

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 8th November 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Kirsty Darwent (Chair), Andy Campbell, Peter Convery, Hugh Hunter, Nan McFarlane, Brian McGinley and John Wallace.

Apology: Councillor Mary Kilpatrick.

Attending: V. Andrews, Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; D. Hutchison, Director of Educational Services; M. Baker, Head of Policy and Performance; K. O'Hagan, Head of Employee and Customer Services; J. Cronin, Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure; W. Carlaw, Democratic and Governance Manager; J. Esslemont, Strategic Planner; 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. Minutes of previous meeting.

The minutes of 27th September 2016 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme.

There was submitted an update of the Action Log and Work Programme for this Panel ([issued](#)).

Decided: with regard to:-

- (1) the Action Log, to note various updates; and
- (2) the Work Programme, to note the current position.

4. **Service and Improvement Plans – Six Month Performance Update to 30th September 2016.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 1st November 2016 by the Head of Policy and Performance updating the Panel on the performance of services over the six month period to 30th September 2016 against the 2016-18 Service and Improvement Plans (SIPs).

Educational Services:-

The Director of Educational Service gave an overview of the SIP he was responsible for and advised:-

- that the actions within the SIP were on track;
- that most of the actions were based around delivery within the school year i.e. August to June each year;
- that in February, when attainment data was available through Insight (the national benchmarking tool) that results would be presented at a Members Seminar, showing the attainments of schools split into Wards; and
- that a seminar for Members on the Attainment Challenge would be held on 7th December 2016.

Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment:-

The Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment gave an overview of the SIPs she was responsible for and advised:-

- that although there had been recent industrial action within Waste Management, it had been resolved and double shifting had been introduced in line with the original objectives and the required savings had been achieved. She praised the Waste Management Team for the manner in which they dealt with the challenges during this time;
- that the Head of Neighbourhood Services had concluded a series of employee workshops which had proven to be very successful;
- of the work that had been undertaken on Participatory Budgeting in six localities, that involved more people in the decision process, and which had involved many young people;
- of involvement in the Children’s Services Inspection, where two examples of good practice from the Directorate had been highlighted, these being an educational programme designed to help prevent homelessness and the Youth Strategy Implementation Group;
- of the work supporting economic development, in particular supporting a group of Ayrshire engineering companies who had come together to collaborate on winning contracts;
- of two announcements being expected shortly in relation to Invest South Ayrshire;

- that this Authority was in the top ten in Scotland for its food hygiene compliance rates;
- that there had been increased revenue from as a result of the improved facilities at the Belleisle golf course;
- that this Council was now back to being one of the top three Councils in Scotland for its performance in dealing with planning applications; and
- that this Council continued to be the second best performing Council in Scotland in terms of rent collection.

Resources, Governance and Organisation:-

The Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation gave an overview of the SIPs she was responsible for and advised:-

- that the Directorate continued to exceed targets for supporting young people into employment;
- that nine graduate interns had recently been recruited into the Directorate;
- that the Council's Annual Accounts and Audit process had been commended by Audit Scotland;
- that there had been solid performance with regard to invoice payments;
- that recent work with regard to the delivery of two Elections within a short space of time had been carried out well and that work was underway with regard to the next elections in May 2017;
- that delivery of procurement services continued to be very successful as reflected in the PCIP (Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme assessment);
- that the delivery of non-housing capital programme was on target and spending within budget;
- that there was confidence that the new payroll system would be implemented this month;
- that with regard to the ICT Review, the Digital Transformation Manager would be in post very soon which would help move this Review forward again; and
- that work relating to Records Management, new proposed Office accommodation and the 'Transform South Ayrshire' digital transformation programme was progressing well.

Policy and Performance:-

Overview:-

Having heard a member of the Panel enquire as to whether discussions and arrangements were yet underway with regard to Ayr again hosting the Scottish International Airshow and further major golfing events, the Head of Policy and Performance reported that there was already ongoing discussion with regard to the Airshow being hosted again in Ayr next year and the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment reported that this Council worked closely with the Royal and Ancient to ensure that major golfing events were held in South Ayrshire whenever possible.

