

**SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL**

**Unconfirmed minutes of the public part of the meeting of the Scottish Social Services Council held on Thursday 25 August 2022 at 10:00am in Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY and by Teams meeting.**

**Present:** Sandra Campbell, Convener  
Theresa Allison, Council Member (online)  
Professor Alan Baird, Council Member  
Julie Grace, Council Member (online)  
Lynne Huckerby, Council Member  
Rona King, Council Member  
Linda Lennie, Council Member (online)  
Peter Murray, Council Member  
Russell Pettigrew, Council Member

**In attendance:** Maree Allison, Acting Chief Executive  
Lynn Murray, Interim Director of Finance and Resources  
Laura Shepherd, Director of Strategy and Performance (online)  
Chris Weir, Acting Director of Regulation  
Anne Garness, Head of Legal and Corporate Governance  
Audrey Wallace, Corporate Governance Coordinator

**Observing:** The meeting was live streamed

**6. Minutes of the previous meeting**

6.1 The minutes of the meeting of 26 May 2022 were approved as a correct record.

**7. Matters arising**

**7.1 Calendar of business - policies**

7.1.1 Lynn Murray advised Members that, following comments made regarding inaccuracies on the policy document attached to the calendar of business, work has been carried out on this and all information regarding Council-approved policies is now updated.

**8. Convener's report**

8.1 Sandra Campbell presented report 28/2022 which summarised her activities as Convener since the last scheduled Council meeting in May 2022. The Convener also confirmed that four Members, Julie Grace, Lynn Huckerby, Rona King and Peter Murray had received their offers of reappointment from Scottish Government, which would take effect from 1 September 2022.

- 8.2 Sandra Campbell also confirmed the appointment of the new Chair of the Care Inspectorate, Doug Moodie, who would take up his appointment as of 1 September 2022. She planned to meet with Mr Moodie once he was in post.
- 8.3 Sandra Campbell then led Council Members' thanks and gave well wishes to Russell Pettigrew who was attending his last meeting of the Council before his term of offices expires at the end of August. She advised that the Scottish Government would not commence advertising the vacancy until early in 2023. Members strongly felt that this would leave a significant gap in expertise and skills of the Council and that the Convener should write to Scottish Government advising of their dissatisfaction.
- 8.4 The Council
1. noted the summary of the key issues and activities covered in the report
  2. noted the appointment of Doug Moodie to the position of Chair of the Care Inspectorate
  3. thanked Council Member, Russell Pettigrew for his service during his term in office
  4. requested the Convener to write to Scottish Government expressing dissatisfaction at the delay in starting the process to fill the vacant position being left by the retirement of Russell Pettigrew.

## **9. Chief Executive's report**

- 9.1 Maree Allison presented report 29/2022 which detailed the SSSC's key performance against strategic priorities and the work of the directorates.
- 9.2 The following areas were highlighted and discussed:
- Maree Allison confirmed that Laura Lamb had reported positive feedback from the sector about how the Code of Practise supports good practice. She had received a number of invitations to speak to the sector about the review.
  - Maree Allison highlighted to Members that Scottish Government had decided to delay the consultation on review of fees meantime and this position will be reconsidered later in 2023.
  - It was noted that there were speakers from the sector arranged to participate in the Members' development session in October. Alan Baird suggested a joint meeting between the SSSC and the Care Inspectorate, including a presentation by The Promise oversight group.
  - Members were pleased to see progress in dialogue between Police Scotland's information team and SSSC. Chris Weir and his team were thanked for progressing this.
  - Lynne Huckerby commented favourably on the progress with the video series on Changing Times, Changing Perspectives. She was advised that Laura Lamb would be able to provide further

information on the Scottish Improvement Leaders (ScIL) programmes.

- Peter Murray asked whether officers were aware of any particular impact of impending industrial action on the cost of living crisis that would impact on the work of the organisation. Maree Allison said she would look into that possibility.

9.3 The Council

1. noted the information contained in the report and offered comment.

## **10. Audit and Assurance Committee report to Council**

10.1 Alan Baird presented report 30/2022, a summary of matters discussed at the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 02 August 2022, along with the Assurance Report which had been submitted to the Committee along with the risk register and the draft minutes of the meeting.

10.2 Several key issues were highlighted including:

- the appointment of Deloitte as external auditors
- the delay to the Annual Accounts audit and the current plan and proposed timeline to lay the Annual Report and Accounts before Parliament
- concern regarding the budget and challenges with office accommodation proposals
- a development session for Members on their health and safety responsibilities
- a positive internal audit report on health and safety
- no instances of fraud detected in the organisation during quarter one.

