

Cabinet  
26 March 2013

**IRVINE, 26 March 2013** - At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 1.00 p.m.

**Present**

Alan Hill, Anthea Dickson, John Ferguson, Tony Gurney and Alex McLean.

**Also Present**

E. Highton and Very Reverend M. Canon McManus (Church Representatives) and G. Smith (Teaching Representative).

**In Attendance**

L. Friel, Corporate Director, G. Macgregor, Head of HR and Organisational Development, P. Doak, Senior Manager, (Internal Audit and Risk Management), T. Reaney, Team Manager (Corporate Procurement), D. Tate, Senior Manager (Housing Assets and Investment) (Finance and Corporate Support); C. Kirk, Corporate Director, M. Armstrong, Head of Service Development and M. Docherty, Head of Education (3-18) (Education and Skills); I. Colvin, Corporate Director, O. Clayton, Head of Service, (Community Care and Housing) and S. Gault, Head of Service (Children, Families and Criminal Justice)(Social Services and Health); C. Hatton, Corporate Director (Development and Environment); and L. McEwan, Corporate Communications Manager, K. Dyson, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer, (Chief Executive's Service).

**Also In Attendance**

Robert Barr, Matthew Brown, Joe Cullinane, John Hunter, Tom Marshall, Peter McNamara, Donald Reid and Robert Steel.

**Chair**

Councillor Hill in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Willie Gibson and Marie Burns; and M. Fraser, Church Representative.

**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 Minutes of the previous ordinary meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 March 2013, and the Special Meeting on 19 March 2013, was agreed and the Minutes signed in accordance with paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

### **3. Statutory Public Consultation Documentation Arising from Three Towns Campus Proposal**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on a preferred site for the proposed school campus within the Three Towns and to seek approval to issue consultative documents arising from this proposal.

Reference was made to the revised appendices to the report which were circulated at the meeting in place of those issued as part of the Agenda.

The report provided an update on progress in respect of the Three Towns Campus project, including the early stakeholder engagement and site identification work which has been undertaken. A working group of officers identified and evaluated a number of sites in the first instance and this was followed by a series of workshops involving local Elected Members. The existing Ardrossan and Auchenhavie Academy sites were short-listed, with the Ardrossan Academy site identified as the preferred location for the development of the campus for the reasons outlined in the report. The full report and analysis were set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

Appendix 2 to the report set out the consultative documents prepared in terms of the statutory public consultation in terms of the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation period will run until 14 June 2013.

Councillor Gurney, as the Portfolio-holder for Education Attainment and Achievement, emphasised that full consultation would take place in respect of the location of the proposed school campus and careful consideration given to all consultation responses.

The Cabinet agreed that (a) the preferred location for the new campus is the site of the current Ardrossan Academy; (b) the consultative documents in Appendix 2 be issued to all interested parties; (c) all interested parties be invited to make written representation on the proposals to the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) no later than noon on 14 June 2013; and (d) the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) submit a report on the results of the consultative process to a future meeting of the Cabinet (Education).

### **4. Education and Skills: St Luke's Primary School: Accommodation Pressures**

**Note: This item is subject to the call-in procedure per the Council's Scheme of Administration and will be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee on 25 April 2013 for consideration.**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on capacity issues relating to St. Luke's Primary School and seek direction on the most appropriate way forward.

Reference was made to the revised Appendix 1 to the report, which was circulated at the meeting in place of that issued as part of the Agenda.

The roll at St Luke's Primary School has increased to 215 pupils this session, with the projected roll for session 2013/14 expected to increase to 230. This equates to an occupancy level of 95.8%, which exceeds the generally accepted level of optimum occupancy, and presents a number of challenges for both the staff of the school and the pupils.

