

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING**

7th October, 2021

10.00 a.m. – 12.20 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Dave Dempsey (Convener), John Beare, Gordon Langlands, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner and Ross Vettraino.

**ATTENDING:** Elaine Muir, Head of Finance; Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Diarmuid Cotter, Head of Customer and Online Services, Communities; Martin Kotlewski, Service Manager – Solutions and Service Assurance, Business and Technology Solutions; Carolyn Ward, Audit Team Manager, Audit and Risk Management Services; Laura McDonald, Lead Officer, and David Thomson, Customer Experience Lead Officer/SPSO Liaison Officer, Customer and Online Services; Helena Couperwhite, Manager - Committee Services, Fiona Stuart, Data Protection Officer and Wendy MacGregor, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Patricia Fraser, Senior Audit Manager and Ross Hubert, Auditor, Audit Scotland.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors Dave Coleman and Derek Noble.

**189. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made in terms of Standing Order No.7.1.

**190. MINUTES**

The Committee considered:-

- (a) the minute of the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee of 3rd June, 2021

**Decision**

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

- (b) the minute of the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee of 29th June, 2021.

**Decision**

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

**191./**

**191. INFORMATION REQUESTS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Committee considered an annual report by the Head of Customer and Online Services, Communities detailing requests for information received by Fife Council in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA); the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR); and the GDPR/ Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the workload arising from managing information requests;
- (2) discussed and provided comment on the performance detailed in the report; and
- (3) requested that 2021 statistics which detailed the number of SARS requests received by Fife Council and Appendix 1 to the report, AR Information requests, be included in the annual report submitted to the Committee in 2022, so that a comparison in annual data would be available for members to scrutinise.

**192. DATA PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered an annual report by the Data Protection Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, highlighting key data protection statistics for Fife Council and developments in relation to data protection law and practice. Data protection priorities for Fife Council over the last year and steps taken to action these were also detailed in the report.

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the work of the Data Protection Officer and the Data Protection Team to ensure continued compliance across the Council with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and in continuing to adapt processes to enable vital COVID related data sharing initiatives and projects to take place in a compliant way;
- (2) provided comment on the performance detailed in this report acknowledged concern in relation to the low number of employees in some Fife Council Services who had not completed the data protection training;
- (3) noted the steps taken via the Information Governance Working Group, the ICT Governance Board and staff communications to improve performance; whilst noting the recommendation to reassess the statistics towards the end of 2021; and
- (4) agreed that an update report would be submitted to this Committee at its meeting on 17th February, 2022 with a focus on training statistics and work carried out to enforce the requirement to complete the online Data Protection training module by employees of Fife Council.

**193. COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director - Communities providing a brief update on Fife Council complaints closed between 1st April, 2020 and 31st March, 2021 (performance and information).

**Decision**

The Committee discussed and commented on the Council's performance during the pandemic, noted the increased volume, the subject matter of complaints received, and the associated responsiveness.

**194. FIFE COUNCIL - MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020-21**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Finance presenting the Fife Council Management Report provided by Audit Scotland. A summary of the key issues was identified during the interim audit work carried out at Fife Council by Audit Scotland as well as the management responses from Council officers. The findings in the report determine the approach to the audit of the 2020/21 annual accounts carried out by Audit Scotland.

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) considered and acknowledged the contents of the report; and
- (2) noted that Audit Scotland would use the results of the interim audit work to determine their approach to the audit of the 2020-21 annual accounts.

**195. UPDATE ON 2021/22 AUDIT PERFORMANCE AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUED REPORTS**

The Committee considered a report by the Audit Team Manager, Risk Management Services, providing an update on 2021/22 audit performance information and providing an analysis of the findings in audit reports issued since the last report to this Committee. Highlighted in the report were areas of concern and instances where Services were not taking appropriate action.

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the contents of the report and the Analysis of Issued Audit Reports detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) requested that Fife Council Services were notified where no further audit actions were required and congratulated on their achievement.

**196./**

**196. INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Finance presenting the Integration Joint Board (IJB) Annual Audit Report for noting as part of the overall assurance portfolio in support of the governance statement. In return, the Fife Council Annual Audit Report was shared with the IJB Audit and Risk Committee.

**Decision**

The Committee noted the Integration Joint Board Annual Audit Report 2020/21.

**197. STANDARDS AND AUDIT FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Standards and Audit Forward Work Programme,

**Decision**

The Committee noted the Standards and Audit Forward Work Programme which would be updated accordingly.

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