

MINUTE

A & B

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Board Room, Economic Development Unit, North Ness, Lerwick

Friday 26 October 2007 at 10am

Present:

F B Grains	A G L Duncan
A T Doull	C B Eunson
R Henderson	A J Hughson
C H J Miller	C L Smith

In attendance (Officers):

G Johnston, Head of Service - Finance
J Smith, Head of Organisational Development
L Gair, Committee Officer

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minute

The minute of meeting held on 31 August 2007, was confirmed.

Min. Ref.	Subject	Action/Info
11/07	<p><u>2006/07 Statutory Performance Indicators – Follow Up Report</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Performance Management Co-ordinator (Appendix 1).</p> <p>As recommended in the report, Members reviewed the information in the report and Mrs F B Grains said that there were areas that she wished more detail on. Mrs Grains invited comments from Members.</p> <p><u>Community Care Assessments</u></p> <p>Mr C B Eunson said that he had been advised by Social Care that normal service would be resumed. He said that he hoped that Social Care would send a letter, to those affected, advising that of this change in the same way that they had written to advise the service was being cut.</p> <p>Mrs F B Grains suggested that it would be beneficial for the Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to meet with the Social Care Service, as a group. Members agreed.</p> <p><u>Roads and Lighting</u></p> <p>Mrs F B Grains said that a record was needed. During discussions, it was suggested that a position on street lighting be negotiated and that it was not necessary to seek the exact</p>	

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	<p>age of the equipment.</p> <p><u>Waste Management</u> Mrs F B Grains requested more information on the failure to report on abandoned vehicles. She asked for information on how many vehicles there were, who notified that a vehicle was to be collected. Mrs Grains said that there had been 150 complaints made, and asked for details on whether the complaints were for different things or for all the same things or was there a specific problem. She said that if complaints were for a specific issue then action had to be taken promptly.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development advised that Members would be able to ask questions at the 6 monthly performance review meetings that had been set up. He said that if there were any issues that were not resolved, then he would be happy to take these forward.</p> <p>The Head of Finance said that it was important for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to impress on officers to make a proper attempt to keeping good records. He said that a continued failure to report was not good for the Council's relationship with Audit Scotland.</p> <p>Mrs C H J Miller said that abandoned vehicles was a particular problem on Bressay and asked for clarification on what would be classified as an "abandoned vehicle", who was responsible, and whether it was possible to recover expenses from the owner.</p> <p>Mr J Smith said that he would seek information on this from Legal Services, and at the request of Member agreed to prepare a report on the subject.</p> <p>Members considered Appendix 1 to the report.</p> <p><u>Public Access to Waiting Rooms & Toilets at Ferry Terminals</u> Mr C B Eunson drew attention to the appendix to the report and asked why there was no disabled access to the toilets and waiting rooms at ferry terminals.</p> <p>Mrs F B Grains asked reports be prepared that addressed the following 3 points; first the current position on access to waiting rooms and toilets, second the position on disabled access and plans for all public buildings, and third overall accommodation strategy and position. Mr C B Eunson suggested a more direct approach, and following further discussions, Mr Eunson said that he was happy to accompany a Council Officer to the ferry terminals, to discuss what could be done at each site. Mr R S Henderson also highlighted a disabled access problem onboard the new Yell Ferry, and said that he would also be</p>	<p>JRS</p> <p>JRS CBE RSH</p>

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	<p>willing to visit the Ferry Terminals, and agreed to do so in the North Isles.</p> <p>Members discussed further, the need for a report to identify which toilets and waiting rooms needed to be addressed. The Head of Organisational Development said a report could also address how priority is established and how improvements are carried out.</p> <p><u>Sickness Absence</u> Mrs F B Grains requested an update on the Occupational Health Procedures and their effectiveness.</p> <p><u>Corporate Management - Council Tax</u> Mrs F B Grains wished to pass on her congratulations to the Revenue Service Manager who had explained the complicated topic in an easy to understand way.</p> <p>Members considered appendix 2 of the report:</p> <p>Mrs C H J Miller drew attention to Adult Social Work paragraph 4 and asked for a breakdown of the age group of home care users. She said that this would provide useful information on the demographic of the population and provide members with a more detailed understanding of the situation. Mr J Smith said that this information could be sought at the 6-month Performance Review, and said that he would speak to the Head of Community Care about this information, prior to that meeting.</p> <p>Mrs F B Grains said that she appreciated the information in Appendix 2 was required by Audit Scotland, but asked that a simplified report be provided for Members. She said that the percentage figures were meaningless figures, and requested that the simplified report provide actuals as opposed to percentages.</p> <p>Members agreed that specific questions would be directed at the 6-monthly performance review meetings.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development advised Members that the areas addressed in the performance reviews were areas that Officer had identified that may be of interest. He said that this was a two way process, and invited Members to consider whether there were areas missing that they wished information on.</p> <p>Mrs F B Grains drew attention to paragraph 5a under Protective Services and said she wanted to know how many were completed and when they were settled. The Head of Organisational Development said that these complaints were</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>JS</p> <p>JS</p>