Section 3 of the report and Appendix 1 presented and evaluated the following options to address the capacity issue:-

- Option 1: Relocate the existing early years provision from St. Luke's primary school to St. Winning's primary school;
- Option 2: Provide a further 2 class extension to St. Luke's primary school; and
- Option 3: Re-zone the catchment areas of St. Luke's and St. Winning's primary schools, as illustrated at Appendix 2; a

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

- whether occupancy levels at St. Winning's Primary School had been stable or falling over recent years;
- if there was any potential for the catchment area for St. Winning's expanding as a result of local housing;
- whether any concerns had been expressed about the quality of educational provision at St. Winning's; and
- the low number of placing requests out of St. Winning's.

Councillor Gurney, as the Portfolio-holder for Education Attainment and Achievement, indicated his preference for Option 1, but emphasised that consideration would be given to the outcome of consultation on the proposed action to address capacity issues at St. Luke's. Councillor Gurney also offered an apology for the erroneous inclusion of Option 4 (consolidation of all denominational primary and early years schooling within Kilwinning to a single site at St. Luke's Primary School) within Appendix 1 circulated as part of the Agenda.

The Cabinet agreed that Option 1 (relocate the existing early years provision from St. Luke's primary school to St. Winning's primary school) be approved as the preferred option for consultation.

## **5. Revenue Budget 2012/13 : Budgetary Control Statement to 31 January 2013**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the revenue budgetary control position for the Council at 31 January 2013.

Current financial projections indicate that an anticipated net in-year surplus of £4.236m for the year to 31 March 2013. However, taking into account £1.735m in respect of the early delivery of 2013/14 savings and £2.500m in net non-recurring underspends, the recurring underlying marginal overspend is £0.154m.

The report summarised a number of significant General Services budget over and underspends across Council Services, provided details of additional funding by way of the redetermination of the General Revenue Grant, and made proposals in terms of carry forwards and virements. Further detail was given in the appendices to the report.

The position on the Housing Revenue Account at the end of January 2013 was outlined in the table at Section 2.24 of the report, with further details provided at Appendix 9. A commentary of the projected underspend of 1.103m was given.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the information and financial projections outlined in the report; (b) approve the virements detailed in Appendix 10; and (c) approve the carry forward of £1.059m as summarised in Section 2.20 of the report.

## **6. Capital Monitoring to 31 January 2013**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme as at 31 January 2013.

The report outlined movements in the General Services Capital Programme since the report to Cabinet on 29 January 2013. Actual expenditure to 31 January 2013 (Period 10) amounted to £19.847m or 67.3% (compared to anticipated expenditure of £20.915m or 70.9%) of the revised annual budget for 2012/13 of £29.511m. Details of actual spend by project against the revised budget for 2012/13 were set out Appendix 1, alongside anticipated spend to 31 March 2013. The projections were summarised by Service in the table at Section 2.2 of the report.

The table at 2.3 of the report illustrated movements in the 2012/13 flexibility budget, including an additional General Capital Grant from the Scottish Government. The report also provided information on major carry forwards and the latest position on projects including Arran road improvements and the Dirrans Head Injury Unit.

The report summarised the position of the 2012/13 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budget as at 31 January 2013. Actual expenditure amounted to £16.961m or 63.5% of the revised annual budget of £26.729m. Current projections suggest there will be a net underspend of £1.073m at 31 March 2013 due to phasing issues. It was proposed that the projects referred to in Section 2.10 of the report be carried forward to meet commitments in 2013/14. Section 2.11 of the report noted funds requiring to be brought forward into 2012/13.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the revisions to budgets outlined at Sections 2.1 and 2.7 of the report; and (b) note (i) the actual General Services and HRA expenditure to 31 January 2013 and (ii) the forecast of expenditure to 31 March 2013.

## **7. Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register 2013/14**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the strategic risks facing the Council and the strategy in place for dealing with risk.

The Risk Management Strategy was set out at Appendix 1 to the report. It has been established to support Services in managing risks, ensuring that Services are 'risk aware' rather than 'risk averse' and are able to identify the opportunities that can enhance Service provision.

