

CORPORATE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on Wednesday, 22 June 2011 in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bollan, Jim Brown, David McBride, Ronnie McColl, Jim McElhill, Patrick McGlinchey, Craig McLaughlin, Marie McNair, Lawrence O'Neill and Iain Robertson.

Attending: Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services; Andrew Fraser * Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services; David Connell, Head of Finance & ICT, Stephen West, Head of Finance & Resources; Lorraine Coyne, Head of Audit, Performance & Strategic Planning; Alan Douglas, Manager of Legal Services; Vincent Gardiner, Client & Support Manager; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; Colin McDougall, Manager of Risk & Performance; Peter Barry, Manager of Community Planning & Policy; Tracy Keenan, Lead HR Policy Advisor – Policy & Employee Relations and Christine McCaffary, Senior Administrative Officer.

* Attended later in the meeting.

Councillor Craig McLaughlin in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David McBride declared a non-financial interest in the item “Elderly People’s Welfare Grant Reform.”

Councillor O'Neill declared a non-financial interest in the item “Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee – 2010 Review of Remuneration for Local Authority Councillors.”

VALEDICTORY

Councillor McLaughlin informed the Committee that this would be the last meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee which David Connell, Head of Finance & ICT would attend before his full retiral in August.

Councillor McLaughlin and all Members present thanked Mr Connell for all the help and advice he had provided to the Committee and Council.

In response, Mr Connell thanked the Committee for its kind wishes and acknowledged the assistance and support given to him by his 3 Managers.

At this point, Councillor McLaughlin welcomed Councillor Patrick McGlinchey and Stephen West, Head of Finance & Resources to their first meeting of the Committee. The Executive Director of Corporate Services also registered her thanks for the excellent service and support to the Directorate by David Connell.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 20 April 2011 were submitted for approval.

Councillor McLaughlin advised that the reports on the National Assistance Act 1948 – Policy on Indigent Funerals and Write-Off of Miscellaneous Income Debtor Accounts would be submitted to the Committee meeting being held in September 2011.

Councillor Bollan stated that the decision minuted for the Grant Applications item in respect of Bellsmyre Digital Community was incorrect in his opinion.

Note: The Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services entered the meeting at this point and the Manager of Legal Services left the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Following full discussion on the conciseness of the Minute, and after hearing Councillor McLaughlin the Committee agreed to adjourn for a period of 5 minutes to allow officers to consult their notes of the meeting.

The meeting reconvened at 10.25 a.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance.

Having heard the Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services confirm that his notes concurred with the decision recorded in the Minute, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor O'Neill, moved:-

That the Minute be approved subject to the undernoted amendment:-

That contrary to the recommendation in the report, a contribution of £34,136 to Bellsmyre Digital Community be approved, on the basis that this would be paid monthly with a further report being submitted to a future meeting of the Committee providing details in regard to their various project plans and to the result of their application for Lottery funding.

As an amendment, Councillor McColl, seconded by Councillor Robertson moved:-

That the Minute be approved subject to the undernoted amendment:-

The Committee agreed to make monthly payments to Bellsmyre Digital Community, the amounts to be calculated pro-rata to their grant application, plus provide officer support in kind to assist the applicants and to request a further report to Committee when the result of the applicants' lottery application was known.

On a vote being taken, 4 Members voted for the amendment, 2 for the motion and 4 abstained. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE CULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee held on 15 March 2011 and the Special Meeting of the Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee held on 12 April 2011 were submitted and approved as correct records.

PEST CONTROL REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of a revised policy that would extend the range of pest control services provided by the Environmental Health Section.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services in clarification of certain matters, the Committee agreed to approve the revised Pest Control Policy.

ADDITIONAL PATERNITY LEAVE REGULATIONS 2010

A report was submitted by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development providing an update on the Additional Paternity Leave Regulations 2010.

The Committee agreed to approve the action taken to update HR policies in line with legislation.

ELDERLY PEOPLE'S WELFARE GRANT REFORM

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the seminar held to review the current elderly people's welfare Christmas grant payout and seeking approval of a revised process for the allocation and payout of future grant payouts.

Following discussion and having heard the Finance Manager in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved:-

That the Committee approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4 of the report, summarised as follows:-

- (1) the Council prepare an 'opt in' database to be used for allocating grant funding from 2011 onwards;
- (2) the Council update the database on an annual basis;
- (3) the eligible age for both males and females will be 60 years;
- (4) Individuals will complete a one-off form, identifying their nomination of payment to a group or themselves; and
- (5) payments made to individuals and groups to be in the form of direct transfers into specified bank accounts (i.e. bacs).

