

**COMMUNITY SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 21st September 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors John Allan (Chair), Ian Douglas, Ann Galbraith, Bill Grant, Hugh Hunter, Elaine Little, Alec Oattes and Philip Saxton.

Also Present: Councillors Douglas Campbell (Portfolio Holder), John McDowall, Nan McFarlane, Bill McIntosh and Margaret Toner.

Attending: H. Garland, Executive Director – Children and Community; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; A. Wilson, Head of HR and Organisational Development; A. Greenwood, Asset Co-ordinator; and D. Knight, Committee Services Officer.

**1. Exclusion of press and public.**

The Panel resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**2. Item for Call-in – Customer Services.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 13th September 2011 (Page 546, paragraph 24) when that Panel, having considered a joint report of 5th September 2011 by the Head of HR and Organisational Development and Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services, had decided

- (1) to note the content of the report and progress to date;
- (2) to approve the following proposals:-
  - (a) to grant authority delegated to the Executive Director – Development and Environment to conclude negotiations and purchase the property for Ayr Customer Service Centre as detailed in the report;
  - (b) the use of Ayr Common Good funds to purchase the property and, in turn, letting the property to the Council;
  - (c) the submission of a proposed workforce structure to a future Leadership Panel in spring 2012; and
  - (d) that the Head to HR and Organisational Development and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services submit progress reports to future meetings of this Panel.

The Panel was advised that the report had been the subject of a call-in (issued) for the following reasons:-

- (i) for explanation and consideration of whether or not independent valuation of property cost range was obtained (paragraph 5.1(1) of the report);

- (ii) from the budgetary provision of £950,000 for the creation of five customer service centres, what are the anticipated completion costs of the Ayr Customer Service Centre (paragraph 5.1(1) of the report);
- (iii) to consider whether the total costs associated with the creation of the Ayr Customer Service Centre represented Best Value; and
- (iv) to ask the Portfolio Holder(s), as a result of consultation, whether the implications of investing in the Ayr Customer Service Centre in the absence of a Business Plan for Ayr Common Good, given the additional capital costs in relation to Ayr Town Hall, Rozelle Estate and the Citadel, have been considered (paragraph 12(1) of the report).

The Head of Legal and Administration advised that the answers to the questions as detailed in the call-in requisition had been tabled. However, it was intended that in future any questions and answers would be circulated prior to the meeting being held.

The Chair invited Councillor McDowall to explain his reasons for the call-in and, thereafter, the Panel heard him enquire in relation to (i) to (iv) above and the Head of HR and Organisational Development and the Asset Co-ordinator responded accordingly.

The Chair then invited the Portfolio Holder to comment on the issues raised and Councillor McDowall to sum up.

Questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to disabled access at Ayr Customer Service Centre, the square footage of accommodation within the Ayr Customer Service Centre, parking issues in the vicinity, the costs from and rental income to the Ayr Common Good Fund, the costs being met from General Services, the refurbishment and adaptations to be carried out within the Customer Service Centres, which staff would be accommodated within these Centres and the relevant Officers responded accordingly and advised that they would respond directly to Elected Members regarding the square footage of accommodation and the provision of parking at the Ayr Customer Service Centre and the rental income to the Ayr Common Good Fund.

Councillor Saxton then moved that the report be referred back to the Leadership Panel for its consideration of the valuation of the property in Ayr and whether this represented Best Value.

Councillor Saxton failed to find a seconder and therefore his Motion fell.

Councillor Saxton requested that his dissent be recorded.

**Decided:** following review, that the decision of the Leadership Panel in respect of this matter be confirmed and implemented.

**Councillor Saxton left the meeting at this point.**

### **3. Minutes of previous meeting.**

**Decided:** to note the Minutes of the meeting of 24th August 2011 (issued).

The meeting ended at 11.10 a.m.