

MINUTE

A & B

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Board Room, Economic Development Unit, North Ness, Lerwick

Friday 31 August 2007 at 2.15 p.m.

Present:

F B Grains A T Doull
C B Eunson R Henderson
C L Smith

Apologies

A G L Duncan A J Hughson
C H J Miller

In attendance (Officers):

G Johnston, Head of Service - Finance
P Peterson, Performance Management Co-ordinator
C McIntyre, Service Manager – Internal Audit
L Gair, Committee Officer

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minute

The minute of meeting held on 22 June 2007, was confirmed.

Min. Ref.	Subject	Action/Info
09/07	<p><u>The Audit & Scrutiny Committee's Role as Audit Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Service Manager - Internal Audit (Appendix 1).</p> <p>The Service Manager – Audit briefly introduced the report.</p> <p>Mr C L Smith moved that Members approve the recommendations in the report, seconded by Mr A T Doull.</p>	
10/07	<p><u>Statutory Performance Indicators for 2006/007</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development (Appendix 2).</p> <p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator introduced the report and advised Members that the report set the last 3 years performance to show whether services were doing better or worse or stayed the same. The Performance Management Co-ordinator explained that in the last Council the information provided and entry point for Members to look at services in</p>	PP

	<p>more detail, on whether the service was poor or had improved.</p> <p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator gave examples of good and bad indicators and explained how the information could be skewed and the factors that could be attributed in those cases. He invited Members to analyse the information in the Appendix to the report and state which areas they wished more information on. He advised that Members should include good indicators as good practice could be shared with other services, as well as poor performance.</p> <p>In response to a query, the Performance Management Co-ordinator advised that the format used was set by Audit Scotland and that all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland had to provide their performance information in that way. Further discussion took place and it was agreed that a summary of the information could be provided in a more meaningful way, for internal use.</p> <p>Members discussed the various services and requested that the Performance Management Co-ordinator seek further information on the information provided as follows:</p> <p><u>Audit Social Work</u></p> <p>2a. and b. Staff Qualification – find out reason for reduction</p> <p>4a and b. Home Care</p> <p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator advised that the Executive Director – Education and Social Work provided an email explaining that “06/07 was the second year we have failed to report on Adult SW PI 1. The reasons for this are due to the fact that we know that we under-report on the completion of assessment” The Performance Management Co-ordinator continued to read the email in which it stated that to explain a figure would be hugely misrepresentative. She had also indicated in the email that this had been discussed and the Social Work Management Team and that she had also discussed this matter with Audit Scotland before deciding to “X” out the performance indicator. The Executive Director had noted that some improvements had been made particularly in Care at Home, but not enough. The Chairperson asked that this be looked at further.</p> <p>8b. Community Service – the average hours per week taken to complete community service orders – look at why there was such a large increase.</p> <p><u>Corporate Management</u></p> <p>1a. Sickness absence – look at increases in teachers absence and Chief Officers/local government employees.</p> <p>1b. Sickness absence – look into how any good practice that had resulted in decreasing craft operative absence rate could be shared with other services.</p>	
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- 4a. Public Access - look at reduction in figures
5. Council Tax – look at why it improved and then slipped

Culture and Community Services

1. Sport & Leisure – look into figures
5. Use of Libraries - Find out reason for N/A.

Development Services

Mr C B Eunson asked for this information to be more concise.

Education & Children's Services

- 4b. Social background reports – reason for improvement

Housing

1a,b and c Response Repairs – what does the percentage mean – how did it improve the service to customers?

3d and e – Tenancy changes - It was noted that the time to re-let houses had fallen from 257 to 125 days. The Performance Management Co-ordinator advised that this had been investigated earlier in the year by the Scrutiny Committee and might be evidenced that the investigation had had an effect. The Chairperson asked that the investigation report be circulated to the Members of this Committee.

5a. and b. Council House Sales – query why the percentage of sales within 26 weeks had slipped.

6a – Homelessness – why had this increased? Mr C B Eunson stated that he had asked Hjaltland if 600 new houses were built how many would be occupied and the answer was 200. He said it was important to concentrate on the 200 houses that could be occupied.

Protective Services

2a and b Noise Complaint – why is this not applicable?

Roads and Lighting

30 year old street lighting. The Performance Management Co-ordinator said that this had been looked at by the Scrutiny Committee last year. The reason given by the Service area for this being FTR was that there was no information on when some of the earliest street lighting columns had been erected, Look at this service further. Members appreciated that the Statutory Performance Indicators were as required by the Executive but asked that a more concise and user friendly report be prepared for Members.

Members discussed the Council's Performance calendar. The Performance Management Co-ordinator advised that a survey had been carried out which indicated that more people had kept the 2007 calendar than last year. He said however fewer copies were being produced for 2008, and it was intended to

	<p>publicise the calendar as being free, with the expectation that members of the public who wanted a copy of the calendar, could request a copy. Mr R S Henderson suggested that the calendars be distributed to shops for people to pick up, if they wished, as that would keep the cost of postage down and make the calendar more accessible to the public.</p> <p>The Chairperson queried whether a list of Council policies existed. She said Officers often referred to their practice as being Council policy, and said that it would be useful to have a list of these in order that they could be viewed and discussed as required.</p> <p>Members discussed Capital Projects and the merits of providing the public with information relating to the budget available for a project. Mr A T Doull was of the opinion that if contractors know they could get more for a project, they would price accordingly. He said that no price should be placed on a project until the contractor's price had come in.</p> <p>Mr R S Henderson moved that Members approve the recommendations in the report, seconded by Mr C L Smith.</p> <p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator advised that he would produce a report for the next meeting of the Committee, outlining more information on the indicators that had been highlighted by the Committee. He added that Member would then decide whether there was any need for further investigation on any of these.</p> <p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator advised Members that each year performance review meetings were held, in the Council Chamber, where Officers were asked to explain and summarise how their service had performed. A series of these reviews had been planned for the end of October as that was 6 months into the financial year. He added that this provided a good entry point for Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to identify new areas for potential investigation/further scrutiny.</p>	
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The meeting concluded at 3.15pm.

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F B Grains
Chairperson