SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 21st March 2017 at 9.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Kirsty Darwent (Chair), Andy Campbell, Peter Convery,
            Hugh Hunter, Mary Kilpatrick, Nan McFarlane, Brian McGinley and
            John Wallace.

Attending: V. Andrews, Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation;
            L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment;
            M. Baker, Head of Policy and Performance; R. Riddiough, Head of Legal and
            Democratic Services; T. Baulk, Head of Finance and ICT; M. Newall, Head of
            Neighbourhood Services; A. O'Neill, Digital Transformation Manager; R. Cairns,
            Building Standards Manager; R. Hannah, Acting Fleet Supervisor; and
            J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer.

1.   **Declarations of Interest.**

Councillor Hunter declared an interest in item 9 of this minute entitled "Fleet Service
Review" as he had a family member who had dealt with Fleet Management and was
likely to tender in future, however, as he felt there was no conflict of interest he advised
that he would not leave the meeting and would take part in discussions relating to this
item.

2.   **Minutes of previous meetings.**

The minutes of 24th February 2017 (issued) were submitted and approved.

3.   **Action Log and Work Programme.**

There was submitted an update of the Action Log and Work Programme for this Panel
(issued).

Decided: to note the Action Log and Work Programme.

4.   **Refresh of the Service and Improvement Plans for 2017-18.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10th March 2017 by the Head of Policy and
Performance to allow this Panel to scrutinise the refresh of the Council's Service and
Improvement Plans (SIPs) for 2017-18.

Comments and observations from the members of the Panel and responses from
officers are set out below:-

Educational Services:-

A Member raised a question on the reporting mechanism to the new Council administration on the equity fund and the Director of Educational Services advised that the Scottish Government expected every school to publish an annual standards and equalities report highlighting its achievements; that all schools were to submit their equity fund proposals by 14th March 2017 and that progress would be monitored through these proposals.

A Panel Member referred to the shortage of teachers and supply teachers and

(1) the difficulties experienced in providing continuity of teaching due to this shortage and outlined that further investment required to be made in teacher education, attracting people to the profession and addressing the workload of teachers to improve this situation; and

(2) the proposal that modern technology be used as a way of teaching pupils via internet sites due to the shortage and he felt that pupils would suffer due to having no pupil/teacher relationship,

and the Director of Educational Services accepted that utilising websites was no substitute for a parent/teacher relationship.

Policy and Performance:-

A Panel Member raised a question on the new process for Best Value and the Head of Policy and Performance advised that new Audit Scotland Guidelines had been published and that the External Auditors would be picking up on the revised framework.

Questions were raised by another Panel Member on the process for communicating with Council staff who did not work in the main Council Offices; and how community groups were advised of participatory budgeting events and the Head of Policy and Performance advised that the weekly communications bulletin and the Chief Executive's Bulletin were used to communicate with staff members and that printed versions were available and displayed in staff rooms for those staff who did not have access to a computer; and that, in relation to participatory budgeting, a series of articles had been issued to various groups, however, he would liaise with the Communications Team on this matter to ensure that all relevant groups were being advised of these events.

Employee and Customer Services:-

Having heard questions from Panel Members on the customer service telephone line, the Head of Employee and Customer Services advised that call handling was monitored closely and that every call could be transferred to a fully trained operator.

Concerns were raised and responded to by the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation in relation to the various Customer Service Centres.

Finance and ICT:-

A Member raised a question on the Oracle system and the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that this system was being actively managed.

Following a question from a Member on the proposals for training Councillors on new technology following the election, the Transformation Manager advised that time would be allocated to introduce the new equipment to the Members and to carry out training on this equipment.

Councillor Wallace joined the meeting at this point.

Legal and Democratic Services:-

There were no questions from Members regarding Legal and Democratic Services.

Property and Risk:-

There were no questions from Members regarding Property and Risk.

Communities:-

Following a question from a Panel Member on the progress of Community Asset Transfers, the Head of Communities outlined the lengthy process involved in transferring assets.

Concerns were then raised and responded to by the Head of Communities and the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment in relation to participatory budgeting; and the Business Improvement District (BID) application process.

Enterprise, Development and Leisure:-

Following a question regarding events in South Ayrshire, the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment advised that a full review of events was currently being carried out and that she would circulate the list of all events in South Ayrshire being supported over 2017/18 to Members of the Panel.

Having heard a Member enquire whether libraries in South Ayrshire had wi-fi, the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment advised that all libraries had wi-fi and that it was currently being installed in Coylton Hall for the use of Coylton residents.

