

LEADERSHIP PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 25th October 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Attending: L. Bloomer, 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; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; M. Hastings, Enterprise Manager; A. Greenwood, Asset Co-ordinator; C. Bradshaw, Public Communications Officer; D. Knight, Committee Services Officer; and A. Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer.

Community Services - Social Services.

1. Children's Hearings Scotland - Consultation on the Establishment of Area Support Teams.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 14th October 2011 by the Head of Legal and Administration

(1) advising

- (a) that in July 2008, the Scottish Government had published the consultation document "Strengthening for the Future", followed by the draft Children's Hearings Bill in June 2009 and that extensive consultation had been undertaken with a variety of stakeholders with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 receiving Royal Assent on 6th January 2011;
- (b) that the Act set out provisions for the establishment of a national body, Children's Hearings Scotland and that Bernadette Monaghan had been appointed as the first National Convener on 1st April 2011; and
- (c) that Schedule 1 of the 2011 Act set out provisions relating to the establishment of Area Support Teams (ASTs) which would undertake, on behalf of the National Convener, the roles currently undertaken by Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPACs), particularly in relation to recruitment, training and monitoring of Panel Members and maintaining national standards;

(2) detailing the proposals for the establishment and composition of the ASTs;

- (3) proposing
- (a) that in terms of Ayrshire, the National Convener proposed a single AST covering the three Ayrshire Authorities which would support a panel of approximately 161 panel members and as North, South and East Ayrshire had previously shared resources, premises and training for a number of years, the National Convener proposed that this joint training should be retained to allow Panel Members to identify with the new all-Ayrshire AST, consolidate relationships and share best practice; and
 - (b) a core membership of nineteen members, comprising four National Convener appointees from each local authority area, three local authority nominees, three Panel member nominees and one Clerk and that the National Convener would meet with local authority Chief Executives to discuss these proposals; and
- (4) reporting
- (a) that informal discussions have taken place between Officers of the three Ayrshire authorities and that there was general support from the three Ayrshire CPACs and Panel Members for the National Convener's proposal for an Ayrshire AST;
 - (b) that further discussions would require to be held between the three Ayrshire Authorities and with the National Convener, to clarify these issues, in advance of any Service Level Agreement being finalised; and
 - (c) that at a recent meeting between South Ayrshire Council's Officers and South Ayrshire CPAC, Panel Chairs and their Clerk, it was suggested on the basis of general acceptance that the way forward was an all AST and that consideration might be given to the submission of a joint Ayrshire response to the consultation document.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the lack of information concerning the role of the Clerk, would there be a lead Council and Clerk, would the core membership of nineteen members be too cumbersome and when would the progress report be submitted to this Panel and the Head of Legal and Administration advised that she would raise these concerns during further discussions with the other Ayrshire Authorities and the National Convener and that it was likely to be April 2012 before the progress report would be submitted to this Panel and that she would keep Elected Members fully advised of the situation.

Decided:

- (i) to note the proposals for the establishment of an Area Support Team covering the three Ayrshire local authorities;
- (ii) to agree that the Council, in association with the other two Ayrshire authorities or otherwise, indicate its support, in principle, for the proposals;
- (iii) to authorise Officers to hold discussions with the National Convener and Ayrshire authorities in terms of Service Level Agreement and the financial, staffing and operational issues arising from the establishment of an Ayrshire AST; and

- (iv) to request the Head of Legal and Administration to submit a further report to a future meeting of this Panel outlining the progress being made regarding the establishment and composition of the ASTs.

Community Services – Housing and Customer First.

