

LEADERSHIP PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 10th April 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Bill McIntosh (Chair), Douglas Campbell, Peter Convery, Nan McFarlane, Robin Reid and Margaret Toner.

Attending: E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; M. Williamson, Head of Curriculum and Services Improvement; B. McInroy, Head of Service and School Management J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; H. Carswell, Head of Children’s Services; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; C. Downie, Public Communications Officer; and D. Knight, Democratic Services Administrator.

Apologies: Councillor Hywel Davies, Miss Phil Davey and Mrs. Mairi Raeburn.

Chair’s Remarks.

The Chair requested that the Panel

- (1) record its appreciation and commitment of the Educational Representatives during the past five years as members of this Panel; and
- (2) that with regard to the comments that had been made by Audit Scotland five years ago about this Council’s financial position, to thank all Councillors and Officers for the improved financial situation.

Decided: to so concur.

Community Services - Lifelong Learning.**1. School Holiday Arrangements 2013/14.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 13th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community seeking approval of the proposed school holiday arrangements for 2013/14 as contained in Appendix 1 of the report.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel enquiring whether East and North Ayrshire Councils had been consulted when preparing the school holiday arrangements and the Head of Service and School Management responded accordingly.

Decided: to approve option 1 of the school holiday arrangements for 2013/14 as contained in Appendix 1 of the report.

Community Services - Social Services.

2. Consultation on future independent monitoring in Scottish Prisons.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 21st March 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) outlining a proposal by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to disband Prison Visiting Committees and to replace them with an Advocacy Service;
- (2) seeking approval for Officers to work with Members of the local Prison Visiting Committee in order to respond to consultation on what the new Advocacy Service should look like / deliver; and
- (3) advising that the consultation would begin on 30th April 2012 and would last for 60 days.

Councillor Convery reminded the Panel that he and Councillor Little were the Council's representatives on the Visiting Committee for HM Prison at Kilmarnock and requested that they both be allowed to address the Panel regarding the proposal from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

Councillor Little addressed the Panel and outlined her concerns regarding the disbandment of the Prison Visiting Committees and the importance of any future service being independent from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service and continuing to maintain the good practice of the Visiting Committee. She thanked Councillor Convery for his support during their visits to Kilmarnock Prison.

Councillor Convery referred to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice's letter on this matter and of the need to respond to the consultation in a constructive manner and that he and Councillor Little would work closely with the relevant Officers to prepare a response.

Decided:

- (a) to note the contents of the report; and
- (b) to agree that Officers and Members of the Prison Visiting Committee respond to the Scottish Government's Consultation on what the future service should look like / deliver.

Corporate and Community Planning - Resources and Performance.

3. Write-off of Non-Domestic Rates (Specific).

There was submitted a report (issued) of 28th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) seeking approval to write-off rates relating to specific cases for 2009/10 and 2010/11, totalling £215,985.12, in accordance with the Council's policy; and
- (2) advising that the write-off was fully provided for in the Abstract of Accounts as at 31st March 2011 and that debts would continue to be pursued.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel enquiring why Local Members had not been consulted about the write-off of non-domestic rates and the Executive Director – Corporate Services responded accordingly.

Decided: to approve the write-off of rates amounting to £60,663.02 for 2009/10 and £155,322.10 for 2010/11.

4. **2011/12 Accounting Policies.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 28th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) advising that each year the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy issued new accounting guidance called the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (The Code) and that all local authorities used the Code when preparing the annual accounts for each financial year;
- (2) intimating that at its meeting on 30th June 2011 (Page 452, paragraph 10), South Ayrshire Council had approved the Accounting Policies to be used in preparing the financial statements for 2010/11; and
- (3) reporting that the approved accounting policies used in preparing the 2010/11 financial statements for this Council had been revised to reflect the requirements of the 2011/12 Code and were attached as Appendix 1 of the report.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to whether changes to the accounting policies could be highlighted in bold and the Executive Director - Corporate Services responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (a) to approve the accounting policies attached as Appendix 1 of the report to be used in preparing the 2011/12 financial statements; and
- (b) to request that the Executive Director - Corporate Services circulate a note to Elected Members highlighting the changes to the accounting policies.

