

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING: 25 JUNE 2009**

### **SIX MONTHLY UPDATE ON CABINET ACTIVITIES**

#### **Report by the Leader of the Council**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** As the second year of the Council nears an end I am pleased to present my fourth six monthly report to Council on the activities of Cabinet. It has once again been an extremely busy and challenging six months and my report outlines just some of the issues and achievements Cabinet considered over that period. I believe Cabinet continues to work well.

#### **2. THE DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 2.1** As colleagues will recall our new decision making arrangements were approved at the Council meeting on 17 May 2007 and at that point Council agreed to review its new decision making arrangements at a future date. That review has taken place over the last few months and I look forward to discussing the results of the review after the recess.
- 2.2** During the period, Governance and Scrutiny Committee has also dealt with a full and varied agenda and Councillor Cook will provide Council with a detailed update later on in the agenda.
- 2.3** The Local Community Planning Forum completed their first full year of activities last November and came together in February of this year to review the activities of 2008 and set priorities for 2009. The review concluded that the first year had been a great success with 99% of respondents rating the Forums as a good, very good or excellent use of their time and over 95% stating that they had an increased understanding of local issues as a result of discussions.
- 2.3** The priorities identified for 2009/10 are wide and varied, including Community Pride and Responsibility, Health and Wellbeing, Town/Village Regeneration, Infrastructure to Support Tourism, Road Safety, Future Jobs/Employment and the opportunity to join together with the Children and Young Person's Forum to discuss topics of mutual interest.
- 2.4** In May, the first sessions of our 2009/10 programme took place with the Northern and Southern Local Community Planning Forums joining together to discuss Community Pride and Responsibility and the Central North and Central South Forums meeting together to discuss health and wellbeing. As always, there was good debate and discussion at the Forums and the actions arising from meetings will be taken forward by officers and reported to Cabinet, as appropriate.

- 2.5 The Equalities Forum has also been operational for one full year and met again in February with the main topic being "Access to Buildings and Services". An event was also held in May which was a 'Look Back, Look Forward' session.
- 2.6 The priorities identified at that event were Communication, Housing Allocations, Access to Services and Council Services and these topics will be considered by the Forum during the year.
- 2.7 The Children and Young Person's Forum has also been very busy and has met on a total of four occasions. They have discussed issues such as Stereotyping of Young People, Personal and Community Safety and Money and Education. The March meeting was a review of the past year and very positive feedback has been received from all the young people involved. They also agreed their issues for 2009/10 which include Drugs and Alcohol, and Transport.
- 2.8 As always I am looking forward to participating in future Forum meetings and hearing the outcome of all of the planned Forum discussions during the year.

### 3. COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 3.1 The Community Planning Partnership Board agreed at its meeting of 28 June 2008 to reduce the number of thematic Action Plans from six to four as part of the Mid-term review of Community Planning and for those new Action Plans to be operational from 1 April 2009.
- 3.2 After significant work across the Partnership, Cabinet considered and approved the review findings and the content of the new Action Plans on 1 April 2009. The four new Action Plans are as follows:
- **Promoting Life Long Learning** – Lead Officer Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service, Education and Social Services
  - **Improving Community Safety** – Lead Officer, Superintendent Dougie Robertson, Strathclyde Police
  - **Delivering Community Regeneration** – Lead Officer, Alan Neish, Head of Planning and Economic Development
  - **Improving Health and Wellbeing** – Joint Lead Officer, Katie Kelly, Community Health Partnership Facilitator and Cathy Roarty, Lead Public Health Practitioner, NHS Ayrshire and Arran.
- 3.3 The new Action Plans will assist the Council deliver on its strategic priorities and on the outcomes contained within the Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement.
- 3.4 Finally, before I move on to provide you with an update across each of the Portfolio headings, Cabinet considered and endorsed the updated Community Planning and Partnership Single Outcome Agreement at its meeting of 25 February 2009 for submission to the Scottish Government by the end of February 2009.

- 3.5 The updated document was well received by the Scottish Government with very few queries and the document was subsequently submitted for Ministerial consideration and sign off in May 2009. We received confirmation from the Scottish Government on the 16 June 2009 that our SOA had been agreed and look forward to an official sign off during the summer months.

