



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL

Cunninghame House,
Irvine.

7 November 2013

Cabinet

You are requested to attend a Meeting of the above mentioned Committee of North Ayrshire Council to be held in Skelmorlie Community Centre, Castle Road, Skelmorlie on **TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2013** at **2.30 p.m.** to consider the undernoted business.

Yours faithfully

Elma Murray

Chief Executive

PLEASE NOTE THE VENUE FOR THIS MEETING

1. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to give notice of any declarations of interest in respect of items of business on the Agenda.

2. Minutes (Page 7)

The accuracy of the Minutes of (i) the special meeting of the Cabinet held at 11.00 a.m, and (ii) the ordinary meeting held at 2.30 p.m. on 29 October 2013, will be confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (copy enclosed).

GENERAL BUSINESS FOR DECISION

Reports by the Corporate Director for Finance and Corporate Support

3. Revocation of the Closing Order at Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran (Page 21)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the condition of the property at Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran (copy enclosed).

Reports by the Corporate Director for Social Services and Health

4. Skelmorlie: Potential Affordable Housing Requirements (Page 23)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on independent research recently undertaken to assess the housing need and demand for the housing settlement of Skelmorlie (copy enclosed).

5. Adaptations Review (Page 35)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on independent research which was commissioned to review existing adaptations arrangements in North Ayrshire (copy enclosed).

Reports by the Corporate Director for Development and Environment

6. Scottish Government Consultation on Planning Scotland's Seas (Page 47)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the consultation being undertaken by the Scottish Government on a number of proposals to take forward integrated marine planning for Scotland's seas (copy enclosed).

GENERAL BUSINESS FOR INFORMATION

7. The Arran Storm (Page 69)

Submit report by the Chief Executive on the handling of the Arran storm, the costs, lessons learned and the proposed improvement plan (copy enclosed).

8. Appointments to Advisory Panels (Page 85)

Submit report by the Chief Executive on nominations received from the SNP Group, the Labour Group and Independent/Conservative groups to serve on the Council's Advisory Panels (copy enclosed).

9. Welfare Reform Progress report at 30 September 2013 (Page 89)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on Welfare Reform issues including the Scottish Welfare Fund and discretionary housing payment scheme (copy enclosed).

10. Building Services Transformational Change Programme Update (Page 111)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the progress being made in the delivery of the internal Transformation Programme in Building Services (copy enclosed).

11. Clyde Valley Residual Waste Project Update (Page 121)

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on progress in securing long-term treatment facilities for residual waste (copy enclosed).

MINUTES

12. Brodick Pier Redevelopment Group: Minutes of Meeting held on 4 October 2013 (Page 125)

Submit 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 (copy enclosed).

13. Urgent Items

Any other items which the Chair considers to be urgent.

Cabinet

Sederunt: **Elected Members**

Willie Gibson (Chair)
Alan Hill (Vice-Chair)
John Bruce
Marie Burns
Anthea Dickson
Tony Gurney
Ruth Maguire

Chair:

Attending:

Apologies:

Meeting Ended:

Cabinet
29 October 2013

IRVINE, 29 October 2013 - At a Special meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 11.00 a.m. in Cunninghame House, Irvine.

Present

Willie Gibson, Alan Hill and Marie Burns

Also Present

Ruth Maguire and Donald Reid.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; I. Colvin, Corporate Director and J. McCaig, Interim Head of Community Care (Social Services and Health); Y. Baulk, Head of Finance and Property, T. Reaney, Procurement Manager and T. Burns, Asset Manager (Finance and Corporate Support); A. Sutton, Head of Community and Culture (Education and Skills); R. McCutcheon, Head of Environment and Related Services and K. Yeomans, Head of Development Planning; K. Dyson, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Bruce, Anthea Dickson, Tony Gurney and Alex McLean.

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 meeting of Cabinet held on 8 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. Write Off of Tenant Rent Arrears

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of tenant rent arrears and court costs for former Council house tenants; and (b) sought approval to write off irrecoverable amounts.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the write-offs totalling £61,792.62, as detailed in Section 2 of the report.

4. Recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on a proposed revised policy on the recovery of Housing Benefit, which reflects the abolition of Council Tax Benefit.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the revised policy on the recovery of Housing Benefit, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

5. Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 - Proposed Revisions

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on proposed amendments to the Annual Investment Strategy in relation to deposits with Government-backed institutions.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve amendments to the Annual Investment Strategy to increase the limit for government backed institutions from £25m to £35m; (b) approve an increase in the maximum holding by one counterparty from 50% to 75% of the total portfolio; and (c) note the appropriate amendments to the Treasury Management Practices.

6. Council Owned Houses on Arran

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of the current status of a six of Council owned houses on Arran; and (b) proposed a way forward for the future of the properties.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) dispose of two of the houses at Ardow and Shiskine; (b) retain one house at Kilmory to provide temporary accommodation for new Council staff moving to the Island; and (c) note the position regarding the other three houses, at Brodick, Pirnmill and Corrie.

7. Revision to the Policy for the Transfer of Assets to the Community

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on proposed amendments to the Policy for the Transfer of Assets to the Community intended to assist applicants in the transfer process.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the proposed amendments to the Policy for the Transfer of Assets to the Community; and (b) approve the immediate implementation of the amended policy set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

8. Surplus Property - 19 Braehead, Dalry

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of the outcome of an exercise to market the former office property at 19 Braehead, Dalry, which was by Education and Skills in January 2013; and (b) proposed the disposal of the property.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on issues of commercial sensitivity in relation to the proposed disposal.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the disposal of 19 Braehead, Dalry for the sum of £129,167.

9. North Ayrshire's Shared Services and Partnership Working

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on progress in taking forward Shared Services and partnership working in North Ayrshire, in terms of developments in Pan Ayrshire partnership working, the Ayrshire Strategic Alliance, other strategic partnership initiatives and internal shared service initiatives.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the effectiveness of the partnership working arrangements in place for North Ayrshire Council-led projects.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note the current position and progress on partnership working, including shared services and (b) changes to the Minute of Agreement constituting the Ayrshire Shared Services Joint Committee, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

10. Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which set out the fourth annual report of the Chief Social Work Officer covering the period April 2012 to March 2013, as required by the Scottish Government's Guidance.

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

- the distinction between befriending and mentoring services;
- the balance between psychological and social interventions in the delivery of addiction services; and
- the overall picture in terms of social services demand and provision in North Ayrshire.

The Corporate Director undertook to look into raising awareness of the mentoring services provided by the Council.

The Cabinet agreed to note and endorse the Chief Social Work Officer report set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

11. Development of an Ayrshire Sensory Impairment Service

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the development of a business case which identifies the benefits and potential risks of a single joint Ayrshire Wide Sensory Impairment Service, initially focused on the three Ayrshire Council Social Work Sensory Impairment Services.

The Cabinet agreed to progress a business case with regard to a joint Social Work Sensory Impairment service in Partnership with South and East Ayrshire and NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

12. Social Service Change Programme Update

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) which (a) advised of progress in terms of the new Service User Journey model, in terms of policies and amendments to policy relating to the Eligibility Criteria, the Resource Allocation System and the revised Charging Policy.

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

- the level of housing disregard for non-dependents offered by the Council compared with that of other local authorities; and
- the intention to report back to the Cabinet on the outcome of the Charging Policy consultation.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the progress of the Change Programme in developing the new Service User Journey ahead of implementation; (b) approve the implementation of the Outcome Focused Eligibility criteria, effective from 5 November 2013; (c) approve the adoption of the Resource Allocation System, effective from 5 November 2013; and (d) approve, in principle, the proposed amendments to the Charging Policy, effective from 1 April 2014, subject to consultation with service users.

13. Review Of Community and Culture

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the revised structure and service delivery model within Community Development with regard to community and youth workers, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, other community support roles and the clerical support team.

Noted.

14. School Meals

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on measures being developed to further improve the uptake of school meals throughout North Ayrshire, including the establishment of a working group to identify and develop proposals and the development of an action plan outlining a number of proposals for further consideration and implementation.

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

- ways to involve young people in developing school meals proposals; and
- the importance of increasing the uptake of free school meals.

The Cabinet agreed (a) that the Head of Community and Culture (Education and Skills) investigate whether the issue of school meals might be added to the agenda for the forthcoming Youth Council Conference and the Straight Talking event on "North Ayrshire: the best place to grow up"; (b) that consideration be given to (i) including the topic of school meals as part of the Cabinet's next meeting with the Youth Cabinet and (ii) seeking to involve a wider range of students in the discussion; and (c) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

15. War Memorials

Submit report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the management and maintenance of War Memorials, including progress made in the recording and assessment of the condition of War Memorials; the registration of the Bereavement and Burials Officer as North Ayrshire Council's War Memorial Officer; and the intention to seek financial assistance to undertake repairs and conservation work on War Memorials by accessing the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund (CMRF).

Noted.

16. Team North Ayrshire and Account Management

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on proposals presented by the Economic Development and Regeneration Board to encourage business growth, including an evaluation of the current practices and customer base and plans for further work culminating in a formal launch of 25 November 2013 of the enhanced offering for businesses.

Noted.

17. Saltcoats Town Hall Redevelopment Project

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the current progress of the Saltcoats Town Hall redevelopment project, including the current funding applications and the statutory approvals required to allow the project to progress.

Noted.

18. Measured Term Contract: Periodic Testing and Inspection of Fixed Electrical Installations

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of the result of the tender exercise for the MTC for Periodic Testing and Inspection of Fixed Electrical Installations; and (b) presented a recommendation for the award of the contract.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the award of contract to Arthur McKay & Co Ltd and SSE Contracting for two years, with the option to extend for up to a further two years at the discretion of the Council.

19. Council House Development Project: John Galt Primary School, Irvine

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of the result of the tender exercise for the appointment of a contractor for the construction of 80 new houses on the cleared John Galt Primary School site; and (b) presented a recommendation for the award of the contract.

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

- the background one of the submissions being deemed 'non-compliant'; and
- the community benefits associated with the contract.

The Cabinet agreed to award the contract to Cruden Building and Renewals, which submitted the lowest cost compliant tender.

20. South West Hub Territory Partnering Board: Minutes of 29 August 2013

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the Minutes of the Meeting of the South West Hub Territory Partnering Board held on 29 August 2013.

Noted.

21. Economic Development and Regeneration Policy Board: Minutes of 11 September 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Development and Environment) on the Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Regeneration Policy Board held on 11 September 2013.

Noted.

22. 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and Corporate Health and Safety Group: Minutes of 19 September 2013

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Minutes of the Meeting of the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and the Corporate Health and Safety Group held on 19 September 2013.

Noted.

23. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Implementation Group: Minutes of 24 September 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the Minutes of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Implementation Group held on 24 September 2013.

Noted.

24. Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Cabinet resolved, in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting, the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

25. Sale of Claims

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which sought delegated authority regarding the potential sale of a Council creditor claim.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) delegate authority to the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support) or Head of Finance and Property, in consultation with the Leader and/or Depute Leader to participate in the auction process; and (b) approve the minimum reserve price at which the Council will sell, as set out within the report.

The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.

Cabinet
29 October 2013

IRVINE, 29 October 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, Marie Burns and Tony Gurney; Very Reverend M. Canon McManus and M. Fraser (Church Representatives); and E. Hawthorn (Youth Representative).

Also Present

John Bell, John Ferguson, Alex Gallagher, John Hunter, Ruth Maguire, Tom Marshall, Ronnie McNicol, Alan Munro, Donald Reid and Robert Steel.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; Carol Kirk, Corporate Director, M. Docherty, Head of Education (3-18), S. Quinn, Head of Service Development, A. Sutton, Head of Community and Culture, F. Rodman, Senior Manager (Early Years and Childcare) and D. Carracher, Senior Manager (Inclusion) (Education and Skills); Y. Baulk, Head of Finance and Property (Finance and Corporate Support); L. McEwan, Corporate Communications Manager, K. Dyson, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

V. Maneely and N. McPherson (Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council); F. Stewart, G. Syme and D. Watson (Ardrossan Academy Parent Council); C. Larsen (Haysholm School Parent Council); and E. McTaggart (James McFarlane School Parent Council).

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Bruce, Anthea Dickson and Alex McLean; E. Higon (Church Representative); G. Smith (Teaching Representative); and N. McDonald (Youth Representative).

1. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 16 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, Councillor Gurney, as parent of a pupil of Ardrossan Academy, declared an indirect, non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 2 (Outcome of 3 Towns Campus Consultation).

2. Outcome of 3 Towns Campus Consultation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the outcome of the statutory public consultation on the proposal to develop an educational campus in Ardrossan by the amalgamation of Auchenharvie and Ardrossan Academies and Haysholm and James McFarlane Schools.

At its meeting on 9 October 2013, the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee considered a petition submitted by Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council in respect of the siting of the proposed 3 Towns Campus and heard from a deputation in support of the petition. The Committee agreed to recommend that the Cabinet invite the Petitioners to address the Cabinet (Education) in terms of the petition.

Representatives of Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council were duly invited to attend the meeting to address the Cabinet. In addition, the Parent Councils for the other schools affected by the proposals, namely Ardrossan Academy, Haysholm School and James McFarlane School, were also invited to address the meeting.

Veron Maneely and Nicola McPherson addressed the Cabinet on behalf of Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council, indicating their opposition to the proposals on the following grounds:-

- the close proximity of the preferred site to the existing St. Matthew's campus and the prospect of 3,000 pupils converging in the same vicinity at the same times throughout the day;
- the concentration of school and community facility within the one area and the loss of those facilities in Stevenston;
- the safety of pupils in terms of road safety, the lack of safe walking routes from Stevenston to the Ardrossan site and the increased walking distance for pupils from the Ardeer area;
- road congestion and parking issues at the Ardrossan site;
- the practicalities associated with sharing some resources with St. Matthew's Academy;
- the loss to the Stevenston community of its community hub at Auchenharvie, including after-school provision and the parent-led community sports club;
- the lack of space on the Ardrossan site for future expansion; and
- the likely negative impact on Stevenston, with regard to housing, crime, local businesses and community spirit.

Frances Stewart and Gloria Syme, accompanied by Donna Watson, then addressed the Cabinet on behalf of Ardrossan Academy Parent Council and made the following points:-

- Ardrossan Academy Parent Council's sympathy with the views expressed by representatives of Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council;
- the availability of leisure and sports facilities adjacent to the Auchenharvie site; and
- the importance, in view of the two academies reaching the end of their lifespan, of investing in provision for future generations.

Thereafter, Christina Larsen addressed the Cabinet and made the following points on behalf of Haysholm School Parent Council:-

- opposition to the proposals on the part of 60% of the school's parents, with this figure rising to 100% among the 15 families directly affected;
- the disadvantages of the proposed site, in terms of the loss of a small, friendly environment for pupils, the scale of the new building and associated difficulties for pupils with severe autism, the traffic congestion which might be encountered by emergency vehicles responding to calls in respect of medical emergencies, and the risk of bullying or mocking;
- concerns about the physical layout of the building, including the potential for overlooking of the outdoor area used by vulnerable pupils and design issues which might limit the natural daylight available; and
- the cost to the Council of parents opting out of the proposed campus in favour of private sector provision should the new facility fail to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Elaine McTaggart then addressed the Cabinet on behalf of James McFarlane Parent Council and raised the following issues:-

- concern about the medical requirements of pupils, some of whom were subject to emergency medical protocols, and the ability of the proposed campus to meet those needs;
- parental support in principle for a new facility, given capacity issues surrounding the current provision, albeit with strong caveats;
- the preference for a merger between Haysholm and James McFarlane schools, with specialised facilities, such as a modern hydrotherapy pool, prioritised over issues such as inclusion;
- the distinction between the shared campus provision seen elsewhere, which aims to integrate pupils with mild to moderate special needs, and the current proposals, which would affect pupils with severe and complex special needs; and
- the importance of design/layout and facilities in determining whether the Parent Council could support the proposals.

Members asked questions and were provided with information in relation to the following:-

- what constituted a "super-school" in the opinion of Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council;
- whether the resource sharing with St. Matthew's Academy, referred to by representatives of Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council, related to academic or sports provision;
- the validity of concerns about safe walking routes, given that pupils already walked from Stevenston to St. Matthew's Academy;
- Auchenharvie Academy Parent Council's expectations in terms of safe walking route provision;

- further information on the current community activities based at Auchenhavrie Academy;
- whether pupils with severe and complex special needs could share facilities with those with mild to moderate special needs; and
- the detailed design assumptions made by Haysholm School Parent Council with regard to the proposals.

In terms of Standing Order 6.8, the Chair adjourned the meeting for a short period to consider the representations made by representatives of the four Parent Councils. The meeting reconvened with the same Members, officers and deputation representatives present.

The Cabinet agreed, following the results of the public consultation and having listened to representatives from the schools affected (a) not to proceed any further with the current proposal; and (b) to instruct officers to develop new proposals to provide the highest quality education for our young people.

3. Supporting Small Schools in North Ayrshire

3.1 Corrie, Brodick and Pirnmill Primary Schools

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) provided information on the successful pilot in respect of shared headship arrangements for Corrie, Brodick and Pirnmill Primary Schools on Arran; and (b) proposed the creation of a permanent shared headship between the three schools.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the management arrangement for a shared headship between Corrie, Brodick and Pirnmill Primary Schools.

3.2 Shiskine and Kilmory

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) provided information on the successful pilot in respect of shared headship arrangements for Shiskine and Kilmory Primary Schools on Arran; and (b) proposed the creation of a permanent shared headship between the two schools.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the management arrangements for a shared headship between Shiskine and Kilmory Primary Schools.

4. Delivery 600 Hours of Early Learning and Childcare: Review of Staffing Arrangements

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which outlined changes to early years staffing within primary and pre-school establishments in response to the Children and Young People's Bill, which is likely to place a duty on local authorities to increase the provision of early learning and childcare from the current 475 hours to a minimum of 600 hours delivered in a more flexible model from August 2014.

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

- any potential detriment to primary schools arising from the staff re-deployment;
- current early years staffing provision in primary schools;
- the views of head teachers in relation to the proposals; and
- the financial implications of the proposals.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) re-focus the teaching input for young children aged 3 to 6 by creating an early years support team consisting of the experienced early years teachers who work in early years centres and classes; and (b) re-locate the early intervention practitioners from the primary schools into early years establishments to ensure a fully qualified workforce is in place to deliver the increased provision of 600 hours of early learning and childcare by August 2014

5. Introduction of Scottish Statutory Instrument: Community Learning and Development 2013

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) advised of the proposed Scottish Statutory Instrument for Community Learning and Development (“The Requirements of Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013”), the purpose of which is to strengthen the legislative basis of Community Learning and Development (CLD); and (b) outlined the responsibilities that will fall to the Education Authority as a result of the pending legislation.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the requirements that this legislation will make on North Ayrshire Council, its Community Planning partners and other CLD providers across North Ayrshire, including with respect to Curriculum for Excellence; and (b) receive a further report once the legislation has been implemented in North Ayrshire.

6. Curriculum for Excellence

6.1 Update Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) provided an update on the progress made in implementing Curriculum for Excellence, including staff training in the Solihull Approach, the embedding of formative assessment in everyday practice in schools, and engagement with teachers on the exemplification of a level material on the National Assessment Resource; and (b) set out how progress made by the Council in being measured and has been recognised nationally.

Noted.

6.2 Political Literacy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) which (a) gave information on the publication of the paper, Curriculum for Excellence: Political Literacy, which provides advice for practitioners and informs partners, learners and their parents of the place of political literacy within Curriculum for Excellence; and (b) provided an Advice Note for Schools on Political Literacy and the Referendum on Independence for Scotland, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

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

- whether a school debate would proceed in the event of an invited party withdrawing;
- a mock court hearings scheme involving Kilmarnock Sheriff Court and pupils from East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire; and
- whether the term "neutral" cited in the Advice Note equated to "balanced".

The Cabinet agreed (a) that the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) seek to obtain further information on the mock court hearings scheme based at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court and any potential for pupils from North Ayrshire to participate; and (b) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

7. Developing Scotland's Young Workforce

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the Interim Report produced by the Wood Commission, which was set up by the Scottish Government with the task of making recommendations to ensure Scotland produces better qualified, work ready and motivated young people with skills relevant to modern employment opportunities both as the employees and entrepreneurs of the future.

Noted.

The Meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 3

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Revocation of the Closing Order at Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran**

Purpose: To report to the Cabinet on the condition of the property at Rose Cottage, Auchencairn, Whiting Bay, Arran

Recommendation: That the Cabinet approves the removal of the Closing Order

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 26 June 2007 the former Council Executive approved the serving of a Closing Order over the above property, as it failed to meet a condition that was compliant with the recognised Tolerable Standard as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The Council has recently undertaken an inspection of the property and can advise that the required reinstatement work is now complete and that the property now complies with the definition of the Tolerable Standard.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Closing Order is now revoked.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 Upon removal of the Closing Order the property will no longer be exempt from paying Council Tax.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 None.

Legal Implications

4.3 None

Equality Implications

4.4 None

Environmental Implications

4.5 None

Implications for Key Priorities

4.6 None

Community Benefit Implications

4.7 None

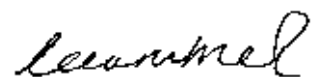
5. Consultations

5.1 The owner of the property has been consulted in relation to the removal of the Closing Order.

5.2 In order to remove the Council Tax exemption, the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board will be advised of the removal of the Closing Order.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve the Revocation of the Closing Order.



LAURA FRIEL

Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support)

Reference :

For further information please contact David Tate, Senior Manager (Housing, Assets & Investments) on 01294 225051.

Background Papers

Communication with the owner of the property.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 4

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: Skelmorlie: Potential Affordable Housing Requirements

Purpose: To provide the Cabinet with an overview of independent research recently undertaken to assess the housing need and demand for the housing settlement of Skelmorlie, and to seek approval to use the report for strategic planning purposes.

