

**POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB –
25 November 2015**

Motherwell, 25 November 2015 at 2 pm.

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

PRESENT

Councillor Burrows, Convener; Councillors Baird, Bonnar, Farooq, P. Hogg, Hume, Lunny, Lyle, McAnulty, McCabe, McCulloch, McKay, O'Brien, G. O'Rorke 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 E-Government and Service Development, Head of Financial Services, and Head of Revenue Services.

APOLOGIES

Councillor Fagan, Jones, McNally, Shevlin, Spowart and Stocks.

CONVENER'S REMARKS

The Convener welcomed Councillor Bonnar to his first meeting of the Sub-Committee.

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

1. No declarations were noted.

The Convener exercised his discretion to vary the order of business, as hereinafter minuted.

PAYMENT OF LOCAL TAXATION AND BENEFIT UPDATE

2. With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2015, there was submitted a report dated 4 November 2015 by the Head of Revenue Services (1) updating the Sub-Committee on payment performance of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and the administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit/Reduction Scheme for the financial year 2015/16, 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 relating to the average number of days to process new claims and changes to Council Tax and Housing Benefit were averaging 24 days for new claims and 9 days for a change of event; (3) outlining the background to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which had replaced Council Tax Benefit on 1 April 2013, together with a comparison of total award on a monthly basis from 2012/13 to 2015/16, and (4) informing that, in relation to Discretionary Housing Payments, the projected spend for 2015/16 was £3.535m, with £3,444,048 having been paid or committed from the funding received from the Department of Work and Pensions, for all successful applications received as at 31 October 2015.

Decided: that the report be noted.

“STRENGTHENING THE INCENTIVE TO SAVE”: A CONSULTATION ON PENSIONS TAX RELIEF

3. There was submitted a report dated 15 November 2015 by the Head of Revenue Services (1) advising of a consultation paper entitled Strengthening the Incentive to Save: Pensions Tax Relief received from HM Treasury, a response to which had been required by 30 September 2015; (2) detailing within Appendix 1 to the report, the response which he had submitted, following consultation with the Convener, and (3) seeking homologation of the response and the action taken.

Decided: that the action taken, following consultation with the Convener, to submit the Council's response to the consultation paper entitled Strengthening the Incentive to Save: Pensions Tax Relief prior to the deadline, be homologated.

AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT – HOUSING BENEFITS PERFORMANCE AUDIT – OUTCOME OF RISK ASSESSMENT

4. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 June 2011, there was submitted a report dated 12 November 2015 by the Head of Revenue Services (1) advising that Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, had reviewed Housing Benefit services across all 32 Scottish Councils on the basis of a self-assessment return; (2) indicating that, following receipt of the Council's self-assessment submission, Audit Scotland had undertaken a site visit to test, interview and gather additional information, and (3) setting out the findings of the review, together with a commentary from the Council detailing the actions taken to respond to the findings, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the report.

Decided: that the report be noted.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS 2015/16 - FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND COUNCIL SUMMARY

5. There were submitted reports dated 2 and 13 November 2015 by the Head of Financial Services (1) advising of, respectively, the expenditure for the financial year 2015/16 for Finance and Customer Services (including Miscellaneous Services) and the Council Summary, which included both the General Fund Account and the Housing Revenue Account; (2) providing a comparison of actual expenditure and income against the estimated expenditure and income for the period 1 April to 16 October 2015 together with explanations for the most significant variances; (3) projecting a year end surplus of £5.216m for the Council which was due to a number of factors, details of which were contained within the report, and (4) setting out, with regard to the Council Summary Report, the consolidated budget monitoring position of all Services, with additional information contained within Appendix 1 to the report.

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

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS 2015/16 - FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COMPOSITE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

6. There were submitted reports dated 2 and 25 November 2015 by the Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services (1) advising of, respectively, the Finance and Customer Services Capital Programme and the Composite Capital Programme for 2015/16; (2) outlining the projected year end outturn position and resultant variances for both, and (3) providing a summary of the position of the

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Composite Services Capital Programme and the HR Capital Programme as at 16 October 2015, within Appendix 1 to the report.

Decided: that the reports be noted.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT – 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

7. There was submitted a report dated 28 October 2015 by the Head of Financial Services (1) advising of the Council's net overall borrowing position as at 30 September 2015, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report; (2) providing information on debt restructuring, borrowing, short term investments and interest rate movements during the period 1 July to 30 September 2015; (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 (4) indicating that the performance against Prudential Indicators remained in accordance with those previously approved by the Sub-Committee.

Decided: that the Treasury Management Activity for the period up to 30 September 2015, including the positive performance against key Prudential Indicators, be noted.

FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES SERVICE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT – SIX MONTHLY EXCEPTIONS REPORT – 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

8. There was submitted a report dated 30 October 2015 by the Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services (1) advising of performance results for the first six months of 2015/16; (2) outlining performance relating to the Service Plan activity including progress against the themes within the Corporate Plan, Service Priorities and the indicators contained within the Performance Portfolio, and (3) setting out the Service Priorities and performance portfolio indicators requiring improvement; outstanding from the previous year; not performing within acceptable thresholds; exceeding targets, or on target, all grouped by Head of Service, as detailed in Appendices A to E of the report.

