

**MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor John McAlpine
Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor James McQueen
Councillor Mary-Jean Devon	Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Iain Angus MacDonald	William Marshall
Councillor Neil MacIntyre	Alison Palmer
Councillor Robert E Macintyre	

Also Present: Councillor Dick Walsh
Councillor Ellen Morton

Attending: Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR
Moira MacVicar, Housing Services Manager
Muriel Kupris, Leisure and Youth Services Manager
Gordon Murray, Service Manager Learning Disabilities
Peter McLaren, Interim Service Manager (Resources)
Brian Reid, Locality Manager
Jon Belton, Services Manager – Criminal Justice
Tricia O'Neill, Central Governance Manager
Morag Brown, Business Improvement Manager
Kevin Baker, Culture and Libraries Development Officer
Robin Harrison, David Adamson & Partners Ltd
Shirley Campbell, sportscotland
Lorna Jackson, sportscotland

Prior to the consideration of business the Chair invited the Leader of the Council to make a short statement on the Council's response to the Syrian refugee situation as given the immediacy and urgency of this issue it was important that Members were given the opportunity to be updated on the situation as it unfolds.

Councillor Dick Walsh read out the following statement to the Committee:-

Everyone is aware of the harrowing images dominating the media over the past few days, showing the plight of refugees frantically struggling to escape terror, destitution and the constant fear of death in Syria. Many of us have received representations from people in our communities asking what can be done to help them – and that question has undoubtedly dominated our own minds, too.

With hundreds of thousands of people caught in the most desperate of all situations, it is time for action, and that is why Argyll and Bute has joined other Scottish local authorities in offering assistance.

The Chief Executive has been in contact through COSLA to signal our willingness to get involved and offer whatever support we can. As a starting point, at least 20 families will be offered housing and support in the area, with the possibility of more in the future. Argyll and Bute will be offering these people the opportunity of a better life at a time when they most need it.

A team of officers are focusing on this, operating at the highest level and working with partners such as housing associations and other agencies, to put together a package of support for the families who ultimately arrive in Argyll and Bute. This team, the Refugee Resettlement Group, will meet for the first time on Friday 18 September under the direction of the Executive Director of Community Services.

The group will have to consider a wide range of issues and as we think of these, it is vital to remember that ultimately these are much more than a list of tasks – they are about finding solutions to some very human problems, like a place to live, furniture, education, health and more.

In addition we have already heard from ACHA and other local housing associations, who are also moving swiftly in offering their support and are keen to work in partnership to ensure that Argyll and Bute responds to this crisis collectively and in a spirit of unity.

The reasons behind this global humanitarian crisis are multiple and complex. Our response, though, is purely about people – about responding to people in need. This is more than another news story; it will not go away in a few days and no one can assume that it is someone else's problem. This is everyone's business.

We speak often about how everyone has a part to play in contributing to life in Argyll and Bute. Now we are playing our part by reaching out as a community to support unfortunate and desperate people who find themselves in the worst and most destitute of situations. We want to take every possible action that we can to welcome them to Argyll and Bute and to show them that here, compassion, humanity and opportunity are available to them in their time of need. I am confident that with support co-ordinated through the council, our community planning partners and, indeed, the people in our communities, they will be able to make a significant contribution to life in our area.

We know that millions of people have been displaced as a result of the civil war in Syria. Around 20,000 refugees will come to the UK, with Scotland welcoming 1,000 people initially.

It is heartening that along with other organisations across Argyll and Bute we are joining forces to work as a community; that we are part of a collective response which is not just national but global, uniting to offer support to people facing the very worst of situations.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors George Freeman, Donald Kelly and Isobel Strong and from William Crossan, Church Representative.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated at this point.

3. MINUTES

The Minute of the Community Services Committee held on 4 June 2015 was approved as a correct record.

Councillor Aileen Morton joined the meeting at this point.

4. PERFORMANCE REPORT FQ1 2015-16

Consideration was given to a report on the Community Services financial quarter one performance scorecard.

Decision

The Committee noted the performance for the quarter.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 18 August 2015, submitted)

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon joined the meeting at this point.

