

**COMMUNITY SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
27th February 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Hugh Hunter (Chair), Ian Cavana, Kirsty Darwent, Nan McFarlane.

Apologies: Councillors Andy Campbell, Hywel Davies, John Hampton and Corri Wilson.

Attending: H. Garland, Executive Director – Care, Learning and Wellbeing; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Facility Services; F. Cardle, Quality Improvement Manager; R. Kingisepp, Office Manager; and D. Knight, Democratic Services Administrator.

Also attending: Councillor Margaret Toner (Portfolio-holder).

**1. Chair.**

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Panel agreed that Councillor Hunter take the Chair.

**2. Declaration of Interest.**

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

**3. Item for Call-in.**

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

**3. Minutes of previous meeting.**

**Decided:** to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 30th January 2013 (issued).

**4. Scoping Papers.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of South Ayrshire Council of 14th February 2013 (Page 160, paragraph 14) when it was agreed that this Panel undertake Reviews in respect of the following areas:-

- Instrumental Music Service; and
- Day Care Services, and

there were submitted reports (issued) of 21st February 2013 by the Executive Director – Care, Learning and Wellbeing providing scoping papers on both reviews.

**(1) Instrumental Music Service.**

The scoping paper on the Instrumental Music Service

- (a) provided details on the potential scope of a Scrutiny Review to review the Council's arrangements for enhancing the musical experiences of children and young people through the provision of weekly instrumental instruction lessons and opportunities for ensemble playing at an Authority level;
- (b) advised that the service was committed to:-
  - increasing access to music tuition for as many learners as possible including the most vulnerable;
  - developing more opportunity for young people to benefit from participation in ensembles, groups and orchestras; and
  - recognising and celebrating achievement in music;
- (c) outlined the current number of music instructors and the number of children taught in primary and secondary schools; and
- (d) proposed
  - (i) that the objectives of this Scrutiny Review were to:-
    - identify current strengths and highlight weaknesses in current provision;
    - consult with service users, secondary music departments, parents and providers prior to submitting recommendations for political approval;
    - develop a formula for an equitable allocation of resource;
    - ensure value for money;
    - provide equality of opportunity of music instruction across South Ayrshire; and
    - formulate plans for improving instrumental music arrangements that were based on this review information;
  - (ii) that this review of music provision across the authority should include:-
    - the Instrumental Music Service;
    - the Youth Music Initiative;
    - Primary Music Specialists; and
    - arrangements for the management and delivery of these services, including resource levels;
  - (iii) that the following approach be adopted:-
    - the Scrutiny Review would be led by a Sub-Group of Elected Members and supported by the Quality Improvement Manager;

- the Sub-Group could involve representatives from amongst the Principal Teacher of Instrumental Service, a Chartered Music Teacher, the Lead Music Instructor, the Lead Primary Music Specialist and the Lead Principal Teacher of Music, representative Head and Depute Head Teacher for all sectors (Early Years, Primary and Secondary), a Teacher Union representative for the JNCT, a representative from Human resources and service user representatives (from both Primary and Secondary sectors); and
- the Sub-Group could progress any action plan for the review, co-ordinate review activities, identify and gather information to inform the review, and coordinate consultation; and

(iv) anticipated outputs from the Review were:-

- process mapping – current and future model;
- resource allocation – current and future model;
- evidence of good practice and areas of improvement;
- Best Value assured;
- Improvement Plan revised based on findings of Review;
- improved outcomes for children and young people in South Ayrshire; and
- celebration and consolidation of success.

Arising from discussion, a series of issues were raised relating to the Review, namely:-

- (A) the maintenance of the musical instruments particularly if there were increased numbers of children taking up music;
- (B) ensuring that the instrumental music service was available to all children, particularly the most vulnerable;
- (C) the definition of music tuition;
- (D) whether voice was included as an instrument;
- (E) the potential financial implications resulting from this Review; and
- (F) might grant funding be available for the purchase of musical instruments.

**(2) Day Care Services.**

The scoping paper on the Day Care Services

- (a) provided details on the potential scope to review the Council's approach to Day Care Services in South Ayrshire;
- (b) advised
  - (i) that in recognition of an ageing population, the Scottish Government's Reshaping Care Agenda aimed to support a shift in the balance of care from acute to community based services; and
  - (ii) that by 2018, it was forecasted that 24% of the South Ayrshire population would be aged 65 or over (currently 21%) and that the most significant increases were expected to be in the population aged 85 and over; and
- (c) proposed
  - (i) that a modernised, more strategic approach to day care services be considered involving health, education, social care agencies, the third sector and community organisations and that it was anticipated that the strong working relationship developed with NHS Ayrshire and Arran would continue throughout this review to achieve a holistic approach to service delivery;
  - (ii) that the delivery model of day care services would consider the following:-
    - access to health and community based professionals;
    - referral processes that support defined routes to services focusing on community based and dementia specialist care;
    - potential for a specialist integrated dementia service seven days per week to meet individual needs
    - potential links to sheltered housing;
    - links to South Ayrshire Volunteer Centre around community development and mapped local opportunities; and
    - the impact of Self Directed Support and the potential shift towards individualised care for people; and
  - (iii) that the Scrutiny Review would be led by a sub-group of Elected Members and supported by the Community Care Manager (Older People) and would involve representatives from the agencies listed at (c)(i) above together with carers, service users and the Trade Unions.

Arising from discussion, a series of issues were raised relating to the Review, namely:-

- (A) ensuring that consultation would take place with the relevant Portfolio-holder, along with all the Council's Partners including the voluntary sector and the wider community during the course of the Review;
- (B) that day care provision should be locally based;
- (C) concerns about the vast breadth of work arising from the scoping paper to be considered with this Review and the expertise that might be required to undertake it; and
- (C) the implications of providing a specialist dementia service seven days per week.

