

The Executive of North Ayrshire Council
28 February 2012

IRVINE, 28 February 2012 - At a Meeting of the Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 10.00 a.m.

Present

David O'Neill, Tom Barr, John Bell, Alex Gallagher and Peter McNamara.

In Attendance

L. Friel, Corporate Director, C. Hatton, Head of Environment and Related Services and A. Bodie, Head of Infrastructure and Design (Finance and Infrastructure); O. Clayton, Head of Community Care and Housing (Social Services and Health); J. Montgomery, General Manager (Policy and Service Reform), M. Adams, Policy & Performance Officer, A. Wattie, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

D. Cowie, Director, Scotland Excel.

Chair

David O'Neill in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Reid.

1. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 16, Councillor O'Neill declared a non-financial, non-significant interest in Agenda Item 6 (Hazeldene Horticultural Employment Project Proposal) as the spouse of an employee of Enable Scotland.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive held on 14 February 2012 were signed in accordance with paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Update on Performance of Scotland Excel

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the performance of Scotland Excel over the last 6 months.

Since the previous report to the Executive on 16 August 2011, Scotland Excel has awarded two contracts, for the supply and delivery of prepared meals for a community meals service and the supply and delivery of telecare equipment and associated services. The Council will not participate in the former as it has an existing contract in place, but expects to achieve savings of £7,600 as a result of participation in the contract for telecare equipment. Scotland Excel's contract delivery plan for 2011-12 and 2012-13 was set out for information at Appendix 1 to the report.

Scotland Excel carried out the annual Procurement Capability Assessments (PCA) for all Scottish Councils during November and December 2011. The Council scored 34%, which represented an increase of 7% compared to 2010 and exceeded its target by 1%. Following on from the annual assessments, Scotland Excel facilitated a best practice learning event in January 2012. The Team Manager (Corporate Procurement) attended on behalf of the Council and is now developing an improvement plan to establish the Council's target for 2012.

The Council continues to support the training courses offered by Scotland Excel, with 58 staff from across the Council attending training courses in 2011. The Council will also continue to support the Scotland Excel Commercial User Intelligence Groups and lobby for opportunities for local suppliers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) where appropriate to do so.

D. Cowie, Director of Scotland Excel, responded to Members' questions and circulated background information on the organisation's aims, objectives and performance.

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

- the range of training on offer through Scotland Excel, including training aimed at developing suppliers;
- how procurement activity responds to the need to balance the issue of cost with that of encouraging local employment;
- the background to figures in relation to the performance of Scotland Excel in previous years and recent improvements in capturing performance data;
- opportunities to develop in-house training on procurement;
- the anticipated future development of Scotland Excel;
- the potential for the Council to host supplier development events;
- the balance between quality and price in procurement;
- the development by Scotland Excel of contracts for building services and fostering; and
- Procurement Capability Assessments.

The Executive agreed to (a) note the report; (b) continue with membership of Scotland Excel; (c) review the position again in six months' time; and (d) note that the Director of Scotland Excel would provide additional information for Members on Scotland Excel's tender evaluation processes.

4. BV2 Improvement Plan: Progress Update

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on progress in implementing the BV2 Improvement Plan 2011/12 as at 31 December 2011.

Overall progress in implementing the BV2 Improvement Plan was set out at Section 2.1 of the report. The plan was reported at 83% complete, with 90% of actions complete or on target and 10% slightly adrift of target. Progress on each of the 100 actions was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Section 2.3 of the report gave further information on those actions/sub-actions described as slightly adrift of target. Whilst efforts are continuing to ensure that those actions in the improvement plan which are slightly adrift are implemented by 31 March 2012, the following 3 will not be complete until later in 2012:-

- the publication of the Council vision (2.1.3);
- the next stage of the Integrated Resource Framework for Children with Complex Needs (5.4.1); and
- the roll out of the PECOS procurement system to all schools (7.4.2).

The Executive agreed to (a) note that good progress continues in implementing the BV2 Improvement Plan; and (b) approve extensions to actions 2.1.3, 5.4.1, and 7.4.2 which will now be completed in 2012/13.

5. Asset Management Plans

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the development of themed Asset Management Plans and their role in the future management of the Council's assets.

At its meeting on 29 March 2011, the Executive approved the Corporate Asset Management Strategy. The development of discrete asset management plans represents the next stage in developing the Council's approach.

The CIPFA "Guide to Asset Management and Capital Planning in Local Authorities" recommends that assets are classified in one of 6 categories, namely Property, Roads, Housing, Open Space, Fleet and ICT. Section 2 of the report set out the current position in terms of each of the categories. The Executive Summary and Action Plan for each asset class were attached at Appendix A to the report.