The most significant risks are identified through the Council's Strategic Risk Register, which was set out at Appendix 2 to the report. The register has been reviewed by the Corporate Management Team, with 10 Strategic Risks identified. The top risks for the Council relate to Welfare Reform, the financial environment and economic inequalities.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Risk Management Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) note the Strategic Risks for the Authority contained in Appendix 2 to the report.

## **8. Procurement Overview**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on national and local procurement and on progress against improving the Council's procurement practices.

The report provided an update in relation to the following:-

- the award by the Scottish Government of a framework agreement for further Category A contracts;
- the Procurement Reform Bill;
- new Scotland Excel Category B contracts and anticipated contracts expected for financial year 2013/14;
- the latest Procurement Capability Assessment;
- the performance of the Council's Corporate Procurement Unit with regard to procurement savings, the implementation of PECOS, payments to suppliers, electronic payments and procurement cards; and
- training for Elected Members.

A new Procurement Strategy document was attached as an appendix to the report. The strategy outlines the Council's vision for procurement, with a detailed action plan of objectives for the next three years.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the reasons for the relatively small savings made by the Council via Scotland Excel when compared with those of some other local authorities.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the report; (b) receive a further update in six months' time; and (c) approve the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2013-2016 set out in the appendix to the report.

## **9. Annual Review of Fees and Charges**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on proposed increases in the level of fees and charges for Council services from 1 April 2013.

Appendix 1 to the report listed all those charges which it is proposed to increase in line with inflation. Appendix 2 contained details of all those charges which it is proposed to increase by a factor other than the November 2012 C.P.I. Increases already approved as part of the 2013/14 budget were summarised at Appendix 3.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the increases to Council fees and charges, as outlined in the report and its appendices, with effect from 1 April 2013.

## **10. Financial Strategy 2013/14 to 2022/23**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the significant financial challenge which the Council faces and the strategy to manage this over the next 10 years.

The proposed Financial Strategy set out in the Appendix to the report relates to the General Services Revenue Fund. The report provided further information on the key messages which can be drawn from the strategy in terms of the following:-

- the economy outlook;
- the national landscape;
- the longer term view;
- the Council's budget;
- the financial outlook; and
- the Council's reserves strategy.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note the scale of the financial challenge which the Council faces over the next 10 years; and (b) submit the Strategy set out in the appendix to the report to the Council for approval.

## **11. Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Home Energy Efficiency Programme For Scotland (HEEPS).**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the potential external funding available via the ECO and HEEPS grant schemes, the area-based schemes initially identified as suitable projects to attract funding, and the Council's intended strategy to develop and submit appropriate funding bids.

The Home Energy Efficiency Programme For Scotland (HEEPS), formerly known as the National Retrofit Programme, comes into effect in April 2013. Monies received under HEEPS are to be used to fund insulation and energy efficiency measures within the private sector. The key objectives of the initiative were outlined in the report.

In addition to the introduction of HEEPS, a new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) was introduced in January 2013. ECO will run until March 2015, supporting the installation of energy efficiency measures in low-income households and areas, and in properties that are harder to treat.

Bids for funding under ECO can be made at any time between January 2013 and December 2015. The timetable for accessing HEEPS monies was set out at Section 3.1 of the report. In order to submit bids in-line with the Scottish Government's timetable, the Council has been developing three projects, namely Weir and Swedish Timber Houses, Montgomerie Street, Ardrossan, and Solid Wall Constructed Houses. The report considered options for funding the gap in respect of private households.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the deadline for a decision on submitting funding bids.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Council's approach to attracting ECO and HEEPS funding; (b) approve the submission of funding requests for the area based schemes identified within the report; (c) delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) to approve and, where necessary, vary or amend the intended ECO and HEEPS bid submissions; (d) approve the proposed budget virement from the HRA roofing and rendering budget, as required, to fund the element of shortfall attributable to the Council-owned housing stock; and (e) to approve Option 2 as outlined at Section 3.23 of the report in terms of funding the shortfall in funding associated with privately owned homes.

