

LEADERSHIP PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 17th August 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Bill McIntosh (Chair), Douglas Campbell, Peter Convery, Hywel Davies, Nan McFarlane, Robin Reid and Margaret Toner.

Attending: D. Anderson, Chief Executive; J. G. Peterkin, Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment; E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; H. Garland, Executive Director – Children and Community; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; I. Woodburn, Head Customer and Community Services; B. McNroy, Head of Services and School Management; A. Wilson, Head of HR and Organisational Development; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; D. Burns, Manager (Housing Policy and Strategy); C. Cox, Planning Manager; W. Gray, Property and Asset Manager; J. Thorburn, Enterprise Officer; E. Monson, Neighbourhood Services Manager; C. Downie, Public Communications Officer; D. Knight, Committee Services Officer; and A. Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer.

Community Services – Housing and Customer First.**1. Priority Need for Homeless Households.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 8th July 2010 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) seeking agreement to extend priority need status to all homeless applicants aged 45 and over, where the applicant was a single person or the head of the household;
- (2) advising
 - (a) that the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 had set the target that all Local Authorities should provide permanent accommodation to all unintentionally homeless households by the end of 2012; and
 - (b) that since the introduction of this Act, Councils had been increasing the categories of homeless applicants who qualified for permanent housing on a gradual basis to allow them to deal effectively with the impact of providing more permanent accommodation to homeless households;
- (3) reporting that during 2009/2010, the Council had awarded priority need status to 82% of all homeless households and therefore, had met the interim target set for the Council by the Scottish Government; and

- (4) intimating that to achieve the 2012 target, the Council would be required to continue extending the groups of homeless households who had been awarded priority need status until 100% was achieved.

Decided: to extend priority need status to all homeless applicants aged 45 and over, where the applicant is a single person or the head of the household as outlined in section 4 of the report.

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2. Interim Accommodation Project.

There was submitted a report (issued) 2nd August 2010 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) seeking approval for the development of a new Shared Interim Accommodation Project;
- (2) advising that the Homeless etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 had placed a statutory duty on Local Authorities to secure permanent accommodation for all unintentionally homeless households by the end of 2012 and this had placed a greater pressure on the Council to supply more accommodation to an increasing number of homeless households, as well as securing accommodation for people in housing need who were not homeless but were on the Council's housing waiting lists;
- (3) indicating
 - (a) that the largest proportion of homeless presentations were made by either single people or young people aged 16-25 who were leaving the family home for the first time;
 - (b) that some single people did not aspire to live alone and would prefer to share accommodation with others to reduce isolation and improve social networks; and
 - (c) that some young people do not have the skills required to live independently and required support and time to prepare for moving in to their own tenancy and there was currently a gap in the market for provision of interim accommodation, which people could move into whilst they were waiting to be allocated permanent housing;
- (4) proposing that the project be piloted for one year, with an evaluation being carried out and that recommendations on its future use and viability be submitted to the meeting of this Panel in August 2011; and
- (5) highlighting that the provision of support would cost £13,728 per annum which would be met from existing Homeless Strategy Funding Budgets.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel and clarification was sought in relation to support being available for young people moving into accommodation and the location of private sector letting properties and the Housing Policy and Strategy Manager responded accordingly.

Decided: to approve the development of an Interim Accommodation Project as outlined in section 4 of the report.

3. Scheme of Assistance (Formerly Private Sector Housing Grant).

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 21st July 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment and Executive Director – Children and Community

(1) advising

- (a) that the Scheme of Assistance Grant was allocated to local authorities to achieve three main objectives:-
- to allow people with disabilities to continue to live independently in their own homes by offering grant money to assist with adaptations;
 - to help tackle issues of disrepair and maintenance in the private sector; and
 - to provide support, information and advice to homeowners on ways to access private finance to assist with adaptations;
- (b) that on 1st April 2010, South Ayrshire Council implemented its new Scheme of Assistance in response to legislation for Homeowners and Private Landlords as agreed by Council on 9th February 2010 which increased the minimum percentage of grant available for disabled adaptations and encouraged homeowners to take responsibility for the repair and maintenance of their own homes by offering advice and information rather than grant money; and
- (c) that it was anticipated that the number of people aged 65 and over in South Ayrshire would increase by 48% by 2030;

