

CORPORATE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on Wednesday, 22 December 2010 in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Brown, David McBride, Craig McLaughlin, Iain Robertson and Martin Rooney.

Attending: Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services; Andrew Fraser, Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services; David Connell, Head of Finance and ICT; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Gillian McNeilly, Manager of Accounting; Colin McDougall Manager of Risk & Performance; Suzanne Greer, Policy Development Officer and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Margaret Bootland and Ronnie McColl.

Councillor Craig McLaughlin in the Chair

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 27 October 2010 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT POLICY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services recommending a housing and council tax benefit overpayment policy for the Council.

The Committee agreed to approve the housing and council tax overpayment policy on the basis outlined in the Appendix to the report.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on grants to voluntary organisations from the Trust Fund and Dumbarton Common Good budgets.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Accounting in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the application from The Rocks Club (£500) and the application from Unit 23 Skatepark (£5,000) made under the Dumbarton Common Good Fund;
- (2) to approve the recommendation for Community Council applications of £600, with the proviso that should this amount not be sufficient for the funding of the running costs of the Forum in 2010/11 then this be dealt with under delegated authority procedures but the amount of grant paid would not exceed the amount requested (£2,130);
- (3) to note the grants awarded to the Community Councils as per the formula set by the Scottish Government; and
- (4) to note the grant awarded under delegated approval.

ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2010

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive summarising the annual report on the Equality Scheme 2009-12.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Policy Development Officer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made under the existing Equality Scheme and agreed the continuation of this via the Equality Scheme action plan and the mechanisms in place;
- (2) to note the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the plan to update the Equality Scheme in 2012 to include a wider range of characteristics, and include the publication of equality objectives (whilst acknowledging the impact of maternity leave on the capacity to take these forward in 2011);
- (3) that the Executive Director of Corporate Services should write to the 322 employees who participated in Equalities Training over the year 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 to thank them for their involvement; and
- (4) that a Briefing Note would be issued to Members giving more information in relation to the issue of Violence Against Women in West Dunbartonshire.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 7 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the performance of the Chief Executive budget for the period to 31 October 2010.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report with satisfaction; and
- (2) to pass on its thanks to officers for ensuring this satisfactory position.

CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 7 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising of the performance of the Corporate Services budget for the period to 31 October 2010.

Having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report with satisfaction; and
- (2) to pass on its thanks to officers for ensuring this satisfactory position.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND – MONITORING REPORT TO 31 OCTOBER 2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing the Committee with details of income and expenditure on the Common Good Fund Account to 31 October 2010.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Finance and ICT in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the Statement of Income and Expenditure to 31 October 2010.

TREASURY UPDATE (1 APRIL 2010 – 31 OCTOBER 2010)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising about interest rates and treasury transactions of the Council which have taken place during the period 1 April 2010 to 31 October 2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING – QUARTER 2 (2010/2011)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on the levels of employee sickness absence for the second Quarter 2010/2011 (July, August and September 2010).

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to note that new targets would be set for sickness absence when Audit Scotland published all Scottish local authority sickness absence figures for 2009/2010.

EMPLOYMENT EQUALITIES MONITORING REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an overview of the Employment Equalities statistics covering the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010, and the comparison against the previous year.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the Council retained a workforce composition of 71% female;
- (2) to note there were significant gaps in the collection of equalities information and steps are being taken to improve data collection; and
- (3) to note that further reports on this matter would be revised to take account of any changes in equalities legislation.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT PLAN - MID YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services presenting the Corporate Services Department mid year performance report which highlights the Department's performance across all services – Finance & ICT, Human Resources & Organisational Development and Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and attached appendices.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2010/14 - MID YEAR REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive setting out progress against the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2010/14 in the first six months, that is, from 1 April to 30 September 2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

COLLECTION OF COMMERCIAL DEBT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the current level of debt owed to the Council for commercial and industrial rents and making recommendations for future recovery actions.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Client and Support Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that follow up procedures for industrial and commercial debts would be amended to a single 'first and final' reminder being issued before being passed to legal debt recovery for action; and
- (2) that bids would be invited for the Council's home loan portfolio and that a report would be brought back to this Committee thereafter with appropriate recommendations.

ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING INSPECTION OF HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT SERVICE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on progress made on the recommendations and subsequent action plan following the inspection of the Council's housing and council tax benefit service carried out by Audit Scotland in December 2008 and follow up risk inspection in July 2010.

Having heard the Client and Support Manager in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the Audit Scotland report and the draft action plan (appended to the report) to minimise risks and continually improve the Housing and Council Tax Benefits service; and
- (2) to pass on its thanks to the officers involved for their hard work and efforts in maintaining the service to such a good standard.

The meeting closed at 10.40 a.m.