2. Priority Need for Homeless Households.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) seeking agreement to extend priority need status to all homeless households in line with the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003;
- (2) advising
 - (a) that all local authorities in Scotland had a statutory duty to abolish the priority need test for homeless households by 5th December 2012 which meant that by this date all applicants assessed as unintentionally homeless would have a right to permanent accommodation;
 - (b) that since the introduction of the 2003 Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, the Council had gradually extended the number of homeless households in priority need to achieve the target of 100% by 2012 and that the Leadership Panel in April 2008 had agreed to abolish priority need status for all single people under the age of 25 which was followed by an agreement by the Leadership Panel in August 2010 to abolish it for all homeless applicants aged 45 and over; and
 - (c) that South Ayrshire Council currently awarded priority need status to 91% of all homeless households amounting to approximately 590 households and that the remaining 9% would require to be achieved by 5th December 2012 and if this recommendation was approved, the Council would be the seventh Local Authority to achieve full compliance ahead of the 2012 target; and
- (3) indicating
 - (a) that this proposal would extend priority need status to the final group of single households aged 26 to 44 and that extension to this group of homeless households removed the need to carry out the priority need test, often referred to by the Scottish Government as “Abolition of Priority Need”; and
 - (b) that the Council would continue to work in partnership with a wide number of local agencies to develop projects that aimed to prevent homelessness before it occurred and that the overall number of homeless presentations had fallen from 963 in 2009/2010 to 908 in 2010/2011 as a result of prevention services and that the Council would continue to focus services on the prevention of homelessness to reduce the number of people becoming homeless in the first place.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the number of homeless households currently being assessed as being in priority need and the date of implementation and the Head of Community Care and Housing responded accordingly.

Decided: to agree that priority need status be extended for all priority homeless households.

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

3. Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012 – 2017.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 14th June 2011 (Page 377, paragraph 16) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 12th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

(1) advising

- (a) that the completed Tourism Strategy for Ayrshire & Arran 2012-2017 had now been produced as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report which proposed the adoption of a clear Vision and aims and set strategic objectives with targets;
- (b) that the Vision: Ayrshire & Arran would be a premier destination of choice, where visitors received a fantastic welcome and enjoyed outstanding experiences of the coastline, countryside, culture and hospitality; and
- (c) that it was clear from consultation that a mechanism to drive the new Strategy forward was required; and

(2) proposing

- (a) that an Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Leadership Group be established comprising of around twelve members, the majority of which would be from the industry including the Chair of the Group with the Council being represented on this Group at Senior Officer level;
- (b) that the Leadership Group be supported by an Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Team jointly resourced by the three Ayrshire Councils and led by an Ayrshire Tourism Manager;
- (c) that the remit of the Team would be the delivery of specific Pan-Ayrshire projects, milestones and targets and to take forward areas of work from the Strategy that were more effectively and / or more efficiently delivered at an all-Ayrshire level; and
- (d) that the Chief Executive be requested to bring forward detailed proposals for a shared tourism team for consideration by Elected Members including the resourcing of such a team.

Concerns were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the marketing of Events and Festivals, measures to increase the number of visitors to Ayrshire and Arran and the development of a strategy to do so, that there was no Elected Member representation on the Group and transport issues and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (i) to adopt the final Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy; and
- (ii) to request the Chief Executive to bring forward proposals for a shared tourism team including proposals for Elected Member representation on the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Leadership Group.

Corporate and Community Planning - Resources and Performance.

4. Procurement Strategy.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 14th October 2011 by the Head of Corporate Resources

- (1) advising
 - (a) that during 2010/11 South Ayrshire Council processed supplier payments totalling approximately £138.4 million and that efficient and effective procurement had been identified as a key priority in seeking to meet best value requirements, achieve efficiencies and deliver required outcomes;
 - (b) that the Procurement Strategy applied to all goods, services and works which were procured throughout South Ayrshire Council, and sought to ensure procurement practices were developed on a continuous basis to meet the challenges ahead in line with strategic requirements; and
 - (c) that the Council's previous Procurement Strategy had been published in 2008 and that during the period since, a number of legislative and government initiatives had evolved and had been progressed, with the outcomes achieved being outlined in the report; and
- (2) reporting
 - (a) that the updated Procurement Strategy was to build on the developments and innovation achieved to date, set out the procurement vision for the Council, and, with this, to provide an understanding of aims, objectives and how these would be achieved;
 - (b) that the strategy identified ongoing requirements and key outcomes going forward, focusing upon the importance of an integrated organisation, technology, processes and performance management in delivering required procurement improvements and that an ongoing programme of communication and consultation with all stakeholders would be essential in delivering the strategy, with customer focus and collaboration integral requirements; and

