

**LEADERSHIP PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 27th October 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Attending: D. Anderson, Chief Executive; J. G. Peterkin, Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment; E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; D. Russell, Head of Legal and Administration; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; W. Phillips, Revenue and Benefits Manager; Y. Hunter, Chief Accounting Officer; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; S. Macdonald, Group Leader Waste Strategy; K. Gibb, Sustainable Development Manager; K. Dalrymple, Roads Manager; B. Wyllie, Supervisory Engineer (Traffic); W. Gray, Property and Design Manager; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; D. Robertson, Public Communications Manager; C. Downie, Public Communications Officer; D. Knight, Committee Services Officer; and A. Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer.

**Chair's remarks.**

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, welcomed Denise Robertson to her first meeting of the Leadership Panel.

**Community Services – Social Services.****C-I****1. Notice of Motion.**

Councillor McFarlane, seconded by Councillor Convery, moved that

“The Adult Care and Support Green Paper (England): Shaping the Future of Care Together.

The Green Paper is part of a very long running debate and its proposals are still under wide public consultation. The Paper sets out proposals for England only but does not take into consideration of cross border implications. The Green Paper takes the view that care in England cannot be funded from general taxation, it describes three options for long term funding rather than offering a single recommended proposal. Some of the funding proposals particularly relate to benefits and attendance allowance and could have serious implications for Scotland's Councils if implemented.

We ask this Council to advise COSLA of our concerns and that COSLA respond to the consultation on the Green Paper.”

A full discussion took place on this matter and a number of issues were raised in relation to cross border implications, funding implications, the funding of insurance schemes and the Department of Works and Pensions.

**Decided:** to support the terms of the Motion.

## **Community Services - Housing and Customer First.**

### **2. Housing Capital Investment Programme 2009/10: Monitoring Report at Period 5 – 31st August 2009.**

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 12th October 2009 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment and the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) informing of the progress being made with the Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2009/10 at 31st August 2009 (Budget Monitoring Report 5);
- (2) advising that South Ayrshire Council's Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2009/10 had been approved at a special meeting of the Council on 4th February 2009 with the total funding being £9,195,000 and that the Council at its meeting on 9th July 2009 had agreed that £948,155 be bought forward from 2008/09 to fund the completion of projects;
- (3) intimating that a number of adjustments were being proposed to the current programme as highlighted in the report; and
- (4) reporting that as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report, at the end of Period 5, £2,023,596 had been spent and that based on a budget of £10,695,155, this represented expenditure in percentage terms of 19% with actual income standing at £2,023,597.

#### **Decided:**

- (a) to note the progress made on projects to 31st August 2009 as highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (b) to approve the proposed adjustments as detailed in section 4 of the report.

## **Development and the Environment – Sustainability and the Environment.**

### **3. Scotland's Zero Waste Plan: Consultation.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 11th September 2009 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising
  - (a) that the Scottish Government was developing a new Zero Waste Plan for Scotland which outlined how everyone could play their part in reducing the amount of waste produced, reusing valuable resources and increasing recycling levels to help Scotland become a Zero Waste Society;
  - (b) that Zero Waste was part of the Scottish Government's wider work on the environment, and by preventing waste in the first place, and by recycling, householders and businesses could take steps to help in the fight against climate change; and

- (c) that the draft Zero Waste Plan had been launched for consultation on 20th August 2009, with the closing date for responses being 13th November 2009; and

- (2) outlining the Scottish Government's Zero Waste vision for Scotland.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the issues around variable charging, funding implications, the proposed increased tax of up to £72 per tonne in 2013, the disposal of ash from coal fires and the implications of the recession on small recycling firms and the Group Leader Waste Strategy responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to submit the response as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report to the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan consultation exercise.

#### 4. **Street Lighting Maintenance Contract – Extension to Contract Period.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 14th October 2009 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising
  - (a) that street lighting repairs and maintenance services were procured in South Ayrshire by means of term contracts which, in order to secure and demonstrate Best Value, were periodically subject to competitive tendering;
  - (b) that the current contract had been awarded to Centre Great Ltd. in January 2004 with works commencing in April 2004 for three years, with an option to extend having been exercised for a further three years until 31st March 2010 and that there was no scope within the contract for South Ayrshire Council unilaterally to extend the contract beyond 31st March 2010; and
  - (c) that the McClelland Report on “Review of Public Procurement in Scotland” encouraged collaborative procurement in the public sector and that in line with that report, South Ayrshire Council was currently collaborating with North Ayrshire Council and Inverclyde Council with a view to procuring street lighting repair and maintenance services by means of a single common contract;
- (2) indicating
  - (a) that the collaborative procurement process would be greatly simplified if the proposed date of commencement of the new contract was the same in each of the three participating local authority areas; and
  - (b) that preliminary investigations had confirmed that South Ayrshire Council's current contractor, Centre Great Ltd., was willing to extend the current contract for a period of three months at no additional cost to South Ayrshire Council; and
- (3) reporting that the cost of all works carried out during the proposed contract extension period would be met from the 2010/11 Revenue Budget.

