

## **SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 31st May 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Attending: V. Andrews, Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; D. Hutchison, Director of Educational Services; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; R. Riddiough, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; M. Baker, Head of Policy and Performance; K. Leinster, Head of Community Health and Care; W. Carlaw, Democratic and Governance Manager; K. Briggs, Legal and Licensing Manager; A. Brown, Co-ordinator (Legal Services, Property and Contracts); C. McMenamain, Co-ordinator (Legal Services Litigation); and A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer.

### **1. Introductory Remarks.**

Having heard the Chair, the Panel welcomed Charlotte Rodger, Clerical Assistant who had recently taken up a post in Committee Services and was here to observe 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 meeting.**

The minutes of 26th April 2016 ([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 various updates; and
- (2) the Work Programme, to note the current position and that further updates would be added.

**5. Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2014/15.**

With reference to the minutes of 23rd February 2016 (Page 2, paragraph 5) there was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 23rd May 2016 by the Head of Policy and Performance updating the Panel on the publication of further information against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and for it to consider where further scrutiny of this information might be helpful to drive improvement.

Having heard a member of the Panel, it was noted that 2014/15 targets were available and that the information would be amended to show this when presented again to Panel.

**Children's Health Care and Criminal Justice.**

**CHC 40 LGBF – The gross cost of “children looked after” in residential based services per child per week:-**

Members of the Panel enquired why the Council's costs were high for this measure compared to the national average; why the trend was one of increase year on year; and why the cost had increased so significantly in the last year. The Head of Community Health and Care Services explained that these costs reflected ensuring staff were available in sufficient numbers and with appropriate training to look after children in South Ayrshire, rather than elsewhere. It was queried whether the quality of care had increased and it was explained that since the opening of the new children's home, resources had been targeted to allow more children to be cared for in our community. It was then queried whether there was an action plan to bring down costs and the Head of Community Health and Care Services confirmed there was.

**CHC 41 LGBF – The gross cost of “children looked after” in a community setting per child per week:-**

A member of the Panel enquired why the Council's costs were high for this measure compared to the national average and why the trend was one of increase year on year. The Head of Community Health and Care Services explained that the Council was using a higher number of externally provided foster carers during 2014/15 at a higher rate than in-house foster carers, but that a recruitment drive for in house foster carers was now bringing costs down and allowing more children to be looked after within our own area.

In relation to these two measures, it was agreed that the Head of Community Health and Care Services provide Members with a Briefing Note on the background to these measures and the work being done to reduce costs.

### **Community Health and Care Services**

#### **SO3.1 04 – LGBF – Percentage of people with intensive needs receiving care at home, rather than in a care home or hospital.**

A member of the Panel enquired why the percentage of people receiving intensive care at home had fallen year on year to 31.5% when we were trying to keep people looked after in the community. The Head of Community Health and Care Services explained the success of the Enablement programme in helping people not to require care at home. He also explained the work being done to avoid older people requiring to be treated by acute hospital services, which often was a route to them going into care homes. It was queried why despite this work South Ayrshire's performance was moving in the opposite direction to the national trend. It was agreed that a Briefing Note be sent to Members providing detail on the numbers involved and the work being done to address the issues.

#### **SO3.1 06 LGBF – Self-directed support spend for people aged over 18 as a percentage of total social work spend on adults.**

Given the apparent low performance compared to the Scottish average, a member of the Panel sought clarification as to whether there were particular issues around the percentage spend within Ayrshire and what the Council's approach was to progressing what was meant to be about empowerment. The Head of Community Health and Care Services advised the Panel that in figures just about to be released, that this Council was the eighth best performing Council in Scotland for self-directed support. Discussion took place over the basis for such a discrepancy in figures, and it was agreed that a note be provided to Members on how both sets of benchmark figures were calculated.

**Decided:** to agree the actions as detailed above.

### **6. Service and Improvement Plans – Six Month Performance Update to 31st March 2016.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 23rd May 2016 by the Head of Policy and Performance updating the Panel on the performance of services over the six month period to 31st March 2016 against the 2015-18 Service and Improvement Plans (SIPs).

