

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL
INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 21 AUGUST, 2019

Present: Provost W Howatson (Chair); Ms R Little; and Councillor D Robertson.

Apologies: Ms A Anderson; and Ms I Kirk.

Officers: Mr A Sharp, Chief Finance Officer; Mr A Coldwells, Chief Officer; Mr C Harvey, Senior Auditor; and Ms J McRobbie, Committee Officer.

In attendance: Mr D Hekelaar; and Ms A MacDonald, Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair having called for Declarations of Interest, no declarations were made.

2. STATEMENT OF EQUALITIES

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Joint Board **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF AUDIT COMMITTEE OF 19 JUNE, 2019

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Meeting of 19 June, 2019.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

There had been circulated a report dated 14 August, 2019, by the Chief Internal Auditor, providing an update on 2 completed audits, relating to Business Continuity (Report No. 1940, July, 2019) and Very Sheltered Housing (Report No. 1942 – May, 2019).

The Committee heard from the Senior Auditor of the focus of the Business Continuity, looking at embedding over next few months, with the Very Sheltered Housing report looking at procedural inconsistencies in payroll and payments. On both issues, Audit were assured that the Service was looking to implement and progress the recommendations as agreed.

There was discussion of the overdue recommendations from previous reports, which had increased in number since the last meeting and included items categorised as major and significant. The Committee was advised that the increase was partially related to the addition of new work including action due at the end of June, with some actions relating to substantial projects, including work force planning and risk management.

The Chief Finance Officer indicated that the Integration Joint Board having approved its own risk management strategy, there was now a need to develop detailed guidelines to accompany

this and move the process onto the Datix system to record. Pilot implementation had begun in two locations, but it would be a significant piece of work, and require an extensive roll out period across all social care, in a phased approach, with supporting training.

There was discussion of the ongoing work in respect of transformational funding, the commissioning plan, which would now be progressed along with the new strategic plan and be more detailed than its previous iteration; the continuing challenge to allocate funding to between community hospitals and at home care provision to align budgets; the alignment of social care staffing to budgets in central Aberdeenshire, with south and north being progressed and anticipated to be complete in October, 2019, and the Committee **agreed** to note the updates and progress reported.

5. AUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST MARCH 2019 AND EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD 2018/19

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 19 June, 2019, (Item 11), there had been circulated a report dated 14 August, 2019 by the Chief Finance Officer, together with the audited accounts for the year to 31 March, 2019.

The Committee heard from the Chief Finance Officer that there had been no changes in the figures following the External Audit consideration, but that he had amplified the information in the performance system section, and updated a number of points in the annual governance statement, with changes in the tables solely to reflect guidance on the latest auditing standards.

Ms MacDonald, Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland, spoke to the unmodified audit certificate as an unqualified audit opinion. The sole issue to be flagged up would be the forthcoming secondment of the Chief Officer and the arrangements for the post to be backfilled in his absence.

The Committee **agreed** to approve for signature the audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March, 2019 as appended to the report.

6. REPORT ON THE 2018/19 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS – REPORT BY THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 21 June, 2019 (Item 10) there had been circulated a report dated 14 August, 2019, by the Chief Finance Officer, including the External Audit report in the 2018/19 Annual Accounts. The updated Action Plan on the recommendations made was tabled.

Having heard from Ms MacDonald of the report, which, overall, found the Integration Joint Board to be in a good place, in terms of governance and financial management, with recommendations mainly echoing those of last year in longer term planning, with a clearer understanding of planned outcomes and increased identification of progress milestones; the need to consider forward workforce planning in the context of a growing aging population and shrinking working population. Ms MacDonald suggested there were difficult decisions ahead and that planning should consider likely scenarios 3, 5, and 10 years ahead.

There was discussion of the workforce planning issues and how they would be encompassed within a mid-term financial strategy; the commended cross partner working, which was not necessarily evident in other Integration Joint Boards; the positive local working on performance management, in the context of Audit Scotland's general concern about the 19 national indicators, with some being reported every second year, or out of date by the time of consideration; workforce planning, with frontline teams considering their service plan and six

steps as integrated teams; the national conundrum in developing a career path and specification of the new type of care workers required, both in health and social care; the ongoing discussions with unions on the new requirements and engagement with staff; the arrangements for reporting back from the recently established Workforce planning group, chaired by the Partnership Manager, Strategy and Business Services; the discussions taking place at the informal Finance Working Group and the potential for these to be reported to the Integration Joint Board for information, noting that any formal decisions would be reflected to Board for consideration; the implications for business continuity of the secondment of the Chief Officer to NHS Grampian; and the partial secondment of the Partnership Manager (South)/ Chief Social Worker to support Health Improvement Scotland on social care, including e-frailty.

The Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the unmodified audit certificate as detailed in the External Audit report;
- (2) to note the comments made in the External Auditor's report and the officer assurances as detailed above;
- (3) to approve the action plan contained within the external auditor's report;
- (4) that a report on the progress towards achieving the management response reactions to the recommendations on (a) medium term financial planning, linked to demonstrably resourced and sustainable outcomes,(b) greater clarification on strategic planning in terms of priorities, outcomes, and targets against progress milestones, and (c) longer term workforce planning, be presented to the Audit Committee by early 2020.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair referred to the secondment of the Chief Officer, likely to commence in September, 2019 for a year, with discussions currently ongoing with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Board to back fill the post. On behalf of the Committee, the Provost commended the support provided to date by Mr Coldwells and wished him well in the new developmental post with NHS Grampian.

