

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes of hybrid webcast meeting on
17 September 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

Present
in County
Buildings: Councillors Philip Saxton (Chair) and Gavin Scott.

Present
Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane, Chris Cullen and George Weir.

Apologies: Councillors Kenneth Bell, Mark Dixon and Lee Lyons.

Attending
in County
Buildings: M. Newall, Chief Executive; K. Braidwood, Director – Housing, Operations and Development; K. Anderson, Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; W. Wesson, Chief HR Officer; J. Tait, Service Lead – Thriving Communities; W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic and Governance; K. Hancox, Committee Services Officer; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Chair's Remarks.

The Chair

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting; and
- (2) outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live.

1. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

The Chair called the Sederunt for the meeting and having called the roll, confirmed that that there were no declarations of interest by Members of the Panel in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The Minutes of 20 August 2024 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme.

There was submitted an update of the Action Log and Work Programme ([issued](#)) for this Panel.

Having heard the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance speak in relation to the Action Log and Work Programme,

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to agree the current position with regard to the Action Log; and
- (2) to otherwise note the current status of the Work Programme.

4. Employee Absence 2023/2024.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 10 September 2024 by the Chief Executive providing Members with detailed information and analysis of sickness absence across Council services for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

A Member of the Panel requested further information in relation to what policies were in place regarding the high figures for psychological illness absence. The Chief HR Officer stated that the Maximising Attendance Framework had been in place since 2014 and that the policy was under review to frame it around the Supporting Wellbeing at Work policy with a focus on supporting employees with psychological illness. It was also advised that there were other support options available which included the mental health first aid network and Access to Work.

Having heard a Member of the Panel seek clarification on the reporting within the appendices, the Chief HR Officer informed that the table displayed in Appendix 1 included a breakdown of all education departments and that Appendix 1A was an overall summary.

Following a question from a Member in relation to the effect of working from home on absence statistics, the Chief HR Officer stated that it had not currently been possible to measure the impact of absences with staff working from home; however it was hoped this would be possible in the future.

A further question had been asked by a Member of the Panel seeking further information regarding the direct cost of absence and the impact this had on the budget. The Chief HR Officer responded that the hidden costs were unable to be recorded due to the variation of requirements between departments, such as front-line services that required immediate cover for absence.

Having scrutinised the information in the context of the Local Government Benchmarking information previously reported, the Panel

Decided: to note the feedback from the Panel, as detailed above.

5. Community Learning and Development Plan (CLD) 2021-2024 – Year 3 End of Plan Progress Report.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 10 September 2024 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Panel with the CLD 2021-24 End of Plan Report.

A Member of the Panel asked if there had been specific targets to measure the progress of Learners Achieving Learning Outcomes. The Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that in CLD it was difficult to ascribe targets as progression varied largely due to the vast types of adult learning opportunities available such as those progressing on to college or volunteering.

Having heard a Member of the Panel share their concerns that there was an absence of activities in the evening for youths, the Service Lead – Thriving Communities informed that the youth work across South Ayrshire happened in the evenings connected to the work that had been carried out through schools to engage with young people.

The Panel

Decided: to approve the report and note the progress made by the CLD Partnership during 2021-2024 subject to a minor amendment in Appendix 1.

6. UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) Year 2 2023/2024 Progress Report.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 29 August 2024 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Panel with an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 2.

A Member of the Panel requested information regarding employment and what organisations were engaging with people to get them in to work, the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that the Employability Team had been established for a number of years and were responsible for the modern apprenticeship programme and work in schools. It was also advised they worked with employers to secure work placements for young people.

A Member of the Panel asked, in relation to paragraph 3.3 of the report, which stated that funding was paid annually in advance, whether the Council had received all funding due for 2024/25. The Service Lead – Thriving Communities responded that the Council had received a letter of confirmation in respect of year three funding and would receive that funding at the end of the year.

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to approve the UKSPF Year 2 Progress Summary Report 2023/24; and
- (2) to agree that the UKSPF Year 3 Progress Summary Report to be presented to the Panel in June 2025.

The meeting ended at 11.15 a.m.

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