

REPORT TO KINCARDINE AND MEARN'S AREA COMMITTEE – 23 AUGUST 2022

ANNUAL SCRUTINY AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2021-2022

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 The Scrutiny and Improvement at Aberdeenshire Guidance in Part 4 of the Scheme of Governance requires each Committee to consider an Annual Scrutiny and Improvement Report. The report includes highlights of key scrutiny activity undertaken by the Committee over the past year and outlines areas for inclusion in the scrutiny programme for the coming year.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. consider and comment on the activities detailed in the report, and**
- 2. consider and agree the proposed programme of scrutiny activity for 2022-23 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 The Scheme of Governance provides that each Area, Policy Committee and Audit Committee should receive and review an annual report of the Committee's scrutiny and improvement activity. This report provides an opportunity for Members of the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee to consider their scrutiny activity in the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

3 Discussion

3.1 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.

3.2 Key areas of the Committee's scrutiny activity over the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 are summarised below,

Past Activity

3.3 Committee Review Process

During the period covered in this report, the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee has not sought further assurance through the Committee Review Process.

3.4 Member Promoted Issues

The Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee has not had any issues raised through the Member Promoted Issues (MPI) process:

3.5 Petitions

The Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee has had one petition submitted on the 12 October 2021 regarding Belmont Brae, Stonehaven. The Committee noted the petition and requested that the issues raised by the petition be addressed and reported in the Stonehaven Traffic Management Review. It is anticipated that a report will be submitted to Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee on the 4 October 2022.

3.6 Formal Scrutiny

Over the course of the reporting period, the Committee has also reviewed performance and monitored service delivery when considering management information reports, performance reports, policy development review plans and strategies and budget monitoring reports.

Examples of where the Committee has had the opportunity to scrutinise and add value include the following areas of work where the Committee has considered the policies, strategies, plans and budgets and has provided comments were required to the relevant Policy Committee or Service:

Aberdeenshire Charities Trust (ACT2) – Financial Management
Aberdeenshire Council Built Heritage Strategy 2018-21 Review and Built Heritage Strategy 2021-24
Aberdeenshire Council Care and Repair Update 2020/21
Aberdeenshire Council Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy
Aberdeenshire Council Empty Homes Advice and Information Service
Aberdeenshire Council Outdoor Access Strategy 2018-21 Review and Outdoor Access Strategy 2021-24
Aberdeenshire Council Planning Information and Delivery Team Strategy 2022-2025
Aberdeenshire Development Plan Scheme 2022
Aberdeenshire Licensing Board Review of Statement of Licensing Principles 2022-2025

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 – Development Plan Scheme 2021
Allocation Of Kincardine and Mearns Community Council Grants 2021-2022
Analysis of Attainment and Achievement in Accredited Awards of Young People in Kincardine and Mearns Secondary Schools During 2019-20
Annual Scrutiny Report – 2020/21
Area Performance Calendar
Area Performance Framework and Performance Indicators
Consultation on the Draft Risk Management Policy
Draft Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022 to 2027
Draft Engagement and Participation Policy 2021
Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategies and Plan for the Northeast Local Plan District
Draft Gaelic Language Plan
Draft Gypsy Traveler Site Provision Strategy 2021-2026
Equalities Outcome
Kincardine and Mearns Area Plan
Kincardine and Mearns Disabled Person's Parking Places
NESBReC – Increase of Existing Charges
Ranger Service – Introduction of Charges
Reports relating to the Area Committee Budget
Reports relating to the Coastal Communities Fund
Review of Planning Delegations – Local Member Notification Process and Representations
Roads, Bridges, Harbours, Coast & Flooding, Landscape and Transportation Works Programme 2021-2022
Roads Policy Review

Road Safety and Action Plan
Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022-2027
Surplus Property Policy
Tackling Poverty & Inequalities – Progress Report
Taxis and Private Hire Car Licensing Review of Advertisement Policy
Tenant Participation Strategy
Town Centre First Principle

3.7 Informal Scrutiny

In addition, the Committee has undertaken a number of 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.

Seminars and Briefing Sessions – in the past year 20 sessions have been held for Kincardine and Mearns Councillors. The subject matter of these were as follows:-

Area Plan
Area Performance Framework
Community Learning and Development Plan
Community Planning
Early Learning and Childcare Update
Fire and Rescue Service Updates
Levelling Up Funding Workshop
New Scrutiny Arrangements
Poverty and Inequality
Roads Work Programmes
Session with Police Scotland Updates
Storms Arwen, Malik and Corrie
Surplus Property Policy

- 3.8 At its meeting on 21 September 2021, the Area Committee received a report presenting performance management information in a revised format. The Committee agreed to note the new performance framework and provisionally agreed the performance indicators subject to a further report coming back to Area Committee showing updated targets. On 7 December 2021, the Area Committee considered the update report on Area Performance and agreed to the new reporting arrangements.

The new performance framework reports commenced in 2022 on the following basis:-

- 8 February – Kincardine and Mearns Area Plan
- 8 February Education and Children's Services
- 1 March – Business Services
- 22 March – Environment and Infrastructure Services

The three directorates also met informally with the Area Committee for an in depth discussion about service activity in March / April 2022. Scheduled reporting and informal sessions are planned for the coming year.

