

**LEADERSHIP PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 17th May 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Bill McIntosh (Chair), Douglas Campbell, Peter Convery, Hywel Davies, Nan McFarlane, Robin Reid and Margaret Toner.

Attending: D. Anderson, Chief Executive; E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; H. Garland, Executive Director – Children and Community; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Development and Environment; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; D. Burns, Housing Development and Monitoring Manager; A. Wilson, Head of HR and Organisational Development; K. Dalrymple, Roads Manager; B. Wyllie, Supervisory Engineer (Traffic); D. Robertson, Communications Manager; C. Downie, Public Communications Officer; D. Knight, Committee Services Officer; and A. Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer.

**Community Services – Housing and Customer First.**

**1. Scheme of Assistance Budget 2011/12.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 14th March 2011 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

(1) advising

- (a) that that the Scheme of Assistance Grant had been allocated to local authorities to achieve three main objectives:-
- to allow people with disabilities to continue to live independently in their own homes by offering grant money to assist with adaptations;
  - to help tackle issues of disrepair and maintenance in the private sector; and
  - to provide support, information and advice to homeowners on ways to access private finance to assist with adaptations and maintenance; and
- (b) that on 1st April 2010, South Ayrshire Council had implemented its new Scheme of Assistance for Homeowners and Private Landlords, as agreed by this Panel at its meeting on 9th February 2010 (Page 91, paragraph 6) which had increased the minimum percentage of grant available for disabled adaptations and had encouraged homeowners to take responsibility for the repair and maintenance of their own homes by offering advice and information rather than grant money;

## (2) indicating

- (a) that the initial Scheme of Assistance allocation of £1,225,000 for 2010/2011 had been combined with a carry forward from 2009/2010 of £121,548 to provide a total Scheme of Assistance budget of £1,346,548 and that Appendix 1 of the report set out the overall budget, adjustments during the year and expenditure for 2010/2011; and
- (b) that it was clear from early in 2010/11, that demand for disabled adaptations was again going to be very high and that adjustments had been made between the described activities to ensure that the high demand was addressed and that at 31st March 2011, an under spend of £209,555 had arisen which would be carried forward for use in 2011/12 as part of the Council's capital year-end process; and

## (3) reporting

- (a) that the 2011/12 Revenue and Capital Budget which had been approved by the Council at its special meeting on 10th February 2011 had included the following budgets for Scheme of Assistance:-

Capital	£617,000
Revenue	£502,000
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE</b>	<b>£1,119,000</b>

- (b) that in addition to the carry forward of £209,555 from 2010/11, this provided a total budget of £1,328,555 for use during 2011/12;
- (c) that the reduction to the overall budget in 2011/12, in addition to an ageing population, was likely to place greater strain on the Council's ability to fund mandatory disabled adaptations from this Fund;
- (d) that expenditure for 2011/12 had been allocated in line with priorities identified in South Ayrshire's Scheme of Assistance as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (e) that it was anticipated that the number of people aged 65 and over in South Ayrshire would increase by 48% by 2030 and that with local and national agendas aimed at supporting individuals to continue to live at home independently, this would place significant pressures on the Scheme of Assistance funding for the foreseeable future.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to how the Scheme would be monitored, would elderly people residing in Nursing Homes who continued to own their homes be able to apply for funding and the financial implications of the Scheme of Assistance Budget and the Head of Community Care and Housing responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (i) to note the Scheme of Assistance expenditure and movement for 2010/2011 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed 2011/12 allocation of Scheme of Assistance Grant as shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

