

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
**STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.**

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

Present: Councillors John Allan (Chair), Ian Douglas, Ann Galbraith, Bill Grant and Philip Saxton.

Apologies Councillors Hugh Hunter, Elaine Little and Alec Oattes.

Attending: K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; P. Linton, Performance and Change, Management Manager; D. Burns, Manager (Housing Policy and Strategy); A. MacLeod, Performance and Business Manager; N. Hunter, Inspection and Quality Assurance Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; and A. Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer.

**1. Items for Call-in.**

The Panel noted there were no items for call-in.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting.**

**Decided:** to note the Minutes of the meeting of 25th August 2010 (issued).

**3. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Review Update.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 20th January 2010 (Page 55, paragraph 4) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 7th September 2010 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) outlining the progress of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan Review to date;
- (2) informing that a report had been submitted to the Leadership Panel on 11th May 2010 seeking approval to appoint Arneil Johnston to undertake the Review; and
- (3) reporting
  - (a) that a progress update meeting had been held with the Consultants on 20th August 2010 and at this meeting clarification had been given on some of the issues around stock numbers, rent levels and the cost of specific elements of the Council's investment programme;
  - (b) that a Tenants' Conference would be held in November 2010 to offer greater contribution to a wider tenant base on the proposed future Business Plan model;
  - (c) that the HRA Business Plan was on target for completion in December 2010;
  - (d) that the final report and recommendations would be provided by January 2011 and in the interim period, an update would be provided to the Community Services Standing Scrutiny Panel in November 2010; and

- (e) that Members' briefings on initial finding would be provided in October with further feedback on tenants' concerns after the consultation events.

Questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel and in particular to rent setting, timing of the report and Tenants' and Residents' Forum involvement and the Head of Community Care and Housing and the Manager (Housing Policy and Strategy) responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to note

- (i) the contents of the report; and
- (ii) that the final report and recommendations would be provided by January 2011 and in the interim period, an update would be provided to the Community Services Standing Scrutiny Panel in November 2010.

#### **4. Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) Performance Inspection – Progress Report.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of September 2010 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) detailing the actions arising from the 2009 Social Work Performance Inspection and the ongoing progress being made;
- (2) advising that SWIA
  - (a) had completed a performance inspection of this Council's Social Work Services in 2009 and that an action plan addressing the 16 recommendations identified by SWIA during the inspection had been developed with key stakeholders and agreed by members of the SWIA inspection team; and
  - (b) would scrutinise progress reports submitted by the Executive Director – Children and Community in March, June and August 2010, in relation to progress made against the action plan; and
- (3) reporting
  - (a) that in the third progress report submitted to SWIA on 27th August 2010, 66 of the 72 actions were reported as being 'Completed/On Target (Green)', 6 actions reported as 'May Not Meet Target (Amber)' and no actions reported as 'Not on Target (Red)'; and
  - (b) that the colour-coding system being used by SWIA to monitor progress against each of the actions differed from the Council's definition as it was based purely on whether an action would be completed by the timescales indicated within the Plan.

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

5. **Remit from the Leadership Panel of 14th September 2010 – Annual Statutory Reporting of Performance Information.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 14th September 2010 (Page 474, paragraph 16) when that Panel had considered a report of 3rd September 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication in relation to the Annual Statutory Reporting of Performance Information and when it had been agreed that each Scrutiny Panel be asked to consider the relevant statutory performance indicators.

The Performance Change and Management Manager referred to the summary report (issued) of 15th September 2010 which, to facilitate the process, contained the indicators falling within the scope of this Panel and invited comment from Members of the Panel on the material being presented to them and that where a response could not be provided, he would co-ordinate a consolidated response for circulation to Members of the Panel.

Various questions and comments were made in relation to the following performance indicators:-

- SA03.012 – the increase in the number of new affordable homes completed during 2009/10 and the Head of Community Care and Housing referred to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, RSLs and the regeneration of Lochside;
- SA03.018 – suggested that it would be helpful to report the actual amount of rent loss, not just the percentage - response to be provided;
- SA03.022 – the reduction in the number of low demand dwellings for 2009/10 and the Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer explained that the definition of low demand dwellings had been reviewed in conjunction with the auditors and this had led to the significant change;
- SA03.028 – what did the percentage of arrears owed by former tenants that was either written off or collected during the year mean and the Head of Community Care and Housing advised that the definition that was being adhered to was set by Audit Scotland;
- SA04.034 – what percentage of the number of adults improving their English language were from elsewhere in Europe and the Head of Community Care and Housing advised that he would obtain this information if it was available and circulate it to Members.
- SA05.038 – how did we achieve such a high increase in the number of youths gaining their Duke of Edinburgh Awards and the Head of Community Care and Housing advised it was because of a dedicated appointment to support this initiative;
- SA05.048 – when would the information on the average tariff score of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils be forthcoming – response to be provided;
- SA05.052 – whether the Council should be concerned about the increase in Looked After Young People within the Authority and the Head of Community Care and Housing advised (1) that many of those placed under supervision remained with their families; (2) the increase was in line with the national trend; and (3) significant efforts had been made to reduce the numbers accommodated outwith South Ayrshire;
- SA05.054 – the high level of achievement by Looked After Children achieving awards at SCQF Level 3 or above by the end of S4 and the Head of Community Care and Housing explained that this was a direct result of the improved procedures of the Directorate, to ensure that both the social and educational needs of looked after children were addressed; and
- SA07.066 – the age of children in temporary accommodation and the Head of Community Care and Housing clarified that these were children with their families.

**Decided:** following scrutiny, to note the information contained within the relevant statutory performance indicators.

The meeting ended at 10.45 a.m.