



Stephen Brown (Chief Officer)
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IJB Performance and Audit Committee

Wednesday, 25 September 2024, 10:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.

Minute

Present

- David Campbell, Non-Executive Director, NHS Orkney (Proxy) (via Microsoft Teams).
- Joanna Kenny, Non-Executive Director, NHS Orkney.
- Councillor Jean Stevenson, Orkney Islands Council.
- Councillor Lindsay Hall, Orkney Islands Council.

Also Present

- Councillor Rachael King, Chair, Integration Joint Board, who had been invited for Items 5 and 6.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer, Orkney Islands Council.

In Attendance

Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership:

- Stephen Brown, Chief Officer, Integration Joint Board (via Microsoft Teams).
- Taiye Sanwo, Interim Chief Finance Officer (via Microsoft Teams).
- Lynda Bradford, Head of Health and Community Care (via Microsoft Teams).
- John Daniels, Head of Primary Care Services.
- Darren Morrow, Head of Children, Families and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer (via Microsoft Teams).
- Shaun Hourston-Wells, Acting Strategic Planning Lead.

Orkney Islands Council:

- Andrew Paterson, Chief Internal Auditor.
- Georgette Herd, Solicitor.
- Kirsty Groundwater, Communications Team Leader.

NHS Orkney

- Anna Lamont, Executive Medical Director.

Azets:

- David Eardley, Partner.

KPMG:

- Michael Wilkie, Director (via Microsoft Teams).
- Taimoor Alam, Audit Manager (via Microsoft Teams).

Chair

Joanna Kenny, Non-Executive Director, NHS Orkney.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been intimated on behalf Morven Gemmill, Rona Gold, Wendy Lycett, Ryan McLaughlin, Laura Skaife-Knight and Samantha Thomas.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated in respect of items of business to be discussed at this meeting.

3. Minute of Previous Meeting

There had been previously circulated the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Performance and Audit Committee held on 26 June 2024 for consideration, checking for accuracy and approval.

The Minute was **approved** as a true record, on the motion of Councillor Jean Stevenson seconded by Councillor Lindsay Hall.

4. Matters Arising

There had been previously circulated the Matters Arising Log from the meeting held on 26 June 2024, for consideration and to enable the Committee to seek assurance on progress, actions due and to consider corrective action, where required.

Stephen Brown updated members regarding the Adoption Allowances and Kinship Payments and confirmed that there had been a delay with presenting the report to the September meeting of the Council's Policy and Resources Committee. He confirmed that it was hoped it would be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee by the end of 2024.

Councillor Rachael King joined the meeting at this point.

5. External Annual Audit Report

There had been previously circulated the External Auditor's Annual Audit Report to those charged with governance of the Orkney Integration Joint Board Annual Accounts, for scrutiny.

Michael Wilkie, Director, KPMG, presented the report, noting that audit work was substantially progressed and further ahead than it had been this time last year. He advised that the audit report was still in draft, with some minor points still ongoing including final review of financial statements and some of the work which had been documented. He did not expect that it would give rise to any further or material change to the financial statements provided for approval but informed members that it should be noted.

Referring members to the Audit Conclusions on Page 5 of the Annual Audit Report, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, he highlighted the following key points:

- It was expected that an Unqualified Opinion on the Financial Statements would be issued.
- There were no specific matters that needed to be reported by exception or bring to the attention of the Committee.

He continued that work had progressed largely as planned and thanked officers for their support. He referred members to the draft Opinion, attached as Appendix 1 to the report circulated and the Orkney Integration Joint Board's Letter of Representation to KPMG, attached as Appendix 2, and confirmed that there were no significant changes to either document from the standard templates or any representations that he would request.

Referring members to the draft Annual Audit Report, attached as Appendix 3, he reminded members that the Audit Strategy had previously been presented to the Committee which set out the materiality level of £2.2m or 3% of gross expenditure, confirming that work was planned and conducted to a lower level of approximately £1.65m.

He continued that there were two significant risks set out in the Audit Strategy being:

- The presumed risk in any audit that management were in a unique position to be able to commit fraud by overriding controls. He confirmed that no such instances had been identified.
- The presumed fraud risk from when income and expenditure was recognised. He confirmed that that risk had been rebutted as there was limited estimation or judgement involved from the IJB perspective in respect of when income and expenditure was being recorded. However, he confirmed it was considered throughout the audit testing and confirmed that no issues of fraudulent income or expenditure recognition in the accounts had been identified.

