

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 21 DECEMBER 2007 AT 1000 HRS
IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Tom Cook, Willie Coffey, Helen Coffey, John Campbell, John Knapp, Stuart Finlayson, Barney Menzies, Eric Ross.

ATTENDING: Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Jackie Donnelly, Executive Head of Social Work; David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; Colin Houston, Chief Auditor; Alan Wasson, Audit Manager (IT); Robin Baker, Financial Controller; Michela Costa-Watt, Audit Manager (Client Services); Julie McGarry, Administration Manager; Steven Hill, Accountant; and Anne Marie Carr, Senior Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Maureen McKay, Alan Brown and Drew Filson.

CHAIR: Councillor Tom Cook, Chair.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

1. There were submitted and approved as a correct record, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 November 2007 (circulated).

1.1 CONSIDERATION OF CALLED IN DECISION OF CABINET: WINDFARM POLICY

The Chair intimated that he had raised with the Head of Democratic Services his concern over the insufficient timescales in respect of notice to Elected Members of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee regarding the additional written evidence which was circulated in respect of this item at the meeting of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on 23 November 2007.

Having heard the Senior Administrative Officer, it was agreed to note that this matter had been taken account of by the Head of Democratic Services and it was proposed to ensure that in future the submission of written evidence for items called-in to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee would require to be lodged in advance with Officers to ensure that Members were given due notice of additional information being submitted and, in any event, any additional information would be circulated to Members and Officers no later than three days before the meeting, although the intention would be to issue such information to Members and Officers with the Committee papers subject to the timescales required for dealing with all called-in items.

1.2 REVIEW OF WASTE RECYCLING POLICY/TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF THE KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME

The Chair advised Members of the Committee that the site visit to the recycling facility at Garlaff which had been scheduled for 10 December 2007 had now been

rescheduled for Wednesday 9 January 2008 and that all Members had been advised of the arrangements for the site visit .

Councillor Eric Ross joined the meeting at this point.

MONITORING REPORT

2.1 AWARDING OF CONTRACTS FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 2007

There was submitted and noted a report dated 6 December 2007 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support which provided, for information, details of tenders which had been accepted.

PROGRESS REPORT - INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2007/08

3. There was submitted and noted a report dated 6 December 2007 (circulated) by the Chief Auditor which provided a mid-year progress report on performance against the Audit Plan for financial year 2007/08.

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

4. There was submitted a report dated 21 November 2007 (circulated) by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management which (i) presented the outcome for the 2006/07 Statutory Performance Indicators on the basis of the Department within which responsibility for the Indicator currently lay; (ii) which provided comparative performance information from previous years; and (iii) which provided textual information on performance trends.

Members raised a number of questions/issues regarding the Performance Indicators detailed in the report and it was agreed to note the responses from Directors as follows:-

Housing Indicator 1 - Response Repairs - The Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that a report would be submitted to Cabinet early in the New Year on the impact of the cross-cutting review of the Response Repairs Service which would examine customer satisfaction, the appointment system, and would also look at all repairs carried out and how these were categorised.

Corporate Management Indicator 1 - Sickness Absence - The Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support advised that this issue had been discussed at length by Chief Officers recently and that the level of absence was being given the highest priority within the Council and alluded to a number of initiatives which were under way such as the pilot within On-Site Services which had shown positive signs in terms of reducing absence levels. The Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support advised that a report would be submitted to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee during 2008 on the matter.

Benefits Administration Indicator 2 - Processing Time - The Financial Controller advised that the first three quarters of 2007/08 indicated that the new procedures which had been introduced were showing a reduction in the processing time.

Cultural and Community Services Indicator 3 - Museums Service - It was noted that the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services would clarify the description of the indicators.

Cultural and Community Services Indicator 2 - Other Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities Attendance - The Committee heard the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services in explanation of the reasons for the decrease in attendance figures at the Gavin Hamilton Games Hall namely that the pattern of demand had changed but that the programme had been adapted to local circumstances.

It was thereafter agreed:

- (i) to note the Council's performance for 2006/07 in relation to Statutory Performance Indicators;
- (ii) to note the performance trends for each of the Indicators; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT AGENDA (ACTION PLAN NO 10) - CHALLENGE AND REVIEW - PROGRESS AGAINST THE BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME FOR 2004/07 AND NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2007/10

5. There was submitted a report dated 6 December 2007 (circulated) by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management which sought (i) to review the implementation of the 2004/07 Best Value Service Review Programme, in terms of progress against the Programme and overall outcomes achieved; (ii) to consider the most appropriate configuration of Service Units, following the Council's restructuring, and following a review of the Service Review process; and (iii) to set out a timetable for the new 2007/10 Best Value Service Review Programme.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the update on progress in implementing the Council's Best Value Review Programme for 2004/07 as detailed in Appendix II of the report;
- (ii) to note the proposed changes to the configuration of Service Units that would be subject to Best Value Service Review as detailed in Appendix IV of the report;
- (iii) to note the timetable for the 2007/10 Best Value Service Review Programme (as detailed in Appendix IV of the report) which would be incorporated into the Governance and Scrutiny Committee's work programme; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

6. The Committee resolved that under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

FINANCE CAPITAL REPORT FOR PERIOD 7

7. There was submitted a report dated 21 November 2007 (circulated) by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management which advised Members of the projected financial position for General Services and Housing Investment for programmes based on information provided by Executive Directors.

It was agreed:

- (i) in response to a question by Councillor Eric Ross regarding the re-designing of the steelworks at the CCTV extension at Council Headquarters, that the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Executive Head of Finance would provide all Elected Members of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee with full details of the changes made by the Architect and costs associated with the work;
- (ii) to note the proposed deferral of the Rural Improvement Schemes, the Stevenson Culvert strengthening, the Kilmaurs Rail Bridge and the roads contribution for the Dunaskin Bridge widening schemes, and the reallocation of the available budgets in 2007/08 to fund the anticipated shortfalls on the A70 Welltrees Bridge (£0.050m) and Lugar Water Bridge Schemes (£0.010m) and the emergency strengthening works at Downies Burn Culvert (£0.016m) and Old Lugar Bridge (£0.006m) detailed in paragraph 2.14 of the report;
- (iii) to note the re-allocation of capital budgets for the Riccarton, Crookedholm and Galston Flood Scheme (£0.100m), and the Flood Development (£0.075m) and Flood Mitigation Schemes (£0.025m) to fund the anticipated shortfall in the Galston Flood Prevention Scheme detailed in paragraph 2.15 of the report;
- (iv) to note that work would commence to develop the proposals in respect of the Rosebank Resource Centre in advance of a final decision being made in respect of the Children's Unit detailed in paragraph 2.16 of the report; and
- (v) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

8. This being the final meeting of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee for this year, the Chair wished all Members and Officers Best Wishes for the Festive season and the New Year.

The meeting terminated at 1038 hrs.