

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 26th January 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present: Councillors Kirsty Darwent (Chair), Andy Campbell, Peter Convery, Mary Kilpatrick, Nan McFarlane, Brian McGinley and John Wallace.
- Apology: Councillor Hugh Hunter.
- Attending: V. Andrews, Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; D. Hutchison, Director of Educational Services; R. Riddiough, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; M. Baker, Head of Policy and Performance; C. Monaghan, Head of Communities; G. Collins, Manager (Community Engagement); M. Burns, Co-ordinator (Community Learning and Development); A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer; and A. Mackenzie, External Auditor.

1. Chairs Remarks.

The Chair welcomed

- (1) Councillor John Wallace to his first meeting of this Panel; and
- (2) Alan Mackenzie, External Auditor, to the meeting.

2. 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.

3. Minutes of previous meetings.

The minutes of 10th November 2015 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

4. 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 the current position and that various updates would be made; and
- (2) the Work Programme, to note the current position.

5. Complaints: Scrutiny Update to 30th September 2015.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 21st December 2015 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

- (1) providing complaints performance information for this Council from October 2014 to September 2015; and
- (2) reflecting the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), as well as information on how the Council could improve its services, following Stage Two and Ombudsman complaints.

After the Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave an introduction to the report, it was noted that there was a need for analysis and narrative to be provided in the future, in order to 'make sense' of the data.

Clarification was sought and provided in relation to a number of issues, including

- (a) the possibility to "drill down" on the top reason for complaints in Stages 1 and 2, namely "Quality of Service/Service Provision" as this was a wide ranging piece of data;
- (b) the need to ensure that complaints that were upheld lead to service improvements that were implemented across the board and reported upon;
- (c) complaints made directly to Elected Members where it was noted that from 1st April 2016, a tracking system for Members' enquiries would commence that could be used to consistently capture these complaints ; and
- (d) the benefits of benchmarking against "similar" Councils;

Decided: having scrutinised the contents of the report, to agree that a further update report on this matter would be presented to Panel, at the meeting scheduled to take place on 31st May 2016, providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1st October 2015 to 31st March 2016.

6. Service Review of Grants.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 20th January 2016 by the Head of Communities detailing the findings of the Service Review of Grants.

The Head of Communities gave a presentation relating to the proposals for the Service Review of Grants that had been undertaken.

Clarification was sought and provided in relation to a number of issues, including

- (1) the proposed External Funding Officer post, if the post holder should be set a target for external funding achieved based on a salary ratio, and if the post should be filled on a full-time or temporary basis;
- (2) the issue of Council grants being used for match funding;
- (3) the effect the proposed changes would have on organisations who annually received funding from the Council;
- (4) the timescales for grants being approved under the proposed arrangements;
- (5) the extent to which the External Funding Officer post would have an input into locality groups; and
- (6) the proposed award to each Locality and process costs and to note that this flat rate award to each Locality may alter in the future and that the role of elected members in the future process needed to be clarified.

Decided: having scrutinised the report, to agree that the recommendations contained within paragraph 5.1 of the report, be referred to the Leadership Panel, scheduled to take place on 16th February 2016 with a note of the issues raised by the Panel as set out above.

7. Communities Service Review Findings.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 20th January 2016 detailing the findings of the Communities Service Review.

The Head of Communities gave a presentation relating to the proposals arising from the Communities Service Review.

Clarification was sought and provided in relation to a number of issues, including

- (1) the proposal to recharge utility bills to community associations prior to them receiving income from lets;
- (2) the closure of Tarbolton Community Centre and the link to the running costs of the forthcoming community school being built in Tarbolton;
- (3) community safety work in South Ayrshire, which was noted as being exceptional;

- (4) inequalities work, where it was noted that a Community Planning Group had been formed and the importance of that contribution from the Council's partners;
- (5) the fact that front line staff were being protected by this Review; and
- (6) the importance of quarterly meetings for each locality.

Decided: having scrutinised the report, to agree that the recommendation of the Review, as detailed in the report, be submitted to the Leadership Panel, scheduled to take place on 16th February 2016 with a note of the issues raised by the Panel as set out above.

8. 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 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

9. Service Review of Democratic Support.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 15th December 2015 detailing the proposals arising from the Service Review of the Democratic Support Service.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave an introduction and background to the report. Clarification was sought on various issues including

- (1) the layout of the reception area at the County Buildings and the siting of the mail room and print room and the cost effectiveness of any changes;
- (2) the use and cost effectiveness of the civic car;
- (3) the security of the County Buildings;
- (4) the savings that could be achieved by the proposals; and
- (5) the need for Elected Members to be consulted in relation to the support provided for them.

Decided: having scrutinised the findings and proposals for the Democratic Support Service, to agree that, having taken on board this Panel's comments, the findings and the following proposals be presented to the Leadership Panel for approval, scheduled to take place on 16th February 2016, to include:-

- (a) clarification that there should be Elected Member representation on the appropriate Working Group to consider arrangements for the change of administration in 2017;
- (b) an assessment of the need for the Council to have a civic car; and
- (c) further explanation regarding the revenue savings that may arise from recommendation 2(b) of the report.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.