#### **4. MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES**

- 4.1 Before I move on to provide you with an update under the Management and Resources portfolio, I think it is worth mentioning briefly the unprecedented economic circumstances being faced nationally and globally. Although the impact of the economic position is significant for everyone, I believe that we have set out in our budget a package of measures which will go some way to addressing the impact of the global position on our local communities; however, we need to be even more vigilant and I believe our decision making arrangements provide us with the opportunity to be flexible and respond to changing circumstances. The ongoing commitment from all parties to address the impact of the recession on our local communities has been greatly appreciated.

- 4.2 So moving on to the Management and Resources portfolio

##### **Revenue Budget 2009/10**

- 4.2.1 In February 2009, the Cabinet presented to Council this Administration's second Budget. Once again I welcomed the opportunity to freeze Council Tax rates at 2007/08 levels and to put forward a Budget focussing on re-directing resources over a range of exciting projects and activities.
- 4.2.2 Our Budget ensured that we focussed our resources on our agreed strategic priorities as detailed within the Community Plan, our Partnership Single Outcome Agreement and the priority issues identified by the Council of Raising Educational Attainment, Town Centre Regeneration and the provision of Council Housing.
- 4.2.3 In February I asked that a series of Business Reviews, 22 in total, be undertaken to ensure we are getting the very most from the resources we have. Excellent progress has been made in all 22, with 5 reviews now completed and efficiencies identified.
- 4.2.4 I am also delighted to report that we have made excellent progress on our Concordat commitments. Additional funding has already been allocated to ensure that from August 2009 free school meals is extended to all primary and secondary pupils of families in receipt of maximum child and working tax credit. I believe this will make a real difference to vulnerable families.
- 4.2.5 Our commitment to extending free school meals to all Primary 1 and Primary 3 pupils remains steadfast and we are looking forward to the necessary legislative changes that will enable us to put this in place from August 2010.

**4.2.6** In addition, the Social Work budget has already received additional funding which will provide for improved Care Home quality, more funding for Free Personal Care and extra weeks of respite for our invaluable Carers network.

**4.2.7** Also in June, Cabinet agreed to proposals which, from April 2010, will provide allowances to Kinship Carers of Looked After Children thereby treating them on an equal basis as our Foster Carers.

**4.2.8** I firmly believe that the decisions we have taken in respect of our Revenue Budget will make a long and lasting impact on the lives of many residents in East Ayrshire.

### **4.3 General Services Capital Programme**

**4.3.1** I was delighted that in February, Cabinet agreed to approve our £200m, 10 Year Capital Programme; the first of its kind in East Ayrshire.

**4.3.2** Within this £200m we are investing:

- over £56 million in our Schools estate,
- £45 million in our roads and vital infrastructure, with £20.9 specifically for carriageway structural maintenance, and
- £36 million being invested on regenerating our town centres.

**4.3.3** The timing is such that this investment should help keep significant numbers of construction workers in jobs during a lean time, and will mean that we will be ready to take advantage of the upturn when it comes.

### **4.4 Council's Second Council-Wide Strategic Self-Assessment of Performance**

**4.4.1** The second Council-wide Strategic Self Assessment of Performance was undertaken by the Corporate Management Team supported by Alistair MacNish the former Chair of the Accounts Commission acting as a 'critical friend'. This provided the opportunity to undertake a comprehensive Council-wide health check of progress made against the 10 Best Value Criteria.

**4.4.2** Areas for improvement were identified, including a need for greater alignment in the Council's strategic direction with the Administration's key priorities and the effective implementation of the Concordat with the Scottish Government and how this impacts on the Council's management and control of its budget. You will see from my earlier comments on the budget that we are making excellent progress in implementing the 12 concordat commitments.

**4.4.3** I am confident that the self-assessment process supports the Council in demonstrating its continuous improvement in service delivery across our communities and facilitates the achievement of the Council's three key priority objectives of improving educational attainment, town centre regeneration and the provision of new Council housing.

## **4.5 Best Value Service Reviews**

**4.5.1** During the six month period, Cabinet has considered two significant Best Value Service reviews under the Management and Resources portfolio:

- Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; and
- Roads and Transportation.

