

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 22nd September 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Brian Connolly (Chair), Sandra Goldie, Bill Grant, John Hampton, Mairi Low, Helen Moonie and Mike Peddie.

Apology: Councillor Oattes.

Attending: E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; J. Cronin, Acting Head of Community Development; J. Dunne, HR Manager; H. McLaughlin, Audit Services/Programme Review Manager; T. Baulk, Chief Accounting Officer; A. Macleod, Performance and Business Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; A. Greenwood, Asset Co-ordinator; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administration Officer.

Also Attending: Councillors Bill McIntosh, Robin Reid and Margaret Toner (Portfolio-holders) and Councillors John Allan, Ian Douglas, John McDowall and Tom Slider (Call-ins); Asif Haseeb, Senior Audit Manager and Anne Cairns, Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland.

1. Item for Call-in – Diamond Jubilee 2012.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 13th September 2011 (Page 542, paragraph 13) when that Panel, having considered a report (issued) of 5th September 2011 by the Head of HR and Organisational Development, had decided

- (1) to agree that one additional day's paid leave be granted to all employees to be taken on Tuesday, 5th June 2012, or as a day in lieu of leave for those who were required to work on that day; and
- (2) to note that the bank holiday on Friday, 28th May 2012 would be moved to Monday, 4th June 2012.

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

- (a) provision of a breakdown by Directorate of the wages cost for the additional days leave;
- (b) what were the additional costs relating to the day in lieu and what were these associated with?
- (c) what staff would be expected to work on 5th June 2012?
- (d) what Council run premises would be open to the public on 5th June 2012?

- (e) paragraph 4.4.1. of the report stated that “the contractual arrangements in place for the majority of employees within South Ayrshire lead to a recommendation that an additional days leave with pay should be granted to all employees”. How many employees are in the minority who would not automatically meet the criteria for receiving an additional day’s paid leave? What Options Appraisal was carried out that had led to the recommendation that all employees receive a day’s paid leave, rather than the majority of employees? What saving could be achieved by abiding by the terms and conditions of employees’ contracts?
- (f) How many businesses/organisations which operate from South Ayrshire Council run premises will be affected? What consultation has taken place with these businesses/organisations? If there has been no consultation, why has this not taken place?

The Head of Legal and Administration advised that the answers to the questions as detailed in the call-in requisition and as outlined at (a) to (f) above had been tabled. However, it was hoped that in future any questions and answers would be circulated prior to the meeting being held.

The Chair invited Councillor Slider to explain his reasons for the call-in and, thereafter, the Panel heard Councillor Slider seek clarification on the points outlined at (a) to (f) above in conjunction with the written response provided.

Following a full discussion, various questions and comments were made by Councillor Slider, as well as the Members of the Panel, in relation to:- the associated costs and whether this was an acceptable use of the Council’s funds; valuing staff and providing them with the opportunity to celebrate the occasion; consulting with businesses run from Council premises and affected by this proposal; the effect on contractors and childcare providers; the provision of emergency cover; issues for parents of school children; and the public’s perception of the Council and its employees.

The Chair suggested that the Executive Director – Corporate Services would explore the issues highlighted at (f) above in terms of consulting with local businesses and organisations on this matter and the Executive Director - Corporate Services confirmed that she would explore this issue further.

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

2. Item for Call-in – Corporate Asset Management Plan.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 13th September 2011 (Page 543, paragraph 14) when that Panel, having considered a report (issued) of 2nd September 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment, had decided

- (1) to note the progress being made towards the development of a Corporate Asset Management Plan; and
- (2) to approve the Interim Property Asset Management Plan and the recommendations contained within Table 11 of the Plan and summarised in Section 4.2 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 timescales and the need to align key tasks and reviews to the 2012/13 budget process (Pages 32 and 33, paragraph 5.20.3 of the Asset Management Plan);
- (b) to consider the timescales for recommendations (Page 53, Table 11 of the Asset Management Plan);
- (c) to consider the relationship between agreed for 2011/2012 savings (Review of Community Facilities at £100,000) and the proposals at Page 32, paragraph 5.20.2 of the Asset Management Plan;
- (d) to consider the accuracy of Table 3, Page 12 of the Plan in relation to Buchan Road, Troon; and
- (e) to consider the variance between Appendix 4 (Page 16 of the Interim Asset Management Plan – Appendices), Appendix 2 (Page 27 of the Interim Asset Management Plan – Appendices) and Table 5 (Page 15 of the Interim Asset Management Plan).

