

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 8th December, 2009. - Minute of Meeting of the CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Jennifer Stewart, Convener; Councillor John West, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Adam, Collie, Crockett (substituting for Councillor Graham from article 7), Dean, Donnelly, Graham (to article 6), Ironside (to article 4), Jaffrey, Leslie, Malone, May, Kevin Stewart, Wisely (to article 5) and Young (substituting for Councillor Ironside for articles 5 and 6).

Also Present:- Councillor Boulton for article 3.

WELCOME

The Convener began the meeting by noting that this was to be the last meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee in 2009 and as such, wished a Merry Christmas to officers and members of the press and public.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 5th November, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

2. The Committee had before it a statement of Committee Business prepared by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

(i) in relation to item 10(i) (Catering Services Review), to note that a full report would be put before the Committee in January, but that initial feedback had been received from APSE which showed:- (a) that service standards were consistent with the rest of Scotland; (b) that there had been a mixed review of the properties where food was prepared, mainly due to the age of some of the buildings in comparison to the new 3Rs properties; (c) that the cost of meals was higher, but that the uptake of primary meals was far higher than

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- in other areas; (d) that the uptake of secondary school meals was lower but that this was typical for schools in urban areas where there was a greater selection of other food outlets available; (e) that the subsidy and cost of preparation was lower than other areas; (f) that no service fell below the statutory level expected; and (g) that there were some areas for improvement, such as the current variability of menu planning, a lack of management and performance reporting, and inconsistency with provision across the service;
- (ii) in relation to item 10(ii) (Catering Services Review), to note that catering at Summerhill was only provided on an “as requested” basis for training and meetings, that the Service had made a profit of £3,499 over the last two months, and that staff were attempting to find alternative sustainable venues for meetings and therefore as the number of meetings held in Summerhill diminished, the catering would cease;
 - (iii) in relation to item 11 (Greenbank Crescent, East Tullos), to note that the investigation undertaken by the Monitoring Officer had yielded no robust evidence that either an Elected Member or an officer had released confidential information to the Press and Journal, and therefore to remove the item from the business statement;
 - (iv) to remove item 16(i) (Becoming Effective Corporate Parents) as a report on implementing initiatives to improve the discharging of corporate parenting responsibilities would be put before the Council on 24th March, 2010; and
 - (v) in relation to item 17 (Services in the Community – Next Steps), to remove the item from the agenda subject to the Committee’s decision on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation later on the agenda.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Dean declared an interest in relation to motion 1 (Councillor Boulton – Car Park Charges at NHS Hospitals) by virtue of her appointment as a Board Member of NHS Grampian and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the item.

MOTIONS LIST

3. The Committee had before it a Motions List prepared by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Convener noted that the letter from officers to NHS Grampian in relation to motion 1 (Councillor Boulton – Car Park Charges at NHS Hospitals) and the

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response received had been circulated in the Committee's Information Bulletin and as such, she planned to move that the motion be discharged and removed from the motions list.

At this juncture, Councillor Boulton joined the Committee and was invited to speak.

Councillor Boulton, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, then moved:-

that the Council write to Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing asking her to reconsider her decision on the scrapping of car park charges at NHS hospitals and that the motion remain on the Committee's Motions List.

As an amendment, the Convener, seconded by Councillor Kevin Stewart, moved:-

that the motion had been discharged and therefore should be removed from the Motions List.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (2) – Councillors Boulton and Donnelly; for the amendment (12) – the Convener; the Vice-Convener and Councillors Adam, Collie, Graham, Ironside, Jaffrey, Leslie, Malone, May, Kevin Stewart and Wisely; absent from the division (1) – Councillor Dean.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the amendment and therefore discharge the motion and delete it from the Motions List; and
- (ii) in relation to Motion 2 (Ward Renaming), to note that no response had been received as yet from the Scottish Government, and that officers had therefore sent a reminder letter requesting a response.

ABERDEEN RESIDENTS SURVEY – CG/09/137

4. With reference to Article 3 of the minute of the meeting of the Continuous Improvement Committee of 21st April, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which presented the results of the Aberdeen Residents Survey which had been commissioned by the Continuous Improvement Committee on 13th January, 2009. Incorporated in the report were details of the ongoing work to explore key issues which had emerged from the survey findings.

At its meeting of 13th January, 2009, the Continuous Improvement Committee had approved the engagement of an external resource to conduct Council-wide research on customer views and satisfaction levels with Council services. The Committee had asked that the results of the research be used to address user

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needs within the Council's corporate, service and team planning arrangements, and requested that services assess their arrangements for additional service specific customer research, with an annual report to be presented to Committee on these arrangements, incorporating the results obtained and any action taken in response.

