

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17 DECEMBER 2010

MATTERS ARISING UPDATE REPORT

Report by Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a consolidated response to information requests made by Members at previous meetings.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members are aware, during the course of discussions at meetings of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee, Members, from time to time, seek information or clarification from Officers on particular matters which requires to be provided after the meeting. Such requests arise from, and reflect, the role of the Committee in respect of its scrutiny function.
- 2.2 The Committee at its meeting held on 3 April 2009 agreed that, in future, a report be submitted to the Committee to consolidate all responses to information requests made by Members of the Committee at previous meetings or, otherwise, provide an explanation as to why the relevant information is not yet available. This approach will formalise the various matters arising into report format thereby facilitating presentation of the information to Members and recording of the origin and progress of the issues raised.

3. UPDATE ON MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The outstanding matters arising from the last meeting of the Committee and the information relevant to these matters is set out below, namely:-

- 3.1.1 **Department of Educational and Social Services: Standards and Quality Report for 2009: Close Cleaning Scheme (GSC, 19 November 2010, Item 3 (ii), Page , 07/12)**

Information Requested: That information be provided within the Matters Arising Update report to the next meeting on the detailed criteria for the selection of common entries under the close cleaning pilot scheme and the criteria for selecting the 88 identified common entries within the report as opposed to any other common entries

Response by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services:- The selection of properties for inclusion within the scheme was based on the following criteria:

- Void rate
- Lost rent
- Turnover rate

- Refusal rate
- Difficult to let indicators
- No. of new vulnerable tenants
- No. of houses given up within 1 year
- Properties taking up a disproportionate amount of staff time dealing with estate management issues
- Number and cost of regular environmental cleans which had been instructed.

It is evident that many tenants take a pride in their property and high standards are maintained. Based on the foregoing criteria, individual closes within a particular street would be included, while others would not. The selection of properties is designed to target the resource to those properties where it will have the greatest impact.

The above criteria were applied in relation to the selection of properties for the pilot and also the rolled out scheme.

3.1.2 East Ayrshire Council: Report to Members and the Controller of Audit on the 2009/10 Audit (GSC, 19 November 2010, Item 4, Page , 07/12)

Information Requested: That the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support would provide within the Matters Arising Update Report to the next meeting, for comparative purposes, information on the relative performance of the family authorities in respect of Accounting Ratios as detailed within Appendix C to the report.

Response by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support:-
This information is provided within Appendix 1 to this report.

3.1.3 Statistics Release: Adults with Learning Disabilities: Implementation of "The Same as You?" 2009 (GSC 19 November 2010, Item 6, Page , 07/12)

Information Requested: That current information on the number/percentage of adults with learning disabilities/disabilities generally employed by the Council be provided within the Matters Arising Update Report to the next meeting.

Response by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support:-
The statistics which the Council collect, collate and publish on the number of disabled employees is not split by the type of disability. Accordingly, it is not possible to provide information regarding employees with learning disabilities as a separate category.

3.1.4 Final Measurements on Works Contracts for the Period 1 April to 31 October 2010 (GSC 19 November 2010, Item 8, Page , 07/12)

Information Requested: That the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support provided within the Matters Arising Update Report to the next meeting, information on (a) the difference between the original and final tendered amounts for the contract for the demolition of the property at Nos 44-46 Townhead Street, Cumnock, and associated works; and (b) insurance arrangements relative to the reinstatement of fire damage to Council houses.

Response by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support:-

The contract for the demolition of the property at Nos 44-46 Townhead Street, Cumnock was tendered only once. The original tender had an item for retention of the Ballochmyle sandstone and this retention was included at the request of the Cumnock CARS Project Officer who considered that this was a rare opportunity to obtain a source of not only Ballochmyle sandstone, but dressed stone, including large blocks of Ashlar from ingoes, cills, lintels and squared rubble. There are a large number of buildings within the local area which have been built using Ballochmyle sandstone, including Council owned buildings, and the sandstone will be used as and when required to enable stone repairs/replacement to such buildings to be properly carried out. The total costs associated with retaining the stone was £4,024.80, within the final contract costs (final measurement) of £27,994.24.

