

The Executive of North Ayrshire Council
28 July 2009

IRVINE, 28 July 2009 - At a Meeting of The Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

David O'Neill, Tom Barr, John Bell, Margaret McDougall and Peter McNamara.

In Attendance

I. Snodgrass, Chief Executive and E.Murray, Chief Executive Designate; B. Docherty, Corporate Director (Social Services); C. Kirk, Corporate Director (Educational Services); O. Clayton, Head of Housing and Building Services and R. Small, Head of Infrastructure and Design Services (Property Services); A. Herbert, Assistant Chief Executive (Finance); J. M. Macfarlane, Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources); I.T. Mackay, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective); M. McKeown, Team Leader - Committee Services, A.Little, Committee Services Officer, and A.Wattie, Communications Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor O'Neill in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Reid.

1. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 16, Councillor Bell declared an interest in relation to item 7 on the agenda and took no part in the discussion thereon.

2. Draft Housing (Scotland) Bill: A Consultation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on a proposed Council response to a Scottish Government consultation paper on the draft Housing (Scotland) Bill 2009.

The Scottish Government published its draft Housing (Scotland) Bill in April 2009. The aim of the new legislation is to safeguard social housing stock levels across Scotland for future generations and to improve the value of investment for tenants and tax payers. Key proposals include reforming the Right To Buy (RTB) for new build properties and modernising the Scottish Housing Regulator through new and reformed powers. The Scottish Government has also indicated that the Bill could be expanded to include both rented and owner occupied housing. These latter issues will be consulted on separately during 2009.

Views from local authorities are being sought regarding further reforms such as ending the Right to Buy for new tenants, revising pressured area designations, developing guidance for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) seeking extensions to the ten year suspension on RTB, and revising guidance on landlords' discretionary powers regarding continuous occupation. The Scottish Government is seeking views on its proposals by 14 August 2009 and plans to introduce the Bill to the Scottish Parliament in 2010.

A proposed response to the consultation was appended to the report. The response indicates the Council's support for the main body of proposals in ending the RTB for tenancies of new build stock and protecting the interests and priorities of tenants via a Scottish Housing Charter. In relation to the proposals for modernising housing regulation, the response indicated the Council's view that all external scrutiny should be delivered by Audit Scotland.

The Executive asked questions and received clarification in relation to the impact of the proposed changes to the RTB on the Council's SHQS Business Plan. The Executive also expressed the view that the Scottish Government should be requested to ensure so far as possible that local authority landlords and Registered Social Landlords operate under the same regulatory framework and standards to ensure a level playing field when investment decisions are taken.

The Executive agreed to (a) approve appendix 1 to the report as the Council's response to the consultation subject to the incorporation of the comments set out above in relation to regulation; and (b) authorise the Corporate Director (Property Services) to submit the response to the Scottish Government.

3. Reimbursement of Employee Travel Costs: Car and Motorcycle Allowances

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources) on the proposed introduction of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates for the reimbursement of employee business travel costs in order to effect efficiency savings.

As part of the approach to achieving efficiency savings across the Council, it was proposed that the Council's Travel Expenses and Payments for Subsistence Scheme should be revised with effect from 1 April 2010 to introduce HMRC rates for those sections of the workforce who are reimbursed travel expenses based on rates set by the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees (Chief Officers, Local Government Employees, Craft Operatives, Heads and Depute Teachers, Peripatetic Teachers and Associated professional staff).

The net current cost to the Council for casual users is £1.06m per annum with the equivalent cost for essential users being £478,684. Adopting the HMRC rates would bring net savings to the Council of around £327,774 per annum. The reduction in allowance payments to employees would be approximately £207,081 per annum.

The Executive agreed (a) to endorse the proposal to adopt HMRC rates for Car and Motorcycle allowances for designated categories of employees with effect from 1 April 2010; and (b) that the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources) consult with union representatives on the proposals.

4. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme - Arran Haul Route Project

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on a grant award from Forestry Commission Scotland to improve the Arran timber haul routes.

