

Committee minute



Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Minute of the Audit & Standards Committee

26 November 2021

held by video conference and at 131 St Vincent Street, Glasgow

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Minute of the meeting of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's Audit and Standards Committee held by video conference and at 131 St Vincent Street, Glasgow on 26 November 2021

- Present** Councillors Marie McGurk (Chair), Richard Bell, Ian Cochrane, Jim Finn and David Shearer and appointed members Ed McGrachan (from Agenda Item 4) and George Hazel (from Agenda Item 4).
- Attending** Valerie Davidson, Acting Chief Executive; Neil Wylie, Director of Finance; Iain McNicol, Audit & Assurance Manager; Stuart Paul, Chief Accountant and Karen Jones of Azets (External Auditors).

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.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from appointed member Jim McNally.

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 27 August 2021, having been considered at the Partnership meeting of 17 September 2021, was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. Review of recent press statements regarding SPT

[Click here to view the report](#)

Following initial consideration at the previous meeting on 27 August 2021 [Click here to view the minute](#) a joint report of 27 August 2021 by the Director of Finance and the Audit & Assurance Manager providing the Committee with the outcome of an investigation into the substance, or otherwise, of the recent statements made in the press regarding the management of SPT business activities which were contained within articles on the conduct of the former Chief Executive was considered further.

Extensive discussion specifically relating to

- (i) whether the processes for management of a senior role were robust and fit for purpose;
- (ii) the process for Board members to raise concerns about either the conduct or performance of a senior role; and
- (iii) Hearing members' views relating to register of interests, and specifically what is acceptable for senior roles

was heard, and Mrs Davidson and My Wylie in response confirmed that:

- (a) immediate steps had been taken with regards to Chief Officer Terms & Conditions including reference to a disciplinary and performance framework;
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- (b) revised arrangements, including suitable training for Board members with regard to the role they play in maintaining robust governance were currently being assessed; and
- (c) consideration of the issues identified had been considered as part of the process for the recruitment of a Chief Executive.

Thereafter and having heard the extensive views expressed, the Chair thanked officers for the report and the Committee noted the assurances provided.

5. Corporate Risk Register update

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive updating the Committee on the Corporate Risk Register and mitigations to minimise risk.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee:

- (i) noted the contents of the report; and
- (ii) agreed to consider presentational changes to the Risk Register document.

6. Counter Fraud Strategy update

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 5 October 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive asking members to approve the updated Counter Fraud Strategy.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee approved the updated Counter Fraud Strategy.

7. Core financial system review of procurement cards

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 5 October 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a core financial system review of procurement cards. This engagement was included in the annual Internal Audit plan 2021/2022.

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

8 Value for money study of electronic signatures

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 5 October 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a value for money study relating to the use of electronic signatures. This engagement was included in the annual Internal Audit plan 2021/2022.

After having heard from Mr McNicol and Mrs Davidson in response to members' questions, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Audit & Assurance Manager submits a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations to a meeting in approximately six months.

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9. Regularity audit of recruitment administration

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a regularity audit of recruitment administration. This engagement was included in the annual Internal Audit plan 2021/2022.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Audit & Assurance Manager submits a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations to a meeting in approximately six months.

10. Regularity audit of the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties report 2020/2021

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 2 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the findings of a regularity audit of the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties report for 2020/2021. This engagement is included in the annual Internal Audit plan for 2021/2022.

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

11. Engagement follow-up performance September to November 2021

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the performance and implementation rate of recommendations from follow-up engagements undertaken between September to November 2021. Planned resource is included in the annual Internal Audit plan 2021/2022 for follow-up reviews.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the implementation rate of the recommendations from assurance engagements previously reported to the committee.

12. Internal Audit plan 2021/2022 – mid-year progress report

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive asking the Committee to note the progress made to date in achieving the Internal Audit plan and performance objectives for 2021/2022.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the note the contents of the report and the progress made to date in achieving the Internal Audit plan for 2021/2022.

13. Audit Scotland report: Tracking the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's public finances

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 5 October 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the issue of an Audit Scotland report titled 'Tracking the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's public finances' and the key messages and implications for SPT contained therein.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the Audit Scotland report titled 'Tracking the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's public finances'.

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14 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) cyber-attack

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 16 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee of a report relating to the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) cyber-attack and the key messages for SPT contained therein.

After having heard from Mr McNicol and Mr Wylie in response to members' questions, and having heard from Cllr Bell recommending the report amendment should be amended to provide clarity that management were reviewing lessons learned, the Committee:

- (i) agreed that the report be amended as requested; and
- (ii) noted the contents of the report and SPT's commitment to the highest standard of cyber security arrangements where possible.

15 Audit Scotland report: Auditing Climate Change

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive advising the Committee on the issue of an Audit Scotland report titled 'Auditing Climate change' and the key messages and implications for SPT contained therein.

After having heard from Mr McNicol, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the Audit Scotland report titled 'Auditing Climate Change'.

16 Public reporting complaints statistics Q2 2021/2022

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 16 November 2021 by the Acting Chief Executive providing the Committee with the complaints statistics for Quarter 2 of 2021/2022, noting that the detail was also presented to the Operations Committee at its meeting of 5 November 2021.

After having heard from Mrs Davidson who highlighted that a business improvement review relating to the complaints process was currently underway, and in response to members' questions, the Committee noted the level of complaints received, in the context of the volume of service provided and the complaints response statistics.

17 Members and Directors expenses

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10 November 2021 by the Director of Finance advising the Committee of members and directors expenses to 23 October 2021.

Cllr Finn requested presentational changes to the list of members expenses document. After having heard from Mrs Davidson, the Committee noted the details of members and directors expenses to 23 October 2021.