5. EXTERNAL INSPECTION/AUDIT REPORTING: JANUARY TO JUNE 2015

Consideration was given to a report providing details of all external inspection/audit reports received within Community Services during the period 1 January to 30 June 2015.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services, submitted)

Councillor Elaine Robertson joined the meeting at this point.

6. REPORT ON NEW WELCOME PACK FOR SERVICE FAMILIES IN HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND

Consideration was given to a report presenting a copy of the Welcome Pack for Service families in Helensburgh and Lomond. The report presented the background leading to the creation of this Welcome Pack, the purpose of the Pack, the intended audience and the distribution strategy.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the contents of the Welcome Pack created by the Service Pupil Advisor;
2. noted the commitment to partnership working between Argyll and Bute Council and The Ministry of Defence; and
3. agreed to the publication of this Welcome Pack on the Argyll and Bute Council website as well as in hard copy format.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 10 September 2015, submitted)

7. NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTTISH EDUCATION

Consideration was given to a report advising of the First Minister's announcement of the publication of the first draft of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education on 1 September 2015. The publication of the framework will be followed by an extensive period of consultation by the Scottish Government to help refine its contents and focus to ensure it helps meet the key strategic drivers of raising attainment and addressing educational inequalities.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the publication of the draft National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education by the Scottish Government;
2. noted the programme of engagement events planned by the Scottish Government to consult on the draft framework; and
3. agreed to the Education Service developing a draft response to the consultation for consideration by Council in November 2015 to align with the September to November consultation period.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 1 September 2015, submitted)

Alison Palmer and William Marshall, Teacher Representatives, left the meeting at this point.

Councillor Aileen Morton declared a non financial interest in the following item as she represents the Council on the ACHA Board in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area. She claimed the benefit of the dispensation contained at section 5.16 of the Standard Commission's Guidance and Dispensation Note dated December 2010 to enable her to speak and vote on this item.

8. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2015-2020: PROGRESS REPORT AND THE REVISED STRATEGIC LOCAL PROGRAMME 2015

A paper providing an interim progress report on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and highlighting minor revisions to the Strategic Local Programme Agreement (SPLA) was considered.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the positive progress with the SHIP;
2. agreed the proposed revisions to the Strategic Local Programme Agreement, which includes a new development of 16 units by ACHA at Jutland Court, Helensburgh in place of the original site at Cardross; and
3. noted that discussions will resume with Tarbert and Skipness Community Council to ascertain the demand for housing in Tarbert.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 26 August 2015, submitted)

9. HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME AREA BASED SCHEME (HEEPS:ABS) - TACKLING FUEL PROVERTY

Consideration was given to a presentation given by Robin Harrison of David Adamson & Partners Ltd on the Atlantic Islands Private Sector House Condition Survey 2014.

A report updating Members on the Home Energy Efficiency Programme: Area Based Scheme (HEEPS:ABS) which represents the main Scottish Government grant funded programme to tackle fuel poverty was also considered.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the presentation and report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 26 August 2015, submitted)

10. CULTURE AND HERITAGE ASSEMBLY

A report outlining progress in implementing the Culture, Heritage and Arts Strategy was considered. The report identified the challenges in progressing a community led initiative, outlined Creative Scotland's 'Place Partnership' offer in relation to the 'Culture, Heritage and Arts Strategy' and identified the next steps ahead.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 21 July 2015, submitted)

* **11. SPORT AND LEISURE FRAMEWORK 2015-2019**

Consideration was given to a presentation by Shirley Campbell of sportscotland and a report presenting the draft Sport and Leisure Framework 2015 – 2019 for Argyll and Bute. The Framework was developed in partnership with sportscotland and other partners, including significant input from staff within the NHS and will replace the current Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and will act as the overarching plan across a wide range of services.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the content of the Sport and Leisure Framework and agreed to recommend to Council that it be adopted to replace the existing Sport and Physical Activity Strategy;
2. agreed that a strategic health and physical activity forum is developed, managed and resourced to ensure that all opportunities to help people live active, health lives are well planned and delivered through partnership working and noted that the Policy Lead or Depute Policy Lead for Sport and Leisure within Community and Culture will be a Member of the Strategic Forum; and
3. agreed that the priority goals and outcomes of the Framework support the outcomes of the SOA and that a monitoring and reporting process is implemented to ensure that performance monitoring is accurate, current and widely shared with Community Planning and other relevant partners.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 4 August 2015 and Sport and Leisure Framework 2015 – 2019, submitted)

Councillors Rory Colville, Aileen Morton and James McQueen left the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

The Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to adjourn the meeting at 1.35 pm for lunch.