(2) reporting

- (a) that this year's allocation of Scheme of Assistance Grant was made from the Council's General Capital grant in line with the Scottish Government's indicative value of £1,225,000 and that a balance of £121,548 was available from 2009/10 giving a total funding for 2010/11 of £1,364,548;
- (b) that expenditure for 2010/2011 as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report had been allocated in line with priorities identified in South Ayrshire's Scheme of Assistance and that the Scottish Government allocated Scheme of Assistance Grant on a 60% capital, 40% revenue split as follows:-

Capital

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Disabled Adaptations | £621,668 |
| Modernising Mixed Tenure Properties | £150,000 |
| Direct Action (Charging Orders) | £10,000 |
| Maintenance Account (Pilot) | £2,000 |
| Town Centre Buildings | £18,935 |

Revenue

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Care and Repair | £377,378 |
| Development and Environment Staffing | £75,000 |
| Bringing BTS Properties up to Standard | £71,567 |
| Provision of information and advice | £15,000 |
| Housing Act Implementation | £5,000; and |

- (c) that the amount available for disabled adaptations in 2010/2011 was less than in previous years partly due to the initial set up costs of moving to a new supplier for Care and Repair Services; and
- (3) seeking approval for the proposed 2010/11 Scheme of Assistance Grant as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

Decided:

- (i) to note the Private Sector Housing Grant expenditure and movement for 2009/2010, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to approve the proposed 2010/11 allocation of Scheme of Assistance Grant as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (iii) to approve management of the Scheme of Assistance Budget through the Children and Community Directorate; and
- (iv) to request that Officers continue to monitor demands on the Scheme of Assistance and maximise expenditure by the movement of funds between the activities as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report and that any changes would be reported to future meetings of this Panel.

4. Housing Capital Investment Programme 2010/11: Monitoring Report as at 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment and Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) informing of the progress being made with the Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2010/11 as at 30th June 2010 (Budget Monitoring Report 3) as contained in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) indicating that the total expenditure and income at Period 3 was £2,412,498 and that based on a budget of £17,424,724, this represented expenditure in percentage terms of 13.85%;
- (3) advising that South Ayrshire Council at its meeting on 1st July 2010 had agreed that resources of £337,596 be earmarked as a draw on the 2010/11 accumulated surplus to fund projects outstanding from 2009/10 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (4) intimating that during 2009/10, it had been agreed by this Panel that £1,275,728 would be returned to the accumulated surplus to be drawn down in 2010/11 to complete projects, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (5) reporting that the Scottish Government had approved a grant of £112,000 to provide energy insulation measures to Council properties as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to financial issues and the Property and Asset Manager and Executive Director – Corporate Services responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (a) to note the progress made on projects to 30th June 2010 as highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (b) to note the grant of £112,000 from the Scottish Government for insulation measures to Council properties.

Development and the Environment – Economic Development, Tourism and Leisure.

5. Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design Guidelines for Advertisement and Commercial Signage.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 26th July 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment

- (1) advising of the outcome of the public consultation process undertaken in respect of Supplementary Policy Guidance (SPG) on advertisements and shop front signs; and
- (2) seeking approval of the finalised SPG document which would replace existing non-statutory Supplementary Planning Policies:
 - Number 13 “Advertisement Signs, General” (1982);
 - Number 17 “Advertisement Sign, Wellington Square, Ayr” (1986); and
 - Number 20 “Design Guidelines for shop fronts and signage in Ayr Central Conservation Area” (1988).

Questions and concerns were raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to partnership working between the Roads and Planning Services when dealing with advertisement consent, the size of posters and whether the Guidance would be posted on the Council’s Website and the Head of Planning and Enterprise responded accordingly and advised that an advert consent questionnaire would be posted on the Council’s Website and that a hyperlink to the questionnaire would be included in the SPG document indicating whether advertisement consent was required.

Decided:

- (a) to approve the “Design Guidelines for Advertisement and Commercial Signage” as contained in Appendix 1 of the report as a final document for publication in accordance with the Council’s approved Protocol for Public Consultation on Supplementary Guidance and as a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications; and
- (b) to agree that once developed, a hyperlink and appropriate sub-text relating to an interactive advertisement consent questionnaire be incorporated into the Design Guidelines for Advertisement and Commercial Signage” SPG (as detailed in paragraph 4.2.1 of the report).

6. Finalised Protocol for Consultation on Policy Guidance on Supplementary Planning Guidance.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 2nd August 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment seeking approval for a finalised Protocol to be produced for Public Consultation on Supplementary Planning Guidance which would amend and abbreviate the previously approved draft Protocol, to streamline it in accordance with the ethos of the new Scottish Planning system.

