

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 21st January, 2010. - Minute of Meeting of the CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Jennifer Stewart, Convener; Councillor John West, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Adam, Cooney (substituting for Councillor Collie), Crockett (substituting for Councillor Ironside for articles 4 to 7), Dean, Donnelly, Dunbar (substituting for Councillor May), Fletcher (substituting for Councillor Malone), Graham (to article 6), Greig (substituting for Councillor Yuill), Leslie, McCaig (substituting for Councillor Jaffrey), McDonald (substituting for Councillor Kevin Stewart, Wisely and Young (substituting for Councillor Graham for articles 8 to 11 and Councillor Ironside for articles 1 to 3).

WELCOME

The Convener welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee to be held in 2010 and wished all in attendance a Happy New Year.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 8th December, 2009.

With reference to Article 6 of the minute, the Committee heard from Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service – Office of Chief Executive. Mr. Monaghan advised that following the letter sent by the Council to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth prior to the Christmas break, Mr. Swinney had written to the Council advising that he would accept the invitation to meet with the Chief Executive and the Leadership Board to discuss the funding settlement for Aberdeen.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to welcome the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth;
- (ii) in relation to Article 6, to request that officers amend the wording of item 2 on the motions list to include the reference to “tax increment funding” as detailed in the minute; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to item 3 (Monitoring Officer report - PIDA), to note that the City Solicitor was to meet with Human Resources in the week commencing 25th January, 2010, to discuss how to take forward the proposed changes to the whistleblowing policy;
- (ii) in relation to item 7 (Byelaws), to note that no response had been received from the Scottish Government and to request that officers send a reminder letter;
- (iii) in relation to item 12 (Review of Sub-Committees and Working Groups), to request that officers proceed as detailed in the draft proposal circulated to members of the Committee via letter by the Head of Community Planning and Regeneration with a report back to Corporate Policy and Performance Committee detailing the action to be taken; namely, that the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing and a small group of relevant officers meet regularly with the Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) and relevant representatives of the sector on matters of shared interest, with any matters raised at these meetings then referred back to the appropriate committee; and
- (iv) in relation to item 14 (Becoming Effective Corporate Parents):- (a) to request that officers investigate the possibility of placing the Corporate Parenting DVD on a secure part of the Intranet or the online training site which would allow members to view the DVD in their own time and would then be logged on their online training record; and (b) to request that officers from HR then contact all elected members to advise if the training would still proceed if the DVD was made available online.

MOTIONS LIST

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

The Committee resolved:-

in relation to Motion 1 (Ward Renaming), (a) to note that the Scottish Government would undertake consultation with the affected wards, with the consultation start date to be advised, and (b) to request that the City Solicitor write to all elected members in the meantime to gauge opinion on whether they wished their own wards to be renamed.

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (SPIs) 2008/2009 – CG/10/020

4. With reference to Article 5 of the minute of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee of 5th November, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which presented comparative rankings for the Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for the 2008/2009 year, and detailed Aberdeen City Council's position on 105 SPIs. It was noted that a detailed report on the Council's performance outturns and officers' detailed analysis thereon had previously been reported to the November meeting of the Committee. The report before members advised on the Council's ranking in comparison with all Scottish local authorities.

The report advised that 59% of the Council's ranked SPIs were in the top or second quartiles for 2008/09, compared to 53% in 2007/08 and 51% in 2006/07, and in general, there was continued good performance in those indicators where Aberdeen City Council had previously ranked in the upper quartile. In terms of performance, rather than rankings, the position for 2008/09 was that there had been improvement in 59 indicators, with a decline in performance in 38 indicators and 8 which were not comparable year on year.

Appended to the report was a set of graphs showing the percentage of indicators ranked in each quartile for each Audit Scotland topic.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note the ranking on the 2008/09 Statutory Performance Indicators, and the positive movement in terms of the percentage of SPIs in the upper and second quartiles; and
- (b) that the Committee note that, as part of the Council's performance management system, each service reported to the relevant Committees of the Council showing performance against SPIs. This included recommendations for actions for further improvement.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that in future reports, officers include a paragraph of text underneath any graphs to explain what the graph represented in terms of the Council's performance; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

