

**LEADERSHIP PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 6th June 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Bill McIntosh (Chair), Bill Grant, John McDowall, Rita Miller, Robin Reid, Philip Saxton and Margaret Toner.

Attending: D. Anderson, Chief Executive; E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Development and Environment; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; M. Williamson, Head of Curriculum and Services Improvement; H. Carswell, Head of Children’s Services; B. McNroy, Head of Service and School Management; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; M. Hastings, Enterprise Manager; K. O’Hagan, Head of HR and Organisational Development; C. Downie, Public Communications Officer; and D. Knight, Democratic Services Administrator.

Also Present: Rev. David Gemmell, Mrs. Mairi Raeburn and Pastor Alastair Simmons (in attendance for items 1 to 4 only).

Apology: Miss Phil Davey.

**Chair’s Remarks.**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thereafter, the Panel introduced themselves.

**Community Services - Lifelong Learning.****C-I****1. Schools for the Future – Phase 3.**

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

- (1) proposing that the Council submit four projects for consideration under Phase 3 of the Scottish Government Schools for the Future Programme and that the brief for each project had still to be fully developed and that any estimated costs provided at this stage only related to the school element of the project for which shared funding would be considered; and
- (2) outlining a description of each project as follows:-
  - the refurbishment and modernisation of the original Marr College building and the construction of new learning accommodation and that following significant engagement with stakeholders, this had now been addressed as part of the fundamental review of the school estate and that the Council had adopted the development of the existing school site including the original Marr College building as its preferred option for the school with the estimated cost of the Marr Project, excluding land purchase being £27.2m based on the buildings costs provided by the Scottish Futures Trust;

- a replacement school for Dailly Primary School which might include the potential rationalisation of other community facilities in the village and that the options for the school had been explored with the community as part of a feasibility study and it was proposed to build on the existing school site and that due to the condition of the village hall which was used by the Police, Library service and the community, there was the potential for the facilities to be integrated into the new school with the estimated cost of replacing Dailly Primary School being £3,196,375 based on the building metrics provided by the Scottish Futures Trust, excluding costs for the potential rationalisation of other community facilities into the school;
- the provision of a new community campus in Tarbolton and as part of the fundamental review of the school estate, the development of a new community campus incorporating primary and nursery education, sports, leisure and community facilities and the local library had been explored with the community and that the project would result in a significant rationalisation of properties within Tarbolton and also bring about improvements to the road infrastructure within the village with the estimated cost of replacing Tarbolton Primary School with a nursery class being £5,675,625 based on the building metrics provided by the Scottish Futures Trust excluding any additional costs for the potential rationalisation of other community facilities to form the proposed community campus; and
- a new integrated learning campus in Girvan replacing Sacred Heart Primary School and Invergarven School as the condition and suitability of both schools was considered to be very poor and could not be resolved within their existing sites and therefore, it was proposed that they were relocated to a new campus facility to be built elsewhere within the town with the estimated cost of building the new learning campus being £3,675,775 based on the building metrics provided by the Scottish Futures Trust.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to consultation with the community and engagement with the relevant stakeholders, the position with regard to Ayr Grammar, whether adequate funding would be provided for Non-Denominational and Denominational Education within Girvan including Special Needs, the implications of additional costs for the purchase of land at Marr College, and whether land could be purchased or leased and the Head of Service and School Management responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve the submission of a bid to the Scottish Government for funding from the Schools for the Future Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

## 2. Queen's Jubilee Holiday Arrangements – Schools.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 18th May 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) advising
  - (a) each year proposals for the main school holidays for the academic session were drawn up two years in advance and that the Council had agreed holidays for schools in November 2010 for this academic year including a school holiday on 5th June 2012; and
  - (b) that in September 2011, the Council had awarded an additional day's holiday to all Council staff for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and that neighbouring Councils had already agreed an additional day's closure for schools in order to compensate school staff for the Queen's Jubilee Holiday; and
- (2) proposing
  - (a) that since most school staff would already be on holiday on 5th June 2012, to compensate school staff for the additional day by closing schools on 26th June 2012 and that schools would be closed for pupils on 27th June 2012, but non-term time staff in secondary schools would operate a skeleton service on that day since they would already have received an additional holiday on 5th June; and
  - (b) if agreed, that schools would close on Tuesday, 26th June 2012 and that permission would be required from Scottish Ministers for the reduction in the school year from 195 days to 194 days.