Decided:

- (1) to approve the proposed amendment of the previously approved draft Protocol for Public Consultation on Supplementary Planning Guidance, as detailed in the report; and
- (2) to request the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment to arrange to produce a finalised Protocol that would be issued to members of the Planning Forum for final comment and adhered to, when producing new or revised Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Corporate and Community Planning.

7. Efficiency Statement 2009/10.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) indicating
 - (a) that efficiency within the 'Efficient Government' programme was defined in two broad ways:-
 - achieving the same level or a higher level of output on a lower input (cashable); or
 - achieving a higher level of output on the same input (non-cashable),
 with these referred to as 'cash releasing' and 'time releasing', respectively; and
 - (b) that the National Efficient Government Plan highlighted five key areas where efficiency improvement was a priority as follows:-
 - procurement;
 - absence management;
 - asset management;
 - shared services; and
 - streamlining bureaucracy;

- (2) advising
 - (a) that the Council was required to produce an annual efficiency statement, both for local consideration and for consolidation by COSLA into a report for local government; and
 - (b) that cumulative targets of 2%, 4% and 6% had been set for the period from 2008/09 to 2010/11; and
- (3) detailing the contents of Council's new Efficiency Statement 2009/10.

Decided:

- (i) to approve the Efficiency Statement for 2009/10, as detailed in the Appendix of the report: and
- (ii) to note that a cumulative saving of 4.4 per cent on the 2007/08 budget had been achieved.

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8. **Efficiency Proposals for 2011/12.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 5th August 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) indicating that in common with all Councils, South Ayrshire faced a reduction in spending over the next three years;
- (2) reporting that Officers had identified areas where efficiencies could be achieved and that the detailed implications of each proposal were outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (3) detailing efficiency proposals totalling £3.205m as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (4) advising
 - (a) that a briefing for Elected Members on the proposals had taken place on 12th August 2010; and
 - (b) that achievement of the efficiencies would reduce the 2011/12 budget gap by £3.205m.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services advised the Panel that the achievement of efficiencies would now reduce the 2011/12 budget gap by £3.405m.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the efficiency proposals and the impact it would have on the various services and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

Decided: to approve the efficiency proposals for the 2011/12 Revenue Budget as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

9. Council Tax Collection Statistics – Cash at 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Head of Corporate Resources advising

- (1) of the collection levels which had been achieved in respect of Council Tax to 30th June 2010 and the action which had been taken to achieve Best Value in the collection thereof;
- (2) that the collection rate had been 28.56 per cent against the target collection of 28.30 per cent which equated to a positive variation of £164,485 (an 8.5 per cent increase on 30th June 2009) and that this was a direct consequence of advancing the Council Tax payment date to 1st April 2010; and
- (3) that in order to address increased customer demand due to the economic recession, Corporate Services staff were working controlled periods of overtime to ensure accurate benefit awards together with the prompt rebilling and recovery of Council Tax and that, in the event of non-payment, Council Tax arrears were now being passed earlier to Stirling Park Sheriff Officers, to maximise recovery and minimise the impact of the economic downturn upon collections.

Decided:

- (a) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (b) to request the Head of Corporate Resources to provide updated figures to the next meeting of this Panel.

10. Housing and Council Tax Benefit – Performance Monitoring – Position at 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Head of Corporate Resources

- (1) advising of the service improvements being undertaken to help achieve the full range of national housing and Council Tax benefit performance standards;
- (2) detailing the position as at 30th June 2010 which highlighted the benefits service performance in key target areas; and
- (3) informing
 - (a) that due to the economic recession, the Council's benefits service had experienced a further increase in new benefit claims of 0.15 per cent between April and June 2010, resulting in 22,264 cases in payment;
 - (b) that between April and June 2010, the number of benefit recipients in employment had increased by 11.32 per cent whilst the number of Jobseeker allowance claimants (available for work but receiving benefit) had increased by 1.45 per cent;

