



REPORT TO MARR AREA COMMITTEE – 30 AUGUST 2022

ANNUAL SCRUTINY AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT – 2022/23

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 The Scrutiny and Improvement at Aberdeenshire Guidance in Part 4A 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:

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

1.2.2 consider and agree the proposed programme of scrutiny activity for 2022/23.

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 Section 1.6, Part 4A of 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 and improvement activity. This report provides an opportunity for Members of the Marr 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, with detail of actions taken as a result.

Past Activity

3.3 Committee Review Process

Where Committees want to undertake further scrutiny, they can either seek a further report from the Chief Officer providing further detail on the issues identified or instigate the three stage process outlined in the diagram on page 6 of the [Scrutiny and Improvement at Aberdeenshire Guidance](#) known as the Committee Review Process. The Committee did not undertake a Committee Review Process in 2021/22.

3.4 Formal Scrutiny

Over the course of the reporting period, the Committee has 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 added value include:

- (i) Consideration of Member Promoted Issues:-
 - a. Glebe Park, Banchory – Extension of Prohibition of Waiting ([4 May 2021](#) and [28 September 2021](#)) – the Committee agreed to extend the prohibition of waiting restrictions.
 - b. A93 Station Road, Banchory – Request For Removal Of Parking Bays And Installation Of Prohibition Of Waiting Restrictions ([17 August 2021](#)) – following consideration of the investigation and officers’ recommendation, the Committee instructed officers to re-engage with stakeholders and bring back proposals to a future meeting of the Committee, taking into account Members’ comments.

- (ii) Consideration of petitions:-
 - a. Speed Limit Reduction at Bridge of Canny and Inchmarlo ([2 November 2021](#) and [8 March 2022](#)) – the Committee agreed the extension of the 40mph speed limit at Bridge of Canny in an easterly direction.
 - b. Removal Of Open Fireplaces In Braemar Council Houses (Braemar) ([15 February 2022](#) and [8 March 2022](#)) – the Committee made a recommendation to Communities Committee to review the lettable standard; that open fireplaces should remain optional in all remaining properties until a suitable alternative contingency could be offered; and that all planned upgrade work proceed without delay whilst a broader review of the lettable standard, housing improvement programme and EESH2 policy take place at Communities Committee. The Communities Committee considered the referral at its meeting on [24 March 2022](#).

- (iii) Reviewed a number of policies and provided comments to Policy Committees including:-
 - a. Draft Engagement and Participation Policy ([25 May 2021](#)) - the Committee requested further consideration of the extent to which the public wished to be engaged in participatory budgeting/engagement and methods of reaching harder to reach groups.
 - b. Roads Policy Review Update ([14 December 2021](#)) – the Committee provided comments on Street Naming and Numbering, Signing of Tourist Facilities and Attractions, and Electric Vehicle Charing policies.
 - c. Aberdeenshire Council Draft Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027 ([25 January 2022](#)) – the Committee provided a number of comments and further detail on the importance of pollinators was added to the Action Plan at the suggestion of the Committee.

- (iv) Marr Area Plan 2021-2023 ([25 May 2021](#)) – the Committee considered and approved the Area Plan and highlighted several areas to be raised by the Area Manager with relevant services.
- (v) Gartly School Options Appraisal ([15 June 2021](#)) – the Committee recommended to the Education and Children’s Services Committee that that the process of determining the school’s future should be parent led; that consultation, involvement and engagement with local families was of paramount importance; highlighted the importance of a small community having access to a local school serving the community; and, by a majority, were in favour of Gartly School being reinstated. The Education and Children’s Services Committee noted the comments from the Area Committee when considering the Options Appraisal at its meeting on [26 August 2021](#).
- (vi) Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategies and Plan for the North East Local Plan District ([7 September 2021](#)) - the Committee made comments regarding Ballater, Aboyne, Tarland and Finzean to the Head of Roads, Landscape and Waste Services to inform Aberdeenshire Council’s consultation response.
- (vii) Ballater Flood Risk and Options for Minor Improvements Study ([23 November 2021](#)) – the Committee agreed the recommendation for additional flood study work, and, if the study concluded that the situation had deteriorated, to look at a range of options to increase flood resilience particularly for higher frequency events. Having heard from representatives of Ballater Flood Issues Group, the Committee additionally agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Roads and Infrastructure to take forward further actions detailed in the report and that there would be appropriate stakeholder engagement throughout with the Ballater Flood Issues Group.
- (viii) Review Of Planning Delegations – Local Member Notification Process and Representations ([14 December 2021](#)). The Committee provided views on proposed amendments to the Local Member Notification criteria and procedures. Further review was undertaken as a result of Area Committees’ collective feedback.
- (ix) Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Annual Report ([15 February 2022](#)) – the Committee highlighted the impacts of rising living costs and poor digital connectivity in the area and suggested that officers engage with Number One/Banchory and District Initiatives as their food initiatives were seen as a good model.
- (x) Roads, Bridges, Cycling, Walking & Road Safety, Landscape, Coast & Flooding And Harbours Works Programmes 2022-23 ([29 March 2022](#)) – the Committee requested the Service give further consideration in relation to headstone maintenance; accelerating landscaping work at the Gordon Highlanders memorial in Banchory; accelerating wall repairs at