**Decided:** that, under the provisions of paragraph 16.3 of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, to grant approval to the Head of Planning and Enterprise to negotiate a three month extension to the current Street Lighting Maintenance Contract with Centre Great Ltd.

## 5. **Vehicular Access to High Street, Ayr.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 15th September 2009 (Page 504, paragraph 15) when it had been decided to carry out a public consultation on proposals to relax parking and access restrictions to High Street and there was submitted a report (issued) of 14th October 2009 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) outlining the results of a public consultation exercise carried out on proposals to relax vehicle access to High Street, Ayr;
- (2) seeking approval to progress with the implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order that would bring a number of proposals into effect; and
- (3) reporting the estimated cost of implementing the recommended changes was £17,800 which could be contained within this years' Capital allocation of £157,000 for the reconstruction of High Street and consisted of:-

• Promoting Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.	£2,500
• Provision of traffic signs and road markings.	£9,300
• Publicity of new regulations	£1,000
• Monitoring and future adjustment to Experimental Order	<u>£5,000</u>
	<u>£17,800</u>

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the users of the High Street, the work of Ayr Renaissance Board, monitoring arrangements and the work of the Community Safety Team and the relevant Officers responded accordingly and outlined their discussions with Strathclyde Police.

### **Decided:**

- (i) to authorise the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment to prepare an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to put in place the following measures:-
  - (A) to provide unrestricted access to High Street between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., Mondays to Sundays;
  - (B) to provide two night time Taxi stances between 6:00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. only outside Nos. 23-30 High Street and 160 High Street and an additional Taxi stance outside the Kyle Centre be provided to allow for left side loading between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.; and
  - (C) to permit unrestricted parking in the existing service bays between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., Mondays to Sundays; and

- (ii) to request that the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment
  - (A) continue to monitor pedestrian and traffic conditions within High Street and to consult with disability groups and others during the period of the Experimental Traffic Order; and
  - (B) submit a further report on the initial effects of the Experimental Traffic Order to a future meeting of the Leadership Panel six months after its implementation.

## **6. Community Energy Project Update.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 8th October 2009 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising
  - (a) that the Council had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Energy Agency for them to develop and manage a Community Energy Project with the main aims of this project being to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock through installation of insulation measures and other measures where funding was available;
  - (b) that the Council had a Preferred Energy Supplier agreement with Scottish Hydro Electric (SHE) where an income was received for every Council housing property that was either transferred to or remained with SHE as the supplier and that this income was ring fenced for energy efficiency projects and had been used to fund the Community Energy Project to date and that the income received in the last year had been approximately £12,000;
  - (c) that the Community Energy Project had been running for three years and had resulted in:-
    - CO2 emissions down by almost 2,000 tonnes;
    - investment in the area of £800,000 from additional grant funding secured; and
    - properties with measures installed were 1,600;
  - (d) that in addition, 50% of households that were in fuel poverty were not in receipt of the entitlements where they would normally receive insulation for free and that this Project gave them these measures at no cost to the householder; and
  - (e) that the success of the Project had been recognised in three Awards:-
    - an Energy Action Scotland Energy Savers Award;
    - a National Energy Efficiency Award; and
    - an International Ashden Award 2008 which project had also been used as a case study in best practice by WWF;