Following a question from a Member regarding the South Ayrshire Way, the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that it developed out of Leadership Engagement work with third and fourth tier managers and was about refining the culture within the organisation, by engaging with employees to promote positive behaviours that would help the Council to perform well externally.

PP10.3 – Explore ways of introducing better customer and audience information and “insight” into the planning, targeting and measurement of communications activities and campaigns:-

A Member of the Panel advised that making a strategic assessment of where the organisation was going and how we are performing was a vital piece of work and required to be communicated effectively. The Head of Policy and Performance confirmed that this was an ongoing piece of work that was being addressed in a number of ways, including a South Ayrshire 1000 newsletter which would be circulated to Members and the Best Value Working Group recently met to start to review engagement and consultation as part of the response to the recent Best Value follow-up audit.

Educational Services:-

Overview:-

Following questions from Members of the Panel, the Director of Educational Services advised:-

- (1) that “Virtual Comparators” had been created for every school and was a way of comparing individual pupils with similar needs and similar backgrounds and was seen as a good way of making comparisons;
- (2) that more required to be done to support looked after children and that the Corporate Parenting Board would help support this;
- (3) that it was important to encourage children from all backgrounds in participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme; and
- (4) that although there was not a high demand for Gaelic in South Ayrshire, there would be a Gaelic classroom in Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr in the near future and that East Ayrshire Council had significant resources for supporting the Gaelic language.

Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment:-

Overview:-

A member of the Panel confirmed their recognition of the challenging environment faced by this Directorate and was encouraged by the work undertaken to build positive relationships with employees.

Following questions from Members, the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment advised:-

- (1) that the performance of street cleansing in South Ayrshire would be addressed as its performance had dropped from the first quartile to the second quartile; and
- (2) that the appointment of the Funding Officer to the Council would help organisations in South Ayrshire in the securing of the LEADER funding.

CM21.3 – Ensure the new Community Partnership Forum made up of representatives from locality level is established and functioning effectively:-

A member of the Panel advised that he was delighted to see that there was great enthusiasm for the Locality Planning Group in Troon.

With regard to the Participatory Budgeting events being supported via community benefit clauses, the Panel agreed that slides shown at a recent procurement presentation should be recirculated to Members and that, in future, information provided in the Members Bulletin regarding procurement should be expanded to provide more information on community benefit clauses.

CM16.1x Prepare a report on the options for a leisure trust:-

Following a question from a Member of the Panel regarding progress on this matter, the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment advised that a review of business rates was in progress and that until this was completed it was difficult to progress this matter.

NS6.2x – Implementation of approved plan to form infrastructure to enable the new Troon Cemetery to be ready and available:-

After a Member of the Panel advised of his concern that those paying for funerals at this Cemetery may be penalised if the burial had to be in a concrete chamber, it was advised that a uniform charging policy will be maintained across South Ayrshire.

Resources, Governance and Organisation:-

Overview:-

Following questions from members of the Panel regarding Procurement, it was noted that opportunities for community benefits, such as apprenticeships, were actively pursued; that in looking to support the local economy that there was a close working relationship between the Procurement and Enterprise Teams of the Council; and that the Procurement Strategy directly linked to the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives. It was further noted that the Executive Director would review the information provided to members regarding Procurement in the Members' Bulletin to provide more information on community benefits and local sourcing.

FI7.1 – Seek to improve efficiency and establish new ways of working through the consideration of new technology within traditional budgeting and budgetary control processes:-

Having heard a Member of the Panel enquire as to why this had taken so long and that the target date had been rescheduled, the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that whilst this was a key piece of work, it had required to take its place in the queue in relation to other commitments. It reflected the need for more detailed planning and prioritisation to deliver such projects within agreed timescales.

