

CORPORATE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on Wednesday, 25 August 2010 in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton at 10.00 a.m.

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

Attending: Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services; Andrew Fraser, Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services; Lorraine Coyne, Head of Audit, Performance and Strategic Planning; David Connell, Head of Finance and ICT; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Gillian McNeilly, Manager of Accounting and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Councillor Craig McLaughlin in the Chair

CHAIR'S REMARKS

On behalf of the Committee Councillor McLaughlin, Chair, welcomed back Councillor Bootland who had been absent due to illness.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to a question by Councillor Bootland concerning a potential declaration of financial interest in respect of the item on the agenda entitled 'Old People's Welfare Grant Funding', the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services advised that he would look into this matter further and give his opinion at the appropriate point later in the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 26 May 2010 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the undernoted correction to the item under the heading "Grant Applications" (Page 2884 refers).

It was noted that in respect of the application by Knowetop Community Farm, the amendment was accordingly declared carried and not the motion, as stated in the minute.

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE CULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee held on 15 June 2010 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

It was agreed that it would be helpful for Members of the Committee to receive a briefing note giving a budget overview of the Corporate Cultural Budget heading.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2010/14

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services setting out the proposed Chief Executive's Departmental Plan for 2010/14.

The Committee agreed to approve the Plan for implementation.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT PLAN 2010 - 2014

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Corporate Services Department's Service Plan 2010 – 2014.

After discussion, Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor Bootland, moved:-

That the Committee approves the Corporate Services Department's Service Plan 2010 – 2014, with the following change in respect of the Performance Indicator under the heading 'Theme 6 An Improving Council (CP10-14)' refers:-

SCM1aiv: CM1biii: Average number of working days lost per employee through sickness absence for all other local government employees, this Indicator be revised to read Target 2011/12 - 11; Target 2012/13 – 10; and Target 2013/14 – 9.

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

That the Committee approves the Corporate Services Department's Service Plan 2010 – 2014, on the basis outlined in the report.

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the amendment and 3 for the motion. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

Note: Councillor McBride entered the meeting during consideration of this item.

APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC ANALYST, AGRICULTURAL ANALYST AND FOOD EXAMINER

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval for the statutory appointments of Public Analyst, Agricultural Analyst and Food Examiner for West Dunbartonshire Council.

The Committee agreed to approve the changes outlined in paragraphs 3.2.1 and 3.3.2 of the report.

FOOD ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Food Enforcement Service Plan 2010/2011.

The Committee agreed to approve the Food Enforcement Service Plan 2010/2011.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2010/2011.

The Committee agreed to approve the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2010/2011.

FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS – QUARTER 1 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval for rent arrears write-offs for the first quarter of 2010/11.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Exchequer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the rent arrears write-offs totalling £13,552.46 for 2010/11 as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor McColl declared a non-financial interest in the following item of business, being a Trustee of the Scottish Maritime Museum.

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 note grant funding for Dumbarton Common Good Fund applications of £64,900;
- (2) to approve the recommendation for a further Dumbarton Common Good Fund application of £2,000; and
- (3) to approve the recommendations for Community Council applications of £7,281.17.

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

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor McBride declared a non-financial interest in the following item of business, being the spouse of someone involved in Dumbarton Senior Citizens' Committee.

The Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services confirmed that, in light of a general dispensation from the Standards Commission, Councillor Bootland did not require to declare an interest in respect of the following item.

OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE GRANT FUNDING

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the survey being completed by the Community and Volunteering Service (CVS) regarding the grant funding for elderly welfare organisations.

