Aberdeenshire
C O U N C I L **Infrastructure Services**

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE 3 JUNE 2021

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2020-2021

1   Reason for Report/Summary

1.1   In adopting the Scheme of Governance in 2017, it was agreed that each Committee be provided with an annual report, outlining its scrutiny activity. This report contains the activity for 2020-2021 for the Communities Committee.

2   Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

2.1   consider and comment on the activities detailed in the report; and

2.2   identify any future scrutiny requirements as part of an annual programme of activity.

3   Purpose and Decision-Making Route

3.1   The Scheme of Governance provides that each Area and Policy Committee and Audit Committee should receive and review an annual report of the Committee's scrutiny activity. This report provides an opportunity for Members of the Communities Committee to consider their scrutiny activity in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

4   Discussion

4.1   The annual scrutiny report is part of the monitoring process allowing committees to keep track of progress and ensure any agreed actions have been implemented. The report also provides an opportunity to reflect on scrutiny undertaken and identify any future scrutiny requirements as part of an annual programme of activity.

4.2   The Scheme of Governance explains that Scrutiny or challenge and review is fundamental to transparent, accountable decision making and performance improvement. Scrutiny is about assessing the impact of the Council's strategic policy and planning on communities and residents.

4.3   Members are undertaking scrutiny continually whether when considering performance reports, approving new policies, plans and strategies, or considering regular budget monitoring reports. Examples of formal and informal scrutiny include: -

Formal
- Performance reports
- Strategies
- Policy development/Approval/Review

- Capital and revenue monitoring
- Management information
- External inspection reports
- Internal/external audit reports.
- Resident consultation/feedback
- Referral from Audit Committee

Informal
- Performance sessions outwith Committee
- Member's surgeries
- Ward Forums
- Joint Area Committee/Area Management Team meetings

4.4 Policy Committees are also responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of policy implementation and service delivery in respect of any function within its remit and identifying and implementing improvements as appropriate in accordance with the Policy Development and Review Framework. On occasions Committees will wish to further assure themselves and may want to undertake more detailed scrutiny. This can be undertaken through a three-stage process: -

Committee Review Process
- Stage 1 Report
- Stage 2 Workshop
- Stage 3 Investigation.

4.5 The Committee's scrutiny activity over the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 is summarised in the table below and a full list is provided in **Appendix 1**. The table highlights scrutiny activity per meeting detailing the total number of items for each meeting (excluding standard items 1, 2 and 3) and those which represent scrutiny activity based on the categories included in the Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire guidance. For the Communities Committee this represents 89% of committee business over that period.

Date of Committee	Total number of items	Number of items representing scrutiny activity	%age scrutiny activity
2/04/2020	10	9	90%
04/06/2020	9	7	77.8%
03/09/2020	19	18	94.7%
05/11/2020	14	12	85.7%
12/12/2020	15	14	93.3%
18/02/2021	17	15	88.2%
Total	84	75	89.3%

4.6 During 2020-2021 the Committee sought further assurance through the Committee Review Process on one occasion. The April Committee received a Stage 1 Report on the Building Maintenance Year End Stock Take (item 10). A further supplementary report was requested and presented to the June Committee (item 10). Following this report, the Committee agreed that it now

had the required assurance in respect of the Year End Stock Take and did not instruct a Stage 2 Workshop.

4.7   The type of Formal scrutiny activity undertaken can be summarised as follows: -

Type	Number	Percentage
Management Information	52	71.3%
Policy Development/approval/review	6	8.2%
Capital and Revenue Monitoring	7	9.6%
Strategies	5	6.8%
Performance Reports	3	4.1%
Total	73	

As can be seen the Management Information category is the largest covering as it does activities such as the Police and Fire operational plans, service plans, action plans, partnership reviews, procurement, pricing, HIP updates and Hard FM updates.

4.8   On 13 occasions, in considering reports submitted, additional actions were requested by the Committee, including issues such as:

- Production of a briefing note on the issues raised during the Committee.
- Arrange a virtual workshop in order to give additional consideration to the issues raised.
- Creation of a Member: Officer Working Group to formulate future policy for rent setting.
- Monitoring reports setting out the impact of new policies/service standards/new systems

4.9   On 5 occasions the Committee held workshops outwith the formal Committee to discuss various issues. These workshops covered: -

- June 2020 – Hard FM.
- September 2020 – New Council Plan – cross committee workshop.
- November 2020 – (i) Health and Social Care Partnership performance information; (ii) Consideration of the financial impact of Covid-19 on areas under Committee responsibility.
- January 2021 – (i) Equalities; (ii) Live Life Aberdeenshire Business Plan; (iii) Housing Service Plan.
- February 2021 – Risk workshop

All of these are instances where the Committee were looking for, or found, assurance on the items contained in the reports, or scrutiny referrals.

