

Cabinet
12 November 2013

SKELMORLIE, 12 November 2013 - At a meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m. in Skelmorlie Community Centre, Skelmorlie.

Present

Willie Gibson, John Bruce, Marie Burns, Anthea Dickson, Alan Hill, Ruth Maguire and Tony Gurney.

Also Present

Alex Gallagher.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; L. Friel, Corporate Director and S. Humphries, Chief Revenues and Benefits Officer (Finance and Corporate Support); I. Colvin, Corporate Director and A. Adrain, Interim Head of Housing (Social Services and Health); C. Hatton, Corporate Director, R. McCutcheon, Head of Environment and Related Services and K. Yeomans, Head of Development Planning (Development and Environment); and A. Fraser, Head of Democratic and Administration Services, C. O'Kane, Change Programme Manager, A. Woodison, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

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 Special Meeting of the Cabinet held at 11.00 a.m, and the ordinary meeting held at 2.30 p.m. on 29 October 2013, was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Revocation of the Closing Order at Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised on the condition of the property at Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran; and (b) proposed the removal of the Closing Order in respect of this property.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the removal of the Closing Order in respect of Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran.

Councillor Bruce joined the meeting at this point.

4. Skelmorlie: Potential Affordable Housing Requirements

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which (a) provided an overview of independent research recently undertaken to assess the housing need and demand for the housing settlement of Skelmorlie; and (b) sought approval to use the report for strategic planning purposes.

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

- whether the North Coast figures provided in Table 2 of the report included those for Skelmorlie; and
- the role of the research and the other factors to be taken into account in terms of informing future investment decisions.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the content of the draft report 'Skelmorlie: Potential Affordable Housing Requirements', as summarised at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) approve its use for strategic planning purposes.

5. Adaptations Review

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which (a) advised on the outcome of independent research which was commissioned to review existing adaptations arrangements in North Ayrshire and seek approval to use the research findings for strategic planning purposes, as summarised at Appendix 1; and (b) sought approval to use the report for strategic planning purposes.

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

- the accuracy of the assessment that the adaptations service can be perceived as lengthy, unclear and confusing for disabled people and their carers;
- the source of the confusion experienced by service users;
- the importance of recognising service issues and seeking to address them;
- proposed actions to improve the service in the short, medium and long term;
- the commitment of partner agencies to service improvement;
- occupational therapy assessments for adaptations such as wet floor showers; and
- the significance of dementia as an issue for the adaptations service.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the findings of the North Ayrshire Council Housing Adaptations Research; and (b) approve its use for strategic planning purposes.

6. Scottish Government Consultation on Planning Scotland's Seas

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) which (a) advised on the consultation being undertaken by the Scottish Government on a number of proposals to take forward integrated marine planning for Scotland's seas; and (b) proposed a consultation response.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on a request received by a third party to take into account elements of their planned consultation response.

The Cabinet agreed that the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) submit the report and Appendices 2 and 3 as the Council's response to the consultation on Planning Scotland's Seas.

7. The Arran Storm

Submitted report by the Corporate Director Chief Executive on the handling of the Arran storm, the costs, lessons learned and the proposed improvement plan arising from it.

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

- any environmental and planning issues associated with promoting the use of wood burning stoves;
- the planned purchase, servicing arrangements and location of a generator; and
- the provision of mobile catering during the emergency.

The Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) undertook to seek confirmation that the proposed generator has been ordered.

The Cabinet agreed to note the terms of the report, the costs incurred, and the terms of the improvement plan set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

8. Appointments to Advisory Panels

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on nominations received from the SNP Group, the Labour Group and the Independent/Conservative groups to serve on the Council's Physical Environment Advisory Panel and the Communities and Lifelong Learning Advisory Panel.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the proposed timetable of Advisory Panel meetings.

Noted.

9. Welfare Reform Progress report at 30 September 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on which (a) advised on a number of Welfare Reform issues, including the Scottish Welfare Fund and discretionary housing payment scheme; and (b) provided information on progress against the welfare reform action plan as at the end of 30 September 2013.

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

- the increase in destitution referrals and the support which can be provided to those presenting as destitute;
- food bank referrals and the role of the voluntary sector in this area;
- the temporary nature of the support provided to Housing Benefit claimants through Discretionary Housing Support;
- the number of tenants the Housing Services Welfare Reform Advice Team has been unable to access and the proportion who are in rent arrears;

The Chief Revenues and Benefits Officer undertook to provide further information to Members on the tenants the Housing Services Welfare Reform Advice Team has been unable to access during its under-occupancy visits and the proportion of those who are in rent arrears.

Noted.

10. Building Services Transformational Change Programme Update

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the progress being made in the delivery of the internal Transformation Programme in Building Services, including the new integrated IT property repairs and maintenance system; a replacement pricing model for Non-Housing works with Property Maintenance and Investment; the development of competitive pricing and benchmarking; and the commitment to providing craft apprenticeships.

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

- the significant transformational work undertaken to improve the efficiency of the service; and
- the potential for encouraging greater numbers of female craft apprentices.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to record its appreciation of the work undertaken to effect the significant improvements outlined in the report; (b) that the Head of Environment and Related Services liaise with Education and Skills to work with schools in order to increase the number of female craft apprentices; and (c) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

11. Clyde Valley Residual Waste Project Update

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on progress in securing long-term treatment facilities for residual waste and the current position in terms of the procurement exercise.

Noted.

12. Brodick Pier Redevelopment Group: Minutes of Meeting held on 4 October 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the Minutes of the meeting of the Brodick Pier Redevelopment Group held on 4 October 2013

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the role of Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.