10.3 There was some discussion about the scale and presentation of the graphs within the Assurance Report and officers agreed to look at improving these.

10.4 The Council

1. accepted that the assurance report presents a true and fair view of the SSSCs performance towards achievement of strategic objectives, financial management and risk identification and management. In particular that
  - a. operational performance as measured by strategic key performance indicators give confidence that the SSSC is delivering as forecasted to meet strategic objectives agreed with the Sponsor Department
  - b. financial performance is consistent with forecasted spend and presents no cause for concern relating to year-end outturn of approved budget
  - c. operational delivery and financial expenditure are consistent

2. took sufficient assurances from the internal audit report, the management audit report and internal and external audit action tracker
3. approved the appointment of Theresa Allison as Counter Fraud Champion on an interim basis
4. noted
  - a. the appointment of the external auditors for the 2022/23 audit
  - b. the concern of the Committee over the delay in external auditors carrying out their audit of the annual accounts; and the resulting pressure on staff to adhere to the terms of the Executive Framework in Audit Scotland laying our annual accounts to Parliament
  - c. the concern of the Committee about future funding and budget situation and related risks
  - d. that data is now gathered on benefits realised from various projects run across the organisation
  - e. the positive annual report on procurement.

## **11. Draft Annual Report and Accounts Review**

- 11.1 Lynn Murray presented report 31/2022 with the draft 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts appended. She advised that there were three elements to this item, the request for initial feedback on the draft, a decision on the revised timeline for approval and submission and to note the publication of the Whistleblowing Report.
- 11.2 Members discussed the revised dates for submission of the audited annual accounts to the Audit and Assurance Committee and to Council, as a result of the external auditors being unable to carry out the audit during the usual timescales. Lynn Murray updated that Grant Thornton confirmed that the revised timetable provided sufficient time to finalise the audit and for Audit Scotland to lay the accounts before Parliament before the deadline of 31 December. The Audit and Assurance Committee will review the accounts on 24 November and the Council will meet to consider approval of the accounts on 13 December 2022.
- 11.3 Members considered and made comments on the draft Annual Report and Accounts as presented:
  - CEO foreword – should first paragraph be revised as it mentions only social care and not social work?
  - Page 11 - Laura Shepherd confirmed that the wording of the strategic risks matches that in the wording of the Risk Register at that time. The wording having since changed, in April 2022.
  - Page 21 – officers to review the wording of the evidence stated under outcome 1 from the strategic plan to ensure that the evidence supplied matched the statement.
  - Page 32 – officers to consider expanding the information on developing our people, perhaps mention Investors in People success.
  - Page 33 – query whether a footnote to clarify the reason for the increase in complaints numbers. It was noted that this was a summary only and full information was provided in the quarterly

assurance reports, but also noted that an explanation would be useful as this was a roundup of the full year and a public document.

- Note 5, on page 84 – Lynn Murray agreed to discuss the assumption on salary increases being 1% above the Consumer Price Index (CPI) with the external auditors, as this appeared low in the current climate. Lynn Murray confirmed that the work on the pension assumptions identified by the external auditors last year has been included in the actuarial report this year.

Officers noted the comments and agreed to review the document taking these into account.

11.4 The Council

1. reviewed the draft unaudited 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts at Appendix 1 to the report and provided the above feedback to officers
2. agreed the revised dates proposed, at paragraph 11.2 above, for the Audit and Assurance Committee to endorse or reject the audited Annual Report and Accounts and for Council to endorse or reject the audited Annual Report and approve the audited Accounts
3. noted the timeous publication of the Whistleblowing Report which forms part of the Annual Report.

**12. Business Continuity Policy**

12.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 32/2022 which introduced a new Business Continuity Policy. She advised that a number of operational documents had been updated but until now there was no overarching policy.

12.2 Laura Shepherd confirmed that a working group will be set up to continue to review and revise relevant processes and actions. She also confirmed that the organisation worked to ISO standard.

12.3 Members discussed the terms of the policy and Laura Shepherd acknowledged an error and clarified that the policy is one which will be approved by Council and not Executive Management Team (EMT). She clarified that responsibility for operational incidents lay with the Chief Executive but that significant changes would be reported to Council.

12.4 The Council

1. approved the Business Continuity Policy.

*Lynne Huckerby and Linda Lennie left the meeting. The Members took a short break*

**13. Health and Safety report**

13.1 Lynn Murray presented report 33/2022 along with the 2021/22 Health and Safety annual report and the Corporate Health and Safety Policy. She explained that members of the joint SSSC and CI Health and Safety Committee were considering whether it would be more effective for each organisation to have separate Committees rather than a joint

Committee. Any recommendation from the group will be submitted to EMT and reported to Council within the Chief Executive's report.

