

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL – 24 MARCH 2011**

### **THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

#### **Report by the Chief Executive**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a Council response to the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In November 2010 the Scottish Government launched the establishment of a high-level Commission to examine how Scotland's public services can be delivered in future to secure improved outcomes for communities across the country.
- 2.2 The Commission is being chaired by Dr Campbell Christie CBE, former General Secretary of the STUC and President of Scottish Council for Development and Industry since December 2009.

#### **3. REMIT OF THE COMMISSION**

- 3.1 The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, also referred to as the Christie Commission, aims to produce a 'road map' for the future reform of public service delivery in Scotland, with the intention that its recommendations will inform work to reform public service delivery in Scotland over the coming 5 to 10 years.
- 3.2 In fulfilling its remit, the Christie Commission wishes to address three broad questions, as detailed below:
- How best can our public services achieve positive outcomes for and with the people of Scotland?
  - How best can wider organisational arrangements (including functions, structures and processes) support and enable the delivery of effective services?
  - What shared values and ethos should underpin Scotland's public services, and how best can they be embedded in the delivery of public services in the future?
- 3.3 The Commission has invited respondents to consider these questions, and to tell them about the following:

- Their experiences of operation of public services;
- Examples of projects, services, innovations or improvement work, including evaluations or assessments, which may be relevant to the work of the Commission;
- Their views on the obstacles to and opportunities for improvement;
- Their views on the options for the future.

3.4 The deadline for the submission of written evidence is 31 March 2011.

3.5 The Commission has been asked to report its recommendations to the Scottish Government by June 2011.

#### **4. RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

4.1 The Leaders of East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Councils agreed at a meeting of the Ayrshire Shared Services Group in December 2010 to develop a joint response to the Christie Commission.

4.2 The draft joint response is attached to this report as Appendix 1. It sets out the experiences of the Ayrshire Councils in respect of Community Planning, Shared Services, supporting the most vulnerable, empowering individuals and the ethos of public services, including the benefits of local democratic accountability.

4.3 Further, the three Council Leaders recognised that there were some areas where it would be beneficial to add to the joint response with some supplementary comments specific to each Council. As such, an East Ayrshire Council supplementary paper is included as Appendix 2 for consideration by Council.

4.4 The joint response was agreed by North Ayrshire Council on 23 February 2011, and will be considered by South Ayrshire Council on 16 March 2011.

#### **5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no community planning implications arising from this report.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications as a consequence of this report.

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no human resources implications as a consequence of this report.

## **8. POLICY/LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no policy, legal or risk implications as a consequence of this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council:
- (i) agree the submission of Appendix 1 as a joint response, with North and South Ayrshire Councils, to the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services;
  - (ii) agree the submission of Appendix 2 as a supplementary paper which focuses on issues particular to East Ayrshire; and
  - (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

**Fiona Lees**  
**Chief Executive**  
**14 March 2011**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- (i) Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services – Call for Evidence (December 2010).

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers or seeking further information on this report should contact Alex McPhee, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support on (01563) 576279.

**COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES**  
**RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE FROM**  
**EAST, NORTH AND SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCILS**  
**MARCH 2011**

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### **Introduction**

1. The three Ayrshire Councils warmly welcome the establishment of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services. Local government has always evolved and adapted to new demands and circumstances and the pace of change has been particularly marked since devolution and the recent shift in focus towards outcomes. Changing demographics, universal service provision and increased expectations on what the public sector can realistically deliver have been straining the system in recent years and will progressively do so as our populations grow older. However, the dramatically altered financial situation of the public sector has brought the situation into sharp relief. It is not sustainable to meet increasing demand for services against a declining financial base since the gap is too big to meet from efficiencies.
2. The opportunity for a fundamental review of what our public services are for and how they can best be configured is timely and opportune and the three Ayrshire Councils stand ready to support the work of the Commission. However, it is vital that the review is fundamental and is not confined to consideration of structures and boundaries between the main public sector agencies. We would urge the Commission to look at the totality of the public sector landscape and for their review to be both broad and deep.
3. We think it is important that the review is connected with the key strategic issues which the public sector is addressing, such as narrowing health inequalities and shifting the balance of resources to early intervention. We think it important that the review is shaped around key principles with outcomes remaining the focus and with evidence underpinning recommendations.
4. The three Ayrshire Councils have a strong tradition of working collaboratively. Joint work has ranged from the development of shared services (e.g. regulatory services) through to responding to major events on a joint basis (e.g. the economic downturn) through to joint planning for the future (e.g. boosting Ayrshire tourism) through to joint training (e.g. equalities). A natural extension of that collaborative working has been for the three Ayrshire councils to work jointly on this submission to the Commission.
5. The scope of the Commission's work is wide-ranging and we have sought in our response to give a flavour of some of what is underway within the Ayrshire Councils. We would be happy to provide further information and engage fully in the consultative process in the interests of being helpful to the Commission.
6. Our input is structured around discussion on:
  - Community planning
  - Joint Working
  - The Integrated Resource Framework
  - Supporting the Most Vulnerable
  - Empowering Individuals
  - The Ethos of Public Services