SUPPORT STAFF REVIEW – CG/10/016

5. With reference to Article 10 of the minute of the meeting of the Continuous Improvement Committee of 24th February, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which provided an update on the temporary realignment of support staff to the new structure. The report also detailed the approach and timing of the review and permanent allocation of support staff to the new structure, as it related to the overall restructuring which would follow the Heads of Service recruitment process. The report advised that it was necessary to undertake a review to establish the business needs of each of the service teams, but that this would take place once the teams in each Directorate were in place, following the Heads of Service recruitment. The alignment of teams and services would be an early task for the newly appointed Heads of Service and the review of support staff would be key to supporting this work. The review would focus on the impacts of new technology and methodology on the tasks to be undertaken; the requirements of the team by task and volume; a skills audit of the support staff; identification of training needs; agreement with the teams and Directorate on the proposals; and finally agreement with HR and Committee on the allocation of support staff. Once these tasks were complete, a detailed plan would be produced which would include recommendations to reduce unit costs, increase productivity and improve service delivery.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note the work which had been undertaken by the Operational Support Managers (OSMs) to realign the support staff on an interim basis to the new structure; and
- (b) that the Committee instruct officers, led by the Chief Administration Officer, to continue to support the work outlined in this report relating to the review of support staff.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Operational Support Managers would also be included in the review of support staff, and that they would be reviewed by senior officers; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

CATERING SERVICES REVIEW – EPI/10/027

6. With reference to Article 2 of the minute of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee of 8th December, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure which provided the Committee with information on the outcome of the best value review undertaken on catering services, as well as the recommendations made by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) following the consultancy work they had undertaken as part of their review.

The report advised that following their review, APSE considered that there were no commercial grounds or otherwise to justify consideration of out-sourcing the catering services at this time. They had however identified a number of strategic, organisational and service delivery issues to be considered and analysed by Aberdeen City Council in order to ensure that there was effective service delivery and structural decisions in the future. To address these issues, officers had prepared a draft action plan which presented an overall picture of areas which required some improvement. The report advised that the action plan represented a general overview and that each key area for improvement would be set out in a clear activity plan for each individual catering service, against which tasks, timeframes, targets and measurement of outcomes could be planned and implemented. These detailed plans would be reported back to Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee then heard of the scheme currently being implemented at Cults Academy, where pupils in S1 and S2 were not allowed to leave school premises at lunch time, which had resulted in an uptake of pupils having school meals. Officers also advised the Committee that work was ongoing on a pilot scheme to introduce the same menu at all Aberdeen City Council schools.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note that based on the evidence gathered as part of the review process, there are no commercial or other grounds to justify any early consideration of out-sourcing these services;
- (b) that the Committee agree that the detailed use of information gathered for and by the review to develop clear strategies and service improvement

plans, would represent a more effective use of available Council resources at this time; and

- (c) that the Committee instruct officers to develop a comprehensive action plan dealing with the organisational and strategic issues from the recommendation and to report back to the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee in two cycles' time.

Councillor Adam, seconded by Councillor Cooney, then moved the recommendations contained in the report.

As an amendment, the Convener, seconded by Councillor John West, moved:- that the recommendations contained in the report be amended to read:-

- (a) that the Committee note the information gathered by the review; and
 (b) that the Committee instruct officers to develop a comprehensive action plan dealing with the organisational and strategic issues relating to catering services and exploring all options, report back to Committee in two cycles' time.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (4) – Councillors Adam, Cooney, Crockett and Graham; for the amendment (10) – the Convener; the Vice-Convener; and Councillors Dean, Donnelly, Dunbar, Fletcher, Greig, Leslie, McCaig and Wisely; absent from the division (1) – Councillor McDonald.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the amendment; and
 (ii) to note that the scheme utilised at Cults Academy where S1 and S2 pupils are not allowed to leave the school at lunch time had resulted in an uptake of pupils having school meals, and to request that officers prepare a report for the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, with a follow-up report to Corporate Policy and Performance Committee for information, advising on the possible benefits to all schools of the Cults scheme and of the pilot to introduce the same menu in all schools.

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – OCE/10/003

7. With reference to Article 10 of the minute of the meeting of the Continuous Improvement Committee of 6th May, 2008, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Executive which detailed progress on refreshing the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.