5. **Contract Renewal: BT Redcare CCTV Fibre Rental.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 28th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) advising
 - (a) that BT Redcare were the providers of the fibre link for the Public Space CCTV system throughout South Ayrshire; and
 - (b) that the current contract was due to expire on 31st March 2012 and that this had been a rolling contact for seven years at an annual cost of £39,250, with no increase in price;

- (2) indicating that Standing Orders Clause 4.2.9 relating to the awarding of a contract applied in this situation, as the provision of this service was not readily obtainable from more than one supplier, service provider or contractor; and
- (3) reporting
 - (a) that negotiations between BT and Procurement had resulted in a further two year contract at an annual cost of £43,555, however, BT would require payment in advance and had advised that this was part of their terms and conditions with every Council they worked with; and
 - (b) that a further increase of 5 per cent was being proposed by BT, but this was being challenged by the National CCTV Users Group and that it was not anticipated that this increase would apply from 1st April 2012.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the practice whereby Companies were requiring payments in advance and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders relating to Contracts would be re-examined regarding making payments in advance.

Decided: to approve the renewal of this contract at the figure of £43,555 per year, for a period of two years, with payment annually in advance from 1st April 2012.

6. Applications for financial support – Old Dailly George Todd Memorial Hall Fund.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising that on 7th March 2003, Ayr Sheriff Court had issued an interlocutor to the effect that the net proceeds arising from the sale of the George Todd Memorial Hall should be applied in such a manner that the Council determined for the benefit of the local inhabitants of Dailly and Old Dailly and that it was made clear by the Ayr Sheriff that this Council had exclusive authority as to how this money was dispersed;
- (2) summarising the applications for funding from the George Todd Memorial Fund that had already been approved with regard to the Dailly Parish Church Hall refurbishment; and
- (3) indicating that a further application of £1,543 had been requested from the George Todd Memorial Fund to Dailly Parish Church towards the unforeseen costs of rot elimination and reinstatement in the hall and re-pointing the gable wall.

Decided: to award £1,543 from the George Todd Memorial Fund to Dailly Parish Church Congregational Board towards the unforeseen costs of rot elimination and reinstatement in the hall and re-pointing the gable wall.

7. 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 during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act and that these reports should remain confidential.

8. Occupational Health Services – Tender Outcome.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 28th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services detailing the outcome of the recent occupational health services tender exercise and seeking approval to renew the corporate contract.

Decided: to accept the proposals outlined at 4.3 in the report and to purchase core occupational health services for a three year period at a cost of £77,300 per annum and additional variable services in respect of early intervention therapies at a cost of £55,430 per annum from Serco Ltd..

9. Belleisle Hotel, Ayr.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 26th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking approval to dispose of the Belleisle Hotel and Gate Lodge to Campbell Inns Ltd.

Questions were asked by Members of the Panel in relation to the reduced offer price and the timescales involved, the maintenance and security issues for the Hotel and other non-operational buildings, the options for the Clubhouse and dates of meetings with Campbell Inns Ltd. and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (1) to approve the disposal of Belleisle Hotel to Campbell Inns Ltd. at a reduced price of £300,000 with date of entry one month after conclusion of missives;
- (2) to approve the disposal of the Gate Lodge, Doonfoot Road, Ayr to Campbell Inns Ltd. for the sum of £1; and
- (3) to authorise the Executive Director - Development and Environment to further negotiate and to agree detailed terms and conditions and to request Legal Services to conclude missives on the basis of such agreed detailed terms and conditions.

Community Services – Housing and Customer First.

10. Internal Modernisation of Council Houses – Managing Agent Contract.

There was submitted a joint report (issued to Members only) of 4th April 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community and Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking approval for delegated authority to appoint a managing agent that provided the Most Economically Advantageous Tender to the Council, when judged on a combination of price and quality, for the overall co-ordination of internal modernisation work in Council Houses.

Decided: to grant delegated authority under Section 16.2(ii) of Council Standing Orders to the Executive Director – Children and Community to determine the selection and appointment of a Managing Agent for the overall co-ordination of internal modernisation work in Council Houses.

11. Tender for Annual Inspection and Reactive Maintenance for Domestic Gas and Smoke Alarm Installations.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 4th April 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) advising of the tender process outcome relating to the Tender for Annual Inspection and Reactive Maintenance for Domestic Gas and Smoke Alarm Installations; and
- (2) seeking approval for the appointment of British Gas Social Housing Limited, trading as P.H. Jones, to undertake the required works.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel enquiring whether smoke alarms would be installed which were suitable for the deaf or hard of hearing, and the tendering process and the Head of Community Care and Housing responded accordingly and gave an undertaking that he would ensure that clients who were deaf or hard of hearing would have a suitable alarm system installed.

Decided: to agree the award of the contract for Annual Inspection and Reactive Maintenance for Domestic Gas and Smoke Alarm Installations to British Gas Social Housing Limited, trading as P.H. Jones, in accordance with Section 16.2(ii) of the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts.

The meeting ended at 10.40 a.m.