The Committee reconvened at 2.00 pm.

Councillors Iain Angus MacDonald and John McAlpine did not return to the meeting.

12. GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to a report providing an update on progress in delivering the actions in the approved Argyll and Bute Council Gaelic Language Plan.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the progress being made; and
2. noted that some measures require to be updated and that this will be reported to a future Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated August 2015, submitted)

13. LEARNING DISABILITY DAY SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report providing a summary and update on the improvement and development of the Learning Disability Day Services.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the ongoing process and development of modern and person centred Day Service Resources throughout Argyll and Bute regardless of whether they are internally or externally sourced; and
2. the improved grading of Learning Disability Day Services following Care Inspectorate inspections.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 29 July 2015, submitted)

14. CARE AT HOME: FIXED HOUR CONTRACTS

A main feature of the Council's internal care at home service has been a historical reliance on zero hour contracts. This has also been a feature across a number of local authorities and private care providers as a contractual response to the changing demand for services across localities thereby more effectively aligning service availability to service user need. Consideration was given to a report advising that Community Services has now reviewed its position on Zero Hour contracts and proposes a shift away from this position where appropriate to the staff member, subject to discussions with staff and the main Trade Unions.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the contents and direction of the report;
2. noted the details as set out in paragraph 4.1 on the processes to be followed in realising this move towards permanent contracts; and
3. agreed with the implementation of these proposals over the course of the Autumn 2015.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 4 August 2015, submitted)

15. CORPORATE PARENTING

Argyll and Bute's Corporate Parenting Board has developed a process to communicate with staff, young people and carers. The newsletter published by the Corporate Parenting Board is a method of communicating the activity of the Board in an easily accessible manner and was presented to the Committee in this format as an Annual report.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the newsletter which is to be circulated to children, young people, carers and staff.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 11 August 2015, submitted)

Councillor Aileen Morton returned to the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

16. KINSHIP CARER ALLOWANCES

A report informing the Committee of the recent discussions that have taken place between the Scottish Government, Social Work Scotland (SWS), the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish local authorities following the legal intervention of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in support of financial parity between foster and kinship carers through the threat of Judicial Review was before Members for consideration.

Decision

The Committee agreed that consideration of the Kinship paper be deferred to allow the implications of the COSLA Leaders decision last week to be fully understood and noted that a report would be brought back to the Community Services Committee once the financial implications have been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 2 September 2015, submitted)

Councillor Robert E Macintyre returned to the meeting at this point.

17. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduces reform in children's services with new statutory duties, which introduce a significant rise in the numbers of children and families eligible for services. A report advising of the changes introduced to "aftercare" and "continuing care" services within the 2014 Act and the implications for the Council was considered.

Decision

The Committee noted the increased requirements in Section 10 Aftercare and Section 11 Continuing Care of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the potential impact on the Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 3 August 2015, submitted)

18. UPDATE OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK UNPAID WORK ACTIVITY 2014/15

A report informing Members of the work being undertaken by offenders subject to Community Payback Unpaid Work was considered. Further information on work undertaken within the Helensburgh and Lomond area was also tabled for consideration.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 26 June 2015, submitted and Appendix to the report, tabled)

Councillors Mary-Jean Devon and Elaine Robertson left the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

19. COMMUNITY SERVICES WORK PLAN 2015-2016

Consideration was given to the outline work plan to facilitate forward planning of reports to the Community Services Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the outline work plan and agreed to the following items being added to the Committee's agenda in December 2015:-

- Report on Housing Options wider than the RSL lets
- Follow up paper on Kinship Care Allowances
- Update on Integration of Health and Social Care

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated September 2015, submitted)