

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 10 April 2014.

Present:

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

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate and Community Services; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Customer and Business Change Services; Jim Sneddon, Head of Democratic and Partnership Services; Iain MacLean, Head of Environment (Planning, Property and Regeneration); Mark Ratter, Education Senior Manager, Planning and Reporting; Gillian McCarney, Planning and Building Standards Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Danny Devlin and Mary Montague.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1008. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CABINET WORK PLAN 2012/14 PROGRESS AND CABINET WORK PLAN 2014/15

1009. Under reference to the Minute of meeting of 11 October 2012 (Page 204, Item 209 refers), when it was agreed that progress against the Cabinet Work Plan would be reviewed in April 2014 and updated on an annual basis thereafter, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on progress made against the 2012/14 Cabinet Work Plan and submitting for consideration a draft work plan for 2014/15. Copies of the statement of progress against the current plan and the draft plan for 2014/15 were appended to the report.

Whilst noting that progress that had been made against the plan since 2012, the report highlighted that the draft work plan 2014/15 was based on the considerable amount of routine Cabinet business for which time frames were known in advance. This included amongst other things planned strategy and policy developments, outcomes of service reviews together with regular cycles of financial and performance management monitoring reports.

The report also explained that the Community Health and Care Partnership and Education Departments had separate committee arrangements and their contributions to the plan were based on inputs to cross-cutting strategies, corporate performance reports and strategy and policy work within Cultural Services.

The report concluded by highlighting that the forward planning exercise would ensure the strategic focus of the Council was maintained, that cross-cutting strategy issues were identified and that the Cabinet made the most efficient and effective use of the time available to discuss and approve strategies, monitor performance and oversee the use of resources.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the content of the draft Cabinet Work Plan for 2014/15; and
- (b) agreed that progress against the plan be reviewed in April 2015 and updated on an annual basis thereafter.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK - 2012/13 PERFORMANCE

1010. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 March 2013 (Page 446, Item 475 refers), when the Council's performance against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators for 2010/11 and 2011/12 was considered, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive providing an update on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) together with overview of the Council's performance against the indicators from 2010/11 to 2012/13. A copy of the performance report was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that the LGBF provided a framework of indicators around cost, productivity and outcomes, the report explained that the indicators had been primarily developed using the best available cost information for councils from existing sources such as Local Financial Returns (LFRs). The report also explained that since that date, the national LGBF indicator set had been subject to review and the final set for 2012/13 data reporting had been agreed in December 2013. Details of the new indicators in the framework were clearly identified in Annex 1 to the report.

The report set out rankings and quartile positions for each indicator and what Council services were doing to address any performance issues. It was emphasised that the data should not be treated as a league table and that by considering related indicators together such as cost and satisfaction and focussing on outcomes, the Council could get a more rounded view of service performance. Overall the Council's comparative performance was good although there were areas where it could improve and learn from others. The Council's performance across a range of service areas was also outlined in the report.

The report concluded by indicating that departments were working hard to continually improve services and that where an indicator showed areas for improvement, this was being progressed to ensure positive impacts on future performance for the Council's residents and

customers. It was emphasised that the LGBF indicator set was only one means of recording and measuring the Council's performance. To achieve a balanced picture the outcomes the Council was delivering through the Single Outcome Agreement; Outcome Delivery Plan; Service Standards and through various audits, inspections and self-assessments required to be taken into account.

The Cabinet noted:-

- (a) the Council's performance against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators and the action being taken by departments to address any performance issues; and
- (b) that the national benchmarking indicator set would be recorded and publicly reported by all Scottish councils as a statutory requirement from 2014.

RULES FOR AREA FORUM EXPENDITURE

1011. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval for new rules for area forum expenditure.

The report explained that the new rules provided greater clarity and removed the ambiguity that existed in the past and would assist community groups who would be clearer on whether or not their project was likely to be considered. In addition, both elected Members and officers would be able to give clearer advice to groups on the suitability or otherwise of projects.

The Cabinet approved the new rules for area forum expenditure.

HIGH HEDGES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2013

1012. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of the enactment of the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013 and seeking approval to charge a fee for applications under the Act. The report also sought approval to update the Scheme of Delegated Functions so that all matters under the Act could be dealt with by the Director of Environment or Head of Environment (Planning, Property and Regeneration).

Whilst noting that the new High Hedges legislation came into effect on 1 April 2014, the report explained that the legislation allowed a person to apply to the Council for a High Hedge Notice in circumstances where they felt that a neighbouring hedge adversely affected the reasonable enjoyment of their property caused by light being blocked by the hedge. The report also explained that it was for each council to set its own fee for high hedge applications and that the Scottish Government had said that fees should be set so that the implementation of the legislation should be cost-neutral for councils.

It was proposed that a fee of £420 be set by the Council for an application for a High Hedge Notice which would be reviewed on an annual basis. The fee would be used to cover administration, land checks, necessary site visits, specialised consultations, professional assessment appeals.

The report concluded by indicating that the introduction of the Act gave residents an opportunity to resolve long-standing disputes between neighbours over high hedges that might have been causing concerns. It was noted that the high hedge process however should only be necessary as a last resort when mediation had failed.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved that a fee of £420 be set for applications under the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013; and
- (b) agreed that the Council's Scheme of Delegated Functions to allow applications, enforcement and all related actions under the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013 to be undertaken by the Director of Environment or Head of Environment (Planning, Property and Regeneration).

CHAIR