5   Council Priorities, Implications, and Risk

5.1   The Council Plan has been developed around the three pillars and six strategic priorities. These are: -

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education
	Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure
	Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise
	Estate Modernisation

5.2   Underpinning the Priorities are a number of key principles. They are right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection; tackling poverty and inequalities; digital infrastructure and economy.

5.3   Whilst the various issues and topics considered as scrutiny relate to all the Council's Priorities and Key Principles they particularly focus on the Pillar "Our People" and the Priorities "Education" and "Health & Wellbeing" and supports the principles around right people, right places, right time, the Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans and tackling poverty and inequalities.

5.4   Equality Considerations:

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

5.5   An equality impact assessment is not required because the annual report of scrutiny does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

5.6   Similarly, there are no specific implications for staffing, finances, wellbeing, or children and young people's rights.

5.7   Various Risks have been identified as relevant to the areas of business covered in the content reports for this annual report and were identified when the

individual matters were considered. There are no risks, either at a Corporate or Directorate level, relevant to this annual report on scrutiny.

6   Scheme of Governance

6.1   The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the <u>Scheme of Governance</u> and relevant legislation.

6.2   The Committee is able to consider [and take a decision on] this item in terms of Section D 7.6 of the <u>List of Committee Powers in Part 2A</u> of the Scheme of Governance as it refers to scrutiny activity undertaken by this Committee.

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Report prepared by

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Date 12/05/2021

List of Appendices – *Appendix 1 – Communities Committee - Scrutiny Activity, 1 April 2020-31 March 2021*

Appendix 1

Communities Committee - Scrutiny Activity, 1 April 2020-31 March 2021

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
2 April 2020	(04) Progress Against Actions Log	Management Information	(i) With regards Living Wage Accreditation, the Committee agreed that the Director of Business Services send the report being submitted to Business Services Committee on 23 April 2020 to all Communities Cttee members for information
	(05) Tackling Poverty & Inequalities – Progress Report	Policy development/ approval/review	The Committee agreed to receive the final draft of the Aberdeenshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020, for approval prior to it being published at the end of June 2020.
	(06) Policy Register Annual Reporting	Policy development/ approval/review	The recommendations were approved
	(07) Partnership Review - Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership	Management information	The Committee agreed that the Council continue to participate in the partnerships for a further two years.
	(07a) Charging Policy 2020 -21	Management Information	The Committee agreed to postpone the implementation of the Health & Social Care Charging Policy 2020/21.
	(08) Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) 2017-2021.	Management Information	The recommendations were approved

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(09) Hard Facilities Management (Hard FM) Update.	Management Information	The Committee requested that: - (i) It should continue to receive updates on a quarterly basis and that those updates provide greater detail in respect of Live Life Aberdeenshire. (ii) That the Head of Property provide a briefing to Members of the Communities Committee on amendments made to the Hard FM contract.
	(10) Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire Stage 1 Report – Building Maintenance Year End Stock Take.	Stage 1 Report	The Committee requested that the Lead Officer submit a further report to the next meeting of the Communities Committee.
	(11) Supplementary Procurement Plan for Housing 2020/21.	Management information	The recommendations were approved
4 June 2020	(04) Progress Against Actions Log	Management Information	The Committee agreed to acknowledge the position with regard to the progressing of actions from previous meetings and those which had now been completed.
	(06) Finance Update – Covid 19 Impact	Capital and revenue monitoring	(i) The Committee agreed to receive regular updates on the financial impact of COVID-19 on the budget areas within the Committee's. (ii) The Committee also requested that at an appropriate time the Finance Service arrange a "virtual" workshop for Communities Committee members, in order to give detailed consideration to the financial impact of COVID-19 on areas within the Committee's remit.

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(07) Housing Rent Management – Covid 19 Impact	Management Information	(i) The Committee agreed to receive further update reports the Housing Service moves into a Renewal phase. (ii) The Committee also agreed the formation of a short life Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) to formulate Aberdeenshire Council's future rent strategy in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. The MOWG shall report a final recommendation to the December 2020 meeting of the Committee.
	(07a) Police Scotland – Local Police Plan	Management Information	The Committee (i) Requested that Divisional Commander continue to report to Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives set out in the Local Police Plan 2020-23. (ii) That "light touch" annual review reports be submitted to the Communities Committee
	(08) - Housing Improvement Programme 2017 - 2021 (Hip) Update	Management Information	The Committee requested that a briefing note be provided to Communities Committee members on safe operating procedures for implementation of HIP.
	(09) Hard Facilities Management (Hard FM) Update	Management Information	The Committee requested that it continue to receive updates on a quarterly basis and that those updates provide greater detail in respect of Live Life Aberdeenshire.