- (c) that while recovery of housing benefit overpayments continued to be stringently enforced, it was not possible to clarify actual recovery levels at 30th June 2010 due to a reporting fault within the Council's benefits system which was provided by Northgate Public Service and that this was a national problem, reported to the Department for Work and Pensions, affecting a vast number of local authorities contracted to Northgate, who have confirmed that a technical solution would be provided for release in September 2010;
- (d) that the gross administration cost per case for housing and Council Tax benefit was calculated based upon caseload and that the cost of delivering the Council's benefits service and that in view of the increasing benefit caseload, it was now proposed to reduce the target for 2010/11 from £55 to £45, which would be reported once the annual accounts were completed in June 2011;
- (e) that workloads remained particularly challenging, and the closure of the benefits offices each day until 10.00 am and all day Wednesday was allowing staff, on a weekly basis, to process 42 per cent of claims/ adjustments whilst progressing a further 14 per cent of other aspects of claim-associated work which, in turn, was enabling staff to provide a more focused and responsive service to benefits claimants; and
- (f) that in light of continuing reduced levels of benefits administration subsidy from the Department for Work and Pensions, it was important that all stakeholders of the Council's benefits service provided greater claimant support to cope with ongoing/ high demands and that the use of self-service technology, including a rules-based electronic benefit claim form which the claimant could complete themselves, or with limited support from stakeholders, was being rolled out across area housing offices and would also be made available during the current financial year to registered social landlords operating within South Ayrshire.

Decided:

- (i) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (ii) to request the Head of Corporate Resources to provide a further quarterly report on service delivery to a future meeting of this Panel.

11. Common Good Funds – Revenue and Capital Budgetary Control 2010/11 – Position Statement at 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th August by the Executive Director – Corporate Services in relation to the revenue and capital accounts of Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Maybole and Girvan Common Good Funds for the period to 30th June 2010

- (1) detailing
 - (a) the revenue position at 30th June 2010, against the approved full year budgets and projected balances; and
 - (b) the accumulated revenue position at 30th June 2010 and the projected accumulated revenue surpluses at 31st March 2011;
- (2) advising that the accumulated capital reserves balance on the Ayr Common Good Fund at 30th June 2010 was £2,535,323 with the projected accumulated capital position at 31st March 2011, taking into account the capital issues highlighted in Appendix 3 of the report, was anticipated to be £3,420,323, an increase of £885,000 since 1st April 2010; and
- (3) intimating that the accumulated capital reserves balance on the Prestwick Common Good Fund at 30th June 2010 was £50,000 and that this position was likely to remain unchanged at 31st March 2011.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel enquiring when the review of the Common Good Funds would be presented to the Council and the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment advised that it was intended that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Council on 7th October 2010.

Decided: to approve the contents of the report.

12. Declaration of Interest.

The Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment declared an interest in the following item of business on the Agenda regarding the Prestwick Common Good Fund as he is a Director of Ayr United Football Academy Limited and the Space Place is a subsidiary of that company, and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of that item.

13. Space Place Request for Grant from Prestwick Common Good Fund.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 21st April 2009 (Page 239, paragraph 10) when it had been agreed to award the Space Place a grant of £15,000 for 2009/11 subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) that the Space Place should apply for external funding for the proposed projects identified within their Business Plan with the support of the External Funding Officer;
- (2) that a Development Officer should be recruited as soon as possible;

- (3) that the Space Place should work in partnership with Community Learning and Development, Community Safety and Leisure Services to develop activities for young people; and
- (4) to note the potential requirement for further contributions in years two and three and to approve the submission of a revised and fully costed Business Plan by the end of January 2010, and

there was submitted a report (issued) of 2nd August 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

(a) advising

- (i) that the Space Place had now submitted a Business Plan which identified the need for a further contribution in years 2010/11 of £15,000 and 2011/12 of £15,750 for core costs and continuing employment of the youth/development worker;
- (ii) that the Plan also contained several aspirational development projects aimed at increasing engagement with young people in the area including development of an IT space (computers already supplied by Ayr College), drop in Cafe, Radio station, live music rehearsal and recording area and developing sport/dance fitness activities and that they also hoped to employ an additional part time Youth Worker;
- (iii) that each of these elements had been costed separately and were the subject of external funding applications to a variety of trusts and did not form part of the cost projections for the core costs as outlined in the report; and
- (iv) that the Youth Development Worker had taken up post in September 2009 and had been instrumental in the production of the Business Plan and had also developed strong links with the multi-agency partnership contributing to the delivery of the services offered through the facility with these partners being Community Safety, Remploy, Community Learning and Development, Dialogue Youth and Prestwick Academy;