## **12. North Ayrshire Council Newspaper**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the options available for introducing a Council newspaper and outlining the expenditure by Services on advertising and marketing activity since a Council newspaper was last published.

The report summarised some of the benefits which might arise from the introduction of a Council newspaper and evaluated the costs and options available in terms of its production. Consideration was also given to the advertising and marketing spend of Services during the period 2010-12. The areas of expenditure which could potentially be absorbed within a Council newspaper, per annum, amount to some £38,100, as set out in Section 2.36 of the report. The in-house costs identified are based on the creation of a new Grade 10 Communications Officer post to copywrite and project manage all aspects of the production of the newspaper.

The Cabinet agreed to remit the report to the appropriate Policy Board for further consideration.

## **13. Pressured Area Status**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on details of independent research which has assessed housing demand pressure within the social housing sector of North Ayrshire and seeking approval to designate certain properties as pressured.

Pressured Area Status (PAS) suspends the Right to Buy (RTB) for some tenants of Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Housing Services commissioned an independent study to reassess social housing demand pressures in North Ayrshire. The outcome was summarised in Section 2 of the report.

The report proposed that all one-bedroom properties in North Ayrshire, regardless of location or type, should be designated as pressured and that all properties in the geographical 'letting' areas identified within Section 2 of the report should also be so designated. The table at Section 2.8 of the report indicated the changes from the existing designated pressured area to that recommended as a result of the 2013 re-assessment. It was proposed that all pressured area designations should apply for a period of 10 years.

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

- whether Councils had the freedom to designate all housing stock as pressured; and
- the background to the change from a 5-year to 10-year designation period.



The Cabinet agreed, upon consideration of the evidence presented in the report, that (a) all one- bedroom properties in North Ayrshire, regardless of location or type, should be designated as pressured; (b) all properties in the geographical 'letting' areas identified within Section 2 of the report should be designated as pressured; and (c) all pressured area designations should apply for a period of 10 years, commencing from 00:00 hours on 27 March 2013 and expiring at 23:59 hours on 26 March 2023.

#### **14. Consultation on Redesigning the Community Justice System**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the Scottish Government's consultation regarding redesigning the community justice system and seeking approval for a proposed response.

Redesigning the Community Justice System – A Consultation on Proposals, was published on 20 December 2012. The consultation document offers the following three options for redesigning community justice, details of which were provided in Section 2 of the report:-

- an Enhanced CJA,
- a Local Authority Model and
- a Single Service Model.

Section 2.6 of the report proposed a fourth option, based on the Local Authority model: "Reducing Re-Offending Partnerships". This option places the strategic responsibility for community justice services with local authorities, but incorporates partnership working between local authorities and builds on the working relationships already established between local authorities in the Community Justice Social work partnerships and Community justice Authorities.

The consultation process comes to an end on 30 April 2013 and the Scottish Government will provide an announcement on the way forward by the end of 2013. Changes to community justice arising from this consultation will be implemented by April 2016.

The Cabinet agreed to support the additional option proposed in the report, of "Reducing Re-offending Partnerships" and that, in addition to the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) responding to the specific consultation questions, details of this option should also be provided to the Scottish Government.

#### **15. North Ayrshire Carers Strategy**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on a proposed Carers Strategy.

The draft Carers Strategy set out at Appendix 1 to the report is the culmination of the work of the Community Health Partnership forum carers' sub-group, which includes representatives from North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Enable, Unity Enterprises (Carers Centre) Young Carers Support Project as well as two informal carers. The principles and objectives of the draft strategy were set out in Section 2 of the report.

The report proposed the appointment of Councillor Steel as the Carers Champion for North Ayrshire Council. The Carers Champion would chair the proposed North Ayrshire Carers Strategy Advisory Group, which will monitor and provide advice on how the Carers Strategy is taken forward, as well as providing a reference point for future strategies and service developments.

