
Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 December 2023

Subject: Audit & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report Follow Up

Report by: Strategic Director, Partnership & Performance

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to follow up on a number of actions that arose from the Committee's Annual Report which was considered on 26 October, and subsequently approved by Council on 30 November 2023.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee note, challenge and comment on the report.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. When the Committee considered its Annual Report on 26 October 2023, it remitted a number of actions to the Strategic Director, Partnership and Performance that were to be further progressed and reported back in December 2023. These were:
- 3.1.1. Seek Council approval of the Committee's Annual Report at the next available meeting.
 - 3.1.2. Consider arrangements for co-opting independent members on to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee;
 - 3.1.3. Draft a training and development programme for the Committee based on a skills audit undertaken in October 2023;
- 3.2. With regard to paragraph 3.1.1, Council approved the Annual Report on 30 November 2023.
- 3.3. Initial research has been undertaken on the action outlined at 3.1.2. CIPFA recommend at least two co-opted independent members. Having looked at a sample of Scottish councils the membership of most is similar in size and arrangements to Clackmannanshire's Audit & Scrutiny Committee. That includes for example, having a chair from the main opposition independent of the prevailing administration group. There appears to be no significant shift

elsewhere to co-opting independent expertise from outwith the pool of elected members.

- 3.4. Table 1 below indicates some of the potential pros and cons of having independent members of the audit committee function:

Potential Benefits	Potential Disbenefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit specialist skills and expertise that may not exist within the current committee membership Provide an alternative worldview from outside local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional cost of recruitment, vetting, induction, expenses, training and support Would require additional committee support resources Expertise from other sectors is not always readily transferable into a local government context Any turnover could be significantly disruptive to functioning of the committee

Table 1

- 3.5. Whilst there may be some benefits, any such undertaking will undoubtedly create pressures on resources that will likely outweigh these. Given current arrangements remain fit for purpose and broadly align with those of most councils in Scotland, on balance, it would seem prudent to continue with the status quo, focusing instead on developing the knowledge and skills of the Committee.
- 3.6. The Committee's training needs analysis identified the following priorities:
- 3.6.1. High – Annual Governance Statement and the Control Environment; Information Governance
- 3.6.2. Medium – Procurement; Performance & Risk; Principles of Best Value and Value for Money; Fraud & Corruption
- 3.6.3. Low – Financial Monitoring.
- 3.7. Work had already commenced on some of the above; an internal development workshop on Performance and Risk took place on 13 June 2023, an external provider undertook training on Data Protection in November 2023; and, an external provider is being brought in to provide officer and members training on Procurement & Governance on 4 December.
- 3.8. Table 2 illustrates proposals to meet the development needs of the Committee up to the summer recess.

Subject Matter	Target Date	Internal/External
Annual Governance Statement/Control Environment	Q4 2023/24	Internal
Data Protection	Complete	External
Cyber Security	Q1 2024/25	Both
Procurement Governance	Q3 2023/24	External
Performance & Risk (Phase 2)	Q4 2023/24	Internal
Principles of Best Value & VFM	Q4 2023/24	Internal
Fraud & Corruption	Q1 2024/25	Both
Financial Monitoring/Scrutiny	Q1 2024/25	Internal

Table 2

- 3.9. At this stage there are no resource implications arising from the report. The Committee learning and development plan will be met from within approved resources. Should additional resources be required for further training or from any future proposals, these will be brought back to Committee for further consideration.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

- 5.4. *Staffing – there are no staff implications arising from this report.*

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

- Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all
- Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life
- Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential
- Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

- 8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?
An EQIA is not applicable in this context.

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below)

- The Council's Decision-Making Framework and Special Responsibility Allowances, Report to Council 25 May 2022.

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Approved by

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