- (2) outlining the reasons for having a Preferred Supplier Agreement in place and that in any future contract the Housing Officer dealing with the property used his/her judgement as to whether to process the supplies through the Preferred Supplier Agreement or not;
- (3) indicating that the contract with SHE ran out in October 2009 and that they were willing to renew the contract for another two years but at lower rates;
- (4) recommending that as there was still enough funding within the Community Energy Project budget to extend the SLA with the Energy Agency for another six months at least that, as long as the Project maintained the benefits that it had brought to the communities, it should be continued as long as funding was available and that the income from the Preferred Supplier Agreement should continue to be used as the source of funding for the Project; and
- (5) reporting
  - (a) that there were no additional revenue or capital resource demands required for this project; and
  - (b) that the estimated income of £6,000 per annum would be ring fenced for the Community Energy Project and that any unspent funds at the end of the financial year would be carried forward for this Project.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to whether Scottish Hydro Electric supplied the cheapest electricity and the relevant Officer responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (i) to continue with the Community Energy Project using the available budget and any future income from the Preferred Energy Supplier agreement; and
- (ii) to approve the renewal of the current Preferred Energy Supplier funding agreement with Scottish Hydro Electric as outlined in the report.

**Corporate and Community Planning –Corporate, Strategic and Community Planning.**

**7. South Ayrshire Council's Directorate Plans.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Council of 9th October (Page 563, paragraph 22) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 19th October 2009 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) advising
  - (a) that the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning identified that the Council needed to develop more clearly prioritised strategic plans that supported the delivery of the Council's vision and improvement plan and introduce effective performance management processes; and

- (b) that these issues were being addressed under Strands 2 and 5 of the Council's Improvement Agenda and that the Directorate Plans presented a further step in the Council's progress towards prioritised strategic plans;
- (2) indicating
- (a) that a preliminary risk assessment had been undertaken on Directorate objectives and that during the first year of the plans, work on risk management would be considerably refined; and
  - (b) that should the Directorate Plans be approved, performance management arrangements would be put in place to monitor progress and to allow for their review by the Council's Management Teams and by the Leadership Panel at Corporate Plan level, on a six monthly basis commencing with the Leadership Panel on 10th May 2010; and
- (3) seeking approval for the Council's Directorate Plans which underpinned the Corporate Plan.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to risk and child protection, advising the Council's staff of the contents of the Corporate Plans, the sustainability of these Plans and the risk ratings and how would any amendments to the Plans be reported to Elected Members and the relevant Officer responded accordingly and advised that she was currently examining how each Directorate Plan could be matched to each Portfolio-holder.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken in the preparation of the Directorate Plans by Officers and Elected Members

- (i) to approve the Children and Community Directorate Plan for 2009-12;
- (ii) to approve the Corporate Services Directorate Plan for 2009-12;
- (iii) to approve the Development and Environment Directorate Plan for 2009-12; and
- (iv) to agree to remit the individual Directorate Plans to the relevant Standing Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

### **Corporate and Community Planning - Resources and Performance.**

#### **8. Council Tax Collection Statistics – Cash at 30th September 2009.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 15th October 2009 by the Head of Corporate Resources advising

- (1) of the collection levels which had been achieved in respect of Council Tax to 30th September 2009 and the action which had been taken to achieve Best Value in the collection thereof;
- (2) that the collection rate had been 47.60 per cent against the target collection of 47.54 per cent which equated to a positive variation of £39,611, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and

- (3) that the Corporate Services' staff continued to promote the take up of Housing and Council Tax benefit together with the prompt rebilling and recovery of Council Tax and that, in the event of non-payment, Council Tax arrears were now being passed earlier to Stirling Park Sheriff Officers to maximise recovery and minimise the impact of the economic downturn upon collections.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken on the collection levels by the Revenue Manager and his team

- (a) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (b) to request the Head of Corporate Resources to provide updated figures to the next meeting of this Panel.

#### **9. Write-off of Housing Benefits Overpayments.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 15th October 2009 by the Head of Corporate Resources

- (1) outlining procedures for the write-off of housing benefit overpayments once all attempts to recover such debts had been exhausted (and without prejudice to future recovery);
- (2) seeking approval to write-off housing benefit overpayments of £574.73 in accordance with the Council's policy; and
- (3) advising that the accounts submitted for write-off would be contained within the existing bad debt provision.

**Decided:** to approve the write-off of housing benefit overpayments totalling £574.73 as detailed in the Appendix of the report.

#### **10. Write-off of Sundry Debtors' Balances.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 15th October 2009 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) outlining procedures for the write-off of sundry debtors' balances once all attempts to recover such debts had been exhausted (and without prejudice to future recovery);
- (2) seeking approval to write-off sundry debtors' balances totalling £17,259.63 in accordance with the Council's policy; and
- (3) advising that the accounts submitted for write-off had been provided for in earlier years and that a charge in respect of these accounts would be made against the relevant Directorate.

