

Motherwell, 4 June 2003 at 2 pm.

A Meeting of the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

PRESENT

Councillor Holloway, Convener; Councillor Saunders, Vice-Convener; Provost Connelly; Councillors Barrie, Chadha, Curley, Devine, Gorman, Gormill, Homer, Irvine, Love, Lunny, McAuley, McKenna, J. Martin, Shields, Stocks, Wallace and Wilson.

CHAIR

Councillor Holloway (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Director of Administration; Head of Central Services; Head of Legal Services, and Senior Accountant, Department of Finance.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Burrows and McCabe.

GENERAL PURPOSES (LICENSING) SUB-COMMITTEE

1. There was submitted the Minutes of the meetings and Special Meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-Committees held on 20 and 28 February, 10, 20, 27 and 31 March and 15 April 2003.

Decided: that the Minutes of the meetings and Special Meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-Committee held on 20 and 28 February, 10, 20, 27 and 31 March and 15 April 2003 be approved and noted.

CIVIC FUNCTIONS GROUP

2. There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Groups held on 21 May 2003.

Decided: that the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 21 May 2003 be approved and noted.

TAXI LICENSING - ALLOCATION OF VACANT TAXI LICENCE IN NORTH LICENSING AREA

3. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 15 May 2003 by Director of Administration (1) advising that a Taxi Operator's Licence had become available in the North Licensing Area, and (2) seeking agreement as to the procedure for allocating and granting of that Licence and for the overall practice of allocating vacant Licences in the North and Central Licensing Areas.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed to authorise the allocation of the Taxi Operator's Licence currently available in the North Licensing area, as detailed in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the report, and
- (2) that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT

4. **C** With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 8 March 2000 when the Council's response to the Consultation Paper "An Open Scotland - Freedom of Information" was agreed, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 27 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that, following a presentation on the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Corporate Management Team agreed that a Working Group be established, with representation from all departments of the Council, to develop proposals to deal with the obligations which will be placed on the Council as soon as the provisions of the Act are brought into force; (2) setting out the basic obligations, the implications for the Council, and the requirement to produce a Publication Scheme; (3) detailing proposals for formally dealing with and responding to statutory Freedom of Information requests, and (4) outlining the resource implications and the position relating to any charges to be levied for the production of information.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed that responsibility for formally dealing with and responding to statutory Freedom of Information requests rest with the Department of Administration;
- (2) that there be one or more central points of responsibility within each of the other Departments of the Council to provide a resource to which frontline staff can transmit statutory requests, a point of contact for the identification and sourcing of information and a swift channel to the senior management of the relevant Department for consideration of issues of public interest;
- (3) that the statutory review provision be undertaken at officer level by an officer, within the Department of Administration, who is senior to the officer who makes - and who is not involved in - the original decision, and
- (4) that the strategy for the production of the Council's Publication Scheme be agreed, with the co-ordination of the production of that Scheme being undertaken by officers who co-ordinate the compilation and maintenance of the Council's website with guidance from the Working Group who will retain responsibility for the Scheme.

DISTRICT COURT, COATBRIDGE

5. With reference to paragraph 50 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources (Property) Sub-Committee held on 6 March 2003 when it was approved, in principle, that the Council, in partnership with the Health Board, develop offices at the former Municipal Baths, Coatbridge, there was submitted a report dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration advising (1) that, having regard to the deficiencies at the present facilities of the District Court, situated at 453 Main Street, Coatbridge, capital provision was made by the Council for adaptations and refurbishment; (2) that following full investigations and costings, it was considered that to proceed with the adaptations at 453 Main Street, Coatbridge would not provide best value, and (3) that the location of the former Municipal Baths site would be a suitable venue to relocate the District Court from 453 Main Street, Coatbridge.

Decided:

- (1) that the position regarding the refurbishment and adaptation of the premises at 453 Main Street, Coatbridge, currently occupied by Coatbridge District Court be noted, and
- (2) that it be agreed, in principle, that the District Court be relocated to a new corporate development on the site of the former Municipal Baths at Main Street, Coatbridge.