- 13.2 Discussion turned to health and safety training and Lynn Murray confirmed that this formed part of induction training for new staff and is included in the Learning Management System, which was being launched this week. Managers had additional modules to complete.
- 13.3 Health and safety training was being arranged for Council Members and it was hoped that this will be included in the development session scheduled for 13 October.
- 13.4 The Council
1. endorsed the Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22
  2. approved the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

#### **14. People Management Policies**

- 14.1 Lynn Murray presented report 34/2022 which sought approval for the Family Friendly Policy and the Agile Working Policy which were appended to the report. She confirmed that following Members' comments, changes had been made to the Agile Working Policy and it had been reviewed by the short-term working group for people management policies that included Council Members. She added that in the Family Friendly Policy there are cost implications in relation to the enhanced shared parental leave and other allowances. This cost couldn't be accurately costed as it would depend on the number of employees applying for the leave. The enhanced allowance was included in the policy following benchmarking which identified that the SSSC was less generous than other organisations. It was also noted that this was an area included by the trade union as part of their pay claim last year and we had agreed to carry it forward into 2022/23. Members noted that any cost to the enhancement would be managed through the current departmental budgets.
- 14.2 Members discussed the changes to the Agile Working Policy and Rona King confirmed that the working group had reviewed the revised policy and the members of the group were content with the revised edition. Lynn Murray confirmed that the Partnership Forum is consulted on the policies and its suggestions taken into consideration by officers.
- 14.3 The Council
1. approved the Family Friendly Policy
  2. approved the Agile Working Policy.

#### **15. People Strategy delivery plan: progress update**

- 15.1 Lynn Murray presented report 35/2022 which gave an update on the progress of the People Strategy delivery plan over its first year September 2021 to August 2022. She advised on the setting up of the People Strategy Board with EMT and other officers and also the process for monitoring the progress of the plan.

15.2 Peter Murray commended the officers involved in this strategy for carrying out this work over the past year.

- 15.3 The Council
1. endorsed the people strategy delivery plan
    - a. progress made in year one
    - b. planned activity in year two.

**16. Digital Development update**

16.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 36/2022 which gave an update on digital development work for the 2021/22 Digital Development Programme, which included nine projects, seven of which have concluded and two carried forward into 2022/23.

16.2 Alan Baird commented favourably on the progress made in this area and recorded his thanks to Andrew Howe, who had been Head of Digital Services over the reporting period, for taking the organisation forward. Theresa Allison concurred and requested that thanks be passed onto the digital team.

16.3 Laura Shepherd confirmed that she would provide information to Council Members on the recent cyber awareness training and testing results. She also advised on the plans to test more frequently, confirming that these currently take place twice yearly and the plans are to move to quarterly testing.

- 16.4 The Council
1. endorsed the progress made to date.

**17. Annual Information Governance report**

17.1 Anne Garness presented report 37/2022 which gave an update on the organisation's performance in complying with its obligations under the data protection, freedom of information and records management legislation. She confirmed that information was also reported quarterly to the Audit and Assurance Committee.

- 17.2 The Council
1. endorsed the organisation's performance in information governance compliance in the 2021/22 financial year.

**18. Annual Review 2021/22 – Shared Services – SSSC and the Care Inspectorate**

18.1 Lynn Murray presented report 38/2022 which detailed outcomes from the annual review of SSSC and Care Inspectorate (CI) shared services. She advised that the user survey results were much more positive than the previous survey in 2020 and that both organisations responded similarly. She also advised on the various joint meetings that are held monthly, quarterly and annually to review the service. This process

included an annual meeting held in May, including the Chief Executives of both organisations, Convener of the SSSC and Chair of the CI and senior officers from both organisations responsible for delivery of the shared service.

- 18.2 Lynn Murray commented on the shared services performance plan at Appendix 1 to the report advising on the future work planned for the areas of payroll system and estates, both of which were in the red category.
- 18.3 Members and officers acknowledged the work carried out in improving the performance of shared services.
- 18.4 The Council
  - 1. endorsed the 2021/22 annual review of shared services.

**19. Council Action Record**

- 19.1 The Council considered and approved the Council action record and agreed that completed actions C3 2022/23 and C5 2022/23 be archived and filed for future reference.

**20. Date and time of next meeting**

- 20.1 The date of the next Council meeting will be Thursday 24 November 2022 and there will be a further meeting on 13 December 2022 for endorsement of the Annual Report and approval of the Accounts.

**Council 25 August 2022**  
**Start time: 10am**  
**Finish time: 2:20pm**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sandra Campbell**  
**Convener**