

# STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 16 March 2005 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors Baird, Barnacle, Barr, Crabbie, Doig, A Grant, Hayton, Hunter, Lennie, Livingstone, MacLellan, Miller, Stewart, Wilson and Young.

In Attendance: Councillor H McDonald, B Malone (Chief Executive), M Cochlan, K MacDonald, P Wallace, T Yule (all Chief Executive's), A R McArthur (Executive Director – Corporate Services), G Fogg, J Low, H Mackenzie, J Symon, G Taylor and S Thornton (all Corporate Services), D Roberts (Executive Director – Housing and Community Care), G Waddell (Executive Director – Education & Children's Services), A Taylor (Education & Children's Services) and W Ronald (Environment Services).

Councillor Doig, Presiding.

## 207. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

## 208. MINUTES

The Minutes of Meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee held on 2 February 2005 (Arts 85-96) were submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

## 209. APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- (i) The Minutes of Meeting of the Appeals Sub-Committee of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 27 January 2005 were submitted and noted. **(Appendix I)**
- (ii) The Minutes of Meeting of the Appeals Sub-Committee of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 3 March 2005 were submitted and noted. **(Appendix IV)**

## 210. PROVOST'S SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Provost's Sub-Committee of 2 February 2005 were submitted and noted. **(Appendix II)**

## 211. EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 28 February 2005 were submitted and noted. **(Appendix III)**

## 212. REVENUE BUDGET 2004/05 – MONITORING REPORT NO. 5 (Art. 89)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/166) providing an update on progress regarding the 2004/05 General Fund Revenue Budget based upon the January 2005 ledger and also providing an update on the projected financial positions of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's Trading Operations.

### Resolved:

- (i) The terms of Report 05/166 be noted.
- (ii) The adjustments to the 2004/05 Management Revenue Budget detailed in Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.5 of Report 05/166 and the adjustments to the 2005/06 Revenue Budget detailed in Section 2.5 of the Report be approved.
- (iii) The carry forward of £575,000 of ring-fenced Scottish Executive Supporting People Grant funding, to assist in the delivery of the Council's Supporting People programme in 2005/06 and 2006/07 as detailed in Section 2.6 of Report 05/166, be noted.
- (iv) The individual service virements summarised in Appendix 2 to Report 05/166 be approved.

## **213. COMPOSITE CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 – MONITORING REPORT NO. 5 (Art. 91)**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/167) providing a summary position to date for the Composite Capital Programme for 2004/05 and seeking approval for adjustments to the programme.

### **Resolved:**

- (i) The terms of Report 05/167 be noted.
- (ii) The proposed budget adjustments to the 2004/05 Capital Budget set out in Sections 3 and 4 of Report 05/167 and summarised at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report be approved.
- (iii) The adjustments to the 2004/05 Renewal and Repair Fund set out in Section 6 and summarised at Appendix 3 to Report 05/167 be approved.

## **214. AUTHORITY TO WRITE OFF BAD DEBTS AND OBSOLETE STOCK (Art. 187/04)**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/168) seeking approval to write off certain sales ledger debts and also seeking approval to write off obsolete or damaged stock in Environment Services and Housing and Community Care Services.

### **Resolved:**

- (i) Sales ledger debts amounting to £37,519.63 (inc. VAT) as shown in the Appendix to Report 05/168 be written off in the current financial year.
- (ii) The obsolete stock within Environment Services (£10,833) and damaged stock (£437) held within Building Services DLO be written off within the current financial year.

## **215. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVENUE BUDGET 2005/2006**

There was submitted a joint report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) and the Head of Economic Development (05/169) seeking approval for provisional budget allocations in respect of financial assistance to the voluntary sector revenue budget and detailing the allocations of financial assistance to be awarded to the major organisations for the year ended 31 March 2006.

### **Resolved:**

- (i) The provisional budget allocations set out in Table 1 of Report 05/169 for each funding heading under the financial assistance to the voluntary sector budget for the year 2005/06 be approved.
- (ii) The virement of £393,500 from the financial assistance to the voluntary sector budget to the Economic Development budget within the Chief Executive's to support VisitScotland and events be approved.
- (iii) Funding of £119,019 to Perth Citizens Advice Bureau be approved in principle, with the first tranche, representing six months of operations, to be paid, and Housing and Community Care Services to continue to monitor the service provided by the Bureau and submit a monitoring report on performance after six months.

## **216. LOCAL TAXATION IN SCOTLAND – CONSULTATION PAPER**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/179) recommending a response to the Local Taxation in Scotland consultation paper issued by the Local Government Finance Review Committee.

Motion (Councillors Wilson and Miller)

- (1) **The Council write to the Scottish Executive indicating the clear preference that any future system of Local Government Taxation should be based on local income tax.**
- (2) **Report 05/179 on Local Taxation in Scotland be approved subject to (i) an amendment to the response to Question 5 that the balance of funding should be 60% local government and 40% Scottish Executive, thereby creating a clear linkage and accountability between the Council and the electorate and (ii) an additional response to Question 41 urging a comprehensive review of the Rural Rates Relief Scheme.**

Amendment (Councillors MacLellan and Lennie) – That each political party respond to the Local Government Finance Review Committee's Consultation Paper on Local Taxation in Scotland.

Amendment – 6 votes

Motion – 9 votes

**Resolved:**

In accordance with the Motion.

**\*217. THE COUNCIL TAX (DISCOUNT FOR UNOCCUPIED DWELLINGS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2004 (Art. 904/04)**

There was submitted a joint report by the Executive Directors (Corporate Services) and (Housing and Community Care) (05/108) detailing proposals for the use and distribution of the additional funds generated by the reduction in discount rates on long term unoccupied properties and second homes in Perth and Kinross.

It was noted that this report had also been submitted to and approved by the Housing and Health Committee of 23 February 2005 (Art. 135).

**Resolved:**

- (i) The policy, based on the Local Housing Strategy Investment Framework and outlined in Paragraph 3.6 of Report 05/108 be used to direct investment of the additional funds collected through higher Council Tax collection from second home and long term empty properties.
- (ii) The use of additional funds collected be reported to the Committee in the context of the annual update to the Local Housing Strategy.

**218. ENVIRONMENTAL BODIES (LANDFILL TAX) CREDIT SCHEME**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Economic Development (05/170) outlining funding attracted by Perth and Kinross Quality of Life Trust through the Environmental Bodies (Landfill Tax) Credit Scheme and proposing that the Council contributes up to £11,400 in order to help secure donations of up to £114,000.

**Resolved:**

- (i) The excellent leverage achieved of securing a contribution of almost £10 for every pound contribution from the Council and its partners be noted.
- (ii) Donations to date of £726,500 to Perth and Kinross Quality of Life Trust through the Environmental Bodies Credit Scheme as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report 05/170 be welcomed.
- (iii) £11,400 from the Financial Assistance to the Voluntary Sector Revenue Budget 2004/05 be contributed in order to secure donations allowed by landfill tax regulations.

**219. BUSINESS CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Change and Improvement (05/171) outlining the framework for implementation of Business Change and Improvement within Perth and Kinross Council and providing a prioritised plan of action.

**Resolved:**

- (i) The Business Change and Improvement Framework be approved.
- (ii) A Modernisation and Improvement Member/Officer Working Group be established, comprising 3 representatives from the Administration groups and 2 representatives from the Opposition groups together with the Chief Executive, Executive Director (Corporate Services) and the Head of Business Change and Improvement.
- (iii) Future progress reports on Business Change and Improvement be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

**220. CUSTOMER FIRST REVIEW – SCOPING PAPER**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Change and Improvement (05/172) outlining the proposed scope of the Customer First review, its objectives, outcomes, review team membership, operational arrangements and timescale, etc.

**Resolved:**

The scope of the Customer First review, initiated under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 together with the review's objectives, outcomes, review team membership, operational arrangements and timescale be approved.

**221. VIEWFINDER FOURTEENTH QUESTIONNAIRE (Art. 663/04)**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Performance Planning and Management (05/173) presenting the key findings from the fourteenth Viewfinder questionnaire on community safety, opportunities for learning, health and activity and libraries in Perth and Kinross.

**Resolved:**

The findings from the fourteenth Viewfinder questionnaire be noted and appropriate officers use the results to inform policy development/implementation and service delivery and planning.

**222. PROVISION OF BLOCK INSURANCE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/178) providing options for block public liability insurance for community groups.

**Resolved:**

The provision of a new block public liability insurance policy for community groups to be recharged as detailed in Section 3.4 of Report 05/178, be approved.

**223. SCHEDULE OF RATES CONTRACT FOR MINOR WORKS ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS 2005-2008 FLOOR CONTRACT**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/174) informing the Committee of the results of the tender for the schedule of rates flooring contract 2005-2008 and seeking approval to appoint a contractor.

**Resolved:**

The schedule of rates flooring contract 2005-2008 be awarded to D Roy (Civil Engineering) Ltd, Bannockburn.

**224. VISITOR CENTRE AT KINROSS – FUNDING FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY**

There was submitted a joint report by the Executive Director (Planning and Transportation) and Head of Economic Development (05/177) recommending financial assistance for a feasibility study for the development of a visitor facility to assist in the regeneration of Kinross.

**Resolved:**

- (i) The proposal to develop a visitor centre at Kinross be welcomed and the potential positive impact of this development for the local economy and its contribution towards the regeneration of Kinross be acknowledged.
- (ii) Funding of £15,000 from the Capital Allocation Area Based Initiative Fund 2005/06 towards the next stage in the development of the proposal be approved.
- (iii) The award by the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 2 March 2005 of £15,000 from the rural initiative fund be noted.

**IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION WHICH IS EXEMPT IN TERMS OF SCHEDULE 7A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973**

**\*225. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AT RIVERVIEW HOUSE, PERTH – PROPOSED LEASE (Arts. 366/04 & 471/04)**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/175) seeking homologation of the decision taken by the Executive Director (Corporate Services), in consultation with the Conveners of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Housing and Health Committee, to approve the lease of office accommodation at Riverview House, Perth to accommodate SWIFT Project operational staff currently at Whitefriars and also the Welfare Rights Team currently at Pullar House.

**Resolved:**

The Committee, for its interest, homologate the decision by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) taken in consultation with the respective Conveners to approve the lease of office accommodation at Riverview House, Perth on the main terms and conditions set out in Report 05/175 and otherwise to the satisfaction of the Head of Property Management and the Head of Legal Services.

**226. SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY MATTERS APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Services) (05/176) on property transactions approved under delegated powers.