

GENERAL PURPOSES – 25 August 2004

Motherwell, 25 August 2004 at 2 pm.

A Meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

PRESENT

Councillor Holloway, Convener; Councillor Saunders, Vice-Convener; Councillors Barrie, Burrows, Chadha, Devine, Gorman, Gormill, Homer, Irvine, J. Martin, 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

Provost Connelly, Councillors Curley, Love, Lunny, McAuley, McCabe and Stocks.

GENERAL PURPOSES (LICENSING) SUB-COMMITTEE

1. There were submitted the Minutes of the meetings and special meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-Committee held on 17 May, 14, 15, 23 and 28 June and 16 August 2004.

Decided: that the Minutes of the meetings and special meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-committee held on 17 May, 14, 15, 23 and 28 June and 16 August 2004 be approved and noted.

GENERAL PURPOSES (PUBLIC PROCESSIONS) SUB-COMMITTEE

2. There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the General Purposes (Public Processions) Sub-Committee held on 9 June 2004.

Decided: that the Minute of the meeting of the General Purposes (Public Processions) Sub-Committee held on 9 June 2004 be approved and noted.

CIVIC FUNCTIONS GROUP

3. There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 11 August 2004.

Decided: that the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 11 August 2004 be approved and noted.

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2004/2005 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (EXCLUDING PERSONNEL) - 1 APRIL TO 23 JULY 2004

4. There was submitted a report dated 5 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) detailing for the period from 1 April to 23 July 2004, outturn and income against the estimates contained in the 2004/2005 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, and (2) indicating that the Department's final 2003/2004 outturn provision was broadly in line with the provisional outturn presented to the Committee on 10 March 2004.

Decided:

- (1) that the budget monitoring report for the period from 1 April to 23 July 2003 be noted, and
- (2) that the Department's final 2003/2004 outturn position be noted.

GENERAL DEBTORS - BAD DEBTS WRITE-OFF

5. There was submitted a report dated 13 July 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) presenting a summary of outstanding debtor accounts which were deemed uncollectable following all attempts at recovery; (2) advising that an analysis of the outstanding balances due to the Department of Administration had been conducted and £1,528.46 had been identified as uncollectable, as contained within the Appendix to the report; (3) indicating that the Director of Finance, under delegated powers, had written off certain balances which represents £225.56 of the aforementioned sum, and (4) seeking approval to write-off the outstanding balance of £1,302.90.

Decided:

- (1) that it be noted that the Director of Finance, under delegated powers, had written off certain balances which represents £225.56 of the £1,528.46 debtor accounts which are deemed uncollectable, and
- (2) that the write-off of the remaining balance of £1,302.90 be approved and noted.

TAXI LICENSING - TAXI FARES REVIEW 2004

6. There was submitted a report dated 3 August 2004 by the Director of Administration advising (1) that Section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 obliges the Council, as licensing authority, to fix from time to time scales for the fares and other charges in respect of the hire of taxis in its area, and (2) that such reviews are required to be carried out at intervals of not greater than 18 months and that the time had arrived for the Council to carry out the next taxi fares review.

Decided:

- (1) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into full consultation with the taxi trade on the issue of taxi fares, and
- (2) that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

TAXI LICENSING - REVIEW OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

7. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 26 July 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) appraising of issues surrounding a potential review of taxi and private hire licensing; (2) advising of

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the outcome of recent discussions with taxi trade representatives; (3) providing, as an appendix to the report, detailed history and issues for consideration, and (4) recommending appropriate action.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed that
 - (a) all new taxi licences require the operation of a purpose built, wheelchair accessible taxi in line with present Council policy;
 - (b) existing operators to be permitted to continue to run non-purpose built vehicles with swivel seats to be fitted by the next annual inspection, but one, to give at least a year for compliance;
 - (c) all persons on the South Area waiting list be offered a taxi licence to meet the identified wheelchair access demand and the waiting list be discontinued thereafter;
 - (d) applications to the Council for transfer of taxi licences be permitted to allow the Council to properly regulate the taxi market, stronger enforcement measures be introduced in respect of any remaining black market operations and the concept of day to day manager be tightened up to ensure that managers are truly employees rather than black market agents or lessees;
 - (e) all taxi licence transfers be on the basis that an approved purpose built or purpose converted wheelchair accessible vehicle will require to be operated by the transferee - leading to a phased increase in purpose built, wheelchair accessible vehicles in respect of the existing fleet - and existing trade members be given the option of one transfer, not subject to the wheelchair accessibility condition, to be exercised within a set time frame;
 - (f) a further survey of demand for taxi services be carried out with a view to assessing the advantages and disadvantages of numerical limits in the North Lanarkshire area and with a view to either reviewing, retaining or abolishing numerical limits;
 - (g) the vehicle specification for non-purpose built taxis and private hire cars be harmonised by 1 January 2006 and age limits for all vehicles be set at a maximum of 5 years from the date of registration to the date of application for grant or renewal (which will give a maximum age limit of 8 years bearing in mind the licensing cycle);
 - (h) all new or replaced non-purpose built taxis be of a uniform colour unless of the clearly identifiable purpose built variety;
 - (i) all taxis on grant or renewal be required to carry a full width roof sign;
 - (j) a review of taxi and private hire conditions be undertaken to solidify the foundations of the new taxi and private hire regime, and
 - (k) the taxi specification be adapted to allow the inclusion of suitable vehicles from the developing market in vehicles that are purpose adapted as accessible taxis, subject to consultation with the Transport Manager and police, and
- (2) that otherwise the contents of the report be approved and noted.