#### **Policy and Performance:-**

Having heard the Head of Policy and Performance, the Panel noted that actions that were 100% complete were included in this report as when the new 2016-18 SIPs had been considered for approval, they had excluded these completed actions.

#### **PP 8.2 – Agree two year programme for business improvement projects:-**

Following a question from a Member, the Head of Policy and Performance reported that the due date had been extended by a year to reflect the fact that it was a two year programme.

### **Educational Services:-**

#### **ED 12.1x - Review and update arrangements for Devolved School Management:-**

The Director of Educational Services advised that although progress was indicated at 100% complete, only once the achievement of current and future savings were settled, a root and branch review would be undertaken to simplify the scheme.

#### **ED 1.1x – Implement new national qualifications:-**

Following questions from various Members, and having heard the Director of Educational Services, the Panel noted that work was still to be undertaken in the implementation of the new qualifications.

#### **ED 2.1x - Develop revised guidance and protocols for Early Years Forums:-**

A Member of the Panel queried why progress was only at 30% when it was due to be completed by 30th April 2016. The Director agreed to provide a Briefing Note in explanation over this matter.

#### **ED 7.3 Continue to develop a strategic approach to Closing the attainment gap**

A Member of the Panel queried why this had been moved from the SIP to a Team Plan. The Director of Educational Services advised that this was a matter of judgment as part of pruning and streamlining the plan and that progress would continue to be reflected and reported through the SIP in the relevant outcome measures.

### **Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment.**

#### **CM 7.3 - Develop a programme of capacity building for external groups:-**

A Member of the Panel queried the omission of Prestwick from the list of locations where sessions were offered. It was agreed a Briefing Note be provided to Members.

#### **CM13.2 – Develop new programmes to support young people to engage in positive activities based on evaluation results and impact assessment:-**

A Member of the Panel asked for more detail over the Council's partnership with Nestle. It was agreed that a Briefing Note be provided to Members.

#### **CM 17.1 - Develop, consult and gain agreement to a South Ayrshire Council Financial Inclusion Strategy:-**

A Member of the Panel asked for more detail over the approach being taken. It was agreed that Members be provided with more detail by way of a Briefing Note.

#### **EDL 9.3 Submit Proposed Plan to Examination:-**

It was clarified that this action related to the Ayr Town Centre Retail Development Plan and that this had been submitted to the Scottish Government in May 2016.

EDL 14.4 - Develop a Leisure Facility and Sports Pitches Strategy Action Plan:-

Following a question from a Member, the Panel noted that work was ongoing with the evaluation of whether to develop an Arms Length External Organisation. It was clarified that whilst reporting to Council in June was a possibility, it was more likely that this would now happen after the summer recess as a result of the ongoing review of Business Rates Scheme being undertaken by the Scottish Government, the outcome of which would be a critical consideration.

HF1.1 Upgrade kitchen facilities; HF3.1 Upgrade of Common Rooms; HF15.1 Procure and Implement Work Scheduling System; HF15.4 Alternative to Schedule of Rates:-

Members of the Panel queried the reasons why all of these projects had slipped by twelve months and the implications of this. The Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment explained the individual issues around these and explained that the new dates were definitely achievable. The Panel agreed that an update on all of these projects should be included in the next six monthly report.

HF11.1 – Develop a communication strategy/plan for housing customers and implement:-

Following a question from a Member, the Panel noted that communication was being improved across the service through a number of initiatives, which alongside the new Council Communication Strategy, meant there was no longer a need to progress a standalone plan.

HF2.1 – Undertake evaluation of Head Teacher feedback from schools with imported meals and HF2.2 – Undertake pupil survey of school catering:-

The Panel agreed that the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment would provide a briefing note to Members on the outcome of these actions.

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

The Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment advised that there had been uncertainty over this matter in relation to discussions with SEPA, and because of this, the timescale for the action had been extended by twelve months.