- (c) that the key objectives identified and proposed for progression within the Procurement Strategy reflected the Public Procurement Reform Board 'Transforming Procurement, Accelerating Delivery' principles, outcomes of the Audit Scotland Review of Purchasing and Procurement undertaken in April 2011, and the Procurement Improvement Plan endorsed by the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel on 26th May 2011, and recognised that procurement capability was essential to the delivery of required outcomes for the residents of South Ayrshire.

Questions were raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the provision of business opportunities to small and medium enterprises and whether weighting had been given to local companies and the Head of Corporate Resources responded accordingly.

Decided: to approve the updated Procurement Strategy as detailed in Appendix of the report.

5. ICT Asset Management Plan.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 14th October 2011 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) advising that the purpose of ICT Asset Management was to provide a forward looking, progressive and resilient ICT service which used industry wide best practice and methodologies to embrace any new technologies to facilitate and support South Ayrshire Council in providing a quality service, the object of which was:-
- to support South Ayrshire Council's corporate aims and objectives through the best use of information technology;
 - to play a key role as a facilitator in the organisation;
 - to ensure the most efficient use of resources and secure system provision and support;
 - to maximise the benefits from the latest information technology developments; and
 - to increase customer and stakeholder satisfaction; and
- (2) reporting that the ICT Asset Management Plan document was attached at Appendix 1 of the report and requesting that this Panel approve the following recommendations:-
- (a) the Council's wide area network would continue to be improved though the adoption of wireless technology as an alternative to traditional leased lines and that this would provide additional bandwidth to all of the Council estate including schools whilst reducing the annual revenue cost incurred;

- (b) a review would be conducted to determine the life span and purpose of the existing server estate with further progression towards the commissioning of an increased number of virtual servers where appropriate which would make the ICT service more responsive to business requirements for infrastructure and reduce the Council's data centre carbon footprint;
- (c) ICT would continue to develop and implement a robust, scalable and secure physical infrastructure capable of supporting high volume, multi-media applications and transactions through a variety of access channels to support business requirements and Customer Service improvement initiatives;
- (d) the PC desktop estate within schools would be refreshed on an on-going basis in line with existing funding provided for within the Council's capital funding programme;
- (e) the current corporate desktop estate was largely in very good condition as a result of hardware acquisition in conjunction with the Prism project rollout and that it was anticipated that no significant refresh would be required in corporate locations for a period of three years; and
- (f) upgrades to the standard PC desktop software (Operating Systems, Microsoft Office and e-mail) would be provisioned within existing licence arrangements and applied, when appropriate.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to accessing the Council's systems using personal equipment and the use of laptops in meetings and the Executive Director - Corporate Services responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (i) to approve the ICT Asset Management Plan and the recommendations, summarised in Section 4.1 of the report and at (2)(a) to (e) above; and
- (ii) to request the Executive Director – Corporate Services to submit a report to the next meeting of this Panel
 - (A) reporting on proposals to allow access to the Council's systems using personal equipment; and
 - (B) on whether laptops could be issued to all Elected Members and used in meetings in order to reduce the costs of paper copies being printed and distributed.