Councillor Steel addressed the meeting on his proposed role as Carers Champion.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the development of the Carers Strategy set out at Appendix 1 to the report; (b) endorse the contents of the Strategy and commit to a wider consultation with service users, their carers and the community of North Ayrshire; and (c) recommend that the Council approves the appointment of Councillor Steel as Carers Champion for North Ayrshire Council.

## **16. North Ayrshire Graduate Employment Fund**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on a programme designed to help North Ayrshire graduates into employment.

The Graduate Employment Programme has been designed to encourage employers to create new graduate jobs in North Ayrshire. It will be targeted at 18-24 year olds currently unemployed or underemployed and North Ayrshire resident, and will offer companies financial incentives to create posts for highly skilled but inexperienced young people. The criteria for inclusion in the programme were set out at Section 3 of the report.

The report proposed that the programme run for 3 years, with a review at 18 months. The indicative costs are £512,000, to be met from existing Economic Development budgets allocated to youth employment initiatives. It is anticipated that the pilot phase will support the creation of up to 64 local graduate job opportunities. The majority will be in the private sector, but 12 of the graduate posts have been earmarked for North Ayrshire Council.

The programme will be managed and delivered in house by Economic Development Services. A new temporary post will be required to manage the programme.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the Graduate Employment Programme, as detailed in the report.

## **17. North Ayrshire Youth Employment Strategy**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on a proposed Youth Employment Strategy for North Ayrshire 2010-20.

Two key themes emerge from the proposed Youth Employment Strategy set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The first is the need to increase the number of jobs in North Ayrshire and secondly to ensure a clear and targeted approach exists to support young people at different points on the journey to employment. Section 3 of the report summarised the main areas covered by the strategy in terms of economic regeneration, preparing young people for the world of work, and preparing the world of work for young people. An action plan has been developed in respect of the strategy.

Appendix 2 to the report provided a report on progress in relation to a number of existing programmes on youth employment.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Youth Employment Strategy set out at Appendix 1 to the report; (b) note progress in terms of the youth employment programmes already in place; and (c) to receive further reports on the implementation and progress of the strategy.

## **18. Road Maintenance Programme 2013/14 Road Maintenance Programme 2013/14**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the proposed Structural Roads and Streetlighting Maintenance Programme for 2013/14.

The structural roads and street lighting maintenance programme for 2013/14 has been produced using the associated Lifecycle Plans, developed in accordance with the strategy contained within the RAMP for managing the core assets. As part of the Asset Management process, condition assessments are carried out on the public road network on an annual basis, with all locations assessed using a risk assessment process. The data from condition assessments is then entered into a Prioritisation Matrix for consideration of inclusion onto the Council's Strategic list of priorities. Appendices 1 and 2 to the report set out the Road Carriageway Assessment Form and Treatment Selection Flowchart, respectively. The Mainland Roads Programme 2013/14, and the Arran Roads Programme 2013/14 were provided at Appendices 3a and 3b.

Arrangements for the prioritisation of lighting column replacement were also provided in the report.

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

- the importance of taking into account the tourist season on Cumbrae as well as Arran when considering the timing of road maintenance works; and
- whether the funding available for works to roads on Arran included Timber Transport funding.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note the approach taken to determining the asset maintenance programme for roads and street lighting; (b) that the criteria used to establish the work programme be expanded to include contribution to the Council Key Priorities, notably Regenerating our Communities and Increasing Employment; (c) to approve the maintenance programme for 2013/14, as shown at Appendices 3a and 3b to the report, and that the programme be presented to Area Committees for comment; and (d) that a consultation exercise be undertaken on Arran and Cumbrae to determine the most appropriate timing to undertake planned maintenance works.

## **19. Employee Volunteering - Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the provision being made to support employees who wish to volunteer or participate at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014.

