

Cabinet
7 October 2014

IRVINE, 7 October 2014 - At a Meeting of Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present

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

In Attendance

L. Friel, Executive Director, G. Macgregor, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, F. Walker, Organisational Development Manager, S. Stewart, Senior Learning and Organisational Development Adviser, S. Humphries, Senior Manager (Revenues and Benefits) and T. Reaney, Procurement Manager (Finance and Corporate Support); C. Hatton, Executive Director, Y. Baulk, Head of Service, D. Tate, Senior Manager (Housing, Assets and Investments) and C. Dempster, Assistant Network Manager (Place); K. Yeomans, Executive Director (Economy and Communities); A. Fraser, Head of Service (Democratic and Administration), A. Todd, Policy and Performance Officer, M. Gilmour, Senior Communications Officer (Media and Internal Communications), K. Christie, Communications Officer (Media and Internal Communications) and M. Anderson, Acting Committee Services Manager (Chief Executive's).

Also In Attendance

H. McPhee, Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

.

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair, in terms of Standing Order 9.1, agreed to vary the order of business to allow earlier consideration of Agenda Items 11 (Procurement EU Tender Plan 2014/15) and 12 (Procurement Overview).

The Chair advised that he had agreed to accept an item of urgent business relating to the consultation response to SEPA's consultation of EDF's application. This would be considered under item 16.

2. 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.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2014 were confirmed and signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

4. Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board - Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) provided information on the role of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board; and (b) outlined the three main functions of the Joint Board to produce and maintain the Valuation Roll which sets out the rateable value of all "*lands and heritages*" (except where excluded by statute) for rating purposes, the Register of Electors and the Valuation List which sets out the banding of all dwellings for Council Tax purposes.

The Cabinet also received a presentation by the Electoral Registration Officer on the work of the Joint Board and, specifically, its role in terms of Individual Electoral Registration and maximising electoral registration/ promoting democratic engagement.

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

- Data Protection issues in relation to information sharing with the DWP;
- the legal position in terms of electors registering at more than one address; and
- campaigns by political groups to promote electoral registration.

Noted.

5. 2014 Employee Engagement Survey - Key Findings

Submitted by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) provided information on the launch of the survey; (b) presented the key findings from the 2014 survey, including the response rate, employee engagement levels, leadership and management of change, and communication within the Council; (c) set out the arrangements for publicising the findings for each Directorate or Service; (d) advised on straw polls which will be conducted to monitor the impact of improvement activities; and (e) set out improvement planning activities.

The Cabinet also received a presentation by the Senior Learning and Organisational Development Adviser, which provided further detail on the survey, in particular, response rates, engagement levels, methods to communicate the survey findings, and the ways in which the impact of improvement activities will be monitored.

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

- whether the Council's performance in terms of levels of engagement could be measured against that of other local authorities;
- the extent to which responses to individual survey questions can be benchmarked against other local authorities; and
- the source of the original questions set.

Noted.

6. Procurement EU Tender Plan 2014/15

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the EU procurement tender plan for the remainder of financial year 2014/15 and the requirements identified for financial year 2014/15.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to extend its congratulations to the Council's Procurement Team in connection with its success in the Go Awards Scotland 2014/15; and (b) to invite tenders for the supplies, services and works listed in the plan detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

7. Procurement Overview

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) provided an update on national and local procurement issues; and (b) reported on the Council's procurement performance.

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

The Cabinet agreed (a) to commend the work of the Council's Procurement Team in working with companies such as CalMac to seek to extend community benefits and promote local employment; and (b) to note (i) the content of the report and (ii) that a further report will be presented to the Cabinet in six months.

8. Public Performance Reporting 2013/14

Submitted report by the Chief Executive which (a) provided information on the Accounts Commission's evaluation of Council performance information; (b) provided information on the Council's performance against the four Council objectives; and (c) set out a draft Annual Council Performance Report 2013/14, incorporating the end of year Council Plan Action Plan 2013/14 progress report.

