

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL (SPECIAL).

Minutes of special meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 8th June 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Kirsty Darwent (Chair), Andy Campbell, Peter Convery, Allan Dorans, Hugh Hunter, Mary Kilpatrick, Nan McFarlane and Brian McGinley.

Also present: Councillor Bill Grant, Portfolio Holder.

Attending: D. Hutchison, Director of Educational Services; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; M. Baker, Head of Policy and Performance; J. Cronin, Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure; C. Monaghan, Head of Communities; M. Newall, Head of Neighbourhood Services; D. Robertson, Public Affairs Manager; D. Sherlock, Corporate Policy Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Officer; A. Mackenzie, External Auditor; and A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer.

1. Declarations of Interest.

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

2. Performance to 31st March 2015 against the 2014-17 Service and Improvement Plans and their Refresh for 2015-18.

With reference to the Minutes of 2nd June 2015 (Page 1, paragraph 4) there was submitted a report (issued) ([link attached](#)) of 1st June 2015 by the Head of Policy and Performance to allow the Panel to scrutinise each Directorate in turn, the performance against the Council's 2014-17 Service and Improvement Plans (SIPs) to 31st March 2015 and the refresh of those same plans for 2015-18.

Their comments and observations are set out below:-

Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment:-

Overview:-

The Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment gave an introduction to the SIPs under her remit. During subsequent discussion, the importance of visitors to and inward investment in South Ayrshire was recognised.

In response to a question, the Executive Director confirmed that officers would be in attendance at the next Airport Consultative meeting.

Annex 2 – Enterprise, Development and Leisure SIP -

Overview:-

Having heard a concern that the reporting contained a lot of information relating to description and process, and few outcome measures for 2014/15, it was clarified by the Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure that the timing of the issue of the report had prevented this being done, and fuller reporting against the performance measures would be presented to the next meeting of the Panel.

2014/15 Year end Reporting:-

Sub-actions -

CP1402.03 - Clarification was sought as to the position with the Town Centre Officer post currently funded by external funding and it was reported that funding would be ending shortly and the work would be taken on by a Council employee and it was hoped to see progress in the Action Plans thereafter.

CP1503.03 - With regard to the review of key “gateways” and whether there would be an involvement of Elected Members, it was reported that the next stage would be looking at key gateways to Ayrshire and that there would be dialogue with Members in this respect.

CP4501.01 - Concern was expressed that the progress of golf in South Ayrshire had not moved forward as quickly as anticipated and the cost of golf in South Ayrshire was also raised. It was reported that the Council were currently in the process of addressing the concerns surrounding golf.

Following further concern regarding the ongoing works at Belleisle Golf Clubhouse and having heard Councillor Grant, Portfolio Carrier, it was agreed

- that Members receive a monthly update on the progress of the works at the Clubhouses at Belleisle and also for the ongoing works at Troon clubhouse; and
- that this Panel receive a report to a future meeting of this Panel on how the problems at Belleisle had occurred and the lessons that had been learned which in turn would help drive improvement for the future;

Service and Improvement Plans for 2015/18:-

Key Performance Measures -

- SO1.5.01 - Clarification was sought of why the cost per museum visit was so high in comparison to that achieved for libraries. It was explained that this related to the limited range of facilities in South Ayrshire to attract visitors. However, it was reported that a number of successful exhibitions had recently been held in South Ayrshire and that it was hoped that this would improve the cost figures for 2015/16.
- SO1.5.03 - It was agreed that Members should receive an update on the use and the success of e-books in Council libraries, compatibility with certain digital reading devices and accessibility of e-books.

Annex 1 – Communities SIP:-

Overview:-

Clarification was provided as to what was meant by “community empowerment” and the Head of Communities indicated that there was a need to manage expectations as to what was achievable.

2014/15 Year end Reporting:-

Sub-actions -

- SP4104.01 - There was discussion on the Community Empowerment Bill and the position regarding the transfer of assets.
- SP4106.01 - The Panel agreed that there was a need to review support arrangements for Community Councils
- CP4201.01 - With reference to the South Ayrshire Multi-Agency Partnership on Violence Against Women Action Plan, it was noted that violence against men was also an issue.
- CP4503.01 - Following a Member’s concern regarding delays in the building of the new community, sport and leisure facility at Girvan Harbour, it was reported that work would commence in December 2015/January 2016, subject to the necessary planning permission.

