

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 1000 HRS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Tom Cook, Willie Coffey, Helen Coffey, Maureen McKay, John Campbell, Alan Brown, Stuart Finlayson, Barney Menzies, Eric Ross and Elaine Dinwoodie.

ATTENDING: Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services; Martin Rose, Head of Human Resources; David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; Robin Baker, Financial Controller; Ken McKinlay, Principal Officer - Quality Improvement; and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGY: Councillor Drew Filson.

CHAIR: Councillor Tom Cook, Chair.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

1. There were submitted and approved as a correct record, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2009 (circulated).

1.1 MATTERS ARISING

1.1.1 New Council Chambers/Relocation of Data Control Centre: Budgetary Provision (Item 4(i), Page 588, 07/12)

It was noted:

- (i) as advised by the Chair, that the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management had circulated to members of the Committee detailed information on the respective budgetary provision for creation of the new Council Chambers and the associated relocation of the Data Control Centre; and
- (ii) that the Head of Democratic Services would circulate to members of the Committee, when finalised costings had been prepared, a breakdown of the costs associated with the creation of new Council Chambers.

1.1.2 Capital Works Projects - Connections to Utilities (Item 4(ii), Page 588, 07/12)

Noted, as advised by the Financial Controller, that a report to provide information on the Council's Capital Works Projects which had experienced delays arising from difficulties in programming connections to the utilities was under preparation and would be circulated to members of the Committee shortly.

1.1.3 Meeting with Scottish Water Representatives (Item 4(ii), Page 589, 07/12)

Noted, as advised by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, that the Officers' meeting with Scottish Water had been re-arranged for 17 March 2009; and

agreed that arrangements be made for this Committee to meet with representatives of Scottish Water on an appropriate date thereafter.

PERFORMANCE

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2007/08: COUNCIL PROFILES

2. There was submitted a report dated 30 January 2009 (circulated) by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management which provided summary information relating to the Council's relative position in respect of the 2007/08 Statutory Performance Indicators as reported by Audit Scotland.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note East Ayrshire Council's performance in the 2007/08 Statutory Performance Indicators, as reported in Audit Scotland's SPI Council Profiles document; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

SCRUTINY

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE 2007/08

3. There was submitted a report dated January 2009 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which advised of pupil attendance and absence in East Ayrshire schools.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the terms of the report;
- (ii) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services report annually to this Committee on attendance and absence in East Ayrshire schools; and
- (iii) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services circulate to members of the Committee information on the number of (a) authorised and unauthorised absences, categorised according to the Scottish Government's Attendance Codes; and (b) absences relating to pupils engaged in training for work type initiatives.

EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOLS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

4. There was submitted a report dated January 2009 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which advised of the exclusion of pupils from schools in East Ayrshire during session 2007/08.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note further information provided by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and also the Principal Officer - Quality Improvement, in response to questions put by Members relative to the following matters, namely:-
 - (a) the particular requirements and reasons associated with exclusions from special schools, and the continuing focus which the Department has on such exclusions; and, in this connection, it was agreed that

future reports provide further narrative in explanation of such exclusions;

- (b) the circumstances and background associated with the increase in the rate of exclusions from primary schools, as identified in the report;
- (ii) that future reports provide information on the number of pupils excluded, as well as the number of exclusions; and that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services provide to members of the Committee information on the numbers of exclusions of male pupils and of looked after children, year on year;
- (iii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report; and
- (iv) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services report annually to this Committee on the exclusion of pupils from schools in East Ayrshire.

Councillor John Campbell left the meeting during consideration, but prior to determination, of this item.

EMPLOYEE STATISTICAL INFORMATION - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008

5. There was submitted a report dated 30 January 2009 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support which provided employee statistics including Staffing Watch and Absence for the period 1 October to 31 December 2008.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note further information provided by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and the Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on the legal, geographical and curriculum management factors associated with the employment of 11 supply teachers aged 65 or over;
- (ii) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and the Head of Human Resources, respectively, would provide further information to members of the Committee on (a) the number of supply teachers over 65 years of age employed within primary and secondary schools; and (b) the number of Council employees as at December each year since 2003, by head count and full-time equivalent;
- (ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

6. There was submitted a report dated 29 January 2009 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support which provided, for information, details of tenders which had been accepted over the recent period.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note further information provided by the Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services in explanation of the variance, in some cases, between the estimated contract cost and the contract award amount;
- (ii) that the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services would provide to members of the Committee further information on the reasons for the significant adverse variance between the estimated contract cost and the

contract award amount for the refurbishment of the Baird Institute, Cumnock contract, and also an itemised breakdown of the expenditure on this scheme; and

- (iii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

REVIEW OF WASTE RECYCLING POLICY - TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF THE KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME - PROGRESS UPDATE

- 7. There was submitted a report dated 30 January 2009 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services which provided an update following recommendations made within the "Review of the Waste Recycling Policy/Technical Evaluation of the Kerbside Recycling Scheme" published in May 2008.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the progress made in implementing the recommendations arising from the review of the Waste Recycling Policy/Technical Evaluation of the Kerbside Recycling Scheme; and
- (ii) that a further update report on progressing implementation of the recommendations be submitted to this Committee in 12 months time, subject to interim updates relative to individual recommendations as and when appropriate.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING REVIEW: UPDATE REPORT

- 8. There was submitted a report dated 30 January 2009 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services which updated Members on the progress being made in relation to the provision of affordable housing in East Ayrshire and the preparation of the new Local Development Plan and Local Housing Strategy.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the progress which was being made in relation to the provision of affordable housing in East Ayrshire, as detailed in the report;
- (ii) in view of the terms of the Executive Director's report, that the review topic "To Ascertain the Availability of Affordable Housing throughout the Settlements of East Ayrshire" be now concluded, but that further update reports on progress relative to the provision of affordable housing be submitted to this Committee from time to time as appropriate; and
- (iii) that the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services (a) report back to this Committee on affordable housing provided within East Ayrshire by the private rented sector; and (b) provide information to members of the Committee to confirm which, if any, initiatives are to be pursued within East Ayrshire by Shire Housing Association through the Scottish Government's Accelerated Affordable Housing Investment Programme; and on the housing areas to be included within the Council's proposals for investment in difficult to let housing, and the average cost per house.

**FINANCE AND SERVICE STRATEGY REPORT TO PERIOD 9
(14 DECEMBER 2008)**

9. There was submitted a report dated 26 January 2009 (circulated) by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management which advised of the projected financial position for the year based on expenditure to 14 December 2008 (Period 9) and information provided by Executive Directors.

In response to questions put, and issues raised, by Members, Officers provided information in respect of the undernoted, namely:-

- the budgetary implications arising from the gritting operations undertaken in recent weeks in response to the severe cold weather conditions; and
- development of arrangements for the recruitment and support of foster carers and the management of demand for foster places.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the information provided by officers, as referred to above; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1128 hrs.