

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 22 January 2013

Present

Councillors Burns (Convener), Cardownie (Vice-Convener), Burgess, Chapman, Child, Nick Cook, Edie, Godzik, Ricky Henderson, Hinds, Lewis, Mowat, Rankin, Rose and Ross.

1. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 4 December 2012 as a correct record.

2. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan January to April 2013

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan for January to April 2013 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for January to April 2013.
- 2) To ensure that the outstanding motion by Councillor Burns from the meeting on 6 November 2012 on the Future Management and Ownership of Easter Craiglockhart Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was added to the forward plan list.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 6 November 2012 (item 5): report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

3. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin 22 January 2013

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Business Bulletin for 22 January 2013 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

4. Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee Work Programme

The work programmes for the Policy Development and Review Sub-Committees of the Education, Children and Families, Finance and Budget and Transport and Environment Committees were presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the work programmes for the Education, Children and Families, Finance and Budget and Transport and Environment Policy Development and Review Sub-Committees.
- 2) To ask the Director of Children and Families to report back to the Education, Children and Families Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee on developing the Estates Strategy review.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

5. Pensions Auto-enrolment

Details were provided of changes to pensions legislation which would impact on the terms and conditions of employment in the City of Edinburgh Council. The financial and resource implications for implementing automatic-enrolment in the Council were provided.

Decision

- 1) To note the staging date of 1 April 2013.
- 2) To recognise the right of eligible jobholders who had already chosen to opt out, to remain opted out, by adopting the transitional period and deferring automatic enrolment until 2017.
- 3) To note the potential additional employers pension contribution costs, particularly if the transitional period was not adopted, estimated in the report by the Director of Corporate Governance and the additional system, administrative, communication and staff resource costs.
- 4) To agree to receive a further report on necessary changes to systems, policies and processes and employer pension contributions.

- 5) To agree to the formation of a working group; the appointment of a project sponsor and governance arrangements; the appointment of a project manager and departmental contacts/champions; and the development of a communications strategy, to progress pensions auto-enrolment.
- 6) To promote the benefits of the scheme to staff.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

6. Non-Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rating Relief

Details were provided on the review of the Council's existing policy on Discretionary Rating Relief (DDR) which was due to end on 31 March 2013. The new policy would now include "social enterprise schemes", and would take effect from 1 April 2013.

Decision

- 1) To agree a revised policy to apply from 1 April 2013.
- 2) To agree that new applications from Citizens Advice Edinburgh and the ICE store be granted relief for 2012/13 and an additional five year period commencing 1 April 2013.
- 3) To agree that organisations which had been granted relief outwith the scope of the existing policy as detailed in the report by the Director of Corporate Governance be granted relief for a further period of five years from 1 April 2013.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

7. Welfare Reform – Further Update

The Committee had agreed a number of recommendations as part of the Council's actions to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform.

An update was provided on the progress being made by the Council and partners to develop arrangements to mitigate, where possible, the negative impact of the UK Government's welfare reforms.

Decision

- 1) To note the continuing progress on assessing the impact of welfare reforms and actions for developing partial mitigation strategies.
- 2) To note that officers were exploring options to provide matched funding for the DHP fund from existing budgets.
- 3) To note that an additional £0.25m of funding for Advice services would be found from existing budgets.

- 4) To agree to receive future progress updates on a two monthly cycle, with the next report on 16 April 2013.
- 5) To note that further details would be provided on the recent Scottish Government announcement about additional funding for Advice services.
- 6) To ask the Director to provide members with update briefings on a regular basis.
- 7) To note the ongoing work to develop more collaborative working across the various advice service organisations in the city and agree to receive further progress reports on this, including funding implications.
- 8) To ask the Director of Corporate Governance to provide a full list of Advice Agencies with the progress report.
- 9) To ask the Director of Corporate Services to circulate to members, details of the information event being held with advice agencies at the Corn Exchange on 22 February 2013.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 4 December 2012 (item no 4); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

8. Achieving Excellence Performance Report to October 2012

An update was provided on performance against specified targets and outcomes across the Council's Performance Framework for the period to October 2012 together with an in-depth analysis of performance against the Council Strategic Outcomes.

Decision

- 1) To note performance and agree actions for improvement for the period to October 2012.
- 2) To note that the performance information would be reported to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for further scrutiny at its performance meeting on 24 January 2013.
- 3) To refer the report by the Director of Corporate Governance to all Executive Committees or Sub-Committees for further scrutiny.
- 4) To note and agree the key messages in the Audit Scotland report 'Managing performance: are you getting it right?' which had been integrated into the Council's Performance Framework.
- 5) To invite members to highlight any particular indicators they wished reported to Committee in detail.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

9. *imProve it* Programme Update

The Council had agreed to proceed with the implementation of the internal improvement plan or Public Sector Comparator (PSC) for Environmental Services.

Details were provided on the progress made in implementing the changes required to deliver both service improvements and the majority of savings contained within the original PSC. The new phase, which focussed on developing and implementing additional efficiencies and achieving sustained improvements in performance, was outlined.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress of the *imProve it* Programme to date and that savings of between £4.5m-£5.3m were forecast in 2012/13 rising to £8.914m in 2013/14.
- 2) To note the main areas of work proposed in the next phase of the programme.

(References – Act of Council No 2 of 24 November 2011; report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)