

**POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB –  
27 November 2013**

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**Motherwell, 27 November 2013 at 2 pm.**

**A Meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES)  
SUB-COMMITTEE**

**PRESENT**

Councillor Burrows, Convener; Councillor Spowart, Vice-Convener; Councillors Clinch, Fagan, Fellows, Hume, Jones, Logue, Lunny, Lyle, McCabe, McCulloch, McKay, McNally, McShannon, O'Brien, O'Rorke, Shevlin and Stevenson.

**CHAIR**

Councillor Burrows (Convener) presided.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

The Administrative Officer (Committee and Civic Governance Services), Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services, Head of Financial Services, Head of E-Government and Service Development and Head of Revenue Services and Customer Services Manager.

**APOLOGIES**

Councillors P. Hogg and Stocks

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN TERMS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE ETC.  
(SCOTLAND) ACT 2000**

1. The meeting noted that there were no declarations of interest.

**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS 2013/2014 - FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES  
(INCLUDING MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES), COUNCIL SUMMARY AND TRADING ACCOUNTS/  
PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

2. There were submitted reports dated 30 September, 15 and 18 October 2013 by the Head of Financial Services (1) advising of, respectively, the expenditure for the financial year 2013/2014 for Finance and Customer Services (including Miscellaneous Services), the Council Summary, which included both the General Fund Account and the Housing Revenue Account, and the overall financial position of Environmental Services Trading Operations and the expected return from the Public Private Partnerships; (2) providing a comparison of actual expenditure and income against the estimated expenditure and income for the period from 1 April to 13 September 2013, together with explanations for the most significant variances; (3) projecting a year end surplus of £6.591m for the Council which was due to a number of factors, and (4) setting out, with regard to the Council's summary report, the consolidated budget monitoring position of all Services with additional information available within Appendix 1 to the report.

**Decided:** that the terms of the reports and the consolidated budget monitoring position in relation to the Council Summary be noted.

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**CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS 2013/2014 - FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES  
CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COMPOSITE CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

3. There were submitted reports dated 30 September and 4 October 2013 by the Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services (1) advising of the performance of, respectively, the Finance and Customer Services Capital Programme and the Composite Capital Programme for 2013/2014; (2) outlining the projected year end outturn position and resultant variances for both, and (3) providing information on the current expenditure up to, and including, 13 September 2013.

**Decided:** that the financial outturn position of the Finance and Customer Services Capital Programme and the Composite Capital Programme 2013/2014 as at 13 September 2013, be noted.

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT – PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

4. There was submitted a report dated 25 October 2013 by the Head of Financial Services (1) advising of the Council's net overall borrowing position as at 30 September 2013, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report; (2) providing information on the short term and long term borrowing, debt restructuring, short term investments and interest rate movements during the period, and (3) outlining the position with regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report and indicating that the performance against prudential indicators remains in accordance with those previously approved by the Sub-Committee.

**Decided:** that the Treasury Management activity for the period up to 30 September 2013, including the positive performance against the key prudential indicators, be noted.

**FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES SERVICE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT – SIX  
MONTHLY EXCEPTIONS REPORT – 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

5. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 22 May 2013, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 30 October 2013 by the Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services (1) advising of performance results for the first half of 2013/2014 ; (2) providing information regarding Service planning activity including progress against the Corporate Plan, Service priorities and the indicators contained within the Performance Portfolio, and (3) setting out the Service priorities and Performance Portfolio indicators not performing within acceptable thresholds; exceeding targets, or on target, all grouped by Head of Service as detailed in Appendices A to D to the report.

