

**COMMUNITY SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
4th June 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors John Hampton (Chair), Ian Cavana, Peter Convery, Kirsty Darwent, Hugh Hunter and Brian McGinley.

Apologies: Councillors William J. Grant and Corri Wilson.

Attending: K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; D. Hutchison, Head of Education; M. McCulloch, Quality Improvement Manager; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; and A. Gerrish, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending: Councillor Margaret Toner (Portfolio-holder).

**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 the previous meeting of 7th May 2014 (issued) ([link attached](#)) were submitted and approved.

**3. Service and Improvement Plans – 2014-17.**

With reference to the minutes of the Leadership Panel of 29th April 2014 (Page 11, paragraph 16), there was submitted a report (issued) ([link attached](#)) of 27th May 2014 by the Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs to allow the Panel to consider the second of the three Service and Improvement Plans (SIPs) which have been remitted to them for consideration and revision as required, namely the Educational Services.

The Head of Policy, Community Planning and Public Affairs outlined the general observations that had arisen from consideration of the Service Improvement Plans at the last round of Scrutiny Panel meetings and the Head of Educational Services explained how the plan being considered by the Panel was based on a recently undertaken self evaluation exercise, the validation of which had gone well.

The Members of the Panel then scrutinised the Plan in detail, raising the following matters:-

- (1) the relationship between Education and Health and Social Care Integration, it being noted that the associated changes in responsibilities, such early years services, would be picked up when reporting back at the six month stage;

- (2) the importance of early intervention and noted that it was helpful that the responsibility for the whole 3-18 curriculum would now lie with Educational Services;
- (3) the significance of Curriculum for Excellence and how this should recognise the totality of the child's life, and the value of connecting with other Council and partnership services to invest in our children's futures;
- (4) the importance of a clear and strong vision, connecting Children Services work with Education, with Health and Social Care to enable effective self evaluation;
- (5) the importance of equity and equitable access for opportunities for all children, with discussion of class sizes, breakfast clubs, access to the Dolphin House and addressing additional support needs;
- (6) the impact of gender on the take up of physical activity and the ambition / equity of the target relating to the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The Panel heard the Council remains the leading authority in Scotland for take up of the scheme and that a more meaningful breakdown of these figures would be provided within the updated Plan;
- (7) the value of regular updates on 'hot topics', such a progress in implementing the new national exam qualifications, recognising that this had been a very stressful period for teachers, children and parents;
- (8) the value of parental involvement and the extent to which there was scope for improvement. The Panel heard this was identified for further development within the Plan and that an update would be provided at the six month reporting stage;
- (9) the outcome based focus of educational system, the range of skills that are developed within children to help them be successful in the modern world, and the work of the quality and improvement team to ensure the consistency of learning and teaching across the authority; and
- (10) that in pursuit these outcomes, that the Council will have some difficult decisions to make over the coming years, to ensure the necessary resources are directed towards their achievement.

The Panel

**Decided:**

- (a) having reviewed the Education Services Service and Improvement Plan 2014-17, to request the Chief Executive to make recommendations to the Council on 3rd July 2014 in line with the discussion of the Panel, to assist in finalisation of the Service and Improvement Plans; and,
- (b) agreed that the Agenda for the next meeting of this Panel should include the Work Plan for 2014/15.

The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.