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	consumer complaints, and as they often related to other organisations, it would be difficult to identify when resolution had been reached.	
12/07	<p><u>Review of Shetland Islands Council Statutory Performance Indicators</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Performance Management Co-ordinator (Appendix 2).</p> <p>As recommended in the report, Members reviewed the information in the report and Mrs F B Grains invited comments from Members.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development said that the final report would be received by Audit Scotland in the next few days. He said that it was important to that information was gathered next year to ensure that that were no X ratings. He said it would be important for Executive Directors to sign off each of the indicators so that they were given explicit responsibility for the process.</p> <p>Mr A G L Duncan drew attention to page 6 of appendix 1 to the report and asked if statistics were available for all 7 of the indicators. The Head of Organisational Development advised that the 2006/07 data was as reported but expected complete data to be available for 2007/08.</p> <p>In response to a query from Mrs C H J Miller, the Head of Organisational Development said that the Executive Director Education and Social Care would be able to clarify where the Museum Service and Recreation appear within her service indicators.</p> <p>Mr A G L Duncan asked for clarification with regard to how far Trusts can be scrutinised. He said that it would be helpful for all Audit and Scrutiny Members to be clear on this matter and requested a report. The Head of Organisational Development agreed to provide a report.</p>	JRS
13/07	<p><u>Shetland Islands Council – Efficiency Statement</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Performance Management Co-ordinator (Appendix 3).</p> <p>As recommended in the report, Members analysed and discussed the Efficiency Statement and Appendix. Mrs F B Grains invited comments from Members.</p> <p>Mr A G L Duncan said that with regard to the overspend on the Trondra Road and the Weisdale Mill, he said it was important</p>	

that at the next meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, members of staff attend and made accountable for the mistakes made. He said that the public needed more detail on what had happened especially as there had been an overspend of £192,000. Mr Duncan requested a report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on all overspends for the past 5 years, and that every member of staff be brought to the meeting and made accountable. He said it was important to learn from those mistakes.

The Head of Organisational Development suggested that the Head of Housing and Capital Programmes be asked to provide a report on the general performance in the first instance rather than focussing in on a specific project. He gave the Landfill Site as an example of a project that had been completed successfully, and said that it was important to look at these projects too.

Members discussed the matter further and agreed that there was a need for a process to be put in place so that it didn't happen again.

Mr Duncan said that he had asked for a detailed financial breakdown on the Trondra Road and he was expecting to receive that information from the Executive Director/Infrastructure.

Mr C L Smith said that he had been concerned to hear that there had been an overspend on the Trondra Road in 05/06 and 06/07, but still no report had been presented to Council on the matter. He said that Officers needed to learn from their mistakes and see that this new Council were going to ask questions.

Members discussed the procedures in place, and Mr Duncan said that updates should be reported at the right times and a policy was required and procedures followed relentlessly in the future.

Mr A J Hughson said that he had been disturbed to hear that in the final phase of the Trondra Road, the Officers had not anticipated the problems that occurred. Mr Hughson said that they had already carried out works at either end of the road and said that they should have already been aware from previous experience.

Mrs C H J Miller said that these procedures should already be in place, but that the information needed to be shared with Members.

Mrs Miller said that there was a great deal of money invested in properties and requested a list of Council properties and their costs with a breakdown of which are owned and leased, with a view to establishing whether they could be used more

	<p>efficiently, effectively and more cost effectively. Members were advised that there is a property asset register, but that it had not been scrutinised. The Head of Organisational Development drew attention to page 1 of the report and said that Asset Management was one of the 5 continuing key themes. Mrs Miller said that she was impressed with how much money had been saved by changing to a new telephone system, and suggested that electricity was another area that should be reviewed. The Head of Finance advised that the Council had negotiated a contract with Scottish and Southern Energy, to seek the best deal, but said that it was worth looking at it again.</p> <p>Following concerns expressed by Mr R S Henderson on who was provided with a Council vehicle for their work, the Chairperson asked that Member be provided with a copy of the report on the Use of Council Vehicles. After further discussion on the uses of Council vehicles and the reasons for staff taking the vehicles home the Head of Finance suggested that a summary report from the Fleet Manager would help Members focus further questions.</p> <p>In response to a request from Mr Duncan for a report on overtime over the last 3 to 4 years, the Head of Organisational Development advised that this information would be available as part of the Single Status work. The Head of Finance said that he would provide a summary report on Overtime.</p> <p>Mr A G L Duncan drew attention to Table 1 of Appendix 1 and requested an explanation for the poor percentage rate of 60% for Customer Satisfaction for Insurance and Risk. The Head of Organisational Development said that this could be queried with the Head of Legal & Administration at their performance review next week. The Head of Finance said that the Corporate Risk Register identified areas of risk and was managed and maintained by the Safety and Risk Service within Legal and Administration. He advised that the Corporate Risk register was an important document and might be helpful for assessing priorities of this committee and therefore the Audit and Scrutiny Committee may wish, at a future meeting, to scrutinise the risk register.</p>	<p>PP/JS</p> <p>PP/JS</p> <p>GJ</p>
14/07	<p><u>Issues for Future Debate</u></p> <p><u>2007/08 Ledgers</u></p> <p>The Head of Finance referred to a handout provided to members at the recent Finance seminar) and drew attention to the employees costs of £3 million. Members requested a breakdown of directorate employee costs within the Infrastructure Services Department and the Education and Social Care Department.</p> <p>Mr C L Smith queried the costs of the 2 Super Low Floor Buses</p>	<p>GJ</p>

	<p>and asked for an explanation of the £60,000 savings which he said was not much of a saving against the cost of purchasing them. He added that this was going against the private sector. The Head of Finance said that a report should be sought from the Feet Manager on what should be owned and what should be contracted in. Mr Smith said that this report should include the cost of the buses, the total anticipated income, fuel, servicing and driver costs. Mr A G L Duncan said that with a possible £4 million wage bill the Council should look at privatisation. Mrs C H J Miller agreed.</p>	PP/JRS
	<p>The Head of Organisational Development said that he would look through the items discussed and along with the Chairperson prepare a list in an order of prioritisation, to be brought back to Members.</p>	JRS

The meeting concluded at 11.15am.

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F B Grains
Chairperson