He continued that the management commentary, remuneration report and the annual governance statement had been reviewed and confirmed that there were no matters to highlight or bring to the attention of the Committee in respect of those documents.

Referring members to page 10 onwards of the draft Annual Audit Report which summarised the consideration and conclusions in respect of the wider dimensions of public audit and included a follow up regarding recommendations made in the prior year, he confirmed:

- That one additional recommendation in the current year had been made regarding the timing of approval of the annual budget and agreement and implementation of recovery plans which may be necessary. He continued that this aligned with the tone of the recommendations made in the prior year around financial and recovery planning.
- That there had been one adjusted audit difference which had been made in the financial statements presented for approval.

The Chair thanked all those involved in getting the external audit to this point and opened the meeting up to members for questions or comments.

Councillor Lindsay Hall referred to the recommendation on page 27 of the report which was rated as red and, as it had been noted that approval of the budget had been delayed and as an updated recovery plan would be presented to the IJB in November 2024, queried whether the rating now be moved to amber rather than red.

Michael Wilkie stated that as it referred to the importance of the recommendation and, in the context of financial planning and action needed, it was his opinion that it did warrant the red priority 1 recommendation.

Davie Campbell welcomed the unqualified opinion and stated that his question reflected on the findings compared to the remit of the Performance and Audit Committee. He continued that he was no longer a regular member of the Performance and Audit Committee, but he saw a disconnect between the findings and potential agenda items. He continued that he had viewed the previous two Performance and Audit Committee agendas, as well as the current agenda, and observed that they all seemed very generic in nature. He continued that he saw a lack of financial sustainability, lack of financial performance, lack of medium-term financial planning and commented that the Committee was missing an opportunity in the financial landscape the IJB found itself in. It further appeared to him that the remit of the Performance and Audit Committee was not being met. He further commented that he had previously raised the issue of financial performance going straight to IJB and not being scrutinised by the Performance and Audit Committee and felt that was a step being missed. He queried what members thoughts were on how to improve the Performance and Audit Committee as he thought that the reality the IJB found itself in and the generic agenda that was in front of everyone, did not match.

Stephen Brown acknowledged that himself and Davie Campbell had had discussions of a similar nature previously when Davie Campbell was Chair and confirmed that it was a discussion that himself and Joanna Kenny, as current Chair, needed to have regarding how reporting was managed in relation to timings. He continued that historically the Integration Joint Board had been the recipient of all financial reports and recovery plans. He agreed that there may be a need for a degree of scrutiny prior to financial performance reports going to the Integration Joint Board and confirmed that himself and the Chair would meet to discuss and plan how to bring forward on the Performance and Audit Committee agendas some of the concerns raised. He was conscious, however, that it was around the timings of the meetings as, for example, the Performance and Audit Committee met after the Integration Joint Board.

Davie Campbell referred to the recommendations made by the external auditors and commented that it was hard to find the progress on the recommendations unless looking at specific report. He urged that the recommendations from 2022/23, plus the recommendation referred to earlier by Councillor Hall, be included in a separate report going forward so members were able to track progress and take assurance that progress was being made.

The Chair agreed with the suggestion and also queried whether the full risk register could be included on the agenda for every meeting. She confirmed that it would be really useful to itemise the ongoing issues raised by external audit. She continued that she was slightly uncomfortable that there were outstanding issues from last year's external audit that were still ongoing and confirmed that she would take the comments raised and discuss them with Stephen Brown.

Councillor Lindsay Hall, in relation to the comments raised by Davie Campbell, commented that he had not been on the Performance and Audit Committee for very long but felt it would be helpful for this Committee and the IJB in general if representatives of the finance departments of each organisation were present so that questions that were pertinent to the individual organisations input into the IJB. He was aware that the Chief Finance Officer was in attendance but felt that representatives from the partner organisations being in attendance would be beneficial.

The Chair agreed with Councillor Lindsay Hall's suggestion and going forward requested that finance representatives from both organisations, as well as the Chief Finance Officer, be invited to Performance and Audit Committee meetings.

Councillor Rachael King, in relation to the comment raised by Councillor Hall, made an observation that there may be a step to take prior to that which was to understand the current role of the Chief Finance Officer. She continued that the IJB was a separate body and there was a separate Chief Finance Officer and if members felt there was a need to have additional finance representation from both partner organisations was there something that was not working in the way that the IJB wanted it to be. She also raised that she would be interested to know if this issue was replicated across the country and whether there was an expectation that Heads of Finance from the partner organisations should attend IJB meetings.

