

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 11th September 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Alec Clark (Chair), Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Andy Campbell, Iain Campbell, Chris Cullen, Martin Dowey, Hugh Hunter and Bob Pollock.

Attending: D. Hutchison, Depute Chief Executive and Director – People, T. Eltringham, Director of Health and Social Care; T. Baulk, Head of Finance and ICT; K. Carr, Executive Manager – Place Directorate; M. Baker, Service Lead – Corporate Planning and Improvement; T. Simpson, Service Lead – Corporate Accounting; W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; N. Gemmell, Acting Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits; C. McPhail, Economic Development Officer; and A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer.

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 meetings.

The minutes of 5th June 2018 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme.

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

Decided: to note

- (1) the current position; and
- (2) that dates when performance updates would be considered at this Panel would shortly be factored into the Work Programme.

4. 2017/18 Performance Against the Former Council Plan.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 4th September 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director – People to allow Members to review performance over the course of 2017/18 towards achieving the strategic objectives and outcomes contained within the 2016-18 Council Plan.

Concern was expressed that the relevant officers were not present to answer questions relating to this item and that this should not recur.

The Panel noted that the Depute Chief Executive and Director – People and the Director of Health and Social Care were available at the meeting to answer any questions on the report.

Following questions from Members, the Panel noted the following:-

- (1) that although 25% of the twenty-four measures had reduced in performance, this could indicate a minor decline, but nothing significant to cause concern;
- (2) that with regard to the measure relating to “Children achieving pre-school development milestones” and following a question from a Member asking whether the Council was able to differentiate between the progress of children in partner provider early years establishments and Council run facilities in relation to the 27-30 month checks, the Depute Chief Executive and Director - People would provide a written response to Members on this matter;
- (3) that with regard to the measure relating to “Carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role” it was noted that there had been a significant drop in this measure across Scotland over the last few years and that the Director of Health and Social Care would provide a written response to Members on this matter to indicate why there had been a drop in this measure in recent years;
- (4) that with regard to the measure relating to “Pupils from deprived areas gaining 5 or more awards at SCQF level six” it was noted that with regard to schools in deprived areas, such as Newton, Braehead and Dalmillig Primary schools, there was significant funding provided to these schools in the form of pupil equity funding and that other similar schools had received funding too. It was also noted that speech and language were issues of concern in these schools. It was reported that the poverty attainment gap was being addressed;
- (5) that with regard to the measure relating to “Jobs created and safeguarded” a Member asked what criteria was used to formulate this measure. It was noted that the Executive Manager – Place Directorate would provide this information to Members;
- (6) that with regard to the measure relating to “Spend by visitors” it was noted that this measure was derived from spend on tourist attractions and local shops and is provided to this Council and all others by external agencies;
- (7) that with regard to the measure relating to “Number of new affordable homes completed” it was noted although 43 affordable homes were completed in 2017/18, Members had recently approved the Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIP) and that this was expected to rise significantly in 2018/19 as site development, planning and construction progressed;
- (8) that with regard to the measure relating to “People 65 and over receiving intensive care at home” it was noted that the formula used by other local authorities to provide information on this measure could vary considerably; that it was difficult to provide a definitive reason as to why there had been a recent reduction in this measure; and that this matter was becoming more challenging moving forward particularly in rural areas with the biggest concern being the dependency ratio, as the number of people of working age was falling;

- (9) that with regard to the measure relating to “Adults who feel they can influence decisions”, it was noted that as this measure moved forward with more information being built into it from South Ayrshire residents, there may not be such a big variation between this Authority and the Scottish average; that although locality planning groups through the HSCP had started with enthusiasm, it had lost its exuberance through time; that there was a need for these groups to be given a sense of worth; that engagement events were taking place; that it was the responsibility of all staff to engage the community; the importance of considering the needs of local people; that the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership had produced a “Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy 2018-2027”; and
- (10) that with regard to the measure relating to “Pupils gaining 5 or more awards at SCQF level six” and having heard a Member, the Panel thanked the Depute Chief Executive and the Director – People for his input in this Council being above the Scottish average.