**4.5.2 Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services** - The review process for Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services was concluded in April of this year.

**4.5.3** The principal outcome of the review was the restructuring of regulatory services, bringing together Environmental Health and Trading Standards into a single unit. I believe the new unit, approved by Cabinet, will ensure greater efficiency and improve customer and business support in all aspects of regulation, service and advice.

**4.5.4 Roads and Transportation** - The Roads and Transportation Best Value Service Review was reported to Cabinet in April 2009.

**4.5.5** A number of recommendations resulted from the review, including the commitment to compile a ten year bridge investment programme and the overall reconfiguration of the Roads and Transportation service to ensure it is best placed to drive forward the £45M, 10 year Roads Development programme to improve road standards across the authority, that I referred to earlier in my report.

## **4.6 Best Value 2 and East Ayrshire Council - A Pathfinder Council**

**4.6.1** As Members will be aware, the Council was subject to audit in 2006 with an extremely positive final outcome. In 2007, the Accounts Commission started the Best Value 2 (BV2) process on evaluating the effectiveness of the audits with Councils being asked to comment on the appropriateness of the draft framework.

**4.6.2** I am delighted that East Ayrshire Council has been chosen, alongside four other Councils as a Pathfinder Council to work with Audit Scotland in testing and developing the new framework.

**4.6.3** The choice of Councils was partly based on a range of risk, based on previous audits and inspections and East Ayrshire Council has been assessed as low risk based on past results.

**4.6.4** The Accounts Commission also consulted with Councils on its revised BV2 Framework with our response was approved by Cabinet in May of this year.

**4.6.5** I am confident that the Council is in a strong position to respond positively to the Pathfinder BV2 audit and to demonstrate economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of its services.

## **4.7 Employee Attitude Survey**

**4.7.1** The Council, in accordance with its Best Practice arrangements, once again carried out an Employee Attitude Survey in September 2008 with individual questionnaires being sent to all employees' homes.

**4.7.2** We received a good return, with over 2,870 submissions, representing a response rate of 42%.

**4.7.3** The principle results of the survey were very positive, indicating for example that:-

- 86.9% claim to enjoy the work they do;
- 60.3% would describe their morale as high;
- 73.2% expressed satisfaction with the Council as an employer;
- very positive responses in respect of employees' awareness and support of the Council's commitment to Best Value; and
- strong recognition of the Council's core values and visions.

**4.7.4** In order to take forward the results of the survey, a number of general Employee Focus Groups will be established, with particular consideration being given to the EAGER process, increasing communication and ensuring a more consistent approach to team meetings/briefings. The Focus Groups will be reporting to the Corporate Management Team with their findings and recommendations.

## **5. LIFELONG LEARNING**

**5.1** Now moving on to Lifelong Learning.

### **Strategies**

**5.1.1** Cabinet has given its support to a number of strategies developed by the Educational and Social Services Department all of which have the overall aim of increasing efficiency, raising educational attainment and improving service delivery. These include:

- Parental Involvement Strategy;
- School Estate Management Plan 2008;
- Capital Investment Strategy ; and
- Support for Looked After Young People Preparing for SQA Examinations.

**5.1.2** I would like to make particular reference to the Support for Looked After Young People in preparing for SQA examinations. The Council as a Corporate Parent has responsibility for our Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People and places the highest possible priority in discharging this function and is always looking for ways to develop support strategies for this group of young people. Members will recognise this work from our updates on the Corporate Parenting Action Plan.

Funding was received by the Department of Educational and Social Services to develop such a strategy and the project focussed on the Children and

Young People who were in danger of failing to achieve any award in Standard Grade English or Mathematics at foundation or general level.

Since receiving the funding over 200 mini lessons are now available on-line. Pupils also have access to the materials in the residential homes and the community learning centres, as well as in schools. This is a positive and practical step in supporting our looked after young people at this important stage of their life.

## **5.2 Extension of the School Nursing Service in East Ayrshire Secondary Schools**

**5.2.1** This is an excellent initiative proposed by NHS Ayrshire & Arran and whole heartedly supported by Cabinet which sees the further development of the school nursing service involving secondary schools across East Ayrshire. This will allow pupils to access professional support and advice on a range of services, including physical, sexual and emotional health.