**Decided:** to approve the write-off of sundry debtors' balances totalling £17,259.63 as detailed in the Appendix of the report.

**11. Common Good Funds - Revenue and Capital Budgetary Control – Position Statement at 31st August 2009.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 15th October 2009 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services in relation to the revenue and capital accounts of Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Maybole and Girvan Common Good Funds for the period at 31st August 2009

- (1) detailing
  - (a) the revenue position at 31st August 2009, taking into account the Leadership Panel's decision, as detailed in section 3 of the report, against the approved full year budget and projected balances; and
  - (b) the accumulated revenue position at 31st August 2009 and the projected accumulated revenue surpluses at 31st March 2010;
- (2) advising that the accumulated capital reserves balance on the Ayr Common Good Fund at 31st August 2009 was £2,550,317 with the projected accumulated capital position at 31st March 2010, taking into account the capital issues highlighted in Appendix 3 of the report, anticipated to be £2,560,317, an increase of £10,000 since 1st April 2009; and
- (3) intimating that the accumulated capital reserves balance on the Prestwick Common Good Fund at 31st August 2009 was £50,000 and that this position was likely to remain unchanged at 31st March 2010.

**Decided:** to approve the contents of the report.

**12. Housing Revenue Account - Revenue Budgetary Control 2009/10 – Position Statement at 31st August 2009.**

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 15th October 2009 by the Executive Director – Children and Community and the Executive Director – Corporate Services on the performance of the Housing Revenue Account's expenditure against its profiled budget for the period to 31st August 2009 and reporting

- (1) that in 2008/09 the HRA had achieved a surplus for the year of £0.829m which had been added to the surplus brought forward of £19.691m to give an accumulated surplus at 31st March 2009 of £20.520m;
- (2) that part of this surplus (£7.375m) was committed to various areas of spend with £4.228m being required to fund the 2009/10 Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2009/10 and that due to the additional income from house sales the £4.228m required to fund the 2009/10 Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2009/10 would be reduced to £3.460m leaving £9.685m to be considered as part of the 2010/11 Business Plan update and that it was likely that it would be needed for future capital investment to avoid the need for long term borrowing;
- (3) that the final out-turn report for 2008/09 had recommended that the HRA should revisit its reserves policy as part of the 2010/11 Business Plan; and

- (4) that the HRA was £0.281m underspent for the period to 31st August 2009 and that the projected surplus for the year to 31st March was £0.412m.

**Decided:** to approve the contents of the report.

## \*C-I

### 13. Budget Management - Revenue Budgetary Control 2009/10 – Position Statement at 31st August 2009.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 16th October 2009 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) presenting an overview of the General Services Revenue Account for 2009/10 as at 31st August 2009;
- (2) advising
  - (a) that the draft 2008/09 Annual Accounts had been submitted for audit to Audit Scotland on 30th June 2009 and had shown an accumulated surplus at 31st March 2009 of £5.084m and as already reported to the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel on 24th September 2009, the draft surplus had been increased by £2.357m to reflect the successful outcome of a retrospective VAT claim submitted to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs in March 2009 and that the surplus had been further increased by £0.012m to reflect increased monies due from the Department of Works and Pensions in respect of housing benefit payments with the audited accumulated surplus now being £7.453m;
  - (b) that of the accumulated surplus of £7.453m, £1.064m would be required to be set aside to assist with the financing of the Council's Schools PPP project and £1.195m had been allocated to be spent on specific Council projects during 2009/10 and that a further £0.895m had been earmarked to be used in delivering the Council's affordable housing strategy in future years leaving an uncommitted balance of £4.299m at 31st March 2009; and
  - (c) that South Ayrshire Council at its meeting on 7th October 2009 had approved the use of £0.750m from the additional VAT monies received to fund severance costs resulting from the latest phase of organisational change, in addition to the £1.000m set aside for this purpose in the 2009/10 Revenue Budget;
- (3) intimating that the Revenue Budget for 2009/10 had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 11th February 2009 and that the approved budget had been based on the former management structures, with further work required by Directorates and Finance to restate the budgets to reflect the new management arrangements;
- (4) reporting that the budget reorganisation exercise was ongoing and that the period 5 budgetary control reports reflected the majority of the reconfiguration, with the remainder expected to be resolved in the forthcoming months;
- (5) summarising the re-organised 2009/10 budgets of the new Directorates at this stage;