The Committee also notes that a further report would be submitted to the next Committee with further detailed procedures.

As an amendment, Councillor McGlinchey, seconded by Councillor McBride, moved:-

That there be no change to the way in which the Elderly People's Welfare Grant was allocated and paid out.

Following discussion, Councillor McBride requested that there be a roll call vote. On the vote being taken 3 Members voted for the amendment (namely Councillors McBride, McGlinchey and O'Neill) and 7 for the motion (namely Councillors Bollan, Brown, McColl, McElhill, McLaughlin, McNair and Robertson) which was accordingly declared carried.

PROCUREMENT CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT 2010 - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of an Improvement Plan, developed in response to the 2010 Procurement Capability Assessment.

Having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services in further explanation, the Committee agreed to approve the Procurement Capability Assessment Improvement Plan.

DISCRETIONARY RELIEF OF NON-DOMESTIC RATES - HARDSHIP

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services apprising of an application received for the relief of non-domestic rates on the grounds of hardship.

Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved:-

That the Committee agrees the recommendation contained in the report that no relief be granted.

As an amendment, Councillor McGlinchey, seconded by Councillor O'Neill, moved:-

That the discretionary relief of rates of £7,371.75 on the grounds of hardship be granted.

On a vote being taken 4 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the Motion which was accordingly declared carried.

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.

Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved:-

That the Committee:-

- (1) notes the grant due to be awarded for community councils (£11,350);
- (2) notes and agrees the grants as recommended from the Dumbarton Common Good Fund (£Nil);
- (3) notes the grant awarded under Delegated Authority (£5,918);
- (4) approves the increase in the Antonine Sports Centre's current bank loan of £45,000 (noting the new total would still be within the overall guarantee originally approved by Council): and
- (5) notes that the payments to be made to Bellsmyre Digital Community would be those detailed in the minute of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee of 20 April 2011, as amended earlier in this meeting.

As an amendment Councillor Bolla, seconded by Councillor McGlinchey, moved:-

That the Committee agrees to approve the contents of the report, subject to the following adjustments:-

- (1) the grant application of £7,693 from Ontowork be approved, subject to the group providing the additional information previously offered in support of their application, and

- (2) the grant application for £8,500 from Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol be approved and paid from the Dumbarton Common Good Fund.

On a vote being taken, 5 Members voted for the amendment and 5 for the motion. There being an equality of votes, Councillor McLaughlin used his casting vote in favour of the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

BELLSMYRE DIGITAL COMMUNITY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing further information on a Dumbarton Common Good grant application from Bellsmyre Digital Community.

Note:- Councillor McBride left the meeting at this point.

Following discussion and having heard the Finance Manager the Committee agreed to note that, in accordance with the decision of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee of 20 April 2011, as amended earlier in the meeting, the Committee would continue to pay monthly grants to Bellsmyre Digital Community until a further report came back to the Committee advising of the result of their lottery application.

Note: Councillor McBride re-entered the meeting at this point.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing Councillor McLaughlin the Committee agreed to adjourn for a period of 5 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 11.40 a.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2011/15

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive setting out the proposed Chief Executive's Departmental Plan for 2011/15.

Having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed the undernoted motion by Councillor McColl:-

That the Committee approves the Plan for implementation, but asks the Chief Executive to further review his organisational structure in relation to Community Planning to further enhance delivery against the objectives of our Single Outcome Agreement.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2011/15

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Corporate Services Departmental Plan 2011/15.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the Corporate Services departmental plan for 2011 – 2015.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of a new Attendance Management Policy and Procedure which would replace the existing Maximising Attendance Policy.

Having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Lead HR Policy Advisor – Policy & Employee Relations, the Committee agreed to approve the implementation of the new Attendance Management Policy and Procedure with effect from 1 September 2011, with a recommended review of the effectiveness of the Policy in March 2012.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE ADVICE SERVICES STRATEGY

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval for the West Dunbartonshire Council Advice Services Strategy.

After hearing the Manager of Community Planning & Policy in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McColl, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

That Committee approves the West Dunbartonshire Advice Partnership Strategy and notes that the strategy and action plan has been developed in consultation with partners to provide a strategy for advice service activity for West Dunbartonshire.

Committee notes that whilst not expressly mentioned in the strategy, the new strategy (Appendix 1 of the report refers) will have a major impact on the need for the services currently offered by Ontowork.

