

LEADERSHIP PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr
on 21st September 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Bill McIntosh (Chair), Bill Grant, John McDowall, Rita Miller, Robin Reid, Philip Saxton and Margaret Toner.

Attending: E. Howat, Chief Executive; V. Andrews, Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; D. Hutchison, Director of Educational Services; R. Riddiough, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; T. Baulk, Head of Finance and ICT; D. Gillies, Head of Property and Risk; M. Newall, Head of Neighbourhood Services; J. Cronin, Head of Enterprise, Development and Leisure; J. Bradley, OD and Customer Services Manager; W. Phillips, Revenues and Benefits Manager; C. Cox, Planning Manager; F. Cardle, Quality Improvement Manager; L. James., Manager (Children and Families); D. Hashagen, (Co-ordinator – Employability and Skills); E. Candlish, Acting Head Teacher (Kirkmichael Primary School); and A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies: Miss Sarah Cosslett, Miss Phil Davey, Pastor Ian Gall, Rev. David Gemmell and Tom Robinson (for items 4 and 5).

1. Declaration of Interest.

Councillor Grant declared an interest in Agenda Item 8(e) – “Complaint” as he had had communication with a Director of the company involved and indicated that he would leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The minutes of 23rd August 2016 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Decision Log.

Decided: to note the contents of the Decision Log ([issued](#)) .

Lifelong Learning

4. Inspection of Kirkmichael Primary School and Nursery Class : Education Scotland Report.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 19th August 2016 by the Director of Educational Services outlining the contents of the Education Scotland Report on Kirkmichael Primary School and Nursery Class.

Having heard the Quality Improvement Manger speak to the inspection report by Education Scotland, the Panel requested the Acting Head Teacher to pass on their congratulations to staff and pupils in recognition of their hard work and achievements.

Having noted that the Primary School and Nursery Class had been prepared for the new approach to Inspection, the Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the contents of the report by Education Scotland, as contained in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) to agree that the main points for action would be addressed by the Head Teacher and Quality Improvement Officers.

5. Service Review of Employability and Skills.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Service and Performance Panel of 30th August 2016 (Page 9, paragraph 5) when it had been agreed, amongst other things, that the findings and the recommendations of the Employability and Skills service review be presented to this Panel for approval, there was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 9th September 2016 by the Head of Employee and Customer Services seeking approval of the findings and recommendations of the Employability Skills Team (EST) Service Review.

Following clarification regarding the ongoing remit of Community Learning and Development in relation to skills development and the links with the Employability & Skills service and discussion regarding pay modelling for Modern Apprentices and having been assured that the service worked closely with employers, the Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the findings and proposals from the Employability and Skills service review as contained in Appendix 1 of the report along with the feedback from the Service and Performance Panel contained in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (2) to approve the findings and the following proposals:
 - (a) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services engage with relevant services to implement revised referral routes for clients from Housing Services and from Community Learning and Development;
 - (b) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services carry out further engagement with service users, partners and employers on the operational delivery of the EST;
 - (c) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services develop and implement an Employability and Skills Strategy and Action Plan;
 - (d) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services work in partnership with the Director of Educational Services to deliver the Developing Young Workforce Action Plan;
 - (e) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services work with colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership to develop and implement a guarantee for looked after and care experienced young people;

- (f) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services increase joint working with the Enterprise Service; and
 - (g) that the Head of Employee and Customer Services develop guidance for Council services on the placement supervisor role; and
- (3) to agree that further consideration be given to the Pay Model for Modern Apprentices, including the impact of changes on wider pay modelling, and that this matter be reported back to this Panel in due course.

Sustainability and Environment

6. Members' Priorities – Investment in Allotments – Development of an Allotment Garden Facility at North Park in South Ayr.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 8th September 2016 by the Head of Neighbourhood Services seeking approval to develop an allotment garden facility at North Park, off Monument Road in South Ayr.

Having noted that waiting lists for allotments in other areas had been reduced and the intention to introduce Allotment Societies to deal with matters such as neglected plots, the Panel

Decided: to approve the proposed development of an allotment garden facility at North Park, Monument Road, Ayr as a replacement for the previously approved Gower Place site in Ayr.

7. Household Recycling Charter.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 29th August 2016 by the Head of Neighbourhood Services

- (1) advising of the development of a Household Recycling Charter by the Scottish Government; and
- (2) seeking approval for this Council to sign up to the Charter.

Having noted the difficulties that would be faced in implementing the proposals, the Panel

Decided: to agree to sign the Scottish Government's Household Recycling Charter.

Economic Development, Tourism and Leisure.

