

CORPORATE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on Wednesday, 27 August 2008 in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bollan, Margaret Bootland, Jim Brown, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Ronnie McColl, Craig McLaughlin, Marie McNair, Iain Robertson and Martin Rooney.

Attending: Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services; Andrew A. Fraser, Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services; David Connell, Head of Finance and ICT; Liz Cochrane, Head of Service – Policy & Performance; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Graham Pollock, Manager of Regulatory Services; Marion Smith, Section Head (Revenues); Lewis Morrison, Policy Officer (Disability and Access), Linda McAlister, Senior HR Officer, HR & Organisational Development Services and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Councillor Craig McLaughlin in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 28 May 2008 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF CORPORATE CULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee held on 4 August 2008 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the following:-

With reference to the item under the heading 'Minutes of Previous Meeting' (Page 1271 refers), concerning the 'Proposed Utilisation of Capital Proceeds of Thomas Hill Painting', it was agreed that the Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee held on 20 March 2008 be amended to reflect that there had been no previous minuted decision of Council that the proceeds of the Thomas Hill Painting would be used to acquire paintings by female artists, both from the local area and Scotland wide.

A SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting a proposal for the formulation of a Single Equality Scheme to replace the current schemes for Race, Disability and Gender.

Having heard the Policy Officer (Disability & Access) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed that the Council should publish a Single Equality Scheme in November 2009.

BEST VALUE REVIEW – POLICY FUNCTION

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting a Best Value Review of the policy function within West Dunbartonshire Council.

After discussion and having heard the Principal Policy Officer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that detailed analysis of Option 1 be undertaken; and
- (2) that a further report containing the Action Plan should be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 29 October 2008.

Councillor Bollan, having failed to obtain a seconder for a proposed motion, asked that his dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

PERFORMANCE OF REGISTRATION SERVICE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services:-

- (a) providing information on the performance of Registration Service in West Dunbartonshire in terms of the national enhanced performance indicators produced by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) for the period 2004 to 2007;
- (b) informing of the outcome of two Registration customer service surveys; and
- (c) informing of the outcome of the recent application by the Registration Service to obtain Charter Mark accreditation.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that all Registration staff be congratulated on their excellent level of performance and service to customers;
- (2) to note that a Capital bid would be made next year for monies to improve the accommodation at the Alexandria Area Registration Office; and

- (3) that officers should investigate the possibility of additional soundproofing being provided in the Dumbarton Area Registration Office, in order to enhance issues of customer confidentiality, etc.

FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS – QUARTER 1 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval for rent arrears write-offs for the first quarter of 2008/09.

The Committee agreed to approve the cases submitted for rent arrears write-offs totalling £45,742.01, as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

EARLY LEAVERS FROM STRATHCLYDE PENSION FUND AND ASSOCIATED COSTS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services:-

- (a) providing details on the number of employees who left the Strathclyde Pension Fund earlier than their normal retirement date with access to their pension and the associated costs; and
- (b) advising that under the terms of the Council's Discretionary Payments for Early Retirement & Redundancy Provisions, redundancy/early retiral costs require to be reported to Council on an annual basis. The report covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

Having heard the Senior HR Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Food Service Plan 2008/2009.

Having heard the Manager of Regulatory Services, the Committee agreed to approve the Food Service Plan 2008/2009.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2008/2009.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Regulatory Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2008/2009.

TREASURY UPDATE (1 APRIL 2008 – 15 JULY 2008)

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 April 2008 to 15 July 2008.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND – MONITORING REPORT TO 15 JULY 2008

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing details of income and expenditure on the Common Good Fund Account to 15 July 2008.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the Statement of Income and Expenditure to 15 July 2008.

UPDATE ON FINANCE REVENUES COLLECTION 2008/09

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the collection of the local council tax and national non-domestic rates (NNDR).

The Committee agreed to note the council tax and NNDR collection performance to date.

GRANTS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on grants to voluntary organisations through Dumbarton Common Good, Community Council budgets and via delegated Member approval.

After discussion and having heard the relevant officers in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed:-

- (1) to approve the recommendations for:-
 - (a) Dumbarton Common Good 2008/2009 - £nil; and
 - (b) Community Councils 2008/2009 - £7,331.64
- (2) to note the grants approved under delegated authority through the transitional period of transferring the administration of grants to the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS);

- (3) to note that the Minute of Agreement between the Council and the CVS had now been signed;
- (4) that an information note giving the up-to-date position with regard to grants, etc. would be circulated to Members of the Committee for their information, and a copy of the application form for grant applications would also be appended to this note; and
- (5) that the CVS would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee in order to answer any questions from Members.

COUNCIL HOUSE RENT ARREARS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the Council's rent arrears position for the financial year 2007/08 and the action plan for continuous improvement.

After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Revenues) in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in the Council's rent arrears performance and the improvement plan for 2008/09; and
- (2) that Councillor McBride would be provided with further information on technical 'evictions'.

CORPORATE DEBT POLICY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the progress of developing a Corporate Debt policy.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Exchequer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed:-

- (1) to note the work undertaken to date;
- (2) to note that a further report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in October;
- (3) to note that a copy of the draft policy would be circulated to Clydebank Independent Resource Centre for any comments; and
- (4) that a seminar for Elected Members would be arranged as soon as the Corporate Debt Policy was finalised, and Members would be given adequate notice in this regard.

CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 3 2008/09

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising of the performance of the Corporate Services Departmental budget for the period to 15 July 2008.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 3 2008/09

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the performance of the Chief Executive budget for the period to 15 July 2008.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT – 2008/2009 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services setting out the performance of the Corporate Services Department in the first quarter of 2008/2009, that is, from 1 April to 30 June 2008.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services in clarification of Standing Orders, etc., Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor Bolland, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to note, despite positive and beneficial discussions with the Trades Unions, detrimental conditions and reneging on back pay due to employees, was imposed by the SNP Administration.

As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor J. McColl, moved:-

That the Committee agrees to note the contents of the report.

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

BENEFIT INVESTIGATION TEAM COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS 2007/08

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing a cost benefit analysis of the work carried out by the Benefit Investigation Team.

After discussion and having heard the relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the role the benefit investigation team plays in the prevention and detection of fraud within the Council.

The meeting closed at 10.40 a.m.