

ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

AUDIT COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING, 7 DECEMBER, 2022

Audit Committee Members:

Ms A Anderson (Chair), Councillor G Reynolds (Vice Chair),
Ms J Duncan, Mr D Hekelaar, Ms I Kirk and Councillor G Lang.

Officers:

Ms P Milliken, Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Mr C Smith, Chief Finance and Business Officer, Mr J Dale, Chief Internal Auditor, and Mr N David, Senior Committee Officer.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare. No interests were declared.

2. STATEMENT ON EQUALITIES

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Audit Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010:-

1. to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF AUDIT COMMITTEE OF 12 OCTOBER, 2022

The Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 12 October, 2022 had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record.

4. REVIEW OF ACTION LOG

There had been circulated a report by the Chief Finance and Business Officer providing an update on actions which had been agreed at the meetings on 24 June, 2020 and 12 October, 2022.

The Chief Finance and Business Officer provided information in respect of outstanding actions on:

- Business Continuity Planning by Primary Care providers within the context of Aberdeenshire with Civil Contingencies partners. In this respect it was explained that all Health and Social Care Partnership teams/services were

expected to maintain their own Business Continuity Plans. A business continuity assurance form had been issued to primary care providers who managed services on behalf of the Partnership. The Leads for Dentistry, Optometry and Pharmacy had replied to indicate that these were independent contractors and they were expected to have their own Business Continuity Plans. During inspections they sought assurance that Plans were in place. The Business Continuity process for Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership had been reviewed in order to simplify the templates and Business Continuity Plan. Currently this was being trialled with three teams, namely Community Hospital, Care Home. and Community.

- Internal Audit Report 2301 – Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Governance Arrangements was on the agenda under Priority Areas.
- Winter Planning was on the agenda under Priority Areas; and
- Integration Joint Board Risk Assurance Group Update was on the agenda under Priority Areas.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to note the position in respect of the matters detailed within the report.

5. BUSINESS PLANNER REVIEW

There had been circulated a report dated 25 November, 2022 by the Chief Finance and Business Officer, which provided a forward view of the work plan of the Committee.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and advised that there was sufficient flexibility in the forward workplan to incorporate further items into future agendas and highlighted the reports which had been instructed by the Committee, as well as reports expected to be submitted due to the remit of the Committee. These were detailed in an appendix to the report.

The detailed appendix to the report included items for consideration at the meetings of the Committee in March, July and October 2023.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the current business planner and items for consideration for by the Committee, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) that, going forward, the Chief Finance and Business Officer provide a report to each Integration Joint Board on items of importance discussed at the Audit Committee.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

There had been circulated a report dated 28 November, 2022 by the Chief Internal Auditor which provided an update on Internal Audit's work. Details were provided of

the progress against the approved Internal Audit plans, audit recommendations follow up, and other relevant matters for the Committee to be aware of.

The report reminded Members that Internal Audit's primary role was to provide independent and objective assurance on the Board's risk management, control and governance processes. This required a continuous rolling review and appraisal of the internal controls of the Board, and the Council overall, involving the examination and evaluation of the adequacy of systems of risk management, control and governance, making recommendations for improvement where appropriate. Reports were produced relating to each audit assignment and summaries of these were provided to the Audit Committee.

The full update report was included as an appendix to the report.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to note:-

- (1) the progress of the Internal Audit Plan; and
- (2) the progress that management had made with implementing recommendations agreed in Internal Audit Reports.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

There had been circulated a report dated 28 November, 2022 by the Chief Internal Auditor advising the Committee of the outcome of a completed audit.

The report explained that the results from individual audit activities had not previously been considered by this, or another Committee, with the exception of any outputs relating to audits contained in the Aberdeenshire Council Internal Audit Plan that related to Adult Social care. In such cases, the output would have been considered by the Aberdeenshire Council Audit Committee prior to being considered by this Committee.

The Internal Audit report which had been finalised and agreed with services since the Audit Committee's last meeting was: Internal Audit Report 2206 – Following the Public Pound – September 2022. This was detailed in Appendix A to the report.

To assist the Committee Appendix B detailed Grading of Recommendations.

The Chief Internal Auditor introduced the report and explained that the objective of this audit was to obtain assurance that the grant payments complied with Aberdeenshire Council's policy and procedures, and this included the Following the Public Pound code of practice. He explained that the review provided some assurance that the Health and Social Care Partnership had developed the grant application process and that they had given consideration to aligning the grant use to service priorities.

The Chief Internal Auditor concluded by highlighting that the report had been presented to Aberdeenshire Council's Audit Committee in November 2022 and that Committee had agreed to refer the report to the Council's Communities Committee

with a request that they conduct the Committee Review Process on Internal Audit Report 2206 – Following the Public Pound – September 2022.

During the discussion Members of the Committee expressed uncertainty in terms of the responsibilities and ownership of Internal Audit Reports, such as Internal Audit Report 2206 – Following the Public Pound – September 2022, which were considered by both Aberdeenshire Council's Audit Committee and the Integration Joint Board Audit Committee. The Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership and Chief Finance and Business Officer undertook to report to the next meeting of the Committee to provide clarity on the processes and governance arrangements.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the issues raised within the report and appendices relating to Internal Audit Report 2206 – Following the Public Pound – September 2022; and
- (2) that the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership and Chief Finance and Business Officer report to the next meeting of the Committee to provide clarity on the processes and governance arrangements in relation to Internal Audit Reports which currently fell to be considered by both Aberdeenshire Council's Audit Committee and the Integration Joint Board Audit Committee.