The strategy as tabled shows that the services provided by Ontowork are a duplication of the new integrated service, which after much consultation, will be provided by the Council and its partners at a significantly lower cost.

This in turn will allow more people to access welfare and employability services.

Committee therefore agrees that, subject to Ontowork fulfilling its statutory duties, West Dunbartonshire Council and the Community Planning Partnership will no longer fund this organisation.

Committee notes that despite knowing since March this year that they would be required to extend their funding base and diversify their service, Ontowork has chosen instead to lobby Councillors for retention of a service that is too costly, not fit for purpose and does not deliver the outcomes expected.

Committee further instructs officers to assist Ontowork with fulfilling their statutory duties with regards to staff severance, subject to the following conditions:-

- Officers will encourage Ontowork staff to apply for posts within the new employability program.
- Ontowork will pass their current case load to the CPP so as not to adversely affect the clients
- Ontowork staff will not participate in actions which could be seen to disrupt the new integrated service provided by the Council and its partners.

Officers will bring a report to the next meeting of this Committee on the progress of the above, and all further reports on advice and employability services will be reported to this Committee and the CPP.

Councillor McBride raised a point of order as to the competency of the motion.

The Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services advised that in terms of Standing Orders the motion was relevant to the item of business and was therefore competent.

Note:- Councillor McBride left the meeting at this point.

Thereafter, the Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services was heard in answer to Members' questions.

Note:- Councillor McBride re-entered the meeting at this point.

As an amendment Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor O'Neill, moved:-

That the Committee notes the SNP during their Emergency Budget in October 2010 rejected the savings option –

“HEED 14 – Terminate Grant to Ontowork”

Instead they decided to “Retain the service and transfer to CPP as part of the review of advice services.”

The Labour Group opposed the transfer to the CPP as it put the continued funding of Ontowork at risk. Furthermore, it means that funding could be withdrawn from Ontowork without the need for a Council decision or proper scrutiny or transparency.

The Committee is concerned to learn the CPP have withdrawn funding and forced the closure of Ontowork.

The Labour Group takes no pleasure in this prediction coming to fruition. The SNP's October 2010 decision regarding Ontowork to "Retain the service" was simply SNP spin. It has also ensured that the closure is now going ahead without an open and transparent report to the Council.

The Committee therefore calls for an urgent report on the future funding of Ontowork, including options to continue the provision, with a reviewed service that meets the required challenges to employability in West Dunbartonshire. This report should be presented for decision to a Special Council Meeting immediately after the July recess and before 5 August 11.

Following debate Councillor McBride requested that there be a roll call vote. On a vote being taken 5 Members voted for the amendment (namely Councillors Bollan, McBride, McGlinchey, McNair and O'Neill) and 5 for the motion (namely Councillors Brown, McColl, McElhill, McLaughlin and Robertson).

There being an equality of votes, Councillor McLaughlin used his casting vote in favour of the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing Councillor McLaughlin, the Committee agreed to adjourn for a period of 5 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 12.54 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance except Councillor Marie McNair.

SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES REMUNERATION COMMITTEE - 2010 REVIEW OF REMUNERATION FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY COUNCILLORS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on the recommendations made by the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) in respect of Councillors' Remuneration.

Councillor O'Neill, having declared an interest in this item, took no part in the discussion thereon.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that there be no increase to West Dunbartonshire Councillors' salaries for the duration of the present Council; and
- (2) otherwise noted the contents of the report.

**SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING
QUARTER 4 (2010/11) AND ANNUAL RETURN 2010/11**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on the levels of employee sickness for the fourth quarter (January to March 2011) and the annual levels (April 2010 to March 2011).

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**RETIREMENT PROCESS AND THE REMOVAL OF THE DEFAULT
RETIREMENT AGE (DRA)**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services on changes to the Default Retirement Age (DRA) regulations and the abolishment of the DRA with effect from 1 October 2011.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

WRITE OFF POLICY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services outlining the range measures the Council undertakes in relation to dealing with debtors.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SUMMARY OF VOLUNTARY GRANTS 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an analysis of voluntary grants approved during 2010/11.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

TREASURY UPDATE (1 TO 30 APRIL 2011)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on interest rates and treasury transactions of the Council which had taken place during the period 1 to 30 April 2011.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2010/14
PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2010/11**

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the performance of the Chief Executive's Department from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing details of the department's end of year progress in meeting corporate and departmental objectives set out in the Corporate Services Department Plan 2010/14.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 1.00 p.m.