

## **SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting held remotely  
on 20 April 2021 at 10 a.m.

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

Apologies: Councillors Iain Campbell and Derek McCabe.

Attending: D. Hutchinson, Depute Chief Executive and Director - People; M Newall, Assistant Director – People; L. Reid, Assistant Director – Place; K. Carr, Assistant Director – Place; M. Inglis, Head of Children’s Health; B. McClean, Head of Community Health and Care Services; K. Anderson, Service Lead - Policy, Performance and Community Planning; W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; K. Dalrymple, Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services; G. Hoey, Senior Manager - Children’s Services; L. Kerr, Co-ordinator – Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation – Culture and Sport; A. Mutch, Co-ordinator – Sports and Leisure; N. Williams – 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.

The Chair reported that the Service and Performance Panel scheduled to take place on Tuesday 18 May 2021 would be deferred due to its close proximity to the upcoming Elections. The next Service and Performance Panel Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 8 June 2021.

### **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 9 March 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.

The Panel

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

#### 4. [Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2019/20.](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 6 April 2021 by the Assistant Director – People, providing an update to Panel on the publication of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data for 2019/20 and for it to consider where scrutiny of this information could help drive improvement.

The Assistant Director – People highlighted that the 2019/20 data was set out within Appendix 1 of the report; outlined that Appendix 2 set out measures not included in Appendix 1, and highlighted that Councillors across Scotland were operating in a much more challenging environment than compared to when the LGBF reporting began in 2010/11. He outlined that the total revenue funding for Council had fallen 7.2% since 2010/11 and that the report confirmed that the funding position had been further exacerbated by pressures Councils had to manage within the last 10 years such as growing demographic pressures, increasing costs, additional impacts on demands from increasing levels of poverty and higher public expectations. He further advised that despite all of the funding challenges mentioned, the National Benchmarking Overview Report evidenced that Councils had continued to perform well in sustaining performance.

##### **Theme 1 Children's Services**

A Member of the Panel enquired in relation to CHN12c LGBF 'The average total tariff score for pupils in the senior phase (S6 based on the S4 cohort) Quintile 2' if now that children had returned to Schools, the average total tariff score for pupils could be measured like for like and the Depute Chief Executive and Director – People outlined that the data over the last year in relation to average total tariff score for pupils had been based on inferred attainment by professional judgement which could have caused a degree of grade inflation and that he did not feel a like for like comparison could be made this year as the SQA were sticking rigidly to evidenced attainment as opposed to inferred attainment. The Depute Chief Executive and Director – People explained that he felt this would provide a great challenge due to the long period of time that pupils had been out of an Educational setting and had been home learning.

A Panel Member asked if, in relation to CHN12b LGBF 'The average total tariff score for pupils in the senior phase (S6 based on the S4 cohort) Quintile 1' why the local tariff score for pupils in the senior phase was below the Scottish National average and the Depute Chief Executive and Director – People advised that these scores were calculated in relation to S6 based on the S4 cohort and that Ayr Academy in particular had a higher number of school leavers in S4. He further advised that he would be happy to bring forward further improvement reports and evidence stronger focus in relation to the monitoring of Ayr Academy's attainment and the Panel was in agreement that future reports on Ayr Academy's attainment progress would be helpful.

In relation to CHN03 LGBF 'Cost per pre-school education registration' a Member of the Panel enquired about the decision-making process for delivering the Early Learning and Childcare provision and the Depute Chief Executive and Director – People advised that the Quality Improvement Manager for Early Years and the Central Education Team had taken the decision to attempt to match the demand for Early Learning and Childcare however, extra physical capacity had been required due to COVID, and as a result, the Team had not been able to be as flexible as they would have liked, though every parent had been offered 1140 hours of childcare

## **Theme 2 Corporate Assets**

A Panel Member enquired in relation to the commentary of CORPASSET 2 LGBF 'Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition' if, all authorities were reporting on this in the same way and if there was suggestion that the data recorded was incorrect and commented that the Council was consistently below the Scottish Average despite the figures increasing annually each year and the Assistant Director – People outlined that he would provide a response within 7 days to all Panel Members in the form of a briefing note.

## **Theme 3 Corporate Services**

A full discussion took place in relation to 'Corporate Services' and a number of Panel Members expressed congratulations to all involved in relation to CORP03c LGBF 'The gender pay gap' the annually improving figure of the gender pay gap; CORP06a LGBF 'Sickness absence days per teacher' & CORP06b LGBF 'Sickness absence days per employee' which was less than the Scottish average; and CORP08 LGBF 'The percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days' which was also better than the Scottish average.

## **Theme 4 Adult Social Care**

A Panel Member noted within SW02 LGBF 'Self-Directed Support (Direct Payments) spend on adults 18+ as a % total social work spend on adults 18+' that the Council was well below the Scottish average and within the commentary a review was said to be undertaken and the Panel Member asked for information around why South Ayrshire Council's figures were below Scottish average and if a higher uptake of self-directed support was expected for the future. The Head of Community Health and Care Services outlined that in the last year a new digital Social Work record-keeping system entitled 'Care First' had been implemented and that within this new system an assessment tool guides Social Workers to ask questions and have conversations around self-directed support with service users, providing more flexibility of support which he said he felt would be a real advantage in terms of delivering better quality of services and providing better outcomes for service users.

