

CORPORATE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on Wednesday, 24 June 2009 in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton at 10.05 a.m.

Present: Councillors Margaret Bootland, Jim Brown, David McBride, Jim McElhill, 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; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Gillian McNeilly, Manager of Accounting; Graham Pollock, Manager of Regulatory Services; Patricia Marshall, Manager of ICT; David Webster, Manager – Improvement & Performance and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Councillor Craig McLaughlin in the Chair

DECLARATIONS 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 Minutes of the Meeting of Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 29 April 2009 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE CULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meetings of the Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee held on 28 April 2009 (Ordinary) and 9 June 2009 (Special) were submitted and approved.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2009/2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2009/2010.

The Committee agreed to approve the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2009/2010.

FOOD ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2009/2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Food Enforcement Service Plan 2009/2010.

Having heard the Manager of Regulatory Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the Food Service Plan 2009/2010.

SCOTTISH FOOD HYGIENE INFORMATION SCHEME

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval for the participation in and implementation of the Scottish Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) within West Dunbartonshire.

After hearing the Chair, Councillor McLaughlin, the Committee agreed to approve the implementation of the Scottish FHIS within West Dunbartonshire during 2010.

PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR THE DETENTION OF STRAY DOGS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval to accept a new partnership arrangement between the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) and West Dunbartonshire Council for the provision of kennel facilities and services for the detention of stray dogs collected by the Environmental Health Section.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Regulatory Services and the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to continue the work with the SSPCA and accept the new charges and conditions of contract, given that it was the only practical and effective option in view of the timescales involved;
- (2) to approve the new arrangement with the SSPCA as outlined in the report;
- (3) that authority be delegated to officers to give further consideration to the charging scheme, for the reclaiming of stray dogs, and this should have regard to the ability of pensioners to pay and repeat offenders; and
- (4) that a briefing note would be sent to Members providing further information on the new arrangements as soon as these had been finalised by officers.

FEASIBILITY OF VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITIES WITHIN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services outlining options to be considered regarding the feasibility of creating two Video Conferencing suites within the Garshake Road and Rosebery Place offices.

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

- (1) that ICT would arrange supplier demonstrations of the different types of video conferencing solutions;
- (2) to note that Members and officers would be invited to attend these product demonstrations which should provide a more comprehensive overview of each solution type and give a better indication of the limitations and the benefits of the systems;
- (3) that ICT would collate and solidify the Council's requirements to ensure that the Council received the best value, fit for purpose solution that was required;
- (4) that ICT would undertake a bandwidth impact analysis for any potential solution in order to identify any performance issues; and
- (5) that ICT would provide a fully costed proposal for the preferred solution following requirements gathering and bandwidth analysis.

UPDATE ON FINANCE REVENUES PERFORMANCE 2008/09

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

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

- (1) to note the performance of the revenues and benefits service during 2008/09 which was in line with target budget assumptions; and
- (2) otherwise to note, with satisfaction, that the Council had achieved the greatest increase in Direct Debit uptake of all Scottish local authorities and had been given a prize award of £1,000 which would be apportioned equally to two charities chosen by staff, British Heart Foundation and McMillan Cancer Care.

DEVELOPING AND MONITORING OF AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting a draft action plan drawn up from the Administration's proposals contained in the document agreed by Council on 12 February 2009.

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

- (1) to note that a new scorecard had been set-up in Covalent to monitor the action plan contained in the 2009 Budget Proposals document;
- (2) to note that the actions contained are to be linked to Departmental Plans allowing individual Executive Directors to monitor these actions along with others in the plans;
- (3) to note that regular monitoring reports would be presented to the Corporate Management Team and to this Committee;
- (4) that the production of budget proposals should be more integrated with the established strategic planning process;
- (5) that, in future, reports should be formatted in such a way that the thematic services that pertained to Corporate Services would be submitted to this Committee for consideration with the Departmental action plans (i.e. of other Departments) being submitted to the relevant Service Committees; and
- (6) that Members could request a report to this Committee on any underperforming thematic service area in order to scrutinise the proposed action plan to deal with underperformance, and that an overview report would be submitted to the Audit and Performance Review Committee as a check on progress.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2008/12 – PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2008/9

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive setting out the performance of the Chief Executive's Department in 2008/9, from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

After discussion and having heard the Manager – Improvement and Performance in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

CORPORATE SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2009 – 2013

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Corporate Services Department's Service Plan 2009 – 2013.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the Corporate Services Department's Service Plan 2009 – 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing the Chair, Councillor McLaughlin, the Committee agreed to adjourn for a short period.

The meeting reconvened at 11.00 a.m. with all Members listed in the Sederunt in attendance.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT – 2008/2009 YEAR-END PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services detailing the performance of the Corporate Services Department for 2008/2009 and inviting the Committee to consider and note the departmental performance progress and achievements.

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

- (1) to note the contents of the report;
- (2) that the report would be reformatted in future in order that an explanatory narrative could be provided to clarify the position in respect of the Year-end Key and Statutory Performance Indicators and Complaints and Complaints Processing; and
- (3) to commend the staff involved for their significant achievements in 2008/09, as outlined in the report.

FINANCE SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the benchmarking of the Finance function.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Manager of Exchequer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the benchmarking exercise and the performance of the council tax collection service during 2007/08.

TREASURY UPDATE (1 APRIL 2009 – 15 MAY 2009)

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 2009 to 15 May 2009.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

TRADING ACCOUNTS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising of the results of the annual review undertaken in respect of the Council's trading activities.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the annual review of trading operations had identified only two Significant Trading Account Services, namely (a) Housing Maintenance; and (b) Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning; and
- (2) to note that this was in line with those identified in the annual review for 2008/09.

GRANTS UPDATE

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

- (a) providing an update on grants to voluntary organisations from the Dumbarton Common Good and Community Council budgets; and
- (b) providing an update of the local grants budget administered by the Community and Volunteering Service (CVS) during 2009/10.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the recommended grants for Community Councils (2009/2010) – totalling £13,292;
- (2) that authority be granted to the Executive Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Leaders of the Administration and Opposition, to approve three grant applications, under the Corporate Cultural Budget heading, for events taking place prior to August 2009; and
- (3) to note that 19 applications had been received by the CVS, at the time the report was written, and these applications were considered on 16 June 2009.

SUMMARY OF VOLUNTARY GRANTS 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an analysis of voluntary grants approved during 2008/09.

After discussion and having heard the Chair, Councillor McLaughlin, it was agreed:-

- (1) that an annual monitoring report should be prepared in order to provide the Committee with an overview on the grants approved by the Community and Volunteering Service (CVS) for West Dunbartonshire; and
- (2) otherwise to note the report.

NATIONAL SHARED SERVICES DIAGNOSTICS PATHWAY PROJECT – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ESTATE ANALYSIS OPPORTUNITIES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update on progress with the Information Technology (IT) Estate Analysis Opportunities aspect of the National Shared Services Diagnostics Pathway Project (SSD).

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

- (1) to note the progress of the SSD IT analysis outcomes; and
- (2) to note that future progress would be reported to the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee via Covalent Performance Management System reports.

The meeting closed at 11.25 a.m.