

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.

Minutes of meeting held remotely via Skype for Business,
on 10 February 2021 at 10 a.m.

Present: Councillors Alec Clark (Chair), Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Andy Campbell, Iain Campbell, Chris Cullen, Hugh Hunter, Derek McCabe and Bob Pollock.

Attending: M Newall, Assistant Director – People, W. Carlaw, Service Lead - Democratic Governance, T. Leijser, Service Lead – Economy and Regeneration, G. Cockburn – Procurement Co-ordinator, Y. Gibo – Auditor, and C. Buchanan, Committee Services Officer.

Opening Remarks.

The Chair took the sederunt and confirmed that today's meeting was not open to the press and public, which was permissible under the COVID-19 legislation. He also confirmed to Members the procedures to conduct this meeting. The Chair announced to Members that the meeting was being recorded for minuting purposes only.

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 17 November 2020 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme.

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

The Panel

Decided: to note the current status of the Action Log and Work Programme.

4. Council Procurement to Support the Local Economy – Progress Update.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 1 February 2021 by the Procurement Co-ordinator allowing Members the opportunity to review the collaborative efforts of the Council's Procurement Service and Economy Regeneration Service in supporting the local, South Ayrshire economy through Council Procurement. The Procurement Co-ordinator provided a verbal introduction to the report.

A Member of the Panel enquired, with COVID-19 and Brexit, if progress on achieving strategic objectives had been hindered for the long term and the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that the figures within Appendix 4 of the report were calculated prior to the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic and that he was unaware of any impact on figures related to Brexit. The Procurement Co-ordinator clarified that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic South Ayrshire Council had sought to procure

locally where possible and that there had been helpful guidance from the Scottish Government in relation to this. The Co-ordinator further advised that the Procurement Service would look to consider alternative local suppliers.

A Member of the Panel enquired, if when discussing local businesses, there was any regard to neighbouring authorities in wider Ayrshire or if 'local' was considered to be South Ayrshire only and the Procurement Co-ordinator highlighted that the 'spend' figures related to South Ayrshire.

Following a question from a Member of the Panel about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and whether this had further localised South Ayrshire Council's use of companies or if the majority of companies utilised were nationwide, the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that the information gathered by the Scottish Government's Procurement Information Hub would have local trade firms classed as 'national' due to their company Headquarters being outwith South Ayrshire, despite workers and employees being local and were unfortunately not classed under 'local spending'. He further outlined that Procurement's efforts were to increase local figures by having a suite of compliant contracts in place, moving away from national frameworks slightly and that, as a result of these efforts, the local food group in South Ayrshire had been developed.

A Member of the Panel enquired how sustainable local contracting would be going forward and what the level of commitment to these suppliers was and the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that there were many benefits to using national frameworks, however, the Council do consider where they can use an alternative local supplier and that, in the majority of cases, the Council was not tied into lengthy national contracts.

Having heard a Member of the Panel enquire how much input the Community Wealth Board could have in assisting with local spending, the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that the Community Wealth Building was a separate workstream which South Ayrshire Council Procurement was leading on regionally; and that the Community Wealth Commission was scheduled to meet on 29 March 2021 and would look at increasing local spend.

The Chair enquired if South Ayrshire Council Procurement had any influence over North and East Ayrshire Councils and if there was an opportunity for a joint strategy between Councils and the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that neighbouring authorities and local agencies were looking to benchmark and work together looking at a number of contract pipelines and the potential to collaborate on some of these.

A Member of the Panel enquired, if there would be contracts to support the employment of apprentices and if there was any incentive put forward to larger companies to utilise local businesses within contracts and the Procurement Co-ordinator outlined that there were pillars within the framework which looked at this as well as the consistencies in the approach to these types of contracts which tied in with the Council framework. He further advised that the Scotland Excel's framework had improved these incentives and that contracts could now split the requirement to smaller lots to allow work for local companies.

Having heard the Procurement Co-ordinator state that if local companies were being utilised, purchase cost may be higher overall but carbon footprint may be reduced due to businesses delivering within a closer radius, the Chair then enquired how quality and value of produce and resources was measured and maintained locally and the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that regular meetings had been scheduled with contracted suppliers, and that these companies would be given a scorecard where customers had assessed price and quality. He further outlined that local services were under pressure currently with budgets, however, scores were always looked at on a

regular basis. He advised that local service deliveries would have a huge positive impact on carbon footprint rather than these deliveries being nationwide.

A Member of the Panel enquired about the “intelligence” of local contract monitoring in relation to local workers, given the parameters of the recorded data, and asked if there had been any learning around the SDP (Supplier Development Programme) engagement event and the Procurement Co-ordinator advised that the SDP event had been moved to a virtual setting which perhaps did not reach as wide an audience as a face to face event, however, overall there had been a good response to this in relation to local businesses. He further advised that an event would be hosted remotely in April with various break out rooms to allow participants to ask questions.

The Service Lead – Economy and Regeneration specified that there had been a number of ongoing activities to build capacity, skills and capabilities in local companies whose capabilities were not always accredited and to identify various opportunities as well as identifying where certain skills were lacking in an attempt to build and strengthen these capabilities for local companies, to create wealth and enable fair working objectives.

The Procurement Co-ordinator added that Procurement had the ability to challenge any errors noted in relation to Scottish Government figures relative to all spends and advised that this task was carried out annually.

Having scrutinised the contents of the report, the Panel

Decided: to request that an updated annual report, on the Council’s performance in supporting the local economy through procurement, was prepared for a future meeting of this Panel by February 2022.

The meeting ended at 10:55 a.m.