

Motherwell, 19 March 2007 at 11 am.

A Special Meeting of the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

PRESENT

Councillor Holloway, Convener; Councillor Saunders, Vice-Convener; Councillors Barrie, Gormill, Higgins, Homer, Irvine, McAuley, Shields and Wilson.

CHAIR

Councillor Holloway (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Director of Administration and Head of Central Services.

APOLOGIES

Provost Connelly and Councillors Burrows, Chadha and McKenna.

MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

(1) GENERAL PURPOSES (LICENSING) SUB-COMMITTEE

1. There were submitted the Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-Committee held on 22 February and 5 March 2007.

Decided: that the Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes (Licensing) Sub-Committee held on 22 February and 5 March 2007 be approved and noted.

(2) CIVIC FUNCTIONS GROUP

2. There was submitted the Minute (tabled) of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 15 March 2007.

Decided: that the Minute of the meeting of the Civic Functions Group held on 15 March 2007 be approved and noted.

CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982 - PUBLIC PROCESSIONS

3. **C** With regard to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on January 2007, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 9 March 2007 by the Director of Administration (1) outlining proposals for the discharge of the Council's responsibilities with regard to public processions in terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 as amended by the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 and the statutory Guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers under Section 65A of that Act; (2) containing, as detailed therein, recommendations (a) that powers be delegated to the Director of Administration and the Head of Central Services to determine a range of matters in relation to Public Processions, and (b) that, in any instance in which representations be made with regard to a proposed procession and in which delegated power is not exercised to determine that those representations contained no relevant material of which the Council could take account, the matter fall to be considered by the General Purposes (Public Processions)

SPECIAL GENERAL PURPOSES – 19 March 2007

Sub-Committee, and (3) proposing that the draft Code of Conduct on Public Processions, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be forwarded to Strathclyde Police for consultation purposes.

Decided: that the recommendations, as contained in the report of 9 March 2007 by the Director of Administration, be approved.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - REVIEW

4. With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 23 August 2006, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 12 March 2007 by the Director of Administration (1) providing therein details of the findings following a review of the operation of the procedures adopted by the Council with regard to Freedom of Information; (2) advising that in light of experience of the operation of the Council's obligations under the Freedom of Information legislation, it was clear that there was a need to allocate additional resources to the Corporate Freedom of Information function, and (3) intimating that a report making recommendations following a review of the establishment structure within the Central Services Division of the Department of Administration to address, *inter alia*, the findings regarding the volume of work and resources required would be considered later in the agenda for the meeting.

Decided: that the outcome of and recommendations following the review of the operation of the Council's Freedom of Information procedures be noted.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES - REVIEW

5. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 March 2007 by the Director of Administration (1) detailing therein the findings of a review, as part of the Best Value Process, of the services provided by the Administrative Services Section within the Central Services Division of the Department of Administration, and (2) intimating that a report making recommendations following a review of the establishment structure within the Central Services Division of the Department of Administration to address *inter alia*, the findings of the review of the Administrative Services Section would be considered later in the agenda for the meeting.

Decided: that the report be noted.

PROPERTY ENQUIRY SERVICE

6. With reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 23 October 2002 when, *inter alia*, the Committee had noted the outcome of a survey of users of the Property Enquiry Service provided by the Central Services Division of the Department of Administration, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 March 2007 by the Director of Administration (1) advising of the outcome of an options appraisal exercise which had recently been carried out in respect of the Property Enquiry Service; (2) indicating that there had been a steady decline in the amount of requests for property enquiry certificates; (3) outlining the factors contributing towards the decline in the usage of the Service, and (4) providing details therein of recommendations to secure service improvement.

Decided:

- (1) that the outcome of the analysis and options appraisal of the Property Enquiry Service be noted;

SPECIAL GENERAL PURPOSES – 19 March 2007

- (2) that it be agreed that action now be taken to ascertain the feasibility of reducing the period for the provision of property enquiry certificates to a maximum of 5 working days from receipt of request;
- (3) that it be agreed that action be taken to seek the consent of the Scottish Information Commissioner to the extension of the Council's publication scheme to include reference to the provision of property enquiry certificates, and
- (4) that it be agreed that a further report on the outcome of this action be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION: CENTRAL SERVICES DIVISION - STRUCTURE REVIEW

- C** 7. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 14 March 2007 by the Director of Administration making recommendations following a review of the establishment structure within the Central Services Division of the Department of Administration to address, inter alia, (1) the new responsibilities with regard to public processions imposed on the Council by the amendment, by the Police Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982; (2) the findings of the review of the Administrative Services Section of the Division and the recommendations arising therefrom; (3) the findings of a review of the operation of the procedures adopted by the Council with regard to Freedom of Information and, in particular, the findings regarding the volume of work and resources required; (4) the transfer, from the Department of Finance to the Department of Administration, of responsibility for the Corporate Data Protection role in terms of the Data Protection Policy approved by the Council, and (5) the increased volume and complexity of work required to support the Returning Officer in the organisation of, preparation for and conduct of elections.

Thereon the Head of Central Services further recommended, orally, that the Committee remit its decision, for consideration, to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Decided:

- (1) that the proposals as contained in the report of 14 March 2007 by the Director of Administration be approved, and
- (2) that the report by the Director of Administration and the Committee's decision thereon be remitted, for consideration, to the Policy and Resources Committee.

CONFERENCE

8. There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2007 by the Director of Administration advising of an invitation from GAPPP Limited for the Council to be represented at a National Association of Councillors' Conference entitled "Public Services – Improvement in Accountability" to be held in Scarborough during the period from 13-15 April 2007.

Decided: that one member be authorised to attend.