North Ayrshire Council Infrastructure and Design Services, in partnership with the Ayrshire Timber Transport Group (ATTG), made a successful bid to the Forestry Commission for grant funding from the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme fund to repair and upgrade various timber transport routes on Arran. Council co-financing for the proposed works is based on money spent on road repair and maintenance for the financial year of application (2008/09), and also any monies spent from the point of application to the start of the funded year in 2010. Current and projected expenditure for roads related projects on Arran for these financial years indicate that the Council may be eligible for the maximum grant of £1,000,000.

It is forecast that Forestry Commission Scotland and private owners will produce 1.5 million tonnes of timber from forests the island over the next 25 years. Timber haulage places a severe pressure on the islands rural road network, which results in a high proportion of the Council's allocated roads budget for Arran being spent on maintenance repairs. The A841 and the B880 roads will carry the bulk of this haulage and direct it into Brodick to reach the ferry and the present barge site. The grant aid will be used to undertake repairs and upgrades to key timber haulage routes, as detailed in the report. The full extent of the works will only be determined after a comprehensive survey and costing of the works has been undertaken. As part of the project, a feasibility study in to providing a new dedicated timber loading facility/pier on Arran will also be undertaken.

The aim of the proposed works is to lessen the impact of timber transport on the fragile rural road network on the island and to concentrate timber haulage onto the newly strengthened sections of the road system. This will help improve haulage efficiency and create an improved route for residents and tourists.

Due to the nature and extent of the works, and for the safety of both the workforce and road users, it is likely that traffic management will involve road closures with the possibly of lengthy diversions for the duration of the works. Full details of traffic management will be published prior to commencement of the works. All of the work is required to be completed and monies claimed before the end of February 2011.

The Executive asked questions and received clarification in relation to:-

- the impact of road closures on traffic movements on the island, including school transport;
- the capacity of Roads Services to complete the works inhouse; and
- the availability of grant aid in future years.

Noted.

5. Meeting with John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the issues raised at the meeting with John Swinney MSP on his visit to North Ayrshire on 16 July 2009.

The Cabinet Secretary met with the Depute Leader, John Reid and Councillor Matthew Brown, together with the Chief Executive, Chief Executive Designate and Assistant Chief Executive (Finance). The meeting focused on the impact of the economic downturn on North Ayrshire, and on the future funding regime. The main points discussed were in relation to:-

- Unemployment levels in North Ayrshire (particularly among 18-24 year olds), and the impact of the proposed closure of the Diageo site in Kilmarnock on residents and local companies in North Ayrshire was also discussed.
- The role of Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company URC as the key vehicle for promoting regeneration in Irvine Bay and the importance of continuing government support for the company's aims.
- The Council's bid for grant support from the Governments schools fund for a replacement for Garnock Academy and for Dreghorn Primary School and on the need to ensure that the Council as an authority that has invested in it schools is not penalised as a result.
- The strategic importance of upgrading the A737 as a key route in and out of Ayrshire and the need to progress improvements to the road as quickly as possible.

- The progress being made with Health e.g the setting up of the new Community Health Partnership, the evolving Single Outcome Agreement action plan, and the joint developments at Brooksby and in future at Ayrshire Central Hospital. Concerns were raised that resource transfer between Health and the Council for groups moving out of hospitals into the community must be addressed.

The Cabinet Secretary was also made aware of the Council's interest in discussing Affordable Housing. Due to time constraints however it was agreed that this should be deferred until the meeting with Alex Neil MSP on 21 July.

Following the meeting, the Cabinet Secretary joined Councillor Margaret McDougall, Chair of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board and other community planning partners in signing the first CPP Single Outcome Agreement. The Cabinet Secretary later visited Booth Welsh Automation at Stevenston to view works to expand the business.

The Executive agreed to (a) note the outcome of the discussions with the Cabinet Secretary; and (b) approve the proposed follow up actions, namely (i) that the Council Leader meet with East Ayrshire Council leadership to discuss the Diageo situation and supporting action; (ii) that the commitment to the URC be welcomed and that confirmation of future funding be raised at the meeting with the Minister for Housing and Communities (this took place on 21 July 2009); (iii) that the Cabinet Secretary's advice on future funding be taken account of in future budget planning; (iv) that the Council's case for funding Garnock Academy and Dreghorn Primary School be developed with government officials; and (v) that a detailed economic case be prepared on the benefits which would arise from improvements to the A737 and that this be used to lobby for early investment.