The six themed Asset Plans reflect the current known condition of the assets. A programme of surveys will provide increasingly robust data for use in planning for maintenance and investment.

A cross service Asset Management Group (AMG) has been established, incorporating the lead senior officer for each Plan and representatives from user services. This group will maintain the Plans and ensure that the action plans are implemented, monitored and reviewed. The AMG reports to the Capital Programme and Assets Group (CPAG) which has the lead corporate role in investment planning and delivery of the Corporate Asset Management Strategy.

A Members' briefing session took place on 27 February 2012 to allow detailed consideration and discussion by all Members on each theme.

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

- the value of individual properties within the Council's estate;
- the importance of the work being undertaken to assess and manage the Council's assets;
- open space as a key asset and the need to manage it effectively;
- the total value of the Meadowside Park resurfacing works referred to within the Open Space Executive Summary; and
- the need for greater clarity within the Action Plan in terms of the transfer of some properties to community ownership or lease.

The Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) undertook to provide Members with a copy of the asset values.

The Executive agreed to (a) note the development of the six themed Asset Management Plans; (b) approve the Action Plan for each asset class; and (c) note that the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) would circulate 6-monthly reports to Members on progress on the Action Plans.

6. Hazeldene Horticultural Employment Project Proposal

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the potential to develop a horticultural employment project within the grounds of Hazeldene Resource Centre, Kilwinning.

Hazeldene Resource Centre provides day services for adults with learning disabilities, some of whom have complex needs. The service is currently registered for 60 places. The internal reconfiguration of learning disabilities day services has increased the range of options on offer for those accessing services, but further development is required.

The Council has engaged with an employment development agency, CEiS (Community Enterprise in Scotland), in an Investing in Enterprise programme partly funded by the European Union. The aim is to support the formation and development of new social enterprises in order to create jobs and grow revenue.

Discussions have been taking place with CEiS about the feasibility of a horticultural employment project, with an initial study suggesting a level of demand for such a project. A partnership search exercise was conducted to identify organisations with a track record in horticulture and employability. Enable Scotland was established as the preferred candidate due to its experience in working in a similar project and their strong record of working with adults with learning disabilities.

The Executive agreed to give approval for a business plan to be completed to (a) explore the potential to develop an horticultural employment project within the grounds of Hazeldene Resource Centre, Kilwinning; (b) develop a business model in association with partner organisations, Enable Scotland and Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEiS) and (c) conduct a consultation exercise with the service users and carers who access Hazeldene Resource Centre.

7. Development Project: Harley Place, Saltcoats

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the preferred re-development option for the vacated Children's Unit at Harley Place, Saltcoats, and seeking approval to commence the project.

Following the closure of the Children's Home at Harley Place, Saltcoats, the converted unit reverted back to Housing Services ownership. In December 2011, the Council's Infrastructure and Design Service concluded the 'value for money options appraisal' exercise, and identified six possible options for the vacated Children's Unit.

The three conversion options which ranged in gross project costs from between £440,000 to £600,00 (£110,000 to £150,000 per unit) were excluded for the reasons set out at Section 2.3 of the report.

Housing Services then considered the remaining three options:-

1. Demolish the existing building and build 5 homes on the vacated site (one of which is adapted).
2. Demolish the existing building and build 5 homes on the vacated site (two of which are adapted).
3. Demolish the existing building and build 6 new homes on the vacated site (none of which are adapted).

Option 3 was excluded as it did not provide the adapted housing required. While it was acknowledged that Option 2 had a higher gross project costs than the other options, it was considered to provide the most value for money through the provision of two units of more expensive particular needs housing. Further detailed examination of Option 2 has resulted in an estimated net unit construction cost at £101,000-£104,000.

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

- the need for appropriate consultation with local residents;
- the importance of ensuring that suitable provision is made for parking; and
- Building Services' proposed shadowing exercise to build up the service's portfolio of skills.

The Executive agreed that (a) the vacated Children's Units at Harley Place, Saltcoats be demolished; and (b) five new homes, including two for households with particular needs, should be developed on the site.

8. National Performance Framework

Submitted report by Chief Executive on changes to the National Performance Framework.

On 14 December 2011, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth issued a letter providing an update on the changes to the National Performance Framework (NPF). The updated NPF was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

There is one new National Outcome, related to older people - *'Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it'*. This reflects the demographic significance of the ageing population and the Government's commitment to independent living, enablement and health and social care integration.