With regard to insurance arrangements relative to the reinstatement of fire damage to Council houses, it is the case that losses due to fire, flood or other accepted risks, the basis of insurance settlement is usually the value of the actual reinstatement works, together with associated fees and charges and a contribution to the value of rent over the lapsed period of vacancy, subject to standard excess dependent upon the type of property. The exceptions to this are (i) where the Council elects to carry out modification or improvement above the scope of the reinstatement works; and (ii) where a claim is settled on an indemnity basis ie if the Council does not choose to carry out the reinstatement works to the same property, a cash value related to the assessed value of reinstatement would be decided upon. In the case of indemnity settlement, there are certain criteria that need to be met to demonstrate that the settlement is to be actively used in providing a suitable replacement.

3.1.5 Awarding of Contracts - Period from 11 September to 5 November 2010 (GSC 19 November 2010, Item 9, Page , 07/12)

Information Requested: That information be provided within the Matters Arising Update Report to the next meeting (a) on which buildings would be included within the Co-Location Evaluation Project referred to in Section 2.1 of the report and when it is anticipated that a start on this project would be made; (b) on the nature of the works included within the Bank Street, Kilmarnock LED Bollards Project; and (c) on the account which was taken by the Northern Local Planning Committee of objections submitted by East Ayrshire (North) Forum on Disability relative to the environmental improvements at Bank Street, which included installation of the LED bollards.

Response by the Relevant Executive Directors, namely:-

(a) Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support:- The co-location facilities which will fall within the remit of this evaluation are Crosshouse Area Resource Centre, Dalmellington Area Centre, Drongan Resource Centre, North West Kilmarnock Area Centre and Stewarton Area Centre. The timescales for the consultancy project involves an interim report to be prepared by end of October 2010 with completion of all consultations and the presentation of the final outcome report in December 2010;

(b) Response by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services:- Work will involve the installation of 95 bollards

and four 3m high "Bank Street" signs. The signs will be installed at either end of Bank Street, one at the corner by the Laigh Kirk, one at the side of the Subway shop and two at the junction with John Finnie Street and will be sited so as to not obstruct the footway, where possible. There will also be 9 "mini haldo" pillars installed to power the LEDs within the bollards which will be 150mm x 100mm x 750mm high and will be located so as not to obstruct the footway, ie behind walls, behind existing furniture etc. The bollards will be installed on the edge of the Caithness slabs throughout the installation with two exceptions - at the side of the Laigh Kirk where there is no footway, there will be 6 bollards in total which will be installed within the existing cobble sets and from College Wynd to Bank Place the bollards will be installed in the red kerbing due to the narrow footway. The bollards will be installed by removing 0.16m² of slab, placing the bollard in the centre at the road edge and surrounding the bollard in miniature cobbled sets - this creates a difference in texture and surface at the base of each bollard to try to assist the visually impaired, letting them know there is an obstacle and determines the edge of the footway.

The work will be done in four phases: Phase 1 from Laigh Kirk to College Wynd, Phase 2 from College Wynd to Bank Place, Phase 3 from Bank Place to Nelson Street and Phase 4 from Nelson Street to John Finnie Street. Bollards will be installed on one side of the road at a time and one section will be finished before another is started so there will be no long sections of roadworks. Permission has been granted to close the road when working at narrow sections on Phases 1 and 2 and a Traffic Order will be in place to keep traffic flowing. The aim is to close the road for only up to 7 days for Phase 1 and no more than 14 days for Phase 2, although this may not be necessary and if weather permitting. The road will be closed from 9am to 5pm to vehicles only (not including emergency vehicles or undertakers). Pedestrians will always have access, temporary footways will be installed when necessary and where there are works outside doorways, temporary covers and ramps, if necessary, will be in place to allow access. It is expected that work will finish before 1 May 2011;

(c) Response by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services:- Prior to the submission of the relevant Planning Application for the Environmental Improvements on Bank Street, Council representatives met with the East Ayrshire Access Panel on 9 December 2009 to discuss the proposals. Following this meeting, on the 10 December representatives from the Council's Lighting Section met with members of the Panel on site to discuss the location and the spacing of the bollards. The comments from both these meetings informed the proposals submitted.