The Games, which will run from 23 July to 3 August 2013, will be the biggest multi-sport event ever hosted in Scotland. Volunteers will need to be available for approximately 14 days in total. Applications opened in mid-January 2013 and are expected to close at the end of February 2013.

The Council wishes to support those who would like to volunteer or participate in the Games. The Employee Volunteering Policy which was approved by the Executive in 2011 contains provision for specific guidance to be produced for "one-off" events such as the Commonwealth Games. A draft Guidance Note for the 2014 Games was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the number of Council staff expected to volunteer or participate in the Commonwealth Games.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the Guidance Note for Employee Volunteering at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **20. Non-domestic Rate Relief**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the implications of the Non-Domestic Rating (unoccupied property) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013 which come into force on the 1 April 2013.

Section 2 of the report provided an update on the position in respect of the following:-

- the unoccupied property 90% rates charge,
- Fresh Start relief for offices and shops,
- Rates relieve for new build property and
- State aid rules.

The increase in rates charge from 50% to 90% for unoccupied properties was highlighted, together with the new relief for unoccupied offices, shops and new build properties.

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

- any bad debt provision which has been made in respect of the change in the unoccupied property rates charge; and
- the importance of tracking the effectiveness of the fresh start relief for offices and shops in terms of maximising occupancy levels.

The Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) undertook to provide Members with further information of the location of the Common Good properties which would be affected by the changes.

Noted.

## **21. Integration of Adult Health and Social Care in Scotland Consultation: Scottish Government Response**

Submitted report by Chief Executive on the Scottish Government's Response to the consultation on the Integration of Adult Health and Social Care, and on the creation of an Integration of Health and Social Care Project Board to oversee the development of proposals and manage the transition to integration.

The Scottish Government recently published its response to the key points made by the 315 respondents to the Integration of Adult Health and Social Care consultation. Section 2 of the report provided a summary of the key points made by the Scottish Government in response to the consultation. The Scottish Government will bring forward legislation for consideration by the Scottish Parliament before the summer of 2013. This will provide for a full implementation of the new Partnerships for Adult Health and Social Care by 1 April 2015.

The Chief Executive has established an Integration of Health and Social Care Project Board, comprising officers from across the Council, to oversee the development of proposals and manage the transition to integration. A copy of the remit/role of the Project Board was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Noted.

## **22 Maximising Attendance - Update on Performance as at the End of Quarter 3 2012-13**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the Council's performance in Maximising Attendance as at the end of Quarter 3 2012/13.

Appendix 1 to the report showed the absence rate performance against target, by Service by employment group for Quarter 3, plus the cumulative performance as at the end of Quarter 3. A comparison of days lost for quarter two this year compared with the same quarter last year shows a marginal worsening with an average of 2.4 days lost this year compared to 2.3 days last year. Appendix 2 to the report included a projection to year end. The overall projection is for 8.9 days lost against a target of 6.8 days. Appendix 3 to the report provided a breakdown of the days lost by reason to the end of Quarter 3.

Absence targets are currently being reviewed for 2013/14, taking cognisance of the Council's performance trends and the performance of other local authorities (as reported in SPI data) to enable informed and realistic targets to be set.

Noted.

## **23. Modern Apprenticeship Programmes**

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on opportunities for programmes which run longer than one year and to look at tracking what happens to Modern Apprentices (MAs) when they leave the training programme.

A list of the current Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes provided within North Ayrshire Council was contained in Appendix 1 to the report. The Council currently offers 13 different types of MA programmes, of which 8 will take more than one year to complete.

The report provided information on developments in terms of the following:-

- Level 2 and Level 3 VQ qualifications,
- Other Funded Training Programmes,
- Extending the programme duration out with the Council,
- MA Progression during 2012 and
- Tracking Modern Apprentices when they leave the Programme.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the funding for MA programmes.

Noted.

## **24. Framework Agreement 2013 / 2015 - Periodic Testing and Inspection of Fixed Electrical Installations**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on inviting tenders for the procurement of Periodic Testing and Inspection of Electrical Installations.