There are now 50 National Indicators as opposed to 45. The new set reflects Government's most up to date priorities and offers simplification of wording and language to aid understanding. The 50 National Indicators comprise 29 retained with the same measures, 9 retained with improvements to definitions and 12 new indicators. Section 2.5 of the report outlined the purpose of the new indicators.

The refreshed NPF contributes to a decisive shift towards prevention, greater integration of public services at a local level and a sharp focus on improving performance. At a local level, SOAs will continue to drive the achievement of improved local outcomes that will contribute to the achievement of National Outcomes. The revised NPF will be considered in the development of the next phase of the Single Outcome Agreement and the Council Plan.

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

- the purpose and status of the NPF strategic objectives set out in the appendix to the report; and
- the role of the national "Scotland performs" website and the availability of North Ayrshire performance data on the Council's own "North Ayrshire Performs" site.

Noted.

9. Welfare Reform Working Group

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the formation of a Welfare Reform Working Group.

The Welfare Reform Bill 2011 is currently progressing through the House of Lords with Royal Assent expected early in 2012. The reforms affect a cross section of Council Services and, therefore, need to be managed in a co-ordinated manner. The personal and financial implications of each reform need to be identified and an action plan devised to ensure all affected parties are informed of the change and understand how it affects them. This is best achieved through a working group.

The Corporate Management Team has formed a Welfare Reform Working Group comprising of seven Council officers from a cross section of Services and led by the Chief Revenues and Benefits Officer (Finance and Infrastructure). The remit of the Welfare Reform Group will be to:-

- identify and assess the implications of each reform before they are implemented, gather statistical information where available and prepare an action plan to minimise the impact on claimants, Council Services and the local economy from a reduction in benefit income;
- communicate and consult with all groups affected by the reforms;
- monitor and assess the impact the reforms have on the number of individuals that move into work or are out of work and provide up to date statistical and trend analysis;
- respond to UK Government and Scottish Government consultations, funding bids or any other requests for information relating to Welfare Reform;
- consult with East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Councils on their approach to Welfare Reform across Ayrshire and pool resource where possible, as well as consulting with other Scottish local authorities and adopt best practice;
- provide regular updates to the Executive of the reforms, their implications and the action being taken to address them;
- feed into the work being undertaken by the Economic Regeneration Development Board; and
- provide the Ayrshire Shared Service Executive with regular updates on the impact the reforms are having and the actions being taken to address them in North Ayrshire.

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

- the importance of including a seminar on Welfare Reform as part of the induction programme for new Members following the May 2012 elections;
- consultation with East and South Ayrshire Councils on their approach to Welfare Reform;
- those reforms which have already been implemented during 2011/12;
- the need for clarity on transitional arrangements in relation to the local housing allowance; and
- consultation with other Community Planning Partnerships, as appropriate.

The Executive agreed (a) that a seminar on Welfare Reform be included as part of the induction programme for new Members; and (b) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

10. Consultation on Public Sector Reform and Local Government

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the response submitted by the Council to the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee's consultation on Public Sector Reform and Local Government.

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee is calling for written evidence from all interested parties on a 3-strand inquiry under the overarching theme of public sector reform and local government in Scotland. Organisations and individuals are invited to submit written evidence to the Committee in relation to the overall remit, or to any or all of the individual strands.

The consultation response submitted on behalf of the Council, was attached as an Appendix to the report. The key points contained within the response were highlighted at Sections 2.2-2.5 of the report.

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

- the role of Elected Members in terms of the governance arrangements necessary for further integrated working;
- the importance of retaining a local perspective notwithstanding greater joint working; and
- the possibility of the integration agenda gathering pace following the local government elections.

Noted.

11. Rape Counselling Service

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the provision of rape counselling services.

There have been continuing discussions on the commissioning of an all-Ayrshire rape counselling service led by NHS Ayrshire and Arran and including the three Ayrshire Councils. An options appraisal was carried out on an Ayrshire-wide basis.

The option agreed was to continue with existing contracts to September 2012 with a view to moving to a single Ayrshire-wide contract in October 2012. Although there is agreement on the nature of the service to be provided, there have been difficulties in tendering for a pan-Ayrshire service due to the current funding and contractual arrangements in place. Partners have agreed that they are not in a position to jointly commission services at this time. This is unlikely to change in the near future and is to be reviewed in a year.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran's response to the Council's request for equity in funding in April 2011 was that there had been a historical anomaly in funding which would be addressed once a model of service provision has been agreed with partners. This has not yet been resolved and is to be reviewed in one year. NHS Ayrshire and Arran currently provide funding to Archway, a rape and sexual assault referral centre in Glasgow which provides support to women from Ayrshire.