NS 7.2 – Monitor progress of the risk assessed priority programme for cemeteries and churchyard boundary walls by Estates and Asset Management:-

Members of the Panel queried why the completion date for this action had been extended by two years and why the reported progress was only 10% when the original completion date was 31st March 2016. The Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment agreed that a detailed explanation would be provided by way of a Briefing Note to Members.

### **Resources, Governance and Organisation:-**

The Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that there had been difficulties and challenges faced with regard to ICT but these were being dealt with proactively.

#### **FI 9.1 – Review and refresh a medium term financial plan annually:-**

It was explained that the revised Plan would be brought forward to Members by December 2016 to align with the timing for the 17/18 settlement from the Scottish Government, which it was hoped would also cover future years' budgets.

**(1) LD 8.1x – Service Review of Archives, (2) LD 8.4 - Service Review of Registration, (3) LD 8.6 – Service Review of Licensing; and (4) LD 8.7 - Service Review of Information Governance.**

A Member raised the matter of the above four actions being removed from the service review schedule. The Panel noted that (1) and (2) above would be brought back into the schedule in due course once the relocation of the Archive service was resolved; and (3) and (4) had been removed following a re-assessment by CMT of their relative priority.

A Member of the Panel asked how the service review programme fitted with the proposed Project Management Office. The Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised of the relationship, along with links to the Business Improvement Team and graduate interns. The Panel further noted that proper planning at the beginning of reviews was important to fully appreciate their complexity and that the Project Management Office would flag up any issues encountered during the reviews.

**FI 13.1 – Undertake a review of the Council's existing fees and charges policies and put in place a clear basis for the Council charges in the context of the Council Plan and Strategic Objectives.**

A Member of the Panel queried if this work would be completed by 30th September 2016. The Executive Director - Resources, Governance and Organisation reported that as this was a substantial piece of work, she was not confident that it would be given that it was intended to be undertaken by a graduate intern who had left post to move to another position. Steps would be taken to progress as quickly as possible.

**Decided:** to agree the actions as detailed above

## **7. Complaints – Scrutiny Update to 31st March 2016.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 23rd May 2016 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services providing complaints performance information for the period from 1st October 2015 to 31st March 2016 and reflected the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), as well as information on how the Council improved its services following Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints.

The Panel agreed that, in future, the information presented to this Panel should show the 'themes' that had been identified and what could be done to improve the Service.

It was noted that a third of people who received a response to their complaint did not understand it and further consideration is to be given on how best to follow up on this issue.

There was discussion on the difference between a complaint and a request.

Following further discussion, the Panel noted that there was benchmarking work underway and that the Council would be investigating the good practice that other local authorities were pursuing.

**Decided:** having scrutinised the report, to request a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1st April to 30th September 2016.

## **8. Service Review – Legal Services.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 23rd May 2016 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advising of the findings of the Legal Services service review, as detailed in [Appendix 1](#) of the report, prior to formal consideration by the Leadership Panel.

After the Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report, there was a presentation regarding the proposed Case Management System that would operate within the Service, should the findings from the Review be approved. The Panel were very supportive of this proposal.

After a Panel Member enquired, with the introduction of the new System, would there be a reduction in secretarial support for the Service, it was noted that it was not proposed to reduce staffing.

A Panel member enquired if, sometime in the future, it was proposed to increase the legal fees charged by this Council. It was noted that fees would not be increasing at this time and that there was need for the fees that were being charged to be clear and transparent. It was also noted that there was no intention to charge fees based simply on hours worked.

Clarification was provided to Members that the ICT Service were positive about Legal Services using an access database at this time and that there was no intention, currently, to roll out the System to the Licensing Section of the Council as they currently used Uniform. It was further noted that there were a number of access databases across the Council at present and that their use was not a solution for the long term.

**Decided:** to agree that the findings and recommendations of the Legal Services service review be presented to the Leadership Panel at its meeting scheduled to take place on of 14th June 2016.

The meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.