FI12.2 – Introduce a new Council ICT strategy as part of the ICT revised service operating model implementation programme:-

Having heard a Member of the Panel advise of their concern that progress to date was only at 10%, the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that preparatory strategic work had been done including the examination of the approach taken by other authorities; that work would progress with the impending appointment of the Digital Transformation Manager; and that the rescheduled due date of 31st March 2017 would be met.

FI13.1 – Undertake a review of the Council's existing fees and charges policies and put in place a clear basis for Council charges in the context of the Council Plan and Strategic Objectives.

Having heard a Member of the Panel advise of his concern that only fifty percent of this project was complete and that graduate intern who had undertaken this work had secured alternative employment in December 2015 with no progress since, the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that a new batch of graduate interns were now in place and one of these was to be assigned to this piece of work.

Decided: that there were no aspects that it wished to scrutinise further at this point and that there were no concerns that it wished to draw to the attention of the Leadership Panel.

5. **Employee Engagement Survey and Focus Groups.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 28th October 2016 by the Head of Employee and Customer Services providing an update on the action taken following completion of the Employment Engagement Survey and subsequent focus groups.

The Head of Employee and Customer Services advised that the next Survey was due to commence.

A member of the Panel enquired if the response to the survey and focus groups had identified themes or common issues for action. The Head of Employee and Customer Services confirmed that a number of themes had emerged, some of which had already been addressed through the South Ayrshire Way and others, which would be progressed through the Transform South Ayrshire programme or through other OD initiatives.

Following questions from Members of the Panel,

- (1) the Democratic and Governance Manager reported that a Members/Officers Working Group was considering various aspects of support to Members and that a survey would be circulated to Members in due course;
- (2) it was noted that progress would be monitored at Directorate level and through the Departmental Joint Consultative Committees; and
- (3) it was agreed that with a forty-seven percent response to the last survey, it was pleasing to see that alternative methods for employees undertaking the survey who did not have access to a computer was continuing to be explored.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

6. **Payroll, HR Business and Resourcing Service Review – Interim Report.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 28th October 2016 by the Head of Employee and Customer Services updating this Panel of progress that has been made to implement the Payroll, HR and Business Resourcing Service Review.

The Head of Employee and Customer Services advised that there had been significant progress with regard to this Service Review and that the new payroll system in the Council would be going “live” next week.

A Member of the Panel asked if the new payroll system would reduce the delay that currently existed for some employees between the start of their employment and the date of their first pay. The Head of Employee and Customer Services advised that the new system would reduce reliance on manual processes and streamline procedures, which until now had required a relatively early cut-off date for payroll, with the result that any such delay should be reduced. Plans to further automate processes and increase the opportunity for manager to enter payroll data directly to the system would result in further improvements in this respect.

The Panel agreed that congratulations should be passed on to the staff involved in this Review.

Decided:

- (1) to note the actions taken and the next steps proposed, as outlined in [Appendix 1](#) of the report; and
- (2) to agree that future updates on progress were included in a single report covering the implementation of all service reviews, in January 2017 and six monthly thereafter.

Councillor McGinley left the meeting at this point.

7. Planning Performance Framework.2015-16.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 31st October 2016 by the Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure setting out the Council's performance against the National Planning Performance Framework for 2015-16.

The Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure advised that the Council's Planning Service were keen to increase pre-application meetings and of the number of appeals recently upheld by the Local Review Body.

After a Member of the Panel raised the issue of the Scottish Government introducing a "penalty mechanism" to allow the Scottish Government to reclaim planning fees, the Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure advised that this would not affect the Local Review Body. The Panel also discussed the Council's Rural Housing Policy.

It was agreed that the Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure would send a Briefing Note to Members on the uptake of the new two tiered pre-application service being offered with an option for site-specific advice at a charge.

Decided: to note the performance information, as detailed in [Appendix 1](#) of the report.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.