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(10) Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire Stage 1 Report Supplementary Information – Building Maintenance Year End Stock Take	Stage 1 Report (Supplementary)	The Committee agreed that it now had the required assurance in respect of the Year End Stock Take and not to instruct a Stage 2 (Workshop).
18 June 2020	Hard FM Workshop	Informal – performance sessions outwith Committee	
3 September 2020	(04) Progress Against Actions Log	Management Information	(i) Resources and Circular Economy Commitment - presentation scheduled for the meeting of the Committee on 5 November 2020. (ii) Health and Social Care Partnership Performance Reporting 2029/20 and Finance Update – COVID 19 Impact - joint workshop arranged to take place at conclusion of Communities Committee on 5 November 2020.
	(05) Quarter 1 Financial Performance: Communities Budget	Capital and revenue monitoring	The recommendations were approved
	(06) Financial Performance To 30 June 2020 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Capital and revenue monitoring	The recommendations were approved
	(07) Aberdeenshire's Child Poverty Action Report – 2019/20 Report	Policy development/ approval/review	The Committee agreed that six monthly monitoring reports be submitted to the Committee, with the first to include a presentation by the Lived Experience Forum if possible.

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(08) Tackling Poverty & Inequalities – Partnership Review	Management information	The Committee agreed that the Council should continue to participate in the partnership for a further three years.
	(09) Financial Inclusion - Partnership Review	Management information	The Committee agreed that the Council should continue to participate in the partnership for a further three years.
	(10) Aberdeenshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Locality Planning Annual Reporting	Management information	The Committee agreed to acknowledge the draft LOIP and Locality Planning Annual Report 2019/20.
	(11) Aberdeenshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Locality Planning Annual 3-Year Review	Management information	The Committee agreed to acknowledge the draft LOIP and Locality Planning 3 Year Review and to provide comment to Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partnership (CPP).
	(12) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service– Review of Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(13) Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Update	Management Information	The Committee agreed to a further update on progress in six months
	(14) Housing Action Plan Update	Management Information	The Committee agreed to receive six monthly updates on the progress of the Action Plan.
	(15) Local Housing Strategy 2019/20 Annual Report	Strategies	The recommendations were approved
	(16) Review of Lettable Standard	Policy development/ approval/review	The Committee approved the recommendations with modification and requested that implementation be monitored for 6 months with a report back to Committee.

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(18) Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Performance and Outcomes Framework Quarters 3 and 4	Performance Reports	The recommendations were approved
	(19) Review of Governance: Live Life Aberdeenshire	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(20) Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) 2017 - 2021	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(21) Hard Facilities Management (Hard FM) Update and Workshop Feedback	Management Information	The Committee agreed to receive further updates on a quarterly basis
	(22) Directorate Procurement Plan – 2020/2021.	Management Information	Renewal of the contract Civica Spydus Library Management System - the Committee requested that a briefing note be provided to the Committee regarding the implementation, after an appropriate length of time.
9 September 2020	New Council Plan – Cross Committee Workshop	Informal – performance sessions outwith Committee	
5 November 2020	(04) Progress Against Actions Log	Management Information	The presentation on Resources and the Circular Economy, in respect of the Communities Committee remit, would take place at the next meeting on 17 December 2020.
	(06) Quarter 2 Financial Performance: Communities Budget	Capital and revenue monitoring	The recommendations were approved
	(07) Financial Performance To 30 September 2020 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Capital and revenue monitoring	The recommendations were approved

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(08) Police Scotland Verbal Update	Management Information	The Committee requested that Police Scotland submit a report to the Committee in the first half of 2021 on preventative measure to protect dementia sufferers from being taken advantage of by "scams"; the report to highlight partnership working approaches in dealing with this - report to be submitted to meeting of Committee on 1 April or 3 June 2021.
	(09) Housing Annual Assurance Statements Briefing	Management Information	The Committee instructed the Director of Infrastructure Services to report to Communities Committee any material change in circumstance that affects Aberdeenshire Council's compliance with these requirements after the submission of the Assurance Statement.
	(10) Housing Allocation Policy Review	Policy development/ approval/review	The recommendations were approved, and the Committee instructed that an update report being submitted to the Committee in 12 months - report to meeting of Committee on 9 December 2021.
	(11) Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021 - 2026	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(12) Tenant Participation Strategy (2019-2029) Update	Strategies	The recommendations were approved, and the Committee instructed that they receive further annual updates.
	(13) Community Access to Educational Establishments	Policy development/ approval/review	The recommendations were approved