8. NATIONAL CARE SERVICE UPDATE

There had been circulated a report dated 29 November, 2022 by the Chief Finance and Business Officer, which provided an update following the introduction of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill in June 2022.

The report explained that the Bill aimed to reform how social care, social work and community health services were delivered in Scotland. It had been described by the Scottish Government as the most significant reform to public services since the creation of the NHS. Currently, the National Care Service was expected to be implemented by 2026.

In particular the report highlighted that a National Care Service, as currently proposed, would potentially see Integrated Joint Boards replaced by Care Boards, which would take on functions currently managed and run by local authorities and health boards. Further detail on the governance, accountability, membership, number or geographical area of Care Boards was required as was clarity on the impact on health budgets to support the National Care Service and Care Boards.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the update on the National Care Service provided in this report; and
- (2) that an update be provided to the Committee in March 2023 and future meetings.

9. INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD RISK ASSURANCE GROUP UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 12 October, 2022 (Item 8), there had been circulated a report dated 28 November, 2022 by the Chief Finance Officer, which presented the updated Risk Policy and Procedures for review and approval.

The report reminded Members that at the Audit Committee meeting of 30 March, 2022 the Committee agreed to the proposal to establish a Risk Assurance Group, terms of reference and the governance structure of the Risk Assurance Group. The Committee also agreed that an update should be provided at each meeting of the Audit Committee.

The Group had the first meeting on 21 June, 2022 and subsequently on the 12 September, 2022. The minutes of these meetings were attached as appendices. The main areas covered at these meetings had been: Reporting Arrangements; Risk Register Update; and two presentations on risk priority areas of review, namely Fire and Analogue to Digital. The ongoing approach for future meetings would be that 2 officers would provide an update at each meeting regarding areas of medium to high risk items or on an item that had remained on the risk register for a considerable length of time.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) approve the updated and Risk Policy and Procedures as presented ;and
- (2) note the update from Chief Finance and Business Officer on the Risk Assurance Group meeting of 28 November, 2022

10. PRIORITY AREAS: REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 UPDATE; WINTER PLANNING; AND ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP – VERBAL UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

The Committee had under consideration verbal updates on the Priority Areas of the Revenue Budget 2023/24; Update Winter Planning; and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

On the Revenue Budget 2023/24 the Chief Finance and Business Officer explained that work was ongoing with partnership organisations and NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Council in terms of aligning with their revenue budget setting process for 2023/24. A budget workshop for the Integration Joint Board was held November and this provided an update on the current year 2023 in terms of spend and forecast. It also provided information on the reserves that were held at the end of the financial year 2021/22 and carried forward into 2022/23. He concluded by explaining that in terms of budget setting, that would be agreed at the meeting of the Integration Joint Board on 1 March, 2023.

The Chief Officer provided an update on Winter Planning. This included information on the recent workshop and issues relating to the surge plan; very sheltered housing and care homes; discharge coordinating nurses; and responder services.

The Chief Finance and Business Officer provided an update on the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Governance Internal Audit report which was presented to the last meeting of the Committee and it was agreed that the outcome of the consideration of the report by Aberdeenshire Council's Audit committee be reported back to this Committee. The Aberdeenshire Council Audit Committee had referred the report to Council's Communities Committee meeting on 22 December, 2023, to determine whether to conduct the Committee Review Process in respect of service delivery.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to note the updates.

11. UPDATES FROM OTHER AUDIT COMMITTEES

There had been circulated a report dated 29 November, 2022 by the Chief Finance and Business Officer, which provided an update on the recent meetings of the Audit Committees of NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board. It highlighted issues of relevance to Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

The report explained that the Chair had suggested that the scrutiny role of the Audit Committee could be enhanced by a knowledge of relevant issues that were being considered by other local Audit Committees which would then enable Committee Members to be aware of relevant audit issues which have implications for Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

The report highlighted the following issues, which the Committee discussed:

- From NHS Grampian Audit Committee - Service Redesign Audit; Dr Gray's Hospital – PPE Management Review; and Patient Private Funds Abstract of Receipts and Payments.
- From Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board Audit Committee – Care Management System Implementation.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the relevant items that had been considered by other local Audit Committees and the implications for Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

12. REPORT TO THE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

The Committee agreed to re-introduce the submission of a report by the Chief Finance and Business Officer to meetings of the Integration Joint Board advising on the matters which the Audit Committee had considered.

From this meeting it was **agreed** that the Chief Finance and Business Officer report to the next meeting of the Integration Joint Board in March 2023 on: the Risk Assurance Group Update; Internal Audit Report 2206 – Following the Public Pound – September 2022; and the discussion on clarity on the processes and governance arrangements in relation to Internal Audit Reports which currently fell to be considered by both Aberdeenshire Council's Audit Committee and the Integration Joint Board Audit Committee.