

SCRUTINY AND GOVERNANCE MANAGEMENT PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 27th April 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Ian Douglas (Chair), Stan Fisher, Hugh Hunter, Elaine Little, Helen Moonie and Winifred Sloan.

Attending: V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; A. MacLeod, Business and Performance Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administrative Officer.

1. Minutes of previous meetings.

Decided: to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 23rd February 2010 (issued).

2. Update on Delivering Good Governance in South Ayrshire Council.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 21st April 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) updating Members on the progress being made with embedding the new Delivering Good Governance Framework; and
- (2) outlining that further development work had focussed on the following two areas:-
 - (a) taking forward the Improvement Agenda identified within the initial assessment; and
 - (b) ensuring a seamless transfer between the existing code and the new framework.

Various questions were asked by Members of the Panel in relation to:- identification of the corporate owners of the six principles; engaging with community groups and notifying Members on outcomes; the community engagement process and the development of the strategy; the latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) figures and the Fairer Scotland Fund and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer responded accordingly and offered to circulate information relating to the corporate owners to Members. The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication further commented on the current position in respect of the Communications Strategy and the Community Engagement Strategy and on how they were interlinked and advised that a report on the SIMD would be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 17th May 2010.

Decided:

- (i) to note the details of how the Council's Improvement Agenda underpinned the Governance framework, as outlined within Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to note the progress which had been made on governance issues since 2008/09, as outlined within Appendix 2 of the report;
- (iii) to approve the process for signing off the Council's Governance Statement for 2009/10, as detailed in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 within this report; and
- (iv) to note that the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication would circulate a list of the corporate owners of the six principles of the Delivering Good Governance Framework to the Members of the Panel.

3. Feedback from Scrutiny Workshop on 12th March 2010.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 21st April 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication advising of the feedback from the recent scrutiny workshop and requesting Members to consider how this feedback should be taken forward.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the current reporting format and the scrutiny process and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Head of Legal and Administration indicated that they were currently reviewing the reporting format and would also look at the layout and clarity of reports.

A full discussion took place in relation to the issues which had been identified by Members at the workshop on 12th March 2010 and listed at paragraph 4.4 of the report.

Various points were made and questions raised by Members of the Panel in relation to each of these issues and an appropriate course of action was discussed with the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Head of Legal and Administration on some of the matters raised, particularly relating to:- service delivery and outcomes; officer attendance at meetings; and clearer definitions between service and scrutiny reviews and the relationship with Standing Orders.

Decided:

- (1) to note the feedback from the Scrutiny workshop as outlined within the report and, in particular, that of the responsibility and role of the Chair of the various Panels in controlling discussion at meetings;
- (2) to agree that the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Head of Legal and Administration would explore the various issues raised during the discussion and feedback their views to future meetings of this Panel in due course; and
- (3) otherwise, to agree that the output be considered alongside the observing work on Scrutiny and that recommendations would be developed accordingly thereafter.

4. **Observing Arrangements**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 21st April 2010 by the Head of Legal and Administration advising of ways in which Members of this Panel could attend meetings of the three Standing Scrutiny Panels, in an observing capacity, for the purposes of identifying areas of good practice and assessing performance.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the proposal to visit other Councils and the Head of Legal and Administration and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication suggested that they could explore this idea further and compile a process to take this further.

Decided:

- (1) to undertake visits to the Standing Scrutiny Panels as follows (with substitution if required):-
 - (a) Provost Sloan and Councillor Hunter - the Development and the Environment Standing Scrutiny Panel on 18th May 2010;
 - (b) Councillors Fisher and Moonie - the Community Services Standing Scrutiny Panel on 19th May 2010; and
 - (c) Councillors Douglas and Little - the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel on 20th May 2010;
- (2) to note that the Chairs of each of the Standing Scrutiny Panels would be notified of the forthcoming visit and its purpose;
- (3) that the Observing Brief attached as Appendix 2 of the report be completed following the visits and forwarded to the Head of Legal and Administration by no later than Friday, 4th June 2010 who would subsequently compile a Note of the findings to be submitted to the meeting of this Panel on 22nd June 2010 for consideration;
- (4) that further consideration would be given thereafter for the need for a Special meeting of the Panel to be arranged to discuss the findings with the Scrutiny Panel Chairs; and
- (5) that the Head of Legal and Administration and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication would explore the suggestion to visit other Scottish Councils to enable comparisons to be made with scrutiny arrangements elsewhere and that they would report their findings to a future meeting of the Panel in due course on such a proposed arrangement.

5. **Call-in Arrangements – Statistical Information.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of April 2010 by the Head of Legal and Administration informing of statistics relating to Call-ins during the period from April 2009 to March 2010 and advising that totals from 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 were also attached for comparison purposes, as outlined within the Appendices of the report.

A discussion took place in relation to the presented data and suggestions were made on ways in which more meaningful information could be collected.

Decided: to note

- (1) the statistical information relating to Call-ins as outlined in the Appendices to the report; and
- (2) that the Head of Legal and Administration and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication would explore options in relation to the presentation of this material for the next annual update to the Panel.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.