The report advised that the original intention had been to refresh the existing governance arrangements making use of the guidance produced by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), namely the "Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". Following the Accounts Commission hearing in May, 2008, the Commission had stated that it had concerns about the governance arrangements within the Council, particularly the need for more effective member scrutiny. The Commission had recommended that the Council ensure that robust and effective governance arrangements were in place, including officers producing reports which outlined policy options, members receiving all papers in accordance with the timescales laid down by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act

and the Council's Standing Orders, as well as members attending appropriate training courses.

The report then detailed the progress made to date on these recommendations, including the CIPFA training organised for members and the establishment of the Scrutiny Panel. The Chief Executive had also submitted reports to Council on revisions to the Council's decision making structure, revisions to the management structure at Director and Head of Service level, and revisions to the Council's Standing Orders. The Accounts Commission Best Value progress report, published in July, 2009, had acknowledged that the Council had implemented a new management structure to improve clarity and accountability, that it had agreed to revise political decision making structures and that it would be implementing new governance arrangements.

The refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance would bring each of these aspects of work together and would be reported to the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee to be held on 29th April, 2010.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee resolve to note the position relating to the development of a refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance for the Council and agree that the Code be brought to its meeting on 29th April, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank the author for a well written report; and
- (ii) to note that the report on the refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance due before the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee on 29th April, 2010, would also reflect the changes to the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

PEER REVIEW – OCE/10/002

8. With reference to Article 11(C) of the minute of the meeting of the Continuous Improvement Committee of 13th January, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Executive which provided an update on the position relating to the use of peer review within Aberdeen City Council.

The findings of the Accounts Commission hearing in May, 2008, had stated that the Council lacked the capacity to carry forward the changes which required to be made, and suggested that external support, including peer review, should be used as a means to increase self awareness and capacity within the Council. The follow-up Best Value progress report published in July, 2009, had acknowledged that the Council had recognised the need to build capacity within the organisation and that it had both actively secured external support and developed its existing capacity.

The report advised that the Council had received external assistance from various sources, including the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), consultants, and the City of Edinburgh, Renfrewshire and West Lothian Councils. The Council also engaged with the External Support Group facilitated by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), and a number of Council services were also

active members of partnerships with other local authorities to provide mutual quality assurance schemes. It was noted that the Corporate Management Team was in discussion with officers at Perth and Kinross Council with a view to adopting their guide, "How Good is Our Council?", which detailed the evaluation of services which made use of quality indicators. This would allow Aberdeen City Council to establish arrangements to ensure an accurate level of self awareness which would allow meaningful engagement with Audit Scotland and its partner inspection bodies as shared risk assessment was developed in the coming months.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the position relating to the use of peer review within the Council.

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL NATURE CONSERVATION STRATEGY 2010-2015
– EPI/10/004**

9. With reference to Article 19 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 11th January, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval for the adoption of the Aberdeen City Council Nature Conservation Strategy 2010-2015. The strategy had been produced through a working group of relevant Council officers and representatives from external organisations, and a workshop involving the wider Council had also been held to assist in the strategy's development. A public consultation exercise had then commenced over eight weeks between 7th September and 2nd November, 2009. All comments raised as a result of the public consultation had been addressed and reflected in the final strategy where appropriate.

The strategy had been reported to the Housing and Environment Committee on 11th January, 2010, for approval and thereafter had come before the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee for Council-wide adoption.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the final Nature Conservation Strategy (2010-2015) for adoption.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 1 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

**MACKIE HALL, CRAIBSTONE – LEASE OF MUSIC SCHOOL BOARDING
ACCOMMODATION – CG/10/009**

10. With reference to Article 45 of the minute of the meeting of the Resources Management Committee of 5th May, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which advised the Committee of the

circumstances that resulted in the lease of Mackie Hall without the authorisation of the Resources Management Committee.

Appended to the report was an action plan containing a number of recommendations which had been agreed to reduce the likelihood of a repeat occurrence.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to amend point 3 of the action plan contained in the report to read “should ensure that all officers below fourth tier report in accordance with the approved organisational structure **and receive Committee approval**”;
- (ii) to request that the City Solicitor write to all Directors to ensure that all staff were aware of the financial regulations and delegated powers, and the fact that all property transactions must be referred to the Asset Management Service;
- (iii) to request that the letter also include an instruction to Directors to check that there were no draft leases under their remit; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the content of the report.

- **JENNIFER STEWART, Convener**.