**5.2.2** The proposed development of the service will be delivered by school nurses for NHS Ayrshire and Arran and will encompass the following:

- healthy eating and exercise advice;
- low confidence and self esteem;
- support with mental health issues including bullying, stress and self harm;
- support with substance misuse, in particular alcohol consumption and smoking; and
- sexual health services.

**5.2.3** Consultation took place with all nine Parent Councils, including the one denominational school in the Authority, between January and March of this year. All Parent Councils responded positively to the proposals.

**5.2.4** I know colleagues around the table are equally concerned about the number of young people affected by these issues and will welcome the introduction of this enhanced service.

## **5.3 Funding update 2009/10 and Payments to Partner Providers**

**5.3.1** In March of this year, under the Lifelong Learning banner, Cabinet awarded just over £133,000 to some very worthwhile groups which will help to ensure their sustainability this financial year.

**5.3.2** In addition approximately £250,000 worth of funding was awarded to groups in respect of early education and childcare in support of the Council's Childcare Strategy.

**5.3.3** Cabinet once again entered into a new Service Level Agreement with 12 partner providers of pre-school education in the voluntary and independent sector for session 2009/10. This will allow children in pre-school year access to 5 x 2.5 hour sessions per week and three year old children to be eligible for

a part-time pre-school education funded place in the term after their third birthday.

#### **5.4 Update on Capital Investment Programmes**

**5.4.1** Considerable progress has been made with a number of key specific projects within the Department of Educational and Social Services namely:

- the development of detailed designs in relation to the merger of Witchhill and Woodstock Schools in preparation for a £10m investment in a new school; and
- progress with the £8m refurbishment of New Cumnock Primary School and Community Facility.

#### **5.5 Patna & St Xavier's Primary School**

**5.5.1** The Council is making significant progress on our work to improve the school estate and is currently seeking views on proposals for the new build campus that will house Patna Primary, Nursery School and Supported Learning Centre, as well as St Xavier's Primary, on a site adjacent to the present Patna schools.

**5.5.2** The local community has been asked to give its views on proposals to replace the Community Library, football pavilion and community centre which could form part of the new campus, with a prospective completion date of 2011.

**5.5.3** As well as purpose built nursery and supported learning facilities, the new campus will provide networking for information technology, be environmentally friendly and include features that support the health promoting school and healthy lifestyle priorities.

**5.5.4** Facilities in the school - such as the games hall and performance areas - will be available for community use.

**5.5.5** In recent years we have had great success with new campus projects which have offered opportunities to integrate school life with the local community and I am sure the campus at Patna will be just as successful.

#### **5.6 Darvel Primary School**

**5.6.1** The Council is also seeking views on the proposal to refurbish Darvel Primary School and create a new, custom-built nursery school within the primary school grounds by late summer 2011.

**5.6.2** Improving the fabric of school buildings is a key component in making sure our young people have the best possible learning opportunities.

**5.6.3** By refurbishing the primary school and creating a campus we can create more suitable accommodation that meets the needs of the children and staff and makes things easier for parents who may have children at primary and nursery school. We believe this campus has the potential to attract new

residents to the area and safeguard future resources and facilities for young people for the foreseeable future.

## **5.7 Scottish Futures Trust**

**5.7.1** I am also delighted with the recent announcement from the Scottish Government on the new Scottish Futures Trust and the opportunity it affords us to further improve our School Estate.

I am sure you will agree there has been significant progress across the Lifelong learning portfolio with exciting developments for the future.

## **6. COMMUNITY WELLBEING**

**6.1** Moving onto Community Wellbeing.

### **6.2 Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2009/10 - 2013/14 (SHIP)**

**6.2.1** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan or SHIP as it has become known sets out how resources will be used over the next five years to deliver the Council's affordable housing investment priorities. The anticipated Affordable Housing Investment Programme Allocation for the SHIP is in the sum of £54.202M.

**6.2.2** The programme, which will be funded from a range of sources, supports the provision of general and community care housing across tenures and seeks to deliver 929 affordable houses with a total programme spend of £96.072M.

