

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 3 September 2013

Present

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

1. 2012 Employee Survey Update

a) Deputation – Unite (Edinburgh Branch)

The deputation expressed concern that the input into the 'People Plans' did not reflect the input by the trade union. They felt that HSE Stress Surveys showed that Council staff did not have much control over the work they did which they felt was an important issue and that these considerations had not featured in the update.

They asked the Council to consider establishing a Joint Trade Union/Management Working Group which they felt would lead to improved industrial relations, better staff health and wellbeing and a more committed and loyal workforce.

b) Report by the Director of Corporate Governance

The Committee had agreed an update on the analysis and actions undertaken since October 2012 to address the development areas identified through the Employee Survey findings.

Details were provided on additional actions taken since May 2013 which provided additional information on how the actions had supported the Healthy Working Lives and interim Investors in People (IiP) assessments.

Decision

- 1) To note the additional actions taken in response to the findings of the 2012 Employee Survey.
- 2) To note the successful retention of the Health Working Lives Silver award and the progress made towards retaining IiP Gold Status in 2014.
- 3) To ask the deputation to forward a copy of their presentation and survey results to the convener, to allow for future consideration at the Partnership at Work Forum.

(References –Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 14 May 2013 (item 4); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Cardownie declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a member of Unite.

2. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 6 August 2013 as a correct record.

3. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan October to December 2013

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

Decision

To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for October to December 2013.

(Reference – Key Decisions Forward Plan October to December 2013, submitted.)

4. Compliance, Risk and Governance Programme – Review of Council Policy

Details were provided on the review of Council policies being carried out to rationalise existing policies, publish them on the Council website and ensure that an appropriate process of update and review was in place

Decision

- 1) To note developments concerning the Council policy register and its publication.
- 2) To approve the policy hierarchy and policy template.
- 3) To refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in accordance with the agreed work programme.

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

5. Compliance, Risk and Governance – Corporate Debt Policy

Details were provided on the proposed Council Corporate Debt Policy which had been prepared following consultation and engagement with elected members and equalities and anti-poverty groups.

Decision

- 1) To approve the Corporate Debt Policy.
- 2) To note the Council's commitment to engage with those in debt, helping them to pay by providing advice and guidance, and involving relevant welfare and debt agencies.

- 3) To note that the Corporate Debt Policy would be reviewed on an annual basis, taking account of changes in legislation, service improvements, regulations and wider policy initiatives.
- 4) To include the outcomes of the Policy's implementation and appropriate case studies in the annual review report.

(References – Act of Council No 9 of 2 May 2013; report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

6. Housing Benefit – Risk Based Verification Policy

The Council, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, excluded the public from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business for the reason that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

Details were provided on a new scheme by the Department for Works and Pensions for the Council to utilise, based on Risk Based Verification for administering housing benefit claims.

Decision

- 1) To adopt the process of Risk Based Verification for verifying Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Reduction Scheme applications as outlined in the executive summary of the report by the Director of Corporate Governance.
- 2) To implement Risk Based Verification in accordance with the policy described in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.8 of the report by the Director of Corporate Governance.
- 3) To note, that as required by the Department for Works and Pensions, this policy had been agreed with the Council's Section 95 Officer.
- 4) To refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value for further scrutiny of the policy as recommended as best practice by the Department for Works and Pensions.