(b) indicating

- (i) that the core running costs were estimated to be in the region of £40,000 in 2010/11, a reduction of £10,000 on 2009/10, primarily through reduced salary costs as a result of the Youth Development Worker being part time with the estimated income for 2010/11 being £47,000, comprising £25,000 in grant (including this grant application figure of £15,000) with the remainder coming from room hire, events and fees; and
- (ii) that the organisation were awaiting decisions on funding bids for some of the aspirational projects which in the longer term would allow the development of funding streams from other trusts and also provide a clearer picture of the sustainability of the project and that the organisation's building required a substantial refurbishment, the costs of which were not included within the current Business Plan;

- (c) suggesting that the Panel might wish to consider putting a cap on the amount of assistance and time span over which funds from Prestwick Common Good could be made available to the project, in order to ensure that focus continued to be on moving to a more sustainable income generation model which did not rely upon on-going public sector funding; and
- (d) reporting
 - (i) that if the funding requested of £15,000 was met from the Prestwick Common Good Fund, then it would be met from the Fund's reserves; and
 - (ii) that the Fund was already forecasting a £11,644 deficit for the 2010/2011 financial year and approval of this grant would increase the "in year" deficit to £26,644 and thereby reduce the revenue reserves accordingly.

Questions and concerns were raised by Elected Members in relation to the current funding and future funding of the Space Place, the Youth Development Worker's post, the Prestwick Common Good Fund's existing deficit, the poor condition of the building and the potential costs of refurbishment and who would meet these costs, the number of children using the facility and the cost per child, whether a similar service was being provided elsewhere and whether any other sources of external funding were available and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (a) to approve in the meantime, an interim grant funding of £3,000 from the Prestwick Common Good Fund for the financial year 2010/2011; and
- (b) to agree that the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment submit a further report to the meeting of this Panel on 26th October 2010 taking into account and responding to the questions and concerns raised by Elected Members.

14. Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budgetary Control 2010/11 – Position statement at 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Executive Director – Children and Community and the Executive Director – Corporate Services detailing the performance of the Housing Revenue Account's expenditure against its profiled budget for the period to 30th June 2010 and reporting

- (1) that there was an accumulated unaudited surplus as at 31st March 2010 of £18.970m and that an updated list of the approved commitments against this surplus totalling £14.080m was outlined in the report and that the balance of £4.890m would be considered as part of the 2011/12 Business Plan review which was currently underway; and
- (2) that the HRA was underspent by £0.339m for the period to 30th June 2010 and that the projected underspend for the year to 31st March 2011 was £0.830m.

Decided: to approve the contents of the report.

15. Budget Management – Revenue Budgetary Control 2010/11 – Position Statement at 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 6th August 2010 by the Head of Corporate Resources

- (1) presenting an overview of the General Services Revenue Account for 2010/11 as at 30th June 2010;
- (2) advising
 - (a) that the final unaudited accumulated surplus at 31st March 2010 was £13.418m;
 - (b) that of the accumulated surplus of £13.418m,
 - £0.528m would require to be set aside to assist with the financing of the Council's Schools PPP project;
 - £1.141m had been earmarked to be used in delivering the Council's affordable housing strategy in future years;
 - a further £2.784m had been allocated to be spent on specific Council projects during 2010/11;
 - £0.102m had been set-aside to recognise the potential loss on the Council's £5m Landsbanki deposit; and
 - £0.080m had been ring-fenced towards the cost of the 2012 local elections;
 - £1.750m had been carried forward to fund severance costs likely to be incurred in 2010/11 onwards as part of the down-sizing of the organisation;
 - a further £1.000m had been agreed by Members to be set aside to reduce workforce numbers and rationalise properties to reduce the budget gap for 2011/12 leaving an uncommitted balance of £6.033m at 31st March 2010;
 - (c) that Members had approved the Council's Revenue Budget for 2010/11 on 10th February 2010, with total planned expenditure of £269.186m and that the budget had included various corporate allocations and targets that had, at that stage, still to be allocated across Directorates;
 - (d) that in addition, further funding required to be transferred between Directorates to recognise changes in responsibilities following the implementation of the revised Council structure during 2009 and that these transfers/allocations were now reflected in the Directorate budgets; and
 - (e) that with regard to finance settlement adjustments, the approved 2010/11 Budget had included Aggregate External Finance (AEF) due from Scottish Government of £215.569m, as notified in Finance Circular 12/2009 and that Finance Circular 1/2010 had provided additional funding to South Ayrshire Council of £0.413m as outlined in the report, resulting in revised AEF due of £215.982m;