The Head of Legal and Administration advised that the answers to the questions as detailed in the call-in requisition and as outlined at (a) to (e) above had been tabled.

The Chair invited Councillor McDowall to explain his reasons for the call-in and, thereafter, the Panel heard Councillor McDowall seek clarification on the points outlined at (a) to (e) above in conjunction with the written response provided.

Following a full discussion, various questions and comments were raised by Councillor McDowall, as well as the Members of the Panel, in relation to:- the requirement to complete the reviews in advance of the budget setting exercise to align projects to capital expenditure as part of the forward planning process; the potential shortfall in funding; a drip feed approach; when would reviews start coming forward; budgetary savings from this process; the proposed Customer Service Centres; full option appraisals for various properties including the iconic buildings; Community Facilities and joint working; the need for a corporate approach; Buchan Road, Troon; the apparent inconsistency with figures relating to school expenditure as a result of aspirations/essential maintenance and whether this could be presented in a clearer format including any associated risks. The Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly and commented that the reporting format would be improved with future reports to the Leadership Panel making reference to the Plan.

Councillors McIntosh and Reid responded to the various issues raised pertaining to the Plan and the budget setting exercise and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services commented on the review process when it was hoped that all reviews would be completed by 31st March 2012.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services commented that she would take forward the request to ensure a corporate approach to asset planning reviews and the Head of Legal and Administration would circulate information raised in relation to Buchan Road, Troon as requested.

Councillor Moonie, seconded by Councillor Goldie, moved that the report be referred back to the Leadership Panel to request that further consideration be given to instructing Officers to bring forward proposals in relation to reviews prior to 31st March 2012 to enable such proposals to be aligned to and integrated into the budget setting exercise for 2012/13.

By way of Amendment, Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Hampton, moved that the Panel uphold the decision of the Leadership Panel.

There was a request that the vote be taken by calling the roll.

The Head of Legal and Administration took the vote by calling the roll as follows:-

Brian Connolly	Amendment
Sandra Goldie	Motion
Bill Grant	Amendment
John Hampton	Amendment
Mairi Low	Amendment
Helen Moonie	Motion
Mike Peddie	Amendment

Five Members voted for the Amendment and two for the Motion. The Amendment was accordingly declared to be carried.

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

3. 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 item 4 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.

4. Item for Call-in – Replacement of Audio Speaker System within Ayr Town Hall.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 13th September 2011 (Page 545, paragraph 17) when that Panel, having considered a report (issued to members only) of 29th August 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment, had decided to agree to the installation of a new Pro Audio speaker system within Ayr Town Hall at a cost of £19,180 to be funded by Ayr Common Good fund capital resources.

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

- (1) as this falls within the £30,000 threshold in Standing Orders, who were the other two companies that quoted and what were the details and cost of other submissions? (it is noted that the lowest tender to specification is proposed);
- (2) why was there no 'key user' consultation in addition to the Portfolio Holder Councillor Reid?; and
- (3) does the said specification include sound and audio links to the Bar/Council Chamber which would be synchronised with wall mounted screens?

The Head of Legal and Administration advised that the answers to the questions as detailed in the call-in requisition and as outlined at (1) to (3) above had been tabled.

The Chair invited Councillor Allan to explain his reasons for the call-in and, thereafter, the Panel heard Councillor Allan seek clarification on the points outlined at (1) to (3) above in conjunction with the written response provided.

Following a full discussion, various questions and comments were made by Councillor Allan, as well as the Members of the Panel, in relation to:- the costs associated with repairing the current system; the specification of the proposed replacement system and how this was compiled, associated costs and the operation of the system; the procurement process; the future use of the Town Hall and whether this level of investment was appropriate; recharging and subsidy issues; and consulting with Town Hall users. The Acting Head of Community Development and the Estates Manager responded accordingly and the Acting Head of Community Development indicated that she would circulate a response for the other issues raised.

Decided: following review, that this matter be referred back to the Leadership Panel inviting Members to endorse a request for an independent acoustic engineer's report to be obtained in respect of the facility together with an evaluation of the current preferred tender to ensure that it met, but did not exceed, the Council's requirements.