## **Community Planning**

7. The Ayrshire Councils have a strong track record of bringing together a range of partners in the public and voluntary sectors to work together to better plan, resource and deliver quality services that meet the needs of people who live and work in the area. We recognise that working together is important if we are to make the most of our combined resources.
8. Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements have been developed through close partnership working and provide a real opportunity to address the challenges faced by our respective communities and ensure effective strategic links from national outcomes to local outcomes which reflect local needs, circumstances and priorities.
9. Much has already been achieved through the Community Planning approach underpinned by the move to Single Outcome Agreements. The key challenge now is to build on our significant achievements and further exploit the potential afforded by partnership working to drive forward the existing agendas of information sharing, co-location of services, shared management arrangements and to move towards joint budgeting and the resolution of associated governance issues.
10. In addition to our respective community planning boards, there is an Ayrshire Strategic Alliance which includes senior officers from the three Ayrshire Councils and NHS Ayrshire and Arran. This has facilitated partnership working in the planning and delivery of services. Although at its early stages, work has been undertaken on the assessment of need and corresponding allocation of resources, development of a joint financial framework and establishing a collaborative commissioning framework.
11. It is recognised that there are further opportunities to move beyond existing partnership working and work further across sector and service boundaries, ensuring better connectivity and co-ordination between services and exploring further shared management arrangements between organisations. In this regard, the work undertaken in relation to the Integrated Resource Framework (discussed below) has the potential to realise significant benefits.
12. The increased focus on outcome based planning and reporting will assist in ensuring that activities and resources are directed at improving outcomes for our communities. The Single Outcome Agreement, as the Performance Management Framework for Community Planning, provides an effective strategic reporting tool, demonstrating progress on key indicators in relation to both local and national outcomes.

## **Joint Working**

13. Since it was established in 2006, the Ayrshire Shared Services Group has achieved success in driving and delivering shared services. Current membership of the Group includes the Chief Executives and Leaders of the three Ayrshire Councils and the Chief Executive and Chair of NHS Ayrshire and Arran.
14. A Project Board was set up in 2010 to drive forward, the shared services agenda in light of the challenging financial climate facing the public sector in Scotland and the UK. The Board directs further work on services or parts of services which might be suitable for joint delivery.
15. Successful projects to date have included emergency planning, out of hours noise team, joint procurement projects, a public sector property group, Business Gateway, a joint Technicians Service, a joint Structure Plan and an Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Group.

16. The most significant and high profile of our joint initiatives is where we co-locate services with Community Planning Partners. Ayrshire has been at the forefront of delivering joint premises initiatives where staff from a range of public sector agencies are co-located and working effectively together under one roof. These one stop shop facilities provide seamless access to public services within local communities and offer staff a base from which to provide services which are fully integrated. Whenever we are reviewing our accommodation needs we will continue to consult with our partners to ascertain if there is an opportunity for co-location.
17. The development of a Pan Ayrshire Regulatory Service is currently being progressed by the three Councils and consideration of delivery options in respect of a joint Roads service are at an advanced stage. In addition, the Ayrshire Economic Partnership has been established to identify strategic inhibitors which require to be addressed at an Ayrshire level in order to maximise sustainable economic growth for the economy, to address recessionary issues and to take the necessary action to remove such inhibitors. As further opportunities arise, we will introduce more shared management arrangements and joint budgeting.
18. The development of formal shared service arrangements for larger services, such as Regulatory Services has provided us with challenges in respect of governance arrangements. There have been various legal issues regarding the different vehicles through which the combined services could be delivered. The option of a Joint Board requires Scottish Ministers' consent. In addition, primary legislation would require to be amended to provide the Board with the capacity to add on further services. We are currently liaising with Scottish Government officials to develop a way forward.
19. There is a range of innovative joint working practices across the three Ayrshires, for example, a new approach has been adopted at a strategic level within North Ayrshire. Following discussions between the Chief Executive, the Leader and the Chief Constable, the Sub Divisional Commander assumed the role of Director of Community Safety and is a member of the Strategic Management Team, which meets on a 6 weekly basis to consider issues at a strategic level as part of the approach to the regeneration and development of North Ayrshire. The SMT also has senior representation from NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the Chief Executive of Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company.
20. Overall, it is important that we continue to push forward and develop the right opportunities for collaborative working, approaching in a structured and evidence based way to overcome any barriers and improve outcomes for our communities. However, we feel we have established a strong foundation from which to do this.

