

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 3 December 2013

Present

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

1. Welfare Reform – Further Update

a) Lothian Federation of Anti-Bedroom Tax Groups - Deputation

The deputation expressed concern that at the present rate of distribution of the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), there was a danger that all the moneys would not be disbursed and any unused funds would require to be returned.

They asked that all tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax who had been granted DHP but with a start date later than 1 April 2013 be sent an application form inviting them to apply for DHP from 1 April 2013. They felt that the Council should not operate a blanket policy as there was money available which should be paid out.

b) Report by the Director of Corporate Governance

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.

Motion

- 1) To note the continuing progress on assessing the impact of Welfare Reforms and actions for developing partial mitigation strategies.
- 2) To note the completion of the Benefit Cap stock cases and the change to business as usual approach had resumed.
- 3) To note Edinburgh's future involvement in the Local Support Services Framework.
- 4) To note a bid for the DWP additional DHP funding had been submitted.
- 5) To note the next progress update report would be 4 February 2014 (with a separate briefing to Committee in early January).
- 6) To agree that any new points raised by the deputation which required factual clarification be addressed in the update report to the Committee in February 2014.

- moved by Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Cardownie

Amendment

- 1) To note with concern the 132% increase in rent arrears in the six month period between 31 March 2013 and 30 September 2013 resulting in an additional £2.6m of Council house rent debt.
- 2) To note that the Council's adopted 'no eviction' policy appeared to have had a dramatic effect on the level of rent arrears in contrast to the policy of Registered Social Landlords, where increases in rent arrears had been more modest.
- 3) To agree to review the 'no evictions' policy and call for an immediate report on its effect within one cycle.

- moved by Councillor Rose, seconded by Councillor Mowat

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the motion	-	11 votes
For the amendment	-	3 votes

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Burns.

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

2. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 5 November 2013 as a correct record.

3. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan January to March 2014

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan for January to March 2014 was presented.

Decision

To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for January to March 2014.

(Reference – Key Decisions Forward Plan for January to March 2014, submitted.)

4. Working Groups

The Council had agreed that a report be submitted to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in December 2013 on the rationalisation of Working Groups.

Details were provided on proposals for revised governance arrangements to ensure clarity within the Committee model, enhance corporate oversight and provide a framework of key documentation to support meeting arrangements.

Motion

- 1) To agree that the appropriate Director, in consultation with the Convener and Vice-Convener of the relevant Committee, consider which working groups as set out in Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Corporate Governance, should be retained, rationalised as officer only groups or their work undertaken by Policy Development and Review Sub-Committees.
- 2) To agree to the transition arrangements as detailed in paragraph 2.1.7 of the report.
- 3) To agree the annual appointment of Working Groups by the relevant Committee as set out in paragraph 2.2.1.2 of the report.
- 4) To agree that the relevant Committee would approve the remit and appoint the membership of new Working Groups as set out in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report.
- 5) To agree that the Convener of the Working Group would be able to adjust the remit within the parameters of the outline remit approved by Committee or add to the membership if appropriate.
- 6) To note that an annual report on the number and scope of Working Groups would in future be provided to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee to ensure corporate oversight of Working Groups across the Council.
- 7) To agree to the use of the standard documentation for Working Groups as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

- moved by Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Cardownie

Amendment

- 1) To refer the list of working groups as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Corporate Governance, to the relevant Committees to determine which working groups should be retained, rationalised as officer only groups or their work undertaken by the Policy Development and Review Sub-Committees..
- 2) To agree to the transition arrangements as detailed in paragraph 2.1.7 of the report.
- 3) To agree the annual appointment of Working Groups by the relevant Committee as set out in paragraph 2.2.1.2 of the report.
- 4) To agree that the relevant Committee would approve the remit and appoint the membership of new Working Groups as set out in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report.
- 5) To agree that the Convener of the Working Group would be able to adjust the remit within the parameters of the outline remit approved by Committee or add to the membership if appropriate.
- 6) To note that an annual report on the number and scope of Working Groups would in future be provided to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee to ensure corporate oversight of Working Groups across the Council.