REGISTRATION OFFICE, COATBRIDGE

6. With reference to paragraph 50 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources (Property) Sub-Committee held on 6 March 2003 when it was approved, in principle, that the Council, in partnership with the Health Board, develop offices at the former Municipal Baths, Coatbridge, there was submitted a report dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising (a) that Coatbridge Registration Office, while internally well designed and laid out to meet the requirements of the service, is, in terms of location, fundamentally unsuitable, and for that reason, that attempts had been made to locate a suitable alternative site which would provide the necessary facilities, afford full disabled access and be conveniently located within Coatbridge Town Centre, and (b) that it is considered that the inclusion of the Registration Office would fit well with the development of offices on the site of the former Municipal Baths, Main Street, Coatbridge and could fully meet the requirements of the Registration service, and (2) recommending that the Committee agree, in principle, to the relocation of the Coatbridge Registration Office to the new development proposed by the Council on the site of the former Municipal Baths, Main Street, Coatbridge.

Decided: that it be agreed, in principle, to relocate Coatbridge Registration Office to the new development to be undertaken by the Council on the site of the former Municipal Baths, Main Street, Coatbridge.

CUMBERNAULD REGISTRATION OFFICE

7. With reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 21 August 2001, when it was agreed that the Cumbernauld Registration Office be transferred from its location in Fleming House to adapted and refurbished accommodation within the Council Offices, Bron Way, Cumbernauld, there was submitted a report dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration advising (1) that the works of refurbishment and adaptations to Bron Way had now been completed and the Registration Service had transferred to and become operative from these premises effective from 27 May 2003, and (2) that arrangements were being made for the formal opening of the new Registration Office by the Provost.

Decided: that it be noted, that following the completion of the works of refurbishment and adaptations, Cumbernauld Registration Offices now located within the Council Offices, Bron Way, Cumbernauld, will be formally opened by the Provost.

APPOINTMENT OF MRS. ROSEMARY HUGHES, REGISTRATION/AREA OFFICER, AS PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF REGISTRARS OF SCOTLAND

8. There was submitted a report dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration advising (1) that the Association of Registrars of Scotland, is the professional organisation of officers who have day to day responsibility for the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Scotland, and works closely with the Registrar General's Office and with COSLA; (2) that the Association's objectives, are the diffusion of professional information, the consideration of questions arising in the practice of registration and, generally, the mutual benefit of Registrars in Scotland; (3) that Membership is open to all Registrars and Assistant Registrars in Scotland, promoting a professional examination leading to the Certificate of Proficiency in the Law and Practice of Registration, and (4) that Mrs. Rosemary Hughes, Registrar, Bellshill and Shotts Registration District and Area Officer for the Bellshill, Motherwell and Shotts Area was elected, for a period of two years, as President of that Association at its Annual Meeting held in Inverness on 28 May 2003.

Decided:

- (1) that congratulations be extended to Mrs. Hughes on her election as President of the Association of Registrars of Scotland, and
- (2) that the report be otherwise noted.

**ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT AREA/REGISTRATION SERVICE - PERFORMANCE,
MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING (PMP) IMPROVEMENT FOLLOW UP AUDIT**

9. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 26 February 2003 when the progress, to date, in the implementation of the Performance, Management and Planning (PMP) Action Plan in respect of the Area Registration Service was noted, there was submitted a report dated 28 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that Audit Scotland had completed the follow up audit of the Area/Registration Service; (2) setting out a summary of Audit Scotland's findings, and (3) providing, in the Appendix to the report, details of progress on the improvement Action Plan.

Decided: that the report be noted.

CIVIC CENTRE - ADAPTATIONS

10. There was submitted a report dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising (a) that following the Elections and the appointment of the Office Bearers to the Council, it had been necessary to adapt Members' accommodation through the partitioning of the Meeting Room on the fifth floor and to utilise the area occupied by the Members' Library for Members' accommodation; (b) that in view of the urgency of both requirements, the necessary works had been instructed and had now been completed, and (c) that it was anticipated that further works would be required to provide sound proofing and a replacement area for the Members' Library, incorporating a restricted meeting facility, and (2) proposing also adaptations to the second and third floors of the Civic Centre, as a result of the Administration Departmental restructuring, approved by this Committee, at its meeting held on 26 February 2003.

Decided:

- (1) that the action taken to adapt Members' Accommodation on the fifth floor and the utilisation of the area occupied by the Members' Library for Members' accommodation be homologated, and
- (2) that the proposed further adaptations to the Members' accommodation and to the second and third floor of the Civic Centre be approved.

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION SERVICE PLAN - MONITORING REPORT

11. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the meeting held on 19 December 2001, when it was noted that the Service Plan would be monitored through the submission of Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports, there was submitted a report dated 28 May 2001 by the Director of Administration (1) advising of the progress made on his Departmental Service Plan to 31 March 2003, and (2) providing, in the Appendix to the report, details thereof.

