

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 11 June 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. Lothian Council for Inclusive Living “Your Call” Service

(a) Deputation – Lothian Council for Inclusive Living

The deputation expressed concern for the service’s future. Due to a lack of funding they would soon be unable to provide their current Counselling service. They outlined the type of services which they provided and details of their volunteer counsellors and service users.

The deputation urged the Council to support their application for Section 16b funding from the Scottish Government.

(b) Motion by Councillor Aitken

The following motion had been submitted by Councillor Aitken in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

“Committee notes:

Your Call is one of the services provided by the Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living. Your call is a national counselling service which has been operating since 2008. Counsellors work as volunteers and they are all disabled people themselves and are professionally trained. The service was the first national telephone counselling service for disabled people in Scotland. The Council has never funded this service but recognises its importance and excellent service and is disappointed that it might disappear next month due to lack of funding.

The Committee instructs:

1. The Convener of Health Wellbeing and Housing to write to the Scottish Government supporting Section 16b Grant Application for 1 year funding.

2. Council Officers to meet with LCiL to discuss what short term help can be given to keep this service going until the Grant Application has been decided.”

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Aitken.

2. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 14 May 2013 as a correct record.

3. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan June to August 2013

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

Decision

To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for June to August 2013.

(Reference – Key Decisions Forward Plan June to August 2013, submitted)

4. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin 11 June 2013

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Business Bulletin for 11 June 2013 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin 11 June 2013, submitted.)

5. 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 the assessment of Welfare Reform and actions to develop partial mitigation strategies.
- 2) To refer reports on continuing financial pressures and associated risks arising out of implementation of Welfare Reform to the Finance and Budget Committee.
- 3) To note that the Director of Services for Communities would report to the Health, Housing and Social Care Committee in June 2013 on the Advice Services review.
- 4) To note that the next progress update report would be 6 August 2013 (with a separate briefing to Committee members in early July).
- 5) To agree that future bi-monthly reports include details of the accumulated running costs.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 4 December 2012 (item 4); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

6. Revised Whistleblowing Policy

Details were provided on proposals for the adoption of a Whistleblowing Policy which would replace the current Policy on Public Interest Disclosure in order to strengthen existing whistleblowing procedures and to meet the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988.

Decision

To refer the report by the Director of Corporate Governance to the Finance and Budget Committee without recommendation.

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

7. The Future Management and Ownership of Easter Craiglockhart Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Adjacent Green Spaces

In response to a motion by Councillor Burns, the Committee had agreed to investigate the opportunities for, and public opinion on, the future ownership and Management of the Easter Craiglockhart Hill Local Nature Reserve and those other green spaces on the Hill that were presently in private ownership.

Details were provided on the outcome of an extensive public consultation on possible land management options and the legal and other implications of the options available to the Council.

Decision

- 1) To explore securing title to those open spaces on Easter Craiglockhart Hill that would enhance landscape connectivity and retain public access.
- 2) To support the Council working with local residents and site users to ensure community involvement in the future management of the Hill's open spaces. This to include further consideration of community ownership or leasing of some or all of the secured public land to a community representative group, along the lines of Option 4a in the report by the Director of Services for Communities.
- 3) To refer any further financial matters pertaining to the transfer of open space land at Easter Craiglockhart Hill to either the Finance and Budget Committee or Full Council.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy committee 6 November 2012 (item 5); report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

8. McCrae's Battalion Trust – Commemorative Service at Contalmaison Cairn – 1 July 2013

Approval was sought for the Council to be represented at this year's commemorative service at Contalmaison, France, on 1 July 2013.

Decision

To approve the attendance of Councillor R Henderson at the commemorative Service at Contalmaison on 1 July 2013.

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

9. Crackdown on Legal Loan Sharks

The Petitions Committee had referred a report detailing the feasibility of five proposed actions which had been identified within the petition 'Crackdown on Legal Loan Sharks' as possible Council contributions to protect people from the actions of Payday Loan companies

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Head of Legal Risk and Compliance.
- 2) To recognise that the Council could make a contribution to curbing the excesses of the payday loan industry.
- 3) To agree that options for a financial literacy campaign be developed.
- 4) To agree that existing promotion and support for Credit Unions be continued.

- 5) To agree that access to payday loan websites be blocked on Council computer systems.
- 6) To agree that Edinburgh Trading Standards Service continue to support The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) enforcement actions following the compliance review of the payday loan sector.
- 7) To agree the establishment of an Officer Working Group to take forward agreed actions including further research on the following items as per the recommendations of the Petitions Committee and report back to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee within one calendar year:
 - i) the historic input the Council has had in setting up credit unions
 - ii) details of previous literacy campaigns
 - iii) the UK wide licence system and what further work was being undertaken to regulate this area.

(References – Petitions Committee 3 June 2013 (item 5); reports (2) by the Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance and the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)