions taken by Council, particularly in relation to the report on the EICC business case due to be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee in October 2021.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

8. Corporate Leadership Team Risk Report as at 23 August 2021

The Corporate Leadership Team Risk Report as at 23 August 2021 was presented to the Committee. The report presented the Council's current enterprise risk profile and highlighted risks where further action was required (where realistic and possible) to ensure that they were brought within approved strategic risk appetite levels.

Decision

- 1) To note the Council's current strategic risk profile.
- 2) To note that seven strategic risks were currently outwith agreed risk appetite ranges.
- 3) To note the impact that Covid-19 had on the Council's approved risk appetite statement.
- 4) To note the timeframes for completion of the operational risk management framework pilot had been extended.
- 5) To agree that the Service Director – Legal and Assurance would send an email to Directors and senior managers to request that risk was properly considered in Council and committee reports.
- 6) To request that the next review of the report template for Council and committees included a 'risk' section to ensure this is considered.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

9. 2021-31 Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy – Outturn 2020/21 and Revised Budget 2021/22 – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

On 12 August 2021, the Finance and Resources Committee considered a report which provided capital expenditure and funding outturns for 2020/21, providing explanations for key variances. The Committee agreed to refer the report to the Governance Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration as part of its work programme.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 12 August 2021 (item 6); referral from the Finance and Resources Committee, submitted.)

10. Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Outturn Report – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

On 12 August 2021, the Finance and Resources Committee considered a report which set out the provisional 2020/21 revenue outturn position for the Council based on the unaudited annual accounts. The Committee agreed to refer the report to the Governance Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration as part of its work programme.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 12 August 2021 (item 7); referral from the Finance and Resources Committee, submitted.)

11. Revenue Monitoring 2021/22 – Month Three Position – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

On 12 August 2021, the Finance and Resources Committee considered a report which set out the first projected Council-wide revenue budget position for the year, based on analysis of the first three months' financial data. The Committee agreed to refer the report to the Governance Risk and Best Value Committee for scrutiny.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 12 August 2021 (item 8); referral from the Finance and Resources Committee, submitted.)

12. Treasury Management: Annual Report 2020/21 – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

On 12 August 2021, the Finance and Resources Committee considered a report which provided an update on Treasury Management activity in 2020/21. The Committee agreed to refer the report to the Governance Risk and Best Value Committee for scrutiny.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 12 August 2021 (item 11); referral from the Finance and Resources Committee, submitted.)

13. Quarterly Status Update - Digital Service Programme

The Quarterly Status Update - Digital Service Programme report was presented to provide a quarterly progress update upon the Council's Digital Services programme of works and the delivery of the Digital and Smart City Strategy.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress detailed in the quarterly update report.
- 2) To request a briefing note on the evaluation of risks when decisions were taken to restrict access to third party apps and websites which resulted in members conducting some of their business outwith the Council network in order that these could be used.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

14. Whistleblowing update

A whistleblowing update report provided a high-level overview of the operation of the Council's whistleblowing service for the quarter 1 April – 30 June 2021.

Decision

To note the whistleblowing activity for the quarter 1 April – 30 June 2021.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

15. Whistleblowing Monitoring Report

The Committee agreed under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1,12 and 15 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

An overview of the disclosures received, and investigation outcome reports completed during the period 1 April to 30 June 2021 was provided.

Decision

To note the whistleblowing activity for the quarter 1 April – 30 June 2021.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)