

Scrutiny Committee
12 December 2011

IRVINE, 12 December 2011 - At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

John Hunter, Anthea Dickson, Matthew Brown, Andrew Chamberlain, Pat McPhee and Alan Munro.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; I. Mackay, Solicitor to the Council (Corporate Services); C. Kirk, Corporate Director and M. Docherty, Head of Service (Education 3 - 18) (Education and Skills); L. Friel, Corporate Director and C. Hatton, Head of Environment and Related Services (Finance and Infrastructure); I. Colvin, Corporate Director and O. Clayton, Head of Service (Community Care and Housing) (Social Services and Health); J. Montgomery, General Manager (Policy and Service Reform), L. Morrison, Senior Manager (Human Resources); K. Dyson, Communications Officer and A. Little, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Councillor Hunter in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Anthony Gurney, Jean Highgate, Margaret McDougall and Jim Montgomerie.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 16.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 5 December 2011 were signed in accordance with paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Service Plan 2011/12 Progress Reports to 30 September 2011

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the performance of all Council Services as at 30 September 2011.

At its meeting on 6 December 2011, the Executive considered the report containing Service Plan 2011/12 Progress Reports for all Services. The report provided an update on progress as at 30 September 2011, following the same format as adopted for the 2010/11 year-end progress reports, to further embed the performance management framework and ensure it becomes a stable framework for Elected Members, management and staff.

Executive Summaries for each Service were set out at Appendices 1-6 to the report. Each provided the relevant Corporate Management Team member's assessment of the overall performance of the Service and its capacity for improvement. The Executive Summaries reported on financial performance calculated on data as at 30 September 2011 (Period 6) and also provided a narrative on progress made in relation to the identified "Priorities". The "detailed" Service Plan 2011/12 Progress Reports, which are produced by Covalent and available to Elected Members and the wider public, offer a report on every objective.

The Chief Executive's Service plan has an indicator which captures *"days per employee invested in learning and development in North Ayrshire"*. Currently this indicator captures data for the Chief Executive's Service only and steps are being taken to examine how all learning and development undertaken for all Council employees is captured and recorded, with a Council wide indicator to be established in 2012/13. With regard to the Financial Services Service Plan action - *"Consultation exercise to be carried out for support services to ascertain customer satisfaction levels across the customer base"*, the report noted that the structure of support services is under review and consequently the consultation exercise has been deferred until the outcome of the review is known and any new structure implemented.

The Executive agreed to (a) note the performance of all Services as at 30 September 2011 against the objectives, key performance indicators and actions in the 2011/12 Service Plans; (b) remove Chief Executive's Service indicator – *"SP1112CE_P_B09: average days per employee invested in learning and development in North Ayrshire"* – for 2011/12; (c) remove Financial Services action – *"SP1112FS_A_CO3: Consultation exercise to be carried out for support services to ascertain customer satisfaction levels across the customer base."* - for 2011/12; and (d) refer the Service Plan 2011/12 Progress Reports for consideration at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members asked questions and received further information on the following:-

Chief Executive's Service

- the provision of a Council-wide indicator for learning and development for all Council employees in 2012/13;
- a review of the structure of support services that will inform internal improvements, soft market testing that will feed into the review of support services and the provision to Members of information on the outcome of the review; and
- the total net underspend of £0.065m for the Chief Executive's service.

Corporate Services

- soft market testing to establish whether there is a robust market in the private sector for the provision of IT services and the range of services that could be provided, consultation with services to inform the specification for the soft market testing and a report to Members in early 2012 on the outcome of the testing.

Education and Skills

- the availability of Community Learning and Development resources to support community capacity building.

Finance and Infrastructure

- the under-recovery in Infrastructure and Design Services fee income offset by reduced expenditure across a range of time limited programmes; and
- a study to evaluate food waste collection options and a report to Members in January 2012 on the outcome of the evaluation.

Social Services and Health

- the implementation of the Re-ablement model across the Care at Home service and an anticipated reduction in the requirement of nursing home beds.

Housing Services

- a report to Members on the Scottish Government Innovation Fund for increasing the supply of affordable housing using new approaches to funding and delivery, and the possible use of this fund to provide loans to landlords to bring properties back into use;
- complex legal issues in respect of absent landlords and abandoned properties;

- the national schedule of rates used by Building Services to price and cost works; and
- continuing preparatory work on the preferred Arms Length Model for Building Services and a report to Members in early 2012 on the progress of the Revitalise and Rebrand Improvement Programme for Building Services.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.