

STIRLING COUNCIL

MINUTES of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OLD VIEWFORTH, STIRLING on THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2013 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Corrie McCHORD (in the Chair)

Councillor Neil BENNY
Councillor Alistair BERRILL
Councillor Margaret BRISLEY
Councillor Scott FARMER
Councillor Danny GIBSON
Councillor John HENDRY (Substitute)
Councillor Violet WEIR

In Attendance:

Tony Cain, Head of Housing & Customer Service
Liz Duncan, Chief Governance Officer, Governance & Resources (Clerk)
Fiona Fulton, Communication Officer, Chief Executive's Office
Belinda Greer, Head of Education
Bob Jack, Chief Executive
Kevin Kelman, Assistant Head of Education
Linda Kinney, Assistant Chief Executive (Learning, Empowerment & Citizenship)
Claire McDonald, Committee Support Officer, Chief Executive's Office
John Risk, Head of Assets & Support
John Scott, Assistant Head of Social Services
Val deSouza, Acting Head of Social Services/Chief Social Work Officer
Chris Sutton, Service Manager – Strategy, Social Services
Willie Watson, Head of Governance & Resources

EX63 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mark Ruskell and Councillor Johanna Boyd. Councillor John Hendry was substituting for Councillor Johanna Boyd.

EX64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EX65 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

EX66 MINUTES – 17 JANUARY 2013

Decision

The Executive agreed to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive held on 17 January 2013.

EX67 BIG NOISE FUTURE FUNDING STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Big Noise Children's Orchestra was an early intervention programme that used music and engagement in an orchestra from an early age to bring about social transformation. The programme was based on evidence from the Venezuelan model El Sistema, that skills learned through orchestra education had the potential to transform lives and improve the achievement and outcomes of children who experienced disadvantage.

Sistema Scotland established the Big Noise Children's Orchestra in Raploch, Stirling in the summer of 2008, in partnership with Stirling Council. The partnership between Sistema Scotland and Stirling Council was based on an agreement that the Big Noise Initiative would be fully funded by Sistema Scotland for a period of up to five years and that, following this period, Stirling Council would take responsibility for funding Big Noise.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Learning, Empowerment & Citizenship) introduced a report, which set out the Council's funding and partnership approach to ensure the future sustainability of the Big Noise Initiative from 2013 onwards.

A key element of the future development of Big Noise was the nomination of Big Noise Champions to act as Ambassadors in promoting and supporting the work of Big Noise and the partnership with Sistema Scotland. The report proposed that the three Group Leaders, along with an additional member of the Administration, be so nominated.

Members recognised the importance of this initiative but noted concern about champions being kept up to date and asked if there was any mechanism in place. The Assistant Chief Executive advised that this was something that officers would be looking at and they would be working on a model/mechanism in partnership.

Members asked if there would be any possibility of the programme being rolled out to other communities in the Stirling Council area. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that this was something that had been discussed with Sistema Scotland.

Members of the Executive agreed that the 3 Group Leaders and Councillor Corrie McChord act as Big Noise Champions.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

1. to support the funding model as set out in the submitted report;
2. that the 3 Group Leaders and Councillor Corrie McChord would act as Big Noise Champions.

(Reference: Report by Assistant Chief Executive (Learning, Empowerment & Citizenship) dated 7 February 2013, submitted).

EX68 CARE INSPECTORATE PERFORMANCE INSPECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES – PROGRESS AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS

In May 2012, the Care Inspectorate published the “Stirling Council Scrutiny Report, which highlighted five areas for development, which formed the basis of the Stirling Council Social Services Care Inspectorate Scrutiny Action Plan.

The five recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate related to:

- Enhancing the Throughcare and Aftercare service to achieve improved outcomes for looked after and accommodated young people.
- Completing work to improve review arrangements for service users in receipt of a community care service.
- Developing more reliable management information on demand for services.
- Improving mechanisms for informing those service users and carers in policy development and service planning of progress.
- Developing Smart (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) action plans.

The Acting Head of Social Services introduced her report, which advised that the Service had maintained a pattern of three monthly meetings with the Link Inspector to support progression of the plan. The Care Inspectorate had achieved progress in addressing the five recommendations within the context of the wider programme of change activity across Social Services. The Acting Head of Social Services gave an update of the details on the progress in each area that were set out in the submitted report.