Housing and Facilities:-

There were no questions from Members regarding Housing and Facilities.

Neighbourhood Services:-

Following a question on works being undertaken at Prestwick seafront, the Head of Neighbourhood Services updated the Panel on the present position.

Discussions then took place in relation to the difficulties in recruiting Trading Standards Officers; and the introduction of management rules and signage to protect parks from dog fouling.

Decided: having scrutinised the refreshed Service and Improvement Plans for 2017-18, to remit the refreshed Plans to Council for approval.

5. **Update on Progress Implementing Agreed Service Reviews.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 28th February 2017 by the Head of Policy and Performance to allow the Panel to scrutinise the progress that has been achieved implementing the agreed recommendations of the Council's Service Reviews programme.

Decided: having scrutinised the progress that had been achieved, as reflected in Appendix 1 to the report, to agree that there were no issues that required to be referred to Leadership Panel for its consideration.

6. **Transform South Ayrshire Programme – Update.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10th March 2017 by the Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advising of progress of the 'Transform South Ayrshire' (TSA) programme.

Questions were raised and responded to by various Officers in relation to the Scottish Government's Digital Strategy; the impact on the various Departments of the Council on the introduction of this Strategy; the on-line vacancy management process; whether Officers were confident that Oracle was capable of retaining all of the data proposed to be uploaded; and the recommendations raised by the ICT Service Review undertaken by the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM).

Decided: to note the progress of the TSA programme since December 2016.

7. **Employee Absence.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 6th March 2017 by the Head of Employee and Customer Services detailing information and analysis of sickness absence across Council services for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st January 2017.

Questions were raised and responded to the Head of Employee and Customer Services in relation to teachers' absence rates; the reasons for absence; the creation of the Equalities Group; and the numbers of employees with perfect attendance and the Head of Employee and Customer Services advised that she would obtain information on the number of employees with perfect attendance and circulate this to Panel Members.

Having scrutinised the information contained in this report in the context of the Local Government Benchmarking Information previously reported to this Panel of 24th February 2017 and having noted the significant progress made in relation to absence rates over the last four years, the Panel

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

8. **Building Standards Service Review.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 13th March 2017 by the Head of Neighbourhood Services seeking approval of the findings and recommendations of the Building Standards Service review.

Questions were raised and responded to by the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Building Standards Manager in relation to this authority's fee income being higher than neighbouring authorities; how building warrant income was utilised; the difficulties surrounding succession planning and recruitment; the proposal to move the budget associated with admin support from Facilities Management to Building Standards; and the greater use of mobile handheld devices to improve efficiency.

Decided: having scrutinised the findings of the Building Standards Service review, to agree that the findings and the following proposals be presented to a future meeting of the Leadership Panel for approval:-

(1)   to approve the deletion of two Building Surveyor posts at Grade 3, Level 10 saving £79,000;

(2)   to approve the creation of two Assistant Building Surveyor posts at Grade 2, Level 7 at a cost of £67,326, to reduce staffing costs by £11,674.00 overall; and

(3)   to transfer 3.21 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) administration posts from Facilities Management to Building Standards.

9.   Fleet Service Review.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 13th March 2017 by the Head of Neighbourhood Services providing the findings of the Fleet Management Service Review prior to formal consideration by a future Leadership Panel.

Questions were raised and responded to by the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Acting Fleet Supervisor in relation to the costs and benefits of using electric and hybrid vehicles; how drivers of these vehicles could locate the charging points; whether the new Council car would be a hybrid vehicle; the length of time taken to charge an electric vehicle's battery; whether there were moves to ensure that the vehicles generated noise to assist blind and partially sighted people

Following a question on the usage of charging points, the Acting Fleet Supervisor advised that he would source this information from Ayrshire Roads Alliance and circulate this to Panel Members.

Decided: having scrutinised the findings of the Fleet Management Service Review, to agree that the findings and the following proposals be presented to a future meeting of the Leadership Panel for approval:-

(1)   to replace the Corporate Occupational Road Risk Policy with the Fleet, Travel and Transport Policy;

(2)   that a business case be developed to consider whether the introduction of a Car Club service presented any efficiencies to the Council's business travel needs and to review the internal 'Hire on the Wire' (HOTW) vehicle booking system to determine if further efficiencies and improvements could be delivered; and

(3)   that a business case be developed to determine the economic and environmental benefits of the installation of additional electric rapid charging points on the eastern landward boundary of the Council and in South Carrick to complete the electric vehicle charging infrastructure within the Council area.

10.   Chair's Remarks.

The Chair thanked the Members for their contribution to this Panel.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.