

REPORT TO GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE – 22 JUNE 2021

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT – 2020/21

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 2020/21 for the Garioch Area Committee.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. consider and comment on the activities detailed in the report; and**
- 2. identify any future scrutiny requirements as part of an annual programme of activity.**

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 This report sets out the various types of scrutiny undertaken by the Garioch area Committee for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. It provides detailed information regarding formal and informal activities that demonstrate how the Committee undertakes its scrutiny role.
- 3.2 The report asks the Committee to consider the scrutiny activity and make comment on the scope of current activity and potential for further development of scrutiny activity in the coming year.

4 Discussion

Formal Scrutiny

- 4.1 During the period 2020/21, the Garioch Area Committee held 13 meetings with reports covering a variety of subject matter. A list of these reports is detailed in Appendix 1. The appendix shows the type of scrutiny undertaken and any additions to the officer recommendation put on by the Committee.

Informal Scrutiny

- 4.2 In addition to formal meetings, Councillors in Garioch undertake a number of other informal meetings which are not open to the public. These include informal seminars/briefing sessions and individual Ward Meetings. The fact that these meetings are not subject to the same time constraints as formal meetings means that Councillors are able to consider issues in more depth. The private nature of these sessions also means that Councillors are able to have open and detailed dialogue with Officers about activity and potential solutions to issues that have arisen.

- 4.3 **Seminars and Briefing Sessions** – In the past year 19 sessions have been held for Garioch Councillors. The subject matter from these were as follows:-

ICT Training (Foxit)
Informal Sessions with Police, Fire and Health & Social Care Partnership (7 sessions)
Early Years Provision
Strategic Budget Discussions
LDP Virtual Room Session
Rural Partnership SLAs
Engagement and Participation Policy
Meeting with Senior Management Team for Education & Children’s Services, Infrastructure Services and Business Services (3 sessions)
Mental Health Service Provision
2021-2022 Strategic Budget Projects
Area Plans

- 4.3.1 Informal seminars allow for more in depth discussions and time to scrutinise topics in more depth. Councillors are able seek more information and provide Officers with an indication of their concerns or issues that they may be aware of.

- 4.4 **Ward Meetings** – In Garioch, we have 4 electoral Wards:-

Ward 10 – West Garioch Ward (3 Councillors)
 Ward 11 – Inverurie and District Ward (4 Councillors)
 Ward 12 – East Garioch Ward (4 Councillors)
 Ward 13 – Westhill & District Ward (4 Councillors)

Ward Meetings for each of these wards are routinely held every 6 weeks, however from April until October 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, Ward Meetings were held weekly and then fortnightly. This was to ensure that Councillors were kept fully briefed about service delivery and activity during this time.

- 4.4.1 Ward Meetings are arranged by the Area Manager and they are used both to brief Councillors on activity and issues within the Ward and for Councillors raise issues or to seek updates on ongoing activity. Council Officers will attend these meetings as appropriate to provide information and to respond to the issues raised by Councillors. The structure of these meetings allow Councillors to scrutinise more carefully the work of the Council in their electoral ward.