DRAFT CHARITIES AND TRUSTEE INVESTMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL

8. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 3 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising of a Scottish Executive consultation on the draft Charities and Trustee Investments (Scotland) Bill; (2) detailing the background to the report; (3) setting out the issues for consideration, and (4) further advising that, after consultation with the Convener, and in order to meet the Scottish Executive's timescale, a response on behalf of the Council, as contained within the Appendix to the report, had been forwarded.

Decided: that the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in forwarding a response, on behalf of the Council, to the Scottish Executive on the draft Charities and Trustee Investments (Scotland) Bill be homologated.

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN SCOTLAND

9. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 3 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that the Subordinate Legislation Committee had decided to conduct an inquiry into the Regulatory Framework in Scotland as a preliminary to its examination of the arrangements for the making and scrutiny of subordinate legislation as a whole; (2) indicating that the Subordinate Legislation Committee had issued a consultation paper on the issue for which a timescale of 20 August 2004 for responses was set, and (3) further advising that after consultation with the Convener, and in order to meet the Subordinate Legislation Committee's timescale, a response on behalf of the Council, as contained within the Appendix to the report, had been forwarded.

Decided: that the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in forwarding a response, on behalf of the Council, to the Subordinate Legislation Committee on the consultation on an inquiry into the Regulatory Framework in Scotland be homologated.

CONSULTATION PAPER - DEVOLVED POWERS IN THE DRAFT GAMBLING BILL

10. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 28 July 2004 by the Director of Administration advising (1) that following a Report by an independent gambling review body in 2001, the UK government set out proposals for the comprehensive modernisation of the law of gambling; (2) that, resulting from these proposals, a draft Gambling Bill was published on 19 November 2003 and took forward these proposals to consolidate all gambling laws into a single comprehensive piece of legislation; (3) that a consultation was carried out on the draft Bill which has been scrutinised by a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament; (4) that, since it was not deemed possible to make the draft Scottish clause of the Bill available to the Scrutiny Committee, the Scottish Executive had decided to publish a short supplement outlining the proposals for devolved powers and sought responses from local authorities by 16 August 2004, and (5) that, after consultation with the Convener, and in order to meet the Scottish Executive timescale, a response on behalf of the Council as contained within the Appendix to the report had been forwarded.

Decided: that the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in forwarding a response on behalf of the Council, to the Scottish Executive on the consultation on devolved powers in the draft Gambling Bill be homologated.

REVIEW OF PARADES AND MARCHES

11. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 6 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising (a) that the First Minister had commissioned an independent review of the procedures for authorising marches and parades in Scotland, and (b) that on 28 June 2004, the Minister for Communities, Margaret Curran, announced that Sir John Orr, former Chief Constable of Strathclyde

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Police, had been appointed as an independent expert to undertake that review with the aim of reporting to Ministers by the end of the year; (2) summarising the remit of the review, and attaching the full remit and scope as an Appendix to the report; (3) setting out issues for consideration, and (4) indicating that, on the initiative of Sir John Orr, arrangements had been made for Sir John to meet with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Director of Administration to discuss the issues.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed that the Council respond to the independent review of marches and parades in Scotland on the basis of the issues for consideration, as contained within the report;
- (2) that it be noted that arrangements had been made for Sir John Orr to meet with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Director of Administration to discuss the review, and
- (3) that the contents of the report be otherwise noted.

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL: DRAFT POLICY ON PUBLIC PROCESSIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS – CONSULTATION

12. There was submitted a report dated 9 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that Glasgow City Council were consulting on a draft policy on public processions and demonstrations; (2) indicating (a) that the draft policy guidance formulated by that Council commences with a precise statement of the legal position regarding public processions and goes on to consider the standard conditions currently utilised by them, and (b) that those conditions were in line with those used by this Council; (3) setting out the draft policy guidelines and issues for consideration, and (4) further advising that, the independent review commissioned by the First Minister, as noted in the preceding paragraph, may impact on the consultation by Glasgow City Council.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed that the Council respond to Glasgow City Council as contained within the report, and
- (2) that otherwise the draft policy on public processions and demonstrations formulated by Glasgow City Council be noted.