The report advised that the appointed consultant Lowland Market Research, had undertaken a face-to-face, in-home survey of 1300 citizens across all wards of the Council, with individuals selected to ensure that the sample was representative of the city's adult population in terms of gender, age group, ethnicity and working status. These individuals were then asked 50 questions on a range of quality of life and service specific indicators which covered their experiences of living in both Aberdeen and their local neighbourhood area. It was noted that the survey had incorporated a range of questions which were currently being piloted nationally. It was hoped that if the pilot was successful, that a bank of questions would then be made available Scotland-wide, allowing for future customer research exercises undertaken by the Council to be benchmarked against other local authorities. The results of the survey were appended to the report.

It was noted that as a result of the survey, several focus groups would be set up to explore some of the findings in more detail, namely, the complaints handling process; communication with residents and information giving; opportunities for involvement in decision making; crime and anti-social behaviour; Northfield ward issues; and George Street/Harbour ward issues. It was proposed that officers could have some involvement with these groups, and work was underway to involve key officers in the groups in order to facilitate discussion with residents. It was noted that any issues not covered by the focus groups could be explored through the Citizens' Panel.

Finally, the report advised that a full evaluation of the survey methodology would be undertaken following completion of the focus groups, and that this would include sampling, suitability of the face-to-face interview approach, questionnaire design and the relevance of the demographic and geographic variable utilised. A report on the outcomes would then be submitted for consideration by the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee in 2010.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note the completion of the survey;
- (b) that the Committee approve the ongoing focus groups and plans for further exploration of survey findings; and
- (c) that the Committee approve a further report to be presented for the Committee's consideration on completion of the focus group and survey evaluation processes.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to commend officers for the good results achieved in terms of customer satisfaction with Council services, particularly in the Museums and Galleries and Roads and Street Lighting Sections;
- (ii) to thank Mike Cheyne and his team of officers for fixing the Christmas lights problem which had been raised by the Convener;
- (iii) to request that officers include young people in the six planned focus groups to ensure that their views were represented; and
- (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

SCOTTISH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION 2009 – EPI/09/047

5. With reference to Article 9 of the minute of the meeting of 10th September, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure which detailed the results of the latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which had been released on 29th October, 2009.

At its meeting on 10th September, 2009, the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee had approved a report entitled “Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City”. As part of this report, it had been agreed that the Committee would receive a report on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, so that the results of the SIMD could inform the Council’s anti-poverty strategy.

The report advised that the SIMD was the method by which the Scottish Government identified small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Scotland. The SIMD was based on areas known as data zones, which allowed for a comparison of relative deprivation at a small area level across Scotland. It was noted that there were 6,505 data zones in Scotland, with 267 of these in Aberdeen, and an average population of around 780 people per data zone.

Aberdeen had 27 data zones in the most deprived 15% of Scottish data zones as measured by the overall deprivation index. The report noted that the city had the fourteenth highest rate of deprivation in the country when measured as a proportion of the overall population.

Appended to the report was a detailed summary of the SIMD results for 2009.

The report concluded that the overall level of deprivation in Aberdeen remained much lower than in some other local authority areas, but that the 27 data zones in the city were among the most deprived in Scotland.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the content of the report and agree that the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) results be used to inform the Council's anti poverty strategy.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note with concern the rise in education, skills and training deprivation figures and to request that a report on how to tackle this issue be submitted to a future meeting of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation contained in the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and in accordance with Standing Orders, that an additional page submitted by officers in connection with the following item be tabled, as it provided members with an update on the report before them for consideration.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Kevin Stewart declared an interest in the following item by virtue of his position as a part-time employee for Brian Adam, MSP, but did not consider it necessary to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.

FUNDING SETTLEMENT – MOTION BY COUNCILLOR GRAHAM – OCE/09/015

6. With reference to the motion submitted by Councillor Graham to the Council Meeting on 12th November, 2008, namely:-

“That this Council calls upon the Scottish Government to increase its 09/10 allocation of funding to Aberdeen City Council in order to prevent further cuts to services to the elderly, disabled and those less fortunate within Aberdeen. Furthermore, this Council Administration honours their promise to the people of Aberdeen during the protest march back in April, 2008, by instructing the Chief Executive to write to the Scottish Government demanding that Aberdeen City Council receives a fairer funding settlement consistent with

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the Scottish average. That the leadership writes to all Aberdeen City constituency and North East list MSPs calling on them to support Aberdeen City Council's plea for a better funding settlement."

The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Executive which provided an update on the position relating to the Scottish Government's review of local government finance distribution. It was noted that work was ongoing to press the case for fairer funding for the City Council and that the Council's submission on Local Government Finance had been considered by the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee on 1st September, 2009. The issue had also been raised with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth on his visit to the Council on 30th July, 2009.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note the position relating to the Scottish Government's review of local government finance distribution; and
- (b) that the Committee request the Chief Executive to continue to press the case for fairer funding for the City Council.