- 4.5 **Partner Organisations** – Since changes were made to the structures of Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland and the Health and Social Care Partnership, the Area Committee has had a role in scrutinising their work at a local level. In order to do this effectively, these partner organisations have been reporting to Area Committee on a quarterly basis, 2 formal reports to Committee and 2 informal seminars with the Committee.
- 4.5.1 In the past year, Scottish Fire and Rescue has been able to continue with this practice.
- 4.5.2 The Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) undertook 2 informal sessions and 1 formal session in 2020, but have not reported in 2021. This is because the HSCP is undertaking a review of its performance framework, with key areas for improvement being how it can better demonstrate outcomes for people and communities and the difference that integration has made. It has since been agreed that future reports to the IJB will be focused on the key transformational initiatives to be taken forward under the HSCP's new strategic delivery plan developed in response to Covid-19. Work is underway to develop the detail of the performance measures through which progress will be monitored, the aim being that this will provide greater assurance as to delivery of the strategic plan and providing evidence of the outcomes that it has agreed to work towards. As the new strategic performance framework is established, it will work to align its reporting timetables with Area Committee meeting dates.
- 4.5.3 Underpinning this, a significant amount of work has been undertaken with NHS Grampian Health Intelligence and Council information teams on the development of operational performance dashboards through which we aim to improve the accessibility of health and social care datasets and ensure continuing senior management oversight of performance. This has been particularly focused on identifying and understanding demands on the health and social care system throughout the Covid pandemic.
- 4.5.4 Police Scotland has only reported informally to Garioch Area Committee in the past year, this has been due to the Service not being able to provide statistical information on a Ward basis. Police Scotland has indicated that an ICT solution is currently being explored, testing a new methodology which will provide more reliable and robust data below council level. There is no timescale for the completion of this work and when Ward statistics will be available again.
- 4.6 The Local Community Planning Group (includes Police, Fire, Health, Voluntary Sector etc) joins together with the Area Management Team (Council Officers) to meet with the Area Committee twice a year. In 2020/21, due to the pandemic, the meeting that would normally take place in May/June was cancelled. However, a meeting took place on 3 November 2020. The focus for this meeting was feedback that was received from the Community Impact Assessment consultation which asked residents how the pandemic had affected their communities. The meeting considered what support was required to assist communities through the crisis and how the community

spirit that had been established through the pandemic could be continued in the future.

4.7 **Statement of Outstanding Business (SOB)** – The Garioch Area Committee has operated a Statement of Outstanding Business for a number of years, it was put in place to allow the Committee to monitor progress with specific action required by the Committee that were in addition to Officer recommendations in reports. In March 2019, amendments were made to the format of the SOB to provide the Committee with all activity and timescales for actions within current items. This allowed Councillors to better understand how issues were being progressed and how these were being actioned against timescales. At its meeting on 17 March 2020, the Committee requested that the SOB be given a higher profile on the agenda (putting it immediately after the minute) and asked that it be routinely reported to each meeting of the Committee.

4.7.1 The Garioch Area Committee now has a very detailed history and timeline for all items on the Statement of Outstanding Business and considers progress against actions at each meeting. The Committee determines whether items have been completed to its satisfaction and can be removed from the SOB or whether further/different action is required. This allows the Committee total control and an excellent opportunity to monitor and hold officers to account.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 The issues and topics considered as scrutiny relate to all the Council's priorities and key principles.

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

Underpinning the Priorities are a number of key principles: 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.

This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Economy and Enterprise” within the Pillar “Our Economy”, having the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

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	

- 5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because the report is to inform the Committee of scrutiny activity and the recommendations will not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 5.4 Similarly, there are no specific implications for staffing, finances, wellbeing or children and young people's rights.
- 5.5 Various Risks will 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 their comments are incorporated within the report. They are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section B.11.3 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it refers to scrutiny activity undertaken by this Committee.

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education and Children's Services

Report prepared by Alison Cumming, Area Committee Officer
Date - 7 June 2021

List of Appendices
Appendix 1 - 2020-21 Formal Scrutiny by Garioch Area Committee

Date of Committee	Item No	Report Title	Categories	Decision
21.04.2020	6.	Business Services' Directorate Supplementary Procurement Plan – 2021/2021	Management Monitoring	Approved Committee agreed not to reserve approval of the Procurement Approval Form.
12.05.2020	6.	Historic Asset Management Project Annual Update	Monitoring	Approved Committee welcomed the report and acknowledged the great work done by Officers.
	7.	Education Scotland Inspection - Inverurie Academy	Inspection Monitoring	Approved Committee congratulated the staff, pupils and parents on the positive inspection report.
	8.	Live Life Aberdeenshire Pitch and Open Space Strategy	Policy Development/Review	Approved. Comments provided to policy committee.
	9.	Community Council Grants 2020 - 2021	Management Monitoring	Approved.
	10.	Area Committee Budget 2020 - 2021	Management Monitoring	Approved – subject to: 1. recommendation 5 being amended to reflect that Area Committee will allocate a proportion of the budget to its strategic priorities; and 2. “normally” being added to recommendation 5.3 following “should”
23.06.2020	6.	Masterplan for Kintore (BUS2 Site)	Monitoring	Committee agreed to decline to approve the Kintore BUS2 Site Masterplan and