At this point, the time being 12noon, the Panel agreed to adjourn for fifteen minutes.

The meeting resumed at 12.15 p.m.

5. Minutes of previous meeting.

Decided: to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 25th August 2011 (issued).

WIDER SCRUTINY PANEL BUSINESS:-

6. Scrutiny Review: Strategic Review of Absence Management.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th September 2011 by the Head of HR and Organisational Development

- (1) advising of the progress to date with the strategic review of absence including the absence statistics for the Council for period 1st April to 31st July 2011; and
- (2) informing
 - (a) that the Maximising Attendance Policy provided a holistic approach to managing attendance and had, at its core, a range of flexible and practical intervention options for managers;
 - (b) that, in addition, a 'Supporting Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace' guidance document for managers and employees had been developed in conjunction with the Trade Unions and would be circulated by the end of September 2011;
 - (c) that HR continued to work closely with managers to encourage an early return to work for employees, particularly where there had been a period of long term absence and advising that this might include adjustments to the normal workplace or a period of alternative employment pending the employee's fitness to return to their own post.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the statistical return and how this information was utilised to inform improvement and reduce absence; an increase in certain trends and reasons for this; the positive overall reduction in figures although certain figures pertaining to the Children and Community Directorate remained high; whether a further breakdown to core figures would provide a clearer insight into specific issues; and teaching and non-teaching staff and the HR Manager responded accordingly and indicated that he would circulate a response for the other issues raised.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services suggested that she would discuss with the Head of HR and Organisational Development ways in which to present core information to future meetings of the Panel and intimated that the Head of HR and Organisational Development was also intending to give a presentation to a future meeting of this Panel.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

7. **Single Outcome Agreement Annual Report.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12th September 2011 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) providing Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the draft Single Outcome Agreement Annual Report for 2010/11;
- (2) informing of the progress being made and that the second year of the Agreement had seen further bedding in of the community planning theme groups and subsequent improved partnership working and informing that further rationalisation of other partnerships had also been undertaken to ensure that the work of groups was aligned to outcomes;
- (3) reporting that Appendix II of the report contained the draft SOA report which provided an overview of performance, highlighted a number of achievements but also identified where improvements could be made;
- (4) advising that the report also contained performance information for the high level indicators and a narrative summary of the progress being made against each national and local outcomes, including actions that had been implemented during the course of the year; and
- (5) indicating that data for a number of indicators, in particular two education related statistics, would be released later in September with the report being updated accordingly and Appendix 1 of the report provided a summary of indicators for which data could not be obtained this year and the reasons for this.

Thereafter, the Chair invited comments and questions from Members of the Panel on each page of the document when the following points were made:-

- an overall observation that the report predominantly described inputs rather than measuring outcomes, noting that as the SOA moved forward, the intention was that it would become more outcome focused, seeking to demonstrate the added value of working in partnership;
- the current position in relation to achieving the target for the refurbishment of retail space - Li2a(1);
- the current position in relation to achieving the target for the percentage of the road network requiring maintenance - Li2a(2);

- further information over the last four years as to what the overall percentage of the road network requiring maintenance been, the corresponding backlog of maintenance, and what of this was due to the adverse winter weather- Li2a(2);
- clarification of the target areas and the numbers with regards to the working-age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance - Li4a(1);
- the challenge of successfully engaging with parents in respect of child obesity rates - LO7 narrative;
- that the Stepping Stones for Girvan model should be replicated across South Ayrshire - LO7 narrative;
- clarification of the figures pertaining to the Child Protection Register and whether these related to the plans for residential care units - Li8a(1);
- the type of accommodation being used to reduce the number of children housed in temporary accommodation and the displacement effect this was having - Li8a(2);
- the length of the pilot for the Integrated Resource Framework and how is it progressing – NO6 narrative;
- whether the closures of wards at Ailsa hospital and the skin care clinic been accommodated / replaced as part of the reshaping care initiative – NO6 narrative;
- whether the figures relate to the rates of hospital admissions or the number of bed days - Li9a(1);
- whether the figures relating to people in receipt of incapacity/SDA benefits was now distorted by the Government changes on how assessments were being undertaken - Li10a(1);
- the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs on the community as a whole, the value of early intervention measures the importance of the collaborative work being pursued by the Alcohol and Drug Partnership - Li11b(1);
- the Community Safety Partnership's main challenge would be to continue to develop and make better use of available resources and the relevance of this statement across all of the Community Planning Partnership – NO9 narrative;
- disappointment that of the 14 targets set by the Partnership, only 4 have been met against LO12;
- clarification of the interpretation of the performance against the number of detected cases of anti-social behaviour and crimes of disorder - Li12b(3);
- the figures for detecting drug related crimes and perceptions concerning this issue - Li12e(1);
- need for care to avoid double counting between the agencies involved - Li12e(1);
- the 2009/10 figure for affordable housing was missing the qualification that 100 of those completed were built as replacement homes for houses demolished in Lochside, Ayr - Li14b(1);
- performance against the primary need defined within the South Ayrshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2010 – LO14 narrative;
- whether monies awarded for the 'empty homes initiative' would be integrated into the work of the Partnership – LO14 narrative; and
- the value of monitoring 'voids' and the associated timescales for turnaround.