- 7) To agree to the use of the standard documentation for Working Groups as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

- moved by Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Nick Cook

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the motion	-	9 votes
For the amendment	-	5 votes

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Burns.

(References – Act of Council No 12 of 24 October 2013; report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

5. Lothian Pension Fund Engagement Activities

Details were provided on the engagement activities relating to social and environmental responsible investment of the pension funds and criteria used to judge the social and environmental impacts of the funds' investments with a view to including a Key Performance Indicator on how the fund performed in these areas.

Decision

- 1) To note the fiduciary role of the Council and the Pensions Committee in administering the pension funds.
- 2) To note that the strategy for incorporating environmental, social and governance issues into the pension funds was agreed and monitored by the Pensions Committee.
- 3) To note that the inclusion of a Key Performance Indicator for such activity was inappropriate given its qualitative nature.

(References – Act of Council No 15 of 24 October 2013; report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Rose declared a non-financial interest in the above item as Vice-Convener of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum.

6. Corporate Performance Framework – Annual Update 2013

The Council had approved a revised Corporate Performance Framework aligned to political, partnership and operational outcomes.

An update was provided on the Corporate Performance Framework.

Decision

- 1) To note the implementation of revised governance arrangements for reporting performance to Executive Committees with oversight by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.

- 2) To agree the annual update to the performance indicators.
- 3) To agree the Council's Annual Performance Report for 2012-13.
- 4) To agree the Strategic Service Plan 2012-17 which had been updated to reflect progress and priorities after the first year of implementation.
- 5) To agree the five Directorate plans which provided further planning detail across service areas.

(References – Act of Council No 10 of 25 October 2012; report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

7. Risk Management Policy and Framework

The Director of Corporate Governance had carried out a project to re-design the Council's risk management arrangements to ensure that they were fit for purpose. Details were provided of the first phase of the design and build process which identified the need for a new risk management framework and policy to be applied consistently across the Council.

Decision

- 1) To approve the Risk Management Policy and Framework.
- 2) To refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for scrutiny in accordance with the agreed work programme.

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

8. Nova Races 2014 to 2018

The Committee had carried out a review of events governance and agreed that a further report be submitted setting out revised events processes.

An update was provided on the current proposals in relation to the NOVA Races 2014 to 2018 which formed part of the Festivals and Events Core Programme for 2014.

Decision

To note the proposals in relation to the 2014 NOVA Races.

(References –Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 5 November 2013 (item 8); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Rose declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a participant in one of the organised events.

9 Corporate and Operational Governance – Update – referral from Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had referred for consideration a report providing an overview of areas of weakness identified by the review and Project Solar; an outline of the planned approach to strengthening critical areas of corporate governance; and an update on progress made.

Decision

To note the progress and actions outlined in the report by the Director of Corporate Governance.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee 14 November 2013 (item 6); report by the Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance, submitted.)

10. Lord Provost's Attendance at UNESCO Creative Cities Summit, Beijing

A summary was provided of the Lord Provost's attendance at the Global Creative Cities Summit in Beijing from 21-23 October 2013.

Decision

To note the report by the Director of Economic Development.

(Reference – report by the Director of Economic Development, submitted.)

11. Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative Proposal

Details were provided of a proposal by Edinburgh Community Solar Cooperative for the development of a community owned Solar Photovoltaic scheme on Council buildings.

Decision

- 1) To approve the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative.
- 2) To note the educational, environmental and community benefits associated with the progression of the scheme.
- 3) That each project be checked on a one on one basis, to determine that they adhered to the conditions stated and then each project be referred to the Transport and Environment Committee.
- 4) To refer the report to the Transport and Environment Committee in January 2014 for information.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

12. Edinburgh's Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Policy

The draft multi-agency domestic abuse policy for Edinburgh was presented. It provided a set of guiding principles and definitions in relation to the prevention of domestic abuse, the support and protection of victims and the management of perpetrators.

Decision

- 1) To approve the multi-agency domestic abuse policy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Chief Social Work Officer.
- 2) To note that the Edinburgh Partnership would be asked to adopt the policy at its next meeting on 5 December 2013.

(Reference – report by the Chief Social Work Officer, submitted.)