### **The Integrated Resource Framework**

21. In relation to rising pressures from demand, it is widely recognised that social care in particular faces increasing complexity of demand, for example in specialist service provision for children and adults with severe learning disabilities, and an increasing elderly population. The recession has accelerated many of these pre-existing patterns of demand.
22. The three Ayrshire Councils, together with NHS Ayrshire and Arran are currently participating in an Integrated Resource Framework pilot, the aim of which is to identify opportunities for a more local, integrated and effective approach to partnership working and for resources to follow need. The work associated with the Integrated Resource Framework Pilot will assist in addressing some of the issues identified above, leading to more effective integration which could improve people's experiences of services, and enable better models of care to be provided without necessarily incurring additional costs.

23. The anticipated organisational outcomes of the Integrated Resource Framework are:
- Resources allocated in line with relative need
  - Increased sustainability of service delivery
  - Efficient utilisation of resources and best value evidence based models of care introduced
  - Approaches to link resources to the individual's care pathway examined and identified.
24. Work thus far has involved looking at current models of support and scoping community need and has led to the identification of opportunities to do things differently, ensuring that in future resources are allocated in relation to need rather than being based on traditional services and service costs. The Change Fund could go a significant way to building on this work and is thus to be welcomed.
25. While this work is at an early stage, we believe that the Integrated Resource Framework approach offers real potential to improve outcomes through effective working and targeting of resources.

### **Supporting the Most Vulnerable**

26. A key consideration for all 3 Ayrshire Councils is in supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable people to achieve a better life and better opportunities. Supporting the most vulnerable people is characterised by demographic pressures, growing financial demands, the need to meet increasingly complex needs, and the ongoing growth of community based services. The emphasis in the future has to be on prevention and early intervention.
27. The three Councils are undertaking a considerable amount of work in order to address the issues identified, including integrating children's services planning, joint futures/community care, tackling homelessness and poor quality housing. There are also considerable efforts being put into employability initiatives and assisting those furthest from the jobs market. This recognises the impact that unemployment can have on other areas of people's lives, particularly around health and well being.
28. Work to support social enterprise companies has also been undertaken with a pioneering project in South Ayrshire being funded through the Community Planning Partnership. Close collaboration with Wallaceton and Newton Regeneration Forum has identified the opportunity for a social enterprise company to be formed to undertake basic care and maintenance of properties and local amenities providing local people with transferable skills.
29. In relation to older people, the rapid growth in this group has significantly increased the demands on all public service providers. In addition, the reduction in the working age population means fewer people will be available to help support their own family and friends to live independently. Community care services have identified particular priorities including encouraging more independence; reducing delayed discharges and emergency and multiple admissions; increasing community based services to maintain people at home; redesigning and developing services to meet current and future needs; improving service user movement through services; and developing further joint assessment and management systems.