Councillor Lindsay Hall agreed with Councillor Rachael King and further commented that the Chief Finance Officer was able to answer most of the questions raised relating to the Integration Joint Board. He continued that due to the integrated nature of the joint board there were issues that lay outwith the board itself and a full understanding of financial integration was helped or made realistic by having officers attending that were able to answer questions relating to the partner organisations.

The Chair agreed that it was a very interesting point that Councillor Rachael King had raised regarding what happened in the rest of the country.

Regarding what happened elsewhere, Stephen Brown informed members that in many other areas, the Performance and Audit Committees or Integration Joint Boards only had input from the Chief Finance Officer of the IJB. However, there would be occasions when the Section 95 Officer of the Council or the NHS Director of Finance would be invited to meetings for specific purposes, for example in the lead up to budget setting where input would be required from both organisations. He confirmed that there had been some challenges locally, particularly regarding capacity of finance colleagues in NHS Orkney. He agreed that the Section 95 Officer, Orkney Islands Council, and the Director of Finance, NHS Orkney should have a standing invitation to future meetings of the Performance and Audit Committee and confirmed that it would be highlighted to them when their attendance was particularly relevant.

Following a query from Anna Lamont, the Interim Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the independent External Auditors had reviewed the transactions of both parties, presented their findings and would be providing an unqualified opinion of the accounts, which she hoped gave the Performance and Audit Committee assurance regarding the information that had been provided.

Regarding whether finance representation from the NHS and the Council at Performance and Audit Committee meetings was needed, the Interim Chief Finance Officer confirmed that it had been difficult getting information from NHS Orkney. She confirmed that she had access to the Council systems and therefore she could drill down into information in relation to queries that might be raised but she did not have access to the NHS Orkney finance systems and therefore she was dependent on getting information from NHS finance colleagues. She continued that in some IJB meetings where specific questions had been raised, she did not have the information to be able to provide a response. She confirmed that it would be useful if finance representatives from both organisations were present at meetings as clarification on specific matters may be better provided by the officers from the relevant organisation. She further clarified that the Chief Finance Officer was the responsible finance person for the IJB.

Councillor Lindsay Hall comment that he found the presentation of the finances very transparent and very easy to cope with. However, there were times when specific issues needed to be asked of people in the partner organisations and he would like the opportunity to be able to do that.

Councillor Rachael King commented that she presumed from the presentation that there were going to be some tweaks made to the Annual Audit Report prior to finalising. Referring to page 39 Financial Management and Sustainability, she commented that she would be really interested to see how this was progressed. Referring to the agreed management actions she commented that it did recognise the challenge in dealing with 10 years and how robust and useful those 10 year figures would be.

The Performance and Audit Committee thereafter:

Noted:

5.1. That KPMG, as the Orkney IJB External Auditor, had now substantially concluded its audit of the Board's Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

5.2. That KPMG intended to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the annual accounts of Orkney Integration Joint Board, following approval by the Performance and Audit Committee and after completion by the Auditor of finalisation checks and procedures on their file.

5.3. That an unqualified opinion was the Auditor's judgement that the Orkney Integration Joint Board's Annual Accounts were true and fairly presented, without any identified exceptions, and had been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice.

5.4. KPMG's Independent Auditor's Report in respect of the Orkney Integration Joint Board's Annual Accounts for 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the International Standard on Auditing 260.

The Performance and Audit Committee scrutinised:

5.5. The Annual Audit Report prepared for members of the Performance and Audit Committee and the Controller of Audit in respect of the Orkney IJB's Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, attached as Appendix 3 to the report by the Chief Finance Officer.

The Performance and Audit Committee:

Resolved:

5.6. That the Orkney Integration Joint Board's Letter of Representation to KPMG in connection with its audit of the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Chief Finance Officer, be approved.

6. Annual Accounts

There had been previously circulated the final Annual Accounts for financial year 2023/24, for consideration and approval.

The Chief Finance Officer highlighting the following:

- The accounts were required to be signed off by 30 September and published by 31 October.
- The Management Commentary detailed on pages 3 to 25.
- An overview of the significant matters in the accounts, namely reference to the medium-term financial plan, the Strategic Plan, Children's Services, the Workforce Plan, the Blide Trust, Unpaid Carers and the reserve balances.
- The Statement of Responsibilities detailed on pages 26 and 27.
- The Remuneration Report detailed on pages 28 to 30.
- The Annual Governance Statement on pages 31 to 37.
- The Auditor's Report, which was the opinion given on the accounts, detailed on pages 38 to 41.

