

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Main Street, Barrhead on 4 September 2014.

Present:

Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Ian McAlpine
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Mary Montague
Councillor Elaine Green	Councillor Vincent Waters

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); David Miller, Head of Revenue Services; Sharon Beattie, Human Resources Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1183. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

VARIATION TO CONTRACT – BARRHEAD FOUNDRY

1184. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of a variation to the contract for the Barrhead Foundry project in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Whilst noting that the variation had occurred as a result of a combination of additional works agreed as being necessary plus some un-anticipated works which were only identified as the construction work commenced, the report highlighted that the works were all identified by the Council as being necessary variations, and were not as a result of any fault or omission on the part of the contractor.

The Cabinet noted the variation to the contract with CBC of £130,000 from the approved contract sum in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2013/14

1185. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing details of the Council's Treasury Management activities for the year ending 31 March 2014 and seeking approval of the current list of organisations for the investment of surplus funds, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report explained that in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2011, the Cabinet was responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of treasury management activities and the submission of the report to the Cabinet was in accordance with this requirement.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2013/14; and
- (b) **recommended to the Council** that the organisations listed at Appendix 7 to the report for the investment of surplus funds be approved.

COLLECTION OF COUNCIL REVENUES

1186. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval of revised Corporate Debt and Rent Arrears policies. Copies of the respective policies were appended to the report.

The report provided summary information of collections and write-offs in respect of all the Council's major revenues which were noted as Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates, Rents and Sundry Debtors. Whilst noting that collections of the Council's revenues had generally increased in 2013/14 with the Council being the best performing council in Scotland for Council Tax collection, the report highlighted that the level of rent arrears continued to cause some concern, particularly in the light of planned welfare reforms.

The report indicated that to ensure continuous improvement, policies guiding debt recovery and rent collection had been reviewed and revised versions prepared for consideration and approval. The main proposed policy changes were intended to relate income collection more closely to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) and to reflect changes to both benefits and current payment methods. Furthermore, other changes included reinforcing both that payments of rent were due in advance and tenants' responsibility to apply for Discretionary Housing Payment where appropriate. A further proposed change was to allow write-off of debts on the recommendation of Council officers where the debtor would otherwise experience hardship.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the revised Corporate Debt and Rent Arrears policies; and
- (b) otherwise noted the terms of the report.

WELFARE REFORM

1187. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 6 June 2013 (Page 550, Item 570 refers), when it was agreed amongst other things to approve an initial allocation of £189,000 to be drawn from the Welfare Reform contingency sum provided in the 2013/14 Council estimates, the Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing an update on the progress of the work which had been undertaken to evaluate and mitigate the impact of welfare reforms on the Council and its customers and to prepare for the impact of future reforms.

Whilst noting that the timetable for the implementation of some of the reforms locally, particularly Universal Credit, was still unclear and as a result this made planning difficult, the report indicated that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had announced dates for Council Benefit Fraud Teams to transfer to a Single Fraud Investigation Service within the DWP. The Council had been allocated a date of December 2015 for the transfer of personnel. However, a number of issues still needed resolved and further reports clarifying both the arrangements for staff transfer and ongoing service provision would be submitted to future meetings of the Cabinet once the outcomes of national discussions were available.

The report concluded by highlighting that Council departments and partners continued to make good progress in mitigating the impact of welfare reforms which were currently being experienced. The funding previously approved by the Cabinet on 6 June 2013 was having a beneficial impact in this regard and authority was now being sought to approve the drawdown of funds for the full 2014/15 year to allow existing staffing arrangements to be extended. Furthermore, it was also proposed to continue financial provision of these arrangements by way of a contingency sum for 2015/16.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the progress that had been made in mitigating and preparing for the impact of welfare reform;
- (b) approved an allocation of £281,000 to be drawn from the welfare reform contingency sum provided in the 2014/15 Council estimates; and
- (c) agreed to continue financial provision by way of a contingency sum for 2015/16.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Leader, the Cabinet unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act".

1138

HOLIDAY PAY ENTITLEMENT

1188. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details regarding pay elements and holiday pay in light of recent Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal rulings and the impact this would have on current arrangements for the Council's workforce.

The Cabinet approved that the Council should implement the new calculation method for holiday pay in September 2014 with back pay to the start of the annual leave year being paid to those employees who had received the approved pay element at the same time.

CHAIR