30. Whilst the child population is projected to fall significantly, there is evidence that the number of vulnerable children and young people is increasing, including those in need of care, protection and additional support services. Early intervention is critical to give vulnerable children the best opportunity in life and to minimise the public sector resources required to secure the best outcomes for those children
31. The national Early Years Framework sets out a new vision for children's early years so that they get the best possible start in life. Early intervention is being implemented through roll-out of the Integrated Assessment Framework and Partnership Forums. Early intervention is also necessary, however, in relation to other groups such as older people, to enable them to remain in their own homes and addressing housing needs to prevent homelessness. With increasing budget pressures, however, if early intervention is to be seen as a high priority, consideration has to be given to areas that can be deprioritised in order to release the necessary resources required to deliver early intervention. Whilst there may be potential for some budget savings in the long term as a result of early intervention, the main driver should be the improvement of outcomes for children and other vulnerable groups. This will also require a cultural change across services and promotion of this cultural change to the wider public.
32. Within Ayrshire there is a strong track record of organisations working together in the area of Child Protection. This has included work on a pan Ayrshire basis in relation to joint work plans and training. In addition, the Child Protection Committees of East, North and South Ayrshire Councils worked together to produce a 'Parenting Handbook' which offers ideas and information to help parents with information on a range of issues and advice. It gives contacts and sources of further information and lists warning signs of particular difficulties and offers helpful tips.
33. The significant welfare reforms announced by the UK Government which will be phased in between April 2011 and April 2017 will have an impact on vulnerable groups. The abolition of Housing Benefit and the introduction of a Universal Credit together with a new Council Tax Benefit scheme will be complex and will require careful transition and there will be consequences for council tenants, for housing policies and homeless strategies and for the demand on discretionary housing payments.

### **Empowering Individuals**

34. In addition to responses by public sector organisations, there is a need to build capacity in local communities, with public services less able to offer financial support and services, and communities increasingly having to rely on their own skills and resources to meet their needs and aspirations. Whilst there is already a network of highly active and committed volunteers, the need for even more motivated, highly skilled volunteers is likely to increase in the future, as the three Councils are already considering options such as community groups taking over the running of community centres and there are some pathfinder programmes underway (for example in Maybole) and there has been a successful implementation in Dunlop, East Ayrshire. Recent consultations undertaken indicate that whilst volunteers are prepared to do more, they require initial support from the council in building their capacity. As they are likely to play an even more significant role in maintaining and developing services such as community halls, the councils and their partners, such as NHS, will not only need to encourage and support existing volunteer networks, but also support the recruitment and development of new volunteers. The South Ayrshire Council Community Planning Board have developed a community grant scheme specifically for this purpose.

35. Recent budget consultations have shown that the public welcome the opportunity for engagement in a full and frank discussion on the future of public services and how we might respond to current financial pressures. They have shown a willingness in the community to consider the reshaping of public services; and the prioritisation of services, particularly those to vulnerable groups such as older people. They see the provision of a high quality education service, which impacts on young people's future prospects in relation to employment opportunities, health/mental health, etc. as very important. The public also have indicated that there is a need to utilise existing public buildings better, such as schools, libraries, community centres, health centres and care homes, to ensure that they are used to maximum capacity to make them hubs for the whole community. The consultations confirmed a willingness for the public to take on more responsibilities for themselves, provided they had the capacity to do so, but they also wished to see public services provided as a priority to vulnerable people.
36. The consultations indicated that the public were keen to see greater efficiency around the delivery of public services in their area. This included the Councils, the NHS and other key agencies co-locating, co-ordinating and merging services where this would make sense. The clear message emerged, however, as long as services and facilities are provided in a way that respects the needs of different areas and are delivered in a quality manner, there is little concern about the organisation or agency which leads in providing them. Therefore we need to focus on the best way of delivering services and in particular to eliminate any duplication which exists.

#### **The Ethos of Public Services**

37. The current perception of a public service ethos is that of providing quality services to the public which meet their needs, equality and fairness in the provision of these services, protection of disadvantaged groups and that staff are motivated by "service" rather than "profit". Whilst there is also a culture within public services of providing "Best Value", there is still a public perception of wastefulness and that there is scope for efficiencies and effectiveness within the public sector. There may also be a misconception amongst many of the public that the council tax funds all of their public services and a reluctance to pay any more council tax. It is to be noted that the majority of taxes are taken at source (income tax, VAT, tobacco duty) and that the council tax is one of the few taxes that people directly pay.
38. Whilst it is acknowledged, that due to future financial constraints, there is a need to reform public services, it is considered important not to lose the "public service ethos". There appears currently to be an increasing focus on running public services on a more commercial basis. There is a risk of a diminution in the quality of service, with those vulnerable groups, less able to support themselves or to articulate their needs being most at risk. Of concerns raised by staff, most of these have centred not about themselves or their own future position but about potential loss of service to the public and particularly to the vulnerable groups. There is also a high risk of de-motivation and loss of morale amongst public sector staff, which in turn may lead to less productiveness and a lesser service, resulting in the very opposite of what public sector reform should be about, ie, efficiency and effectiveness and improved outcomes for individuals. There is a risk of a "one size fits all" approach, which does not take into account individual and community needs. These issues will require to be carefully managed in any public sector reform, in relation to staff and public expectations. This will require strong leadership at a national and local level.