Decided: that the report be noted.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

9. With reference to paragraph 18 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 10 September 2014, there was submitted a report dated 29 October 2015 by the Head of Financial Services seeking approval of proposed amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations, as outlined in the report, and shown in more detail in Appendix 1 to the report.

Decided: that the amendments to the Financial Regulations, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND – FIRST SIX MONTHS REPORT AND PROGRESS UPDATE

10. With reference to paragraph 21 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2015, there was submitted a report dated 13 November 2015 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development (1) providing a performance update for Scottish Welfare Fund activity for the first six months of 2015/16; (2) outlining the background to the Scottish Welfare Fund, which was introduced on 1 April 2013 as an interim two year scheme to deliver Community Care Grants and Crisis Grants; (3) stating that the funding for the scheme remained unchanged for

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this financial year at £2,956,014, but was subject to change for the next three financial years; (4) indicating that, during the period April to September 2015, the Council made 11,044 decisions on applications to the Fund with 7,375 grants being awarded; (5) containing details, within Table 1 of the report, of the monthly breakdown of decisions on grant applications; (6) detailing, within Table 2 to the report, the spend profile for the first six months of 2015/16; (7) advising that the Council had received 1,000 more crisis applications than any other Council in Scotland and the second highest number of applications overall; (8) intimating that it was anticipated that the Scottish Government would decide the model for funding allocation across the next three financial years during December, and (9) outlining the current proposals for funding based on spend to date and the income domain of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), as discussed at the COSLA Settlement and Distribution Group.

Decided:

- (1) that the current status of the Scottish Welfare Fund provision for the first six months of 2015/16 be noted;
- (2) that the proposals for funding going forward, as outlined within the report, be noted, and
- (3) that the report be otherwise noted.

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ICT STRATEGY – ICT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

11. With reference to paragraph 22 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2015, there was submitted a report dated 29 October 2015 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development (1) providing an update on the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy; (2) summarising the current status of Phase 1 of the overall programme, and the key developments and milestones in respect of Network Redesign, Flexible and Mobile Working and High Schools' Bandwidth Upgrade, the three key projects which comprised Phase 1 of the Transformation Programme; (3) advising that, in line with agreed governance procedures, another four additional Transformation Projects had been approved to proceed, and (4) setting out details of the four additional projects; School Service Desk, Paperlite, Enterprise Integration (MS Biztalk) and Customer Portal.

Decided: that the report be noted.

CUSTOMER SERVICES REPORT

12. There was submitted a report dated 16 November 2015 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development (1) updating the Sub-Committee on the Customer Services provision through primary customer contact channels and the ongoing development of key supporting initiatives to collect and measure customer satisfaction; (2) providing a summary of the systems in place to help the Council understand the grade of service being experienced by customers and the type of information collected; (3) advising of the progress of the Master Citizen Record (MCR) that had become operational in October 2014 to handle data queries; (4) providing details on the uptake of Myaccount, a national account introduced by the Scottish Government to allow customers to sign-in to access on-line services at both national and local levels, and (5) detailing the current status of the Customer Portal.

Decided: that the report be noted.

INSTALL HIGH LEVEL CABLING, WIRELESS ACCESS POINTS, NETWORK CABINETS AND UPS

13. There was submitted an amended report (tabled) dated 16 November 2015 by the Head of E-Government and Service Development (1) requesting that Committee homologate the action she had taken, following consultation with the Convener, to use the Scottish Procurement Network Enablement Services Framework to source a suitable supplier for two Lots to install high level cabling, wireless access points, network cabinets and un-interrupted power supplies (UPS) across 23 secondary schools and 61 corporate locations; (2) setting out the results of the mini competition for Lot 1: Installation Services for Network Cabinets and UPS, and Lot 2: Installation Services for High Level Cabling and Wireless Access Points; (3) intimating that, after checking and evaluation on the basis of 60% price and 40% quality, the tenders submitted by Capita IT Services Limited were the most economically advantageous for both Lots, and (4) proposing that both Lot 1 and Lot 2 be awarded to Capita IT Services Limited.

Decided:

- (1) that the action taken by the Head of E-Government and Service Development, following consultation with the Convener, to use the Scottish Procurement Network Enablement Services Framework to secure a suitable supplier to install high level cabling, wireless access points, network cabinets and un-interrupted power supplies (UPS) across 23 secondary schools and 61 corporate locations be homologated, and
- (2) that the contracts for (a) Lot 1: Installation Services for Network Cabinets and UPS in the sum of £92,016.39, and (b) Lot 2: Installation Services for High Level Cabling and Wireless Access Points in the sum of £145,495.59, be awarded to Capita IT Services Limited.

CONTRACTS ACCEPTED UNDER FINANCIAL LIMITS – 10 SEPTEMBER TO 5 NOVEMBER 2015

14. There was submitted a report dated 5 November 2015 by the Head of Democratic and Legal Services intimating that the contract highlighted within Appendix 1 to the report had been accepted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services in accordance with Contract Standing Orders during the period from 10 September to 5 November 2015.

Decided: that the contract accepted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, during the reported period from 10 September to 5 November 2015, be noted.