6. Meeting with Alex Neil MSP, Minister for Housing and Communities

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on issues raised at the meeting between Council representatives and the Minister for Housing and Communities, Mr Alex Neil MSP, held on 21 July 2009.

The Minister and officials met with the Council Leader, David O'Neill, and Councillors Tom Barr and Matthew Brown, together with the Chief Executive, Chief Executive Designate, Corporate Director (Property Services) and Divisional Housing Manager. A full set of papers, a copy of which was appended to the report, was passed to the Ministerial team in advance of the meeting to facilitate discussions.

Among the issues discussed were: the Scottish Government's plans in respect of maintaining subsidy levels at £25,000 per unit for local authorities who wish to embark on programs of new build new houses for social rent; the Scottish Government's view on mixed tenure developments; the Government's rationale for separating funding into 'core' and 'non-core' allocations; the rationale for uplifting the North Ayrshire mainland ceiling price by 10% to identify Isle of Arran ceiling prices; the requirement to ensure that all Local Authorities are recording prevention of homelessness work consistently and the need for guarantees that Councils who have made significant progress on developing prevention and advice services will not be adversely affected in terms of future funding; and future strategic and financial support for Irvine Bay URC. The report summarised the outcome of the discussions.

Noted.

7. Request for Emergency Funding from Radio City, Kilbirnie

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposed emergency funding to assist the Board of Radio City to meet a funding shortfall in 2009/10 arising as a result of the failure of a Lottery Funding bid.

Radio City Healthy Living Centre opened in January 2004 with the aim of improving the social and economic fabric of the Garnock Valley. The Centre, which is housed in an extensively refurbished Art Deco cinema at the centre of the town of Kilbirnie, enables the delivery of, and access to, many local initiatives and programmes aimed at reducing social exclusion e.g. health promotion activities, fitness suite, facilities for new local SMEs and social enterprises, I.T. Training, recording studio and community radio space, cafe, and community hall and meeting venues.

The Board of Radio City has faced some daunting challenges since 2004, including going into and out of administration, and more recently, the extensive damage caused by flooding in 2008. The Council has previously supported the project with emergency funding of £9,500 in February 2005 and has helped negotiate a three-year funding package from the Community Regeneration Fund of £458,000 in total - £150,000 core funding per year (2005-08) and additional funding for Business Planning. Financial projections prepared on behalf of the Association forecast an operational deficit for the current financial year of £40,000. The Association has negotiated funding of £70,000 from the former Healthy Living Centre Budget paid by the Scottish Government through NHS Ayrshire and Arran. This is transitional funding for this financial year only and is available to all former healthy living centres, to enable them to develop towards sustainability.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) and a Policy Officer from the Chief Executive's Service met with representatives of the Board of Radio City including Councillor John Bell to discuss the financial situation. A further meeting took place on site involving the Council's Chief Executive Designate, the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) and the Chair of the Radio City Board. It was confirmed that in 2009/10 the project would require £40,000 to meet the shortfall resulting from the failure of the Lottery Application bid. In December 2008, Radio City had submitted a bid to the Big Lottery Fund's 'Investing in Communities' funding stream. This 5 year proposal, at a total of £810,000, would have enabled Radio City to continue to run a core programme of activities and to introduce 4 new initiatives: volunteer Time Banking, a media training initiative for young people, an I.T. programme aimed at those aged over 50 and a green gym initiative. This funding bid was rejected by the Big Lottery in May 2009. In 2010/11 Radio City will require a budget of around £200,000 and on current income levels is likely to have an income of around £100,000, leaving a shortfall of £100,000.