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scottish Government's national policy agenda requires housing authorities to be more strategic in developing preventative approaches to tackle housing-related problems. Therefore, evidencing how we identify our priorities, and how we will target our resources is vital.
- 1.2 To this end, and to meet a commitment made to Skelmorlie residents, Housing Services commissioned independent consultants, Newhaven Research Scotland Limited, to carry out a desk based-appraisal of housing need and the potential requirement for affordable housing (in particular social rented housing), in Skelmorlie.
- 1.3 Newhaven Research were also asked to consider the following:
 - How strong are the housing linkages between Skelmorlie, the wider North Coast Sub Housing Market Area, and the neighbouring Inverclyde?
 - How has housing market performance affected the affordability of the private sector?
 - What is the forecast net annual future housing need over the next 10 years?
 - What proportion of newly forming households could potentially meet their housing needs through intermediate forms of housing?

- 1.4 The full research findings can be viewed on request and a copy is also available in the Members' Lounge.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Skelmorlie is home to approximately 2,200 people or 1,000 households. The vast majority of residents in Skelmorlie own their own home (circa 85%); there are 49 Council tenancies, with 18 of these being one-bedroom bungalows.
- 2.2 The stock profile is predominantly houses (72%), though the construction of flats in the village in recent years has increased the proportion of this type of housing.
- 2.3 There are no households living in caravans or other temporary housing structures.
- 2.4 In terms of vacant stock, 8% is not permanently occupied. This figure includes second homes, abandoned, uninhabited and long term vacant properties. There has been little change to this figure over recent years, and almost all vacant homes are in private ownership.
- 2.5 Over the past 10 years, long distance movers have relocated to the village, including those seeking to retire to the coast. Indeed, over the past decade, the rate that the demographic profile has 'aged' has been very pronounced, with a sharp rise in those between 65 and 79 years. This has been attributed to the existing population reaching retirement age, as well as people retiring to the area.
- 2.6 Those working age households who have moved to the village appear to be prepared to take longer commuting journeys to work in the central belt.
- 2.7 While house prices in the village have reduced since 2008, Skelmorlie house prices remain higher than the rest of the North Coast or adjacent Inverclyde. In 2011, the median resale price in Skelmorlie was £162,500. The comparable price for the North Coast was £123,750, North Ayrshire was £90,250 and for Inverclyde the median resale price was £95,000.
- 2.8 However, despite the higher prices, there is little evidence to suggest that residents of Skelmorlie face substantially greater affordability constraints than households that live in adjacent areas. Skelmorlie households have relatively high incomes. In 2001, 64% of Skelmorlie households had a gross income in excess of £25,000. In the North Coast Sub Housing Market area, the figure was 55% and, for North Ayrshire as a whole, only 48% of residents have a gross income exceeding £25,000.

- 2.9 The research found that the village of Skelmorlie is not strongly integrated into the wider North Coast Sub Housing Market Area. Between 2002-2011, very few house buyers moved from Skelmorlie to other North Coast towns, or vice versa. Evidence also suggests that first time buyers who are unable to purchase a home in the village tend to move away from North Ayrshire, preferring to seek housing in neighbouring Gourock or Greenock instead.

Housing Need

- 2.10 The methodology used to identify housing shortfall within Skelmorlie is in line with the Scottish Government's Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) guidance (see Appendix 2). This is the same methodology used in the Mainland HNDA and the HNDA's carried out recently on Arran and Cumbrae. This consistent use of Government recommended methodology ensures that for strategic planning purposes we are comparing like-for-like findings.
- 2.11 Table 1 shows the identified affordable housing shortfall in the village, per annum (potential net annual future need). The shortfall figure of 7 equates to less than 1% of all households who currently reside in Skelmorlie.

Table 1: Affordable Housing Shortfall - Skelmorlie (potential net annual future need)

	annual average
Annual flow of current need (10 year backlog quota)	1
Plus estimated newly arising need	9
Total current and future need	12
Minus estimated annual supply (relets averaged over 10 years)	4
Potential net annual future need	7

- 2.12 For comparison the affordable housing shortfall figures reported in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2013-2018 are shown in Table 2. The shortfall figures are taken from the Mainland HNDA (2009), and the Arran/Cumbrae HNDA carried out in 2013. The household information has been updated to reflect the 2013 Council Tax database.

Table 2: Affordable Housing Shortfall - North Ayrshire

Sub Housing Market Area	No of Households	Identified Shortfall in Supply	Shortfall in supply as a % of h'holds
North Coast (mainland)	10,189	-939	9%
Three Towns	16,161	-837	5%
Irvine/Kilwinning	25,987	-777	3%
Arran	2,788	-66	2%
Cumbrae	1,326	-3	0%
Garnock Valley	10,560	78	n/a (no shortfall)

2.13 Based on the findings of the Skelmorlie study, the affordable housing shortfall in the village is such that it would not secure affordable housing investment ahead of more pressured markets.

2.14 Despite the very low 'shortfall' in Skelmorlie, and subsequent low investment priority, the Council will continue to consider any development projects which meet exceptional, or particular housing needs, on a case by case basis, and where evidence exists to support such a project.

3. Proposals

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

4. Implications

Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality Implications

- 4.4 By managing the supply of suitable and affordable housing, we are maximising our potential to meet the housing needs of those for whom social rented housing is a viable housing solution.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 There are no Environmental implications arising from this report.

Implications for Key Priorities

- 4.6 The findings and recommendations of the Assessment support the Single Outcome Agreement between North Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Government, specifically National Outcome 10 - "We live in well-defined, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need" and Local Outcome 10b - "Availability of affordable housing has improved".

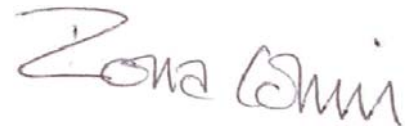
5. Consultations

- 5.1 The desk-based remote nature of this exercise meant that there was very little consultation. Some limited discussion was carried out with Planning colleagues at Inverclyde Council but, other than this, the study used statistical analysis and quantitative research to ascertain the housing situation in Skelmorlie.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 An independent study has been carried out to assess the potential affordable housing requirements in Skelmorlie.

- 6.2 This report recommends that the Cabinet notes the content of the draft report 'Skelmorlie: Potential Affordable Housing Requirements' and approves its use for strategic planning purposes.



IONA COLVIN

Corporate Director (Social Services and Health)

Reference :

For further information please contact Alex Adrain, Interim Head of Housing Services on telephone number 01294 324641

Background Papers

Report by Newhaven Research Scotland Limited on Skelmorlie: Potential Affordable Housing Requirements (23 July 2013)

1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Skelmorlie and the wider housing market

Skelmorlie falls within the spatial boundaries of the North Coast HMA and is home to an estimated 1,000 households, of which over 85% own their own home. Over the past decade the rate of population aging in the locality of Skelmorlie has been very pronounced. There has been a very sharp rise in those aged between 65 and 79 years due to a rise in the numbers of existing residents moving into retirement as well as people retiring to the area.

The housing stock is largely comprised of houses rather than flats as a result there are few smaller properties, such as studio apartments and 1 bedroom apartments, within the village. Much of the village has been designated a Conservation Area to protect and retain its distinctive character and appearance.

The picturesque location of Skelmorlie and its distinctive built environment has made it an attractive location to live. Over the past decade it has attracted long distance movers, including those seeking to retire to the coast. It has also attracted working age households that have been prepared to undertake longer commuting journeys to their place of work within the west central belt in order to secure housing of their choice.

One consequence of the 'openness' of the Skelmorlie housing market is that it is not strongly integrated into the North Coast HMA. In the decade from 2002 to 2011, relatively few house buyers moved from Skelmorlie to other settlements in the North Coast HMA or vice versa. Sasines evidence also suggests that prospective first time buyers that struggled to buy in Skelmorlie have tended to move out of North Ayrshire and bought homes in the Gourock and Greenock area of Inverclyde.

NAHR applicants that live in the North Coast HMA also express relatively little interest in being rehoused in Skelmorlie. At the end of June 2013 the NAHR contained records for 409 households that had applied for rehousing since the start of 2008 and lived in the North Coast HMA, including those coming from Skelmorlie. Just 17% of these 409 households expressed any interest in being offered a tenancy in Skelmorlie. Weighted analysis suggests the proportion of applicants that would be prepared to move within or move to Skelmorlie if offered a tenancy could be as low as 4% to 10%.

Since the economic and housing market downturn in 2008, house prices in Skelmorlie have fallen back, especially at the lower quartile point, which is widely accepted to represent the entry level price for prospective first time buyers. Nonetheless, prices remain well in excess of those for the North Coast HMA or for the adjacent area of Inverclyde that stretches from Wemyss Bay to Greenock. In 2011, the latest year for which small area house price data is available, the median resale price in Skelmorlie was £162,500. This was much higher than the comparable price for the North Coast HMA (£123,750), North Ayrshire (£90,250) and the adjoining Inverclyde area (£95,000).

Nonetheless, here is little evidence to suggest that residents of Skelmorlie face substantially greater affordability constraints than households that live in adjacent areas. Currently around 42% of all households resident in Skelmorlie would be unable to purchase an entry level price property of £101,250, assuming a household could secure a mortgage of up to 83% and borrow 2.9 their gross income. In comparison 39% of all households in the North Coast HMA would be unable to afford to purchase an entry level property of £75,000.

This reflects the fact that Skelmorlie households have relatively high incomes. CACI PayCheck estimates suggest that in 2001 around 64% of Skelmorlie households had a gross annual household's

income in excess of £25,000 compared to 55% of households in the North Coast HMA and 48% of all North Ayrshire households.

Evidence in respect of the current structure and operation of the private rental market in Skelmorlie and the rest of the North Coast HMA is limited. The publication of the 2011 Census of Population data for small areas towards the end of 2013-14 should improve matters somewhat.

In the interim, evidence suggests that there has been only a modest increase in the numbers of privately rented dwellings within Skelmorlie over the past decade, in contrast to trends in many other areas of Scotland. Available evidence also suggests that advertised rents in the private rental market exceed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for Ayrshire as whole.

Overall, no more than around 15% of the local housing stock appears to be comprised of private rented or social rented stock. This, alongside the high entry level price and the very limited volume of smaller units, confirms that opportunities for low and moderate income households to access housing in the Skelmorlie locality are limited.

Housing need

Current need

In June 2013 there were 71 NAHR applicants that lived in the North Coast HMA that had expressed an interest in being rehoused in Skelmorlie. Of these, 34 applicants were identified to be in current housing need. After weighting the area preferences of applicants, it is estimated that there are 12 applicants in current need that require to be rehoused within Skelmorlie.

Trends suggest that there are around 3-4 relets in Skelmorlie each year. Netting off the anticipated number of relets over the next 12 months, suggests that there is current shortfall of 7 affordable lettings within Skelmorlie. This indicates that there is a small but chronic shortfall of social rented properties in Skelmorlie.

Future need

Three alternative scenarios of net annual future housing need were produced to illustrate and explore the direction of change in net annual future housing need over the 10 years to the end of 2022-13.

These scenarios are based on the Scottish Government approach to estimating net annual future housing need. This involves calculating the difference between the annual supply of affordable housing units and the 'need' for them that has resulted from the backlog of current need which has built up over recent years and newly arising need that is likely to arise over each of the next 10 years.

The three alternative scenarios suggest that net annual future housing need could fall somewhere in the range from 5 to 8 households per annum. Over the 10 year period as a whole, this translates in a potential gap between housing need and available supply of between 48 for the lower scenario and 81 for the higher scenario.

Households with gross incomes of £25,000 or above might struggle to buy in Skelmorlie but could buy elsewhere in the North Coast HMA or in the adjoining area of Inverclyde (i.e. the area from Wemyss Bay to Greenock). In recognition of this, it is our opinion that the lower scenario, which suggests a potential 10 year shortfall of up to 48 affordable units, is the most plausible.

A potential role for intermediate housing

Mid-market rent could play an important role in addressing affordable housing need. The lower scenario suggests that perhaps up to 70% of the potential shortfall of 48 affordable units could be addressed through the provision of intermediate housing for rent (also referred to as mid-market rents).

The central scenario and upper scenarios both include new households with a 'moderate' gross income of between £25,000 and £34,000. Shared equity may prove an attractive option for those who could afford to buy in nearby settlements, but given a choice, would prefer to remain in or return to Skelmorlie. This might be an important consideration if a community planning priority is to reduce imbalances in the population age structure that has occurred over the past decade.

It is important to caution that the number of households with the potential financial capacity to secure intermediate housing is not the same as consumer demand. In particular, future demand for shared equity is likely to be strongly influenced by the trade-offs that households with moderate incomes are willing to make in terms of tenure, price, and location and the ebbs and flows of the wider housing market.

It is therefore recommended that any policy decisions regarding the future expansion of affordable housing within Skelmorlie should be informed by local market research to confirm there are sufficient householders with moderate incomes and stable employment with the desire to access intermediate housing for rent or sale.

Improving the evidence base

Given the paucity of data in respect of private renting, it would be sensible to analyse the Census 2011 small area statistics in early 2014 to establish a more up to date socio-economic profile of households across the main tenures. Of particular significance should be an analysis of the changing scale and structure of the private rented sector across North Ayrshire since 2001 and the role the sector currently plays in accommodating households with low to moderate incomes.

The Scottish Government approach to assessing housing need is important and should be used by Council staff to monitor annual or bi-annual changes in net future housing need at the local authority and local housing market area level. This could be achieved relatively simply by some modification of the excel based housing need model developed for Arran and Cumbrae.

Our experience of applying this approach to Skelmorlie leads us to conclude that this method is not a suitable basis for monitoring trends and developments at the small area scale. As the discussion in chapter 4 highlights, the use of highly localised geographies can rarely, if ever, generate robust forward projections of net future need. Moreover, at the small area level it is essential to critically appraise the scope for housing need to be met within adjacent areas. This adds further complexity to what is already a complex model. In short, this model is too time consuming, too complex, and too data demanding to provide a practical basis for monitoring changes in housing need for small areas from one year to next.

More generally, the fact that applicants do not rank their top area preference is problematic in terms of monitoring the expressed requirement (or need) for affordable housing. This is because weighting of area preferences in an inexact science. It would therefore be sensible to put in place arrangements to record each applicant's top three area preferences when the application form is

next revised. This would provide a more reliable guide to monitoring changes in the expressed requirement/need for social housing across North Ayrshire than current arrangements.

Assuming the required area preference ranking data can be secured, North Ayrshire Council should look to complement the routine updating of the housing need model at the local authority and local HMA level with an analysis of the relative expressed need for social housing at the small area level. This could involve:

- An estimation of the current backlog of expressed need: This would involve establishing the number of applicants that have applied within the last 5 years and have been assessed as homeless or have been awarded points for experiencing one or more forms of housing stress. Each applicant would then be assigned to a single letting area/region in accord with their top area priority.
- Plus an estimation of future expressed need: This would involve projecting the numbers of new applicants (i.e. excluding social renters) likely to register for social housing over each of the next 3 -5 years. This projection would be based on the average number of new applicants that have applied for housing over each of the last 3 years and have been assessed to be homeless or in housing stress.
- Minus projected supply: The average number of annual relets to new tenants for the past 3 years (i.e. excluding letting to all social renters) and any new affordable units under construction.

Whilst the numbers would not provide a definitive estimate of housing need, they would provide a clear and quantifiable measure of the relative pressure in different letting areas and settlements and highlight any small areas at risk of falling demand across each local housing market area. The calculations of current and future need could also be undertaken inclusive and exclusive of applications from outside North Ayrshire. This would make it possible to assess the extent to which "external expressed need" is adding to the pressure for social housing in particular areas.

Finally, one of the issues that became apparent as this research progressed was that the profile of working age applicants in Skelmorlie differs somewhat from the profile of working age applicants for North Ayrshire as a whole. It is also clear that the village attracts applications from those living in the adjacent area of Inverclyde, some of whom may be trying to return to the village. In light of this it may be helpful to set up a short life working group with colleagues from Inverclyde housing to look at the scope for a potential letting initiative for Skelmorlie.

Summary of the Scottish Government's HNDA methodology

Component	Summary description
Estimate of current housing need	The number of existing and concealed households that are on the housing register that live in the North Coast area and have been assessed by the Council to be homeless, OR are at risk of homeless OR have a housing need that the housing allocation policy has awarded points for and require a move to affordable housing at a point in time.
Minus	Existing social tenants that already occupy affordable housing and any other housing applicant for whom an in-situ need is judged a more appropriate solution.
Minus	Housing applicants judged able to afford a housing market solution. In the absence of income data it has been assumed that only applicants that current own their own home may be in a financial position to resolve their needs in the housing market.
Equals	Current housing need
Convert current need to an annual flow	Consistent with Scottish Government guidance, current housing need has been divided by 10 in order to convert it into an annual flow.
Plus annual newly arising need	The numbers of new households that will form each year and have insufficient income to access open market housing without assistance. AND The annual number of existing owners and private renters aged 35+ years that apply to the housing register due to a change of circumstances and are at risk of becoming homelessness or have some other very urgent need to move to affordable housing.
Minus Annual supply of lettings	The projected numbers of permanent non-transfer social relets AND The number of subsidised affordable units that will be constructed by March 2015. In line with the Council's current investment programme this has been set to zero.
Equals	Net annual future housing need, which is equivalent to the potential shortfall (or surplus) in affordable housing provision, required each year to meet need over the projection period.
<i>Source: Derived from Scottish Government (2008) Housing Need and Demand Guidance – chapter 6</i>	

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 5

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: Adaptations Review

Purpose: To advise the Cabinet 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 (summarised at Appendix 1).

Recommendation: That the Cabinet (a) considers the findings of the North Ayrshire Council Housing Adaptations Research; and (b) approves its use for strategic planning purposes.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Nationally, there has been a longstanding policy to 'shift the balance of care' to enable those with disabilities to live independently in their own homes, rather than in institutional settings.
- 1.2 As most people with disabilities live in housing that was constructed a number of years ago, housing adaptations play a pivotal role in enabling them to live independently in a safe, comfortable environment.
- 1.3 Research has shown that adaptations can prevent falls and other accidents within the home, reduce emergency hospital admissions and reduce (or delay) admission to long-term care.
- 1.4 Councils lead on assessing each individual person's need for a housing adaptation, but the organisation, delivery and funding of adaptations varies according to tenure.
- 1.5 North Ayrshire Council, and our RSL partners, were concerned that these different arrangements across housing tenures were impacting on the quality of service provision for North Ayrshire residents.
- 1.6 Housing Services commissioned independent research to review existing adaptation arrangements in North Ayrshire. Craigforth Consultancy was the organisation appointed to carry out this study.

2. Current Position

2.1 The research study sought to review existing adaptations arrangements in North Ayrshire across all tenures, taking cognisance of local and national drivers. It was also asked to provide recommendations on how to reconfigure the housing adaptation system to ensure that it would:

- improve joint working;
- secure better value for money solutions;
- as far as practically possible, deliver a more tenure neutral system and thus a more fair, equitable and consistent service to residents;
- explore the potential to make more effective re-use of equipment installed as part of an adaptation; and
- maximise procurement efficiencies in line with current and potential future budget requirements.

2.2 The full research report is available on request and a copy can be viewed in the Members' Lounge. The key findings of the study are detailed below.

Demographics

2.3 There are 23,000 North Ayrshire households which contain at least one individual with a long-term illness and/or disability (37% of the household population compared to the Scottish figure of 35%).

2.4 Furthermore, projections indicate the number of people with a disability and/or dementia is likely to rise sharply over the next 20 years, with a forecast 34% increase in those aged 65-74 years and a 92% increase in those aged 75 years and over by 2033 (the Scottish comparison figures are 33% and 84% respectively).

2.5 This has particular significance for the housing system in ensuring that suitable housing options are available for the rapid future increase of older people, particularly those with mobility problems or other long term conditions.

Existing Stock

2.6 Disabled households are more or less evenly split between the private housing sector (12,000) and the social rented sector (11,000). There is a high concentration of disability amongst the social rented population; over half of all social tenant households contain someone with some form of long term health condition.

2.7 6,000 private dwellings (14% of all private dwellings) and 7,000 social sector dwellings (34% of all social dwellings) currently contain adaptations or equipment.

Review of existing arrangements

- 2.8 The study found that the adaptations service across North Ayrshire can work well for some, but too often the process can be lengthy, unclear and confusing for disabled people and their carers, with little written information to which clients can refer.
- 2.9 The research identified that adaptation services need to be better promoted so that residents are aware of what is available to them and encouraged to come forward if they need assistance. Often service users experienced lengthy waiting times and delays from the point of referral to the date works were completed.
- 2.10 There are also differences in the average cost of a housing adaptation in each tenure, as well as between the mainland and the islands.
- 2.11 The allocation of empty adapted properties to disabled households or the recycling of equipment installed as part of a housing adaptation is not widespread.
- 2.12 Clear accountability for service delivery is required due to a lack of defined published standards and procedures, especially for the delivery of services on the mainland. It was also highlighted that a performance management framework needs to be developed.
- 2.13 There is a lack of consistency in terms of accessing adaptations for RSL tenants dependant on landlord. Furthermore, RSL adaptation processes often differ from the Council.

Recommendations

- 2.14 The study highlighted 5 key areas for improvement, these are noted below.
- 2.15 Recommendation 1 - It was identified that a strategy for housing adaptations was necessary in order to set out the scope of provision for minor and major adaptations. This would also define a common set of priorities and service standards to deliver the objectives of the service and would require full commitment from all partners including NHS Ayrshire and Arran.
- 2.16 Recommendation 2 - Greater personalisation of housing adaptations would streamline and improve the co-ordination of case management, providing service users with a single point of contact and facilitate choice and control. The introduction of a clear eligibility and prioritisation criteria across tenures (where possible) was suggested as well as multi-partner assessments which could assist service users with more complex needs.

