

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 22nd April 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Brian Connolly (Chair), Sandra Goldie, Bill Grant, Mairi Low, Helen Moonie, Alec Oattes and Mike Peddie.

Apology: Councillor John Hampton.

Attending: A. Wilson, Head of HR and Organisational Development; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; H. McLaughlin, Audit Services/Programme Review Manager; D. Sherlock, Improvement Manager; C. Bishop, Performance and Business Change Manager; C. Boyd, Corporate Safety Manager; A. MacLeod, Business and Performance Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; D. Robertson, Communications Manager; G. Boyce, Service Planning and Performance Management Officer; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administration Officer.

Also Attending: Councillors John McDowall; Bill McIntosh; and Robin Reid (Portfolio-holder of Resources and Performance); and Anne Cairns, Senior Auditor, and Kirsty Forrester, Audit Scotland.

1. Minutes of previous meetings.

Decided: to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 18th March 2010 (issued).

2. Remit from the Leadership Panel: Corporate Risk Management.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 13th April 2010 (Page 220, paragraph 12) when that Panel, having considered a report (issued) of 12th March 2010 by the Head of Corporate Resources seeking approval of the revised Council Risk Management Strategy, updated strategic risk register and proposed mitigations as contained within the appendices to the report, had agreed

- (1) to approve the revised Risk Management Strategy as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) to agree the Strategic Risk Register and proposed mitigations as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (3) to request that appropriate training for Elected Members be arranged; and
- (4) to remit the report for further consideration by this Standing Scrutiny Panel.

The Head of Corporate Resources provided further information in relation to the production of the Corporate Risk Management Strategy, which would be reported on six monthly intervals to the Leadership Panel and this Panel and incorporating a Members' training schedule and outlined that the report had been referred to this Panel:-

- (a) to seek endorsement of the risks identified within the Strategy for officers to take forward the management of these risks; and
- (b) to consider the delivery of appropriate training which would enable Members to undertake their Scrutiny role in this regard.

Various questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the Mott MacDonald survey and Members' involvement, associated costs, the reasons for external consultancy and future in-house provision; insurance cover; training issues; the risk process, the role of Members in this regard and the Council's priorities and the Head of Corporate Resources and the Corporate Safety Manager responded accordingly on the various issues raised. The Head of Corporate Resources also indicated that a training session would be organised towards the end of May 2010 and the Chair advised that, following this training, Members would be in a position to further consider the process.

Decided:

- (i) to agree the key risks as identified within the Strategic Risk Register and to endorse the proposed mitigations; and
- (ii) to request that more training for Elected Members be organised to enable Members to further undertake their scrutiny role in this regard.

3. Remit from the Leadership Panel: South Ayrshire Council Directorate Plans.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 13th April 2010 (Page 219, paragraph 10) when that Panel, having considered a report (issued) of 31st March 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advising of the current position in relation to the Directorate Plans, had agreed

- (1) to approve the Children and Community Directorate Plan for 2010-13;
- (2) to approve the Corporate Services Directorate Plan for 2010-13;
- (3) to approve the Development and Environment Directorate Plan for 2010-13; and
- (4) to remit these Plans to the relevant Standing Scrutiny Panels, to examine those sections that relate to their specific remits.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (a) explained that the Plans had been revised and had been submitted at this stage to bring about time alignment between strategic plans and the budget cycle;
- (b) advised that performance information would be reported on a six monthly basis commencing with the Leadership Panel meeting on 8th June 2010 and the Standing Scrutiny Panels thereafter; and
- (c) informed that the Community Services Standing Scrutiny Panel had requested a seminar and suggested that a Performance Management seminar on each Directorate Performance Report, open to all Members, could be arranged.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the schedule and prioritisation of tasks; the flexibility of the Plan; and child protection issues and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Head of HR and Organisational Development responded accordingly.

Councillor Moonie raised concerns in relation to the extent of Members' scrutiny being undertaken and commented that the other two Standing Scrutiny Panels had approached this remit in completely different ways. The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication further explained that when the Performance Management reports were submitted, Members would have a better opportunity to scrutinise at that part of the process. She also indicated that Performance Management sessions would be organised prior to each performance management report.

The Chair raised a question in relation to the proposed seminar and asked the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication, in terms of a consistent approach, to ascertain how the other two Panels had explored specific issues arising from the Plans. The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication indicated that she would feedback her findings in respect of the approach which had been taken by the other two Standing Scrutiny Panels.

Decided: to note

- (i) the current position with the updated Directorate Plans;
- (ii) that a Performance Management seminar would be organised in due course; and
- (iii) that performance information would be submitted to the Leadership Panel on 8th June 2010 and, thereafter, referred to the relevant Standing Scrutiny Panels.

4. Improvement Agenda:-

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

Reference was made to the Leadership Panel of 13th April 2010 (Page 219, paragraph 9) when that Panel, having considered a report of February 2010 (issued) by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advising of the fourth 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;
- (b) that one improvement strand (Core ICT systems) had been graded as 'amber'; and
- (c) to remit this report to this Standing Scrutiny Panel for its further consideration.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication provided an update on the fourth progress report, informed of the current visit by Audit Scotland and reported that following the Best Value revisit report, Members would be asked to reflect on the way forward as the Council moved into the next phase of the process.

Various questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to specific Improvement Strands and in respect of:- resource implications; stability and road repair issues; political risk; the grounds maintenance review; asset management planning and property issues and the Master Class sessions for Elected Members; and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly on the various issues raised.

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) Service Modernisation and Review.

There was submitted a report (issued) of April 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (a) providing information on the progress being made in respect of Improvement Strand 6 relating to Service Modernisation and Review;
- (b) informing that one of the first tasks undertaken in relation to this improvement strand would be to assess and formulate on-going reviews into a coherent programme and indicating that Scrutiny Reviews were also being considered within this strand because they contributed to consideration of modernising Council services; and
- (c) advising that the second significant task, to develop guidance for commissioning and progressing service reviews which support reviews being carried out consistently, swiftly and with an emphasis on challenging the existing way of doing business, was currently being completed.

Various questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the emergence of priorities; Older People's Services and the Integrated Resource Framework and the Single Outcome Agreement; and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly on the various issues raised.

Decided: to note the current status and the next steps in relation to Improvement Strand 6, Service Modernisation and Review as outlined within the report and appendices to the report.

5. Scrutiny Review of Communications.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 14th April 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communications

- (1) advising of the process being undertaken for the development of the Council's Communications Strategy, as agreed as part of the Panel's review;
- (2) presenting a draft of this Strategy, as detailed in the appendices to the report, and intimating that a meeting with this Panel's Sub-Group chaired by Councillor Grant was being arranged to explore this further with a breakfast briefing on the strategy for Elected Members taking place on 21st April 2010; and
- (3) highlighting the opportunity for any relevant feedback prior to the Strategy being submitted to the Council at its meeting scheduled for 17th May 2010.

Various questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the formation of the Strategy; the arrangement for Sub-Group meetings and internal audiences and Elected Members and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly and commented that the draft Strategy was work in progress.

Decided: that relevant feedback would be provided on the draft Communications Strategy in relation to Strand 11 of the Improvement Agenda prior to its submission to the Council at its meeting on 17th May 2010.

The meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.