

GENERAL PURPOSES – 12 January 2005

Motherwell, 12 January 2005 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, McAuley, McKenna, J. Martin and Stocks.

CHAIR

Councillor Holloway (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Director of Administration; Head of Central Services; Head of Legal Services, and Accounting Manager, Department of Finance.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Love, Lunny, McCabe, Shields and Wallace.

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 25 October, 1, 15 and 18 November and 1 and 16 December 2004.

Decided: that the Minutes of the meetings and special meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-Committee held on 25 October, 1, 15 and 18 November and 1 and 16 December 2004 be approved and noted.

CIVIC FUNCTIONS GROUP

2. There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 8 December 2004.

Decided: that the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 8 December 2004 be approved and noted.

2004/2005 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (EXCLUDING PERSONNEL) - 1 APRIL TO 12 NOVEMBER 2004

3. There was submitted a report dated 23 November 2004 by the Director of Administration detailing, for the period from 1 April to 12 November 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.

Decided: that the report be noted.

TAXI LICENSING - TAXI FARES REVIEW

4. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 25 August 2004, when it was agreed that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into full discussions with the taxi trade on a review of taxi fares in the Council's licensing areas, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 15 December 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising that (a) a joint proposal for increases attached as Appendix A to the report had been submitted by taxi trade representatives from the three licensing areas; (b) a full breakdown of the proposed fares was detailed in Appendix B to the report, and (c) the fares review had attracted one representation, as contained within Appendix C to the report; (2) containing his observations and considerations in respect of harmonising the units of measure used in the North licensing area with those traditionally used in the Central and South licensing areas; (3) setting out issues for consideration, and (4) recommending the amendment of taxi fares scales as detailed in Appendix B to the report with effect from 15 February 2005.

Decided: that it be agreed to amend the taxi fares scales as detailed in Appendix B to the report with effect from 15 February 2005.

REVIEW OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES - AGE LIMITS AND VEHICLE COLOURS FOR PRIVATE HIRE CARS

5. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 27 October 2004 when, *inter alia*, the Head of Legal Services was authorised to invite views from Private Hire Operators on vehicle age limits and colours and thereafter report to a future meeting of this Committee, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 December 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) setting out detailed recommendations on the implementation of operational changes in respect of age limits and vehicle colours for private hire licensing, and (2) providing details thereon.

Decided: that it be agreed that:-

- (1) an entry age limit of five years be set, calculated from the date of first registration to the date of application for grant of a licence, scheduled date of renewal of a licence or application for substitution of a vehicle;
- (2) the transitional period and arrangements as detailed in paragraph 3.10 of the report be applied, and
- (3) a prohibition on white private hire cars in the south licensing area be introduced to take effect on the same timescale as that of the age limits.

REVIEW OF THE LICENSING PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982

6. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 7 January 2005 by the Director of Administration (1) setting out the main recommendations contained in the report of the Independent Task Group set up to review the licensing provisions in the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 which was submitted to the Scottish Ministers for consideration, and (2) providing details thereon.

Decided:

- (1) that the submission to the Scottish Ministers of the report of the Civic Government Task Group, be noted, and
 - (2) that the contents of the report be otherwise noted.
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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 - FEES

7. There was submitted a report dated 3 December 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising the Committee of the issue of statutory instruments governing fees chargeable under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002; (2) outlining the background to the report; (3) summarising the contents of those statutory instruments; (4) proposing that the Council agree that fees be charged for the provision of information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (a) where the projected costs do not exceed £100 - no fee; (b) where the projected costs exceed £100 but do not exceed £600 - 10% of the difference between the projected cost and £100, and (c) where the projected cost exceeds £600 but, nonetheless, it is determined that the Council provide the information, £50 plus the amount by which the projected cost exceeds £600, and (5) recommending that consideration be given to the proposals.

Decided: that the report be approved.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - ELECTED MEMBERS

8. There was submitted a report dated 6 January 2005 by the Director of Administration (1) advising the Committee of draft guidance issued by the Scottish Information Commissioner at the request of COSLA, attached as Appendix 1 to this report on how Freedom of Information would affect Councillors; (2) outlining the background to the report; (3) setting out his observations and considerations; (4) advising of the consultation process undertaken by COSLA; (5) attaching as Appendix 2 to the report, a copy of the response submitted on behalf of the Council, and (6) recommending (a) that the draft guidance issued by the Scottish Information Commissioner be noted, and (b) that the submission of the response in terms of Appendix 2 to the report be homologated.

Decided:

- (1) that the draft guidance issued by the Scottish Information Commissioner be noted, and
(2) that the submission of the response in terms of Appendix 2 to the report be homologated.

PROPOSALS TO CLOSE POST OFFICES WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S AREA

9. With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 27 October 2004 when it was agreed that the Director of Administration be authorised to respond to the Post Office setting out the Council's opposition to Post Office closures, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 5 January 2005 by the Director of Administration (1) advising the Committee of correspondence received from the Post Office intimating decisions to close Post Offices within the Council's area; (2) providing his observations and considerations, and (3) recommending that the position be noted.

Decided:

- (1) that the Director of Administration be instructed to write to the Post Office relaying the dismay of the Council at the decision to close Post Offices within the Council's area, and
(2) that the contents of the report be noted.