- 2.17 Recommendation 3 - The development of a performance and improvement framework. This would include developing service standards with target timescales in order to reduce waiting times for service users from the point of assessment to delivery. It was highlighted that the introduction of procedures could improve recording, co-ordination and sharing of strategic and operational data which would enhance planning and performance management and support measures to enhance case management.
- 2.18 Recommendation 4 - Improved partnership governance and management arrangements. This could be achieved by developing a forum involving all relevant partners who would work towards re-designing the housing adaptations service. The forum would agree an improvement programme as well as devising a governance arrangement in order to guide strategic decision-making and actions to attain the strategic goals and service standards.
- 2.19 Recommendation 5 - Securing better value for investment. This could be achieved by exploring possible procurement efficiencies in terms of re-designating stair lifts as community equipment and streamlining tendering arrangements for wet floor/level access showers in the private sector. In addition to this greater emphasis should be placed on anticipatory and preventative adaptations, using a housing options approach to ensure an early discussion of the best solution for people needs.
- 2.20 Further to the above, the research highlighted the importance of exploring the potential to make best use of existing social rented housing stock, reduce the removal of adaptations through proactive management of re-letting adapted stock and improved design of adaptations.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Cabinet (a) considers the findings of the North Ayrshire Council Housing Adaptations Research; and (b) approves its use for strategic planning purposes.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 The human resource implications will be absorbed by existing resources.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

Equality Implications

- 4.4 There will be positive implications for vulnerable, elderly and disabled residents who could benefit from an enhanced service.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 There are no environmental implications at this stage.

Implications for Key Priorities

- 4.6 The findings and recommendations of the Research supports the Single Outcome Agreement between North Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Government, specifically National Outcome 10 - "We live in well-defined, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need" and Local Outcome 10a - "The quality of social housing has improved" and Local Outcome 10b - "Availability of affordable housing has improved".

5. Consultations

- 5.1 A scoping exercise was undertaken by Craigforth Research in order to identify how housing adaptations are currently organised and delivered across the social rented and private sectors in North Ayrshire.
- 5.2 Those involved in the delivery of adaptations in different tenures were asked about perceived strengths and limitations of existing services and the opportunities and barriers to working together to improve outcomes for households containing individuals with a disability.
- 5.3 Workshop discussions were held with steering group members on possible policy options.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Projections indicate the number of people with a disability and/or dementia is likely to rise sharply over the next 20 years.
- 6.2 This has particular significance for the housing system in ensuring that suitable housing options are available for the rapid future increase of older people, particularly those with mobility problems or other long term conditions.

- 6.3 If approved, taking forward the recommendations from this study will make a significant contribution to modernising adaptations services across North Ayrshire.



IONA COLVIN

Corporate Director (Social Services and Health)

Reference : AA

For further information please contact Alex Adrain, Interim Head of Housing, Housing Services, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE on 01294 324641

Background Papers

Age, Home And Community:

A Strategy For Housing For Scotland's Older People: 2012 - 2021,

Scottish Government 2011

Scottish Government, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and NHS Scotland. (2011a)

Reshaping Care for Older People: A Programme for Change 2011-2021, Edinburgh, Scottish Government.

Final Report by Craigforth Research on the Review of the Provision of Housing Adaptations in North Ayrshire (27 March 2013)

1. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall conclusions

Services that enable people to remain living independently or join the community from institutional care provide real quality of life. Equipment and adaptation services are a vital component of a family of services that span the range from health care through social care, support, and adaptations.

In North Ayrshire there is a consensus that adaptation services across all providers are not as good as they ought to be. There are lengthy delays in the assessment and provision of adaptation services. This remains the case in spite of the recent (potentially one-off) increase in funding for RSLs and recent changes in the OT service which have both helped to reduce the backlog of people waiting for assessment and/or waiting for a housing adaptation.

The service is reactive and there is too much silo working and inadequate communication between professionals from different services; in some instances organisational arrangements are placed ahead of a customer focus. The assessment process is sub-optimal and there is duplication, inefficiency in the process of assessing and delivering adaptations.

Overall, we conclude that the adaptations service requires to be modernised if it is to be aligned with changes in the delivery of broader social care service to promote independence and personalisation and to ensure service users' needs are at the centre of the process.

The following is a summary of the improvements which we have concluded are required.

1. Development of a strategy for housing adaptations in North Ayrshire

This Strategy should be short and specific and should 'nest' with the Local Housing Strategy, the Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan and associated RSL service plans. It should therefore support and complement the outcomes and priorities set out in these wider strategies. The Strategy should be based on a shared understanding about the contribution that housing adaptations make to independent living for older and disabled people amongst all partners in housing, health, and social care. It should:

- Set out the scope of minor and major adaptations to be provided, including the approach to needs such as dementia, and achieving a shift to prevention.
- Define a common set of priorities and service standards to deliver the objectives for the service.
- Identify the means by which all those who might benefit from a housing adaptation are aware of services and encouraged to come forward if they would like assistance
- Include a commitment from all partners, including NHS Ayrshire and Arran to implement these priorities.

2. Greater personalisation of housing adaptations

The scope and design of a re-shaped housing adaptations service should provide greater personalisation and should focus on achieving people's personal outcomes, providing choice and control where that is wanted and possible. Particular improvements should be made to:

- Streamline and improve the co-ordination of case management, providing service users with a single point of contact throughout and thus facilitates service user choice and control.
- Provide comprehensive information and advice for those seeking an adaptation, which enables them to understand their housing (and other) options.
- Introduce clear eligibility and prioritisation criteria that, as far as accountability and funding limitations permits, are common across tenures and sectors.
- Introduce multi-partner assessment arrangements to assess needs and review the full range of alternative housing options for service users with more complex needs so that long term solutions are put in place at an earlier stage.
- Facilitate and promote the use of self assessment, and extending its use to other types of adaptations, building on the experience of other local authority areas.

3. Performance and improvement framework

There is an urgent need to develop a ‘whole system’ understanding of the inputs, outputs and outcomes delivered by the current arrangements. This information is needed so that the new reshaped service retains the strengths of the current arrangements but address its shortcomings. This should include:

- The preparation and of a set of service standards, including target timescales to overcome unacceptable waiting times for assessment and subsequent provision of adaptations, and an accompanying set of indicators to monitor delivery.
- The introduction of procedures to improve the recording, co-ordination and sharing of strategic and operational data to enhance planning and performance management and support measures to enhance case management.
- The modernisation of customer feedback arrangements to improve understanding of the impact of services on service user outcomes and their contribution to independent living and prevention.

Moreover, the improved data and customer feedback should be used to develop a better understanding of the needs of current and prospective service users and how these could shape stock improvement and affordable new build programmes.

4. Improved partnership governance and management

Housing adaptations can only be delivered effectively in partnership, involving the strategic housing services, the Council’s housing management service, RSLs and social services, and co-produced with people using the service.

Leadership of this partnership will be key and should lie with the Council’s housing services in line with its strategic responsibilities for housing in North Ayrshire. In addition, there is a need to:

- Create a forum at which partners re-design the housing adaptations service, and to put in place governance arrangements to guide strategic decision-making and actions to attain the strategic goals and service standards.
- Clarify the respective roles and contributions of each of the partners, under the leadership of the Council's housing service. This should minimise the number of 'transactions' between services for people using services and focus on creating a joined up service experience.
- Agree an improvement programme for the housing adaptations service and ensure its continued integration and alignment with other strategies and service areas.
- Put in place arrangements to develop specialist OT skills on housing (major) adaptations, whether through re-organising responsibilities within ILS/OT service, or by the appointment of an OT(s) based in housing.
- Identifying project management capability to support the service transformation that is required.

5. Securing better value for investment

The level of available resources has for the most part been sufficient in recent years to be able to meet demand. Partners are however likely to encounter growing budgetary pressures as a result of demographic change and policies to shift further the focus on care at home. There are opportunities for partners to secure better value from available investment. This includes:

- Place greater emphasis on anticipatory and preventative adaptations, through:
 - Using a 'housing options' approach to ensure an early discussion of the best solution for people needs – whether an adaptation or a move to alternative, more suitable accommodation.
 - Active case finding in advance of modernisation and improvement programmes.
- Explore possible procurement efficiencies and, in support of this, the re-designation of all stairlifts as community equipment.
- Exploring the potential to make better use of existing social rented stock and reduce the removal of adaptations through proactive management of the re-letting adapted stock and improved design of adaptations.
- Develop a common approach to supporting and incentivising people willing to move, focusing on social tenants in the first instance.
- Streamline tendering arrangements for wet floor/level access showers in the private sector that cost under a given sum (say £4,500).
- Review arrangements for service users that want to make additional improvements or upgrade the specification of works.

Moving forward

In the short term

We recommend that over the next 12 months that priority is given by North Ayrshire Council and its partners to deliver immediate service improvements and to:

- Establish a partnership to steer the improvements and provide strategic oversight of the service.
- Improve understanding of the outputs and outcomes of housing adaptations services.
- Identify and appoint a project management to co-ordinate and support the service transformation process.

More specifically, over the next **6 months** we recommend the following:

- Service improvements are made by:
 - Developing and agreeing standardised, easy to understand prioritisation criteria that will help ensure that regardless of tenure, wherever funding permitted, urgently needed adaptations are fast tracked.
 - Introducing a ‘housing options’ approach to ensure an early discussion of the best solution for people needs – whether an adaptation or a move to alternative, more suitable accommodation.
 - Active case finding takes place in advance of modernisation and improvement programmes.
 - Ensuring that access to adaptations and community equipment is effectively sign-posted and on their websites and that prospective service users are provided with clear information on the full range of alternative options including a house move and self-purchase.
- Partnership governance and management is developed by:
 - Establishing a partnership group, probably building on the current housing partnership for the common housing register and including social services representation, to have responsibility for developing and thereafter co-ordinating the delivery of an Action Plan to modernise the adaptations service across all tenures.
 - Identifying project management capability to support the Partnership Group to re-shape the housing adaptations service
 - Agreeing a means by which OT(s) can be identified, who will work closely with the partners, develop expertise in housing adaptations and provide consistent assessment.
- Performance and improvement-related information is improved by:
 - Collecting management information on an agreed and consistent basis for all housing adaptations so that there is better understanding about the profile of those seeking an adaptation, the service received (including timescales), and the associated costs.

- Devising and agreeing a short but standardised cross-tenure customer satisfaction to be administered by all service providers that can be used to monitor and report customer perceptions and outcomes on a consistent basis. This might require some service providers to merge the sets of questions into their existing customer feedback forms.

Over the next **12 months** we recommend the following:

- Service improvements are further enhanced by:
 - The development of a caseworker role to manage the customer journey for council tenants that would act as the first point of contact for tenants, progress-chase on behalf of tenants and give customers practical assistance with moving and to improve links with allocations.
 - Investment in an information and advice service to facilitate self-financed major adaptations and any associated works and adaptations and in particular make available the technical and advice services available to "willing and able to pay" customers.
 - The expansion of the use of self assessment for an agreed range of minor adaptations funded by housing providers. At a minimum this should include small items to improve mobility (such as grab rails) but other measures to improve personal safety within the home (such as improved lighting) should also be considered
- Partnership governance and management is further developed by:
 - Establishing a customer panel consisting of past users of the service, people with disabilities and those with an interest in the issues to help drive further improvements
 - Establishing a Case Referral Panel to review more complex cases
 - Setting up arrangements to oversee strategic and monitoring function in relation to the co-ordination of adaptations system across all tenures, which takes into account future needs monitoring.
 - Putting in place multi agency training for housing officers and Social Care Access team staff to promote self assessment and support people completing self assessments.
 - Putting in place a programme of briefing/training events to ensure that all personnel who visit or otherwise inspect properties are aware of adaptations services and are able to signpost individuals and/or their carers to appropriate personnel in housing or social care access teams.
 - Investigating the re-designation of stairlifts (straight and curved) to community equipment in all tenures and the potential financial implications for the Council of including these with the bulk purchase contracts with Cordia/Stannah.
- Performance and improvement-related information is improved by:
 - Establishing a set of time based performance indicators for turning around applications for assistance to improve the speed and efficiency in the provision of a disability facilities adaptations service.
 - Agreeing information sharing protocols to permit partners to share information that is critical to improving performance management, including timescales by which each

partner will, where necessary, amend their own internal confidentiality and security procedures to ensure compliance with this protocol.

In the longer term

Over the next **1-2 years**: the Council and its partners should:

- Develop a clear and shared strategy, which sets out the scope of minor and major adaptations to be provided, including the approach to needs such as dementia, and achieving a shift to prevention; defines a common set of priorities and eligibility criteria; and identifies how the service will address the growing demand for housing adaptations and support wider strategies to enable older and disabled people to live independently.
- Formalise the remit of the Partnership Group to ensure it is responsible for ensuring the new end-to-end service is monitored and continues to improve in line with the agreed objectives.
- Identify opportunities for further streamlining of arrangements, drawing on the improved management and customer feedback information which has been gathered.
- Set out clear service standards, including timescales for delivery and design standards, and the basis on which the overall service will be managed, monitored and, where required, reviewed.
- Address the range of financial issues and opportunities, including the potential for procurement efficiencies, to adopt a set price with contractors for the installation of straightforward adaptations.
- Exploring options for private owners to be offered loans to assist moves to more suitable accommodation as an alternative to grant aiding extensions and other high cost works to carry out adaptations to unsuitable properties.
- Open up discussions with NHS Ayrshire and Arran about the further development of the housing contribution to the integrated health and social care agenda and the future role of a more person-centred and preventative orientated adaptations service and how this could be delivered.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 6

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Scottish Government Consultation on Planning Scotland's Seas**

Purpose: To advise Cabinet of the consultation being undertaken by the Scottish Government on a number of proposals to take forward integrated marine planning for Scotland's seas.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet agrees that this report and the attached Appendices 2 and 3, form the basis of the Council's response to the consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Marine spatial planning is a mechanism to assist in the delivery of economic investment through the sustainable management of the marine environment. The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 marked a major change in safeguarding the future of Scotland's seas and laying the foundation for a simplified marine planning and licensing system. It introduced a duty to protect and enhance the marine environment and included measures to help boost economic investment and growth in areas such as marine renewables. It established for the first time a statutory three tier marine planning system: internationally, through the EU Marine Strategy framework; nationally, through the preparation of a Scottish Marine Plan; and regionally through the development of Regional Marine Plans and delegation of powers to Scottish Marine Regions.
- 1.2 A new national Government organisation to champion the seas, Marine Scotland, was established in 2010. The powers within the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 extend from Mean High Water Spring (MHWS) tide and to the seaward limits of Scottish Territorial waters of 12 nautical miles(nm). Devolution through the UK Marine and Coastal Act allows Scottish Ministers to manage Scotland's seas from 0 - 200 nm. Marine planning will be implemented at a local level within Scottish Marine Regions out to 12 nm.

- 1.3 Marine Scotland has now issued, for consultation, a number of proposals to take forward integrated marine planning for Scotland's seas:
- A National Marine Plan;
 - Marine Protected Areas;
 - Sectoral Marine Plans for Offshore Renewable Energy;
 - Priority Marine Features;
 - Integration with Land Use (Terrestrial) Planning.
- 1.4 Details of the content of each of the above consultation documents are provided within Appendix 1.
- 1.5 The National Marine Plan is the key national policy document and sets out Scottish Ministers' objectives for the seas and the national policies for sustainable development. The Plan contains general policies to ensure that all future decisions lead to sustainable economic growth which is sensitive to the environment. It covers a wide range of topics including fisheries, aquaculture, wild salmon, oil and gas, carbon capture and storage, renewables, recreation and tourism, transport, telecommunications, defence, aggregates and will inform:
- Preparation of Regional Marine Plans at the local level such as the Clyde Scottish Marine Region; the proposed identification of the Clyde as our local marine region was reported to the Planning Committee in February 2013 and under delegated powers regional planning functions will be taken on board by Marine Planning Partnerships. These bodies will have a responsibility to develop marine regional plans and will be the subject of future secondary legislation later this year or early next year;
 - Location of development from a strategic perspective; and
 - Determination of proposals and appeals.
- 1.6 The South Coast of Arran is proposed as a new Marine Protected Area (MPA) and stretches from the waters at Drumadoon point on the west coast to Corriegills Point on the east coast and includes the current Lamlash Bay "no take zone" (no commercial/recreational fishing). This proposed new designation is geared towards the protection of maerl beds, other seaweeds and associated sea species.
- 1.7 A series of public events was held by Marine Scotland during October and November 2013 to explain more about the consultation. Two events were held within North Ayrshire, one in Largs and the other at Brodick on Arran. The consultation period for all documents closes on 13 November 2013.

2. Current Position

2.1 A series of questions is outlined in the consultation documents and the details of the proposed responses are provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

3. Key points from the consultations include:

- To recognise within the National Marine Plan, the recent request to Scottish Government in relation to NPF3 that Hunterston be promoted as a National Development designation for an “Energy Hub” in terms of the following potential energy related uses:
 - i. Offshore renewables (wind, wave and tidal) manufacture, assembly, operations and maintenance;
 - ii. Maritime decommissioning associated with defunct oil and gas platforms;
 - iii. Extended and/or new nuclear power production;
 - iv. Biomass bulk handling;
 - v. Onshore infrastructure for electricity transmission; and
 - vi. Renewable energy skills academy.
- To recognise that the Council will be looking to adopt the relevant North Ayrshire sections within the Seascape/Landscape Assessment, prepared for the Firth of Clyde Forum, as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance to address the identified need to ensure that development and use of the marine environment should take account of the seascape as well as landscape and visual impacts. This matter will be the subject of a future report when the relevant details applicable to North Ayrshire will be presented.
- To welcome the proposed new Marine Protected Area (MPA) for the South Coast of Arran which will have a range of beneficial impacts including higher biodiversity that may add to the site as a tourist destination and impact positively upon the local economy; enhanced research and education benefits; and indirect benefits to the tourism sector may also arise from improvements in recreational water sports. These aspects will contribute towards the development of marine tourism and especially marine education, science and research which is highlighted within the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012-17 prepared by the Ayrshire Economic Partnership as being an important component of particular relevance to North Ayrshire.
- To recognise within the National Marine Plan, the following specific area attributes which are of fundamental importance to the development of the tourism sector within North Ayrshire:-

- i. North Ayrshire is home to Scotland's biggest marinas, the Scottish Sailing Institute at Largs and the National Watersports Centre at Cumbrae;
- ii. the importance of marine leisure and recreation tourism and specifically sailing and watersports;
- iii. North Ayrshire is a centre for excellence in this sector with the provision of employment and offering future development opportunities in the expansion of the sector; and
- iv. the important lifeline ferry services to our islands of Arran and Cumbrae and, in particular, the need to secure funding for the proposed £18m redevelopment scheme for the port of Brodick.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agrees to:

- a. approve Appendices 2 and 3 as the Council's formal response to the consultation documents; and
- b. note the key points arising from the consultation draft to ensure that the Council's interests are properly considered in the context of the new marine planning regime.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

Human Resource Implications

4.2 There are no human resource implications.

Legal Implications

4.3 There are no legal implications.

Equality Implications

4.4 There are no equality implications.

Environmental Implications

4.5 There are no environmental implications.

Implications for Key Priorities

- 4.6 Inclusion of the proposed uses for Hunterston within the National Marine Plan, and the job creation and perception change that would result from investment in the site, contribute to a variety of the Council's strategic objectives. These include outcomes under the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) such as: "the current business base is encouraged to move up the value chain and high level activities and jobs are attracted to North Ayrshire"; "North Ayrshire is effectively promoted to individuals, businesses and Government", and "the number of job opportunities within North Ayrshire is increased".
- 4.7 The designation of the new Marine Protected Area for the South Coast of Arran would result in enhanced opportunities for marine tourism and particularly marine education, science and research and help to contribute to the Council's Service Plan outcome: "develop new tourism products to encourage new visitors to the area".

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Consultation with our colleagues in Economic Development Services was carried out and informed the responses at Appendices 2 and 3.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed responses to the consultation documents set out comments which reflect the Council's interests on a variety of planning topics such as Hunterston, seascape and landscape considerations for marine development, the proposed marine protected area for the South Coast of Arran, the existing marine tourism attributes of North Ayrshire and the important lifeline ferry services to Arran and Cumbrae. The response makes a specific reference to the potential energy related future uses for the Hunterston site that may secure significant new employment creation. In seeking recognition of the site's potential through inclusion within NPF3 as a National Development and the National Marine Plan for an "Energy Hub" (see Appendix 2), added certainty and profile for Hunterston as a location to invest for operators would be provided.

- 6.2 The proposed new Marine Protection Area designation for South Arran is to be welcomed and would bring new opportunities for marine tourism development.



CRAIG HATTON
Corporate Director (Development and Environment)

Reference : RRH

For further information please contact Richard Henry, Planning Officer,
Development Planning on telephone number 01294 324777

Background Papers

Planning Scotland's Seas – Scotland's National Marine Plan Consultation Draft

Planning Scotland's Seas 2013 – Possible Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas Consultation Overview

Planning Scotland's Seas - Sectoral Marine Plans for Offshore Renewable wind, Wave and Tidal Energy in Scottish Waters Consultation Draft

Planning Scotland's Seas – Consultation on Priority Marine Features

Planning Scotland's Seas – Draft Circular 2013 – The relationship between the statutory land use planning system and marine planning and licensing.

Firth of Clyde Forum – Seascape/Landscape Assessment of the Firth of Clyde 2013

Planning Scotland's Seas Consultation 2013

Marine Scotland have now issued for consultation a number of proposals to take forward integrated marine planning for Scotland's seas:

- A National Marine Plan
- Marine Protected Areas
- Sectoral Marine Plans for Offshore Renewable Energy
- Priority Marine Features
- Integration with Land Use (Terrestrial) Planning

The following represents a summary of each of these documents.