It was proposed that the Council should make available £40,000 to allow Radio City to remain operational for the remainder of 2009/10 and that a rigorous assessment be made of the potential of the Radio City building and facilities to contribute to the overall delivery of Council and community services in the Garnock Valley. A further report will be submitted to the Executive outlining what future support, if any, the Council can provide.

The Executive agreed (a) that funding of £40,000 be made available to allow Radio City to remain operational for the remainder of 2009/10; (b) that a rigorous assessment be made of the potential of the Radio City building and facilities to contribute to the overall delivery of Council and community services in the Garnock Valley, this assessment to be carried out urgently and include consideration of both financial and operational issues; and (c) to receive a further report outlining what future support, if any, the Council can provide.

8. Write-off of Irrecoverable and Non-Recoverable Housing Benefit Overpayments

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on balances written off under delegated powers during 2008/09 and seeking authority to write-off irrecoverable and non-recoverable Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit overpayments in excess of £1,000.

Appendix 1 to the report provided details of 224 accounts deemed to be non-recoverable, and with a total value of £37,494.10, that have been written off under delegated powers. A further 16 accounts involving sums in excess of £1,000, and totalling £34,116.75, required to be written off with the Executive's approval.

The appendix also provided details of 553 accounts deemed to be irrecoverable overpayments, and with a total value of £82,233.52, that have been written off under delegated powers. A further 24 accounts in excess of £1,000, and totalling £57,344.05, required to be written off with the Executive's approval.

The Executive (a) noted the sums written off under delegated powers; and (b) agreed to approve the write off Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit overpayments in excess of £1,000, as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

9. Draft Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill: Consultation Paper May 2009

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the terms of a proposed response to a Scottish Government consultation on proposals for crofting reform.

The Scottish Government published a draft Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill for consultation on 19 May 2009. It sets out proposals for changes in crofting legislation that would implement the proposals set out in the Government's response to the final report of the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting. A 12 week consultation is taking place on the draft Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill, which will close on 12 August 2009. Appendix 1 to the report provided a proposed Council response to the series of questions raised in the consultation paper.

Arran, Bute, Greater and Little Cumbrae, Moray, and parts of Highland not already within the seven traditional Crofting Counties, are to be designated as new crofting areas. This follows a public consultation in March 2008 on proposals to extend crofting tenure, which was reported to the Executive on 11 March 2008. The proposals align the crofting counties with the area covered by Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE). The main components of the Draft Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill were summarised in the report. The full implications of the proposed reforms for Arran and the Cumbraes are unclear at this stage, particularly given the lack of experience and knowledge of crofting in North Ayrshire. It is difficult to gauge the level of crofting interest that may come forward and the related issues involved. There may be specific opportunities offered whereby redesignation of small holdings to crofts on Arran (possibly some 13 on Arran) will have some benefits from a grant assistance standpoint.

The formation of new crofts, subject to securing land, raises local issues of housing provision and together with Scottish Government's policy of encouraging the beneficial use of any surplus land held by the Forestry Commission particularly for the creation of woodland crofts, there may well be some pressure for such provision within Arran.

In addition, it is recognised that the release of some of the poorer land on large estates on Arran may also present fresh pressure for new croft development. In relation to housing on crofts, the consultation paper indicates that crofters are required to live on or within 16 kilometres of their croft. This raises issues about the need for new planning policy for housing on any crofts that may be created on Arran and Cumbraes. It may be necessary in time to consider planning policy and to examine issues surrounding crofting, for example, about buildings in the countryside, numbers of new buildings and their spatial distribution.

North Ayrshire Council Housing Services, in partnership with the Housing Initiative for Arran Residents (HIFAR), have commissioned a feasibility study into the development potential of Forestry Commission land on Arran. This study will consider the full range of options presented by Forestry Commission land on the island, through the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS), including affordable housing, affordable self build plots and woodland crofts, and identify any other feasible residential development options, which would be deemed acceptable by the Forestry Commission National Office. This work is ongoing with completion anticipated towards September 2009 and will help address the issue of woodland crofts as well as form a useful input to our new Local Development Plan which is moving towards a Main Issues Report by the end of this year.