			Local implementation of Council Policy	for officers to go back to the applicants to give them the opportunity to reconsider the Masterplan and produce an alternative that:- 1. reflects business use as the primary use for the site; and 2. ensures that the business use is more appropriately sited.
	7.	Aberdeenshire Council Strategic Cycle Routes: Kintore to Blackburn – Option Review	Monitoring Local implementation of Council Policy	Approved Subject to recommendation 2 being amended to read “ approve route improvements along the Option 3 alignment and instruct officers to investigate options for funding of further improvements to Option 3.
	8.	Area Committee Budget 2020/21	Management Monitoring	Approved.
25.08.2020	4.	Petition – Kingseat School Bus	Local role in decision making Monitoring implementation of Council Policy	The Committee agreed to request that a report be brought to Garioch Area Committee including the following information:- a) issues of safety and improvements; including the crossing of Hillbrae Way and whether a pedestrian crossing may be required; b) the free transport entitlement policy and the implications of a change to this policy; c) the provision of a service bus;

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) communication with residents and the background/history to this issue; and e) the costs for a replacement school bus, if the parents were to contribute.
	9.	Strategic Budget Projects 2020/21	Management Monitoring	<p>Committee agreed to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to unanimously suspend standing orders to revisit the decision regarding allocation of funds and move £150 from the Area Initiatives Budget to the Strategic Budget; 2. to note that £10,000 had been secured from Developer Obligations towards the Westhill Paths Project; 3. to make the following awards:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) £6,950 to Inverurie Allotments project for provision of a car park; b) £15,000 towards improvements to Formartine and Buchan Way; c) £10,000 towards tree planting and rewilding in 6 identified locations in Garioch; d) £14,200 towards equipment to set up a electric bike hub at Kintore Station; and e) £4,000 to WECC towards the Westhill Path Project
	10.	Information Security Policy and Associated Procedures	Policy Development/Review	The Committee agreed to provide detailed comments to policy committee

15.09.2020	4.	Kingseat School Bus – Safe Walk Route to School	Local decision and monitoring of implementation of Council Policy	Approved.
	8.	Potential to Increase Biodiversity through Changes to Existing Maintenance Regimes	Policy Development/Review Monitoring	Approved. Committee agreed to:- 1. request a list of the projects that have already been consulted upon and are likely to go ahead in 2020/21; 2. remove “all” from recommendation 2 and add the words “...and those noted by GAC”; and 3. the comments detailed on the table below.
	9.	Housing Allocation Policy Review Consultation	Policy Development/Review Monitoring	Approved. Comments provided
	10.	Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-2026	Strategic Plan Development and Review Monitoring	Committee agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.
	11.	Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy Consultation and City Region Deal Strategic Transport Assessment	Regional Strategic Development/Review	Approved.
	12.	Garioch Area Initiatives Fund 2020/21	Management Monitoring	Approved - All applications granted in full.
	13.	Licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues – Draft Policy	Policy Development/Review	Committee agreed:- 1. to provide the following responses to the questions:-

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Nil ii) Yes iii) Yes, 250 metres (by a majority) iv) Yes v) Yes vi) All religious denominations should be included; and <p>2. that the Licensing Sub-Committee should determine Sexual Entertainment Venue Licences.</p>
06.10.2020	7.	Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-2026	Strategic Plan Development and Review	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Committee agreed to forward the following comments to Communities Committee:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. welcome the plan and support all of the proposals to develop more affordable housing across Aberdeenshire over the next 5 years; and 2. request that officers investigate and provide information about any constraints that may be being faced by the private sector regarding the delivery of adaptations to housing and envisage any scope for alignment with the Council to improve the delivery rate.
10.11.2020	7.	Proposed 20 Mph Speed Limits – Corskie Park, Dunecht	Management Monitoring	Approved.