National Marine Plan

This is Scotland's first national marine plan which will build on existing management regimes to provide one framework for all activity which takes place in Scottish waters (out to 200 nautical miles). The Plan sets out Scottish Ministers' objectives for the seas and national policies for sustainable development. It contains specific policies for certain activities relating to economic productivity, environmental limits, interactions with other users and climate change. Activities covered in the consultation document include fisheries, aquaculture, wild salmon, oil and gas, carbon capture and storage, renewables, recreation and tourism, transport, telecommunications, defence and aggregates. The Plan includes some spatial policies setting out areas which are designated for environmental protection purposes or which are preferred for certain types of development. These include proposals relating to marine protected areas and offshore renewable energy. Other policies set out issues to be taken into account by planners, developers, decision makers and other users of the sea. The National Marine Plan will inform the preparation of Regional Marine Plans at a local level (Scottish Marine Regions). The local Scottish Marine Region (SMR) for North Ayrshire will be the Clyde SMR which will be developed by Marine Planning Partnerships to take account of local circumstances. SMRs will be created under secondary legislation.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

A network of marine protected areas is proposed which is designed to protect marine biodiversity (species and habitats) and geodiversity (landforms and natural processes that underpin the marine landscape). Nationally, there are already existing protected areas in our seas with some 45 Special Protected Areas for colonies of seabirds; 46 Special Areas of Conservation for species and habitats such as bottlenose dolphins, coral reefs and seals; and 61 Sites of Special Scientific Interest for further protection of species such as seabirds and seals and habitats including sea caves and rocky shores. A total of 33 new nature conservation MPAs are identified including one for the South Coast of Arran. The new MPAs are being identified to give more protection to species, habitats and geology.

Sectoral Marine Plans for Offshore Renewable Energy

Scotland's seas have massive potential to provide renewable energy. Harnessing this potential to develop a sustainable and successful offshore renewable energy industry in Scotland is a major priority for Scottish Ministers. Marine Scotland has published Draft plans which identify options for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy developments. Hunterston is identified as a key location for significant upgrade to the grid network with the high voltage direct current (HVDC) subsea link running to Deeside in North Wales and the subsea connection to Kintyre. The area off the southern coast of Kintyre has been identified as being suitable for both offshore wind and tidal development.

Priority Marine Features

Scientists have developed a list of priority marine features including key habitats and species within Scotland's seas which would benefit from site based protection and/or other management measures.

Integration with Land Use (Terrestrial) Planning

All developments and activities which take place in Scotland's seas have implications onshore ranging from changing infrastructure requirements to the impacts on communities of economic growth or decline. The Scottish government has produced a Draft Circular which explores the linkage between the marine and terrestrial planning systems and provides guidance about joint working.

Appendix 2

National Marine Plan

Consultation Draft



RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

North Ayrshire Council

Title Mr ☒ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Please tick as appropriate

Surname

Henry

Forename

Richard

2. Postal Address

Cunninghame House

Irvine

Postcode KA12 8EE

Phone 01294 324777

Email rhenry@north-

3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

☐

/

Group/Organisation

☒

Please tick as appropriate

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate ☐ Yes ☐ No

- (b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available ☐

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address ☐

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address ☐

- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate ☒ Yes ☐ No

- (d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

☒ Yes

☐ No

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Please identify the main area of interest you identify with :

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Nature Conservation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Fisheries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Industry/Transport | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Energy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Aquaculture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Recreation/tourism | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic/scientific | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Local authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Community group | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Public sector/Regulatory body | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Coastal Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (Please state)

No comments

Q1. Does the NMP appropriately guide management of Scotland's marine resources?

The document provides a useful overview of all the relevant sectors to be considered in the subsequent preparation of Regional Marine Plans/Scottish Marine Regions (Clyde SMR for the North Ayrshire area) although recognition of our coastal communities requires to be more adequately addressed - see response to Q 11.

Q2. Does the NMP appropriately set out the requirement for integration between marine planning and land use planning systems?

Yes, the NMP adequately sets out the context for the integration between marine and terrestrial planning which is dealt with separately by the Draft Circular.

Q3. Does the NMP appropriately guide development of regional marine planning? What, if any, further guidance is required for regional marine planners in terms of implementation and how to interpret the NMP?

See response to Q 1 above

Q4. The Marine Regional Boundaries Consultation proposed that in addition to regional marine planning, further integrated management of key marine areas would be achieved by designating the Pentland Firth; the Minches and the mouth of the Clyde as Strategic Sea Areas.

Should the NMP set out specific marine planning policies for Strategic Sea Areas?

No comments

Q5. Are the objectives and policies in the NMP appropriate to ensure they further the achievement of sustainable development, including protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the health of the sea?

Yes; although recognition of our coastal communities requires to be more adequately addressed - see response to Q 11.

Q6. Chapter 3 sets out strategic objectives for the National Marine Plan and Chapters 6 – 16 sets out sector specific marine objectives.

Is this the best approach to setting economic, social and marine ecosystem objectives and objectives relating to the mitigation of and, adaptation to climate change?

The approach is considered appropriate. Also see response to Q 5.

Q7. Do you have any other comments on Chapters 1 – 3?

No comments

General Planning Policies

Q8. Are the general policies in Chapter 4 appropriate to ensure an approach of sustainable development and use of the marine area? Are there alternative policies that you think should be included? Are the policies on integration with other planning systems appropriate? A draft circular on the integration with terrestrial planning has also been published - would further guidance be useful?

The general direction of policy, approach and vision are considered broadly

acceptable. Further guidance to the Draft Circular may be required as and when local partnerships are formally established to address the preparation of SMRs.

Q9. Is the marine planning policy for landscape and seascape an appropriate approach?

Yes - this matter has already been addressed for the "Clyde" through the Firth of Clyde Forum after the preparation of their Clyde Pilot Marine Spatial Plan in 2010 when a study was commissioned to provide a strategic assessment of the coastal landscape and seascapes of the area. The study was carried out by Landscape Architects was completed earlier this year. The study provides an understanding of what is special about the landscape of the Firth of Clyde and the experience of this diverse seascape. It provides a landscape context for decision makers and suggests opportunities for landscape change. It is proposed that this study be adopted by the Council as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance to assist with decision making on all development proposals affecting the marine environment.

Q10. Are there alternative general policies that you think should be included in Chapter 4?

No comments

Guide to Sector Chapters

Q11. Do you have any comments on Chapter 5?

Are there other sectors which you think should be covered by the National Marine Plan?

It is suggested that marine education, science and research should be worthy of specific identification given its overall importance within North Ayrshire in terms of the development of marine tourism.

In addition, it is considered that recognition of our coastal communities requires to be more adequately addressed within the NMP. A generic policy within the Plan should seek to ensure that developments for marine based activities should generally be located and designed to accord with the Local Development Plan (and associated Supplementary Guidance on Design Guidance etc) as well as assist in delivering the aspirations of local communities. The need for detailed consultation with our coastal communities is also considered paramount.

Sea Fisheries

Q12. Do you have any comments on Sea Fisheries, Chapter 6?

As part of the pan- Ayrshire Tourism Strategy 2012-17 being taken forward by Ayrshire Economic Partnership, the strategy indicates the importance of marine tourism especially marine education, science and education. The Clyde 2020 research project which is geared towards addressing the restoration of the Clyde marine ecosystem is a good example of this type of project and one which North Ayrshire Council would support.

Q13. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Aquaculture

Q14. Does Chapter 7 appropriately set out the relationship between terrestrial and marine planning for Aquaculture? Are there any planning changes which might be included to optimise the future sustainable development of aquaculture?

Yes. An Aquaculture policy has been included within our new Local Development Plan (LDP) which has recently been passed to Scottish Government (Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals) for external independent "Examination" by appointed Reporters. The Aquaculture policy is considered to be broadly in line with the strategic policies contained within the NMP.

Q15. Do you have any comments on Aquaculture, Chapter 7?

No comments

Q16. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish

Q17. Do you have any comments on Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish, Chapter 8?

See response to Q 14; the consideration of wild fish populations is included within the Aquaculture Policy within the new LDP for North Ayrshire Council.

Q18. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Oil & Gas

Q19. Do you have any comments on Oil and Gas, Chapter 9?

Policy 2 for Oil and Gas indicates that decommissioning of oil and gas infrastructure must take place in line with standard practice, and as allowed by international obligations. However, no consideration is given to appropriate locations for the maritime decommissioning associated with defunct oil and gas platforms.

Q20. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Hunterston represents an opportunity for maritime decommissioning associated with defunct oil and gas platforms. With existing deep water advantages together with associated port facilities including a railhead, it is well placed to capitalise on any opportunities for maritime decommissioning. On the basis of the above, Scottish Government are requested to consider within the National Marine Plan the recent request to Scottish Government in relation to NPF3 that Hunterston be promoted as a National Development designation for an "Energy Hub", with one of the elements covered by the designation being "maritime decommissioning associated with defunct oil and gas platforms".

Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS)

Q21. Do you have any comments on Carbon Capture and Storage, Chapter 10?

No comments

Q22. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Offshore Renewable Energy

Q23. Should the NMP incorporate spatial information for Sectoral Marine Plans?

Yes this would be useful to give a flavour of the sectoral marine plans for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy although it is recognised these

aspects are covered in a separate consultation document.

Q24. Do you have any comments on Offshore Renewable Energy, Chapter 11?

See response to Q 25 below.

It is also considered that there is a need for enhanced cross referencing between the NRIP references within this Chapter and those specified within the Renewable Energy section of Chapter 13 and the related Map 19 for "NRIP sites and National Developments in Scotland" - see also response to Q 28.

Q25. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Yes. As part of our response to NPF3, North Ayrshire Council believes it is essential that Scottish Government identify specific sites for onshore infrastructure for offshore renewable energy in order to guide investment and provide a framework for delivery of ambitious renewable energy generation targets.

Hunterston has been identified within the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan as a possible site for integrated manufacture of offshore turbines (and as outlined in Section 13 of the NMP). This has been affirmed by the Hunterston Competitive Advantage Study (HCAS), carried out by URS Consultants, who note the potential for Hunterston to act as a base for assembly of turbines and for construction of gravity base foundations. The Council believes that Hunterston is the best placed port in the west coast for future west coast arrays, which include five Round 3 Offshore projects which are at pre-consent stage. The HCAS confirms that several options are available to accommodate the infrastructure requirements necessary for foundation manufacturing and turbine assembly. Hunterston also has better road/rail connections and access to the labour market than other west coast ports, for example Kishorn.

The offshore turbine test bed at Hunterston, which was consented in 2012, is currently under construction and has raised the profile of Hunterston in the context of offshore renewables.

On the basis of the above, the Scottish Government are requested to consider within the National Marine Plan the recent request to Scottish Government that Hunterston be promoted as a National Development designation for an "Energy Hub", with one of the elements covered by the designation being "offshore renewables (wind, wave and/or tidal) manufacture, assembly, operation and maintenance.

Recreation and Tourism

Q26. Do you have any comments on Recreation and Tourism, Chapter 12?

The Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy 2012-17 highlights the importance of marine leisure and recreation tourism and specifically sailing and

watersports. North Ayrshire is home to Scotland's biggest marinas, the Scottish Sailing Institute at Largs and the National Watersports Centre at Cumbrae. Our area is a centre for excellence in this sector with the provision of employment and offering future development opportunities in the expansion of the sector. These specific area attributes are of fundamental importance to the development of tourism sector within North Ayrshire but are not recognised within this Chapter and should be included.

It is also considered that Millport and Brodick should be recognised as potential cruise stops (need for cross referencing to Transport Chapter). See also the response to Q 29 on the importance of the ports/proposed improvements at Brodick and Millport to the island communities of Arran and Cumbrae respectively.

Q27. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Transport (Shipping, Ports, Harbours & Ferries)

Q28. Should the NMP specifically designate national significant ports/harbours as described in Chapter 13: Marine Planning Policy Transport 2?

Yes. As part of our response to NPF3, North Ayrshire Council believes it is essential that Scottish Government identify specific ports/harbours for onshore infrastructure for offshore renewable energy in order to guide investment and provide a framework for delivery of ambitious renewable energy generation targets.

Hunterston has been identified within the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan as a possible site for integrated manufacture of offshore turbines (and as outlined in Section 13 of the NMP). This has been affirmed by the Hunterston Competitive Advantage Study (HCAS), carried out by URS Consultants, who note the potential for Hunterston to act as a base for assembly of turbines and for construction of gravity base foundations. The Council believes that Hunterston is the best placed port in the west coast for future west coast arrays, which include five Round 3 Offshore projects which are at pre-consent stage. The HCAS confirms that several options are available to accommodate the infrastructure requirements necessary for foundation manufacturing and turbine assembly. Hunterston also has better road/rail connections and access to the labour market than other west coast ports, for example Kishorn.

The offshore turbine test bed at Hunterston, which was consented in 2012, is currently under construction and has raised the profile of Hunterston in the context of offshore renewables.

On the basis of the above, the Scottish Government are requested to consider within the National Marine Plan the recent request to Scottish Government that Hunterston be promoted as a National Development

designation for an “Energy Hub”, with the following elements covered by the designation:

- offshore renewables (wind, wave and tidal) assembly, manufacture, operation and maintenance;
- biomass bulk handling;
- maritime decommissioning associated with defunct oil and gas platforms;
- onshore infrastructure for electricity transmission;
- extended and/or new nuclear power production; and
- energy skills academy

It is also considered that there is a need for enhanced cross referencing between the Renewable Energy section within Chapter 13 and the related Map 19 for "NRIP sites and National Developments in Scotland" to NRIP references within Chapter 11 on Renewables - see also response to Q 24.

Q29. Do you have any comments on Transport, Chapter 13?

The port at Brodick is the lifeline ferry connection to the mainland of North Ayrshire and the pier is the subject of a proposed £18m redevelopment scheme to bring it up to present day standards to cater for the new demands of the tourist island. The Scottish Government Ferries Plan 2013-22 confirmed through its Investment Plan that proposals to upgrade Brodick Pier would be implemented by 2016. However, funding is not in place for the full project and the Council is currently heading a Redevelopment Group on the project with a number of other partners including Visit Arran and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to help deliver the project. This project is of critical importance to the area and the project, together with the need to secure adequate funding support from Scottish Government, requires to be recognised in the NMP.

Similarly the ferry connection between Largs and Millport on Cumbrae acts as a ferry lifeline for the residents of the island and its future prosperity. A feasibility study has recently been commissioned by the Council to investigate a number of options on how best to pursue the necessary redevelopment of Millport Pier with a view to securing the necessary funding to deliver maximum social and economic benefit to the island. This matter should be clearly recognised within the NMP.

Map 16 - the Campbeltown - Brodick - Ardrossan link is missing. The Troon link to Larne is also missing.

It is considered that Millport and Brodick should be recognised as potential cruise stops (need for cross referencing to Recreation & Tourism Chapter) - see also response to Q 26.

Q30. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Telecommunication Cables

Q31. Do you have any comments on telecommunications, Chapter 14?

No comments. North Ayrshire Council have just received a screening opinion request from Marine Scotland in respect of BT PLC proposals for cable links Cumbrae to Largs; Bute to Cumbrae; Kintyre to Blackwaterfoot, Arran; and Corrie, Arran to Ardneil Bay, Portencross.

Q32. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Defence

Q33. Do you have any comments on Defence, Chapter 15?

No comments

Q34. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Aggregates

Q35. Do you have any comments on Aggregates, Chapter 16?

No comments

Q36. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comments

Business and Regulatory

Q37. Please tell us about any potential economic or regulatory impacts, either positive or negative, that you think any or all of the proposals in this consultation may have.

No comments

Equality

Q38. Do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan discriminates disproportionately between persons defined by age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race and religion and belief?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Q39. If you answered yes to question 23 in what way do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan is discriminatory?

Comments

Sustainability Appraisal

Q40. Do have any views/comments on the Sustainability Appraisal carried out for the NMP?

No comments

Planning Scotland's Seas Consultation 2013

Possible Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas Consultation Overview

Consultation Questions

1. Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's seas

Yes✓ No

NAC Comments: no comments

22. Individual possible Nature Conservation MPAs – Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socio-economic assessment for the South Arran possible Nature Conservation MPA?

Designation	Yes✓	No
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NAC comments: The Council welcome the proposed new Marine Protected Area (MPA) for the South Coast of Arran which will have a range of beneficial impacts including higher biodiversity that may add to the site as a tourist destination and impact positively upon the local economy; enhanced research and education benefits; and indirect benefits to the tourism sector may also arise from improvements in recreational water sports. These aspects will contribute towards the development of marine tourism and especially marine education, science and research which is highlighted within the Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy 2012-17 prepared by the Ayrshire Economic Partnership as being an important component of particular relevance to North Ayrshire.

In addition, it is recognised that the designation, if confirmed, would help to contribute to the Council's SOA outcome: "develop new tourism products to encourage new visitors to the area".

Management Options	Yes	No✓
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NAC Comments: no comments

Socioeconomic Assessment	Yes	No✓
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NAC comments: no comments

All of the above	Yes	No✓
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NAC comments: no comments

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 7

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **The Arran Storm**

Purpose: To provide Cabinet with a report on how the Arran storm was handled, the costs of this, lessons learned and the proposed improvement plan.

Recommendation: Cabinet agrees to note the terms of the report, the costs incurred and the terms of the improvement plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 22 March 2013, the worst storm for a generation hit the island of Arran. This report provides details of the challenges faced, the manner in which these were dealt with and the costs of dealing with this.
- 1.2 Preparation is a key feature of successful Civil Contingencies planning. It is, therefore, important that learning points from the Arran storm are captured. While the overall conclusion is that the storm was handled as effectively as possible, there are always learning points. These have been captured in an improvement plan attached as Appendix 1.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 On 22 March 2013, a blizzard driven by strong winds hit the island of Arran. Within half an hour of the snow starting, mains power was down across the whole of the island, not to be reinstated for 8 days. While the collapse of electricity pylons in Kintyre severed the mains connection, across the island electricity and phone lines were snapped, poles broken and pylons down. Phones lines, both landline and mobiles were knocked out. Drifts of up to 15 feet blocked access to the North, South and West of the island. Water pumping stations were located in inaccessible areas and only had between 12-48 hours generator capacity before water supplies would also be severed. For the next fortnight, temperatures remained below freezing every night. The following weekend was the Easter weekend, a crucially important time for the island's economy when Arran's population would normally increase from 5,000 to 25,000.

- 2.2 In dealing with such emergencies, the Police initially lead the emergency or response stage of the emergency. Thereafter, the Council leadS the recovery stage. Generally, there are 3 levels of Civil Contingencies response. There is a strategic group at National or Strathclyde wide level, a tactical group at North Ayrshire level and an operational group at local level. In this case, the local Arran Police Sergeant Allan Dodds initially led the multi agency operational response from the Auchrannie Hotel (which had a generator). The tactical response was led from the Ayrshire Civil Contingencies team building in Prestwick and there was also strategic involvement with Strathclyde Emergencies Co-ordination Group and The Scottish Government. When there was no longer a risk to life and limb and the main roads in Arran were opened to the public on the evening of 27 March, the Council took over the recovery of the emergency, based in the Arran Outdoor Education Centre.
- 2.3 A key role of the Council as a Category 1 responder is to plan for such Civil Contingencies. The shared Ayrshire Civil Contingencies team aim to support the 3 Councils as well as develop community resilience. In August 2012, the Contingencies team had undertaken Exercise Ayrshire Polar Storm. Within Arran itself, Arran Resilience was formed in October 2010. This Group, chaired by a local GP comprised members from responders and voluntary agencies and aimed to bring together emergency teams based on the island to establish better working relationships and nurture a joined up approach when responding to incidents on the island. The Council's Roads Service also had in place its own winter actions, procedures and training. The Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) also maintained lists of vulnerable people on the island.
- 2.4 When the storm hit the key objectives were:-
- i To identify vulnerable residents across the island and ensure they were visited at least once a day whether by the community, Social Services or other partners;
 - ii Open the main roads, prioritised to quickly allow access to the water pumping stations which required refuelling to maintain water supplies and to allow access by SSE where required;
 - iii Assist SSE in providing temporary power to the population of the island, by facilitating ferry access, road access, accommodation for workers etc;
 - iv Getting food to residents, particularly in areas where there was no roads access;
 - v Communication, both to residents without any power or phone, the visitors arriving for Easter weekend and nationally;
 - vi Promoting recovery of the island, trying to get it open for business for the Easter weekend, supporting local businesses and enhancing the profile of the island;

- 2.5 SSE provided temporary generated power to Arran, with the first generator being supplied to part of Brodick on 23 March. Thereafter between 23 and 27 March temporary power was provided to most of the island and by the end of the week every available generator north of the M25 was in Arran along with 400 power workers. SSE also brought 7 mobile food vans onto the island.
- 2.6 On 23 March 2013, the Roads service concentrated on clearing the String Road to refuel the pumping station and to facilitate access for SSE to damaged areas. Thereafter on 24 March, a single track emergency access route was cleared around the entire island by ploughs and snow blowers. Throughout the following days, such access was widened to 2 lanes with the assistance of local contractors and extra equipment provided by Transport Scotland. All of the water pumping stations were refuelled in time.
- 2.7 All vulnerable people on the Council/NHS/SSE lists were visited by 24 March 2013 by a combination of NHS, Social Services, Strathclyde 4x4 Volunteers, Community Council 4x4 Volunteers, Mountain Rescue and HMS Gannet. Thereafter there were daily visits. Hot food was also supplied to vulnerable people with the SSE food vans being increasingly used to supply such food. A Social Work team based in the Kinloch Hotel helped provide support to the west of the island.
- 2.8 Dealing with this emergency involved a huge degree of co-ordinated partnership working. Helicopters from HMS Gannet and the Troon Lifeboat provided emergency supplies to the West and North of the island prior to the roads being opened. Helicopters delivered feed for sheep. Caledonian MacBrayne co-ordinated the huge influx of resources onto the Brodick and Lochranza ferries, including an additional days sailing to Lochranza.
- 2.9 Communication was also a key feature of the Council's response. Communication within the island was difficult when large areas had no power, mobile or landline. Methods of communication varied from, knocking on doors and use of loud hailer/megaphone, the Coast Guard obtaining signals via Belfast and the use of social media, local and national radios. Communication also needed to reach the potentially huge influx of visitors to Arran on the Easter weekend of 29 March. This influx could see the population rise 5,000 to 25,000. Again, national media, social media and briefings available on the ferry helped deal with this, along with the involvement of VisitArran. National media coverage was very positive, to the extent that the Chair of the Scottish Affairs Committee of the House of Commons commented on 10 July 2013 that "people in Kintyre kept on complaining to me that Arran was getting all the publicity and they were being ignored".

