

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
**STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 25th May 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Apology: Councillor John Allan.

Attending: K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; R. MacDonald, Head of Community Development; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; J Cronin, Strategic Service Planning Manager; D. Burns, Policy and Strategy Manager; M. Alexander, Housing Operation's Manager; C. Reynolds, Children's' Services Manager; N. McNeil, Criminal Justice Manager; M. Hastings, Enterprise Manager; C. Gardiner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; A. MacLeod, Performance and Business Manager; N. Hunter, Manager Inspection and Quality Assurance; and A. Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer.

Also Attending: Councillors Douglas Campbell, Stan Fisher, John McDowall, Helen Moonie and Winifred Sloan.

**1. Item for Call-in – Affordable Housing: Council New Build Subsidy.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 17th May 2011 (Page 315, paragraph 2) when that Panel, having considered a report (issued) of 28th March 2011 by the Executive Director – Children and Community, decided

- (1) to agree that the Council submit a bid to the Scottish Government for Council New Build Subsidy by 31st May 2011 based on the proposals outlined in the report; and
- (2) to approve, in principle, the proposed sites for Council New Build as outlined at 4 (4) of the report.

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

- (a) to consider the significance of the proposed sites in relation to the Council's strategic document and Policy H13;
- (b) to explore the accuracy of the proposed level of funding required;
- (c) to consider whether there was a lack of consistency in information to Members in site selection and costs; and
- (d) to further explore the issues raised at paragraph 4 (3) of the report in relation to the HRA Business Plan.

The Chair invited Councillors McDowall and Moonie to explain their reasons for the call-in and, thereafter, the Panel heard them enquire in relation to (a) to (d) above and further comment that they were not opposed to the bid, but that it should be further examined to ensure that it was robust given that this Council was in a competitive bidding process with other Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

Further questions and comments were raised by Councillors McDowall and Moonie in relation to:- why the proposed three sites were not contained in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP); Planning Policies; Landbanking; Council New Build at short notice; feasibility studies; construction costs; lifecycle costs; stock condition surveys; partnerships and other options and the Strategic Service Planning Manager and Policy and Strategy Manager responded accordingly and assured Members that the bid that was being submitted to the Scottish Government would be based on robust information.

Following a discussion, various questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to lifetime houses, variation of sites after the bid was submitted and the flexibility of SHIP and the appropriate Officers responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (i) following review, that the decision of the Leadership Panel in respect of this matter be confirmed and implemented; and
- (ii) to request that the Head of Community Care and Housing issue a briefing note on Site Selection to Members.

**2. Minutes of previous meetings.**

**Decided:** to note the Minutes of the meeting of 27th April 2011 (issued).

**3. Progress Against the Council Corporate Plan to 31st March 2011.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 13th May 2011 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication outlining the progress which had been achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan in relation to the Directorate objectives and tasks which had fallen within this Panel's remit.

The Performance and Change Management Manager referred to the recent workshops attended by Members and invited comment on the content of the Plan.

A full discussion took place and various questions and points of clarification were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the Strategic Objectives and tasks, detailed as follows:-

- was this Council grasping every opportunity to get grants for affordable housing?;
- clarification required on how many Housing Options Assistants does this Council have;
- explanation required on why only 25% progress shown on the review and prioritise housing support provided to help people remain in their tenancy,
- explanation required on the amber status on the Delivery of Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) Plan;
- explanation required on why only 40% progress shown on the review and development of housing management services through the analysis of performance information and customer feedback when the framework was due to be in place by May 2011?;
- explanation required for the arrangements for adaptations to Council v private properties and why there was a delay in agreeing funding for 2011-12?;
- explanation required on why people with 20 year old night storage heaters had been told there were no plans in place for their replacement, yet the Council aspired to achieve compliance of Scottish Housing Quality Standards by 2015;
- explanation required if this Council was obliged to provide a programme of courses and classes for people who have English as a second language and whether the Council received European Funding for this?;

- explanation required as to why it was showing two thirds through the plan for the provision of appropriate experiences, opportunities and support for adult learners but only 50% progress;
- explanation required on the amber status on the range of advice and support services aimed at improving business growth and competitiveness capitalising on export potential and attracting new businesses from target sectors (in relation to learning interventions for low paid/ low skilled workers);
- explanation required as to why this Council was only taking on four apprentices a year;
- explanation required as to how the work for increasing the number of children and young people participating in positive and constructive activities being better co-ordinated within the new directorate arrangements;
- explanation required on why progress for the provision support for delivery of Health and Wellbeing outcomes through the Active Schools programme was shown as 0%;
- explanation required on the technical problems around the use of Glow in Schools (white boards); and the progress being made in relation to self evaluation;
- overview required for ensuring the delivery of appropriate, proportionate and timely interventions in Children's Services, based on Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC);
- update required on the improvement work to Ayr Grammar and the longer term plans for its relocation;
- explanation required on why it was showing two thirds through the plan for the contribution to the future development of the VOICE system for measuring community engagement and promoting the use of the national standards of community engagement but only 20% progress;
- clarification required on why the plan to assist Community Associations to identify sustainable models for the future operation of Community Centres as appropriate showing only 20% progress;
- explanation required on what information was received from partners on the use of performance management information to analyse risk, inform the Child Protection Committee's Business Plan and inform service planning and delivery;
- clarification required on whether in reducing the funding that was previously allocated to developing the Community Safety Misuse Worker initiative had impacted on the service that was being delivered;
- update required on how the Council was delivering the Community Safety Service after restructuring;
- explanation required on why it was showing two thirds through the plan for ensuring commissioned services were informed by research, good practice and identified need but only 25% progress, leaving large numbers of service reviews to be carried out in the final year;
- would be useful to get feedback on the reablement pilot in Girvan;
- clarification required on the production of a joint commissioning strategy and implementation plan for older people;
- explanation required on how the new Community Service Orders were being implemented;
- explanation required on why it was showing two thirds through the plan for ensuring that robust consistent and coherent arrangements were in place to identify, assess, plan support and intervention and review and evaluate services but only 17% progress;
- explanation required on the amber status to develop and implement an Ayrshire Criminal Justice Partnership, what were the concerns and how was it proposed to overcome them;
- explanation required on the amber status on the Review of the South Ayrshire Criminal Justice data system and the development of an action plan to address findings, what were the concerns and how was it proposed to overcome them?;

- clarification required on why progress was shown as 0% on the Review of Licensing Procedures and compliance on a regular basis (to include review of available IT processes); and
- comment – pleased with the success of the Ayr project, but concerned that people involved might burn themselves out – would the Girvan venture remove some of the pressure in Ayr for continued support of the Care and Share Project for people with addiction issues?

The relevant Officers responded accordingly in respect of specific Directorate objectives and tasks.

**Decided:** to note

- (1) the progress achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan as detailed through the updates provided against its Directorate Plans to 31st March 2011;
- (2) that the relevant Officers would respond directly to Members of the Panel on the following issues that had been raised:-
  - (a) whether the Council had sufficient powers to ensure properties were safe and secure;
  - (b) details of the current status of self evaluation process in schools; and
  - (c) details of the information received from partners to inform the Child Protection Committee's Business Plan; and
- (3) that a report on the reablement pilot in Girvan would be submitted to the next meeting of this Panel on 22nd June 2011 for its consideration.

**Vacation of Chair.**

During consideration of the above item Councillor Hunter vacated the chair and left the meeting and thereafter the Chair was taken by Councillor Little.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.