Torphins Cemetery; an improved system or messaging on reporting roads issues outwith Council ownership; and inclusion of the benches opposite Banchory Town Hall in street furniture repairs.

3.5 Informal Scrutiny

In addition, the Committee has undertaken informal scrutiny including informal performance reporting sessions with each Directorate, and sessions relating to the Surplus Property Policy, Deeside Health Services, Community Learning and Development, Storm Impacts, and Live Life Aberdeenshire Facilities. There were 18 informal sessions held over the year.

3.6 Partner Organisations

- 3.6.1 In the past year, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has reported formally to Committee quarterly. Police Scotland has not been in a position to provide a formal report to Committee and has continued to report to Committee informally. No performance information was provided from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in the last financial year
- 3.6.2 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.

Programme of Future Activity

- 3.7 The proposed programme of activity for 2022/23 forms Appendix 1. This focuses on the performance reporting schedule. The Committee will also receive reports on policy development/review, strategies and plans.
- 3.8 As Elected Members are at the start of their terms and still undergoing a programme of induction and familiarisation with Council services and policies, no specific areas where improvements could be made have been identified for the Committee to focus on at this time. The Committee may highlight particular issues to explore further in the course of its business throughout the year.
- 3.9 In addition to formal scrutiny, the Committee's induction and ongoing seminar programme provides opportunities for Members to identify areas where improvements could be made. The Area induction/seminar programme to date is outlined in Appendix 1. Following initial induction sessions, Members identified areas to be covered in more detail including broadband/digital engagement; emergency planning and resilience; and tackling poverty and inequalities.

4 Council Priorities, Implications, and Risk

4.1 The following priorities are relevant to this report:

<i>Pillar</i>	<i>Priority</i>
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.

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations 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 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken.

4.4 There are no risks associated with this report at a Corporate or Strategic Level

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. Any comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and 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 – to receive and review the annual report of activity in accordance with the Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire Guidance.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Janelle Clark, Marr Area Manager and Kirsty Macleod, Area Committee Officer (Marr)
Date: 20 July 2022

List of Appendices – Appendix 1 – Programme of Scrutiny Activity

Appendix 1

Programme of Scrutiny Activity, 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Performance Reports	
21 June 2022	Marr Area Plan – Progress on Projects/Actions
	Business Services Performance
	Education and Children’s Services Performance
	Environment and Infrastructure Services Performance
	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance
20 September 2022	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance
15 November 2022	Marr Area Plan – Progress on Projects/Actions
	Business Services Performance
	Education and Children’s Services Performance
	Environment and Infrastructure Services Performance

Policy Reviews (policies expected to be reviewed in the 2022/23 financial year)	
<i>Directorate</i>	<i>Policy</i>
Environment and Infrastructure Services	Waste Collection Policy (tbc)
	Tree and Planting on the Roads Boundary Policy
	Local Transport Strategy
Business Services	Housing Allocation Policy
	Non-residential Charging Policy
	Corporate Asset Management Plan
	Community Asset Transfer Policy

Area Induction and Seminar Programme	
17 May 2022	Area Committee; Planning Process
24 May 2022	Marr’s Communities
7 & 14 June 2022	Networking with Council Services and Community Planning Partners
28 June 2022	Aberdeenshire-wide Autism Strategy for Adults, Young Persons and Children
23 August 2022	Informal Performance Sessions with Business Services, Education and Children’s Services; and Environment and Infrastructure Services
6 September 2022	Police Scotland
	Tackling Poverty and Inequalities
	Digital Engagement
13 September 2022	Emergency Planning and Resilience
	Cairngorms National Park
21 February 2023	Informal Performance Session with Business Services
28 February 2023	Informal Performance Sessions with Education and Children’s Services and Environment and Infrastructure Services.