Members were advised that there had been positive opportunities to share best practice and develop joint working with partners with the progression of the Shared Service across Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils. This had enabled Social Services to work collaboratively in a number of areas for improvement, both those identified by the Care Inspectorate, and those found as a result of self-assessment.

A programme of work had been established in collaboration with partner agencies and across both Councils to address joint priorities, enabling more efficient and effective collaborative use of resources.

The Acting Head of Social Services advised that strong internal governance arrangements were now in place across the Service to support and monitor improvement activity, providing assurance that the Service had a thorough understanding of areas of strength and areas requiring improvement and was therefore well placed to take prompt actions to address any recommendations for improvement.

In response to some concerns raised by Members of the Executive, the Chief Executive recognised that on reflection of different areas scrutinised in social care

there were still areas that needed to be improved and more linked up working needed but there was movement in the right direction.

Decision

The Executive agreed to note the progress of the Service towards improvement and the continued engagement with the Inspection Agency.

(Reference: Report by Acting Head of Social Services/Chief Social Work Officer, dated 6 February 2013, submitted.)

EX69 UPDATE ON THE REQUEST BY KILLIN AND ARDEONAIG DEVELOPMENT TRUST TO TRANSFER THE OLD MILL, KILLIN ON A LESS THAN BEST PRICE BASIS

At its meeting on 28 June 2012, Stirling Council considered a report on a request by Killin and Ardeonaig Trust (The Trust) to transfer the Old Mill, Killin to them at Less than Best Price. Council agreed that this application was consistent with the Council's ambitions to transfer assets to community control where there was a sustainable case for the transfer, and therefore to support the initiative subject to the Trust providing a sustainable Business Plan.

A report by the Head of Assets & Support provided details of the background and ownership position, and consideration, which had been given to the Trust's proposal.

The Head of Assets & Support advised that the Trust had run the Old Mill for a trial basis, which had provided information for the Business Plan. It had also demonstrated that the community was behind the project. The Head of Assets & Support highlighted that a possible condition from The Big Lottery funding might be that The Trust have a Mill Co-ordinator who would assist with the Volunteers. The Big Lottery would also require the asset to be transferred to the community but Grant Fund Investors would not require this.

The report recommended that, in view of the overall potential net benefit to the community, further time be granted to the Trust to demonstrate a sustainable business case. It was proposed that a full Repairing and Insuring Lease be granted to the Trust for the period 1 March 2013 to 31 October 2014, with a report being submitted to the appropriate Committee no later than December 2014 on progress made.

Members noted that, after a transfer had taken place, there would be a period when the Old Mill would be closed for refurbishment before being run by the community. They also commended the progress that had been made over the last two years and was a good example of good practice.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

1. to note the content of the submitted report and commend the progress made by Killin and Ardeonaig Trust in developing a Business Plan;
2. to grant a Full Repairing and Insuring Lease to the Trust for the period 1 March 2013 to 31 October 2014 in order to further evaluate the initiative;

3. a report being submitted to the appropriate Committee, no later than December 2014, on the progress made.

(Reference: Report by Head of Assets & Support, dated 6 February 2013, submitted).

EX70 ASBESTOS POLICY

The Head of Assets & Support introduced his report, which highlighted the need for the Council to have an agreed approach to the control of asbestos in its buildings.

He advised that asbestos was a versatile and useful building material, used universally until 2000, when its potential dangers to health became fully appreciated and its use was made illegal.

When asbestos was in good condition and was left undisturbed, it was not a health risk. To ensure that the Council was in control of the situation, it was vital to know where asbestos was located; that its condition was kept under review, and that it was not accidentally interfered with.

A draft Asbestos Policy, attached as an appendix to the submitted report, set out how the Council would deliver its responsibilities with regard to asbestos.

Members were advised that the Health and Safety Executive had served two Improvement Notices on the Council in August 2012 on account of asbestos in the basement of Old Viewforth. The Health and Safety Executive had confirmed they were satisfied with the actions taken. Since that time, work had been undertaken to ensure that the Council complied with all aspects of the draft Asbestos Policy in respect of all Council premises.