**Decided:** that the contents of the report be noted.

**PAYMENT OF LOCAL TAXATION AND BENEFIT UPDATE**

6. With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2013, there was submitted a report dated 25 October 2013 by the Head of Revenue Services (1) updating the Sub-Committee on the payment performance of the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and the administration of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit/Reduction Scheme for the financial year 2013/2014, together with comparable figures for the same period for the previous financial year and details of the Council Tax collection levels since 1993/94; (2) indicating that performance against indicators relating to the average number of days taken to process new claims and changes to Council Tax and Housing Benefit was averaging 25 days for new claims and 12 days for a change of event; (3) intimating that, on 1 April 2013, Council Tax Benefit was replaced by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the budget position continued to be monitored throughout the year to assess the support provided by the Scottish Government with the estimated Council

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contribution as at 30 September set out in the report; (4) advising that, in relation to Discretionary Housing Payments 3,776 applications had been received, 3,255 had been processed with 2,865 applicants receiving assistance as at 27 October 2013; (5) stating that, based on the current levels of spend and the known impending welfare changes, the projected spend for 2013/2014 was £1.215m; (6) detailing the current position regarding the collection of outstanding debt for the Community Charge up to the end of September 2013; (7) pointing out that the 85,000 households affected had been lettered to inform them of the change in Council Tax payment date which becomes effective on 1 April 2014, and (8) intimating that 853 letters had been issued to Council Tax payers with liability for empty properties to advise of a change in legislation which allows the charge for empty properties to be increased once the properties have been empty for 12 months.

**Decided:** that the terms of the report be noted.

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON DRAFT BUDGET 2014/15**

7. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 23 October 2013 by the Head of Financial Services seeking homologation of the Council's response to the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee regarding the Scottish Government's 2014/15 Draft Budget (1) outlining the background to the consultation which was looking at the impact on finances as a result of the 2011 spending review and the next two years of the 2013 spending review, and (2) enclosing, in Appendix 1 to the report, the Council's response to the consultation.

**Decided:** that the action taken by the Head of Financial Services in submitting the Council's response to the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee consultation on the Scottish Government 2014/2015 Draft Budget be homologated.

**SCOTLAND'S DRAFT BUDGET 2014/15**

8. There was submitted a report dated 13 November 2013 by the Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services providing an update on the announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget for 2014/15 and indicative spending plans for 2015/16 (1) intimating that the overall funding provided to the Scottish Government from the UK Treasury would decrease by 1.3% in real terms in 2014/15 to £27.8 billion and a further 1.9% to £27.3 billion in 2015/16, and (2) providing further details in respect of the Local Government budget element, capital investment, Welfare Reform, the integration of Health and Social Care and the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the publication of the draft Scottish Budget for 2014/15 and indicative spending plans for 2015/16 be noted, and
- (2) that it be noted that details of grant funding for individual councils would be published in early December 2013.

**SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND UPDATE – PROGRESS TO DATE**

9. With reference to paragraph 19 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2013, there was submitted a report dated 19 November 2013 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development providing an update on the progress of the implementation of the Scottish Welfare Fund in terms of Crisis and Community Care Grants (1) outlining the

background to the Scottish Welfare Fund which was introduced on 1 April 2013; (2) providing a comparison of actual spend against the monthly budget at the end of each four week period from 1 April 2013 with a year to date total spend of £824,568, 45% of which had been spent in the last two months; (3) intimating that, in terms of operational arrangements, more emphasis was being placed on processing decisions than answering calls which had resulted in a significant increase in spend as decisions were being administered quicker; (4) advising that in quarter 2, 21,204 incoming calls had been received which was an increase of 332% from quarter 1; (5) giving a comparison of percentage expenditure on Crisis and Community Care Grants with four comparable local authorities for the period up to 13 October 2013; (6) detailing in the report, benchmarking of the commonly awarded items from Community Care Grants; (7) specifying the operational priorities and considerations for future delivery of the service; (8) enclosing in Appendix 1 to the report, a summary of all activity awards made and spend to date, and (9) setting out, in Appendix 2 to the report, guidance on applying for Crisis and Community Care Grants.

**Decided:** that the terms of the report be noted.

#### **PROCUREMENT REFORM BILL**

10. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 21 October 2013 by the Head of Revenue Services setting out a summary of the key implications for the Council of the draft Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill which was introduced by the Scottish Parliament on 4 October 2013 (1) detailing the proposals contained within the Bill including the creation of a national legislative framework regulating procurement above specified financial thresholds and below the EU limits, and (2) summarising the implications for the Council.