**6.2.3** In addition, the SHIP seeks to support the ongoing work of the Council in terms of its statutory duty to promote the eradication of homelessness by 2012. The programme provides for a range of housing solutions, in response to the varying needs of different service users. Over the lifetime of the SHIP, the plan allows for the provision of housing that complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 in terms of:

- (i) a new temporary accommodation development to replace the existing Peden Court Hostel facility in Cumnock;
- (ii) a new Women's Aid refuge in the south of the area, to respond to the identified needs of women fleeing domestic violence which compliments existing refuge provision in Kilmarnock; and
- (iii) a new temporary accommodation unit in Kilmarnock to provide housing and support to young people leaving care and for whom the Council retains a corporate parenting responsibility.

### **6.3 Best Value Service Review - Housing Services**

**6.3.1** A Best Value Service Review of the Housing Service was carried out and presented to Cabinet on 6 May 2009.

**6.3.2** The review identified a number of changes to strengthen front-line service performance, emphasising customer focus, and to secure greater efficiencies

and cost reductions to deliver better value for money for tenants and other service users.

**6.3.3** The review further strengthened the commitment made by Cabinet in 2008 to embed the Single Business Unit into Housing services.

## **6.4 Leisure and Cultural Strategy**

**6.4.1** The Council has launched its Leisure and Cultural Strategy following a very positive public consultation.

**6.4.2** This is a very important document for the Council as it sets out the vision for delivery of Leisure and Cultural Services within East Ayrshire and includes our plans for sports, arts, museums, parks, countryside access, play and health improvement. In the face of the current economic difficulties it is more important than ever that our community has access to a range of activities and events which are positive by their very nature and help to promote the feel good factor for our residents.

## **7. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION**

**7.1** And finally, moving on to the Environment and Regeneration portfolio.

**7.1.1** Cabinet has considered and given its support to a number of strategies under the heading of Environment and Regeneration, namely:

- Sustainable Development Strategy;
- East Ayrshire Tourism – The Way Ahead 2009/2015; and
- Open Space Strategy.

**7.1.2** Each of these strategies set out important statements and ambition for the Council area, from our commitments to tackle waste, improve energy efficiency and promote sustainable procurement set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy to our direction for the future regeneration and development of our Open Space.

**7.1.3** In addition, our Tourism Way Ahead strategy sets out our vision that:

“By 2015, East Ayrshire will be an immediately recognisable and even more attractive destination where our industry works together to provide a unique, authentic and accessible tourism experience which focuses on exceeding visitor expectations and delivers tangible benefits to the wealth and wellbeing of local communities”.

**7.1.4** I am sure you will agree that significant steps have been made in this regard and I look forward to future tourism developments.

## **7.2 Homecoming Scotland 2009**

- 7.2.1** I am delighted to have been personally involved in a number of events to celebrate the Year of Homecoming in 2009. This has been an important event nationally and has encouraged a number of foreign visitors to Scotland, many for the first time to trace their family roots. I was particularly pleased to attend the official opening of the Burns Monument Centre and this will provide an exciting new destination for family and local history researchers.
- 7.2.2** Locally, we have been very successful in attracting visitors to East Ayrshire; the Creative Burns Exhibition attracted over 35,000 visitors to the Dick Institute, the Holy Fair in Mauchline was once again a major success and the Darvel Music Festival has become a firm favourite in the cultural calendar. I was also delighted to attend the inaugural Land of Burns Community Golf Festival at Ballochmyle Golf Club, an event which involved over 100 young people.
- 7.2.3** Looking ahead, we have the Ayrshire Innovators Exhibition running at the Dick Institute until mid September and the Kilmarnock Music Festival in August is sure to be a big attraction, with the majority of tickets now sold. Also during August, we have the Tattoo at Dumfries House and Cumnock Highland Games.
- 7.2.4** We really are offering something for everyone and I would like to thank Members for their support in these events and their continuing support and attendance at future events. This will include a special event, to celebrate St Andrews Day, details of which are currently being finalised and will be reported to Members. This will conclude the Year of Homecoming.