- The detailed income and expenditure showing the cost of providing services for the year according to accepted accounting practices was shown on page 42, with the total net expenditure being £73.029m. The funding contribution of £73.221m, which had been received from both organisations, included additional funding which was allocated due to an overspend of £5.6m against the original funding. The net balance, after the use of reserves, was £192,000.

Following a query from Councillor Lindsay Hall, Stephen Brown explained that unscheduled care was care that was not planned. For example, medical emergencies where accident and emergency services were involved and health interventions were given on the basis of things that were unplanned. Anna Lamont further explained that scheduled care was anything that resulted from a referral from a GP or a doctor. If there had not been a referral and the patient was presenting themselves to a service, that was unscheduled care.

Following a query from Joanna Kenny regarding the £192,000 detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement section on page 43, the Interim Chief Finance Officer referred to the table on page 49, where the opening balance was £2.5m and due to different allocations during the financial year, the net difference was an increase in the reserve balance of £192,000. She further explained that the £2.7m in the balance sheet was a short-term debtor as the IJB did not hold reserves.

She continued that the Notes to Financial Statements were on pages 44 to 47. Page 48 detailed the transactions of both partners which showed expenditure on services for NHS Orkney being £42.1m, which included unscheduled care, and the expenditure on services for Orkney Islands Council being £30.8m.

Referring to page 49, she explained that this showed details of the balance of earmarked reserves which, as at 1 April 2023, was £2.5m and showed a total balance for reserves as at 31 March 2024 of £2.7m.

Regarding the reserves, Davie Campbell commented that he felt it was a bit of a “red herring” report in terms of it being very reactive in that it went up and down. He wondered whether there was anything that could be done regarding forward planning so that there was more commentary as to why things were happening. He continued that he would like to know, in theory, what was the expected balance in each category. He was aware that it would change month to month but felt that the long-term vision would enable far more scrutiny.

The Chair agreed with Davie Campbell’s comment.

In response to Councillor Lindsay Hall’s query regarding Alcohol and Drugs Prevention detailed on page 49, Stephen Brown confirmed that there was a separate budget for the treatment of those who struggled with addiction. He continued that it was recognised that, due to a number of staffing issues, particularly in relation to the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership support service, as well the strategy being updated, as well as undertaking a joint needs assessment in relation to alcohol and drugs, the Prevention budget funds were not drawn down in 2023/24. He confirmed that there were plans which would be coming forward in terms of how the funding would be best utilised.

Councillor Lindsay Hall further commented that there seemed to be a large increase in the balance from 2023 to 2024, which suggested that more money was being put into Alcohol and Drugs Prevention. He referred to a previous third sector organisation in Orkney which had been very effective in alcohol and drugs prevention which had closed through lack of support.

Stephen Brown stated that that was a point well-made and that the process of commissioning services through the Alcohol and Drug Partnership, which would include prevention and treatment services, was due to commence.

Following a comment from Councillor Rachael King regarding the Ministerial Strategy Group no longer existing, which was referred to on page 34, the Interim Chief Finance Officer confirmed that she would make the change prior to the final version.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer also confirmed that she would check the query raised by Councillor Lindsay Hall regarding whether the names of additional proxy members should also be listed on page 3.

The Performance and Audit Committee thereafter:

Noted:

6.1. That the Orkney Integration Joint Board was required to produce its own statutory accounts in terms of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and Section 106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

6.2. That the minimum reporting requirements contained in the legislation included:

- To consider and approve the audited Annual Accounts for signature no later than 30 September immediately following the financial year to which the accounts relate.
- To publish the signed annual accounts on a website by 31 October.

6.3. The Management Commentary, comprising pages 3 to 25 of the Annual Accounts, attached as Appendix 1 the report by the Chief Finance Officer, which provided an overview of the most significant matters reported in the Annual Accounts for financial year ended 31 March 2024, with the key facts and figures summarised at section 4.3 of the report by the Chief Finance Officer.

The Performance and Audit Committee resolved:

6.4. That, the Annual Accounts for financial year 2023/24, including the Annual Governance Statement, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Chief Finance Officer, be approved.

Councillor Rachael King left the meeting at this point.

7. Strategic Plan Priorities – Progress Report

There had been previously circulated an update on progress made against the priorities of the Strategic Plan, associated milestones and actions, for scrutiny.