The Committee then considered a tabled paper from the Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive, which detailed the statement made by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth on 26th November, 2009. Following the review of the existing needs-based grant distribution mechanism, the Scottish Government had determined that there were no genuine anomalies in the methodology and as such, the grant distribution indicators were retained unchanged. In the funding settlement prepared by the Scottish Government, Aberdeen City Council was ranked second bottom out of the thirty-two Scottish local authorities on a per capita funding basis. The Committee then heard from the Director of Corporate Governance who advised that the Council was looking at the implications of the funding settlement and would continue to press the case to the Scottish Government for fairer funding.

Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Adam, moved:-

that the Committee resolve (i) to note the intolerable position relating to the Scottish Government's review of Local Government finance distribution; (ii) to instruct the Leadership Board to take all possible steps to mobilise all party and all sector opposition to this manifestly unfair settlement and to report back to the next meeting of the Committee; and (iii) to agree recommendation (b) in the report.

As an amendment, the Convener, seconded by the Vice-Convener, moved:-

that the Committee accept the recommendations contained in the report, and that the Chief Executive write to the Scottish Government on the matter;

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that the Leadership Board and Chief Executive continue to press the case for a fairer funding settlement for Aberdeen; that officers investigate the benefits to the Council of tax increment financing and a change in the floor level; and that all political parties come together to put their weight behind the campaign for a fairer funding settlement.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (5) – Councillors Adam, Collie, Donnelly, Graham and Young; for the amendment (8) – the Convener; the Vice-Convener; and Councillors Dean, Jaffrey, Leslie, Malone, May and Kevin Stewart; absent from the division (1) – Councillor Wisely.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the amendment; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

LOCAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY – ABERDEEN ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP – H&E/09/117

7. The Committee had before it a joint report by the Directors of Housing and Environment and Social Care and Wellbeing which sought Council support for the local Alcohol Strategy produced by the Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

The report advised that the local alcohol strategy had identified several high level outcomes, namely:-

- through education, prevention and communication, people of all ages will be equipped to make informed choices about their alcohol use and will be actively involved in being part of the solution;
- services will focus on supporting recovery from alcohol related harm. Access to support and treatment including training, employability and palliative care will be improved;
- communities will be protected from criminal and anti-social behaviour related to alcohol use through the use of intelligence and enforcement and proactive relationships with communities;
- children and young people will be valued and supported, and outcomes and opportunities for children and young people will be improved;
- the influences and contributions of culture, licensing, licensed trade, the hospitality industry, the alcohol producers and the business community will be integral to the strategy.

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It was noted that Aberdeen City Alcohol and Drugs Partnership would be accountable for monitoring and evaluating the quality of service and funding allocated to support these outcomes.

The strategy comprised four priority areas of work, namely, reducing consumption; supporting families and communities; developing positive attitudes and positive choices; and improving support and treatment. Each of these areas contained a range of actions which would be further developed and implemented over the next 10 years. Appended to the report was the draft Local Alcohol Strategy.

The Committee then heard that the strategy was to be launched at the Citadel on 14th December, 2009.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee endorse the local alcohol strategy produced by Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank Leslie Brown, Community Safety Strategist, for the work which had gone into producing the report; and
- (ii) to endorse the strategy as recommended in the report.

BYELAWS – CG/09/158

8. With reference to Article 2 of the minute of the meeting of 10th September, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which provided information on the procedural and legal issues relating to the promotion and enforcement of byelaws. The report detailed the procedure for promotion of a byelaw, and the possible effects of non-compliance, but did not acknowledge the difficulties which could be faced in the enforcement of byelaws.

It was noted that a register of all byelaws had to be kept at the Council offices and made available for inspection by the public if required.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the contents of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that due to the recent change to the Council's Standing Orders, the reference to the Council's Common Seal under the procedure section of the report no longer applied and should therefore be removed; and

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- (ii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

**UPDATE ON THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SHARED SERVICES PROJECT
– CG/09/144**

9. With reference to Article 16 of the minute of the Continuous Improvement Committee meeting of 21st April, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which provided an update on the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Initiative and sought a decision from the Committee on how the Council should progress with the initiative.

At its meeting on 21st April, 2009, the Continuous Improvement Committee had resolved to continue participation in the project on the understanding that further work was to be undertaken on the business case and cost benefits, and that once this work was completed, that the relevant Committee of the Council would then consider the case for further investment in the scheme. The Committee had also requested that the involvement required by elected members be investigated before any further decision was taken on the matter. The report advised that although work on the business case was ongoing, limited progress had been made thus far and an updated business case was expected in two to three months' time.

