

Cabinet
10 September 2013

Irvine, 10 September 2013 - At a meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m. in Cunninghame House, Irvine.

Present

Willie Gibson, Alan Hill, John Bruce, Marie Burns, Tony Gurney and Alex McLean; G. Smith (Teaching Representative); and E. Hawthorn and D. Flynn (Youth Representatives).

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive, C. Kirk, Corporate Director, M. Docherty, Head of Education (3-18), S. Quinn, Head of Service Development and A. Sutton, Head of Community and Culture (Education and Skills); I. Colvin, Corporate Director, S. Gault, Head of Children, Families and Criminal Justice and A. Adrain, Interim Head of Housing (Social Services and Health); Y. Baulk, Head of Finance and Property, G. Macgregor, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, T. Burns, Asset Manager and T. Reaney, Procurement Manager (Finance and Corporate Support); R. McCutcheon, Head of Environment and Related Services and A. Laurenson, Team Manager (Regeneration) (Development and Environment); and K. Dyson, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Democratic and Administration Services) (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Anthea Dickson and Church Representatives E. Higton, M. Fraser and Very Reverend M. Canon McManus.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 16 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2. Minutes

The accuracy of the Minute of the meeting of Cabinet, held on 27 August 2013, was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. North Ayrshire's Response to "Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach"

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) reported on the "Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach" report which takes forward the Scottish Government's Manifesto commitment to create the conditions in which every child in Scotland will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue; (b) outlined the Council's response in terms of language learning provision in North Ayrshire primary and secondary schools; and (c) advised of the planned establishment of a Language Learning Steering Group, consisting of appropriate professionals, to ensure local implementation of the advice offered by The National Implementation Group on language learning.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the role of the Development Officer; and
- whether teachers are responding positively with regard to their expected involvement in the delivery of language learning.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve North Ayrshire's response to "Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach" as set out within the report; and (b) note that further progress reports will be submitted to the Cabinet in due course.

4. Confucius Classroom

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) provided information on the aim of the Confucius Classroom Strategy to ensure that Scotland is well placed to respond to the opportunities arising from the growth of China as an economic power; and (b) advised on proposals to expand and deepen Scotland's educational links with China by continuing to strengthen and further develop the Confucius Classroom.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the level of Chinese language learning delivered in school; and
- the scope for students to progress from access level to study the Chinese language at university.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the proposal to expand and deepen Scotland's educational links with China by continuing to strengthen and further develop the Confucius Classroom; and (b) note that further progress reports will be submitted to the Cabinet in due course.

5. Teaching Scotland's Future: Development of a Teaching Hub

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) summarised the background to the teaching hub approach; (b) outlined progress made in the development of a teaching hub in partnership with the University of Glasgow; and (c) detailed plans for session 2013/14.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on how teachers are responding to the responsibilities associated with the teaching hub approach.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the content of the report; and (b) receive further reports in due course.

6. Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) Examination Results 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) summarised the overall performance of North Ayrshire schools in the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) examinations of 2013; and (b) set out detailed information in relation individual schools, as contained in the appendices to the report.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the likelihood of improved performance at SCQF level 6 in 2014.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note the content of the report and the achievements of the pupils in this year's SQA examinations; and (b) that a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in due course on performance in the 2014 diet of SQA examinations.

7. Flexibility of P2/P3 Class Size

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) provided background information on delegated authority provided to officers to exceed the class size maxima set by Council on a temporary basis for certain Primary 2 and or Primary 3 classes at particular schools; and (b) gave details of the five primary schools, out of a total of 53 primary schools in North Ayrshire, where class sizes at Primary 2 and Primary 3 have exceeded the class size maxima set by Council.

Noted.

The Teaching Representative and Youth Representatives left the meeting at this point.

8. Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Funding

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) which (a) provided information on attempts to secure funding from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Socio Economic Fund; and (b) set out the Council's future approach to the response to decommissioning activity and the associated pursuit of funding, including the proposed formation of a Response to Nuclear Decommissioning Steering Group.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the number of Nuclear Decommissioning Authority representatives to be appointed to the Steering Group.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the outcome of applications to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Socio Economic Fund; (b) the formation of a Response to Nuclear Decommissioning Steering Group, chaired by the Council and comprising those representatives set out at Section 3.1 of the report, subject to an amendment providing for 1 Nuclear Decommissioning Authority representative and 1 representative of Magnox; and (c) recommend to the Council that the Portfolio holder for Economy and Employment be appointed to serve on the Steering Group as its Chair.

9. Consultation on the National Litter Strategy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) which (a) advised on the main discussion themes and proposals within the Scottish Government consultation on a proposed National Litter Strategy; and (b) set out a proposed response by the Council to the consultation paper.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the key proposals from the Scottish Government's consultation report; (b) approve the draft response to the questions posed in the paper as detailed in Appendix 1.

10. Consultation on the Marine Litter Strategy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) which (a) advised on the main discussion themes, Strategic Directions and actions within the Scottish Government consultation on a proposed National Litter Strategy; and (b) set out a proposed response by the Council to the consultation paper.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the type of measures required for beaches to achieve Blue Flag status.

