

SCRUTINY AND GOVERNANCE MANAGEMENT PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr
on 4th February 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Brian McGinley (Chair), Alec. Clark, Allan Dorans, John Hampton, Hugh Hunter and Provost Helen Moonie.

Attending: V. Andrews, Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; and E. Wyllie, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending: Councillor Kirsty Darwent (Chair of Standing Scrutiny Panel).

The Chair of the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel was unable to attend this meeting.

1. Declaration of Interest.

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

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

Decided: to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting of 19th November 2013 (issued) ([link attached](#)). It was noted that for future Minutes it should be clarified that Members who are not Members of the Panel itself should be listed as 'Attending' and not as 'Present'.

3. Panel Work Programme and Action Plan 2013/14

Reference was made to the previous Minutes of 19th November 2013 (Page 2, paragraph 4) and there was submitted a progress update (issued) ([link attached](#)) of the Panel Work Programme and Action Plan for 2013/14 which provided the current position with the various themes and actions being undertaken by Members of the Panel and Officers.

A discussion took place in relation to the various themes and current status of actions.

It was noted that the informal Working Group to review the Scheme of Delegation had initially met and that the Scrutiny Review Guidance had naturally formed an area for this Group to discuss since both documents were interlinked. The Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation commented that any feedback on the current Review Guidance from Panel Members would be welcome. Some Panel Members involved in the informal Working Group commented that they were finding this exercise informative and productive. In terms of the work of the informal Working Group, due to meet again shortly, it was intended that the Group's findings be reported to this Panel for discussion, in the first instance, and thereafter for Council consideration. It was also noted that the intention of the Panel was that any Members of the Panel be entitled and welcome to participate in the informal working group meetings should they so wish. A draft note from the informal Working Group meeting would be circulated.

A discussion took place in relation to the role of Standing Scrutiny Panel Chairs and this Panel and it was noted that a closer working relationship was being actively encouraged by inviting the Chairs to attend meetings of this Panel, in an informal capacity, to exchange views on scrutiny processes, since two of the Chairs were not Members of the Panel.

In relation to the progress being made with the 'Best Practice in Scrutiny' theme:-

- the Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs indicated that, in terms of benchmarking information, data would be available in the very near future which would make this position clearer; and
- clarification was sought in relation to the current status of possible visits to other local authorities and it was noted that further discussions were taking place with the previously identified authorities and that, if any visits were arranged, Members of the Panel would receive an 'information' pack to assist them on visits. It was noted that one of the authorities had offered possible dates, however, these conflicted with Elected Members' diary commitments to this Council.

In terms of the remit for Standing Scrutiny Panels, the Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation referred to the discussion which had taken place at the initial meeting of the informal Working Group when the remit of these Panels formed part of the discussion as it related to the Scrutiny Review Guidance document. She also referred to a key list of points raised at the Working Group and informed that the Group had invited the Standing Scrutiny Panel Chairs to its next meeting.

The Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation referred to the theme pertaining to the follow-up of decision-making tracking mechanisms and requested feedback from Members on the first report generated via covalent and circulated in December 2013. A full discussion took place in relation to decision tracking in general and how best this tracking information could be presented to Members and whether there was a requirement for such information to be reported to some formal meeting of the Council. The Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation welcomed the views from Members and commented that tracking and reporting mechanisms would be further explored.

The Panel, following review

Decided: to note the current status of the work programme and action plan which would be updated and presented to the next meeting of this Panel as a standing item of business on the Agenda.

4. Delivering Good Governance – Update on Improvement Actions.

There was submitted a report (issued) ([link attached](#)) of 23rd January 2014 by the Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs inviting Members to review the progress against the 2013/14 improvement actions that were agreed in relation to the Council's Delivering Good Governance Framework.

A discussion took place in relation to the various improvement actions contained within the appendix to the report.

In relation to Roles, clarification was sought as to whether many comments had been received on the Scrutiny Review Guidance and the Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that the only comments that had been received so far had been via the informal Working Group discussed at the previous item of the agenda. It was noted that Members' comments were welcome to aid this task.

A full discussion took place in relation to Skills pertaining to community engagement and the development of a strategy. Concerns were raised regarding the 85% completion rate of this action and the Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs commented that the task to develop a community engagement strategy was 85% complete. It was noted that, on completion of this document due by 31st March 2014, further work in terms of timescales and resource implications for the delivery of the strategy would require to be considered by the appropriate Panel of the Council. It was noted that a Members' briefing would be organised to inform all Members of the current status following the publication of the strategy.

In terms of Accountability, it was noted that benchmarking information would soon be available from SOLACE which would then aid the completion of this task. Clarification was sought as to whether the Council's calendar could incorporate waste collection information and it was noted that this might not be possible due to the complexities of collection routes. A full discussion took place in respect of the Integration of Health and Social Care as well as the accountability and governance arrangements required in this regard.

The Panel, following reviewed

Decided: to note the progress achieved to date against the improvement actions as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

The meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.