

Item 4.1 - Minutes

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 8 August 2017

Present

Councillors McVey (Convener), Day (Vice-Convener), Aldridge, Burgess, Doggart, Macinnes, Main, McLellan, Perry, Rankin and Whyte.

1. Deputation

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Michael Vallance and William Black from the Power to the People group.

The deputation raised concerns about cuts to housing benefit due to the benefit tax and the consequent eviction of tenants who could not afford their rents. They explained the impact that this was having on families in Edinburgh, with some being made homeless. They urged the Committee to take immediate action, as follows:

- To pay full discretionary housing payment (DHP) to completely cover rent in cases of tenants affected by the benefits cap;
- To house homeless families in decent flats in suitable areas;
- To address homeless families' needs in advance of the eviction date;
- To respect the rights of homeless families to be assisted by an advocate;
- To build more social housing;
- To ensure that temporary accommodation would meet acceptable standards;
- To immediately repair empty houses and put them back in use;
- To end dampness in council housing;
- To ensure that private sector rents were regulated.

The deputation expressed their concern that the City Deal would not help people who needed housing in Edinburgh. They highlighted the urgency around the issue and conveyed their disappointment that the report requested by the City of Edinburgh Council on 29 June 2017 would not be considered until the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 3 October 2017. It was proposed that the issues could be discussed at a meeting of the Welfare Reform Working Group.

The Convener thanked the deputation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the Business Bulletin.

(References – City of Edinburgh Council, 29 June 2017 (item 1); letter from All About Me and the Power to the People Group to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 29 June 2017, submitted.)

2. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Business Bulletin.
- 2) To agree that after the reappointment of the Welfare Reform Working Group, a meeting would be organised as a matter of urgency to address the issues raised by the Deputation.
- 3) To agree that officers would continue to engage with the Power to the People Group and would inform them of decisions taken by the Welfare Reform Working Group regarding the issues raised.
- 4) To note that a report would be brought to the Committee on 3 October 2017 and to agree that details of the support offered to homelessness clients should be included in the report.

(Reference – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin, submitted.)

3. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 28 March 2017 as a correct record.

4. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan August to October 2017

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan for August to October 2017 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the key decisions forward plan.
- 2) To agree that the inspection of health and social care services report would be added to the forward plan and would be considered at the October 2017 meeting of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.

(Reference – Key Decisions Forward Plan August to October 2017, submitted.)

5. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Rolling Actions Log

Details were provided of the outstanding actions arising from decisions taken by the Committee.

Decision

- 1) To note the Rolling Action Log.
- 2) To agree that an expected completion date for Item 6 would be added to the Rolling Actions Log.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

6. The Edinburgh and South Scotland City Region Deal – Implications for the City of Edinburgh Council

An outline of the Heads of Terms for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and the known financial contribution from the City of Edinburgh Council was provided. During discussion, it was highlighted that the final City Region Deal document would be presented to full Council.

Motion

- 1) To note the content of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Heads of Terms Agreement that was signed by UK Government, Scottish Government, and regional partners on 20 July 2017 (Annex 1).
- 2) To note that funding would only be released subject to Green-Book accredited outline business case approval.
- 3) To note the £23m capital funding requirement for the match funding allocation to IMPACT and infrastructure in West Edinburgh and that this would be considered as part of the Council's budget framework.
- 4) To note that a final City Region Deal document, including a detailed implementation plan with monitoring and evaluation frameworks and associated business cases for all projects and/or programmes receiving funding from the UK and/or Scottish Governments would be submitted to Full Council to be agreed and published.
- 5) To note that the governance structure, agreed in principle in June 2016, would be subject to formal approval by Council once agreed in principle by partners and Government.
- 6) To note the potential need for additional resource to enhance the Project Management Office as partners entered the delivery phase to meet the capacity demands required to deliver Green Book-compliant business cases and to manage the new governance structure.
- 7) To agree that full business cases would be presented to the relevant subject committee for scrutiny, prior to being taken to full Council for approval.
- 8) To note the need for continuing development of proposals to ensure:
 - Recognition of the importance of active travel and public transport in transforming regional transport choices;
 - Delivery of the mix of active travel and public transport proposals within the West Edinburgh Transport Appraisal Refresh;
 - The full contribution of the region's social enterprise sector;
 - A strengthened focus on the need for the city region economy to lead the way on low carbon and sustainable investment;
 - The quantum of housing needed, recognising the case in the council's Housing Needs and Demand Assessment for focus on homes at below market levels.
- 9) To note that the case for greater regional say over matters such as local taxation, energy planning and regional land assembly continued.

- moved by Councillor McVey, seconded by Councillor Day

Amendment

- 1) To note the content of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Heads of Terms Agreement that was signed by UK Government, Scottish Government, and regional partners on 20 July 2017 (Annex 1).
- 2) To note that funding would only be released subject to Green-Book accredited outline business case approval.
- 3) To note the £23m capital funding requirement for the match funding allocation to IMPACT and infrastructure in West Edinburgh and that this would be considered as part of the Council's budget framework.
- 4) To note that a final City Region Deal document, including a detailed implementation plan with monitoring and evaluation frameworks and associated business cases for all projects and/or programmes receiving funding from the UK and/or Scottish Governments would be submitted to Full Council to be agreed and published.
- 5) To note that the governance structure, agreed in principle in June 2016, would be subject to formal approval by Council once agreed in principle by partners and Government.
- 6) To note the potential need for additional resource to enhance the Project Management Office as partners entered the delivery phase to meet the capacity demands required to deliver Green Book-compliant business cases and to manage the new governance structure.