Decided: that the progress made with regard to the Department of Administration Service Plan 2001/2004 be noted.

APPOINTMENTS TO PRISON VISITING COMMITTEES

12. With reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of the meeting of the Council held on 17 December 1998 when it was agreed that a Prison Visiting Appointments Panel be established, there was submitted a report dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising (a) that the Council is responsible for the appointment of members to Barlinnie, Low Moss and Shotts Prison Visiting Committees, and (b) that the procedures which include a process of advertisement and

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interview, were noted and adjusted following consideration by this Committee at its meeting held on 20 January 1999, and (2) proposing (a) that with regard to the Elected Members of the Council, these appointments be considered by the Council at its next meeting; (b) that with regard to the appointment of non-Council Members, prior to advertising, it be ascertained if persons currently so appointed to the Prison Visiting Committees are willing to continue that appointment, and, if so, that their re-appointment be recommended to the Council, and (c) that in the event that any one or more does not wish to continue their appointment, a feature be inserted in North Lanarkshire News publicising the role of Prison Visitors and inviting individuals interested in becoming Prison Visitors, to contact the Council for an information pack and application, and thereafter to proceed with the process of interview.

Decided:

- (1) that with regard to the Elected Members of the Council, appointments to Prison Visiting Committees be considered by the Council at its next meeting;
- (2) that with regard to the appointment of non-Council members, prior to advertising, it be ascertained if persons currently so appointed to the Prison Visiting Committees are willing to continue that appointment and, if so, that their re-appointment be recommended to the Council, and
- (3) that in the event that any one or more does not wish to continue their appointment, a feature be inserted in the North Lanarkshire News, publicising the role of Prison Visitors and inviting individuals interested in becoming Prison Visitors to contact the Council for an Information Pack and Application, and thereafter to proceed with the process of interview.

TOWN TWINNING

13. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising of action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in determining matters relating to Town Twinning since the last meeting of this Committee, and (2) seeking homologation in this regard.

Decided: that the action taken after consultation with the Convener be homologated.

CONFERENCES

14. There was submitted a report dated 13 May 2003 by the Director of Administration advising that three invitations had been received in respect of attendance at conferences for which no attendance was authorised.

Decided: that the report be noted.

2002/2003 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (EXCLUDING PERSONNEL) - 1 APRIL 2002 - 31 MARCH 2003

15. There was submitted a report dated 13 May 2003 by the Director of Administration detailing for the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003, provisional outturn and income against the estimates contained in the 2002/2003 budget for the Central Services Division, including separate details in respect of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages and for the Legal Services Division of the Department of Administration.

Decided: that the report be noted.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2003/2004

16. **C** There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 29 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) referring (a) to the decision of the Council at its meeting held on 3 April 2003 to approve the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to the revised Composite Capital Programme for 2003/2004, which includes proposals for Cumbernauld, Coatbridge and Motherwell Area Registration Offices and Coatbridge District Court, and (b) the works of relocating Cumbernauld Registration Office and the proposals for Coatbridge Registration Office and the District Court, Coatbridge as, respectively, noted and approved by the Committee in terms of paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 above; (2) setting out proposals for Motherwell Registration Office, and (3) intimating that, if sufficient remaining funds can be identified both within the Administration Department Capital Programme and the Housing and Property Capital Allocation for Council Properties, the works undertaken to the Civic Centre be completed, as contained within the report.

Decided: that the contents of the report be approved and noted.

The Convener being of the view that the follow item of business was of an urgent nature, authorised its consideration to enable the Council to progress the item timeously.

CIVIC GOVERNMENT LICENSING - ENHANCEMENT OF LICENSING ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

17. With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 18 December 2002, when it was noted that the Licensing Enforcement System will continue to be developed and improved on an on-going basis, there was submitted a report dated 21 May 2003 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that the close of the Council's business year on 31 May 2003 presented an opportunity to review the operational outturn of the Civic Government Licensing Service; (2) detailing on-going work being undertaken by the Licensing Enforcement Officers resulting in an over-recovery in Licensing income, and (3) proposing that the Licensing Enforcement System be enhanced by the recruitment of an additional Licensing Enforcement Officer, graded at AP3, and an additional Clerical Officer, graded GS3 to support the administrative staff.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed to recruit an additional Licensing Enforcement Officer, graded AP3, within the Licensing Section of the Legal Services Division;
- (2) that it be agreed to recruit an additional Clerical Officer, graded GS3, to support the Licensing Section of the Legal Services Division, and
- (3) that the report be remitted to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee.