

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 24 AUGUST 2007 AT 1000 HOURS IN
THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD,
KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Tom Cook, Helen Coffey, Willie Coffey, Maureen McKay, Alan Brown, Stuart Finlayson, Eric Ross and Drew Filson.

ATTENDING: Fiona Lees, Chief Executive; Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Alex McPhee, Executive Head of Finance; Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services; David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resources; Colin Houston, Chief Auditor; Michela Costa-Watt, Audit Manager (Client Service); Alan Wasson, Audit Manager (IT); and Julie McGarry, Administration Manager.

ALSO ATTENDING: David Richardson, Mark Sims and Jamie Robertson, Audit Scotland.

APOLOGIES: Councillors John Campbell, John Knapp and Barney Menzies.

CHAIR: Councillor Tom Cook, Chair.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of East Ayrshire Council's Governance and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair highlighted the importance of the role of the Committee and hoped that Elected Members and Officers would work and learn together and operate in the best interests of East Ayrshire residents.

He stated that the aim of the work of the Committee would be hold the Cabinet, Service Departments and Core Partners to account.

The Chair welcomed David Richards, Mark Sims and Jamie Robertson from Audit Scotland and thanked them for coming along to the meeting.

**INITIAL DRAFT GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY
WITHIN EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

2. There was submitted a report dated 20 August 2007 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support which submitted an initial draft of a guidance document aimed at providing an overall framework for governance and scrutiny in East Ayrshire Council.

It was further noted that copies of the draft guidance document had been circulated to all Elected Members and the Corporate Management Team for comment.

The Committee acknowledged that this would be an evolving document which would be subject to change as the Committee Members' roles and experience developed.

It was also noted:-

- that matters for further scrutiny may be identified through the consideration of the regular monitoring reports;
- that ownership of the document would lie with this Committee; and
- that a review of the operation of the new Council's decision-making structure would be carried out after one year of operation.

It was thereafter agreed:-

- (i) that all Elected Members be encouraged to submit their comments on the document to the Head of Democratic Services by Friday 7 September 2007;
- (ii) to note that the guidance document would be submitted to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on 28 September 2007 for approval subject to any further consequential changes required in light of any operational experience; and
- (iii) that prior to the workshop, to be held at the beginning of 2008, which would develop the Committee's work programme for 2008, that Committee Members identify potential topics which could be subject to scrutiny reviews for 2007/2008 in doing so Committee Members were to identify one or two topics to be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services before Friday 28 September 2007 to allow a draft prioritised work programme to be submitted to the next meeting to be held on Friday 28 September 2007.

MONITORING REPORTS

3. There was submitted and noted a report dated 17 August 2007 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support which presented, for information of the Committee, a list of future monitoring reports that would from time to time be presented to the Committee.

The Committee further noted that this would be an evolving document which would be updated on a regular basis and that these monitoring reports would provide a resource for the Committee in terms of its scrutiny responsibility.

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

4. There was submitted and noted a report dated 10 August 2007 (circulated) by the Chief Auditor which advised of matters of significance that had arisen out of the 2006/07 audit process and offered an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control.

Officers responded to questions raised by Members. The Chief Executive also outlined the reporting and clearance procedure for audit reports.

MONITORING REPORTS

AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

5. There was submitted and noted a report dated 17 August 2007 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support which provided, for information, details of tenders which had been accepted.

The Committee also agreed that these reports should be submitted to every alternate meeting and that the Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services

also consider the possibility of regular reports being brought to Committee on the final out-turn of contracts.

COMMITTEE AGENDA STRUCTURE

6. The Chair, in terms of the future ordering of business to be considered by the Committee, informed that the Agenda would be structured as follows:-
- (i) statutory/annual reports;
 - (ii) monitoring/scrutiny reports; and
 - (iii) "called-in" items.

The Chair explained that this would ensure that routine type items would be dealt with by the Committee in the first instance and that any Elected Members/Officers or witnesses required to attend for a "called-in" item could be given a scheduled time to attend and would therefore not require to attend the full Committee business.

The meeting terminated at 1110 hours.