There are concerns about the need to ensure that adequate Member/Officer support is required to meet expected additional burdens placed on local authorities in respect of any Area Committee/Board representation proposed and it is considered that appropriate funds should be made available by the Scottish Government to meet any additional financial burdens that may be placed on local authorities in implementing the new crofting legislation.

HIE are to take a new lead role in respect of the development of crofting communities and there will be a clear need to ensure that close co-operation and partnership working is established between HIE and the Council to help secure maximum benefit for Arran and the Cumbraes. It will also be important to work closely with Argyll and Bute Council, our new local authority partners within the proposed Local Area Committee network, where one Member representative from each authority will need to be agreed in due course.

The Executive agreed to (a) approve the terms of the report as the Council's response to the consultation; and (b) authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) to forward the report to the Scottish Government.

10. Ardrossan: Land at Harbour Street

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the proposed terms of purchase and sale of land at Harbour Street, Ardrossan involving Clydeport PLC and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, in connection with the development of a new Health Centre on the site.

At its meeting held in April 2007, the former Corporate Policy Committee agreed to transfer land at Harbour Street/Princes Street, Ardrossan to North Ayrshire Ventures Limited. The intention at that time was for the company to design and build a new Health Centre for NHS Ayrshire & Arran and thereafter lease the building to the Health Trust. Loan Notes were to be offered to the Council's North Ayrshire Ventures Trust in recognition of the value of the transferring land.

Since the decision was taken, discussions have been ongoing with NHS Ayrshire & Arran regarding their requirements for a new Health Centre. Design work has been undertaken by North Ayrshire Ventures Limited and its associate company EDI. NHS Ayrshire & Arran have advised that they now wish to acquire the site rather than lease it and to construct the new Health Centre. Discussions with North Ayrshire Ventures Limited and EDI have taken place and it has been agreed that neither would seek to pursue the transfer as originally agreed.

Accordingly it was proposed that NHS Ayrshire & Arran should take title to the Council's land. As part of the development, NHS Ayrshire & Arran have indicated that a small parcel of land lying at the junction of Harbour Street and Harbour Road, Ardrossan will be required to afford access to the site for the new Health Centre. This land is currently in the ownership of Clydeport PLC who have indicated a willingness to dispose of the land. Agreement has been reached with Clydeport that the value of this land is £75,000. The intention is to incorporate this area of land in to the package of land to be sold on by the Council to NHS Ayrshire & Arran. The total area of land to be sold to NHS Ayrshire & Arran amounts to 2744.7 square metres. The land has been valued by the District Valuer who has placed a value of £225,000 (including an element of £75,000 for the Clydeport land) on it.

The Executive agreed to approve (a) the acquisition of 667.3 square metres of land at Harbour Street/Harbour Road, Ardrossan from Clydeport PLC at a price of £75,000; and (b) the sale of land extending to 2744.7 square metres to NHS Ayrshire & Arran for the sum of £225,000, and on other terms and conditions considered appropriate by the Principal Estates Officer.

11. Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company: Transfer of Land

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the proposed transfer of land at (a) Annickbank, Irvine and (b) Harbourside, Irvine, to Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company.

On 7 February 2007, the Council approved arrangements for the Council's support to Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company (URC), which involved a package of capital and revenue support to the company over a 12 year period. Part of the capital contribution, which was agreed at £23m, was to be made up of Council owned land which could be transferred to the URC to assist its regeneration objectives. A number of areas of land were provisionally identified as being suitable for development by or with the assistance from the URC.

The URC has been marketing a number of these sites including land at Annickbank, Irvine (opposite The Menzies Irvine Hotel) and ground at Harbourside, Irvine, part of which is currently a public car park. Valuations of these two areas of land have been carried out and in doing so consideration was given by the District Valuer of possible development options for each. The former site at Annickbank is considered suitable for office development whilst the site at Harbourside has been the subject of discussion with planning consultants and developers to identify a suitable mix of development involving residential, hotel and commercial combinations. The respective valuations have been produced reflecting the current state of the ground, any abnormal conditions and the type of development envisaged.