- (3) detailing revenue monitoring reports for each Directorate for the period to 30th June 2010 as provided in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (4) indicating that a number of service and budget issues were being raised in these reports and that Executive Directors had committed to management action to ensure that there was a break-even position at 31st March 2011 as follows:-
- **Chief Executive's Strategic Office** – showed a current underspend of £0.015m which was mainly due to a saving in employee costs resulting from a current vacancy and maternity leave within the service with a break-even position being currently projected at 31st March 2011;
 - **Children and Community** – showed a current underspend of £0.092m which was mainly due to underspends on employee costs and an over recovery of income offset by overspends in transport costs and payments to agencies and that management action would be taken to ensure that a break-even position was achieved by 31st March 2011;
 - **Corporate Services** – showed a current underspend of £0.129m which was mainly due to underspends in employee and administration costs offset by an under recovery of income with a break-even position being currently projected at 31st March 2011;
 - **Development and Environment** – showed a current underspend of £0.327m which was mainly due to employee costs and increased income with a break-even position being currently projected at 31st March 2011; and
 - **Miscellaneous** – showed an overspend of £0.099m which was mainly due to insurance premiums paid but not yet recharged to the Housing Revenue account etc. with a year end underspend of £0.034m currently being projected and seeking approval of the transfer to contingency of £0.032m in respect of VAT recovered from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, which would result in a revised projected underspend of £0.002m.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the current position with the Court of Session action raised by Education 4 Ayrshire Limited against the Council and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that a report on this matter would be submitted to the Special Meeting of the Council on 9th September 2010.

Decided:

- (i) to approve the management action being taken by Directors to ensure a break-even budget at 31st March 2011 as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to approve the transfer to contingency of £0.032m VAT recovered from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, as outlined in Appendix 1e of the report dealing with Miscellaneous Services;
- (iii) to approve the virement as outlined in the Directorate budgetary control reports at Appendix 1 and summarised in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

16. General Services Capital Programme 2010/11: Monitoring Report at Period 3 – 30th June 2010.

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment and Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) outlining the General Services Capital Programme for 2010/11 at 30th June 2010 and detailing that at the end of Period 3, actual expenditure and income stood at £2,434,533 (12.39% of total budget), against a full year approved budget of £19,563,207;
- (2) indicating since the budget had been approved on 10th February, 2010, two awards had been made and had been reflected in Appendix 1 of the report as follows:-

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Prestwick Local Cycle Network (Sustrans) | £100,000 |
| Girvan Local Cycle Network (Sustrans) | £ 25,000 |
| TOTAL ADDITIONAL AWARDS | <u>£125,000</u> |

- (3) recommending adjustments to the Programme as follows:-
 - (a) a street lighting project was planned to take place in the Killdoon Drive, Kinraig Avenue and Queens Terrace area of Maybole, however, due to the results of a structural inspection carried out at Gearholm Road and Cunning Park Drive in Doonfoot, a number of the lighting columns within this area have been condemned due to excessive corrosion and that the funding originally set aside for the Maybole project be utilised to fund the necessary works at Gearholm Road and Cunning Park Drive; and
 - (b) that as part of the budget setting process, £270,000 had been allocated towards bridge replacement, with £210,000 being set against the culvert in Maidens and £60,000 for work to other bridges and that tenders have now been returned for the culvert replacement project and were in the order of £269,000 and that the £270,000 allocated to bridges should now be used to fund work at Maidens Culvert in the current financial year.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the procurement process for the extension at Heathfield Primary School, the Archives' accommodation and procedures for reporting repairs to buildings and the Property and Asset Manager responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (i) to note the progress being made on projects to 30th June, 2010, as highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to note the additional awards as outlined in Section 4 of the report; and
- (iii) to approve the adjustments as outlined in Section 5 of the report.

17. Treasury Management Quarter 1 Report 2010/11.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by Head of Corporate Resources

- (1) advising
 - (a) that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had issued a revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management in November 2009, following consultation with Local Authorities during the summer of 2009; and
 - (b) that the revised Code required that Elected Members should be provided with regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and the Council was undertaking this on a quarterly basis;
- (2) highlighting
 - (a) an update of the economic background from 1st April to 30th June 2010; and
 - (b) a forecast for interest rates; and
- (3) outlining the following within the Treasury Management Strategy:-
 - (a) investments;
 - (b) a full list of investments held at 30th June 2010; and
 - (c) borrowing and prudential indicators.