The Head of Service and School Management confirmed that approval had now been received from Scottish Ministers for the additional school day closure.

**Decided:** to approve an additional school closure day on Wednesday, 27th June 2012.

## 3. Partnership with Ayr United Football Academy.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 18th May 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community seeking approval

- (1) to enter into an agreement with Ayr United Football Academy (AUFA) to deliver sports activities, mainly football coaching, to young people in South Ayrshire Schools and local communities; and
- (2) to provide funding of £20,000 annually for a period of three years to support this work.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel enquiring whether the all-weather pitches in Maybole and Prestwick would continue to be used and the Head of Service and School Management confirmed that both Maybole and Prestwick all-weather pitches would continue to be used.

**Decided:** to approve

- (a) a three-year agreement being drawn up between South Ayrshire Council and AUFA for the delivery of sports activities in schools;
- (b) annual funding of £20,000 to AUFA for a period of three years; and
- (c) preferred status for AUFA in accessing lets at Belmont Academy all-weather pitch for a period of three years.

**4. Curriculum for Excellence in South Ayrshire Schools.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10th May 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) providing Members with the fourth annual update in relation to the continuing implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in South Ayrshire Schools;
- (2) advising members of South Ayrshire's share of £3.5 m to support Secondary Schools with national qualifications; and
- (3) requesting approval
  - (a) to use the funds according to the expectations of Scottish Government; and
  - (b) to close Secondary Schools for two additional INSERVICE days for CfE development on 23rd October 2012 and 12th February 2013.

A concern was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the use of acronyms and Council terminology within reports and questions were asked about consultation with teachers and whether their concerns and views had been taken into account and what action was the Council taking to alleviate any concerns from parents and the Head of Curriculum and Services Improvement responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve the contents of the report.

**Rev. David Gemmell's Remarks.**

Rev. Gemmell addressed the Panel and urged Elected Members to take the opportunity to visit the schools in their wards to show their appreciation of the work and commitment from teachers.

**Decided:** to request that the Chief Executive circulate Rev. Gemmell's comments to all Elected Members.

**Community Services - Social Services.**

**5. Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 – Children's Panel Advisory Committee.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 25th October 2011 (Page 624, paragraph 1), there was submitted a report (issued) of 28th May 2012 by the Head of Legal and Administration

- (1) outlining progress in relation to the proposals to implement the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 which were due to be in place by September 2012 including the formation of an Ayrshire Area Support Team; and
- (2) advising that these reforms would now take effect in the second quarter of 2013 and that the current system would remain in place until that time and accordingly, the Council would require to consider local authority representation on the Children's Panel Advisory Committee for South Ayrshire.

**Decided:**

- (a) to note the position to date;
- (b) to agree that Officers continue to work towards the implementation of the Act; and
- (c) to confirm the current appointments to the Children's Panel Advisory Committee, namely, Renee Gillan and Pat Brown.

**Corporate and Community Planning - Resources and Performance.**

**6. Council Tax Write-off – Irrecoverable Debt.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 24th May 2012 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) seeking approval to write-off Council Tax during 2011/12 relating to specific cases in accordance with the Council's policy;
- (2) intimating that in addition, write-offs for Council Tax amounting to £143,656.33 during 2011/12 in respect of cases under £5,000 had been approved by the Executive Director – Corporate Services in accordance with section C31 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation; and
- (3) advising that the sums to be written-off would be fully provided for in the Abstract of Accounts and that debts would continue to be pursued and, in relation to debtors who are sequestrated, claims have been lodged with the trustee.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the collection levels which had been achieved in respect of Council Tax and the Executive Director – Corporate Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve the write-off of Council Tax amounting to £41,022.08 during 2011/12.