Members of the Panel asked as to the position of community justice. It was reported that the Council was currently in discussion with the two other Ayrshire Authorities at present and that a measure of its success would be by a reduction in the number of children entering the system. Due to concerns on this matter the Panel requested an update be provided to them on this matter within the next three months.

Annex 3 – Neighbourhood Services SIP:-

2014/15 Year end Reporting:-

Sub-actions -

CP5401.03 - There was discussion of the proposed Street, Tree and Woodland Management Policy.

SP5406.03 - Following a question, it was confirmed that the new Troon Cemetery would be completed in 2015.

CP5501.05 - After discussion regarding the poor uptake of food recycling in South Ayrshire, it was noted that the Council was currently looking at what practices had proved more successful in other Authorities.

Service and Improvement Plans for 2015/18:-

Key Performance Measures -

SO4. 2 13 - The Panel discussed the reduction that had been achieved in the cost of trading standards per 1,000 population in 2013/14, and heard this was due to a reduction in the number of staff employed within the service.

Annex 4 – Educational Services SIP:-

2014/15 Year end Reporting:-

Sub-actions -

CP2101.06 - It was noted that in developing a planning model and training programme to deliver appropriate experiences in pre-births to three year olds, there was a need to have a well trained and experienced staff.

CP2201.10 - Clarification was sought of the difference between 'families' of schools and 'cluster' arrangements. It was reported that during Head Teachers meetings schools split into families reflecting schools with similar demographics, to examine their performance data and to support and challenge one another. Cluster meetings continue to be held to assist with alignment of curriculum and planning progression in schools associated with a particular secondary school.

A Panel Member advised of her concern in the variation of performance in secondary schools. It was explained Head Teachers meet and review performance, identifying best practice both from within and outwith the authority. The need is to focus on the highest quality of teaching.

SP6502.11 - With regard to Devolved School Management it was reported that matters were progressing in this respect with it being hoped to have a simplified Scheme of Delegation in place within the next year.

Service and Improvement Plans for 2015/18:-

Key Performance Measures -

SO1.3 07-10 - There was discussion in relation to businesses' concerns about literacy and numeracy levels of young people leaving the education system.

Following discussion, it was noted that there was need for resources to be made available for certain school children who needed to be encouraged and helped and there was a need to stretch the more able too. It was agreed that when the SIP reporting was presented again, there be an indication given of (1) the Council success in closing the attainment gap while stretching and challenging the most able learners; and (2) the attainment of looked after children and also those children who were carers themselves.

Annex 5 – Policy and Performance SIP:-

2014/15 Year end Reporting:-

Sub-actions -

SP6806.01- In terms of social media plans, it was questioned what was being done to influence news print. It was reported that the Head of Policy and Performance had visited local newspaper editors and would soon be visiting the national newspaper editors too and that more could be done to improve communications with the press.

Concerns were expressed regarding leaked reports which the Head of Policy and performance undertook to consider in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Service and Improvement Plans for 2015/18:-

Key Performance Measures -

SO6.5 01- Comment was made on the low performance against the proportion of members agreeing that they get good information, and the need to improve the clarity of papers and the quality of the performance measures. The Head of Policy and Performance confirmed that he would be working with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to improve on this governance issue.

SO6.8 03 - Concern was expressed regarding recent figures for the percentage of South Ayrshire residents who felt this Council was good at communicating services. It was noted that improvements are being made that should raise this figure but that this style of survey was perhaps not the best at indicating the true picture.

Decided: to agree

- (1) that there were no substantive points requiring to be addressed by Services in the 2014/15 year end reporting or the refresh of their Service and Improvement Plans for 2015/18; and
- (2) to remit the 2015-18 Service and Improvement Plans to the Council meeting scheduled to take place on 25th June 2015 for approval.

Councillor Hunter left the meeting during consideration of the above item and Councillor McFarlane left the meeting at the conclusion of the item.

3. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. Service Review of Public Affairs.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 1st June 2015 by the Head of Policy and Performance detailing the findings of the Service Review of Public Affairs.

Matters were raised regarding a staffing issue and the timescales for the introduction of the findings from the Review. It was noted that a wider Review may have been useful and still could be undertaken in the future and that all the procedures and processes had been undertaken to get to the current position.

Decided: to agree that the findings and recommendations from the Service Review be presented to the Leadership Panel, scheduled to take place on 16th June 2015.

The meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.