

DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 21st September 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors John McDowall (Chair), Eddie Bulik, Stan Fisher, Ann Galbraith, John Hampton, Mary Kilpatrick and Mairi Low.

Apology: Councillor Mike Peddie.

Also
Present: Councillor Peter Convery, Portfolio-holder.

Attending: J.G. Peterkin, Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment; I. Woodburn, Head of Customer and Community Services; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; C. Cox, Planning Manager; T. Simpson, Principal Accountant; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administrative Officer.

1. Items for Call-in.

The Panel noted that there had been no call-ins for this meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting of 15th June 2010 (issued) were submitted and noted.

3. Performance Update on the Planning Service.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 19th January 2010 (Page 53, paragraph 3) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 6th September 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) providing an update on performance within the Council's Planning Service on key performance indicators for the period from 1st June 2009 to 30th June 2010 as outlined in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Framework attached as an Appendix to the report;
- (2) outlining the percentage of planning applications determined within two months as detailed in table 1 within the report; and
- (3) recommending that, in the interests of consistency with other performance reporting structures and also to assist with resourcing data collection, a revision to the timescales for future reports on performance for the Planning Service be made.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- specific data contained within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Framework; planning applications determined within two months; and the proposed reporting timeframe for future reports and the Head of Planning and Enterprise and the Planning Manager responded accordingly.

Decided: having heard the Chair, on behalf of the Panel, congratulate the Planning team on the performance achieved in respect of planning applications determined within two months

- (a) to note the performance update, as outlined in the report and set out in Appendix A; and
- (b) to agree to change the reporting timescales to this Panel from that of the Panel meeting subsequent to 30th June each year to that of the first Panel meeting after 1st April each year with the report based on the period from April to April.

4. Current Condition of Roads in South Ayrshire.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 16th February 2010 (Page 139, paragraph 4) when the scope and associated timescales for the review by the Roads Service relating to the current condition of the roads in South Ayrshire had been agreed and there was submitted a report (issued) of 9th September 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising
 - (a) that the Roads Service had established a Review Panel with the initial aim being to collate relevant information in relation to the Review from this Council and neighbouring North and East Ayrshire Councils with a view to benchmarking performance, budgets and mode of operation;
 - (b) that this information had now been collated and would be presented with the final report in November 2010;
 - (c) that, during this process, senior roads management within the three Ayrshire Councils had had regular meetings in relation to the possibility of Shared Services and had explored the various options and challenges that would be encountered in a joined up Roads Service;
 - (d) that, in July 2010, the Council had received the results of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey for 2009 which detailed an increase in the percentage of carriageways that required maintenance from 42.2% in 2008 to 42.8% in 2009; and
 - (e) that the annual steady state budget required to sustain the roads in their present condition had a shortfall of £2.9m and that it was expected that there would be further deterioration in the figures for 2010 due to the severity of the 2009/2010 winter; and
- (2) concluding that as part of the Review, the Roads Service was also challenging its processes and procedures, resulting in an improved service delivery in relation to some operational aspects.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the condition of the roads and the most common reasons for damage; repair work undertaken by utility companies; Shared Services; European funding; heavy transport on rural roads; and the shortfall of £2.9m within the annual steady state budget and the Head of Planning and Enterprise responded accordingly.

Decided: to note the progress of the Review to date and await the final Review report in November 2010.

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 Head of Policy, Performance and Communication 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.

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

- SA01.124 (Page 1) – the Supplier Development Programme and how many of these contracts were won from within the South Ayrshire area – response to be provided;
- SA02.006 (Page 3) – as well as the four examples quoted, what were the other twenty-one partnership initiatives - response to be provided;
- SA09.089 (Page 5) – domestic noise complaints
 - what does Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 entitle the Council to do and the Head of Customer and Community Services advised that the Act gave officers the power to issue enforcement notices and outlined numerous steps thereafter; and
 - reasons for increases in the number of complaints and whether noise related problems were on the increase or were people becoming more aware of the service and the Head of Customer and Community Services commented that, at this stage, he could not differentiate as to the reasons for an increase in these complaints although he expected the figures to plateau;
- SA10.091 (Page 6) – whether information in relation to the number of local services sustained through volunteering was now available – response to be provided;
- SA10.092 (Page 6) – why were no antisocial behaviour figures available for 2009/10 and the Head of Customer and Community Services commented on possible re-groupings and would confirm this position;
- SA12.105 (page 8) – an impressive increase in the improvement in performance with the cleanliness index for streets was noted;

- SA12.106 (Page 8) – completion of curricular upgrades and what was meant by this – response to be provided;
- SA12.109 (Page 9) – could an explanation of the nine biodiversity initiatives be provided and officers commented on some of these projects, the Portfolio-holder advised of a Council web link which contained useful information and the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment confirmed that the Sustainable Development Policy Officer would be able to provide further information on such initiatives;
- SA13.110 (Page 10) – what did the performance of 1 refer to and what was meant by the comment of ‘no change’ - response to be provided;
- SA13.112 (Page 10)– whether these figures were good or bad in terms of fuel usage and recycling and the Head of Planning and Enterprise responded accordingly and commented that overall this was good;
- SA13.116 (Page 11) – the amount of waste going to landfill and how was this measured and the relatively small improvement in percentage terms and the Performance and Change Management Manager explained the weighing process involved and the Portfolio-holder commented that this Council continued to be amongst the three top performing Councils; and
- SA13.117 (Page 11) – the reason for the increase in the net cost of refuse collection and the Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer confirmed that the figures were per household.

Further discussion took place in relation to energy usage within Council offices and officers commented on the various staff awareness energy saving initiatives being undertaken. The Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment advised that where a specific response had not been provided at the meeting, the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication would co-ordinate a consolidated response for circulation to Members of the Panel.

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

The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.