## **7.3 Delivering Community Regeneration**

- 7.3.1** Cabinet recently approved an Integrated Regeneration Strategy which will form the basis for co-ordinating the Council's investment priorities in delivering Community Regeneration. The strategy sets out a cumulative investment total of approximately £224.758M over the lifetime of the plan.
- 7.3.2** Regeneration is one of our highest priorities and as such, as I mentioned earlier, became one of the four key themes of the East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership backed by detailed actions and targets against which success will be measured. This will ensure it remains at the top of the agenda.
- 7.3.3** Following approval by the meeting of the Cabinet on 20 May 2009, 3 bids were submitted to the Scottish Government's £60m Town Centre Regeneration Fund for projects in Kilmarnock, Cumnock and Galston by the deadline of 5 June 2009. The total combined value of bids was £2.15 million and we expect an announcement on the outcome of the bids by the end of July 2009.
- 7.3.4** The visible signs of work to regenerate the historic core of Kilmarnock's Outstanding Conservation Area are now starting to bear fruit, with work on site at Tannahill's Furniture Shop and the Johnny Walker Bonded

Warehouse, with the schemes receiving grant funding of over £200k and £560k respectively.

**7.3.5** A range of other projects to be funded through the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and Townscape Heritage Initiative are in the pipeline and will make a significant difference to the environmental prospects of Kilmarnock.

**7.3.6** In addition earlier in the year, Council secured £880k of grant from Historic Scotland for the Cumnock Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and work is ongoing to ensure the effective implementation of this programme.

#### **7.4 Employment Task Force**

**7.4.1** To ensure that we are proactive in our response to the overall economic downturn, Cabinet agreed to establish an Employment Task Force, which now operates on a pan-Ayrshire basis.

**7.4.2** The Task Force's remit is to share information about companies experiencing particular trading difficulties and ensure that effective, co-ordinated support is made available to sustain business and support employees.

**7.4.3** In March this year a Business Summit was organised and attended by over 200 local businesses. The Summit highlighted the range of support available from both public and private organisations and offered practical advice on an individual basis, as required.

#### **7.5 Leisure Services Capital Programme 2009/10**

**7.5.1** Some exciting projects were approved by Cabinet under the Leisure Services Capital Programme for 2009/10 and I look forward to seeing them come to fruition.

- £4.3m is being invested in Stewarton for the provision of new indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
- £5m has been allocated to deliver an athletics facility in Kilmarnock with competition standard indoor and outdoor facilities.
- £200,000 was allocated to improvement in public parks - £170,000 for the Howard Park which will complement the Town Centre Regeneration Initiatives and ensure that the park is a safe and attractive venue for visitors.
- £50,000 was allocated for Public Art and it was agreed that the Howard Park would benefit from a Public Art installation.
- £600,000 was allocated to new sports pavilions and the initial priority order was Knockentiber followed by Netherthird.

- £30,000 was allocated to Core Path Plans with £25,000 being utilised for appropriate signage;
- £150,000 would be used for the ongoing works required throughout the Council area to allow us to offer cemetery facilities locally;
- £300,000 investment in play parks; and
- the installation of a further two Streetsport Cages in Mauchline and Gargieston.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1** Over the last 6 months I believe that the Cabinet has considered and agreed a range of programmes and initiatives which will have a positive impact on the communities of East Ayrshire. It has been a busy and productive 6 months.
- 8.1.2** I believe our significant capital investment programme, coupled with our proposals for the regeneration of our Town Centres, will deliver long term benefits for our local communities.
- 8.1.3** Our ambitious plans for our school estate, supported by our commitment to supporting our most vulnerable young people, I believe will raise educational attainment over future years.
- 8.1.4** In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our Council officers for the exciting range of work developed and presented to Cabinet over the last 6 months.
- 8.1.5** Finally, I would like to thank all Elected Members of the Council for their positive participation in all elements of the decision making structure, from our Local Community Planning Forums, through Cabinet and on the work of Governance and Scrutiny. We face unprecedented circumstances nationally and globally and your positive contribution at a local level ensures that East Ayrshire continues to grow and develop and that we continue to deliver first class services to our local communities. Thank you.