The report proposed that three contractors be appointed to the framework to allow greater scope and flexibility for the Council to meet its statutory obligations. In the first year of the agreement, each contractor appointed will be awarded a proportion of the testing and inspection programme. The framework agreement is expected to commence 1 October 2013 as a 2-year agreement, with the option to extend for up to a further two years. A facility will also be built into the agreement to allow a mini-competition between the contractors for subsequent works arising as a result of recommendations from inspections.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the tendering of the Framework Agreement for the procurement of Periodic Testing and Inspection of Electrical Installations as detailed in the report.

## **25. Banking Services**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on a proposal to invite tenders for banking services.

In order to comply with the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts and the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (SSI 2012/88) (as amended), a formal tendering exercise must be undertaken for banking services. It is intended that the new contract will commence on 1 February 2014, operating for 5 years and with the option to extend for up to 2 years.

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

- whether officers had given consideration to the increased demand for cash handling likely to arise as a result of changes associated with Welfare Reform; and
- the type of banking services covered by the contract.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the issuing of a formal tender for banking services.

## **26. Renewal of 3-year Licence for Education City for North Ayrshire Primary, Secondary and Special Schools**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on a proposal to purchase a 3-year licence for Education City for North Ayrshire schools.

All of North Ayrshire primary and secondary schools and many nursery and special schools use Education City software, an online, interactive resource which supports the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Education City is a unique product. No other currently available software offers the features and tools to support learning and teaching both within school and at home.

Over the past six years Education and Skills has purchased a central licence to cover all local authority schools for a 3-year period at a discounted rate (50% discount). Previously, schools had purchased a separate, annual licence at a non-discounted rate. Therefore the move to purchasing the licence centrally over a 3-year period represented best value. The cost of £88,592 for a 3-year agreement for schools equates to a sum of £29,530 per annum and approximately £2.04 per pupil.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the educational benefits of the use of Education City to support raising attainment in North Ayrshire schools; and (b) to the purchase of a further 3-year licence.

## **27. South West Hub Territory Partnering Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 31 January 2013**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the Minutes of the South West Hub Territory Partnering Board of 31 January 2013.

Noted.

## **28. 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and Corporate Health and Safety Group: Minutes of Meetings held on 21 February 2013**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Minutes of the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and Corporate Health and Safety Group of 21 February 2013.

Noted.

## **29. Urgent Items**

### **29.1 Isle of Arran Power Outage**

The Corporate Communications Manager provided a verbal update on the following:-

- the excellent partnership working which has taken place to help Arran residents cope with the effects of recent adverse weather;
- the timescale for SSE connecting the remaining 900 customers on Arran to generator power and ongoing work to restore power to the grid;



- work by the Council's Roads Service to ensure all roads on the island are clear of snow and accessible by the emergency services;
- the service being provided by Social Services and Health to service users and vulnerable people on Arran;
- the provision of catering vans offering free food and drinks, together with free transport on the east coast of the island to allow residents to access the service;
- the role of volunteers in assisting with the delivery of food;
- the continued closure of all Arran schools for the remainder of the week and plans to provide appropriate support after the Easter break to young people sitting exams;
- the measures being implemented by Corporate Communications to make information available to residents via the Council's website, Twitter and telephone helplines;
- arrangements for the Council to assume responsibility for the recovery stage of the operation; and
- issues surrounding the anticipated number of people wishing to visit Arran during the Easter period.

Members commended officers for their handling of the situation and praised the effective partnership working which had taken place.

Noted.

### **30. Departure of Head of Service Development (Education and Skills)**

The Chair and Members paid tribute to Mark Armstrong, Head of Service Development (Education and Skills), who will be leaving the Council in April 2013. Members thanked Mr Armstrong for his contribution to the work of the Cabinet and the Council.

Mr Armstrong thanked Members for their kind words.

The meeting ended at 2.55 p.m.