8. Service Review Scope – Planning Service.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of September 2016 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment seeking approval of the scope, including objectives, timescales and resource requirements, of the Service Review for the Planning Service.

The Panel congratulated C, Cox, Planning Manager, who would be taking up a promoted post with Stirling Council and thanked her for her work with this Council.

The Panel, having welcomed the report,

Decided: to approve the service review scope for the Planning Service, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Health and Social Care

9. Care Inspectorate Reports on Children’s Houses.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 30th August 2016 by the Director of Health and Social Care outlining the outcomes of unannounced inspections conducted by the Care Inspectorate at the Council run Children’s Houses at Cunningham Place, Ayr, Woodhead Road, Coylton and Glenriddel Road, Ayr.

The Panel, having welcomed the report and the progress reflected in it,

Decided: to agree, having considered the contents of the two inspection reports, that oversight of improvement activity be undertaken by the Integration Joint Board’s Performance and Audit Committee.

Resources and Performance.

10. The Electronic Submission of New Claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 9th September 2016 by the Head of Finance and ICT seeking approval for a proposed change in administering new online claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

The Panel, having welcomed the report,

Decided:

- (1) to approve the adoption of electronic submission of new online claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction;

- (2) to note that both Legal Services and Internal Audit had been consulted on the proposals, which were currently operational within a number of local authorities including City of Edinburgh Council, Glasgow City Council, Highland Council and North Lanarkshire Council; and
- (3) to agree that the Chief Executive authorise the Direction Notice, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

11. National Fraud Initiative.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 9th September 2016 by the Head of Finance and ICT advising of the 2016/17 National Fraud Initiative (NFI) exercise and seeking agreement on data matches to be undertaken.

The Panel, having expressed their desire for updates on progress,

Decided:

- (1) to agree that the Council participate in the 2016/17 National Fraud Initiative;
- (2) to agree that officers concentrate resources on the highest priority rated matches; and
- (3) to request that the Acting Audit Services/Programme Review Manager arrange for progress updates to be provided through the Members' Bulletin on a quarterly basis.

12. 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 during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 6, 9 and 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

13. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Risk Based Verification.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 9th September 2016 by the Head of Finance and ICT seeking approval for a proposed change in administering new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

The Panel, having welcomed the report and noted the benefits from the use of software for the proposed new processes,

Decided: to agree

- (1) to adopt and implement the proposed Risk Based Verification Policy in Appendix 1 for determining evidence requirements for the assessment of new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims from 1st November 2016; and
- (2) that updates be provided by way of the Members' Bulletin.

14. Proposed Sub-Station Ground Lease, Low Green, Ayr.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 9th September 2016 by the Head of Property and Risk requesting

- (1) consent to enter into a ground lease for land on the Low Green with Scottish Power Networks (SPN) to accommodate a new electricity sub-station for the new power installation to County Buildings and
- (2) approval to seek permission from the Sheriff for this as is required as the area forms a small part of the Low Green in Ayr.

Having welcomed the report and having noted the consultation that was still required to be undertaken and how the grassum amount had been derived, the Panel

Decided:

- (1) to approve (subject to Court permission) a lease of the ground as shown on the plan at Appendix 1 for a period of 99 years to Scottish Power Networks at a rent £1 per annum (if asked) to allow a new sub-station to be developed;
- (2) to approve the payment of a grassum of £2,000 (two thousand pounds) sterling from the Council to the Ayr Common Good fund as compensation for alienating the title; and
- (3) to grant delegated authority to the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation to seek permission from the Sheriff Court to alienate the title as it formed part of the Ayr Common Good land at the Low Green and to conclude the lease with Scottish Power Networks on these and such other reasonable terms and conditions as appropriate.

Councillor Grant, having previously declared an interest in the following item of business, left the meeting at this point.

15. Complaint.

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 13th September 2016 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advising Panel Members of the recommendations within the final report by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and seeking approval to make the resulting payments.

Having heard Members raise concerns regarding this matter and discuss the various options that were open to them, the Panel

Decided: to agree that officers from the Council urgently seek external verification of costs incurred in respect of the works referred to in the Report, and report back promptly to this Panel with a further recommendation and legal advice.

Councillor Grant re-joined the meeting at this point.

16. Consideration of Disclosure of the above Confidential Reports.**Decided:**

- (1) not to authorise the disclosure of the whole or part of any documents of the following reports falling under Standing Order 31.2:-
 - Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Risk Based Verification; and
 - Complaint; and
- (2) to authorise the disclosure of the following report falling under Standing Order 31.2 once court procedure had commenced:-
 - Proposed Sub-Station Ground Lease, Low Green, Ayr.

The meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.