- 2.10 It should also be recognised that the response of the Arran community played a huge part in effectively dealing with this emergency. Local community organisations such as Arran Community Council, Arran Council of Voluntary Services and VisitArran all played their part, as did all the voluntary agencies across the island. Local contractors were extremely helpful and across the island individuals helped clear pavements, checked on vulnerable neighbours and otherwise supported each other.
- 2.11 Arran Schools were closed from 22 March until after the Easter break. Certain SQA assignments required to be lodged during this period and the Council's Educational Services were required to negotiate amended deadlines with the Scottish Qualifications Authority.
- 2.12 A key consideration in the Council's response was to consider the economic impact on Arran. An economy sub-group was formed and 3 days in advance of the Easter weekend Arran was declared 'Open for Business'. Media coverage was also successful in enhancing the profile of the island. While Easter bookings were inevitably affected, it has been suggested that the enhanced profile of Arran during this period was, along with the weather, a contributing factor to a buoyant summer tourist season.
- 2.13 Inevitably, there were costs to be borne. The basic principle is that 'the polluter pays'. Thus costs incurred through loss of power would be for SSE to meet, while those incurred through the snow would be borne by each organisation. Where the cost of an emergency exceeds 0.2% of a Council's revenue budget, these can be recovered from the Scottish Government through a Bellwin Claim. In this case, costs were not of this magnitude and no Bellwin Claim could be made.
- 2.14 The costs incurred by the Council in handling this emergency were:-
- Roads - £34,039
 - Social Services - £54,660
 - Other Costs - £15,667
 - Total Costs - £104,336
- 2.15 These costs were borne by individual service budgets across the Council .

3. Proposals

- 3.1 In general, it is thought that the Arran emergency was handled effectively by Police, Council and other Category 1 responders, with huge support from other agencies, private sector, voluntary agencies and most of all, the community. There has been little criticism, either locally or nationally of the way the Arran emergency was handled and there is national interest in learning why the response in Arran worked so well.
- 3.2 The key feature of the Arran emergency was the extent to which the community supported each other and the public agencies. A key to the future is to try and support such community resilience, to analyse why it was so effective in Arran and to use this as a model across North Ayrshire and nationally. To try and maintain community resilience, the Ayrshire Civil Contingences Team will support Arran Community Council to work on their own resilience plan. The work of Arran Resilience continues with an Arran multi agency plan being drawn up. Individual community resilience can be encouraged through thinking about issues such as keeping wind-up radios, wood burning stoves, barbecues, etc.
- 3.3 Inevitably there are learning points for both the Council and its partners. The following were identified through de-briefs: -
- A need to log resources on the island, both in terms of the people and facilities which are available. The capacity of all Council staff on the island needs to be identified in advance;
 - Use of the Arran Outdoor Education Centre as an emergency control centre, requires a generator;
 - Patchy mobile signals and need for more air wave radios on the island;
 - Civil Contingencies training need for all staff in the Arran Local Office;
 - Civil Contingencies planning needs to recognise that in long term emergencies vulnerability increases with time;
 - Electricity providers - need to understand their technical limitations and avoid over promising;
 - Telecoms - deregulation makes it difficult to co-ordinate in an emergency;
 - Cost recovery - who should pay if there is no polluter. Should the Council be left with the bill, particularly where other agencies order items?;
 - Farmers - while livestock were compensated through a Scottish Government Scheme they bore other losses including fence and hedge damage;
 - An Emergency Control Centre could have been opened in Cunninghame House during the response stage of the emergency;

- Temporary catering facilities - while helpful, the catering vans did not provide longer term nutritional value; and
- The Ayrshire Civil Contingencies Team was stretched in dealing with the Arran emergency, issues in South Ayrshire, a Prestwick exercise and a burst water tank in flats in Ayr. On the other hand the fact that they were able to deal with all such contingencies reflects the resilience and capacity which this shared service provides.

3.4 Some of these issues will be taken up at a national level. Those actions which the Council and its Civil Contingencies team can progress are detailed in an improvement plan in Appendix 1.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

4.1 The financial implications of the Arran emergency are detailed in section 2.12 of the report

Human Resource Implications

4.2 There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

4.3 There are no Legal implications arising from this report.

Equality Implications

4.4 There are no Equality implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

4.5 There are no Environmental implications arising from this report.

Implications for Key Priorities

4.6 The handling of this Civil Contingency supported the Council priorities of supporting vulnerable people, operating more efficiently and effectively and encouraging economic growth.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 This report follows a debrief involving those Council services involved, a multi agency debrief organised by Strathclyde Emergencies Co-ordination group and a severe weather strategic leaders wash up of national organisations. The Chief Executive also gave evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee of The House of Commons on 10 July 2013 regarding the emergencies in Arran, Dumfries and Galloway and Kintyre.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The handling of the Arran emergency by those agencies involved, of which the Council was a key player was effective. Particular strengths were the extent of community involvement and resilience and the extent to which different partner agencies were able to effectively co-ordinate their services to protect and support the community of Arran. There has been national praise for the manner in which the emergency in Arran was handled, both by the community and agencies. Inevitably there are points to be learned. Those actions the Council can take forward are detailed in the improvement plan attached at Appendix 1.



ELMA MURRAY
Chief Executive

Reference : AF/jm




For further information please contact Andrew Fraser, Head of Service (Democratic and Administration Services) on telephone number 01294 324125

Background Papers

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Arran Improvement Plan

	Outwith timescale		Minor disruption to schedule		Completed		On schedule
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	Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Progress	
1	Complete Multi-Agency Arran plan				
a	Progress work on Multi-Agency Arran plan	December 2013	NHS Ayrshire & Arran	A number of meetings have already taken place and DH is meeting with partners of the multi-agency planning group on Monday, 26 th August where he hopes to obtain a date when the draft plan will be ready for comment. 5 th September ACCT have asked through the ALWG for a projected date for completion – the draft document will be tabled at the next ALWG meeting on 12 th December.	
b	A list of resources to be compiled on Arran The council.	End November	Arran Resilience ACCT / Julie Davis Donna Reid Donna Reid Esther Gunn Stewart	Arran Resilience are progressing the information on the Island relating to the emergency responders both statutory and voluntary. Strategic placement of resources around island to be considered:- Social Services Arran Outdoor Centre Education – Teachers, Janitors, etc Customer Services Templates for information issued for completion	 

	ACVS to be contacted to ask for the resources they would have available (if not included in Arran Resilience)	Complete	ACCT	ACVS are aware this should form part of any Arran Community Plans	✓
c	Details of water pumping stations which require power to run; Details of fuel suppliers with manual pumps	Complete	Scottish Water ACCT	Scottish Water have provided information Modern fuel delivery pumps have no manual capability. ACCT have passed onto NHS for inclusion in final document	✓
d	Ascertain where the blankets and torches are stored on the island which were provided in March by SSE;	Mid November	ACCT / SSE	ACCT to speak with Lisa Duggan (SSE) during the forthcoming visit to SSE offices.	○
e	Council staff on the island to be encouraged to consider voluntary role in initial phases of incidents. (ie teachers and support staff)	End of 2013	Corporate Director (Education and Skills)	Following discussion at CMT level, seek volunteers from Education and support staff to assist in the emergency phase of incidents on the Island. ACCT would deliver appropriate training once participants identified..	○
f	Community Resilience Plans to be completed by different villages and, if possible, linked in to an Arran Community Resilience Plan	Spring 2014	ACCT/ Arran Community	This will be done by the community themselves but ACCT have offered and will provide assistance. Have already met with ACVS and members of the Community Council who are now progressing this on the Island.	○

	Harness local volunteers via ACVS To check on local people; To drive mainland staff round island; To utilise any 4x4 capability To assist at feeding centres Make use of knowledge of postmen who will know which houses are occupied; Local shops may also know if people are in their houses or not	Complete	ACCT/ACVS	ACCT have spoken with the Community Council and representatives from ACVS and Councillor John Bruce and they are happy to provide this to the community where possible. It is likely that this information would be part of any Arran Community plan.	✓
g	Involvement of CalMac Calmac agreed to prioritise supplies onto the ferry. The Council (Strategic) need to liaise with CalMac for additional ferry sailings if required.	Complete	Chief Executive	This will require the Chief Executive to ask Transport Scotland during the emergency phase	✓
h	Notification process for informing BT re telephone / line problems	Complete	All partners during incident	Awareness calls should be made through the Strategic / Tactical Group to inform BT Emergency Planning of ongoing communications issues involving BT Lines/poles etc	✓
2 Managing the Incident					
a	Cost recovery from Partner organisations	Complete	David Whyte	The issues regarding cost recovery are being discussed at the Ayrshire Local Working Group in September.	✓

		March 2014	Andrew Fraser	To be raised as an Agenda Item for the SECG Strategic meeting by Andrew Fraser.	○
b	Provide a telephone number for people to call – 01294 31000	Complete	Esther Gunn Stewart	This could be dealt with on the mainland by the Customer Contact Centre on 01294 310000. This is the Customer Services number but non-urgent calls will be diverted.	✓
c	Meeting time management – considered by some to be too long.	Complete	ACCT	This will be managed by the Chair of the particular meeting and the items on the agenda.	✓
d	Quick decisions on resources, etc from mainland as it was thought that decisions took a while to be made	Complete	All partners during incident	Tightening up on log procedures and authorisation procedures should improve this.	✓
e	A resource is required on the island for use as an Island control centre	End November	Multi Agency Plan group	Sites at Lamlash (Arran Outdoor Centre – no generator) Fire Station (has generator) It would be preferable if there was suitable accommodation in Brodick and this will be also considered The plan should identify primary and secondary control centres.	○
f	Temporary Catering facilities: Catering facilities were considered poor by the Arran residents.	End November	ACCT /SSE	The “polluter” needs to be asked to provide more nutritional food where possible. ACCT meeting with SSE and recommend at this time	○
g	Provide Civil Contingency Training to Arran Council staff	Complete	ACCT	Training on Integrated Emergency Management; Rest Centre training; Airwave radio training (completed 20 th / 21 st August 2013)	✓
h	Teleconference facilities required	End of October	MultiAgency Plan group	This item will be considered as part of the identified Control centre requirements	○
i	Provide additional supplies of bottled gas to the island as there	End	N/A	This is a business continuity issue for the gas suppliers on the island and resilience issue for	Legislative requirements

	will be increased need for this type of fuel.	November	ACCT	the residents This should be included in part of Community plans	
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3 Civil Contingencies Team Improvements					
a	Process for opening of ECC at Cunninghame House	Complete	ACCT	In this incident the information provided by SSE did not indicate the severity of the situation or the length of time that the power would be out. It is recognised that the ECC at Cunninghame House could have been opened and may have provided greater access to staff and resources. As per the ECC document.	✓
b	A Civil Contingency Officer to be at the scene of an incident	Complete	ACCT	ACCT duty officer protocol indicates that they will attend the scene of an incident if circumstances allow.	✓
c	Council Incident Officer tabards to be supplied	Complete	ACCT	Council Incident Officer tabards have been delivered 23 October 2013.	✓
4 Communications (Warning and Informing)					
a	Clear messages of difficulties to be given by power companies	End November	ACCT	SSE to be visited; SSE to be asked to provide better information to the multi-agency group so that they can prepare for a worst case scenario	○
b	Provide additional airwave radios to the island	Complete	Police Scotland	Additional radios now located on the Island.	✓
c	Request RAYNET as soon as possible	Complete	Multi Agency Plan group	Liaise with the Ayrshire Co-ordinator for RAYNET To be incorporated into Multi-Agency plan	✓
d	Information to be put onto website about preparing for the winter;	Complete	Communications	NAC already have a winter page giving advice to people. This will also be included as part of the community plans and the Community Council could be asked to discuss it also	✓

5 Other Council Department improvements					
a	Need to stock spares for road clearing equipment on island	Complete		This has already been done following this incident	✓
b	An alternative way of tracking vehicles and staff as trackers do not work without power	Spring 2014	Roads	This is already being investigated. Digital radios were considered but costs are prohibitive and other options continue to be explored	○
C	Suggestion that flyer be placed at pre-identified spots within each village	Spring 2014	ACCT/ Community	This will form part of both the Community Resilience plans and the multi-agency plan	○
d	Improved use of local radio to be used as guidance states “go in, stay in, tune in”.	Incident management Protocol	Communications	Communications to liaise with the two locally listened to stations (West FM as the local Ayrshire station and Argyll FM which is more used on the far side due to poor reception	○
e	Provide regular social media updates		Communications	Whilst this does not work for the island when there is no power, it is useful for relatives / friends on the mainland.	✓

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 8

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Appointments to Advisory Panels**

Purpose: To advise the Cabinet of nominations received from the SNP Group, the Labour Group and Independent/Conservative nominees to serve on the Council's Advisory Panels.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet agrees to note appointments to the Advisory Panels.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 8 October 2013, the Cabinet considered a report entitled "Council Governance – Policy Boards Review and Neighbourhood Planning Forums". The Cabinet agreed to note the outcome of the Policy Boards review and agreed that the six Policy Boards be replaced by two Advisory Panels, namely the Physical Environment Advisory Panel and the Communities and Lifelong Learning Advisory Panel.
- 1.2 The report outlined the broad remit of each of the two Advisory Panels and gave information on arrangements for administering their meetings. In terms of chairmanship, the report noted that the Cabinet Members for Environment and Infrastructure and Finance and Corporate Support will sit on the Physical Environment Advisory Panel, and the Cabinet Members for Education Attainment and Achievement, and Community Empowerment, will sit on the Communities and Lifelong Learning Advisory Panel. It was proposed that the Chair of each Advisory Panel will rotate across the portfolio holders, depending on the main subject matter being considered.
- 1.3 The report also indicated that the membership of each Advisory Panel will reflect the political composition of the Council. Both Advisory Panels will consist of up to 15 Elected Members and comprise up to six SNP nominees, up to five Labour nominees and up to four Independent/Conservative nominees.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The political group leaders have been contacted and nominations sought in terms of 1.3 above. The following nominations have been received:-

Physical Environment Advisory Panel	Communities & Lifelong Learning Advisory Panel
Ruth Maguire (joint Chair)	Tony Gurney (joint Chair)
John Bruce (joint Chair)	Alan Hill (joint Chair)
Anthea Dickson	John Bruce
John Ferguson	Catherine McMillan
<i>Vacancy</i>	Joan Sturgeon
<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>
David O'Neill	John Bell
Donald Reid	Alex Gallagher
Ian Clarkson	Peter McNamara
John Easdale	Joe Cullinane
Jim Montgomerie	Irene Oldfather
John Hunter	Ronnie McNicol
Robert Barr	Robert Steel
Councillor Elizabeth McLardy	Councillor Jean Highgate
Councillor Tom Marshall	Councillor Tom Marshall

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to note the appointments to the Advisory Panels, as set out at Section 2.1 above.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 None arising from this report.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 None arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 None arising from this report.

Equality Implications

- 4.4 None arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 None arising from this report.

Implications for Key Priorities

- 4.6 None arising from this report.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Nominations were invited from political group leaders. No other consultations were undertaken.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Following the appointment of members to the Advisory Panels, arrangements can now be made for meetings to be held.



ELMA MURRAY
Chief Executive

Reference :

For further information please contact Melanie Anderson, Committee Services Officer on telephone number 01294 324131.

Background Papers

Correspondence with Members

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 9

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Welfare Reform progress report at 30 September 2013**

Purpose: To update the Cabinet on Welfare Reform issues including the Scottish Welfare Fund and discretionary housing payment scheme and the progress against the welfare reform action plan as at the end of 30 September 2013.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet agrees to note (i) updates on the welfare reform programme (ii) the position in relation to the Scottish Welfare Fund; (iii) the position in relation to the discretionary housing payment scheme; and (iv) the progress made against the welfare reform action plan as set out at Appendix 1.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report to Cabinet on 27 August provided an update for the first quarter of 2013/14. This report a further update as at the end of September on the welfare reforms, including; the Scottish Welfare Fund and the discretionary housing payment scheme. Progress on the Council's welfare reform action plan is set out at Appendix 1.

2. Current Position

2.1 Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Government implemented the Scottish Welfare Fund on the 1 April 2013. The scheme consists of crisis grants and community care grants and is administered by the Council's Benefits Service.

2.1.1 Scottish Welfare Fund Team and Customer Contact Centre

Administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund fund has been challenging; Scottish Government scheme guidance, a new software system, grant application form and operational procedures were all introduced in a relatively short period of time. These are now well embedded. The software system still requires a number of enhancements to meet the requirements of the Scottish Government's scheme. A public website to allow applications on-line is expected to be live by the end of December 2013.

Excellent cross service and local partnership working has resulted in effective delivery of the scheme, including the grant decision making process and good customer service, ensuring payments are made quickly and are targeted to those most in need. The few customer signposting issues with Job centre Plus in the early stages of implementation have been resolved.

For the period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013:

- The customer contact centre answered 5,059 calls, that resulted in 1,791 and 290 crisis grant and community care grant applications respectively;
- 41% of calls resulted in an application form being completed with 59% not eligible to progress to the application stage;
- 524 paper based applications forms have been received.

2.1.2 Crisis Grants

From 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013:

- 1,789 crisis grant applications have been completed;
- 1,175 (66%) awarded;
- 585 (33%) refused and 15 withdrawn (1%); and
- 14 applications have still to be processed.

£59,576 has been paid from an annual budget of £362,252. Similar to other Councils, expenditure is low with the Council's average payment of £50 just below the Scottish average of £57 (August 2013).

Payment of crisis grants is by a PayPoint voucher system. The vouchers are redeemed for cash or energy top-ups at local shops throughout the area. The voucher system is working effectively with customers finding it easy to use. There have been no operational difficulties. A pre-paid voucher for Primark is provided to applicants in need of clothing, this is also working well.

2.1.3 Community Care Grants

From 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013:

- 816 crisis grant applications have been completed;
- 415 (51%) awarded;
- 309 (38%) refused and 12 withdrawn (1%); and
- 80 applications still to be processed.

£214,469 has been paid from an annual budget of £705,792. Similar to other Councils expenditure is low with the Council's average payment of £523 being just below the Scottish average of £550 (August 2013).

Payment of community care grants is non cash with furniture, household items and white goods being delivered and installed by Furnishing Services Limited. The service provided has been positively received by customers and partner organisations.

Under the former DWP Social Fund scheme cash payments were provided to applicants for a community care grant. The non cash scheme under the Scottish Welfare Fund may explain the low expenditure.

2.1.4 Performance indicators

The Scottish Government's processing targets of 2 working days for a crisis grant and 15 working days for a community care grant are being met, but with overtime required during peak periods.

A fully funded Scottish Welfare Fund team of 6.55 FTE staff was created to operate the scheme. This is being supplemented by three FTE customer services staff to receive incoming calls and complete the application form. Two of the three customer services staff are funded by the benefits service and the remaining post by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Council is meeting the Scottish Government's requirement of sending a monthly monitoring statement.

2.1.5 First and second stage reviews

An applicant that is dissatisfied with the Council's decision has the right to request a first and second review within 20 days of the decision. At 30 September 2013 there were 26 (1%) first stage reviews with 7 applications changed in favour of the customer and the remaining 19 upheld. In addition 1 second stage review was upheld.

The number of low requests for a review may reflect that applicants are satisfied with the Council's decision making process.

2.1.6 Scottish Government Guidance and payment priority level

In recognition of the low levels of expenditure Cabinet changed the payment priority level from high to medium at its meeting of 27 August 2013 to meet lower priority demand;. Since then the Scottish Government has responded to the low expenditure levels across Scotland by updating its guidance. The Council now has discretion to award a community care grant for applicants not in receipt of a qualifying benefit; this will allow grants to be made, particularly under the exceptional pressure criterion, to people on contributory benefits, people in severe need on very low incomes or who are in and out of work. The families under exceptional pressure criterion has also been extended to include families who do not have children.

Both of these changes are expected to result in higher levels of uptake between now and the end of March 2014.

The Scottish Welfare Fund is an interim scheme until 31 March 2015 and the Scottish Government intends to introduce a Scottish Welfare Fund Bill during this year's Parliamentary session. It is anticipated that the Bill will establish the Fund as discretionary local welfare assistance and describe how the Fund will be delivered. It will also outline how applicants to the Fund might challenge decisions. The Scottish Government plans to consult this Autumn on options for reviews, before the Scottish Welfare Fund Bill is introduced.

2.2 Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

The Department for Work and Pensions provided original funding of £273,421, which the Council topped up by £394,611 giving a DHP budget of £668,032 for 2013-14. A further £36,402 was received from the DWP increasing the DWP fund to £309,823. This additional funding would allow the Council to increase the DHP budget to a new maximum of £774,557. More recently the Scottish Government allocated £20m across Scotland, with £460,059 for North Ayrshire for both 2013/14 and 2014/15. This additional funding allows the Council to increase its DHP budget to the maximum level.

The Council approved its DHP policy and operational procedures at its Cabinet meetings of 23 October 2012 and 30 April 2013 respectively.