It would take some months to tender for a pan-Ayrshire service and the contract would run from September 2012 at the earliest. It is, therefore, proposed that the existing contract with Break the Silence be extended for a further one year period up to March 2013 subject to a tender being issued for the service during this period.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the need for a stable, longer-term arrangement to be put in place as soon possible.

The Executive agreed to (a) approve an extension to the rape counselling services contract with Break the Silence for a year up to March 2013, subject to a tender for this service being issued during the year; and (b) receive a further report in 6 months.

12. Currie Court Care Service, Ardrossan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on a proposed tender exercise to appoint a care provider for care and support services to individuals living in tenancies within the reconfigured residential linked unit at Currie Court, Ardrossan.

At its meeting on 22 November 2011, the Executive approved the reconfiguration of the linked residential unit at Currie Court, Ardrossan. The reconfiguration will convert the ex-residential unit into 13 self-contained, 1-bedroom tenancies for service users with learning disabilities and mental illness. A staff base has also been integrated within the initial design, with staffing provided on a 24-hour basis, 7 days per week.

Service users who would benefit from moving to this type of accommodation model are in the process of being identified. Some currently live in the community with support or reside within a care setting or a hospital.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the need to consult fully with service users and their families.

The Executive agreed that a tender exercise be undertaken to appoint a care provider to deliver care and support to the individuals living in tenancies within the reconfigured residential linked unit at Currie Court, Ardrossan.

13. Tender for Taigh Mor Respite Centre, Beith

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services and Health) on the tender exercise for the appointment of a provider organisation to operate Taigh Mor Respite Centre, Beith, on behalf of North Ayrshire Council.

At its meeting on 1 February 2011, the Executive agreed to a tender exercise for the appointment of a provider organisation to operate Taigh Mor Respite Centre on behalf of North Ayrshire Council.

A formal contract notice was duly advertised, in line with European Procurement Regulations on 14 October 2011 for a contract period of two years with the option to extend the contract on a yearly basis for up to a maximum of 2 years.

A total of 18 organisations responded to the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) and, following an evaluation, 11 organisations were shortlisted. Tender documents were received from 8 organisations and the submissions assessed in terms of quality of service (60%) and cost (40%). The completed evaluation matrix was detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Hansel Alliance scored the highest against the evaluation criteria. The value of the contract per annum will be approximately £462,000.

The Executive agreed to award the contract for the appointment of a provider organisation to operate Taigh Mor Respite Centre on behalf of the Council, to Hansel Alliance.

14. Evaluation of Tenders – Sale of Dry Recyclable Materials

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the outcome of the procurement exercise for the sale of reprocessing of dry recyclable materials.

At its meeting on 25 October 2011, the Executive agreed to undertake a procurement exercise for the sale for re-processing of recyclable materials collected through the blue bin scheme.

The Member Working Group tasked with developing a Waste Management Strategy and Implementation Plan expressed a desire to expand the range of materials that can be collected through the existing 'blue bin' service. Consequently, the tender exercise sought options from the market for the re-processing of additional materials such as glass and mixed plastics within the co-mingled mix.

A contract period of 3 years with an option to extend, on an annual basis, for up to a further 2 years was agreed and a formal tender advertised, in line with Procurement Regulations. 4 completed tenders were received and evaluated against the following Stage 1 pre-qualification criteria. All of the submissions received met the pre-qualification criteria and were taken forward for price evaluation. The price was evaluated on the basis of price offered per tonne, including the costs of bulking, transporting and processing the material collected. The completed price evaluation matrix and implementation programme were attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

Stirling Fibre Limited scored highest against the evaluation. The commencement date of the contract is 9 April 2012 and its value is estimated at approximately £300,000 of income per annum.

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

- the balance between promoting the service to increase uptake and ensuring that associated publicity costs are minimised; and
- the provision of a second 'blue bin' free of charge to service users who require it.

The Executive agreed (a) to award a contract for the sale for re-processing of recyclable materials to Stirling Fibre Limited; (b) to delegate the completion of contract documentation to the Head of Environment and Related Services; (c) that a suitable promotional campaign be undertaken to advise residents of the additional materials that can be placed within the 'blue bin' for recycling.

15. Joint Ayrshire Waste Management Group: Minutes of Meeting held on 18 January 2012

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Ayrshire Waste Management Group held on 18 January 2012.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.