After discussion, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) that all organisations should provide verification of their memberships to the Council to confirm allocation of funds is being given on a like-for-like basis;
- (2) that it is for an organisation to ensure the application for funding is for an acceptable use – payout or event. However, evidence will be sought to ensure action is being taken to ensure maximisation of benefit to all eligible individuals;

- (3) that work requires to be undertaken by officers with the organisations involved to ensure eligible areas are resolved. Groups should be reminded that areas require to be correctly and clearly advertised to avoid disappointment or confusion;
- (4) that an age criteria should be adopted for all groups regarding grant funding. Groups should be reminded that age eligibility should be correctly and clearly advertised to avoid disappointment or confusion;
- (5) that the identification process during payouts should be reviewed by all groups concerned. Eligible identification should be made clear in any advertisement;
- (6) that the future process for any payouts (if Members agree to continue this) remains similar to current process – i.e. through manual payouts;
- (7) that the CVS are requested to consider increasing their current administrative role in any payouts (including Old Kilpatrick);
- (8) those administering the cash payouts are asked to contact the police at least 3 months in advance of any payout to allow relevant discussions and actions to be taken to minimise risk to all parties;
- (9) that acceptable risk assessments should be completed and provided to the Council by those administering the cash payouts prior to funding being released;
- (10) that if the payout goes ahead, organisations are required to find suitable accommodation for any payout – particularly in relation to the temporary closure of the Clydebank Town Hall (dependent upon timing); and
- (11) that any payout should consider attracting appropriate service representatives available at the event to benefit a vulnerable group within the community.

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

That the status quo regarding Christmas Payments be maintained.

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

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT PLAN – ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009/2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services presenting the Corporate Services Department annual performance report.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and attached appendices.

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR FOR CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing information on the Statutory Performance Indicator that measures Trading Standards' performance with respect to consumer complaints.

The Committee agreed to note and endorse the efforts which Trading Standards had made to improve performance continuously against this indicator.

SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING – QUARTER 1 (2010/2011)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on the levels of employee sickness absence for the first Quarter 2010/2011 (April, May and June 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 that new targets will be set for sickness absence when Audit Scotland publishes all Scottish local authority sickness absence figures for 2009/2010; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In relation to a question by Councillor Robertson concerning a potential declaration of financial interest in respect of the following item of business, the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services confirmed his view that, such as was the nature of the interest, Councillor Robertson did not require to declare an interest in respect of this item.

COMPETITIVENESS OF CORPORATE MARKETING, DESIGN AND PRESS OFFICE SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting the current results, conclusions and a future action plan for competitiveness studies of the Council's Marketing, Design and Press Office services.

The Committee agreed to note the progress of the competitiveness study of Marketing and Design and the Press Office services.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 3 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising on the performance of the Chief Executive budget for the period to 30 June 2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 3 2010/11

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on the performance of the Corporate Services budget for the period to 30 June 2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND – MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing details of income and expenditure on the Common Good Fund Account to 30 June 2010.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Accounting in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the Statement of Income and Expenditure to 30 June 2010.

TREASURY UPDATE (1 APRIL 2010 – 30 JUNE 2010)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising on interest rates and treasury transactions of the Council which have taken place during the period 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

UPDATE ON FINANCE REVENUES COLLECTION PERFORMANCE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the billing and collection of local revenues.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the 2010/11 in-year collection rates for Council Tax was on track to meet the target performance levels; and
- (2) to note that the 2010/11 collection rate for rents was ahead of last year's collection performance level and that an action plan was in place to secure further improvements in rent collection performance.

COMPETITIVENESS REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing a competitiveness position statement on the 5 services prioritised by Corporate Services for competitiveness review.

It was agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made to date; and
- (2) that officers would report on progress to future meetings of the Committee.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee approved the following Resolution:-

"That under Section 50(A) (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."

DISCRETIONARY RELIEF OF NON-DOMESTIC RATES - HARDSHIP

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising of an application received for the relief of non-domestic rates on the grounds of hardship and making a recommendation with regard to the award.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of the Exchequer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to refuse the application and requested that officers work with the applicant regarding a deferred payment scheme.

Councillors Rooney and Bollan, having failed to obtain a seconder for two individual proposed amendments, asked that their dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

The meeting closed at 10.55 a.m.