

Corporate Policy Standing Sub Committee  
8 March 2006

**IRVINE, 8 March 2006** - At a Meeting of the Corporate Policy Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

Tom Barr, Jean Highgate, Margaret Munn, David O'Neill and Richard Wilkinson.

**In Attendance**

I. Snodgrass, Chief Executive; J. Hair, Finance Manager (Finance); J. Montgomery, Principal Performance Review Officer, G. Lawson, Head of Corporate and Democratic Support, M. McKeown and C. Graham, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Barr in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

John Reid and Margaret McDougall.

**1. Capital Plans: Monitoring Statement**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on movements in the Council's approved capital budgets for 2005/06 and beyond, and on expenditure to 31 January 2006.

Noted.

**2. Political Management Structures**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the outcome of the 2007 Working Group's visits to Scottish Borders and East Lothian Councils.

The purpose of the visits was to look at the political management structures of these authorities, both of which operate 'cabinet' styles of governance supported by a scrutiny function, to determine what lessons can be learned by North Ayrshire Council as it considers possible political management arrangements post the local government elections in 2007. The report provided a comparison between each authority's cabinet and scrutiny procedures, and highlighted a number of areas which will require further examination by the Working Group to assess how such arrangements might be applied to North Ayrshire Council.

The following issues were discussed:-

- the importance of engaging all Members in any new system;
- the importance of an effective scrutiny and review function to the cabinet system;
- the requirement for robust procedures and protocols;
- the need for Member and Officer training to define their respective roles within any new system;
- the future role of the Council; and
- the involvement of the Council's Community Planning partners.

The Sub Committee agreed (a) that the Working Group considers the areas where lessons can be learned and what the might steps might be; and (b) to receive a further report at a future meeting.

### **3. Audit of Best Value and Community Planning - Improvement Plan Progress Report as at 31 December 2005 and 28 February 2006**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on progress to 31 December 2005 in implementing the Improvement Plan following the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning. A supplementary paper on progress as at 28 February 2006 was tabled.

Of the 50 action points contained in the Improvement Plan, all are either on target or have slipped to some extent in relation to the original planned timescale. Where slippage has occurred it is considered to be within acceptable parameters and revised timescales have been set. The Plan will continue to be monitored and is due to be reviewed by the Council's external auditors in summer 2006, and by Audit Scotland in 18 months. The Sub Committee noted that arrangements have been made for the Council's external auditors to provide training on the audit function to the Audit and Standards Committee.

The Sub Committee (a) noted the progress to date in implementing the Council's Improvement Plan; and (b) agreed to receive a further report at a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.