Shaun Hourston-Wells, Acting Strategic Planning Lead, presented the third quarterly update where officers advised on progress made against three of the six Strategic Priorities. The three Strategic Priorities included in this update were:

- Community Led Support.
- Early Intervention and Prevention.
- Tackling Inequalities and Disadvantages.

He continued that a tracker had been developed to monitor performance against each Strategic Priority, along with its associated milestones and measures, attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Whilst there were no risk implications arising directly from the report, there was the risk that failure to progress the actions detailed in Appendix 1 could result in the inability to deliver the Strategic Priorities identified in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Following suggestions from Committee members, the tracker now featured a RAG status. In addition, to assist the Committee to identify updates received from officers for this iteration of the tracker, the new commentary was shown in bold script.

Following a query from Councillor Lindsay Hall, Lynda Bradford agreed that it made sense to merge the two milestones under Mental Health, namely “establishing a psychiatric liaison services” and “delivering a reduction in the overall patient impact as a result of staggering the mental health transfer bed”, which were both marked red, as the one depended so much on the other. She further commented it was hoped to get the positions advertised very shortly.

Following a query by Councillor Jean Stevenson relating to the comment on page 2 regarding the collective data from three care homes regarding falls, Lynda Bradford provided assurance that the figures could be skewed due to an individual who had a particular issue or older people who had set themselves on the floor rather than falling or had been assisted to the floor and did not always mean falls. Regarding the query of what were fall rate monitors, she confirmed that this was a device worn by the individual which activated when they fell.

Davie Campbell commented that he struggled to read the appendix. He did not see any target dates or any real progress being measured in a date format. Regarding the bold updates, he felt it was more narrative regarding funding rather than an update. He continued that he found it hard to obtain assurance and commented that he would like to see more dates of when things were going to be complete and if they had not been completed, more commentary as to the reasons why they had not been completed. He continued that he had struggled to scrutinise the report and obtain full assurance.

The Chair commented that this was a top-level look at the priority areas, so Shaun Hourston-Wells was pulling together a look rather than the detail. She further commented that this was the third iteration and thanked Shaun Hourston-Wells for incorporating the comments regarding the layout which had been raised at the previous meeting. Regarding the points Davie Campbell had raised, she queried how Shaun Hourston-Wells felt about adding the lower detail regarding times and mitigations.

Shaun Hourston-Wells commented that the report was based on the action plan which had been approved by the IJB in November 2023. When the Strategic Plan was first launched there were six strategic priorities which did not have specific actions behind them at that time. He continued that working with the Strategic Planning Group, a series of milestones had been developed which were in the delivery tracker with a specific action or actions associated with that milestone. He continued that it had been agreed previously that three of the six priorities would be reported at each meeting. He wondered whether there was some confusion as he had noticed that a lot of the questions were regarding priorities that were not being reported on this quarter. He confirmed that he would revisit how the information was being reported.

Regarding the delivery dates raised by Davie Campbell, all the milestones and the actions were to be delivered within the term of the existing Strategic Plan which was due to end in March 2025. He confirmed that, while it had been attempted to make the tracker as SMART as possible, it was not as SMART as it could be and confirmed when the action plan was developed for the next Strategic Plan, the action plan would have clear delivery dates.

Stephen Brown commented that there were some actions and targets within the report that were very specific but perhaps were not as clear on the tracker as they should be. He confirmed that he took on board the comments and would take a further look as to how the information was presented.

In response to the Chair's query regarding no funding having been identified for the Community Engagement Officer, Shaun Hourston-Wells confirmed that it was a challenge having no-one in post but informed members that there had been other services which had continued to deliver what was Community Led Support in all but name. For example, the Island Wellbeing Project which was led by colleagues from VAO as well as the development trusts in the participating islands.

Councillor Lindsay Hall commented on the inequality and disadvantage faced by some of the outer isles who did not have a Wellbeing Co-ordinator. He further commented that this inequality should be highlighted in the Strategic Plan Delivery Tracker.

Stephen Brown commented that there had been a discussion at the recent meeting of Orkney Islands Council's Policy and Resources Committee regarding the challenge of having Wellbeing Co-ordinators on some of the islands but not others and the commitment of the Integration Joint Board was to support VAO to continue the existing service which was what happened and was why it appeared as blue on the tracker. He continued that it masked another issue which was the inequality that currently existed with some of the islands not benefiting from the service. He confirmed that how to share the resource more effectively would be looked into but recognised that there would be additional costs. He further confirmed that work was ongoing with development trusts, VAO and others regarding taking on some of the financial burden of Wellbeing Co-ordinators.