**C-I****2. Affordable Housing: Council New Build Subsidy – Government Funding Phase 4.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 28th March 2011 by the Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) advising
  - (a) that South Ayrshire Council had a statutory requirement to meet housing need through a variety of means and that it was estimated that at least 200 new affordable homes were required each year in South Ayrshire, as outlined in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), approved by this Panel at its meeting on 23rd November 2010 (Page 600, paragraph 6);
  - (b) that in rounds 2 and 3 of the Scottish Government's Council New Build Subsidy, South Ayrshire Council had been successful in its bid for funding support for two housing developments at Thornyflat and Somerset Road, Ayr respectively; and
  - (c) that in March 2011, the Scottish Government had announced a fourth round of subsidy of up to £30,000 per unit for Council New Build with the deadline for applications being 31st May 2011;
- (2) seeking approval, in principle, to the sites at Forehill, Ayr, Aldersyde Avenue, Troon and Woodpark, Ayr being considered for Council New Build, subject to a feasibility study, and that a third bid be submitted to the Scottish Government for Council New Build Subsidy;
- (3) proposing that the Council should fund the indicative costs of development (based on a worst case scenario) as follows:-

New Build Subsidy at £30,000 per unit	£450,000
Income second Homes Council Tax Discount	£300,000
Prudential Borrowing	£1,245,000
TOTAL	£1,995,000; and

- (4) indicating that the second homes Council Tax discount fund was £1.120m as at 31st March 2010 and that the previous bids had committed £0.962m (Thornyflat £0.414m and Somerset Road £0.548m) leaving £0.158m with the estimated funds from 2010/11 being a further £0.262m which would give £0.420m available for this bid.

**Decided:**

- (i) to agree that the Council submit a bid to the Scottish Government for Council New Build Subsidy by 31st May 2011 based on the proposals outlined in the report; and
- (ii) to approve, in principle, the proposed sites for Council New Build as outlined above and at 4(4) of the report.

**Development and the Environment - Sustainability and the Environment.****3. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 8th June 2010 (Page 312, paragraph 11) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 9th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) detailing the recommended method of operating a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Scheme in South Ayrshire; and
- (2) seeking approval for the submission of an application and business case to the Scottish Government for the introduction of a DPE Scheme in South Ayrshire.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the existing voucher parking scheme within South Ayrshire, the provision of residential parking in North Ayr and Prestwick, the provision of disabled parking in Troon and removal of illegal vehicles parked in disabled spaces and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve the submission to the Scottish Government of an application and business case for the introduction of a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Scheme in South Ayrshire.

**Corporate and Community Planning - Corporate, Strategic and Community Planning.****4. Community Planning: Request to use the underspend in the Skills Towards Employment Project.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Community Planning Board of 20th April 2011 when it had been agreed that South Ayrshire Council should be asked to consider the underspend of £25,000 in the Skills Towards Employment Project (STEP) budget in 2010/11 due to the non-filling of a vacancy, and recommending that it be carried forward into the 2011/12 financial year to fund a new initiative to set up a social enterprise to address issues of employability and supported employment for young people and there was submitted a report (issued) of 5th May 2011 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication seeking approval to carry forward the £25,000 underspend in STEP.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to whether the training opportunities for young people related only to catering and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to approve the carryover of £25,000 of Community Planning Programme Funds, identified as an underspend in the STEP project, to fund a new initiative to set up a social enterprise to address issues of employability and supported employment for young people.

**Corporate and Community Planning - Resources and Performance.**

**5. Council Tax Collection Statistics – Cash at 30th April 2011.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th May 2011 by the Executive Director - Corporate Services advising

- (1) of the collection levels which had been achieved in respect of Council Tax to 30th April 2011 and the action which had been taken to achieve Best Value in the collection thereof;
- (2) that the collection rate had been 10.23 per cent against the target collection of 10.20 per cent which equated to a positive variation of £16,997;
- (3) that the actual Council Tax collection levels achieved for 2010/11 by 31st March 2011 would be finalised once the Annual Accounts had been completed in June 2011; and
- (4) that in order to address increased customer demand due to the economic recession, Corporate Services staff were working controlled periods of overtime to ensure accurate benefit awards together with the prompt rebilling and recovery of Council Tax and that, in the event of non-payment, Council Tax arrears were now being passed earlier to Stirling Park Sheriff Officers, to maximise recoveries.