Decided: to approve the contents of the Treasury Management Quarter 1 Report for 2010/11.

18. Civic Hospitality.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 6th August 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services advising that requests for civic hospitality in connection with the Royal Air Force and Crossroads, South Ayrshire had been approved by the Leader of the Council and the Depute Chief Executive in terms of paragraph G21 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation during the Council's summer recess.

Decided: to note the decisions made in terms of the Scheme of Delegation by the Leader of the Council and the Depute Chief Executive in respect of provision of civic hospitality during the summer recess period.

19. 2010 Employee Opinion Survey.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th August 2010 by the Head of HR and Organisational Development

- (1) detailing the results of the Employee Opinion Survey which had been undertaken in April 2010; and
- (2) outlining the action plan for progressing issues raised.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to the decrease in the numbers of teachers responding to the survey and how any changes to working conditions would be publicised to employees and the Head of HR and Organisational Development responded accordingly and advised that teachers had been asked to complete another questionnaire around the same time as the Employee Opinion Survey and that, in future, the survey would be conducted at the most optimum time during 2012 taking into account the school term and other influencing factors.

Decided:

- (a) to note the results of the Council's 2010 Employee Opinion survey and the progress made since the 2008 Employee Opinion Survey;
- (b) to agree the proposed action plan which sought to address matters arising from the survey;
- (c) to agree that Directorate actions as a result of further detailed local analysis of the survey be progressed through Directorate Service Plans and reported accordingly;
- (d) to agree to release information contained in the report and disseminate to all employees; and
- (e) to agree that the 2012 survey be conducted, the distribution of which should be determined by the Head of HR and Organisational Development, with the findings being reported thereafter to this Panel.

20. Exclusion of Press and Public.

The Panel resolved, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the remaining business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

21. Tender for Play Equipment.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 2nd August 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking approval to accept tenders for new play equipment at Ardfin Road, Prestwick and Murray Street, Ayr.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to how the tenders for the play equipment had been assessed, protecting the new equipment against any vandalism or misuse and could Community Safety Officers be involved in patrolling the area and the timescale for the installation of the equipment and the Neighbourhood Services Manager responded accordingly.

Decided: to approve the acceptance of tenders submitted by Playdale Playgrounds Ltd. for the provision of new play equipment at Ardfin Road, Prestwick and Murray Street, Ayr.

Community Services - Housing and Customer First.

22. Council House New Build Phase 3 – 26 houses.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 13th April 2010 (Page 217, paragraph 7) and there was submitted a joint report (issued to members only) of 26th July 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment and Executive Director, Children and Community

- (1) advising that the Council's recent bid to the Scottish Government for funding to support new Council House building in South Ayrshire had been successful; and
- (2) seeking approval to enter into negotiations with a Construction Company for the design and construction of twenty-six new Council Houses at Somerset Road, Ayr.

Decided: having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken by Officers in relation to this project

- (a) to note the award of funding by the Scottish Government to part finance the construction of a further twenty-six Council owned homes in South Ayrshire; and

- (b) to agree, in accordance with Section 16.2 of the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, that the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director for Development and Environment be given approval to enter into negotiations with Dawn Homes Limited to agree a tender for the proposed works, subject to this providing a Best Value approach for the Council and subject to final approval from the Leadership Panel in terms of the price negotiated and the overall scheme agreed.

Community Services – Social Services.

23. Outcome of the Complaints Review Committee.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 12th July 2010 by the Head of Legal and Administration informing of the outcome of the Complaints Review Committee which had been held on 17th June 2010 and

- (1) outlining how the Complaints Review Committee had reached its conclusions as detailed in the Appendix of the report; and
- (2) recommending that on the basis of these conclusions, the Complaint was not upheld and the Committee did not see fit to make any recommendations on this matter.

Decided: to note the conclusions reached by the Complaints Review Committee following the Hearing on 17th June 2010 as detailed in the Appendix of the report.

24. Non-Domestic Rates – Application to Proceed with Auction/ Sequestration.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th August 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services seeking approval to proceed with auction and/ or sequestration action in respect of the rating debtors as detailed in the Appendices of the report.

Decided: to authorise the Executive Director – Corporate Services to proceed with the auction and/ or sequestration action as outlined in the Appendix of the report.

The meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.