

PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW SCRUTINY FORUM

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 25 October 2011

Chair:

Councillor Edward McAvoy

Councillors Present:

Eileen Baxendale, Jim Docherty, Ian Gray, Graeme Horne, John Murray

Councillors' Apologies:

Jackie Burns, Alex McInnes, Anne Maggs

Attending:

Chief Executive's Service

A Strang, Chief Executive

Education Resources

L Forde, Executive Director

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; H Black, Improvement and Risk Manager; G Bow, Administration Manager; H McNeil, Head of Audit and Improvement

Also Attending:

Unison

S Smellie

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 31 May 2011 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Forum decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Improving Local Government Benchmarking – Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and Improvement Service

A report dated 3 October 2011 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on work carried out by the Improvement Service on behalf of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to improve local government benchmarking.

Following a SOLACE Benchmarking Forum held in March 2011, the Improvement Service had issued a report to Chief Executives containing proposed indicators/data sources and a number of key questions. The Council's response had confirmed support for using existing data sources as opposed to developing new indicators.

Update reports had been presented to SOLACE in June and August 2011 and the key issues arising from those reports were detailed.

SOLACE had requested that further work be carried out by the Improvement Service before it issued finalised guidance and data sources for each indicator.

The suite of indicators which had been considered by SOLACE in August was detailed in an appendix to the report.

Individual Council Resources would give consideration to the level of participation and use to be made of benchmarking results.

The Forum decided: that the progress achieved in developing a comparative performance support framework for Scottish Local Government through SOLACE and the Improvement Service be noted.

4 Best Value Review of the Early Years Service

A report dated 20 October 2011 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ progress achieved with the implementation of service improvements identified in the initial phase of the Best Value Review of the Council's Early Years Service
- ◆ further recommendations arising from the latest phase of the Review

An interim report on the initial phase of the Best Value Review of the Council's Early Years Service had been submitted to this Forum in May 2011 when the intention to implement a number of improvement actions had been endorsed. Good progress had been achieved in relation to the implementation of those improvement actions and a summary of the key improvements made in service delivery was provided.

The review process had continued in order to evaluate the remaining areas of the Service including:-

- ◆ service delivery arrangements
- ◆ actions to maximise the use of the school estate to extend provision for children aged between 0 and 12 years
- ◆ out of school care
- ◆ carrying out an assessment of management posts across the Early Years Service in liaison with the trades unions
- ◆ implementing measures to ensure continuous improvement
- ◆ the development of a new contract with partner providers
- ◆ the development of an ICT Strategy

A number of firm proposals had arisen from the Review and those proposals would be taken forward by Education Resources. This would include:-

- ◆ aligning early years establishments to the learning community structure
- ◆ assessing the potential for extending hours and full year provision within learning communities
- ◆ undertaking further work to identify opportunities for the school estate to be used for out of school hours care provision
- ◆ concluding the assessment of management posts in partnership with the trades unions
- ◆ continuing to develop quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ consulting with partner providers on proposed changes to their contract with the Council to deliver early years services
- ◆ continuing to assess the ICT requirements of early years establishments

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the action taken to implement the improvement actions arising from the initial phase of the Review of the Council's Early Years Service be noted; and
- (2) that the intention of Education Resources to take forward the proposals arising from the latest phase of the Review of the Council's Early Years Service be endorsed.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 May 2011 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.