The Chair suggested that, in future, a workshop session would be a preferred process to enable Members to work through this document prior to their scrutiny of it at the Panel. The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded that this would be taken on board and also commented that clarification and explanation of the issues raised at this meeting would be attached to the draft Plan for consideration at the next meeting of the Community Planning Board on 5th October 2011 and, thereafter, at the Council meeting on 6th October 2011.

Decided: following consideration of the draft Single Outcome Agreement Annual Report for 2010/11, that this report, including the issues raised at the meeting today, would be considered by the Community Planning Board and the Council meeting on 5th and 6th October 2011 respectively.

AUDIT FUNCTION:-**8. Report to those charged with Governance on the 2010/11 Audit.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of September 2011 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) advising of the submission of accounts for the financial year to 31st March 2011 and the proposed independent Auditor's report to the Members of the Council and to allow the Auditor to communicate the matters raised during the audit to the Panel;
- (2) informing that recognised best practice required the Council to consider the draft financial statements and the proposed independent Auditor's report and to approve a recommendation that the Executive Director – Corporate Services, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council sign the accounts;
- (3) indicating that the Auditors were required under International Standard on Auditing 260 to communicate matters relating to the audit of the financial statements to those charged with governance of a body to enable appropriate action as outlined in their draft report attached as Appendix 1 of this report with the management representation letter, signed by the Executive Director on behalf of the Council, attached as Appendix 2; and
- (4) highlighting the key issues for Members as identified by the Auditors, as follows:-
 - (a) that there were no qualifications in the proposed independent Auditor's report;
 - (b) that the accumulated surplus at 31st March 2011 was £15.302m, with an uncommitted general fund balance of £7.532m and that the Council had committed to achieve an uncommitted general fund balance of £8m by 31st March 2013 with a projected balance at 31st March 2012 being £8.032m, reflecting a reduction of £0.002m from figures reported to the Council in June 2011;
 - (c) that the annual report to Members would be submitted to a future meeting of this Panel; and
 - (d) that CIPFA and LASAAC had prepared two documents – 'IFRS: How to tell the Story' and 'Holding to Account Using Local Authority Financial Statements' – to assist Members in understanding the IFRS-based financial statements and recommending that this Panel considered these documents as part of the Panel work programme.

The Chair invited the Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland to outline the main findings from the report who then proceeded to bring certain matters to the attention of the Panel and who also took the opportunity to thank the Executive Director and her team for their assistance.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the Police and Fire Injury benefits and what would be the position when these bodies became a single entity; and Oracle and the current position with projects and the possibility of sharing such systems; and the Executive Director – Corporate Services responded accordingly and also took the opportunity to thank her staff for the work they had undertaken to reach the current position.

Decided: having thanked the staff within Corporate Services and the Auditors for their work,

- (i) to authorise signature of the Accounts and submission of copies to Audit Scotland by 30th September 2011; and
- (ii) to request that the Executive Director – Corporate Services developed a review of the Accounts using the CIPFA and LASAAC documents.

9. Review of Audit Committee.

Decided: that this report be continued to the next meeting of this Panel for its consideration.

The meeting ended at 1.55 p.m.