**7. Housing and Council Tax Benefit – Performance Monitoring – Position at 31st March 2012.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 24th May 2012 by the Executive Director - Corporate Services advising of the service improvements being undertaken to help achieve the full range of national housing and Council Tax benefit performance standards as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the pressures being encountered by the Council in administering Housing and Council Tax Benefit on behalf of the Department of Works and Pensions and the Executive Director - Corporate Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (1) to approve the contents of the report;
- (2) to request the Executive Director - Corporate Services to provide a further quarterly report on service delivery to a future meeting of this Panel; and
- (3) to request that the Executive Director – Corporate Services circulate a briefing note to Elected Members detailing the financial and personnel implications to this Council of administering Housing and Council Tax Benefit on behalf of the Department of Works and Pensions.

**8. Treasury Management Quarter 4 Report 2011/12.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 24th May 2012 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) presenting an update of the economic background from 1st January to 31st March 2012;
- (2) outlining the following within the Treasury Management Investment Strategy:-
  - (a) policy on investment;
  - (b) list of investments held as at 31st March 2012;
  - (c) credit ratings;
  - (d) investment performance;
  - (e) borrowing;
  - (f) borrowing in advance of need;
  - (g) prudential indicators; and
  - (h) Icelandic Bank update; and

- (3) detailing the resource implications for General Services and Housing Revenue Account.

**Decided:** to approve the contents of the Treasury Management Quarter 4 Report for 2011/12.

**9. Variation in order of business.**

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 10, the Panel agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

**Development and the Environment - Sustainability and the Environment.**

**10. Roads Improvement Plan 2012/13.**

Reference was made to the minutes of the Council of 15th December 2011 (Page 12, paragraph 9) when the Council had decided to invest an additional £1m on roads maintenance works and that detailed proposals for this expenditure would be presented to the Leadership Panel, there was submitted a report (issued) of 23rd May 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising
- (a) that a draft programme of listed improvement projects over a potential five year timeframe had been subjected to public consultation in five road shows throughout South Ayrshire in February of this year;
  - (b) that a variety of treatment options had been included in the programme to reflect the differing challenges faced by the Roads Service, whilst at the same time squeezing as much improvement as possible out of the additional money provided by the Council;
  - (c) that the programme was project specific in terms of named improvement schemes, but pot hole patching would continue as part of the road defect categorisation process and efforts were being made to reduce reactive works and increase proactive repairs; and
  - (d) that in summary, those roads listed on the proposed Roads Improvement Plan had been chosen due to the fact that they had scored the highest in the engineering risk assessment process and that the process had followed the principles as outlined in the “Well Maintained Highways” Code of Practice that was approved by the Council in 2009;
- (2) recommending that the Revenue Works Programme maintenance budget be augmented with the additional £1m approved by the Council on 15th December 2011; and

## (3) reporting

- (a) that the programme could be contained within the Roads service's 2012/13 revenue budget and that the planned programme of structural maintenance for the Roads Service was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (b) that the programme was estimated to cost £1.641m which equated to improving 2.08% of the overall road network and that part of the recurring maintenance budget would be utilised, if required, in order to fund any additional expenditure incurred.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to roads at Troon West, Mauchline / Mossblown Road West, Carrick Hills Road and St. Quivox Road, Prestwick and the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that he would respond to these questions.

**Decided:**

- (i) to endorse the programme of investment for 2012/13 as listed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) to request the Head of Planning and Enterprise to respond to Elected Members' individual queries in relation to the Roads Improvement Plan as soon as possible following this meeting.

**11. 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 6, 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**12. Approvals under Delegated Authority.**

There was submitted a joint report (issued to Members only) of 24th May 2012 by the Executive Director – Children and Community and Executive Director – Development and Environment outlining a number of matters that had been dealt with under delegated authority.

**Decided:** to note the matters determined under delegated authority during recess.

**13. Prestwick Sailing Club – Extension of ground lease.**

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 22nd May 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking approval to extend the ground lease at Prestwick Sailing Club for a further twenty five years.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to review of leases and rent reviews and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve a minute of variation to extend the ground lease of Prestwick Sailing Club, Grangemuir Road, Prestwick on such terms and conditions as might be agreed by the Executive Director – Development and Environment.

**Development and the Environment - Economic Development, Tourism and Leisure.**

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**14. Developing International Tourism.**

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 23rd May 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking approval of financial support to assist in developing international tourism, with consequential economic benefits.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the proposal including marketing and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve a one-off financial contribution of up to £20,000 as set out in the report in anticipation of the beneficial impacts this would have on local tourism and the wider economy.

The meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.