	8.	Climate Change Declaration Consultation	Policy Development and Review	Approved. Comments to Full Council
	9.	Community Safety Governance and Strategic Arrangements in Aberdeenshire	Strategic Plan Development and Review	Approved. The Committee agreed to: 1. Note the Governance arrangements as outlined in paragraph 4.1.5, 2. Instructed the Area Manager to progress the matter of terminology in EIAs, and 3. Provided the below comments.
	10.	A947 Route Options Strategy	National Plan Development and Review Monitoring	Approved. Comments provided to policy committee
	11.	Corporate Parenting Annual Report	Management Monitoring	Approved. Comments provided.
	12.	Area Initiatives Fund 2020/21	Management Monitoring	Approved. The Committee agreed to grant £1,510 to Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk towards the provision of a defibrillator, in Sauchen and transferred the remaining balance to the Garioch partnership for use as part of the small grants initiative.
01.12.2020	6.	Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service Strategy Review 2017-20 &	Policy Development/Review	Noted/Approved. Comments to ISC.

		Archaeology Service Strategy 2020-23		
	7.	Aberdeenshire Council NESBReC Strategy Review 2017-20 & NESBReC Strategy 2020-23	Policy Development/Review	Noted/Approved. Comments to ISC.
	8.	Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service Strategy Review 2017-20 & Ranger Service Strategy 2020-23	Policy Development/Review	Noted/Approved. Comments to ISC.
	9.	Asset Transfer: Inverurie Scout Group Asset Transfer Request for Land Adjacent to The Scout Hut	Management Monitoring	Approved.
	10.	Aberdeenshire's Digital Strategy	Policy Development/Review	Noted/Approved. Committee requested that the Service provide detailed information about the £17 million the Council spent to increase broadband speeds including the number of extra connections this facilitated. Comments to BSC.
12.01.2021	5.	1140 Infrastructure Programme – Newmachar School Nursery Replacement Early Learning and Children Provision Contract Award Approval	Management Monitoring	Noted/Approved.
02.02.2021	7.	Garioch Interim Community Plan 2019-2022	Community Planning – monitoring role	Approved.
23.02.2021	8.	A96 Dualling – Huntly to Aberdeen Preferred Route Option	National Plan Development and Review Monitoring	Comments to ISC
	9.	Review of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils	Management Monitoring	Approved. Comments to Full Council

			Local decision making	
	10.	Petition for Consideration – Road Conditions (B933 St Mary’s Place to Keith Hall)	Local scrutiny Monitoring	Approved. Report requested from Head of Roads, Waste and Landscape Services to deal with the particular issues raised in the petition. Report to be submitted to GAC on 20/04/2021.
	11.	Tackling Poverty and Inequalities – Progress Report	Monitoring (Council service delivery)	Approved Comments to policy committee
16.03.2021	6.	Below Tolerable Standard Policy Review	Policy Development/Review	Approved. Comments provided to policy committee
	7.	Housing Renewal Area Policy Review	Policy Development/Review	Approved. Comments provided to policy committee
	8.	Charles Ogg Fund Application Update – Technology for the Use of People Newly Diagnosed With Dementia	Management Monitoring	Approved.
	9.	Infrastructure Services Directorate Procurement Plan – 2021/22	Management Monitoring	Approved. Committee agreed: 1. to approve the items on the procurement plan, 2. not to reserve the approval of procurement approval forms for any item, and to note that the relevant Chief Officer has the delegated authority to approve the procurement approval forms and to award the final contracts for all the items in the procurement plan.
	10.	Kingseat	Management Monitoring	Approved.

				The Committee noted that officers were currently engaging with a legal agent and agreed to support proceeding with the first bullet point in Paragraph 4.9 and thereafter conduct a review and carry out consultation with local ward members before officers proceeding further.
	11.	Business Services' Directorate Annual Procurement Plan – 2021/22 – Procurement Approval	Management Monitoring	Approved. The Committee agreed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to approve the item on the procurement plan in Appendix 1 2. to approve the procurement approval form in Appendix 3, 3. not to reserve the award of the contract, and 4. to note that the Head of Property and Facilities Management has the delegated authority to award the final contract.
	12.	Workspace – Office Space Strategy – 18358 Inverurie Town Hall	Strategy	Approved Comments to Full Council