**Decided:**

- (I) to agree that two Sub-Groups be formed comprising Members from this Panel as follows:-
  - the Sub-Group relating to the Review on Instrumental Music Service being Councillors Darwent (Chair), Hampton and McFarlane; and
  - the Sub-Group relating to the Review on Day Care Services being Councillors Hunter (Chair), Cavana , Hampton, McFarlane and Wilson;
- (II) to approve the proposals for the remit of the Reviews as outlined within the scoping papers subject to any amendments as considered appropriate by the Sub-Group as each Review developed; and
- (III) that findings from these Sub-Groups be reported back to this Panel by the end of this year.

**6. Remit from Leadership Panel – Housing Capital Programme 2012/13 – Monitoring Report as at Period 9: 31st December 2012.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 19th February 2013 (Page 171, paragraph 4) when that Panel, having considered a joint report of 12th February 2013 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment and Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation in relation to the Housing Capital Programme 2012/13 – Period 9 Monitoring report, had agreed

- (1) to note the progress made on the delivery of the Housing Capital Programme to 31st December 2012;
- (2) to approve the amendments as outlined in Section 4.2 of the report and as detailed in Table 2 of Appendix 1 of the report; and

- (3) that in light of the concerns about the level of slippage and potential impact on the achievement of the Scottish Housing Quality Standards 2015, to refer this report to the next meeting of the Community Services Standing Scrutiny Panel to examine the reasons for the slippage and to identify actions which would assist in minimising slippage in the future and that their findings be reported back to the meeting of this Panel on 19th March 2013.

The Panel gave detailed consideration to the terms of the Housing Capital Programme Monitoring Report and reference was made to the Capital Programme Management Report that had also been considered at that meeting of the Leadership Panel and which provided Members with proposals to improve performance within both the General Services and the Housing Capital Programmes, with a view to achieving higher expenditure levels and reduce slippage.

In relation to the Housing Capital Programme, particular issues were raised and discussed as follows.

The reasons for slippage and when it had first started; the amount of slippage which had occurred during the last four financial years and the effect that the slippage had on projects; the review of project programming; the responsibilities of Managing Agents, monitoring and measuring the performance of Contractors; the additional staffing resources being made available in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to progress project development; whether the implementation of the five year Housing Capital Programme would assist in reducing slippage; whether there is an opportunity to re-profile projects between years; when slippage occurred, would it be possible to bring forward alternative projects; whether elements of the Housing Capital Programme relating to mixed tenure blocks could be subsidised by the General Services Programme; and whether preparatory work was being done to reduce slippage in next year's Programme.

The Head of Property and Facility Services outlined the position with regard to the slippage within the Programme and that there had been slippage in Programme throughout his four years in the Council and at a level of around £5m on a rolling basis over the last couple of years. The rolling basis means that a "backlog" from a previous year may be dealt with during the current year, but that an element of that current year's projects then "slipped" into the next year, and so on. An analysis of current slippage in relation to the Modernisation Programme showed delays resulting from unforeseen, contractual issues relating to asbestos removal, and that specific steps had been taken to address that contractual issue. However, issues remained due to the specialist nature of the works, the volumes involved and limited availability of specialist contractors. Changes in the way asbestos testing was now being conducted including sampling less than 100% based on a database of similar properties which have been tested and reflecting what other authorities were doing, would all help to address this specific cause of slippage.

He advised that feasibility studies including appropriate site investigation, surveys and statutory investigations including asbestos testing, might also require a procurement process for appointment of a particular specialist and European advertising for appointments may be required on major projects. The role of the appointed Managing Agent in relation to the tendering and project management of Housing Capital projects was explained.

He further advised that detailed design and options appraisals could highlight previously unknown factors which, in turn, could require a review of the brief or further investigation and that procedures were in place for the Council to sign off in the evaluation of contractors as contractor performance could have a direct effect on progress and that the Housing Business Plan allowed for earlier future planning of projects and greater flexibility between financial years.

The Head of Property and Facility Services also advised that the increased staff resources available in 2013/14 and 2014/15 were available for the General Services Programme only. Future programming over a longer period would allow projects to be amalgamated and timed so as, for example, to ensure that certain outdoor works would no longer be programmed for the winter months.

Some 2014/15 works would be advanced and contracts let in 2013/14 to progress the Programme. The revised Budget to achieve Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) was confirmed as £30m over the next two financial years. In response to concerns relating to availability of sufficient quality contractors to complete the SHQS targets, it was acknowledged that contractor performance was a critical area.

The Panel was advised that there was no one, simple answer to resolving slippage, but that as a result of improved monitoring and more accurate reporting, earlier decisions would be able to be made on, for example, bringing projects forward to absorb under-spending and slippage.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified the position in relation to a number of procurement matters and poor contractor performance and the additional resources becoming available to support these areas.

The Head of Property and Facility Services advised that the issues of processes for project development, outsourcing, procurement and tendering, and managing contractor performance would all be further reviewed.

The Executive Director – Care, Learning and Wellbeing and the Head of Community Care and Housing clarified the position with regard to issues that had arisen about owner / occupier engagement and delivering both repairs and in particular, improvements to mixed tenure blocks and the ongoing discussions that were taking place in order to progress works with a view to meeting SHQS timeously.

**Decided:**

- (a) that the terms of this minute on the Housing Capital Programme should form this Panel's response to the Leadership Panel on 19th March 2013; and
- (b) to request that the Leadership Panel, when considering the Housing Capital Programme 2013/14 – Monitoring Report for Period 6 to the end of 30th September 2013 refer that report to this Panel for its consideration and to review progress at that stage.

The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.