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

- the increase in the number of indicators which are significantly adrift of target; and
- the length of time which indicators might conceivably remain significantly adrift of target and the measures in place to ensure Members are made aware of any issues.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the Account Commission's Evaluation of the Council's public performance reporting for 12/13; (b) note the status of the Council's performance indicators at Appendices B and C to the report; (c) approve the draft Annual Performance Report 2013/14 set out at Appendix D; (d) note that the Annual Performance Report 2013/14 will be published on North Ayrshire Performs; and (e) note that the report be referred to Scrutiny and Petitions for further consideration.

9. Sundry Debtor Write off

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of sundry debtor write offs under delegated powers; and (b) requested authority to write off balances which exceed the delegated powers threshold of £1,000.

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

- the figure in respect of debts over £1,000, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- the costs associated with debt collection, including commission paid to the collection agency acting on behalf of the Council.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the sums written off under delegated powers; and (b) authorise the write off of balances over £1,000, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

10. Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2014/15

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on a proposed Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2014/15 in relation to the Council's statutory duties under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

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

- sourcing of gritting sand used on the Island of Arran;
- safe routes to school considerations in terms of footway clearing priorities in winter, including monitoring activity in connection with the walking route to Garnock Campus; and
- the legal position with regard to activity by householders and communities to clear footpaths.

The Executive Director (Place) undertook to examine how the Council's winter weather guidance might incorporate a positive message about community participation in helping to keep footpaths clear.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Roads Winter Services and Weather Emergencies Plan 2014 set out at Appendix 2 to the report; and (b) note the continued development and improvement in the winter service.

11. Demolition Order - Peamount Cottage, 2 Golf Course Road, Skelmorlie

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) which (a) provided information on the condition of the property at 2 Golf Course Road, Skelmorlie; and (b) sought approval to serve a Demolition Order on the property.

The Cabinet agreed, given the condition of the property, to approve the serving of a Demolition Order in terms of Section 115 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

12. The Ayrshire and Arran Joint Health Protection Plan 2014-2016 prepared by NHS Ayrshire and Arran in conjunction with North, South and East Ayrshire Councils

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) which (a) provided information on the work by NHS Ayrshire and Arran, working jointly with Senior Environmental Health officers from North, South and East Ayrshire Councils, to prepare the Joint Health Protection Plan 2014/16; and (b) detailed the joint work undertaken to protect public health across a wide range of health protection topics.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Ayrshire and Arran Joint Health Protection Plan 2014-2016 set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) note (i) the statutory arrangements for review of the Joint Health Protection plan to ensure resilience in responding to public health incidents; and (ii) the collaborative working arrangements between the NHS and the Local Authorities in the preparation and implementation of the Plan.

13. Additional Grant Offers for Outdoor Access Projects in the Financial Year 2014/15

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) which presented information on the outcome of funding applications for a number of projects to improve the outdoor path network in 2014/15.

Members requested that the officers take into account the following:-

- the need to ensure that full community consultation takes place in connection with the River Irvine Bridge and Connections Feasibility Study, particularly with regard to the community of Fullarton; and
- the value of priority being given in future to proposals which promote safe routes to school.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the grant funding bids submitted, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) approve the acceptance and expenditure of the grant offers from Sustrans Community Links Fund, as set out in the report.

14. Minutes of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Implementation Group: 9 July 2014

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Minutes of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Implementation Group held on 9 July 2014.

Noted.

15. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Physical Environment Advisory Panel : 28 August 2014

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Physical Environment Advisory Panel held on 28 August 2014.

Noted.

16. Urgent Items

The undernoted item was considered as a matter of urgency.

16.1 Hunterston B Power Station - Response to consultation by SEPA on EDF Energy's application under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993

At its meeting on 23 September 2014, the Cabinet approved a response to the consultation by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) on an application from EDF Energy to vary the terms of their Certificate of Authorisation for the disposal of radioactive waste at Hunterston B nuclear power station.

A response has now been received from EDF Energy in respect of a number of queries raised in relation to the application. A copy was circulated at the meeting. Members considered whether any change might be required to the Council's consultation response in the light of EDF's response.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note EDF Energy's response to the queries raised; and (b) to make no change to the Council's consultation response to SEPA, which was approved at its last meeting.

The meeting ended 4.00 p.m.