In the meantime, a submission for additional funding for the project had been prepared and submitted to the Scottish Government, with no response received as yet. It was noted that participation in the project would require significant investment and substantial additional resources would be required to support any implementation and at present, there was no evidence available to suggest that the Council's performance would significantly improve through participation in the scheme.

Appended to the report was the application for additional funding from the Scottish Government.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note progress to date; and
- (b) that the Council continue participating in the initiative until the full business case was completed when a further decision would be taken on the City Council's involvement.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that officers at Moray Council were currently preparing the business case and that it was unlikely to be received by Aberdeen City Council until either March

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or April, 2010, at which point a report would come before the Committee and the Council's participation in the scheme would be reconsidered.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and in accordance with Standing Orders, that an additional page submitted by officers in connection with the following item be tabled, as it proposed a second option to be considered by members, prepared following feedback from the Disability Advisory Group.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Dean declared an interest in the following item by virtue of her position as a Director of Grampian Society for the Blind, but did not consider it necessary to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.

**REVIEW OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE DISABILITY ADVISORY GROUP –
CG/09/159**

10. With reference to Article 5 of the minute of the meeting of 10th September, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which presented a review of the remit, membership and constitution of the Disability Advisory Group (DAG).

As part of the wider review of all the Council's sub committees and working groups, the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee, at its meeting on 10th September, 2009, had requested that officers review the current status of DAG. It was noted that although over one hundred individuals were currently members of DAG, only around thirty or so attended meetings on a regular basis. Of those thirty, around twelve members made regular contributions to the business of the meeting. As a result of the large membership, it had proven difficult to contact members and sustain consistent attendance at meetings.

The report advised that the current arrangements for DAG were not conducive to

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the Council and others delivering satisfactory outcomes for people with disabilities. It was therefore proposed that the membership of the group be amended to a smaller, strategically focused steering group consisting of around twenty members, which would meet every eight weeks. The wider membership of disability interest groups and individuals would then meet twice a year as a Forum to be briefed on any issues arising from the steering group meetings. Members of the wider Forum could also approach representatives on the steering group with any issues they wished to raise. It was suggested that the selection process of representatives for the steering group could be undertaken at the wider Forum meetings.

The report proposed that the steering group comprise three community representatives with disabilities (with the authority to co-opt two others as required) who would be elected at the biannual Forum meetings; up to five elected members; and up to twelve representatives of public and voluntary sector organisations working for and advocating on behalf of people with disabilities.

At this juncture, the Committee heard from Mr Roddy MacTaggart, Strategist for Disability and Race Equalities, who advised that the contents of the report had been discussed with members of the Disability Advisory Group at its meeting on 26th November, 2009. Mr MacTaggart advised the Committee that the Group had been concerned at the balance of representation on the Steering Group and the lack of places proposed for individual members of the Group who would not otherwise be represented by a public or voluntary sector organisation. As such, he had prepared a second option for consideration by the Committee, which proposed that the representation of the Steering Group comprise up to seven individual representatives with disabilities who would be elected at the bi-annual Forum meeting; up to five elected members; and up to seven representatives of public and voluntary sector organisations working for and advocating on behalf of people with disabilities (with the facility to co-opt others as required). The additional representatives would be co-opted at particular meetings only for discussion of specific items in their field of expertise.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note the progress of the review to date;
- (b) that the Committee approve the draft proposal to establish a smaller Steering Group within the wider membership of the Disability Advisory Group;
- (c) that the Committee instruct officers to develop and implement the proposals in conjunction with Disability Advisory Group members.

The Convener, seconded by Councillor Leslie, then moved:-

that the Committee accept option 2 (up to seven individual representatives, up to seven representatives of public and voluntary sector organisations;

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and up to five Elected Members) and agree that the group can co-opt individuals for specific purposes and items as and when required with a further review of the amended arrangements in one year.

As an amendment, Councillor Adam, seconded by Councillor Crockett, moved:- that the Committee postpone acceptance of option 2 until the views of the wider Forum could be sought on the proposal at the next meeting of the Disability Advisory Group in February, 2010.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (9) – the Convener; the Vice-Convener and Councillors Dean, Donnelly, Jaffrey, Leslie, Malone, May and Kevin Stewart; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Adam, Collie and Crockett; absent from the division (2) – Councillors Ironside and Wisely.

Councillor Crockett noted his concern at the proposal that the members of the general Forum would vote to elect the representatives from the voluntary and public sector organisations as he suggested that if there were a greater number of Forum members with a particular disability, then this could exclude organisations with a smaller voting membership from becoming members of the Steering Group.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the motion; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

- **JENNIFER STEWART, Convener.**