The URC has formally approached the Council seeking transfer of ownership of the two sites. The proposed transfer of land is in accordance with the Council's decision of February 2007. As the land is being transferred as a capital contribution to the work of the URC it was proposed that the Council should not seek a capital receipt for the areas of land in question. Transferring the land at nil cost to the URC will require the consent of the Scottish Ministers, as any disposal of land for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained requires their formal consent.

The Executive discussed and received clarification on the scope for securing improvements to the wharf at Irvine Harbour as part of the proposed redevelopment of the Harbourside. The Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) undertook to discuss this with the URC.

The Executive agreed to (a) approve the transfer of ownership of (i) land at Annickbank Irvine extending to 5.14 hectares, and (ii) land at Harbourside Irvine extending to 4.52 hectares, to Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company; and (b) authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Protective) to obtain the Scottish Minister's consent to the transfer in terms of Section 74(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

12. Tenders for Specialist Asbestos Surveys

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) seeking approval to invite tenders for a framework agreement for the provision of asbestos surveys in non-domestic Council buildings and the common areas of domestic properties.

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006, require the Council to manage all asbestos containing material within its non-domestic properties and within the common areas of its domestic properties e.g. bin stores, access hallways, plant rooms etc. In order to discharge these obligations, the Council must establish the location and condition of all asbestos carrying material, assemble relevant information within a written management plan, and periodically review/update this information. In addition, the Council has an obligation to make this information available to its staff or those of private companies who may become engaged in any task within properties which if incorrectly organised could lead to the disturbance of these materials.

The report set out proposals to invite tenders from interested companies for a framework agreement for the provision of asbestos surveys in non-domestic Council buildings and the common areas of domestic properties. The proposed framework agreement will run for a period of three years with the provision to extend it, if required, for a further one year. As it was anticipated that expenditure may exceed £150,000, Executive approval is required prior to tenders be invited. The adoption of a framework agreement will ensure that this work is procured in a manner which demonstrates best value and current procurement best practice.

The Executive agreed to approve the invitation of tenders for a framework agreement to provide asbestos surveys.

13. Saltcoats: 39 Sydney Street (Ground Floor Left)

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed revocation of a Closing Order served on the owner of a property at 39 (Ground Floor Left) Sydney Street, Saltcoats.

The Closing Order was served on 28 November 2008 due to the property being found to be below the tolerable standard required by the The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. The owner of the property has now carried out repairs and upgrading works and has requested that the Closing Order be revoked.

The Executive agreed to approve the revocation of the Closing Order on the property at 39 (Ground Floor Left) Sydney Street, Saltcoats.

14. North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 18 June 2009

Submitted report, being the Minutes of a Meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board held on 18 June 2009.

The Chief Executive advised that the Partnership had agreed to set aside unallocated funding from the Fairer North Ayrshire Fund in 2009/10 to support the Council's Future Job Fund Programme. An announcement on the success of the Council's bid to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund was expected by the end of July.

The Chief Executive advised that the CPP had agreed to set aside unallocated funds from the Fairer North Ayrshire fund to support the Council's Future Jobs programme. A decision on the bid to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund was expected by the end of July.

Noted.

15. Strategic Service Statements 2009-2012

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the strategic context and priorities for Social Services covering the next three years, as contained in the Strategic Service Statement 2009-12.

At its meeting held on 21 April 2009, the Executive considered a report on the Strategic Service Statements for Corporate Services, Property Services and Social Services. At that time the Executive agreed to convene a special meeting to consider the Strategic Service Statements in more detail. Further discussions indicated that rather than convene a special meeting, individual Service Statements should be considered individually at future meetings of the Executive. The Strategic Service Statement for Social Services was appended to the report.

The Executive asked questions and received clarification in respect of:-

- the scope for increasing the role of the voluntary sector in service delivery;
- staffing levels and staff retention with the Service;
- co-operation between partners e.g. NHS Ayrshire and Arran in delivering services;
- arrangements for monitoring the delivery of commissioned services

The Executive (a) noted the strategic context and (b) approved the Service priorities for Social Services for the next three years.

The meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.