The Panel objected to the proposal, noting that guidance in British Standards 8300 recommends that bollards should contrast in colour with the surrounding area, and that a 150mm contrasting band should be included at the top of any bollard, to minimise physical conflict between street furniture and people with sight impairments.

This objection was noted at the Northern Local Planning Committee and it was indicated that the design of the bollards is of a modern stainless steel appearance with a blue down lighter, continuing the successful lighting schemes carried out elsewhere in the Town Centre. Within Bank Street the

existing streetscape has a range of colours and the bollards would be read against a varied background. It is noted that the Caithness slabs are a mid-dark grey and there is a limited contrast between this and the proposed stainless steel bollards.

The stainless steel bollard design with a blue down lighter was selected as a modern intervention to provide a contrast between the existing historic streetscape and good modern design. Due to the sculptured shape of the top of the bollard and the lighting insert it would be very difficult to provide a 150mm contrasting band at the top of the bollard. The LED lighting will be directed downwards into the road surface away from the pedestrian footpath.

At the Committee it was considered that the representations received were not of sufficient weight to justify refusal of the application contrary to the provisions of the development plan.

Since the Committee the opportunity has been taken to revise the bollard design to include a band at the top of the bollard which is white during the day and blue at night to create a visible contrast.

It is considered that the proposed scheme meets the guidance within "The Disability Discrimination Act – Good Practice for Roads 2009".

4. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY/COMMUNITY PLANNING/RISK IMPLICATIONS
- None arising directly from this report.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Committee is asked to note the information provided in response to the matter arising as set out in this report.

Alex McPhee
Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

1 December 2010

SN/FM

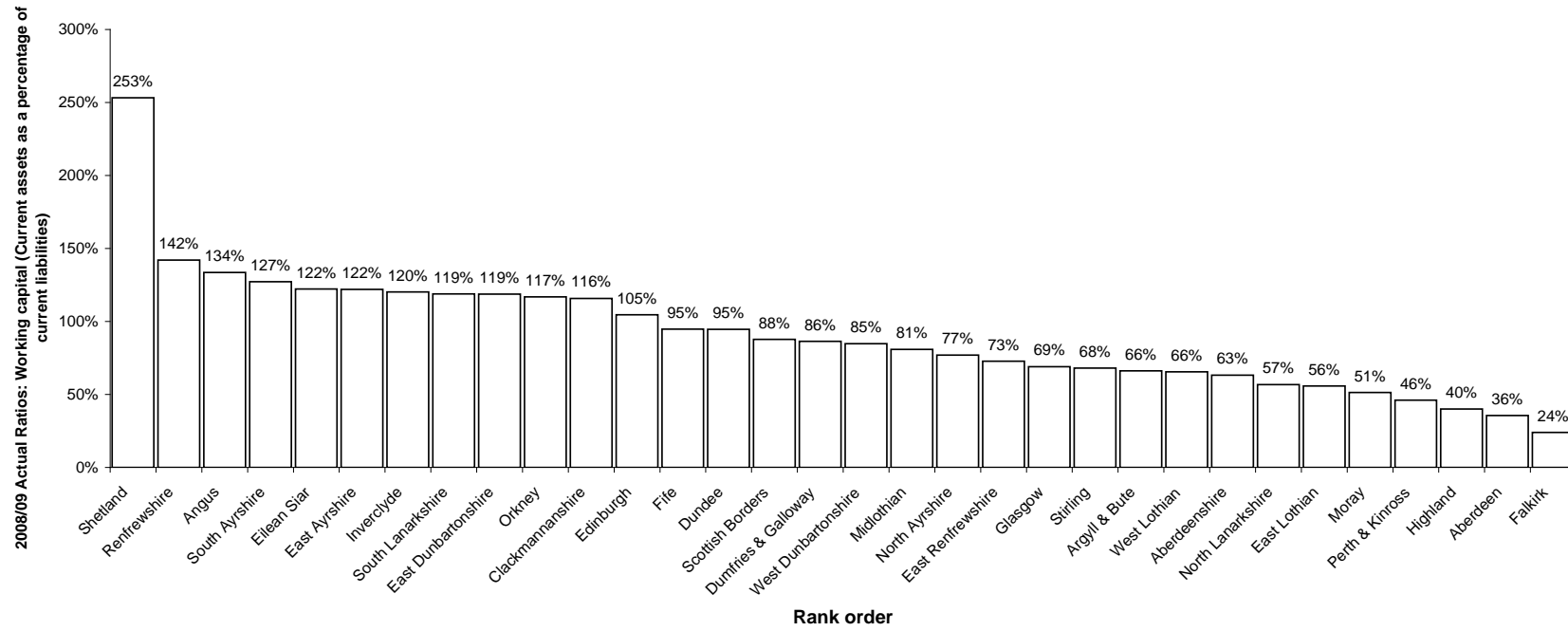
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - NIL