39. Equalities runs through the policies and practices of all three Councils and is highlighted in our Single Outcome Agreements. The practice of equality impact assessing decisions is taking root throughout the public sector. Scotland has come a long way in the last decade in terms of addressing inequalities and the new Equalities Act consolidates and enhances that progress. It is important that financial pressures being faced by the public sector and public sector reform do not set that progress back and we would urge the Commission to reflect on the impact of its recommendations from an equalities perspective.

### **Conclusion**

40. The intention of this paper has been to set out some of the key work on-going across the 3 Ayrshires. It is not exhaustive but is intended to give a flavour of some of the work that the reform of public services is building on.

41. The priority for us all in the public sector should be in improving outcomes and achieving real and lasting benefits for people and communities. We must ensure that activities and resources are directed appropriately and that we focus on the best way of delivering services, including eliminating the duplication which exists.

42. We believe that there are opportunities to move beyond existing partnership working and work further across sector and service boundaries, particularly in respect of Community Planning and Shared Services. Community Planning Partnerships are well placed to respond to the challenges we face, particularly within Ayrshire where we have a strong track record of working closely together and with our communities.

43. We would welcome further discussion with the Christie Commission as its work develops.

## COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

### SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER - EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

East Ayrshire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Commission for the Future Delivery of Public Services, and trusts that the following information, in addition to the information provided in the Ayrshire joint response, will be a useful contribution to the work of the Commission.

East Ayrshire Council is a medium sized authority, widely recognised as a high performing organisation. This was reflected in Audit Scotland's Best Value Audit of April 2010 which confirmed that, together with our partners, we have a clear and ambitious vision for East Ayrshire, based on a sound understanding of the area and the needs of our local communities. The audit recognised that our services perform well, we are making progress with improving the impact and outcomes for our communities, we have a strong track record of delivering improvement and we are well placed to continue to do so.

The values and ethos that underpin our Services are demonstrated by our core founding values:

- *Quality* local services;
- *Equality* of opportunity and treatment;
- *Access* to services on an equal basis; and
- *Partnership* working to deliver more effective, joined-up services.

The Council has a strong commitment to Community Planning and we and our Partners have worked well together to set the strategic direction for East Ayrshire Community Plan, ensure effective partnership working and effective performance monitoring/evaluation and scrutiny of community planning activity and the related Single Outcome Agreement.

The Community Plan is the Council's sovereign planning document which links directly with service plans. The Plan was initiated in 2003 with a 12 year timeframe and four yearly review. During 2010/11, a four yearly review of the East Ayrshire Community Plan has been underway. This is the process by which the high level Strategic Priorities and Local Outcomes, and associated workstreams, activity and actions, are identified and confirmed by Partners. In December 2010, the Community Planning Partnership Board agreed a number of shared commitments for the next four years.

- Shared Premises;
- Shared Services with Shared Management Arrangements;
- Joint Consultation and Engagement;
- Joint Information Sharing;
- Rationalisation of Plans and Structures; and
- Joint Training.

Our priority at both national and local level needs to focus on being clear about the outcomes which our communities want to see and reviewing and aligning our arrangements to ensure that they are fit for purpose to support the delivery of those outcomes, within the resources available. **The Council would be loath to re-direct scarce resources to activities which might compromise this in either the short or longer term.**

Like other public sector organisations, the Council is working to address a significant funding gap over the next few years. Work to set the budget for 2011/12 was done in conjunction with a range of stakeholders, including our employees, Trade Unions, community representatives, independent and voluntary sector, business representatives, tenants and residents representatives, Parents Steering Group, elderly forum, disability network, carer's forum and children and young people.

A number of key principles were identified which governed our budget strategy for 2011/12.

- The agreed priorities set out in the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement should not be compromised;
- Investment in Children and Family Services to deliver the agreed strategy should be maintained;
- Financial Inclusion activities in all sectors should be fully coordinated;
- Economic development activities should focus on business nurture and inward investment;
- Local groups should be encouraged and supported to plan, fund and manage community assets and projects;
- The environmental impact of Council activities should be factored into budget decisions; and
- Further support should be provided to the third sector/social enterprise within an overall regeneration framework.

