

Audit & Scrutiny Committee - Thursday, 26 September 2019 at 2.00 pm

Posted by RM64 - 22 Sep 2019 08:50

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Giffnock,

on Thursday, 26 September 2019 at 2.00 pm.

You can read the Agenda/Papers here -

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=25187&p=0

I would encourage all East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers/Residents to ask their Councillors that all these Committee meetings are Webcast and made available for viewing at their own convenience.

You should not have to sit in a Public Gallery at a date and time of the Councillors choosing.

You should be able to view these committee meetings at a time convenient to you.

In these modern times openness and transparency is the Democracy we should be embracing.

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Re: Audit & Scrutiny Committee - Thursday, 26 September 2019 at 2.00 pm

Posted by RM64 - 24 Sep 2019 15:49

----- Original Message -----

To:

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Sent: Tuesday, 24 Sep, 2019 At 16:57

Subject: Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting on Thursday 26 September 2019

Dear Cllr Miller - Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

I would request that these matters are raised at the Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting on Thursday 26 September 2019.

If this is not possible, I would appreciate if you would let me know how these matters should be raised for investigation by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee or others.

Peter Brett Associates were given at least £49,000.00 of Council Tax Payers money and confirmed, to ERC, that for this £49,000.00 contract, they would produce Reports/Documents in regard to the Visioning & Masterplanning of Eastwood Park.

However, Andrew Cahill, the Director of Environment has said in a reply to Cllr David MacDonald - 'They were not retained as documents.'

I wish to register my great concern over the deletion of reports/documents and request that you investigate the reasons for the deletion of these reports/documents.

I would also register my concern that indeed East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers are not getting value for money for this contract and this should be investigated by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee..

I am concerned that the deletion of these reports/documents goes against the Councils Record Management Policy.

I would appreciate if you and/or the Committee will address and answer my questions and/or points

made below.

Peter Brett Associates were given at least £49,000.00 and confirmed, to ERC, that for this £49,000.00 contract, they would produce the following Reports/Documents in regard to the Visioning & Masterplanning of Eastwood Park -

'28 January 2019 - Start

25 February 2019 - Visioning Report Draft

18 March 2019 - Visioning Report Final

1 April 2019 - Masterplan Draft

22 April 2019 - Masterplan Final

22 April 2019 - Action Plan / Road Map

The outputs for the project will include the following:

- a. A Visioning report for the Campus – which outlines proof on concept – present & future uses, landscaping (hard & soft) and building enhancement potential.
- b. Masterplan layout options for the site & presentation
- c. Action plans/implementation road map/phasing with cost implications
- d. Access and Transport review (including junction modelling & case for 2nd access and improved connections)
- e. Community Benefits - details of how the new buildings will derive benefits for the Council and the wider community.

To enable delivery of above, PBA will utilise their multi-disciplinary team to provide planning, transport and economic inputs to the study.

This will be supplemented by Stallan Brand architects who will bring their significant architectural experience to assist in the design and visualisation of the masterplan options and the preparation of the visioning report and 3D images.'

However, Andrew Cahill, the Director of Environment has said in a reply to Cllr David MacDonald - 'They were not retained as documents.'

This is of extreme concern to East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers.

As said Peter Brett Associates have been paid £49,000.00 for these Reports/Documents and are under contract to provide these reports/documents.

However, Andrew Cahill, the Director of Environment would appear to have got rid of these reports/documents on a whim.

How do ERC Audit and the Audit & Scrutiny Committee ensure East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers are not being defrauded, if they cannot access reports/documents that they have paid £49,000.00 for?

How do ERC Audit and the Audit & Scrutiny Committee ensure East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers are getting value for money if they cannot access reports/documents that they have paid for?

If we cannot access the actual reports/documents produced by Peter Brett Associates, how can we properly Audit and Scrutinise the Director of Environment on the conclusions they have reached?

If we cannot access the actual reports/documents produced by Peter Brett Associates, how do we know the Director of Environment has not made the whole thing up?

Is the Director of Environment not retaining/destroying these Reports/Documents because they don't like what is written in them?

If we cannot access them, how would we ever know?

How can the contract with Peter Brett Associates be audited if all the reports/documents are destroyed?

Why should it not be concluded that the only reason Andrew Cahill, the Director of Environment is taking this course of action is to avoid Freedom of Information disclosure? -

- Receive reports/documents from company/consultants
- Claim a work in progress.
- The documents when finalized for the end report are then destroyed.
- The final report is never finished until the Director of Environment publishes it.

Yes a 'final report' can be produced, but the original documents that are used to compile this 'final report' are still valid and relevant and must be retained for the reasons indicated above.

Please confirm these reports/documents are not the property of Andrew Cahill, the Director of Environment.

Please confirm that these reports/documents should be an asset and used in the future if required, to look at one specific subject(as they have not been copied in their entirety).

Please confirm that it is not convention to delete source documents - they are usually referenced in the final report.

Please confirm that destroying reports/documents has the effect of making the public suspicious as to the motive behind destruction - not in keeping with an open and transparent Council.

These reports/documents should be retained.

There is no reason why these reports/documents should be destroyed.

I would also appreciate that as Chair you also raise -

I am asking that in your position of Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee you establish the current situation regarding documents/reports to be supplied by Peter Brett Associates(PBA) under the £49,000.00 tender/contract for the Eastwood Park Masterplan etc.

It is now 24 September 2019 and it would appear only 1 Document (unfinished) has been produced(but not published).

As you can see from the below Project Plan produced by PBA these Documents/reports were due to be produced before the end of April 2019.

As at the Full Council meeting on 26 June 2019 only 1 Document had been produced and the Director of Environment stated that this was 'in draft form, in the course of completion and is an unfinished document.'

As at 7 August 2019 Gerry Mahon, the Chief Officer, Legal & Procurement stated - ' the document is currently being sense checked and assessed for factual accuracy and consistency' and that it was still in draft form.

It is now nearly 10 months since the start of the project and nearly 7 months since the dates quoted by PBA for the completion of the documents, and only 1 unfinished document has been produced(but not published).

I would appreciate that you ask the Director of Environment to give an urgent update on the current situation regarding the 'masterplan' and the expected Documentation/Reports listed by PBA below -

- Have any of these Documents/Reports been received?

- If so, which ones, and when were they received?

- If not, when will they be received?

- The current position with the 'masterplan' project?

- Why the 7 months delay?

- Current cost of the Project?

- When the project is expected to conclude?

It seems East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers are not getting value for their £49,000.00 spend if PBA have only produced 1 unfinished document in 10 months from from January 2019.

From the revised PBA Project Plan -

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18 March 2019 - Visioning Report Final

1 April 2019 - Masterplan Draft

22 April 2019 - Masterplan Final

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wider community.

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As you will appreciate East Renfrewshire Council tax payers have given at least £49,0000.00 of Council Tax for these promised Documents/reports.

I think it is in their interests and therefore the public interest that after 8 months, you as the Audit & Scrutiny Chair establish the current situation and let Council Tax payers know what is being done for this £49,000.00 spend.

Again, your help is appreciated.

Thanks

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