

**2 September 2021 at 1 pm.**

A Remote Meeting of the **AUDIT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**PRESENT**

Councillor Watson, Convener; Councillor Stevenson, Vice-Convener; Councillors Burrows, Carragher, Douglas, Graham, T. Johnston, Loughran and Alan Valentine.

**CHAIR**

Councillor Watson (Convener) presided.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

The Head of Business Solutions; Head of Financial Solutions; Audit and Risk Manager; Business Strategy Manager; Strategy and Performance Manager, and Democratic Services Manager.

**ALSO PRESENT**

F Carney (Accountant) and A Craik (Senior Audit Manager), Audit Scotland.

**APOLOGY**

Councillor Hume.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN TERMS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE ETC. (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000**

1. There were no declarations of interest.

**P075.1: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK - ANNUAL REVIEW AND REFRESH**

2. There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Solutions (1) advising that the Council's Local Code of Governance is set out in the Strategic Governance Framework, which had been approved by the Panel in February 2020 and brings together the principles of good governance with legislative requirements and management processes by which the Council is directed and controlled; (2) indicating that, along with other inter-related corporate frameworks, the Strategic Governance Framework is key to assessing the success of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and monitoring delivery of the Programme of Work; (3) explaining that, to ensure that these frameworks remain in line with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work, they are each on an annual review and refresh programme; (4) explaining that, following conclusion of the annual review process, this report provides the Panel with an overview of the refreshed Strategic Governance Framework, together with the updated review programme, to ensure that the Council's governance arrangements continue to effectively support The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work, and (5) attaching, as an Appendix to the report, the Strategic Governance Framework, which included in Appendix A – 7 principles and 21 sub-principles from the national framework and in Appendix B – the Council's local Code of Governance review programme.

Officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel following upon which the Panel agreed:-

- (1) that the contents of the report and accompanying Appendix be noted;

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- (2) that the work to review and refresh the Strategic Governance Framework, and to ensure that each of the elements and mechanisms listed therein were up to date, on a review programme to be updated at an appropriate interval, and reported to the relevant committee, be noted;
- (3) that the refreshed Strategic Governance Framework be approved;
- (4) that the role of the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in respect of the Strategic Governance Framework in terms of providing independent assurance to the Council and those charged with governance on the adequacy of the Council's Risk Management Framework and Internal Control Environment be noted, and
- (5) that the next steps be noted.

### **DRAFT AND AUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2021**

3. There was submitted a report by the Head of Financial Solutions (1) informing the Panel that the unaudited accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021 had now been completed; (2) highlighting the key aspects involved in the preparation process for the unaudited accounts; (3) reporting that the draft accounts had been submitted to External Audit, and (4) attaching, as an appendix to the report, the unaudited annual accounts 2020/21.

E Kemp answered questions from the Panel following upon which the Panel agreed:-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted, and
- (2) that the submission of the unaudited accounts to External Audit by 30 June 2021 be noted.