- (6) detailing revenue monitoring reports each Directorate for the period to 31st August 2009 as provided in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (7) indicating that a number of service and budget issues were being raised in these reports and that Executive Directors have committed to management action to ensure that there was a break-even position at 31st March 2010 as follows:-
- **Chief Executive's** – showed a current overspend of £0.004m which was mainly due to minor savings in employee costs offset by minor overspends in supplies, transport and administrative costs compared to the approved budgets with a break-even position currently being projected at 31st March 2010;
  - \* • **Children and Community** - showed a current underspend of £0.278m which was mainly due to savings in employee costs, school running costs, employee transport costs and out-with authority placements for children and that these underspends would be offset by increased expenditure on homecare and residential care packages with a year-end underspend of £0.640m currently being projected;
  - **Corporate Services** –
    - \* showed a current overspend of £0.052m which was mainly due to overtime costs being incurred within Finance and Human Resources as part of the implementation of single status, and the delay in the transfer of the District Court to the Scottish Courts Service with a break-even position currently being projected at 31st March 2010; and
    - \* virement as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report had been requested;
  - \* • **Development and Environment** – showed a current overspend of £0.191m which was mainly due to unbudgeted expenditure in relation to the relocation of the Archives Service to Auchincruive and reduced Property and Design and planning fee income with these overspends being partially offset by underspends in Property and Design and Roads employee costs and that in order to offset the current adverse position and ensure that the Directorate's net expenditure was in line with budget at the year-end, management have limited expenditure to essential items only and that subject to the management action outlined above, a break-even position was currently being projected at 31st March 2010; and
  - **Miscellaneous** – showed an underspend of £0.005m which was mainly due to minor underspends on consultancy and pension payments with a year-end underspend of £0.259m currently being projected due to anticipated savings on debt management costs.

Questions were raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to Older People on waiting lists and free personal care and the relevant Officer responded accordingly.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken in the preparation of the Revenue Budgetary Control Statements by the Head of Corporate Resources and his team

- (i) to approve the management action being taken by Executive Directors to ensure a break-even budget at 31st March 2010 as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;

- (ii) to approve the request for virement as outlined in the Directorate budgetary control reports at Appendix 1 and as summarised in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

## C-I

### 14. General Services Capital Programme 2009/10: Monitoring Report at Period 5 – 31st August 2009.

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 12th October 2009 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment and Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) outlining the General Services Capital Programme for 2009/10 at 31st August 2009 and detailing that at the end of Period 5, actual expenditure stood at £3,059,588 (15.44% of total budget), against a full year approved budget of £19,817,976 with actual income totalling £3,059,588;
- (2) advising
  - (a) that the Scottish Government, through the Zero Waste Fund Initiative, had made a total of £92,000 available to fund capital works in 2009/10 which had been reported to, and approved by, the Leadership Panel on 19th May 2009 and that the capital funding would support the completion of a Waste Recycling Project in Wallacetown, a recycling initiative in Kincaidston and contribute to the upgrade of bulk recycling bays at Walker Road;
  - (b) that Sustrans had awarded £6,000 for a Pilot Active Travel Initiative to encourage cycling activities within schools; and
  - (c) that Strathclyde Passenger for Transport had made a number of awards as follows: -
    - £18,600 for the Ayr Renaissance Project to fund a study into proposals for a new bus station within Ayr;
    - £25,000 for a study into Decriminalised Parking Enforcement in South Ayrshire; and
    - £200,000 for the development of Quality Bus Corridors, to implement a Real Time Passenger Information system to be installed within bus shelters to inform passengers of travel information;
- (3) reporting that at the time of preparing the 2009/10 General Services Capital Programme, the Scottish Government had indicated that funding of £2,100,000 was to be accelerated from 2010/11 into 2009/10 and that notification had now been received that the accelerated funding figure was only £1,925,000, being £175,000 less than anticipated and therefore, income would require to be reduced by this amount in 2009/10;

- (4) intimating that a number of adjustments were being proposed to the current programme as highlighted in the report and if approved, these adjustments would mean that the current over-programming of £919,222 would increase by £265,000 to £1,184,222, being the net result of the £175,000 reduction in Accelerated Funding and the £90,000 requested for contaminated land and that a summary of this information was detailed in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (5) recommending that in order not to increase current over-programming in 2009/10 beyond £919,222, that the budget for work at Heathfield Primary School be reduced from £500,000 to £400,000 and the budget for work at Forehill Primary School be reduced from £1,700,000 to £1,535,000 and that as both of these projects would continue into 2010/11 that the budget position in respect of these be reassessed in the new financial year once tender outcomes were known.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken on the General Services Programme by the Property and Design Manager and his team