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(15) Live Life Aberdeenshire Pricing	Management Information	The Committee agreed recommendations and requested update report on the use of this power.
	(16) Sheltered Housing Review Update – 9 Month Progress Report	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(17) Use of Delegated Powers by Chief Officer by Reason of Special Urgency	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
5 November 2021	Workshop (i) Health and Social Care Partnership to organise a workshop for Communities Committee on performance information. (ii) Finance Service arrange a "virtual" workshop for Communities Committee members, in order to facilitate detailed consideration of the financial impact of COVID 19 on areas within the Committee's remit.	Informal – performance sessions outwith Committee	
17 December 2020	(04) Progress Against Actions Log	Management Information	Committee agreed to hold an Equalities Workshop following meeting of Committee on 18 February 2021.
	(7) Aberdeenshire's Digital Strategy	Strategies	The Committee instructed the Director of Business Services report back to the Communities Committee in respect of monitoring of the implementation of the Digital Strategy, specifically in relation to matters within the remit of the Communities Committee.

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(8) Police Scotland – Thematic Report: Contact Assessment Model (CAM)	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(9) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Revised Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire.	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(10) Housing Rent Strategy Consultation – Outcomes Arising from Member Officer Working Group and Tenant Consultation	Strategies	The Committee recommended recommend Option B to Full Council, with an RPI only increase for the 2021/22 financial year, with an annual review for 2 years thereafter.
	(11) Community Safety Strategy	Strategies	The recommendations were approved. The Committee asked that a briefing note on Violence Against Women be provided to the Committee, as well as a link to the ALDO training.
	(12) Housing Service Plan	Management Information	The Committee requested that reporting, by exception, to Committee take place quarterly on performance measures against service objectives and six monthly on progress in delivering all aspects of the service plan; and that a workshop session be organised.
	(13) Climate Change Declaration Consultation	Management Information	Noted
	(14) - Live Life Aberdeenshire – Business Plan 2021 - 2023	Management Information	The Committee asked that a workshop session be arranged to finalise performance indicators and confirm how frequently these should be reported to Committee.
	(15) - Chief Social Work Annual Report 2019-20	Management Information	The recommendations were approved

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(16) - Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) Update	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(17) - Housing Support Review	Management Information	The Committee requested that the items detailed in the report would be added to the Annual Housing Work Plan that would be considered at the meeting of the Communities Committee on 18 February 2021.
	(18) - Live Life Aberdeenshire Financial Workplan 2021-2022	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(19) - Supplementary Procurement Plan 2020-21 – Payment Cards	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
28 January 2021	Workshop - Equalities Principles, Live Life Aberdeenshire – Business Plan 2021 - 2023; Housing Service Plan	Informal – performance sessions outwith Committee	Took place as part of the wider workshop on 28 January, 2021
18 February 2021	(04) Progress Against Actions Log	Management Information	Digital Strategy - Director of Business Services to submit an update report to the next meeting of the Communities Committee.
	(5) Quarter 3 Financial Performance: Communities Budget	Capital and revenue monitoring	The recommendations were approved
	(6) Financial Performance To 31 December 2020 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Capital and revenue monitoring	The recommendations were approved
	(7) Corporate Improvement Plan 2020/21	Management Information	The Committee agreed to receive quarterly updates for monitoring and scrutiny.
	(9) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire	Management Information	The recommendations were approved

Meeting Date	Item Description	Category of Scrutiny	Additional Actions
	(10) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Aberdeenshire Year to Date Performance Report April – September 2020	Performance Reports	The recommendations were approved
	(11) Police Scotland - Performance Monitoring and Operational Update	Performance Reports	The Committee requested that the Divisional Commander to continue to report to Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives.
	(12) Annual Procurement Performance Report 2019-2020	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(13) Housing Action Plan	Management Information	The Committee agreed to receive six monthly updates on the progress of the Action Plan.
	(14) Live Life Aberdeenshire Pricing Update	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(15) AHSCP Non-Residential Charging Policy & Unit Costs 2021/22	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(17) Hard Facilities Management Update	Management Information	The Committee agreed to receive further updates on a six-monthly basis
	(18) Procurement Plan 2021/22 for Housing and Building Standards	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(19) Live Life Aberdeenshire Grant Funding 2021/2022	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
	(20) Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board – Annual Procurement Plan Direction	Management Information	The recommendations were approved
18 February 2021	Risk Workshop	Informal – performance sessions outwith Committee	