

Committee minute



## **Strathclyde Partnership for Transport**

### **Minute of the Audit & Standards Committee**

**17 February 2023**

held in person at 131 St Vincent Street and via Video Conference

**contact:**

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## **Minute of the meeting of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's Audit and Standards Committee held in person at 131 St Vincent Street and via Video Conference\* on 17 February 2023**

<b>Present</b>	Councillors Donald Reid (Chair), Malcolm Mitchell* (from Agenda Item 4), William Sinclair*, Duncan Townson* and appointed members Jenna Dickson*, Ed McGrachan* and Andrew Walters*.
<b>Attending</b>	Valerie Davidson, Chief Executive; Neil Wylie, Director of Finance & Corporate Support; Iain McNicol, Audit & Assurance Manager; Stuart Paul, Chief Accountant; Gordon Dickson, Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery; Karen O'Donnell, Schools Agency Services & Compliance Manager; Jim Griffin, Senior Solicitor; and Fiona Mitchell-Knight, David Jamieson and Jack Kerr of Audit Scotland.

The Partnership agreed at its meeting of 12 March 2021, following consideration of Standing Order No 14, for the recording of Committee and Partnership meetings, and that such recordings would be made available together with the minute of meetings.

### **Chair's Remarks**

The Chair welcomed Ms Mitchell-Knight, Mr Jamieson and Mr Kerr of Audit Scotland to the meeting and members introduced themselves for the benefit of the new external auditors.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Alex Allison, William Lennox, Christy Mearns and Lawrence O'Neill.

#### **2. Declaration of interest in terms of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000**

The Committee noted there were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minute of previous meeting**

[Click here to view the minute](#)

The minute of the meeting of 25 November 2022, having been considered and approved at the Partnership meeting on 16 December 2022 as a correct record, was duly noted.

#### **4. External Audit Plan 2022/2023**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report of 26 January 2023 (issued) by the Director of Finance & Corporate Support advising the Committee of the External Audit Plan for 2022/2023 received from Audit Scotland, SPT's newly appointed external auditors.

After hearing from Ms Mitchell-Knight, Mr Wylie, Mr Kerr and Mr McNicol in response to members' questions, particularly on the importance of timeous reports from external audit, the Committee welcomed the details of the External Audit Plan for 2022/2023 from Audit Scotland and noted the intention was not to issue an interim audit report at this stage.

#### **5. Corporate Risk Register update**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report of 24 January 2023 (issued) by the Chief Executive updating the Committee on the Corporate Risk Register and mitigations to minimise risk.

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After hearing Mr McNicol and Mr Wylie explain that the Risk Register is reviewed by the leadership team every 4 weeks, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the updated Corporate Risk Register.

## 6. Assurance framework update

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive providing the Committee with an update report on the assurance framework within SPT from internal and external sources, recommending the Committee note the current position.

After hearing from Mr McNicol, Mrs Davidson and Mr Wylie in response to members' questions, specifically concerning the quality assurance of third-party reviews, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the assurance framework map as at January 2023.

## 7. Local Code of Corporate Governance update

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive updating the Committee on the arrangements for the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023 and the Local Code of Corporate Governance used to inform this statement.

After hearing from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the arrangements for the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023, the summary of documents supporting the Local Code of Corporate Governance and the action plan for 2023/2024 at Appendix 1 of the report.

## 8. Mainstream Home to School Transport – Update

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2 February 2023 by the Chief Executive updating the Committee in relation to the Mainstream Home to School Transport review as detailed in previous reports to the Operations Committee, together with more detail on specific recommendations.

After extensive discussion, particularly relating to:

- (i) whether opportunities existed for further saving costs if standardisation of agreements and contracts was implemented;
- (ii) increased risks that potentially could arise if councils change school transport policies and entitlement criteria;
- (iii) whether the risk of operators behavior could be entirely eliminated;

and after hearing from Mr Dickson that market conditions remain difficult and challenging, the Committee noted the findings identified in the report as the key themes within SPT's control to improve the process of procuring an extensive number of contracts.

Thereafter, the Committee noted that Mr Dickson would update on progress at a future meeting.

## 9. Core financial system review of creditor payments and administration

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[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a core financial system review of creditor payments and administration which is included in the Internal Audit plan 2022/2023.

After hearing from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Audit & Assurance Manager submit a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendation to the Committee in approximately six months.

#### **10. Regularity audit of bus station facilities administration**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a regularity audit of bus station facilities administration which is included in the Internal Audit plan 2022/2023.

After hearing from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### **11. Regularity audit of mobile digital equipment**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a regularity audit of mobile digital equipment which is included in the Internal Audit plan 2022/2023.

After hearing from Mr McNicol and Mr Wylie who informed the Committee that during the enhanced activity to prepare for homeworking, not all processes were followed to the end, but confirmed there had been no loss of equipment, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Audit & Assurance Manager submit a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations to the Committee in approximately six months.

#### **12. Audit and Standards Committee work plan 2023/2024**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive providing the Committee with a provisional work plan for the 2023/2024 financial year.

After hearing Mrs Davidson explain that the Committee Plan could and should be changed to reflect work requested by the members, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the work plan for 2023/2024.

#### **13. Internal Audit Plan 2023/2024**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 January 2023 by the Chief Executive seeking Committee approval for the Internal Audit plan 2023/2024.

After hearing from Mr McNicol, the Committee considered and approved the Internal Audit plan 2023/2024.

#### **14. Audit Scotland report: Local Government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2021/2022**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12 January 2023 by the Chief Executive advising the Committee on the issue of an Audit Scotland report titled 'Local Government in

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Scotland: Financial bulletin 2021/2022' and outlining the key messages and implications for SPT contained therein.

After hearing from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the Audit Scotland report titled 'Local Government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2021/2022'.

**15. Members and Directors Expenses 2022/2023**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 26 January 2023 by the Director of Finance & Corporate Support advising the Committee of members and directors expenses to 14 January 2023.

After hearing from Mr Paul, the Committee noted the details of members and directors expenses to 14 January 2023.

**16. Cyber Scotland Week 27 February – 5 March 2023**

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a paper (issued) advising the Committee of an SPT intranet article relating to Cyber Scotland Week 27 February – 5 March 2023.

After hearing from Mr McNicol and Mr Wylie in response to members' questions, the Committee noted the intranet article, that SPT deliver cyber security exercises throughout the year and the invite for members to attend Cyber Security training on 8 March 2023.

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