Regarding the Community Engagement Officer post, for clarity, Stephen Brown confirmed that it was not that the funding stream had not been identified, it had been. However, they had been unable to draw down and begin to spend the budget on a recurring basis due to significant pressures and overspends in the Council's delivered services. Therefore, it was impossible to justify spending the funding stream identified for the Community Engagement Officer, as well as other posts approved by the Integration Joint Board, until some way of recovering the financial position had been achieved.

The Performance and Audit Committee thereafter:

Noted:

7.1. That, in order to ensure an update on progress was provided biannually in respect of each Strategic Priority, an update on three of the six priorities was presented every quarter to the Performance and Audit Committee.

The Performance and Audit Committee scrutinised:

7.2. Progress made against the three Strategic Priorities, as outlined at section 4.3 and detailed in the Strategic Plan Delivery Tracker, attached as Appendix 1 to the report circulated, and obtained assurance that those Priorities were being progressed and delivered.

8. Internal Audit – Internal Communications

There had been previously circulated an Internal Audit on Internal Communications, for scrutiny.

David Eardley highlighted the following:

- Azets worked in partnership with the Council in terms of Internal Audit function.
- This audit was a bedfellow to the Audit Report on External Communications which the Council's Internal Audit had presented to the previous Performance and Audit Committee.
- The audit report was a good example of the sort of issues where the IJB had a responsibility of directing and leading but relied on key partners to deliver the range of activities associated with internal communications.
- Referring to the outcomes and findings of the review it looked like there were more issues than there were. What Azets had tried to do was bear in mind that there would be different personnel responsible for taking forward the actions so in some cases the one overriding point was split into two actions so it could be tracked easier.
- Azets noted the following good practice:
 - That the IJB Strategic Plan outlined its strategic priorities with a strong emphasis on listening to and engaging with communities.
 - In line with its strategic objectives, the IJB had developed a Communication and Engagement Strategy for the period 2023-2025. It included a dedicated section of Staff Engagement and Communication, which highlighted the importance of internal communication within the organisation.
 - NHS Orkney and the Council followed independent protocols and communicated with each other on IJB matters to help ensure internal communications were accurate and timely.
- Areas for improvement were:
 - The Council should review and update the communications and engagement strategy to bring this up to date. This should include ensuring that it supported the IJB communications strategy which was already in place.

- The Council should develop a suite of supporting documents for the internal communications process which helped the achievement of the IJB communications objectives.
- The Council and NHS Orkney should ensure the approval process for internal communication was executed and that those approvals were documented.
- The Council and NHS Orkney should enhance feedback mechanisms, to inform continuous improvement.

Following a query from Davie Campbell, Stephen Brown highlighted that Andrew Paterson, Chief Internal Auditor, had been working with him on how to routinely update the Performance and Audit Committee on all the outstanding actions and recommendations that came from Internal and External Audit reports, including the Internal Audit Internal Communications report, where there would be a tracker showing what had been completed and what was still underway. He further confirmed that if, when scrutinising the outstanding actions and recommendations reports, the Performance and Audit Committee were unsatisfied with the outcome of actions and recommendations, there were ways to raise those issues.

David Eardley underlined that often although they were auditing the IJB it did reach out to the two key partner organisations. He continued that Azets could make a recommendation to the IJB but what they could not do, as in this particular case, was make a recommendation and enforce it to the Council or NHS Orkney.

Following a query from Councillor Jean Stevenson regarding the feedback mechanisms on page 7, Stephen Brown confirmed that ordinarily the answer to whether Council staff received the iMatter survey was yes. However, this year Council employed staff had not completed the iMatter survey for a number of reasons. He confirmed that there were several ways of receiving feedback from Council employed staff, such as the Investors in People survey. He further confirmed that the iMatters survey would resume for all Health and Care staff next year.

The Performance and Audit Committee thereafter scrutinised the findings contained in the internal audit report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Chief Officer, reviewing the procedures and controls around internal communications and engagement for the Integration Joint Board, and obtained assurance that action had been taken or agreed where necessary.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 11 December 2024 at 10:00.

The Performance and Audit Committee thereafter **resolved** that the following meeting dates for 2025 be approved:

- 19 March 2025.
- 18 June 2025.
- 25 September 2025.
- 3 December 2025.

10. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting concluded at 12:20.