

**CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING**  
**STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 17th June 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present: Councillors Brian Connolly (Chair), Sandra Goldie, John Hampton, Mairi Low, Alec Oattes and Mike Peddie.
- Apologies: Councillors Bill Grant and Helen Moonie.
- Attending: E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; H. McLaughlin, Audit Services / Programme Review Manager; A. MacLeod, Performance and Business Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; G. Boyce, Service Planning and Performance Management Officer; and D. Knight, Committee Services Officer.
- Also Attending: Councillors Robin Reid and Margaret Toner, Portfolio-holders, Ian Douglas, Elaine Little and Provost Winifred Sloan.

**1. Minutes of previous meetings.**

**Decided:** to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 20th May 2010 (issued).

**2. Progress Against the Council Corporate Plan to 31st March 2010.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 8th June 2010 (Page 313, paragraph 13) when that Panel, having considered a report of 28th May 2010 (copies previously issued) by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advising of the progress achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan's aims and objectives, had agreed

- (1) to note the progress achieved over 2009/10 against the Council Corporate Plan as set out in the table at 4.2 of the report and Appendix 1 attached to the report; and
- (2) to note that detailed performance reports were to be considered at the forthcoming Standing Scrutiny Panels.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication referred to the recent workshops attended by Members and invited comment on the format and content of the Plan. The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication also advised that, in future, the intention would be for Standing Scrutiny Panels to receive the detailed report for consideration prior to the Leadership Panel on a six monthly basis.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to Officers' attendance at Standing Scrutiny Panels or workshops, improving or establishing consistency of reporting and the presentation of information contained within the report and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly.

In particular, questions were raised regarding the following Directorate Objectives and Tasks:-

- CC11c01.04 (Page 1) – enquiring about the progress being made in relation to PDRs for teachers and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advised that she would keep the Panel advised of progress;
- CC11c04.02 (Page 4) – enquiring when would the move to the SEEMIS ASN module start and the Performance and Business Manager advised that she would inform the Panel when the module would begin;
- CC11c04.03 (Page 4) – how many routes were involved in the safe routes to school and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advised that she would inform the Panel how many routes were involved;
- CC11c04.06 (Page 4) – enquiring whether the DDA projects for 2009/10 would be completed by the year end and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advised that this Task was on track;
- DE11c01.04 (Page 5) – requesting an update on the work being undertaken to obtain customer satisfaction figures in relation to the roads network and the Service Planning and Performance Management Officer advised that the figures in relation to customer satisfaction were currently being prepared;
- CS14a01 and CS14c01 (Pages 6 and 7) – enquiring whether there would be outcome indicators that could be reported against and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advised outcomes were difficult to measure and that she was working on the next phase of the Improvement Agenda;
- CS14f01.05 (Page 11) – enquiring about the upgrades to the Revenue and Benefits systems and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advised that this Task was on target and the Executive Director – Corporate Services intimated that these were regular upgrades to the system;
- CS14f02.03 (Page 12) – what action was being taken in relation to small businesses that did not have access to internet technology that “quick quote” was based around and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Executive Director – Corporate Services outlined the support that was being given to Small to Medium Enterprises;
- CS14f02.08 (Page 13) – enquiring about how many staff would be trained on “quick quote” and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that only staff involved in procurement issues would receive training;
- CS14f03.12 (Page 14) – enquiring about the legal requirement to provide translation services to clients and the Executive Director – Corporate Services explained that the Council would have to take reasonable measures to provide translation services and of the need to use approved translators to maintain confidentiality and accuracy;
- CS14f04 (Page 15) – what processes had been used to select the staff that worked in the Call Centre as there seemed to be high levels of absences and the Executive Director – Corporate Services outlined the current criteria for staff that had been transferred to the Call Centre which had been based around the transfer of specific services;

- CS14f05.04 (Page 17) – enquiring about how many appeals were still to be dealt with in relation to Single Status and the Executive Director – Corporate Services indicated that appeals were being examined to ascertain which could be dealt with through hearing a number of generic appeals;
- CS14f07 (Page 18) – enquiring about the desirability of linking the updates in these reports to the associated risk assessments which had been discussed in the recent workshop session and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advised that this would be considered when preparing the next set of reports;
- CS14f07.05 (Page 19) – enquiring about the Council's range of insurance arrangements that the Council had in place and the Executive Director – Corporate Services explained that there was a portfolio of policies in place that were designed to meet the varied and specific requirements of the Council;
- CS14f10.04 (Page 21) – enquiring why had the completion date had been revised for the review and updating of the schools' Scheme of Delegation and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that changes to the promoted posts structure had caused the delay; and
- CS14f10.11 (Page 22) – enquiring about the progress being made with Oracle developments and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that a report would be submitted to the Council on 1st July 2010 regarding a proposal involving South Lanarkshire Council.

A consolidated response to all the issues raised would be provided to Members.

**Decided:**

- (a) to note the progress and assessments made as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report and in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) that further refinement to the reporting format would be developed taking into account the comments made at this meeting;
- (c) that for future reporting, Standing Scrutiny Panels should receive the detailed report for consideration prior to the Leadership Panel; and
- (d) to request that the Head of Customer and Community Services provide a detailed response to the Members of the Panel in relation to the absence levels at the Call Centre.

**3. Improvement Agenda:-**

**(1) Remit from the Leadership Panel – Improvement Agenda: Fifth Progress Report.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 8th June 2010 (Page 314, paragraph 15) when that Panel, having considered a report of May 2010 (copies previously issued) by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advising of the fifth progress report arising from the Council's agreement on 9th July 2009 to the South Ayrshire Council Improvement Agenda, had agreed to note

- (a) the status of each improvement strand and the detailed information provided; and
- (b) that one improvement strand (Core ICT systems) had been graded as “amber” and one (Joint Working and Shared Services) had been graded as “red”.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication provided an update on the fifth progress report and in particular gave an update on the rescheduling of self assessment of the Community planning Partnership.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel enquiring what kind of occurrence would require the Council to use its General Reserves and the Executive Director – Corporate responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to agree with the recommendations of the Leadership Panel and to note the update provided by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication.

**(2) Improvement Agenda Strand 1 – Sustained Financial Health.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th June 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (a) advising of the progress to date with Improvement Agenda Strand 1 in relation to Sustained Financial Health as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) informing that the initial Audit of Best Value had raised concerns as follows:-

*‘The Council faces severe financial pressures and difficult challenges in providing its services. It lacks reserves to deal with unanticipated expenditure and is exposed to substantial financial risks, including the cost of implementing single status’;*

- (c) reporting that the Council had recognised the challenging financial position and were already working towards an ‘uncommitted’ general fund reserve of £2.0m by 31st March 2010 and the implementation of job evaluation and single status; and
- (d) outlining the current position in relation to:- financial reserves; single status/equal pay; financial planning; and future developments.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the percentage of the budget that the Auditors had recommended should be allocated to General Reserves and the Executive Director – Corporate responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to note the progress in relation to Improvement Strand 1 – Sustained Financial Health.

The meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.