The Head of Environment and Related Services undertook to brief the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Infrastructure further on the factors taken into consideration in the awarding of Blue Flag status to beaches.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the key proposals from the Scottish Government's consultation report; (b) approve the draft response to the questions posed in the paper as detailed in Appendix 1.

11. Fullarton Community Association - Land Transfer

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on progress made in finalising the business plan for Fullarton Community Association, to enable a final determination to be made in respect of the proposed land transfer.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the support provided by the Council to the community of Fullarton.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to record its appreciation of the significant work undertaken by members of community of Fullarton and officers of the Council in taking forward this project; (b) to transfer the community centre and the land

shown at Appendix 1 to the report to Fullarton Community Association, subject to the conditions set out at Section 3.1 of the report; and (b) that Small Town and Rural Development Group (STAR) be commissioned to continue with the local action planning process in the Fullarton area.

12. Procurement Overview

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) provided an update on progress in improving the Council's procurement practices; and (b) gave information on national and local procurement issues, including the National Procurement agenda and the annual Procurement Capability Assessment within the Council.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on measures to continue to increase the percentage of Council spend with local suppliers.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the report; and (b) receive a further report in six months.

13. Surplus Property - Prospect House, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the proposed disposal of the residential property known as Prospect House, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran which was declared surplus by the former Education Executive in November 2009.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the impact of the economic climate and the condition of the property on its current market value.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the disposal of Prospect House, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran, for the consideration of £120,000.

14. Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2013-2018

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which (a) advised on a number of recent developments, including the impact of increased subsidy levels for affordable housing on future financial planning; (b) sought approval of the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2013-2018 for submission to the Scottish Government.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the complexity of the information presented;
- the Council's capacity to deliver on its slippage programme in the event of further funding becoming available;
- whether the Council itself might have been in a position to develop the Stanley Road, Ardrossan site had it retained ownership of the land; and
- Cunninghame Housing Association's current house building activities in North Ayrshire.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the submission of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2013-2018 set out at Appendix 1 to the Scottish Government.

15. Housing Need and Demand Assessment: Isle of Arran and Isle of Cumbrae

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which (a) gave an overview of independent research recently undertaken to assess Housing Need and Demand on the Isles of Arran and Cumbrae; and (b) sought approval to use the research findings for strategic planning purposes.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the difference between the small shortfall in the number of housing units on Cumbrae compared with the significant issue in terms of the availability of suitable housing to meet the needs of older people and those with disabilities on the island

The Cabinet agreed to approve the findings of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment: Isle of Arran and Isle of Cumbrae for strategic planning purposes.

16. Whole Systems Approach

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which (a) provided details of a number of key strands within the Whole Systems Approach designed to reduce re-offending by young people; and (b) summarised the current position relating to the locally implemented Whole System Approach.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the need to publicise the effectiveness of the Whole Systems Approach.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the information provided in the report; and (b) approve the continued development of this strategy as an approach to best meet the needs of young people who offend and the community within which they live.

17. Change Programme: Progress as at 31 July 2013

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the continuing good progress of the Change Programme as at 31 July 2013, including the activity in relation to the Social Services and Health and Education and Skills change programmes, work on Bridgegate House, the Transport Business Case, Customer Services work and a number of other initiatives currently under review.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- whether the Council's approach to Senior Phase and Post 16 Education is likely to meet the Scottish Government's expectations in terms of the delivery of vocational qualifications;
- the effectiveness of the Council's print management solution; and
- the current approach to encouraging the public to direct their enquiries through the Council's website rather than the telephone contact centre.

The Corporate Director (Education and Skills) undertook to provide the Cabinet with a copy of a Curriculum for Excellence Senior Phase Strategy paper.

Noted.

18. Section 10 Social Work (Scotland) Act - Small Grants

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on recent Section 10 Social Work (Scotland) Act grant awards to support the work of local and national organisations that offer a direct service in support of community development across North Ayrshire, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on measures to ensure that the availability of funding is publicised across North Ayrshire.

Noted.

19. Maximising Attendance Performance – Quarter 1 Summary, April to June 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) provided an analysis of sickness absence and cumulative days lost in Quarter 1 2013; (b) gave comparative figures for the same period in 2012/13; and (c) offered details of the cost of sickness absence, the use of occupational health services and the causal factors of absence.

Noted.

20. Procurement EU Tender Plan - 2013/14

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) presented an EU procurement tender plan for the remainder of Financial Year 2013/14; and (b) requested approval for the fifteen requirements listed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the potential for splitting some larger contracts into framework agreements or lots to facilitate bidding by smaller local businesses.

The Cabinet agreed to invite tenders for the supplies, services and works listed in the plan at Appendix 1 to the report.

21. Education Attainment and Achievement Policy Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 12 August 2013

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the Minutes of the Meeting of the Education Attainment and Achievement Policy Board held on 12 August 2013.

Noted.

**22. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Implementation Group:
Minutes of Meeting held on 13 August 2013**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Implementation Group held on 13 August 2013.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 4.25 p.m.