For the period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013:

- 2,225 DHP applications have been received;
- 1,467 applications granted (66%);
- 657 applications refused (30%); and
- 101 awaiting information or still to be processed (4%)

There has been a 765% increase in DHP applications compared to 257 applications in 2012-13 at the end of September. Administration of the increased workload has been challenging for the Benefits Service at a time when other welfare reforms have been implemented including the council tax reduction scheme, spare room subsidy (bedroom tax), benefit cap and the Scottish Welfare Fund. One FTE post, funded by the DWP, was created to respond to the increase in DHP applications, in addition overtime is being incurred.

DHP is intended to be temporary support to Housing Benefit customers facing hardship and who need assistance with housing costs. The Council's DHP policy and operational procedures are working effectively with support being provided to customers most in need.

£390,072 (58%) has been paid with £286,721 (73%) going to Council tenants and £58,158 (15%) to Housing Association tenants affected by the spare room subsidy (bedroom tax). The remaining £45,193 has been awarded to private tenants affected by welfare reform.

The remaining DHP budget will be used for new claims and for applicants who may reapply after a DHP period of award runs out.

2.3 Under-Occupation in Social Housing

The number of council tenants affected by under-occupation is 2,260 at the end of September 2013.

The Housing Services Welfare Reform Advice Team has carried out a total 2,953 visits with access gained to 2,283 properties.

1,869 'no access' visits have also been made by the Housing Services welfare reform advice team. Some tenants have been visited more than once. There are still 286 properties where access has not been gained despite repeated visits.

79 tenants on the housing waiting list with over occupation points have been rehoused; 59 tenants were aged under 60 and therefore would have been subject to under-occupation charge.

During the visits information is gathered from tenants in readiness for universal credit and some of the key findings from the 2,283 cases are:

- 1,674 tenants have access to a bank account (73%);
- 351 tenants have access to a Post Office account (15.4%);
- 1,348 tenants have access to the Internet (59%);
- 1,266 tenants prefer to pay their rent by cash (55.4%); and
- 357 tenants prefer to pay their rent by direct debit (15.6%).

This information will be used by the welfare reform working group and the DWP to forward plan for the introduction for Universal Credit in terms of digital inclusion, access to a bank account to make direct payments of rent and the methods of payment available to council tenants.

2.3.1 Rent arrears

Rent arrears at the end of September are £846,973, an increase of £301,946 since the end of March 2013. The number of tenants in arrears is 4,394 compared to 3,050 at the end of March, an increase of 1,344.

The total amount of rent arrears due to under-occupation is £240,680 for 1,294 tenants. However, 779 tenants had arrears of £127,965 prior to the introduction of the under-occupation charge; therefore rent arrears relating entirely to under occupation is £112,715. There are 360 under occupied tenants who have no DHP or been refused DHP and are paying their rent charge on time.

Total rent arrears have increased from 3.6% of annual net rent at the end of March 2013 to 5.5% at the end of September 2013 up 1.9%. The percentage increase in rent arrears over the same period in 2012 was 0.1% (3.4% March to 3.5% in September 2012). The payment of £286,721 DHP to council tenants has reduced rent arrears and therefore the percentage increase may have been higher without this support.

2.3.2 First tier tribunals

Benefit claimants are starting to lodge appeals against the spare room subsidy (Bedroom Tax) and the UK Government appointed QC Simon Collins to preside over under occupation test appeal cases in Fife. He ruled that:

- A room measuring less than 50 square feet is not a bedroom; and
- A room measuring between 50 and 70 square feet could only be used by a child aged under 10. The judge determined that the rooms did not satisfy the “space standard” as set out in section 326 of the Housing Act 1985 and section 137 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, which is used to assess statutory overcrowding. The ruling is not binding on Councils.

The DWP is seeking permission to appeal the decision and in the meantime has issued guidance under urgent bulletin U6/2013. The guidance states:

- Benefits Service - The only consideration should be the composition of the household and the number of bedrooms as designated by the landlord, but not by measuring rooms.
- In determining whether or not a room is a bedroom the landlord may consider a number of factors, but one of these must be whether or not a room is large enough to accommodate at least a single bed.
- Where a room is designated as a bedroom landlords should classify it as such notwithstanding that the tenant may argue that it has been habitually used for something else (such as storage).

The Cabinet approved at its meeting of 30 April 2013 that a bedroom for a council property which is less than 50 square feet should be reclassified as a box room. To date no properties have been reclassified based on the size of the bedroom.

Housing Services do not hold information relating to bedroom size and therefore the number of properties with a room between 50 and 70 square feet is unknown.

There have been 15 reclassifications requests on other grounds, 9 have been approved as one of the rooms could not be regarded as a bedroom due to disabled adaptations carried out to the property or alterations made by the tenant; 2 refused as the room could still be used as a bedroom; and 4 pending.

The Benefits Service has received 4 appeals (3 Council tenants and 1 Housing Association) against the spare room subsidy and these will be passed to HM Courts and Tribunals Service for a ruling.

2.4 Universal Credit & local support service framework

The DWP roll out of Universal Credit is slowing down. The national roll out of Universal Credit by October 2013 has not materialised. The Council will not be affected during 2013-14 and it is unclear if the roll out will commence in 2014-15 or 2015-16. The DWP Universal Credit roll out programme is unknown but it is still the UK Government's intention to implement Universal Credit by 2017. Inverness Jobcentre Plus office is now live with Universal Credit for single Jobseekers Allowance claimants only and the welfare reform working group will monitor the findings.

North Ayrshire Council, Jobcentre Plus and officers from Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Councils have formed a local support services delivery group to discuss the roll out of Universal Credit from 2014-15 and beyond. The lack of a DWP Universal Credit roll out timetable is severely hindering forward planning by the group.

The welfare reform working group is undertaking a mapping exercise of the provision of digital services, benefit advice, budgeting advice and financial advice in North Ayrshire and this will be a key component of the plan to support customers through the migration to Universal Credit.

The DWP Local Support Services Framework version 2 is due to be published in October 2013, which will use evidence from Universal Credit pathfinders, local authority pilots and Housing Benefit demonstration projects to inform the framework and funding requirements. COSLA and the Scottish Government continue to press the DWP for a Scottish Framework developed and delivered through Community Planning Partnerships.

The new DWP claimant commitment for Jobseekers Allowance claimants will roll out nationally across 100 Jobcentre Plus offices per month from October 2013. This is being piloted in advance of Universal Credit, which requires a commitment to be in place before Universal Credit is paid. A benefit claimant and Jobcentre Plus adviser will work together to produce and commit to an action plan that will increase the possibility of finding work. A sanction regime is used to encourage compliance. The claimant commitment may result in sanctions of for example: 3 months for refusing a job offer. This could add pressure on Council services. The sanctions also apply to people in work and employees facing in-work conditionality may look to the Council's employability service for guidance and support.

2.5 Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2013-14 is working effectively. The first data extract for the Scottish Government's council tax reduction monitoring report was sent on the 17 October 2013. The Scottish Government will use the data for statistical analysis purposes only.

2.6 Benefit Cap

The DWP has notified the Council of 64 potential benefit cap cases; 29 have resulted in a reduction in Housing Benefit; 29 had no effect and 6 have still to be processed. The number of cases can go up or down depending on the circumstances of the households (39 had their Housing Benefit reduced in August).

The households affected by the Benefit Cap include 125 children. The welfare reform working group is taking this matter forward to minimise the impact on the families concerned.

The total reduction in Housing Benefit to the end of the financial year is £39,279 for the 29 households. This amount can vary as household circumstances change, for example the amount based on the August caseload was £51,658.

Five Discretionary Housing Payment application forms have been received with one awarded and four refused after taking income and expenditure into account.

Additional funding has been received by DWP West of Scotland to support claimants affected by the benefit cap. This funding will be used to offer a specially designed workshop, which will include employability modules, finding and getting a job and CV preparation, as well as financial advice and health check and 'better-off' calculation modules.

Three DWP workshops will be offered in North Ayrshire, in recognition of the high number of claimants affected. There are 12 places on each workshop. Claimants that may benefit the most from a place on the workshops are being jointly identified and encouraged to attend by the DWP and the welfare reform working group.

2.7 Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and passport benefit

From 28 October 2013, claimants approaching age 16, who report a change in their health condition or disability or those whose fixed term award is due to expire are asked to claim PIP rather than Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The same applies to existing DLA claimants who want to claim PIP rather than wait for the Department to contact them ("self-selectors"). PIP acts as a gateway or 'passport' to other types of help, including benefits and tax credits for example:

- Carer's allowance
- Benefits cap exemptions
- Council tax reduction
- The Motability Scheme
- Blue Badge
- Road tax

2.8 Impact of welfare reform on Local Support Services

The number of referrals to the Homeless Prevention and Advice Team since 2011-12 is noted below.

Welfare reform financial issues

- 2011-12 16 (full year)
- 2012-13 115 (April to September)
- 2013-14 418 (April to September)

House size issues

- 2011-12 1 (full year)
- 2012-13 4 (April to September)
- 2013/14 19 (April to September)

Housing options

- 2011-12 1,142 (full year)
- 2012-13 904 (April to September)
- 2013/14 1,033 (April to September)

Since April 2013 Social Services Reception Services has seen a 389% increase in destitution referrals as detailed below:

May to September 2012 - 56

May to September 2013 - 274

The number of Welfare Rights enquiries received at the end of September is 1,440 compared to 814 last year (Up 77%).

2.9 Communication

The following welfare reform communication events took place during August and September 2013:

- Tenancy newsletter was issued, including articles on Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Credit Unions, Debt Advice and on-line assistance;
- Welfare Reform Advice Team and Money Matters held a tenant information day at Maritime Museum;
- Money Matters and North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership delivered a Welfare Reform Cafe for service users and partner agencies - "How to cope with Welfare Reform"; and
- Local press articles publicised the mitigating work of the Council and details of the support and advice available for residents.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Cabinet agrees to note (i) updates on the welfare reform programme; (ii) the position in relation to the Scottish Welfare Fund; (iii) the position in relation to the discretionary housing payment scheme; and (iv) the progress made against the welfare reform action plan as set out at Appendix 1.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 Scottish Government Programme funding for the Scottish Welfare Fund will continue at the same level for the next 2 years (£33m per annum). The Council's share is £1,068,524 per annum. The 2014-15 administration grant of £159,850 is under review by COSLA and the Scottish Government.
- 4.2 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) increased the amount of the Council's DHP funding allocation by £36,402 to a revised total of £309,823 (previously £273,421) with a maximum government limit of £774,557 (250% DWP funding). The Scottish Government has also recently provided £20m DHP funding to Scottish Councils to enable Councils to top up their DHP allocation for 2013/14 and 2014/15, the Council's share is £460,059, which is £4,676 below the DWP 250% maximum limit. In addition the Council had provided £394,611 of DHP top up funds. It is proposed that £4,676 of this is used to secure the maximum top up. Proposals are being developed for the balance of funds. The average weekly DHP spend is £14,676 and if this level continues then the annual spend will be £763,152, which is within the Council's budget but the number of new claims is unpredictable and this may exceed the cash limited funds. This is being monitored on a weekly basis.
- 4.3 The DWP has announced a further £20m DHP reserve fund for people affected by the spare room subsidy (bedroom tax) that Councils across the United Kingdom can bid for between October 2013 and February 2014. This funding is separate for other DWP DHP funding and is not restricted by the 250% maximum. A bid will be made by the Council before the end of November 2013.
- 4.4 A funding application made by the Welfare Reform Working Group to the Scottish Legal Aid Board was successful in securing £72,228 for 1 FTE Welfare Rights Officer and 1 FTE Debt Advice Worker for the Welfare Reform Advice Team. This will enable the two posts to be extended for a further year.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.5 None

Legal Implications

- 4.6 The action plan ensures that the Council will comply with the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Equality Implications

4.7 None

Environmental Implications

4.8 None

Implications for Key Priorities

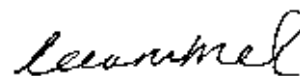
4.9 More vulnerable people are supported within their own communities. Fewer people are living in poverty.

5. Consultations

5.1 A welfare reform progress report is provided to the Council's Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Council's welfare reform action plan is being progressed by the Welfare Reform Working Group and the Council is well placed to respond to the reforms contained in the Welfare Reform Act 2012.



LAURA FRIEL

Corporate Director (Finance and Corporate Support)

Reference : SH

For further information please contact Stephen Humphries Senior Manager Revenues & Benefits on telephone number 01294 324527

Background Papers

None.