Community engagement in the budget process has been a feature for a number of years but this was the most extensive budget consultation exercise ever undertaken by the Council and provided an insight into how highly members of our communities value the key services that we deliver. Over 600 people attended the various meetings organised by the Council, resulting in very effective two-way communication with a wide variety of questions and suggestions explored. In addition, over 1,500 written comments were received and the budget web pages attracted over 16,000 hits.

The Council put forward a number of savings options for consultation and listened to what members of the community had to say. People recognise the difficult position the Council is facing and welcomed the opportunity to be involved in determining how the Council could address the funding gap.

Whilst some views were expressed about the potential benefits of shared services, the majority of people were primarily interested in maintaining local services and were concerned with the impact of savings proposals on their own local communities.

Much of the public sector reform commentary to date has been around structural change, including Police, Fire and Rescue and Health and Social Care, and it is appropriate that East Ayrshire Council pass comment in this supplementary paper.

**First and foremost, we believe that consideration of public sector reform should take account of all parts of the public sector, not just local government.** As outlined earlier in this paper, East Ayrshire Council has a strong track record of working with partners to develop and work towards a shared vision for the area, and would wish to emphasise that partnership working has been, and will continue to be, an important element in making the most of the resources available to the Council and its Community Planning Partners.

### Police and Fire and Rescue

It is important to recognise the key role that Fire and Rescue and Police play in Community Planning at a local level and we would not wish to see reviews of these services being undertaken in isolation. They are valued and respected partners, who make a significant contribution, and it is essential that links are maintained at a local level to address local challenges. We welcome further discussions on this matter.

### Health and Social Care

In East Ayrshire we have for a number of years recognised the challenges of demographic change and have implemented a strategic direction to develop a health and social care infrastructure to support the growing number of older people in our communities.

We are committed to supporting people to live for as long and as independently as possible in their own homes in the community. This has meant that the focus of service delivery has been on shifting the balance of care away from institutional settings to delivering services to people in their own homes. This shift has been achieved through partnership working and the delivery of integrated services.

Our partnership work already extends beyond community health and social care services and includes acute and primary health, housing, leisure and other vital stakeholders including family carers, independent, voluntary and community sectors. Notable successes have been:

- Meeting and often exceeding national balance of care targets for older people with intensive care needs;
- Consistent achievement of Delayed Discharge Target over a number of years;
- Progression of the East Ayrshire Supported Accommodation Strategy for Older People including new Council House provision prioritised to older people; and

- Partnership arrangements with Independent Care Home Providers to deliver long term care for older people.

Our transformation plan, now approved by the Scottish Government, sets out for East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership an investment and implementation strategy to utilise the resources allocated through the Change Fund in support of further progressing the Reshaping Care agenda. The plan includes the development of Single Point of Contact Hubs which will drive the redesign of services with Council employees and NHS colleagues being brought together in an integrated service with an aspiration for early movement towards joint management.

We firmly believe that there needs to be a co-ordinated approach to achieving outcomes across all of the public sector. Recent suggestions on how health and social care services might be “better” integrated give us some concern, not least because we believe that the model we have worked with our partners to develop, goes beyond conventional service delivery arrangements, is successful and continues to develop apace. These are local services for local people, designed and driven by the needs of the communities to whom we are accountable. We have evidence which demonstrates that how we are operating and our direction of travel is making a positive difference to peoples’ lives and we would argue that this needs to continue. The idea that all of the progress we have made with and for our older people might be squandered or halted by a change in structure involving the creation of a new unelected body gives us cause for concern. Careful consideration of evidence on the ground will be required, not least the benefits of local democratic accountability. **If any such change is proved to have the capacity to deliver greater benefits for the citizens of East Ayrshire, we will be amongst the first to embrace it.**

### Conclusion

East Ayrshire Council is a forward looking local authority keen to engage with the future reform of public services in Scotland and would be delighted to provide any additional information that will assist the work of the Commission.

We are a flexible and responsive Council, recognised by Audit Scotland, and eager to develop opportunities which will build upon what has already been achieved with our Community Planning Partners and which recognises the need for continued democratic scrutiny and accountability. Communities must be able to engage with service deliverers at a local level and to hold them accountable for the quality of the services that they deliver. Local Government has a key role to play in the delivery and future development of public services: public services accountable to local elected representatives.

Local Government, like the rest of the public sector, can not stand still. We recognise change as the route to sustainable improvement and would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Commission in driving this forward and we look forward to meeting with you in Edinburgh, or here in East Ayrshire.