**Decided:** that the contents of the report be noted.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICES NETWORK UPDATE**

11. With reference to paragraph 21 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 September 2013, there was submitted a report dated 15 November 2013 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development providing an update on the status of activities currently underway to ensure that the Council remains connected to the Public Services Network (PSN) (1) intimating that the majority of corrective action to achieve PSN compliance had been completed; (2) informing that the UK Cabinet Office had advised the Council that they had successfully met the requirements of connecting to the PSN; (3) indicating that work was ongoing in respect of (a) remote connection to the Council Network – External Supplier and Partners (b) Audit Logging and Enterprise Systems Management, and (c) remediation of non-compliant servers, and (3) advising that to deal with the increase in the use of mobile devices, remote working and data sharing PSN compliance was being substantially tightened in 2014 and would require further significant financial investment.

**Decided:**

- (1) that it be noted that the Council had successfully achieved compliance with the PSN Code of Connection, and
- (2) that it be noted that significant additional financial resources would be required to achieve PSN compliance in 2014.

**FIRST STOP SHOP SUPPORT FOR WELFARE REFORM INTRODUCTION**

12. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 15 November 2013 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development providing an update on the increased demand across the Council's First Stop Shop Network (1) intimating that for the period from 1 April to 30 July 2013 there had been an increase of 17% in footfall and demand in the First Stop Shops compared with the same period in the previous year; (2) advising that if the current trend continued the overall demand for 2013/14 would be approximately 276,555; (3) detailing the demand types which have increased due to Welfare Reform changes and the current economic climate, together with a comparison from the same period in 2012; (4) indicating that in terms of her delegated authority, the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Conveners of Policy and Resources (Finance and Customer Services) Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources (Human Resources) Sub-Committee had commenced the recruitment process; (5) proposing the creation of six temporary posts of Customer Services Officer at salary grade NLC5 to deal with the increased demand across the First Stop Shop Network in North Lanarkshire for an initial period of 12 months, up to a maximum of 18 months, and (6) pointing out that a review of demand across the First Stop Shop Network would be undertaken within 12 months and a further report would be submitted to the Sub-Committee.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the establishment of six temporary posts of Customer Services Officer at salary grade NLC5 be approved for an initial period of 12 months;
- (2) that the action taken by the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Convener of Policy and Resources (Human Resources) Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources (Finance and Customer Services) Sub-Committee in commencing the recruitment process be homologated;
- (3) that the Head of E-Government and Service Development undertake a review of demand across the First Stop Shop Network and submit a further report to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee advising whether the posts would be required for the full 18 months period, and
- (4) that the report be remitted to the Policy and Resources (Human Resources) Sub-Committee for consideration.

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS SCOTLAND**

13. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 November 2013 by the Head of Revenue Services advising of the outcome of the Council's submission to the Social Enterprise Awards Scotland (1) intimating that the Council submitted an entry to the Social Enterprise Awards Scotland within the "Social Economy Market Builder Category" through a joint submission between Corporate Procurement and Regeneration Services which highlighted the significant efforts between both teams to improve the position, awareness and capacity of social economy companies to establish and flourish within North Lanarkshire, and (2) advising that the Council had been successful in winning the award and the submission had also been shortlisted in the UK Awards.

**Decided:** that the terms of the report be noted.

**MOBILE TELEPHONY SERVICES**

14. There was submitted a report dated 25 October 2013 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development regarding the outcome of the tender process for the Mobile Telephony Services
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Contract (1) setting out in the report the outcome of the tender evaluation; (2) indicating that, after checking, the most economically advantageous tender for the Mobile Telephony Services was that submitted by Everything Everywhere (T-Mobile) in the sum of £790,272, and (3) advising that the Executive Director of Corporate Services was progressing this matter in terms of her delegated powers.

**Decided:** that the action taken by the Executive Director of Corporate Services following consultation with the Convener in progressing the acceptance of the tender as detailed in the report, be noted.