North Ayrshire Council - Welfare Reform Working Group - Work Plan

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
1	April 2010 to April 2014 Migration of Incapacity Benefit to Employment Support Allowance (ESA)	Increase of the number of unemployed North Ayrshire residents who are actively seeking work. Current figures show 29 claimants for every vacancy in Jobcentre Plus.	Review of current Employability activity to assess fit with local labour market needs	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	Task & Finish Group set up with both Council and external agencies represented. Tender brief written and let to review current Employability Provision in line with economic & political changes - explicitly focussed on welfare reforms. Expected start date August and completion expected in Early November. Stakeholder interviews built in as key component of brief.
		Additional resources required to support those with additional barriers to employment.	Work with Work Programme providers to ensure support to this group is provided and enhances existing provision	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	Increased co-operation with WP providers but still limited due to the eligibility of WP clients for Euro funded programmes. New co-operative pilot agreed with DWP for case managed approach to WP "graduates".
			Examine the availability of additional targeted resources to support this target group	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	Current Employability programme extended to March 2014 - but based on extension of current delivery model. Additional resources drawn down from Scottish Gov for Youth Employment wage subsidies - could help support at risk households.
			Ensure the pipeline approach adopted by NAC offers a supported pathway into sustainable employment	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	Employability pipeline delivering to targets. New SDS Employability Fund added to local pipeline with new referral routes opened up to NAC.
			Consideration of potential implications for Local Employability Partnership provision, and how it will ensure interventions suitably target and support the most vulnerable people affected by WR	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	This aspect is key element of Employability Review as described above - new pipeline provision designed with Welfare Reforms in mind. Additional support being made available from DWP through the local support services framework - early work to align this element with existing/developing provision.
			Re-consider the potential role of financial and money management skills in pre-employability programmes etc.	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	As above - This aspect is key element of Employability Review as described above - new pipeline provision designed with Welfare Reforms in mind. Additional support being made available from DWP through the local support services framework - early work to align this element with existing/developing provision.
			Identify the scale of the reduction in income in the local area as a result of Welfare Reform, and assess the potential impact on economic development and job retention/creation	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	The Improvement Service commissioned by SLAED to deliver on this action for all local authorities - to be circulated once completed.
			Identify projected future growth in affordable childcare provision through more parents returning to work due to welfare reform & assess capacity of current local provision to meet this demand at affordable cost	Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	As above - This aspect is key element of Employability Review as described above - new pipeline provision designed with Welfare Reforms in mind. Additional support being made available from DWP through the local support services framework. Has been include in early draft European Structural Fund programme as a key issue - potential funding opportunity for the future.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
2	April 2013	Personal Independence Payment is being piloted in North England from April 2013 to June 2013	Research general rules of entitlement and the assessment / scoring framework and provide training for advice staff.	Isobel Kelly	Apr-13	Apr-14	In September a Statutory Instrument was issued - delaying extension of PIP to review / renewal cases until 28th October instead of 7th October 2013.
			Increase awareness and provide current information for appropriate local authority staff and partners – Health, advice agencies, frontline disability services, etc.	Isobel Kelly	Apr-13	Ongoing	Website and briefings on Welfare Reform timetable and PIP provided prior to implementation. Money Matters team have attended specialist training and were able to deal with PIP issues from point of introduction. (Helpdesk and direct referrals for individual claimants)
			Provide a PIP briefing for Social Services and Health staff	Isobel Kelly	May-13	Jun-13	22 briefing Welfare Reform sessions delivered in Quarter 2. 2 NAC Welfare Reform publications - as part of Communications Plan. Personal Independence article in "Tenancy Matters" magazine.
			Continue to support parents of disabled children to access Disability Living Allowance.	Isobel Kelly	Apr-13	Jun-13	Meetings have been held with Kinship Carers Support Group to discuss Welfare Reform and specific issues for families / Kinship carers.
			Provide general Awareness session on PIP for all Head Teachers.	Laura Cook/Isobel Kelly	Apr-13		Teaching staff were given welfare reform awareness training in June and in September 2013 Money Matters delivered a Welfare Reform presentation to senior Modern Studies students in Greenwood Academy.
	June 2013	New claimants aged 16 to 65 will claim PIP under the new rules – many will be unaware of rules and claims process.	Provide information, advice and support covering claims, reviews and appeals processes to support staff, claimants and potential claimants.	Isobel Kelly	Apr-June 13	Apr-14	Public Information materials prepared for PIP and briefing sessions arranged for appropriate staff. Money Matters and NA Alcohol and Drug Partnership delivered a Welfare Reform Cafe for service users and partner agencies - "How to cope with Welfare Reform".
	Extension of new PIP claims to people aged 16 to 65 (i.e., first time claims).	Expectation that fewer awards / lower awards will be made. 20% reduction in spending anticipated and impact on other "trigger" benefits. May lead to increase in appeals	Introduce referral pathways into Money Matters for new Service Access service users (adults) and for young people at transition stage – Education /Social Services.	Isobel Kelly	Jun-13	Sep-13	Some problems for claimants in the claim process have been identified and these will be fed into DWP "Implementatation Group". Briefing for Children with Disability, LD, Mental Health and Addiction staff (Social Wrork and Health) arranged - including the referral pathway for disabled service users and children at age 16. Improved support to Social Services team and users under consideration as part of Social Service Change Programme.
		New qualifying period and points based assessment may delay award or reduce chance of success.	Raise awareness of PIP through visits to Special Schools – parents groups	Isobel Kelly/Laura Cook	Apr-13	Jun-13	At end July no information from DWP on the new Assessment Centres for PIP. Reported delays in claim forms being issued by DWP. Money Matters staff reporting implementation issues - at September still difficulties and delays for initial group of claimants. Few successful claims notified to Money Matters team.
		People who are entitled to higher award under PIP may seek to claim the new benefit	Review appeals procedures to include mandatory reconsideration of PIP decisions.	Isobel Kelly/David Hornell	Jun-13	Sep-13	Information on review and new "appeals" process included in briefings for appropriate staff / teams. In September a Statutory Instrument was issued - delaying extension of PIP to review / renewal cases until 28th October instead of 7th October 2013.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
	October 2013 – Review and renewals for existing claimants moving from DLA to PIP	This will impact on 16 to 65 year olds with change of circumstances, reaching age 16 or who have awards coming to an end. It can be difficult for young people and families to access information about transition and how to challenge assessment.	Alert Head Teachers and Children and Family (Disability) Teams to new processes.	Laura Cook / Isobel Kelly	Aug-13	Nov-13	In September a Statutory Instrument was issued - delaying extension of PIP to review / renewal cases until 28th October instead of 7th October 2013. This will be taken forward on the basis of the new implementation timetable.
			Implement referral process for 16+	Laura Cook / Isobel Kelly	Sep-13	Nov-13	In September a Statutory Instrument was issued - delaying extension of PIP to review / renewal cases until 28th October instead of 7th October 2013. This will be taken forward on the basis of the new implementation timetable.
			Identify groups of service users who can benefit from new rules.	Laura Cook / Isobel Kelly	Sep-13	Nov-13	In September a Statutory Instrument was issued - delaying extension of PIP to review / renewal cases until 28th October instead of 7th October 2013. This will be taken forward on the basis of the new implementation timetable.
			Undertake take up work.	Isobel Kelly	Sep-13	Nov-13	In September a Statutory Instrument was issued - delaying extension of PIP to review / renewal cases until 28th October instead of 7th October 2013. This will be taken forward on the basis of the new implementation timetable.
	2015 - Move from DLA to PIP - all cases	Review of 10,000 cases in North Ayrshire with consequential loss of income / entitlement - @ 20% of current DLA spending.	Raise general awareness by targeting – stroke unit, Social Services care assessors / managers, Macmillan services, and health colleagues.	Isobel Kelly	Sep-13	Mar-14	Attendance at Scottish Network event for Macmillan Managers clarified PIP issues / problems for terminally ill patients. This resulted in arrangements to negotiate direct with national Implementation Team for PIP - for Macmillan services
			Consider the implications of the migration process, and new rules and impact on trigger benefits.	Isobel Kelly	Sep-13	Mar-14	
			Engage with Education / Health and Social Services staff who support people with disability.	Isobel Kelly/Laura Cook	Apr-15	Mar-16	
			Ensure early information about transition and predictability of future entitlement, including other benefits which are related to disability entitlement.	Isobel Kelly	Apr-15	Mar-16	
3	April 2013 - Passported Benefits	Passport Benefits	Produce briefing note on Passporting when full details are known.	Isobel Kelly	Jan-14	Mar-14	September 2013 - lack of PIP awards and expected delays in implementation of Universal Credit means it is difficult to provide further information on impact of Welfare Reform on Passported Benefits.
			Consider with Education, Social Services and the Registration Service what new procedures and application forms need to be introduced to verify an application for a free school meal, clothing grant, blue badge and education maintenance allowance under Universal Credit.	Laura Cook/Janie Millar	Apr-13	Oct-13	Initial indications are that Scottish Government proposals will protect entitlement at same level. The threshold for access to Blue Badge for PIP is similar to the level of "passport" for DLA. Access to educational benefits can include families in receipt of new benefits (Universal Credit) even prior to introduction at national level (would ensure access for families moving from "pathway" areas.
		Changes to the rules on passported benefit will impact on customers in receipt of free school meals, clothing grants, blue badges and education maintenance allowance.	Identify the nature and scale of passported benefits affected by UC and PIP changes – distinguishing between Scottish level and local schemes	Laura Cook	May-13	Mar-14	September 2013 - lack of PIP awards and expected delays in implementation of Universal Credit means it is difficult to provide further information on impact of Welfare Reform on Passported Benefits.
		Has relevance for Blue Badge parking entitlement and access to free school meals and clothing grants.	Assess impact on current processing and payment systems & recommend to services new processes and procedures & workforce requirements	Isobel Kelly	Apr-13	Mar-14	September 2013 - lack of PIP awards and expected delays in implementation of Universal Credit means it is difficult to provide further information on impact of Welfare Reform on Passported Benefits.
4	July 2013 to September 2013	The DWP provide data scans to the Council that indicates the number of households affected by the cap. The DWP will be writing to all households concerned.	Benefits Service to cross check the DWP data scans with Jobcentre Plus & to agree the accuracy of the data	Linda Walker	Apr-13	Until Universal Credit is introduced	At the end of September 29 households were capped. The households includes in excess of 100 children. The working group is working with Jobcentre Plus to hold employment related training workshops for the families affected.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
	Benefit cap	Those households to be capped will have their housing benefit reduced down to the cap. This will increase the amount of rent for the household and may increase rent arrears.	Welfare Reform Advice Team to visit all mainstream Council tenants affected by the Benefit Cap to offer advice and assistance in relation to bank accounts. Budgeting etc.	Jacqueline Cameron	May-13	Until Universal Credit is introduced	Only a small number of council tenants affected. WRAT team have visited al to offer dvice and assistance. List of affected tenants passed to Social Services to establish if any families known to them
	The total amount a household can receive in state benefit has been capped at £500 per week for couple and lone parent households and £350 per week for single person households where no children are present. Exclusions do apply.	The cap has serious implications for the provision of temporary accommodation by Housing Services.	Benefits Service to work with Housing Services on the implications of the cap for tenants of temporary accommodation and council housing.	Linda Walker / Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Until Universal Credit is introduced	The Benefits Service is working closely with Housing Services regarding the number of council tenants affected by the benefit cap and contact is being made with each household affected and a DHP application form completed where possible. Employment related training workshops are being run by Jobcentre Plus for households affected.
	The cap will be administered by the Council until Universal Credit is introduced.		Upgraded National standards training for key personnel within homelessness and housing advice services	Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Until Universal Credit is introduced	2 officers have started training
			Monitor impact of Benefit Cap on Furnished Tenancy Grant and increased risk of homelessness	Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Until Universal Credit is introduced	Only 8 mainstream tenants affected by Benefit Cap and none of them have Furnished Tenancy Grants. 25 tenants in private sector affected by Benefit Cap and therefore may be at risk of homelessness. Housing Services staff will be visiting to offer advice and assistance.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
5	<p>Scottish Welfare Fund implemented on the 1 April 2013 until 31 March 2015</p> <p>The Scottish Welfare Fund administered by the Council provides Community Care Grants and Crisis Grants to customers in need.</p>	The Council has cash limited funds to administer the scheme for 2013-14:	Maintain baseline details of the number of applications made, accepted, rejected and appeals for community care grants and crisis grants in the North Ayrshire area.	Linda Walker	Apr-13	Until 31 March 2015	Statistics are maintained on a weekly basis. At end of September 2013; 1,789 crisis and 816 community care grants applications received (total 2,605). 1,175 crisis and 415 community care grants awarded.
			Monitor the level of community care grants and crisis grants expenditure against the Council's cash limited funds and decide the high, medium or low priority setting for payments. Also track Section 12 and Section 27 payments to ensure customer needs are being met.	Linda Walker/Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Until 31 March 2015	Crisis grant and community care grant expenditure is monitored against the cash limited funds on a weekly basis and expenditure against Section 12 and 27 payments are tracked. At the 30 September 2013; £59,576 crisis grants awarded against an annual budget of £362,252 and £214,469 community care grants awarded against an annual budget of £705,792. Expenditure is low and in response the Cabinet approved the payment priority to be changed from high to medium to increase expenditure.
		Crisis Grants £362,552	Decide on a supplier for the provision of goods and services in respect of the Scotland Excel Framework and the payment of community care grants	Stephen Humphries	May-13	May-13	Contract in place with the Furnishing Service Limited until 31 March 2015. Action complete
		Demand for a grant may exceed funding.	Provide the Scottish Government with a monitoring statement of the administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund.	Linda Walker	Jun-13	Until 31 March 2015	Monitoring statement is now being provided to the Scottish Government for the Scottish Welfare Fund
			Provide the CMT and Cabinet with regular updates on the administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund.	Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Until 31 March 2015	Monthly reports are provided to the CMT and Cabinet report of 6 November 2013 provides an update on the Scottish Welfare Fund.
			Monitor the impact of the Scottish Welfare Fund grants on tenancy sustainability.	Janeine Barrett	Mar-14	Mar-15	No update required as yet
6	<p>Discretionary Housing Payment</p> <p>A discretionary housing payment provides a temporary solution to claimants to cover part of their housing costs.</p> <p>The Council's funding for 2013-14 £668,032</p> <p>The Council approved its DHP policy in October 2012 and operational procedures in April 2013</p>	Welfare Reform has reduced Housing Benefit for benefit claimants and the DHP scheme is a temporary measure used to support customers. Some client groups are more affected than others and therefore the temporary support may be required for longer periods.	Maintain baseline details of the number of DHP applications made, accepted and rejected.	Linda Walker	Apr-13	Until 31 March 2014	Statistics are maintained on a weekly basis. For the period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013; 2,225 applications received, 1,467 granted and 657 refused after an income and expenditure review.
		The DHP funding will be used to targets claimants affected by:	Monitor the level of DHP expenditure against the Council's cash limited funds.	Linda Walker/Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Until 31 March 2014	The amount of DHP expenditure is monitored against the cash limited funds on a weekly basis. At the end of September 2013 DHP totalling £390,072 awarded against a budget of £668,032 (58%).
		Size criteria, Benefit Cap, LHA restrictions	Provide the CMT & Cabinet with regular updates on the administration of the discretionary housing payment scheme	Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Until 31 March 2014	Monthly reports provided to the CMT and Cabinet report of 6 November 2013 provides a summary of the first 6 months of the scheme.
		The funding will also be used to address general hardship issues.	Monitor the number of DHP applications received, process DHP applications in accordance with the benefits right time indicator target of 15 days and monitor the expenditure against the Council's cash limited funds.	Linda Walker	Apr-13	Mar-14	DHP expenditure is monitored on a weekly basis against the Council's cash limited funds. The amount of expenditure is reported to the Chief Executive and CMT on a monthly basis. The funding is being used to address hardship and is targeted to those most in need.
		The funding is cash limited and demand is expected to exceed supply.	Review the DHP policy and operational procedures in line with operational experience identified in 2013-14	Stephen Humphries	Jan-14	Mar-14	Expenditure is monitored weekly and a review is underway to inform the policy development for 2014-15.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
7	<p>The reduction in Housing Benefit due to under occupation for working age social housing tenants was implemented from April 2013</p> <p>The amount of weekly Housing Benefit has been reduced by 14% for working age claimants where there is one extra bedroom or 25% for two or more extra bedrooms.</p>	To minimise the impact of under-occupation on Council and RSL tenants and to minimise the impact on the Council's Housing Revenue Account	Review impact on Arrears Policy	Marianne McManus / Linda Walker	Mar-13	Jun-13	Options in relation to arrears recovery under review and report went to Cabinet on the 30 April 2013. Cabinet agreed no eviction of tenants with u/o arrears where tenant is engaging and making payments towards arrear. Agreed not to pursue tenants in temporary accommodation.
			Develop and implement flat sharing opportunities for households affected.	Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Mar-14	The South West HUB are working along with North Ayrshire Community Housing Advocacy Project in the developmnet of a flat sharing procedure which will ensure a common approach across the South West of Scotland.
			Review impact on Lodger Policy	Marianne McManus	Nov-12	Jun-13	Review under way by Estate Management Working Group
			Review impact on Allocation Policy	Carol Nelson	Dec-12	Jun-13	Impact on Allocation Policy being reviewed by Common Housing Register Working Group. Report was submitted to the Cabinet on 30th April 2013. Cabinet agreed to increase points for under occupancy and to reclassify around 300 amenity properties to housing for all ages.
			Review impact of changes on Housing Business Plan	Marianne McManus / Alex Adrain & Business Planning Working Group	Jul-12	Mar-13	housing baseline Indicators for 2013/14 agreed. Impact on Business Plan discussed with Business Plan Implementation Group as part of the budget setting process for 2014/15
			WRAT Team to visit all mainstream Council tenants affected by the under occupancy size criteria to offer advice and assistance on options available to them & track changes in behaviour.	Jacqueline Cameron	Feb-13	Jul-13	All tenants affected by under occupancy have now been visited, with new tenants being visited on an ad hoc basis if support required. 357 tenants have not engaged with WRAT but team will continue to make efforts to engage
			Monitor performance indicators for WRAT Team	Marianne McManus / Jacqueline Cameron	Jan-13	Ongoing	Performance monitored monthly
			Amend the current approach within the Local Housing Strategy to allow the development and purchase of 1 bedroom properties in the social housing sector	Alex Adrain	Apr-13	Ongoing	Report to Cabinet April 2013 for agreement. Agreed at Cabinet
			Promote Employability services to tenants	Marianne McManus/ Jacqueline Cameron/Andy Lee	Jun-13	Ongoing	Article included in tenants newsletter. WRAT team working with CEIS Ayrshire to promote employability services to tenants
			Publicise and promote DHP scheme	Marianne McManus / Jacqueline Cameron	Apr-13	Ongoing	Information included in Tenants Newsletter and Welfare reform Leaflets and WRAT team promoting at visits. Information and application available on website
			Monitor baseline indicators, identifying trends and changes in demands for services	Marianne McManus / Jacqueline Cameron	Apr-13	Ongoing	Housing baseline Indicators are monitored by Housing Services in relation to under occupation and the impact on support services including homelessness.
			Monitor the number of appeals received from benefit claimants in relation to under occupation.	Linda Walker	Apr-13	Ongoing	The number of appeals received are being monitored.
			Monitor the number of requests for property reclassifications received from benefit claimants in relation to under occupation.	Marianne McManus	Apr-13	Ongoing	Sept 13 - 26 requests received from tenants. 12 approved, 13 refused, 1 pending
			Monitor the potential increases in rent arrears as result of new under occupancy arrangements against estimated projections	Marianne McManus	Apr-13	Ongoing	Sep 13 - 1294 tenants subject to under-occupation in arrears - owing £240,680
			Monitor the potential increases in homelessness presentations as a result of WR changes and the reason for the presentation.	Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Mar-14	The number of homeless presentations has increased by 17% during 2013-14. At the end of September 2013 the number of presentations is 395 compared to 338 in 2012. A further review is being carried out to establish how much of the increase is entirely related to welfare reform issues.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
			Consider potential reduction in rental levels received from temporary accommodation as a result of DWP current policy on supported exempt accommodation	Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Mar-14	We are still awaiting a final statement from the DWP with regards to classification of supported exempt accommodation, which will inform impact.
			Review of the Council's homelessness policy, strategy and procedures based on DWP policy decisions.	Janeine Barrett	As required		A full review of of service provision will be undertaken on receipt of final guidance and classification of temporary provision dependant of budget implications.
			Assess and quantify any significant migration patterns between areas as a result of HB changes in the social and private rented sectors	Janeine Barrett	Apr-13	Mar-14	Assessment will be undertaken in last quarter of 13/14
			Consider the potential implications household migration for other Council services i.e. impacts on school rolls etc.	Janeine Barrett/ Laura Cook/ Janie Millar	Apr-13	Mar-14	All North Ayrshire Head teachers have been made aware of the welfare reforms and the potential impacts on pupils/families. To date, there have been no reported impacts as result of household migration but the situation continues to be monitored closely. Welfare reform features regularly on the agenda of Head Teacher meetings"
8	October 2013 to April 2017 Universal Credit	The Council has an important role to play during the migration period to Universal Credit by shifting claimants to on-line claims. The level of funding for this is currently unknown.	Review potential impact of Housing Revenue Account Business Plan: Meeting SHQS; Rent Restructure; and Council House Building	Marianne McManus/ Business Plan Working Group	Oct-12	Apr-17	The DWP migration to Universal Credit is slowing down and the Council is waiting on further guidance from DWP on vulnerable exemptions for Direct Payments. Universal Credit will not be rolled out in North Ayrshire during 2013-14.
	Housing Benefit will be abolished from around October 2013.	Direct payment of Universal Credit will increase rent arrears.	Identify potential service gaps and Council capacity to address these.	All group members	Apr-13	Mar-14	Council officers and Jobcentre Plus have formed a local support services delivery group to progress the DWP local support services framework and the implementation of Universal Credit. A mapping exercise to identify current digital services, benefits advice, budgeting advice and debt advice is being compiled and this will underpin the Universal Credit implementation plan.
	New claims and changes in circumstance will migrate to Universal Credit.	The migration of benefit claims will impact on the staffing resources required to administer benefit and the financial funding received by the Council.	Scale/cost of potential delivery options	All group members	Apr-13	Mar-14	
	Universal Credit will combine Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit for working age claimants.		Consider 'political' implications and risks of delivering these services	All group members	Apr-13	Mar-14	This will now be considered as part of the local support services delivery group consisting of council officers and Jobcentre Plus.
	Universal Credit will include a housing element to cover rent charges and it will be paid direct to the claimant.		Consider/support potential roles for local social economy organisations.	Rhona Arthur / Andy Lee	Apr-13	Mar-14	This will now be considered as part of the local support services delivery group consisting of council officers and Jobcentre Plus.
	Pension Credit will also include a housing element from around October 2015.		Identify workforce requirements	Marianne McManus / Stephen Humphries	Jul-13	Mar-14	This will now be considered as part of the local support services delivery group consisting of council officers and Jobcentre Plus.
			Review the options available to tenants to open an account in order to pay their rent direct to the Council under Universal Credit.	Marianne McManus / Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Aug-13	Housing Services has entered into a partnership agreement with the 1 st Alliance Credit Union and 5 Housing Associations. The agreement offers tenants a range of accounts and services that protects the rent income of the Council and other partner organisations, and prepares tenants for direct payment in advance of Universal Credit.
			Assist council tenants to prepare for UC - WRAT Team to visit tenants who will be eligible to claim Universal Credit, to discuss banking, financial circumstances and rent payment options and Identify/quantify particularly vulnerable tenants	Jacqueline Cameron	Jul-13	Ongoing	Funding of WRAT team being considered as part of budget process, if team continued for a further year a survey of tenants will be carried out initially to establish support needs for tenants who will claim Universal Credit in future
			Assess the additional costs associated with increase in collection/payment methods due to Universal Credit.	Marianne McManus/J Cameron	Aug-13	Mar-14	This will now be considered as part of the local support services delivery group consisting of council officers and Jobcentre Plus.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
			Develop process/procedures for identifying both current and prospective tenants who may be vulnerable under the Act in preparation for requesting that housing costs are paid direct to Council	Marianne McManus/J Cameron	Aug-13	Ongoing	Some initial work has been carried out during visits to tenants subject to under-occupation. Funding of WRAT team being considered as part of budget process, if team continued for a further year a survey of tenants will be carried out initially to establish support needs for tenants who will claim Universal Credit in future
8 (continued)			Review and update all information in handbooks/leaflets etc to reflect changes from HB to Universal Credit	Marianne McManus/J Cameron	Aug-13	Mar-14	The DWP migration to Universal Credit is slowing down and will not be rolled out in North Ayrshire during 2013-14. Leaflets and handbooks will be updated nearer the time the changes will be implemented to ensure the information is as up to date as possible.
			Adjust and review housing services performance indicators and targets to reflect the effect of Welfare Reform	Marianne McManus/J Cameron	Sep-13	Mar-14	Baseline indicators are in place for 2013-14 and these are used to monitor the impact of welfare reform and to set performance targets.
			Review Direct Debit frequency options and carry out a Direct Debit campaign for all council tenants once the DWP migration timetable to UC is known.	Marianne McManus/J Cameron	Oct-13	Mar-14	Additional Direct Debit payment option dates being piloted
			Identify and promote training opportunities for tenants to gain basic computer skills training.	Marianne McManus/J Cameron	Sep-13	2017	Article included in September Tenants Newsletter. Pilot also being agreed with CEIS Ayrshire to provide support, advice, guidance and access to training for tenants affected by welfare reform.
			Evaluate the Universal Credit pilot to identify and disseminate good practice and identify any risks associated with the implementation of UC for tenants and benefit claimants.	Marianne McManus/ Linda Walker	Jun-13	Ongoing	The Universal Credit direct payment demonstration sites and local authority pilots have been extended to December 2013 and the findings will be considered by the working group and incorporated into the action plan as required.
			Review the evaluation report of the direct payment demonstration sites and identify areas of good practice and risks to the direct payment of Universal Credit & estimate the likely additional demand levels on services and associated costs.	Jacqueline Cameron	Jun-13	Aug-13	The Universal Credit direct payment demonstration sites and local authority pilots have been extended to December 2013 and the findings will be considered by the working group and incorporated into the action plan as required.
			Manage the migration of the Housing Benefit caseload in accordance with the DWP timetable and assess the implications of the phased introduction of UC on the benefits service.	Stephen Humphries/ Linda Walker	TBC	Until HB caseload completely migrated to DWP	The DWP Universal Credit roll out programme is slowing down and the Council will not be involved in 2013-14. The DWP migration timetable from April 2014 onwards is unknown.
			Identification and quantification of staff potentially affected by the reducing role of the local authority in HB administration and clarification of staff TUPE options under Universal Credit.	Stephen Humphries/ Linda Walker	TBC	Until HB caseload completely migrated to DWP	The DWP Universal Credit roll out programme is slowing down and the Council will not be involved in 2013-14. The DWP migration timetable from April 2014 onwards is unknown.
			Assess the potential increases in rent arrears as a result of loss of direct housing benefit payments – scheduled against proposed UC rollout	Marianne McManus	Jul-13	Mar-14	The DWP Universal Credit roll out programme is slowing down and the Council will not be involved in 2013-14. The DWP migration timetable from April 2014 onwards is unknown.
			Review rent arrears procedures and practices to ensure fit for purpose	Marianne McManus	Sep-13	Until HB caseload completely migrated to DWP	The DWP Universal Credit roll out programme is slowing down and the Council will not be involved in 2013-14. The DWP migration timetable from April 2014 onwards is unknown.
			Develop appropriate support mechanisms for tenants - map out support/advice agencies across the area that can assist tenants	Marianne McManus/ Jacqueline Cameron	Oct-13	Mar-14	Successful funding application made to the Scottish Legal Aid Board for a welfare rights officer and a debt advice officer within the Housing Services welfare reform advice team.

Change Number	Date of reform & change description	Impact Assessment & Objectives	Key Actions Required	Lead Officer	Start Date	Completion Date	Progress
9	Single Fraud Investigation Service	The creation of a single fraud investigation service (SFIS) will harmonise the investigation of benefit fraud under the one organisation.	Keep the benefits investigation team fully informed of any changes.	Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Mar-14	There is limited information coming from the DWP in relation to the single fraud investigation service. Benefits Investigation Team is kept fully up to date on any developments.
	The DWP is setting up a UK single fraud investigation service (SFIS). This will combine the fraud activity currently carried out by the DWP, Local Authorities and HMRC.	The SFIS will change the responsibilities and the powers of the Council's benefit investigation team from 1 April 2013.	Revise the policies and procedures & IT systems of the benefits investigation team once the SFIS powers and access to software systems are known.	Stephen Humphries	Once DWP provide guidance	Mar-14	No information received from the DWP regarding the role of the Council.
	The start date of the SFIS in North Ayrshire is unknown. The Council's benefits investigations staff will remain employed by the Council and at some stage operate under SFIS powers.	The amount of DWP funding to be provided to the Council to operate under SFIS powers is unknown.	Assess the impact the funding provided by the DWP for operating the SFIS will have on the current level of resource involved in benefit investigations.	Stephen Humphries	Once DWP confirm the funding	Mar-14	No information received from the DWP regarding the level of funding provided to the Council.
		The future of the Council's fraud investigation service is unknown and this will impact on staff resources.	Continue to support the training of the benefits investigation staff on SFIS powers with the DWP during 2013-14 when available.	Stephen Humphries	Apr-13	Mar-14	Staff have registered for DWP courses.
10	Council Tax Reduction scheme	The amount of funding provided by the DWP was reduced by 10% around £40m and for 2013-14 only the Scottish Government (£23m) and Local Authorities (£17m) funded this gap. This means that no one was worse off at 1 April 2013.	Continue to provide data and comments to COSLA, Scottish Government and officer working groups on the service design options for a replacement Council Tax Reduction scheme for	Stephen Humphries	As required	Mar-14	The 2013-14 Council Tax Reduction scheme working effectively. The 2014-15 scheme will operate on the same basis as this year.
	Council Tax Benefit scheme was abolished from 1 April 2013 and replaced by the council tax reduction scheme by the Scottish Government which is administered by the local authorities.	The structure of the council tax reduction scheme for 2014-15 is unknown and the Council may be required to implement a new scheme if the current level of funding from the Scottish Government and Local Authorities discontinues at the 31 March 2014.	Respond to any fundamental changes in the structure of the council tax reduction scheme decided by the Scottish Government for 2014-15.	Stephen Humphries	As required	Mar-14	The Scottish Government (£23M) and Local Authorities (£17m) will continue to fund the council tax reduction scheme for 21014-15.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 10

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Building Services Transformational Change Programme Update**

Purpose: To advise Cabinet of the progress being made in the delivery of the internal Transformation Programme in Building Services.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet notes the progress made delivering the Building Services improvement plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 06 November 2012 Cabinet considered a report upon the future delivery of Building Services and agreed to implement an ambitious internal change programme to enable its sustainability over the medium term.
- 1.2 It was agreed that Cabinet receive an annual report setting out progress against the improvement actions, bench-marking information, additional work streams secured, and market conditions. This report also provides a forward look to ensure the service anticipates market changes and opportunities to ensure a sustainable service is maintained.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The review of pay and grading for craft employees within the service has been completed. The agreement has provided:-
- new role profiles which increase the range of ancillary tasks and multi-skilled work undertaken;
 - the opportunity to improve minimum productivity levels through adjustment of standard task completion times in job codes;
 - a sound basis for productivity performance management to ensure efficiency and value improvements are achieved.
- 2.2 We are working with Reid Kerr College to assess modules which may be used to raise or verify skill levels to ensure the multi-skilling capabilities exist before being fully deployed. This is being done in partnership with Trade Union representatives.