- moved by Councillor Whyte, seconded by Councillor McLellan

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the motion	-	8 votes
		(Councillors McVey, Day, Aldridge, Burgess, Macinnes, Main, Perry, Rankin)
For the amendment	-	3 votes
		(Councillors Doggart, McLellan, Whyte)

Decision

- 1) To approve the motion by Councillor McVey.
- 2) To agree that Committee Services would circulate the remit and delegated functions of the Leadership Advisory Panel to members of the Committee.

(References – Act of Council (No. 6), 26 January 2017; report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

7. Sickness Absence Policy

Details were provided of a review of the existing Sickness Absence Policy that was underway and the ongoing work with the Trade Unions. The review reflected an organisational priority to focus on employee wellbeing.

Decision

- 1) To note that a review of the current Managing Attendance Policy was progressing.
- 2) To note that a revised policy be brought for approval once agreement had been reached with the Trades Unions.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

8. Workplace Policy on Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse

The Committee considered a report on the existing Workplace Policy on Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse, which was presented as fit for purpose. There was discussion about the potential implementation of a random and “for cause” drug and alcohol testing regime, which had been discussed previously by the Council Leadership Team. It was noted that, where this had been implemented in other organisations, there was evidence of both positive and negative impacts.

Motion

- 1) To note that the current policy was still fit for purpose and no change was required at this time.
- 2) To note that the Council Leadership Team (CLT) were considering putting forward recommendations for the introduction of a random and ‘for cause’ drug and alcohol testing regime.
- 3) To note that random testing would not support Council aims and there were documented risks associated with such regimes.
- 4) To note that where such regimes had been introduced elsewhere, some of those involved in drug misuse changed behaviours making their misuse more serious by changing drugs to avoid detection.
- 5) To note that that the Edinburgh Trade Unions had been consulted and were against the current proposals for the introduction of random alcohol testing regime.
- 6) To agree that, if CLT were to consider that changes were required to the current policy to manage risks to the Council or residents, that alternatives would be brought forward for Committee that:
 1. Supported the current Policy Statement, including the aim “to provide and positive and constructive approach to dealing with the effects of the misuse of alcohol and drugs had on employees and their performance in the workplace” (Policy Statement 1.3).
 2. Were in support of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 placing a duty of care on employees to consider their own health and safety and that of their colleagues.

- moved by Councillor McVey, seconded by Councillor Day

Amendment

- 1) To note that the current policy was still fit for purpose and no change was required at this time.

- moved by Councillor Whyte, seconded by Councillor McLellan

Voting

The voting was as follows:

- | | | |
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| For the motion | - | 7 votes |
| | | (Councillors McVey, Day, Burgess, Macinnes, Main, Perry, Rankin) |
| For the amendment | - | 4 votes |
| | | (Councillors Aldridge, Doggart, McLellan, Whyte) |

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor McVey.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

9. Equality and Diversity Policy

The new Equality and Diversity Policy report was presented. It was explained that more detailed equality and diversity plans were being developed for the next three years, and that the City of Edinburgh Council was taking the lead for this project for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

Decision

- 1) To approve the new Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 2) To agree that this policy would as part of the Annual Policy Assurance Statement come back to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

10. Equality, Diversity, and Rights Framework 2017-21

An outline of the Council's second Equality, Diversity and Rights Framework was provided. This would replace the 2012-17 framework. The framework was developed along with partners in the Equalities and Rights Network in Edinburgh. During discussion, it was explained that measurement in equality work was a new science and it was acknowledged that improvement was needed in this area.

Decision

To approve the Equality, Diversity, and Rights Framework 2017-21.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

11. Policies – Assurance Statement – HR

Details were provided of a report that advised that, to ensure that the policies remained current and relevant, all Council directorates were required to review policies on an annual basis. The existing policy was presented to the Committee as fit for purpose.

Decision

To note that the Council policies detailed in the report had been reviewed and were considered as being current, relevant and fit for purpose.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 9 August 2016 (item 5); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

12. Policies – Assurance Statement – Customer

Committee considered a report that explained that, to ensure that the policies remained current and relevant, all Council directorates were required to review policies on an annual basis. The existing policy was presented to the Committee as fit for purpose.

Decision

To note that the Council policies detailed in the report had been reviewed and were considered as being current, relevant and fit for purpose.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 9 August 2016 (item 5); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

13. Corporate Debt Policy Annual Report

The Corporate Debt Policy Annual Report was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Annual report.
- 2) To note that further updates relevant to the Corporate Debt Policy would be incorporated in various performance reports throughout 2017/18.
- 3) To agree that a minor amendment would be made to Appendix 9 of the report to explain that the Executive Director of Resources was responsible for appropriate write-offs and that authority would be delegated to appropriate officers.

(Reference – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 23 February 2016 (item 7); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

14. Policies – Assurance Statement – Legal and Risk

To ensure that the policies remained current and relevant, all Council directorates were required to review policies on an annual basis. The existing policy was presented to the Committee as fit for purpose.

Decision

To note that the Council policies detailed in this report have been reviewed and were considered as being current, relevant and fit for purpose.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 9 August 2016 (item 5); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

15. Appointments to Working Groups – 2017-18

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee was required to re-appoint the membership of its Working Groups for 2017/18.

Decision

- 1) To appoint the membership of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee's Working Groups for 2017/18, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2) To agree to investigate the possibility of Working Groups being held in public and to report back to the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in October 2017.
- 3) To agree to add a link in the report to the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee's Working Groups.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)