

COMMUNITY SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 22nd February 2012 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.

Attending: B. McInroy, Head of Service and School Management; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; J. Bradley, Organisational Development Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; A. MacLeod, Performance and Business Manager; C. Bishop, Performance and Business Change Manager; and A. Gerrish, Committee Services Officer.

1. Items for Call-in.

The Panel noted that there had been no call-ins for this meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting of 5th December 2011 (issued) were submitted and noted.

3. Modern Apprenticeships and Work Placements.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 2nd November 2011 (Page 654, paragraph 3) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 13th February 2012 by the Head of HR and Organisational Development

- (1) outlining the current position in relation to the Modern Apprenticeship and Work Placement Programmes as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report; and
- (2) advising that the Council had currently a variety of programmes delivered in a range of different formats which were either funded through Skills Development Scotland or delivered from within existing resources.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- working together with schools; the gap between students leaving school and taking up a programme funded through Skills Development Scotland; the change in Modern Apprenticeships compared to Craft Apprenticeships; Apprenticeship funding to adults; a breakdown of the Apprenticeships within the Construction Service; and the Health and Social Care imbalance of Apprenticeships and the Organisational Development Manager and the Head Service and School Management responded accordingly.

Decided: to note the current position in relation to the Modern Apprenticeship and Work Placement Programmes.

4. **Update on Points Raised by the Panel about the Corporate Plan Progress Report.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 2nd November 2011 (Page 654, paragraph 3) and there was submitted a joint report (issued) of 15th February 2012 by the Executive Director-Development and Environment and Executive Director - Children and Community

- (1) outlining the current position relating to the ongoing housing repairs review;
- (2) advising
 - (a) that the Scottish Housing Quality Standard required local authorities and registered social landlord to achieve improvements and required standards by the conclusion of 2015; and
 - (b) that this Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan review of 2011 highlighted areas of the repairs service which would benefit from further consideration in seeking to achieve these required standards and from this a Housing Repairs Service review had been approved by the Corporate Management Team;
- (3) informing
 - (a) that the Housing Repairs Review Group had a remit to consider the repairs with the objective of ensuring best value;
 - (b) that the approach adopted by the Group was one which considered the strengths and weaknesses of the current structure and service delivery methods in order to identify potential improvements, such as investigating the causes of any variations in the approach to and charging or works undertaken; and
 - (c) that the Group met every six weeks and included representation from Officers, tenants and trade unions; and
- (4) intimating
 - (a) that the broad ranging review was designed to improve efficiency and ensure required standards were being met; and
 - (b) that from the work undertaken in 2011/12, further improvements would now be taken forward in 2012/13.

The Head of Community Care and Housing further advised that he would issue a full briefing note to Elected Members on the up-to-date position on each of the areas outlined in paragraph 4 of the report.

Following a full discussion, comments were made and various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the Improvement Plan for the Housing Repair Service and the Head of Community Care and Housing, the Head of Corporate Resources and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (i) to note the content of the report; and
- (ii) to request the Executive Director – Children and Community to submit a further progress report on the Improvement Plan for the Housing Repair Service to this Panel in June/July 2012.

Councillor Saxton left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.