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on Telephone Number (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

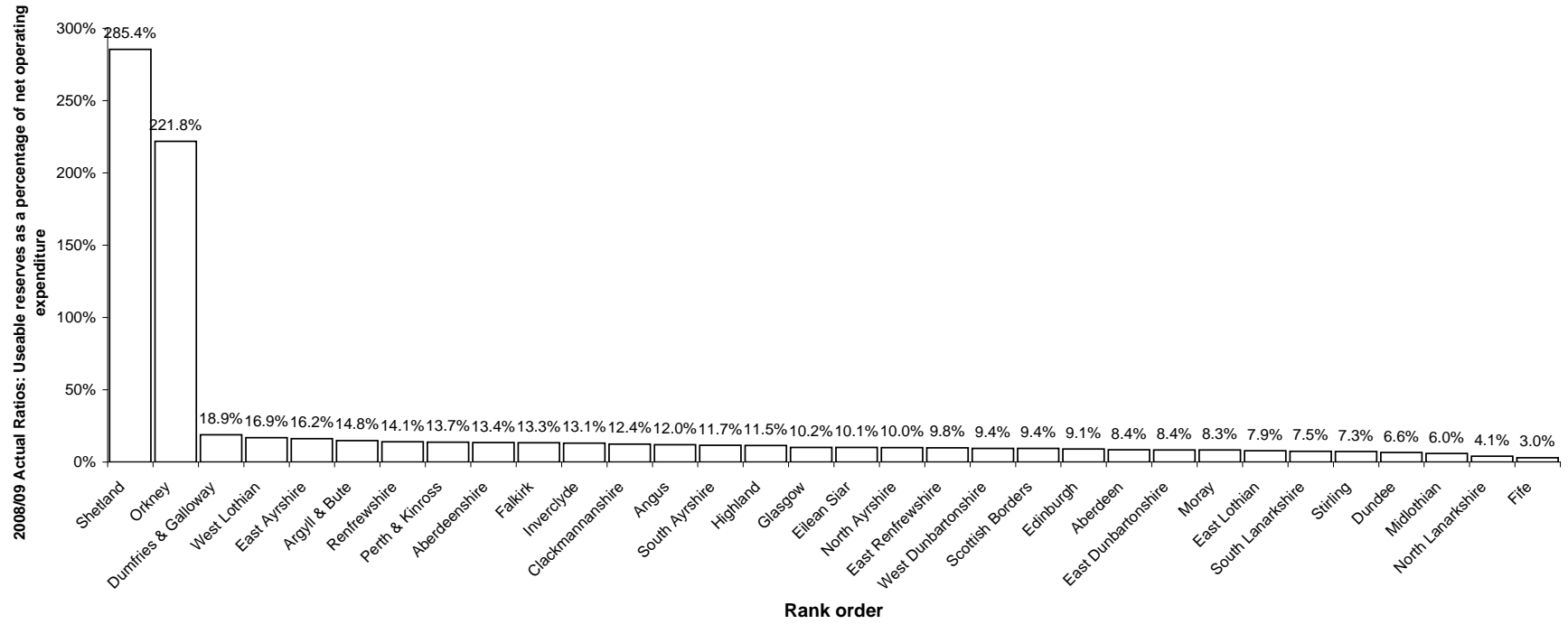
Annual report ratios - 2008/09 Ratios

1 Working capital – current assets as a percentage of current liabilities 2008/09