A query was raised in relation to SW06 LGBF 'Rate of re-admission to Hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges' around the reasons why the Hospital re-admission rates in South Ayrshire were so high and the Head of Community Health and Care Services highlighted that Hospital re-admission rates was an area of focus for the Health and Care Service and outlined that a workshop was scheduled in the next few weeks, facilitated by The Scottish Government and in partnership with acute services. He advised that there was a clear pattern in South Ayrshire whereby people would stay for a shorter time in hospital and would then require a high level of care when they were discharged. He further advised that the workshop would look more closely at the reasons behind re-admission rates and how to improve on these effectively.

## **Theme 5 Economic Development and Planning**

A Member of the Panel asked if information could be provided in relation to ECON05 LGBF 'No of Business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population' and the sustainability of Business gateway start-ups such as how many business start-ups started in 2018 and were still trading, the fall off rates and support given for sustainability and another Panel Member highlighted that the figures shown in ECON06 LGBF 'Cost of Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 population' were below the Scottish average and that the intention in the narrative outlined the plan to develop this area in the Strategic Economic Plan for the Council, Vision 2030, The Panel member asked for reassurance of a Strategy to target both urban and more rural areas. The Assistant Director – People stated that he would provide a response to both questions to all Panel Members within 7 days, in the form of a briefing note.

A question was raised in relation to ECON02 'Cost of Planning and Building Services per planning application' and why these costs were high in relation to the Scottish average and if this was due to the costs tied to the Station Hotel in Ayr. The Assistant Director – Place confirmed that this was the case and the expectation was that the figures would decrease in the following year.

A Panel Member noted that the figures related to ECON07 LGBF 'Proportion of people earning less than the living wage' indicated that South Ayrshire was above the Scottish Average and enquired if a response could be provided around the reason for this and the Assistant Director – Place outlined that she would provide a briefing note within 7 days to all Panel Members.

In relation to ECON09 LGBF 'Town Centre Vacancy Rates' there was a query around why the figures were decreasing each year, another Panel Member asked if a breakdown could be given of the 5 Town Centres and the Assistant Director – People outlined that she would provide a more detailed response in relation to these questions to all Panel Members. On the same page of the report ECON10 LGBF 'Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes' a Panel Member highlighted the figure stating that 78% of land was available, and therefore only 22% of land was currently being used, the member asked what the Council was doing to bring businesses onto this land and bring figures down and the Assistant Director – People outlined that he would provide a briefing note within 7 days to all Panel Members.

### **Theme 6 Environmental Services**

A full discussion took place in relation to Panel Members' general dissatisfaction of the figures shown across ENV03a LGBF 'Net Cost of Cleaning per 1,000 population £' and ENV03c LGBF 'Street Cleanliness Index – Percentage Clean' and Members felt that there had been a noticeable decline in street cleanliness. The Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services explained to Members that the issues highlighted had been historical issues with regard to additional housing established in South Ayrshire over the last few years. The Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services outlined that there had been no additional resource for the new houses therefore, street cleansing employees were increasingly supporting refuse collections. He explained that, the implementation of the new operating model for collections was introduced in 2018-19, and the transitional plan for the new operating model highlighted that 7 additional employees were required however additional employees were unable to be introduced until the new operating model was fully implemented. The Council recognised these staffing issues as part of the budget setting process and in March 2020 and invested in the additional 7 employees, unfortunately there was a delay in the commencement of the additional employees due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services outlined that all issues were being taken seriously and that a significant input would be given to improving the Street Cleanliness Squad in the next 2 years and that The Waste Strategy had been recently presented to the Leadership Panel for discussion and scrutiny in March 2021 and would be ratified at the Full Council meeting in June 2021. All Panel Members requested future updates in relation to street cleaning.

### **Theme 7 Culture and Leisure Services**

Questions were raised in relation to Theme 7 'Culture and Leisure Services' around the costs incurred by the Council in relation to all of these individual facilities and responses were given by the Co-ordinator – Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation and the Co-ordinator – Sports and Leisure. All Panel Members were satisfied by the answers given in relation to the various costings and figures against the Scottish average dataset.

**Theme 8 Housing Services**

In relation to HSN01b LGBF 'Gross Rent Arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year (SHR)' a question was raised if there was a Strategy or Plan in place going forward, to mitigate some of the potential future challenges to face if an increased number of individuals were to begin falling into rent arrears due to redundancies and the economic challenges presented due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Assistant Director – Place advised that consideration had been given to creating a strategy in relation to the aforementioned potential issues and that discussions had taken place between himself, the Director – Place and the Service Lead - Policy, Performance and Community Planning though the details of the Strategy had not yet been finalised.

**Theme 9 Financial Sustainability**

A Panel Member asked in relation to FINSUS02 LGBF 'Total useable reserves as a % of Council annual budgeted revenue' why The Council was consistently at the lower end of the uncommitted reserves in line with the Scottish average shown and the Assistant Director – People outlined that he would provide a response within 7 days to all Panel Members in the form of a briefing note.

Having considered the contents of the report, the Panel

**Decided:** to note the contents of the report.

The meeting ended at 11:55 a.m.