

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 20 MAY 2011 AT 1002 HRS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Tom Cook, Helen Coffey, John Campbell, Alan Brown, Stuart Finlayson, Jimmy Kelly, Eric Ross, Elaine Dinwoodie and Drew Filson.

**ATTENDING:** Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services; Craig McArthur, Head of Finance; Chris McAleavey, Head of Housing; Martin Rose, Head of Human Resources; David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; Michela Costa-Watt and Alan Wasson, Acting Chief Auditors; and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Willie Coffey and John McGhee

**CHAIR:** Councillor Tom Cook, Chair.

#### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

1. The Chair welcomed to the meeting Valerie Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; Claire Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; and Eillen Wyllie, Committee Administration Officer, all South Ayrshire Council, who would be observing the meeting as part of research which South Ayrshire Council were undertaking into the governance and scrutiny arrangements of other authorities; and advised that following the meeting, and together with the Head of Democratic Services, he would be meeting with the officers from South Ayrshire Council for a general discussion on East Ayrshire Council's governance and scrutiny arrangements.

#### **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

##### **2.1 Approval as a Correct Record**

There were submitted and approved as a correct record, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 April 2011 (circulated).

##### **2.2 Matter Arising: Matters Arising Update Report: Multiple Domestic Noise Complaints/Anti-Social Behaviour Team (Item 2 (ii), Page 1627, 07/12)**

The Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services confirmed, and it was noted, that information previously requested by the Committee relative to those premises which had been subject to multiple domestic noise complaints during 2009/10 and which were also being dealt with by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team could only be obtained by undertaking a manual trawl, which was not considered to be the most effective use of officers' time; but that arrangements were being put in place to provide that, in future, the data collated and held by the Department in electronic form would facilitate the extrapolation of such information.

## AUDIT

### INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

3. There was submitted a report dated May 2011 (circulated) by the Acting Chief Auditors on the outcome of the audit by Internal Audit of the Council's internal control systems for the year ended 31 March 2011.

During discussion, the officers concerned responded to issues raised by Members relative to the following, namely:-

- the means by which recovery of VAT by the Council had increased by over £20,000 during the 2010/11 year, and the requirement for Elected Members to provide VAT receipts in respect of mileage expenses claims;

#### **3.1 Exclusion Of Press And Public**

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 to enable the following information to be provided to Members, on the grounds of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

- investigation by Internal Audit into two projects funded by the Council;

#### **3.2 Re-Admission Of Press And Public**

The Press and public were re-admitted.

- arrangements around improving the processing and payment of charges from the Council's property maintenance contractor.
- the effectiveness of measures put in place by the Head of Finance in response to a major national fraud which had commenced in July/August 2010;
- reconciliation of income received by St Joseph's Academy through the cashless school meals system; and
- consultation regarding the closure of Crossroads Primary School and the scheduling of demolition of the school building.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the terms of the report submitted and the further information provided by officers; and
- (ii) that the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services report to a future meeting of this Committee on the first year of operation of Housing Asset Services since the introduction of the Single Business Unit in 2010, including productivity levels and other areas of operation.

## SCRUTINY

### QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE STATISTICS: JANUARY-MARCH 2011

4. There was submitted a report dated 9 May 2011 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support which provided a range of employee statistics including Staffing Watch and Absence for the period 1 January to 31 March 2011.

Arising from discussion, the Head of Human Resources provided clarification with regard to the nature of the posts occupied by those employees who are aged 65 or over and on the inclusion of newly qualified teachers within the statistics provided in the report.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note amendments to the report, as advised by the Head of Human Resources, at Appendix 2, to indicate that the total of all staff, full-time equivalent within salary bands A2, B and C, were 398.60, 1832.71 and 2993.46, respectively, with corresponding amendments to the relevant sections of Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 (copies of the amended Appendices were circulated at the meeting);
- (ii) that, in future, the page numbers of the various appendices be referred to within the body of the report for ease of reference; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

Depute Provost John Campbell joined the meeting during consideration, but prior to determination, of this item.

### **CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2011/13**

5. There was submitted a report dated 6 May 2011 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support which provided the Committee with detailed information pertaining to the Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy, the implementation of which had been approved by Cabinet on 20 April 2011.

Arising from discussion, the Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services responded to enquiries in relation to management of the contracts for the Creating Civic Space project in Cumnock and the refurbishment of the Johnnie Walker Bond at the Strand, Kilmarnock; on the factors taken into consideration in respect of the Council's membership of Excel Scotland; and on the efforts being made by the Council through the procurement strategy to improve the opportunities for the use of locally based small to medium sized firms in sub-contractor roles, including encouraging such firms to register with the Public Contracts Scotland portal.

It was agreed to note the terms of the report.

Depute Provost John Campbell left the meeting during consideration, but prior to determination, of this item.

The meeting terminated at 1120 hrs.