The Panel, having considered the performance against previously agreed high level measures as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report

Decided: to agree that there were no concerns it wished to draw to the attention of the Council.

5. Business Support in Rural Areas.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 4th September 2018 by the Director – Place updating Members on the business support activities being delivered by the Council in rural areas to support the local economy and encourage business growth in South Ayrshire.

Having heard the Economic Development Officer and following questions from Members, the Panel noted the following points:-

- (1) that although start-up figures were below target, existing rural businesses supported were above target;
- (2) that workshops to support businesses had been held in Burns House, Ayr and these workshops would now also be held in rural areas;
- (3) that the classification used by the “Understanding the Scottish Rural Economy” which indicated that South Ayrshire was mainly rural was open to interpretation;
- (4) the reasons for bringing the Business Gateway service in-house, which would now mean quality was the main focus rather than the number of payments received;
- (5) that the Service had issues due to staff being on sick leave and moving post but was expected to return to full capacity in the future;
- (6) that with regard to targets and the criteria used, this had been outlined in a report to Leadership Panel in 2015;
- (7) that effort required to be put into developing the Maybole bypass and the Carrick area;

- (8) that although effort with regard to business support was put into Ayr and the other towns, more effort was required to be put into rural areas to ensure that they felt part of South Ayrshire;
- (9) that it was hoped now, with the support proposed, businesses in rural areas would come forward for assistance;
- (10) the importance of the Council's Ambition Programme, which would bring job creation to South Ayrshire; and
- (11) that it would have been helpful to have had the details of the number of jobs that had been created by start-ups.

Having scrutinised the activities undertaken and performance against the targets set out for 2017/18, the Panel

Decided: to request that an Action Plan be developed for Business Support in rural areas within South Ayrshire for consideration by this Panel once the proposed restructure of the Economic Development Team was approved by Leadership Panel.

6. Service Review: Revenues and Corporate Accounting.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 5th September 2018 by the Head of Finance and ICT advising of the findings of the service review of Revenues team (within the Revenues and Benefits Service) and the Corporate Accounting service prior to formal consideration by the Leadership Panel.

The Head of Finance and ICT introduced the report and thereafter the Acting Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits and the Service Lead - Corporate Accounting outlined the background to the report, providing details of the proposals being recommended.

Following questions from Members, the following issues were noted:-

- (1) that the Health and Social Care Team had been stretched, together with resourcing issues;
- (2) that it was proposed to allocate four additional posts, which was hoped to be sufficient;
- (3) that having 12/14 qualified posts would get the team back to where it was a few years ago;
- (4) a member suggested that "optimism bias" can be built into this type of report, it was confirmed that this approach was not taken;
- (5) that ideally there would be more resources available for this team but that this area must shoulder its share of contributing to Council savings;
- (6) that the proposals were costed after the structure had been concluded;
- (7) that with regard to vulnerability eg. Illness, staff leaving etc, the Service would be in a better position than it had been in the past due to the temporary fixes that had been in place;

- (8) that for those who did not have access to online forms, there was still a core back office function available;
- (9) that there was no cost to the Council of sheriff officers/debt collection providers taking up underpayments as there was a 0% commission; and
- (10) that there would be no-one placed in redeployment.

The Panel, having commended the work that had gone in to the Review,

Decided: to agree that the findings and the following proposals be presented to Leadership Panel for approval:-

- (a) to combine the existing separate teams (Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates (NDR/Other Income/ System Admin) into one Revenues Team;
- (b) to re-focus the Corporate Accounting function around the core business support needs through four focused support teams;
- (c) to transfer the Health and Social Care operational front-facing activity to sit within the Revenues and Benefits service;
- (d) to transfer the Accounts Payable activity to Procurement, operating within the Place Directorate; and
- (e) to combine the Treasury and Cashiers activity within the newly created Corporate Finance team.

The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.