6. Shared Services Development Fund.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising
 - (a) that the Council had had an excellent record of partnership working including, for example, work with North and East Ayrshire Councils on the Ayrshire Strategic Waste Management Project, Ayrshire Civil Contingencies Unit and the Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit and that through joint working the Council had been able to secure benefits in efficiency and effectiveness across a very wide range of service areas;
 - (b) that the Ayrshire Shared Services Executive, a Pan Ayrshire Group involving the Leaders and Chief Executives of South, North and East Ayrshire Councils and representatives of NHS Ayrshire and Arran, together with relevant senior Officers, met to identify services or parts of services which might be suitable for joint delivery and had directed further work on these, as appropriate; and
 - (c) that this Group was supported by the Ayrshire Shared Services Project Board which drove progress on this work with the Executive Director - Development and Environment being the Council's representative on this group;
- (2) detailing the four substantive live projects and the progress being made:-
 - Pan Ayrshire Regulatory Services;
 - Roads;
 - Social Work Out of Hours Services; and
 - Tourism;
- (3) outlining the work being undertaken by the Ayrshire Economic Partnership and Tourism;
- (4) recommending
 - (a) that as development of shared services proposals had required external input, that a sum of £50,000 be set aside that could be used as required to resource external advice; and
 - (b) that the sum would be earmarked within the contingency budget and drawn from as required and seeking delegated authority for the Executive Director - Development and Environment to approve expenditure from the budget; and

(5) reporting

- (a) that decisions on usage of the fund would be made by the Shared Services Board and reported for accountability purposes to the Shared Services Executive with individual Councils funding individual elements of spend drawn from their earmarked sums, in accordance with their own Standing Orders procedures and that a review would be held in spring each year to make any adjustments necessary so that the amount spent by each Council was equitable; and
- (b) that East and North Ayrshire Councils had each approved £50,000 for shared services development.

Decided:

- (i) to approve an allocation from Contingency of £50,000 to be drawn upon to support the development of shared services; and
- (ii) to grant delegated authority to the Executive Director - Development and Environment to approve expenditure from this budget.

7. Exclusion of press and public.

The Panel resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

8. Internet Access Control and Monitoring Software – Extension of Contract.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 14th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services seeking approval to extend the contract for the Council's Internet access control and monitoring software (Websense provided by Foursys) for a further three years, in terms of paragraph 20.2 of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts.

Decided: to grant approval to the Executive Director - Corporate Services, in terms of paragraph 20.2 of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, to extend the enterprise agreement with Foursys for a further three years.

9. Demolition of Blocks A and F at Mainholm Academy and Re-roofing of John Pollock Centre (Block E).

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 12th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking additional funding of £332,000 to allow additional asbestos works in connection with the demolition of Blocks A and F and the removal of asbestos in Block B of the former Mainholm Academy, together with essential roof works to Block E, the John Pollock Centre which had resulted from storm damage to the property.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the arrangements in place with contractors regarding the disposal or sale of materials and equipment such as the school crest being recovered from the demolition site, whether any bats inhabited the Blocks and the condition of some of the windows within the John Pollock Centre and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

Decided: to agree

- (1) to make available the additional funding requested for the removal of asbestos in Blocks A, F and B and demolition of Blocks A and F at the former Mainholm Academy; and
- (2) to fund the essential roof work required to the John Pollock Centre (Block E).

10. Disposal of Unit 2 – Prestwick International Aerospace Park, Dow Road, Prestwick.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 5th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking approval to dispose of the industrial premises at Unit 2, Prestwick International Aerospace Park, Dow Road, Prestwick.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the financial implications and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

Decided: to agree to the disposal of Unit 2, Prestwick International Aerospace Park to Etek Europe Limited at a sum of six hundred thousand pounds (£600,000) plus VAT on outline terms and conditions agreed with Scottish Enterprise and that the Council would receive the sum of three hundred thousand pounds (£300,000), (less any clawback of ERDF monies which required to be paid), for the 50% *pro indiviso* share of the heritable title to the property and would require to meet a 50% share of all costs involved with the disposal of the property.

11. Gaiety Theatre, Ayr.

There was submitted a report (issued to Members only) of 20th October 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking additional funding of up to £50,000 to allow for the completion of additional unforeseen works to the Cafe Bar area of the Gaiety Theatre.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the works that required to be carried out within the Theatre and when would the Cafe / Bar re-open and the Executive Director – Development and Environment responded accordingly and the Executive Director – Children and Community advised that he would inform Elected Members as soon as possible when the Cafe / Bar would re-open.

Decided: to agree to make available the funding requested of £50,000 for the additional work as highlighted in Section 3.4 of the report.

The meeting ended at 11.05 a.m.