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2004/2005 TO 2006/2007 AND REVENUE BUDGET 2005/2006

10. **C** There was submitted a joint report (docketed) dated 1 December 2004 by the Directors of Administration and Finance (1) seeking approval of the Administration Department's updated Service Improvement Plan for 2004/2005 to 2006/2007 and the Revenue Budget 2005/2006; (2) reminding Members that North Lanarkshire Council had established a three year programme of integrated service improvement and financial planning linked to the Corporate Plan; (3) submitting for consideration (a) the updated Service Improvement Plan for the Department of Administration in respect of the period 2004/2005 to 2006/2007 as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and (b) the proposed Revenue Budget for the Department of Administration in respect of the period 2005/2006 as contained in Appendix B to the report; (4) indicating that the proposed budget for the Department of Administration shows an increase of £232,507 and the basis of that increase; (5) advising that departmental budgets will be consolidated to enable the Council to evaluate and consider the potential for growth in the service budgets prior to determining its overall spending plan for the forthcoming year, and (6) recommending that the Committee (a) approve the draft updated Service Improvement Plan for the Department of Administration for the period 2004/2005 to 2006/2007 as contained in Appendix A to the report; (b) note the level of CSP movements and increases in the departmental revenue budget as set out in parts i and ii of Appendix B to the report; (c) agree the departmental base budget as detailed in part iii of Appendix B to the report; (d) consider and make recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee on efficiency savings from the departmental base budget as detailed in part iv of Appendix B to the report; (e) note (A) that any alterations to the updated Service Improvement Plan for the Department of Administration, required as a consequence of finalisation of the Council's budget, will be brought to the attention of this Committee, and (B) that the first six monthly performance report to be presented to this Committee in the financial year 2005/2006 would also contain updated information on the departmental revenue budget for the financial year 2004/2005, and (f) otherwise note the contents of the report.

Decided:

- (1) that the updated Service Improvement Plan for the Department of Administration in respect of the period 2004/2005 to 2006/2007, as contained in Appendix A to the report by the Director of Administration be approved;
- (2) that the level of CSP movements and increases affecting the departmental revenue budget, as set out in parts i and ii of Appendix B to the report by the Director of Administration be noted;
- (3) that the departmental base budget, as set out in part iii of Appendix B to the report by the Director of Administration be agreed subject to consideration of efficiency savings;
- (4) that the proposed efficiency savings as detailed in part iv of Appendix B to the report by the Director of Administration be approved and referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration;
- (5) that it be noted (a) that any alterations to the updated Service Improvement Plan for the Department of Administration, required as a consequence of finalisation of the Council's budget, will be brought to the attention of the Committee, and (b) that the first six monthly performance report to be presented to the Committee in the financial year 2005/2006 would also contain updated information on the departmental revenue budget for the financial year 2005/2006, and
- (6) that otherwise the contents of the report be noted.

This paragraph was dealt with by the Council at its Special Meeting on 10 February 2005.

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION - PERFORMANCE REPORT

11. With reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 18 December 2002, where it was agreed inter alia to approve the Administration Service Plan for the period 2002/2003 and 2004/2005, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 7 January 2005 by the Director of Administration (1) reminding Members that when the Service Improvement Plan for the Department of Administration was approved, it was agreed to monitor and report progress; (2) advising the Committee that the monitoring period for the report was from April to December 2004; (3) attaching as an Appendix to the report, information which was systematically compiled to enable the Departmental Management to monitor and measure the Department's activities across the range of services provided and to identify issues and trends; (4) setting out performance results; (5) detailing accreditations and awards gained, and (6) recommending that the progress made be noted.

Decided: that the contents of the report - and the progress made - be noted.

TOWN TWINNING - SCHWEINFURT UNTERFRANKENSCHAU 2004

12. With reference to paragraph 20 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 25 August 2004 when the financial assistance to Schweinfurt Twinning Association to assist with the cost of their participation in the biennial Unterfrankenschau was homologated, there was submitted a report dated 2 December 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) advising the Committee of the receipt, from the Chairman of Schweinfurt Twinning Association, of a report on involvement in the Schweinfurt Unterfrankenschau 2004 (UFRA); (2) setting out details of the report submitted by the Chair of the Schweinfurt Twinning Association, a copy of which is available for inspection in the Members' Library, and (3) recommending that the position be noted.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

TWINNING - WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

13. There was submitted a report dated 6 January 2005 by the Director of Administration (1) proposing that representatives from each of the Council's twin towns be invited to visit North Lanarkshire on the occasion of the World Rowing Championships to be held in Strathclyde Park from 8-11 September 2005; (2) indicating that the World Rowing Championships represent a significant event for both the Council and the area of North Lanarkshire, and (3) proposing that the Council issue an invitation to (a) the Maire of Bron; (b) the Sindaco of Campi Bisenzio; (c) the Mayor of Gatchina; (d) the Maire of Les Marches; (e) the Maire of Meulan; (f) the Maire of Saint Denis, and (g) the Oberbürgermeisterin of Schweinfurt to visit North Lanarkshire on the occasion of the World Rowing Championships between 8 and 11 September 2005.

Decided: that an invitation be issued to the Maire of Bron, the Sindaco of Campi Bisenzio, the Mayor of Gatchina, the Maire of Les Marches, the Maire of Meulan, the Maire of Saint Denis and the Oberbürgermeisterin of Schweinfurt to visit North Lanarkshire on the occasion of the World Rowing Championships between 8 and 11 September 2005.

CONFERENCES

14. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 5 January 2005 by the Director of Administration advising that five invitations had been received in respect of attendance at conferences and seeking that consideration be given to the invitations.

Decided: that no attendance be authorised.

COUNCIL HOUSE SALES - REVIEW OF TEMPORARY SOLICITOR POST

15. There was submitted a report dated 16 December 2004 by the Director of Administration (1) seeking approval to make permanent the temporary Solicitor post dealing with Council house sales; (2) outlining the background to the report; (3) setting out his proposals and considerations; (4) detailing the financial implications, and (5) recommending (a) that the temporary Solicitor post be made a permanent post, and (b) that the matter be referred to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee for their consideration.

Decided:

- (1) that the temporary Solicitor post be made a permanent post, and
- (2) that the matter be referred to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee for their consideration.