REGISTRATION, COATBRIDGE

13. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 4 June 2003 when it was agreed to relocate Coatbridge Registration Offices to the new development on the site of the former Municipal Baths, Main Street, Coatbridge, there was submitted a report dated 19 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) indicating that work had not yet started on the new baths site development and that consideration required to be given to interim measures to provide disabled access to the registration service, and (2) advising of the outcome of the investigation into interim measures to facilitate access to the registration services in Coatbridge.

Decided:

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted, and
 - (2) that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.
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LOCAL PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2005 FOR FACTORIES AND BUSINESSES

14. There was submitted a report dated 26 July 2004 by the Director of Administration regarding the determination of local public holidays for the year 2005 for factories and businesses in North Lanarkshire.

Decided: that the following dates be determined as local public holidays in North Lanarkshire for 2005 for factories and businesses, viz:-

Monday, 3 and Tuesday, 4 January 2005
Monday, 28 March 2005
Monday, 2 and Monday, 30 May 2005
Monday, 18 July 2005
Monday, 26 September 2005
Monday, 26 and Tuesday, 27 December 2005

ROYAL MAIL GROUP PLC: SIZE BASED PRICING

15. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 30 July 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising (a) that Royal Mail had submitted a proposal to Postcom to change the pricing of its mail services so that postal prices reflect postal costs, and (b) that Royal Mail indicate that modern postal systems have changed so much since they introduced their current pricing system that the current pricing system now requires to change and, given that most mail is not sorted by a machine, the pricing of postage will be related to the size of the item sent, and (2) providing as an Appendix to the report a copy of their proposal.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS - AFFILIATION 2004/2005

16. There was submitted a report dated 6 August 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that during the summer recess, and after consultation with the Convener, the Council affiliated to the National Association of Councillors for the current year at a cost of £16 per Member, and (2) seeking homologation in this regard.

Decided: that the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in affiliating to the National Association of Councillors for the current year be homologated.

TWINNING

(1) VISIT FROM SCHWEINFURT GOLFERS

17. There was submitted a report dated 27 July by the Director of Administration (1) advising of action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in awarding assistance in terms of the Council policy to Schweinfurt Twinning Association in respect of a twinning visit by a party of golfers from Schweinfurt, Germany during the summer recess, and (2) seeking homologation in this regard.

Decided: that, the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in awarding assistance in terms of Council policy to Schweinfurt Twinning Association in respect of a twinning visit by a party of golfers from Schweinfurt, Germany during the summer recess be homologated.

(2) ST. DENIS

18. There was submitted a report dated 6 August 2004 by the Director of Administration advising of action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in accepting an invitation from the Mayor of St. Denis, France to attend ceremonies planned for 4 September 2004 to commemorate the Second World War Liberation of St. Denis.

Decided: that the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in accepting an invitation from the Mayor of St. Denis, France to attend ceremonies to commemorate the Second World War Liberation of St. Denis be homologated.

(3) ST. DENIS

19. With reference to paragraph 17 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 10 March 2004, when it was noted that, in collaboration with the Municipality of St. Denis, France, an application for European funding was submitted in respect of an International project, "Developing Education Through Sport", there was submitted a report dated 19 August 2004 by the Director of Administration advising that intimation had been received from the Municipality of St. Denis that while the European Commission found the project interesting and concluded a positive evaluation, the necessary funding for the project had not been granted.

Decided: that it be noted that the application for European Funding in respect of an International project "Developing Education Through Sport", was unsuccessful.

(4) SCHWEINFURT UNTERFRANKENSCHAU

20. There was submitted a report dated 27 July 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that an invitation to participate in the biennial Unterfrankenschau to be held in Schweinfurt in October 2004 had been received; (2) that for the past two Unterfrankenschau the Council has supported the Schweinfurt Twinning Association and that Association had indicated that a grant of £3,000 would enable them to participate; (3) that the Economic Regeneration Committee, at its meeting held on 25 May 2004, agreed, *inter alia*, that a contribution of £500 towards the cost of the Twinning Association's participation be approved, with the cost of transportation and the merchandise for sale being borne by the Economic Regeneration Budget, and (4) that after consultation with the Convener, and in view of the timescale, a grant of £2,500 was made from the Department of Administration's Twinning Budget.

Decided: that the action taken, after consultation with the Convener, in awarding financial assistance to the Schweinfurt Twinning Association to assist with the costs of their participation in the Biennial Unterfrankenschau, be homologated.

(5) BRON : INVITATION TO VISIT NORTH LANARKSHIRE

21. With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 26 February 2003, when it was reiterated that the Council had previously agreed that an invitation be extended for an official Twinning Visit by representatives of the Municipality of Bron, France to North Lanarkshire, there was submitted a report dated 16 July 2004 by the Director of Administration advising (1) that during a recent visit to Bron, the Provost extended an invitation for the Mayor and a delegation from Bron to visit Cumbernauld and North Lanarkshire this year, and (2) that the Mayor had indicated that she would be very pleased to lead such a delegation during October 2004.

Decided: that it be noted that the Mayor of Bron had accepted the invitation to visit North Lanarkshire this year, and that arrangements for the visit had been put in place.