- 3.9 **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. Initially this was done through reporting to Committee twice formally and twice informally throughout the year.

In the past year, Scottish Fire and Rescue has continued with this practice but Police Scotland indicated that it was no longer in a position to provide a formal report to Committee and continued to report informally on a quarterly basis. No performance information was provided from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in the last financial year

The HSCP has implemented a revised approach to performance reporting to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) in the last year. This continues to be refined and feedback sought to ensure IJB members have the assurance required in terms of progress against transformational projects under the HSCP's strategic delivery plan. Revised proposals for performance reporting under the HSCP's new strategic delivery plan are being presented to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and IJB over the next month. Subject to approval, revised performance reporting will commence from January 2023 in line with the HSCP's new strategic delivery plan, to include reinstatement of reports to Area Committees.

- 3.10 **The Local Community Planning Group** (includes Police, Fire, Health, Voluntary Sector) joins together with the Area Management Team (Council Officers) to meet with the Area Committee twice a year. In 2021-22, joint meetings took place on 11 May 2021 and 9 November 2021. The first session focused on Poverty and Inequalities. The focus for the second 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.

- 3.11 **Statement of Outstanding Business (SOB)** – The Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee has operated a Statement of Outstanding Business over the previous year, it was put in place to allow the Committee to monitor progress with specific actions required by the Committee that were in addition to Officer recommendations in reports.

The Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee now has a history and timeline for all items on the SOB 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 control and an opportunity to monitor and check on progress.

- 3.12 **Ward Meetings** – In Kincardine and Mearns there are 3 electoral Wards:-

Ward 17 – North Kincardine (4 Councillors)

Ward 18 – Stonehaven and Lower Deeside (4 Councillors)

Ward 19 – Mearns (4 Councillors)

Ward Meetings are arranged by the Area Manager and are routinely held every 6 weeks. They are used both to brief Councillors on activity and issues within the Ward and to allow Councillors to 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.

- 3.13 Programme of Future Activity

The proposed programme of activity for 2022-23 forms Appendix 1.

In addition, the Committee have identified the following service areas where improvements could be made:

- Landscape Services – participatory budgeting / community actions
- Community Resilience
- Economic Development Post Covid
- Tackling Poverty and Inequalities in Kincardine and Mearns

If agreed, officers will arrange for the Committee to receive reports to future meetings on these areas for consideration.

4 Council Priorities, Implications, and Risk

4.1 Scrutiny and Improvement helps to deliver the Council Priorities across the board,

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

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.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-plan/delivering-our-priorities-across-services/>

4.2 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 and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

- 4.3 Staffing resource will be required to support the Committee with the proposed future scrutiny activity. This will be provided within existing resources.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 An Integrated Impact Assessment has not been carried out as any impacts will have been identified as relevant to the areas of business covered in the content reports for this annual report. There are no impacts resulting from this update report.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 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 relevant legislation.
- 5.2 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.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Emma Storey, Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee Officer
Date 10 August 2022

List of Appendices
Appendix 1 – Programme of Scrutiny Activity

Appendix 1

Programme of Scrutiny Activity, 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

Please note that this programme contains the sessions arranged at time of writing the report and further sessions may be added. It is indicative and the dates may be subject to change.

Performance Reports to Formal Committee	
Meeting Date	Item Description
13 September 2022	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
29 November 2022	Kincardine and Mearns Area Plan
29 November 2022	Business Services
29 November 2022	Education and Children's Services
29 November 2022	Environment and Infrastructure
21 March 2023	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Informal Performance Sessions	
Meeting Date	Item Description
30 August 2022	Update on the creation of a new Aberdeenshire-wide Autism Strategy for Adults, Young Persons and Children
30 August 2022	Update on the Business Gateway Service – what are the service doing, how does it work and what are the future plans
30 August 2022	Digital Engagement Team – supporting residents across Aberdeenshire with advice and guidance in getting better broadband
6 September 2022	Emergency Planning and Resilience – Guidance for Elected Members
4 October 2022	Police Scotland
6 December 2022	Police Scotland
6 December 2022	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
7 March 2023	Police Scotland
28 March 2023	Business Services
28 March 2023	Education and Children’s Services
28 March 2023	Environment and Infrastructure
To Be Arranged	Local Community Planning Group Joint Session

Policy Reviews	
Service	Item description
Environment and Infrastructure Services	Local Transport Strategy
Environment and Infrastructure Services	Tree and planting on the roads boundary policy
Environment and Infrastructure Services	Waste Collection Policy (tbc)
Business Services	Common Good Policy (tbc)
Business Services	Community Asset Transfer Policy
Business Services	Corporate Asset Management Plan
Business Services	Housing Allocation Policy
Business Services	Non-residential Charging Policy

Service Areas for Formal Scrutiny	
Meeting date	
To Be Arranged	Landscape Services – participatory budgeting / community actions
To Be Arranged	Community Resilience
To Be Arranged	Economic Development Post Covid
To Be Arranged	Tackling Poverty and Inequalities in Kincardine and Mearns