- 2.3 The continued implementation of new business processes based on a client/customer values has led to an innovative and new approach to coordinating, planning and delivering work, by means of creating an Intelligent Coordination Centre (Workflow Planning Unit) and making corresponding changes to the Operational Delivery and Commercial Support structures. The new end to end business process service blueprint is delivering reduced duplication, increasing the opportunity to achieve right first time delivery and improving service outcomes to our clients. It is also providing a sound basis for the specification of the new ICT based property repairs and maintenance system and other supporting technology applications.
- 2.4 The design and implementation of the new Intelligent Coordination Centre was completed with its 'go live' creation event in June 2013. From one new open plan 'hub' office space, the teams undertake job scoping, planning and scheduling of work, processing of all job tickets, coordination of materials, plant and equipment provision; while also providing the single point of entry and control for all work requests, customer service response coordination, sub-contractor management, quality management and continuous improvement. The project has been achieved through close collaboration with staff, HR and Trade Unions, together with colleagues in the Customer Contact Centre, Finance and Property, and Housing Services.
- 2.5 Benefits apparent so far include:-
- Reduced duplication of effort, freeing up of staff to undertake new tasks, more collaborative style of working;
 - Expected reduction in unnecessary variations to jobs as a result of centralised scoping and planning functions;
 - Improved coordination of materials and equipment, now controlled and measured by a new tracking database;
 - Improved quality control and performance being developed through dedicated team;
 - The use of Visual Management which lets everyone see how Building Services is performing and encourages improvement;
 - An established single e-mail facility and single communication route for North Ayrshire Council clients/client agent and Contact Centre;
 - Reduced spend on sub-contractors from 25% to under 10% through improved sub-contractor and resource planning.

- 2.6 Examples of measured improvements in job types completed within target times before and after the ICC and related changes include:-

Repair Types	Aug 2012	Aug 2013	% Improvement
Urgent	94.78%	98.94%	4.16%
Routine	91.52%	97.40%	5.88%
Sub-contractors	52.00%	92.00%	40%

- 2.7 In line with the improvement strategy to reduce the volume of paper based job tickets processed and managed through the Intelligent Coordination Centre and Operational Delivery teams, the use of the workflow scheduling/planning system is currently being extended into other work streams. This will shortly be implemented in voids refurbishment and related activities, together with associated electronic mobile working facilities.
- 2.8 Options for extending work scheduling/planning systems and/or mobile electronic working across the service for optimum business benefit will be determined in line with the Business Strategy, with a view to implementation during the financial year 2014/15.
- 2.9 The review of materials and supplies to ensure value for money in procurement of goods, timely supply, distribution and appropriate stock levels, has progressed in tandem with the new business process design and creation of the Intelligent Coordination Centre, as follows:-
- New integrated business processes and procedures in place to get the correct materials for the job at the right time;
 - Management of stores function and coordination incorporated into the ICC hub, improving collaborative working;
 - Responsive repair vans have been restocked to more closely match the most commonly used repair types and materials.
- 2.10 A comprehensive zero-based review of the Schedule of Rates and Job Codes used for Housing works was completed and implemented in June 2013, to provide a simpler, more transparent, effective job costing and charging mechanism. This was achieved through close collaboration with colleagues in Finance & Property and the Customer Contact Centre.

2.11 Benefits apparent so far include:

- clearer, more appropriate work descriptions through revised job codes;
- related improvements to Diagnostics codes used by the contact centre;
- improved standard job/task time targets for increased productivity;
- reduced need for dayworks charging method, used where standard codes are not available or appropriate;
- clearer means of demonstrating value for money to clients;
- sound basis of future benchmarking and tender pricing strategies.

2.12 The monitoring of the changes in practice continues and will be refined in coming months.

2.13 A similar review for the measurement and charging of Non-Housing works is currently in progress, with different pricing models being investigated for agreement with Property Maintenance and Investment, anticipated implementation being by 1 April 2014.

2.14 The new rates will be benchmarked on an annual basis to ensure that best value is achieved. Improvements have been achieved and confirmed during initial comparison work carried out following the implementation of the revised Schedule of Rates. Responsive repairs costs are 6.1% below the national benchmark, and planned works costs are 7.5% below the national benchmark. Development of the most appropriate benchmarking comparators is continuing in order to more closely reflect anticipated changes in work types such as planned and project work. This will also inform more effective future pricing strategies when tendering for external work.

2.15 Following a review of Non-Housing Capital and Revenue funded projects at the start of the current financial year, Building Services are now utilised to undertake additional Council work streams where value for money can be demonstrated. In collaboration with Property Maintenance & Investment, a process was established to offer all appropriate projects initially to Building Services to assess nature, extent, timing and logistics of the works in relation to other work streams. A costing exercise is then done, through a process which demonstrates whether Best Value is provided by Building Services, in comparison to estimated costs in the external market. This process allows for project(s) to be procured externally if this cannot be established. Cost and quality is monitored for significant projects and it is expected this process will continue to provide an increased non-housing work stream to Building Services within budgets available in future years. A series of Non Housing works projects have been awarded to Building Services since April 2013, with a value to date of £550,000. The types of projects are school windows, school partitions, school toilet refurbishment and public convenience refurbishment.

- 2.16 Work has progressed to enable Building Services to expand its portfolio of internally commissioned works that require new skills within the service and which are currently procured externally. An initiative is currently being pursued as part of the Green Deal with particular regard to external wall insulation works which the Council undertakes to around 400 properties per year. In order to undertake these works all contractors must possess several regulatory and guarantee certifications. Building Services are working towards achieving all certifications with the intention of initially obtaining 10 % of these works in the next financial year and growing thereafter.
- 2.17 As part of the implementation of the Building Services Improvement Plan, early work has taken place to look at the possibility of developing and establishing a shadow team within the Service for large projects that are currently procured externally. This will provide an understanding of how the Service would require to develop to compete for these work streams. This action will progress further from early 2014, with a small Manager/Supervisory Team liaising with colleagues in Property and Finance to seek opportunities for learning and identifying knowledge and skills required to organise and deliver major building related projects.
- 2.18 To ensure Building Services anticipates market changes and opportunities to tender for external work, the market for repair and maintenance contracts is being regularly reviewed. Currently external economic conditions are showing little change, with recently observed signs of recovery being most evident in new-build construction. However, as previously reported, the best opportunities for providing existing services to new clients are with small to medium sized Registered Social Landlords. Competition for these property repair, maintenance and improvement contracts remains strong from many other businesses offering similar services, with consequent continuing pressure on keen pricing.
- 2.19 As part of the on-going business change in Building Services, a small number of tender and pre qualification submissions have been made in order to gauge potential, and to develop our external pricing strategy. While no works have been secured to date, this is not unexpected due to the learning curve inherent in pursuing external contracts of that nature. Nevertheless, our comprehensive 5 year market analysis has been updated and five potential target Housing Association contracts are being tracked with a view to tender submissions during 2014 -15, and beyond.

- 2.20 In order to complement and support the new business processes and ways of working being implemented through the change programme, a new integrated property repairs and maintenance IT system has been procured. It is designed to have a flexible, industry standard platform which will support Building Services, Finance and Property and the Customer Contact Centre in their joint operations, to an extent that was not provided by the existing systems in terms of their dated technology and limited functionality.
- 2.21 For Building Services, it will include improved analysis, job costing, stores and stock management, and financial processing. Shared access to accurate and timely data will improve the repairs diagnostics facilities in the Customer Contact Centre and elements of Finance & Property's processes for creating Building Services jobs and monitoring completion.
- 2.22 The contract was awarded to ROCC Computers Ltd with commencement on 2 September 2013, and is planned to be in use during the first quarter of 2014.
- 2.23 Benefits which the new system will enable include:-
- Interfaces to other Council IT systems to enable data to be shared and updated between them, i.e.; Finance and Property -Masterpiece; K2, Apex; Housing – iWorld; Customer Services – Lagan; Health & Safety- CRID; HR- CHRIS;
 - Improved timeliness, accuracy, accessibility and visibility of information;
 - Improved utilisation of resources through reduced time generating and maintaining paper based systems;
 - Transcription errors significantly reduced through direct links between systems to share data automatically;
 - Improved decision making through ability to access accurate (trusted) near real time information;
 - System technical reliability substantially improved , and flexible to develop in line with business needs.
- 2.24 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan contains an intention to reduce responsive repairs by 20% from 2015/16 onwards. In the current year 2013/14, due to a change in Housing Repairs Strategy, it is projected that Building Services income will fall by £1.4m. This is composed of a reduction in responsive repairs income of £1.1m (25%) and £300,000 in timber and dampness income. The service also remains vulnerable to potential impacts of the new Welfare Reform provisions providing an element of uncertainty going forward.

- 2.25 A key part of the transformation agenda has been to develop a suite of forward looking business performance indicators based on a balanced scorecard approach. While measurement of these is at an early stage of implementation, examples of internal business performance measures in place or being introduced are:-
- Operative productive time vs standard minute values target;
 - Expenditure to income received;
 - Jobs completed right first time (quality of work and materials);
 - Responsive jobs scoped and planned on time (to enable completion targets to be met).

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is intended that:-

3.1.1 Looking forward, the Transformation Programme is clearly identified as the means of delivery for change and improvement in Building Services in line with the Development and Environment Service Plan and will continue as a priority action.

3.1.2 The Environment and Related Services Operational Plan continues to be integrated with the Transformation Programme as the primary means of delivery and prioritisation of key business improvement actions.

3.1.3 The key deliverables in the Transformation Programme (enhanced Revitalise and Rebrand) continue to complete and/or include the following priorities aimed at securing a sustainable future for Building Services:-

- To implement the new integrated IT property repairs and maintenance system in accordance with the agreed project plan;
- To identify and address all outstanding actions and new opportunities to ensure supply, storage, and logistics of materials is efficient and effective, including those arising from the improved capabilities provided by the new IT System;
- To agree and implement an agreed replacement pricing model for Non-Housing works with Property Maintenance & Investment;
- To assess benefits and determine appropriate options, for extending workflow scheduling and electronic mobile working to the remaining areas of Building Services work streams.

3.1.4 Building Services continue to undertake additional Council work streams where value for money can be demonstrated.

3.1.5 New skills and capabilities be identified and developed to enable the service to undertake further additional internal works within the Council.

- 3.1.6 Development of competitive pricing and benchmarking be continued to enable tender submissions for target Housing Association contracts during 2014 -15.
- 3.1.7 In, order to address the key challenge of securing external work streams in a highly competitive market, Building Services develops the necessary additional expertise around sales and marketing along with a supporting strategy for pricing and offering.
- 3.1.8 Building Services participates in the new Council Graduate Programme initiative aimed at providing employment opportunities to locally resident graduates. Two positions have been approved in respect of forthcoming Investors in People and materials/logistics projects with recruitment process in progress.
- 3.1.9 Building Services continues its longstanding commitment to providing craft apprenticeships by achieving or bettering the target percentage of 10% ratio to full time craft operatives. Currently the target is being exceeded with 22 craft apprentices employed within the service.
- 3.2 The Cabinet is invited to notes the progress made delivering the Building Services improvement plan.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 Financial monitoring and governance is in place with regard to the programme and its deliverables

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 There are no equality implications at this time

Legal Implications

- 4.3 There are no legal implications at this time.

Equality Implications

- 4.4 There are no equality implications at this time.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 There are no environmental implications at this point.

Implications for Key Priorities

4.6 Continued implementation of the Transformation Programme will contribute to the following key objectives within the Council Plan;

a) Regenerating our Communities and Increasing Employment

b) Operating more efficiently and effectively

5. Consultations

5.1 Continual consultations take place with staff, Trade Union representatives and stakeholders throughout the implementation and development of the programme of change and improvement.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The internal transformation programme within Building Services (Revitalise and Re-brand) is delivering a model that will enable the service to meet the challenges it faces in demonstrating best value in the medium term, and provide a sustainable future.



CRAIG HATTON

Corporate Director (Development and Environment)

Reference : NG/RM/JA

For further information please contact Neil Gelston, Business Change Manager, Building Services on telephone number 01294 606910

Background Papers

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NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 11

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Clyde Valley Residual Waste Project Update**

Purpose: To advise Cabinet of the progress in securing long-term treatment facilities for residual waste.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet notes the progress to date for procuring residual waste treatment facilities.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 4 December 2012 Cabinet formally agreed to enter into an Inter Authority Agreement to procure a long-term solution for the treatment of residual waste with the Clyde Valley Partnership.
- 1.2 Update reports were presented to Cabinet on 26 February and 25 June 2013 summarising the procurement process, the project timetable and evaluation of Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs).

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The partnership formally commenced the procurement exercise by publishing an OJEU notice on the 31 January 2013.
- 2.2 Following evaluation of the PQQ submissions in June the Steering Group invited the following six applicants to participate in the competitive dialogue process:
 - Amey Cespa;
 - Balfour Beatty/Urbaser;
 - Covanta;
 - FCC Waste Services;
 - Neales Waste Management; and
 - Viridor.
- 2.3 Following a series of meetings, dialogue was suspended and the bidders were asked to submit their outline solutions. Submissions were received from the five of the bidders. Covanta formally withdrew from the process.
- 2.4 The Project Team scored the submissions along with support from the appointed technical, legal and financial advisors.

- 2.5 The governance of the project is stated in the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) that has been signed by all partner councils. In the IAA, the approval of the short list of bidders who will be invited to participate in detailed dialogue is delegated to the Clyde Valley Waste Management Initiative (Residual) Steering Group. A Steering Group meeting took place on 10 October 2013 for this purpose.
- 2.6 Following evaluation of the outline submission the Steering Group approved that the following four applicants have been successful and will be invited to participate in detailed dialogue.
- Amey Cespa;
 - Balfour Beatty/Urbaser;
 - FCC Waste Services;
 - Viridor.
- 2.7 Following evaluation of the outline submissions the Steering Group approved that Neales Waste Management has been unsuccessful and will not be invited to participate in the competitive detailed dialogue.
- 2.8 The project will now be progressed by the Project Team, with the issue of the Invitation to Participate in Detailed Dialogue to the list of applicants stated in Section 2.6 of this report.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Cabinet notes the progress to date for procuring residual waste treatment facilities.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The procurement of residual waste treatment facilities will require a long term funding solution. The current estimate of final costs, which will be established through the procurement exercise, requires additional funding of £1.948m, this has been identified within the Council's 10 year Financial Strategy. Of this sum, £0.434m would require to have been met through current and projected increased in landfill tax payments.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 There are no implications at this time.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 The Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 place restrictions upon the type and quantity of materials that can be disposed of at landfill from December 2020. The procurement exercise will identify a solution that will enable the Council to meet these requirements.

Equality Implications

- 4.4 There are no implications at this time.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 The implementation of the Waste Management Strategy will have a positive impact upon the environment in three ways:
- Reduction in the amount of waste disposed of at landfill;
 - Increase in recycling of materials reducing the need to access virgin materials; and
 - and increase in the re-use of materials reducing the impact of re-processing and the use of virgin materials.

Implications for Key Priorities

- 4.6 The procurement exercise will contribute to Corporate Object 4: Efficient and Effective Services.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 The partner Council's have been consulted upon the report.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The procurement exercise will enable the Council to meet its regulatory obligations in respect of the treatment and disposal of residual waste.



CRAIG HATTON
Corporate Director (Development and Environment)

Reference : CH/LB

For further information please contact Craig Hatton, Corporate Director (Development & Environment) on telephone number 01294 324312

Background Papers

Nil

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 12

12 November 2013

Cabinet

Subject: **Brodict Pier Redevelopment Group**

Purpose: To submit the minutes of the meeting of the Brodict Pier Redevelopment Group held on 4 October 2013.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet notes the Minutes at Appendix 1.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The formation of the Brodict Pier Redevelopment Group was agreed by Cabinet on 25 June 2013 with the objective of pursuing the implementation of proposals. However, as the project has developed, the benefits to the harbour area and Arran are now being considered as part of the project.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The Brodict Pier Redevelopment Group is chaired by Councillor John Bruce, and the most recent meeting was held on 4 October 2013. Represented on the group, are Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd, Visit Arran, Transport Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- 2.2 The main purpose of the meeting on 4th October was to receive an update from EKOS Ltd on their assessment of the economic impact of the delivery of proposals for the harbour, and of the significant differences in implementing the proposals in a phased rather than single project. EKOS are also considering the potential for any value engineering of the proposals, and additional sources of funding.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to note the Minute attached at Appendix 1.

4. Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising at this time.

Human Resource Implications

- 4.2 There are no human resource implications arising at this time.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 There are no legal implications arising at this time.

Equality Implications

- 4.4 There are no equality implications arising at this time.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 There are no environmental implications arising at this time.

Implications for Key Priorities

- 4.6 The Council's Core Objective 1: Regenerating our communities and increasing employment is supported.

Community Benefit Implications

- 4.7 There are no community benefit implications arising at this time.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Represented on the group are Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL), Visit Arran, Transport Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It should be noted that further public consultation will be carried out by CMAL on their proposals for the redevelopment of the harbour on 6th November in the Brodick Hall.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Minute attached is submitted for information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CH', written over a horizontal line.

CRAIG HATTON
Corporate Director (Development and Environment)

Reference : AL/FM

For further information please contact Alasdair Laurenson, Team Manager
on 01294 324758

Background Papers

N/A

Minute.....Appendix 1

Meeting:	Brodick Pier Redevelopment Group	
Date/Venue:	Friday 4 October 2013 Chief Executive Large Meeting Room	
Present:	Councillor John Bruce (Chair) North Ayrshire Council Karen Yeomans; North Ayrshire Council Alasdair Laurenson: North Ayrshire Council Ramsay Muirhead; CMAL Guy Platten: CMAL Lucinda Gray; HIE Alasdair Dobson: Taste of Arran/Visit Arran Chris Kelly; EKOS Iain Jenkins; EKOS Richard Hatfield; Scottish Transport Tom Tracey; Visit Arran	
Apologies:		
No.		Responsible
1.	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Minutes from meeting on Friday 2 August 2013 The minutes from the meeting held on 2 August 2013 were discussed. It was agreed to amend the minutes to reflect comments from Transport Scotland.	
3.	R Muirhead updated the group on the Master Plan for the Harbour including the following information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halcrow have changed the name of their company to CH2M HILL. • Detailed drawings for the harbour proposals will be completed by June 2014 .The pre-qualification tender process will commence in March 2014. • There is no need for an environmental impact assessment. • Initial ground investigations will be carried out in the next few weeks, with intrusive surveys December 13 – January 2014. • Calmac are happy with progress and a meeting has been arranged with the Port Manager to continue to keep them informed. • The Brodick Hall has been booked for Public Consultation on Wednesday 6 November 2013, with a press release due on Wednesday 9 October 2013. • The construction project will start in October 2014 lasting 14-15 months. <p>Discussion was held on the Timeline on the Project it was agreed that R Muirhead will issue a summary of key dates associated with the project.</p>	<i>R Muirhead</i>

4.	<p>Presentation: EKOS work to date,</p> <p>C Kelly gave an update on the study and Interim findings to the Pier Development Group. He started with the study objectives they are as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Impact Assessment of redeveloping – single versus multi-phase approach. • Potential for redevelopment of existing pier. • Technical analysis of proposals. • Review funding opportunities. • Comment on approaches providing greatest value for money. <p>L Gray asked had there been any discussion with Highlands and Islands (Tony Jarvis). C Kelly agreed to make contact with T Jarvis.</p> <p>A Dobson stated there is huge potential for growth for Arran businesses due to the proposals and the introduction of the Road Equivalent Tariff. He warned that there may be some conflict for pedestrians and vehicle traffic with the disruption at the Pier during the implementation of the project; therefore, a clear message as to how this would be managed must be given to all the businesses on the Island at the Public Consultations stage.</p> <p>CMAL recognise these concerns, which have also been expressed by Calmac. C Kelly suggested looking at how this was managed on other Islands during the development of their pier.</p> <p>Single Phase verses Multi Phase</p> <p>Discussion on the benefits of a single phase versus multi-phase was held. All agreed that a single phased approach would provide increased GVA and employment, and less operational difficulties. It was agreed that there was a real risk of a second phase not being delivered following the implementation of a first phase.</p> <p>EKOS were asked to urther articulate the difference in GVA between i) the delivery of the entire project; ii) the delivery of only a single phase incorporating the ‘do minimum’ elements of the project; and, iii) the delivery of two phases but with a delay, all measured over a twenty year period.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>Discussion was held on potential funding sources, and the need for the project to demonstrate benefits to businesses growth on Arran to secure additional funding. K Yeomans asked that for renewables to be taken into consideration and any other potential sectors.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">C Kelly</p>
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Draft

Minute.....Appendix 1

	<p>G Platten and R Hatfield are meeting Friday 4 October 2013, to discuss Grant funding available for 2014/15 15/16 and implications for the funding gap associated with the entire project.</p> <p>EKOS agreed to undertake further work on potential funding sources, outlining the criteria of potential funders, and how the project may fit with these and therefore the likelihood of an approach being successful.</p> <p>Public bodies will require to consider their level of any financial contribution based upon the funding gap identified by CMAL and the benefits identified in the EKOS report.</p>	<i>C Kelly</i>
5.	<p>Next Stage</p> <p>C Kelly to look further at sensitivities and their impact on GVA, and potential sources of additional funding sources.</p> <p>Their draft final report is to be circulated within a 3 week period from the meeting, to allow consideration prior to the next meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Date of next meeting Monday 11 November 2013 at 11.00 a.m. venue tbc</p>	

Fiona Millar October 2013
KY/FM