- (i) to note the progress made on projects to 31st August 2009 as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to note the additional funding awards as detailed in Section 4 of the report;
- (iii) to approve the proposed adjustments to the programme as outlined in Section 5 of the report;
- (iv) to approve the allocation of funding to projects within the ICT Equipment at PPP Schools budget as outlined in Section 6 of the report ; and
- (v) to note that the adjustments would have no overall impact on the current level of over-programming.

**15. National Entitlement Cards – Authority to upgrade cashless catering equipment in schools.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 20th October 2009 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) advising
  - (a) that the Council was participating in the Government's National Entitlement Card (NEC) programme and that as part of the project had committed to replacing its Young Scot cards with National Entitlement Cards with the change-over for all South Ayrshire's secondary school children being completed before the Christmas break;
  - (b) that one of the important features of the NEC was providing access for pupils to the school cashless catering system and that to facilitate this, equipment and software in schools needed to be upgraded to read the new 'smart' NEC card which contained an electronic chip;

- (c) that for some schools such as Belmont Academy and Prestwick Academy only minor upgrades have been necessary as improvements to these schools were made as part of the PPP project, however, for the other 6 secondary schools a more significant upgrade was required;
  - (d) that schools were equipped with cashless catering equipment under a contract previously agreed with CRB Solutions and that the cost of upgrading all schools was estimated to be £42,500 which was contained within the budget but the amount was in excess of the Council's £30,000 limit for awarding contracts without a tendering process; and
  - (e) that since CRB Solutions was already contracted to the Council for the continuing maintenance of the cashless catering systems in schools it would not be practical, or desirable, to have a third party different from CRB Solutions complete the necessary system upgrade;
- (2) seeking approval to use section 2.3 of Standing Orders Relating to Contracts to upgrade cashless catering equipment in secondary schools to allow integration with the new National Entitlement Cards (NEC); and
  - (3) reporting that as part of the Modernising Government Fund, the Council had been allocated money to replace Young Scott with NEC and that £60,000 of that allocation had been carried forward into 2009/10 to fund the changes as outlined in the report and that the £42,500 needed to upgrade the cashless catering facilities in secondary schools would be funded from this budget.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to whether the card would be rolled out to other services and could a discount be given to the unemployed at leisure centres and the relevant Officer responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (i) to exempt from the provisions of Paragraph 2.3 of the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts the purchase of cashless catering equipment and software to allow its use with the new National Entitlement Cards; and
- (ii) to authorise the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication to procure the necessary services through the appointment of CRB Solutions.

**16. 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 agenda, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 1 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**17. Housing Revenue Account Land Disposal: Brewlands Crescent, Symington.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 24th September 2009 by the Executive Director – Children and Community seeking approval to declare a site at Brewlands Crescent, Symington as surplus to requirements and for sale to the owner of Symington Stores, 53 Brewlands Crescent, Symington.

**Decided:** to agree that an identified area of land at Brewlands Crescent, Symington be declared as surplus to requirements and for sale to the owner of Symington Stores, 53 Brewlands Crescent, Symington on the terms indicated within the report.

**18. Finance Review 2009 - Proposed Structure Revisions.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 16th October 2009 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) seeking approval
  - (a) for a revised Corporate Finance and Accounting structure, which consolidated finance duties currently undertaken across Directorates; and
  - (b) to maximise efficiency and eliminate duplication and overlap of responsibilities; and
- (2) reporting that the proposed revised structures comprised 71.0 full-time equivalent posts, compared to 78.1 within the current structures (a reduction of 7.1 fte posts) and that the full-year saving associated with the revised structure, net of £40,000 funding to be transferred to Children and Community Directorate to assist with financing their new structure, was £148,000 which compared favourably with the total targeted saving of £142,000.

**Decided:**

- (i) to approve the implementation of the revised Corporate Finance and Accounting structure as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to implement the proposals, including approval of voluntary early retirement/ severance where appropriate; and
- (iii) to request the Executive Director – Corporate Services to provide the Leadership Panel with an update on progress.

The meeting ended at 11.15 a.m.