**Decided:**

- (a) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (b) to request the Executive Director - Corporate Services to provide updated figures to the next meeting of this Panel.

**6. Housing and Council Tax Benefit – Performance Monitoring – Position at 31st March 2011.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th May 2011 by the Executive Director - Corporate Services advising of the service improvements being undertaken to help achieve the full range of national housing and Council Tax benefit performance standards as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Executive Director - Corporate Services and her staff

- (1) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (2) to request the Executive Director - Corporate Services to provide a further quarterly report on service delivery to a future meeting of this Panel.

## 7. Council Tax Write-off - Irrecoverable Debt.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 19th April 2011 (Page 249, paragraph 17) when it had been agreed to approve the Council Tax write-off policy in relation to irrecoverable Council Tax debt and there was submitted a report (issued) of 9th May 2011 by the Executive Director - Corporate Services

- (1) seeking approval to write-off Council Tax relating to specific cases during 2010/11 in accordance with the Council's policy;
- (2) advising
  - (a) that the total amount submitted for write-off was £21,760.41 as detailed in the Appendix of the report with a full list of specific write-offs being available for members' consideration from the Executive Director – Corporate Services, on request;
  - (b) that in addition, write-off of Council Tax amounting to £154,730.22 during 2010/11 in respect of cases under £5,000 had been approved for write-off by the Executive Director – Corporate Services in accordance with section C34 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, and that a full list of such write-offs was available for members from the Executive Director – Corporate Services, on request; and
  - (c) that the write-off was fully provided for in the Abstract of Accounts as at 31st March 2011 and that Members should note, however, that where circumstances changed, debts would continue to be pursued and in relation to debtors who had been sequestrated, claims had been lodged with the trustee; and
- (3) indicating that the accounts submitted for write-off would be contained within the existing bad debt provision.

**Decided:** to approve the write-off of Council Tax amounting to £21,760.41 during 2010/11.

## 8. Strategic Risk Management.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel of 28th April 2011 (Page 301, paragraph 6) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 9th May 2011 by the Executive Director - Corporate Services

- (1) providing an update on the reviewed Strategic Risk Register – April 2011 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report in line with the agreed reporting framework; and
- (2) outlining a summary of the seventeen key risk themes which had been reviewed by the risk owners identified by CMT as having responsibility to undertake risk management action planning in respect of these themes.

**Decided:** to agree the seventeen key risks and to endorse the work currently being undertaken or proposed by risk owners to mitigate these risks.

**9. Development and Environment – Savings.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 7th April 2011 by the Executive Director - Development and Environment

- (1) seeking approval for a number of savings identified in the Development and Environment Directorate which formed part of the £750,000 service modernisation efficiency measures approved as part of the Council's 2011/12 Revenue Budget;
- (2) reporting that the savings proposed totalled approximately £185,000, of which approximately £144,000 would be achieved by deleting posts which were or would shortly become vacant and that £41,000 would be achieved by reducing non-employee cost budgets and that work was continuing to refine further ideas for efficiencies within Development and Environment in order to meet the overall £750,000 target; and
- (3) indicating that five efficiency proposals had been developed for consideration by Elected Members and categorised as follows:-
  - four proposals requiring approval for implementation as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report; and
  - one proposal which could be implemented through management action detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

**Decided:** to approve the savings proposals totalling £143,663, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report and to note the savings of £41,104 to be implemented by management action in Appendix 2 of the report.

**10. Exclusion of press and public.**

The Panel resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**11. Freeman's Hall, 2 The Cross, Prestwick.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment outlining the current position regarding the reinstatement of the Steeple at the Freeman's Hall, Prestwick.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel enquiring whether the steeple had been built as part of the original building or had been added later and when would the cost of restoring the steeple and appropriate funding sources be submitted to the Leadership Panel and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to note

- (1) the contents of the report; and
- (2) that a further report outlining options and detailed costings would be submitted to a future meeting of this Panel.

**12. Belleisle Estate, Ayr.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 19th April 2011 (Page 263, paragraph 29) and there was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 6th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment updating Members on matters relating to Belleisle Estate.

Questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the progress being made with the Master Plan for Belleisle, access and parking arrangements for the Hotel and golfers and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:** to agree that Officers continue to progress the proposals in relation to Belleisle Estate.

**13. Ayr Greyhound Stadium, Glenmuir Place, Ayr.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking the Panel's approval to declare the subjects, Ayr Greyhound Stadium, as shown on the plan attached as an Appendix to the report, as surplus to requirements and seeking authority to dispose of the property for sale or lease.

Questions were raised by a Member of the Panel enquiring whether the Council would pursue the Tenant for any outstanding costs in relation to the property and whether there would be an opportunity to have a community sports club at this location and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (1) to formally declare the property surplus to requirements and;
- (2) to authorise the Executive Director - Development and Environment to advertise the property on the open market for sale or lease.

**14. Prestwick Indoor Bowling Club.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking the Panel's approval to declare the subjects, Prestwick Indoor Bowling Club, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix to the report, as surplus to requirements and requesting the Panel to note that expressions of interest would be sought.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to expressions of interest and the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services responded accordingly.

**Decided:**

- (1) to formally declare the properties surplus to (operational) requirements; and
- (2) to agree that the property would be advertised as soon as possible and that expressions of interest would be sought for the use of the property as an Indoor Bowling Venue.

**15. Land at Shanter Lane, Ayr.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking the Panel’s approval to formally declare the properties to the rear of the Tam O’Shanter Inn, Ayr as surplus to requirements, as identified on the plan attached as an Appendix to the report, following which, to advertise on the open market.

**Decided:**

- (1) to authorise the Executive Director - Development and Environment
  - (a) to formally declare the properties and land to the rear of the Tam O’Shanter Inn, Ayr as surplus to operational requirements; and
  - (b) to advertise the properties on the open market for both lease and sale; and
- (2) to note the position in respect of the pedestrian right of access through the site.

**16. Co-mingled Dry Recyclate Contract.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 6th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) seeking the Panel’s approval to replace the Council’s Co-mingled Dry Recyclate contract; and
- (2) advising that Officers would submit their recommendations to this Panel for its consideration regarding the most economically advantageous tender.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services and his staff

- (a) to note the evaluation process undertaken in relation to the Co-mingled Dry Recyclate Contract; and
- (b) to approve award of the Co-mingled Dry Recyclate Contract to the second highest ranked submission from Regen Waste Ltd. (Zero Rebate).

**Community Services - Housing and Customer First.**

**17. Development of Customer Service Centre.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 19th April 2011 (Page 264, paragraph 31) and there was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th May 2011 by Executive Director – Development and Environment updating the Panel on progress being made with the development of the Customer Service Centre for Ayr.

**Decided:** to note the current position as outlined in this report and the continued negotiations to acquire the property for the Customer Service Centre in Ayr.

**18. Burns House Car Park.**

Following a question from a Member of the Panel regarding the closure of the car park and access areas at Burns House, the Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services advised that a routine external inspection of Burns House had identified some loose areas of external cladding and that as a precautionary measure, the car park and access areas had been closed to staff and the public until remedial works could be undertaken.

**Decided:** to note the position.

**Development and the Environment - Sustainability and the Environment.**

**19. Waste Management - Interim Management Arrangements.**

There was submitted a report (issued to members only) of 4th May 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment seeking the Panel's approval for the extension

- (1) of interim management arrangements for the waste management element of Neighbourhood Services; and
- (2) of the contract for the independent external investigator working on the Walker Road investigation and associated hearings.

**Decided:** to approve extensions of the following contracts and as detailed within the report under Section 20 of Standing Orders and that both extensions should run until the conclusion of ongoing disciplinary and potential appeal processes:-

- (a) the contract for investigation work and support for ongoing disciplinary and potential appeal processes; and
- (b) the contract to support the interim development and delivery of waste management services.

The meeting ended at 11.00 a.m.