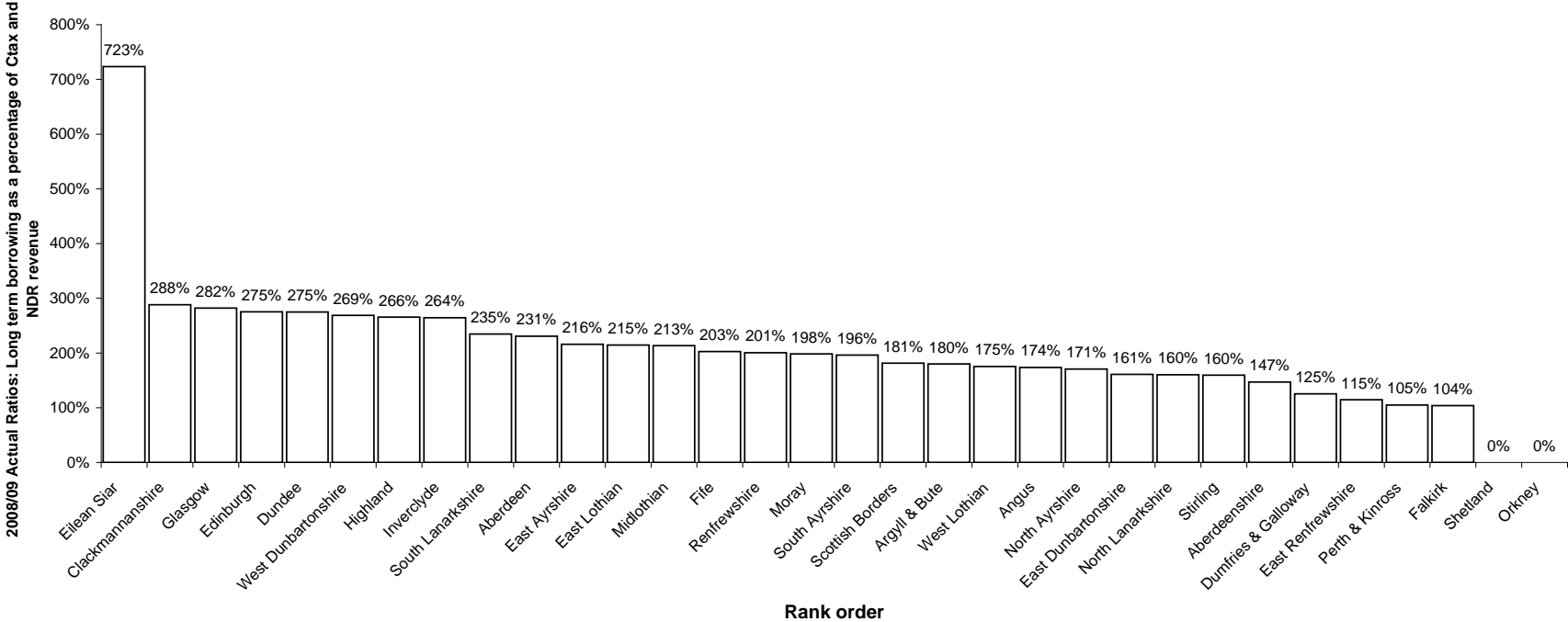


APPENDIX 1

2 Useable reserves as a percentage of operating expenditure 2008/09



3 Long term borrowing as a percentage of Ctax and NDR income 2008/09



4 Long term assets as a percentage of long term borrowing 2008/09

