

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes of a remote meeting
on 8 June 2021 at 10 a.m.

- Present: Councillors Alec Clark (Chair), Andy Campbell, Douglas Campbell, Derek McCabe and Bob Pollock.
- Apologies: Councillors Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Iain Campbell and Hugh Hunter.
- Attending: M. Newall, Assistant Director – People; W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; J. Bradley, Assistant Director – People; D. McVey, Team Leader – Democratic Governance; N. Gemmell, Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits; K. Anderson, Service Lead – Policy, Performance and Community Planning; M. Houston, Service Lead – Trading Standards and Environmental Health; K. Gallagher, Team Leader Golf – Sport, Leisure and Golf; and D. Mulgrew, 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 and that the meeting was being recorded for minuting purposes only.

The Chair then welcomed Councillor Douglas Campbell to his first meeting of this Panel and recorded his thanks to Councillor Chris Cullen for his contributions whilst on this Panel.

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 20 April 2021 ([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.

With regard to the Work Programme, the Chair highlighted the fact that some reports had been deferred from April due to the election. He stated that he would prefer that reports were heard on the date that they were scheduled to be considered if possible to avoid an unnecessary accumulation of reports to one Panel.

The Panel

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

4. **Complaints – Scrutiny Update - Period: 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 2 June 2021 by the Head of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services providing Members with complaints performance information for the period from 1 October 2020 – 31 March 2021 and comparing performance to the same reporting period in 2019/20 which reflects the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The Team Leader – Democratic Governance indicated to the panel that, although there was a decrease in complaints overall, the complaints being escalated to Stage 2 had increased.

Following a question from a member of the panel regarding the significant rise in the Stage 2 escalation process, the Assistant Director – People gave an update on the Leisure golf complaints as many complaints were in relation to this. Many complaints had resulted due to a change in procedures in line with Covid Government guidelines. Having noted an increase in the number of complaints regarding Golf, there was discussion thereon.

A member of the Panel raised a concern in the number of targeted complaints where groups had orchestrated a complaint with similar wording and the Assistant Director – People stated that all complaints had to be recorded through Listening to You which was a very time consuming process. The Head of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services was examining the process and also considering an unacceptable actions procedure in order to manage challenging and aggressive behaviour towards officers. The Panel welcomed this practise as all officers should be treated with respect at all times.

Following a question from a Member of the Panel regarding the 41 Housing complaints, the Panel would like to clarify how many concern contractors, it was agreed that the Assistant Director – People would provide Members with a Briefing Note in this regard.

A Member of the Panel advised that staff should be commended on the positive statistics shown in this report.

Having scrutinised the report, the Panel

Decided: to request a further report to a future meeting of this Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 April – 30 September 2021.

5. **Council Plan 2018-22 (2020 Mid-Term Refresh)- Report January to March 2021.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 2 June 2021 by the Assistant Director – People allowing Members the opportunity to review progress made towards achieving the strategic objectives contained within the Council Plan 2018-22 (2020 Mid-Term Refresh).

The Assistant Director -People gave an update on various issues arising from the report.

With regard to objective, COPL01.3a “Strengthen our tenants’ voice through the Implementation of our Tenant Participation Strategy” a Member of the Panel raised a concern in relation to the rent setting and the previous lack of tenant participation. The Service Lead – Policy, Performance and Community Planning advised that the process has been adapted to allow online participation of current members, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, and to encourage people to get involved. In the future they were hoping to offer a hybrid approach to allow greater numbers. There was also ongoing work with a Choir

and arranged gaming nights to involve the younger tenants to allow them the opportunity to have their say in a less formal setting.

With regard to objective, COPL02.1b “Implement the Educational Services Improvement Plan” and following a question from a Member of the Panel regarding the impact on pupils who had not engaged in remote learning, it was agreed that the Assistant Director – People would provide Members with a Briefing Note in this regard.

With regard to the objective, COPL04.2b “Deliver the office rationalisation programme to ensure the best use of Council-owned facilities” and following a concern from a Member of the Panel in regards to the John Pollock Centre, the Assistant Director – People confirmed that the NHS would complete the Covid 19 Vaccination programme in September 2021 and that the site had been identified as a Housing site.

With regard to objective, COPL05.2c “In consultation with stakeholders prepare and deliver the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2” a Member of the Panel raised a concern that this process was not yet complete. The Assistant Director – People would provide Members with a Briefing Note on the lengthy ratification process.

With regard to the objective, COPL06.1f “Raise awareness of the effects of car idling on air quality and climate change and the penalties for breaching the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (Scotland) Regulations 2003 through a programme of publicity” a Member of the Panel requested information on what was being done to raise awareness. The Service Lead – Trading Standards and Environmental Health informed the Panel that work had been delayed due to the Pandemic but would be resumed towards the end of the year involving a Social Media campaign and visits to Schools to highlight issues and patrol the school areas. Resources had been very limited to date but it was hoped that the deadline of 31 March 2022 would be met.

With regard to objective COPL02.1c “Continue to work with partners to provide meals during school holidays to support activity clubs within local communities” a Member of the Panel asked if any lessons had been learned to improve the 78% success rate during the summer holidays. The Assistant Director – People would provide members with a Briefing Note in this regard.

With regard to the objective COPL02.3b “Build collaborative capacity across the South West to improve outcomes for learners by offering and facilitating peer to peer, school to school and authority to authority professional learning” a Panel member had requested further information on how South Ayrshire Council felt the partnership had worked and what would be the next step involving Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Assistant Director – People would provide Members with a Briefing Note.

With regards to objective COPL02.4a “Deliver a programme of projects to ensure our schools and other community hubs are placed at the heart of our communities, with the required services delivered from the most suitable sites” a Panel Member requested information on progress in relation to this. The Assistant Director – People would provide Members with a Briefing Note in this regard.

With regard to the objective COPL02.5b “Expand the Housing First service to meet the needs of people with experience of repeat homelessness and complex needs” a Member of the Panel asked for clarification in relation to the “Ending Homelessness Together” funding asking if procedures required to be addressed to provide a better service to existing tenants also. The Service Lead - Policy, Performance and Community Planning explained they were working closely with Rapid Housing and Housing First to meet the complex needs of homeless tenants and the need to follow legislation for existing tenants also. He advised the Panel that the allocations policy was currently being updated by the Service Lead – Housing Services.

The Panel commended the excellent work which had been undertaken by Council employees despite increasing pressures and additional workload throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Panel having considered the progress through the narrative set out within [Appendix 1](#)

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

The meeting ended at 11 a.m.