Decision

The Executive agreed to approve the Asbestos Policy detailed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Assets & Support dated 6 February 2013, submitted).

EX71 EMPLOYEE WORKSTYLES

Reprovision of the Council's main office accommodation in Stirling had been agreed on the basis of employees working in a different way from the traditional model, and a fresh and flexible approach would be encouraged and supported.

The Head of Assets & Support introduced his report, which included as appendices a Workstyles Policy and Display Screen Equipment Policy.

The Workstyles Policy defined four workstyles:-

- Fixed worker
- Flexible worker
- Mobile worker
- Home worker

It was advised that managers would agree with each employee their working arrangements, taking account of service implications, responsibilities of the job and the employee's individual circumstances.

Management and employee guides had been produced to explain the Policy and the responsibilities of managers and employees.

The Head of Assets & Support advised that the Display Screen Equipment Policy set out the Council's approach to ensuring employees were supported. Responsibilities would be shared between the employee and the Council. The approach set out in the Policy was supported by the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management and was considered by the Health and Safety Executive to be best practice.

Many employees could be working at many different workstations, and using mobile devices, and it was therefore essential that arrangements were put in place to support employees and ensure that they understood health and safety issues.

An employee guide and training programme for employees on Display Screen Equipment had been produced.

The Executive was invited to approve the approaches set out in the Workstyles Policy and Display Screen Equipment Policy.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

1. to approve the approach set out in the Workstyles Policy in Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
2. to approve the approach to Display Screen Equipment assessments set out in the Display Screen Equipment Policy in Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Assets & Support, dated 6 February 2013, submitted).

EX72 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

On 1 October 2009, following the implementation of the new Senior Management structure, Council remitted to the Chief Executive to keep the management and organisational structure under review and make such changes as from time to time appeared appropriate in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. This was reaffirmed when further changes were made as noted by Council on 22 August 2011.

The Chief Executive introduced his report, which detailed the significant reduction in the number of Senior Management posts over the last four years, resulting in the annual cost of the Senior Management structure being reduced from £2,156,200 in 2009 to a current cost of £1,228,640, a saving of £927,560.

Stirling Council's aspiration to be an efficient, effective and agile organisation required arrangements and structures that supported a collaborative and enabling approach to strategy, corporate development, service management and delivery.

The recent departures of an Assistant Chief Executive and the Head of Employment, Communities & Youth provided a further opportunity to review the Senior

Management Structure and Chief Executive's Office. Members were invited to consider how these could best provide support to both Elected Members and the Chief Executive in delivering the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan – Serving Stirling and contribute to the ongoing need to find efficiencies in management in view of the financial challenges facing the Council over the next few years.

The revised Senior Management structure and functions for the Chief Executive's Office were attached as appendices to the submitted report.

The Chief Executive advised that the three Assistant Chief Executive posts would be replaced by a Depute Chief Executive post. It was also confirmed that the two Assistant Chief Executives would stay in post until tasks/projects were completed.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

1. to note changes to Service Structures implemented by the Chief Executive following deletion of the post of Head of Employment, Communities & Youth;
2. to note the proposed changes to the Chief Executive's Office that the Chief Executive was now proceeding to implement;
3. to approve the proposed changes to the Senior Management Structure and remit to the Chief Executive for implementation in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy and the procedure for Chief Officer appointments.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive, dated 6 February 2013, submitted).

The Executive resolved under Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6, 8 & 9, and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

EX73 UPDATE ON THE REVIEW AND DISPOSAL OF BACK O'HILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, STIRLING

A report by the Head of Assets & Support Service provided an update since the decision taken by the Executive on 14 June 2012 to dispose of units at Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Stirling.

At that meeting, the Executive had agreed:-

- to sell the units to the existing tenants at market value and to market the vacant/soon to be vacant units;
- to note action being taken by Strategic Asset Management in relation to the Equinox Land Ltd Phase 2 site;
- to a further report to the Executive on the opportunities for a further development site to be assembled.

The submitted report provided an update on negotiations with sitting tenants, discussions with Equinox and Raploch Urban Regeneration Company (RURC) and on the marketing of the vacant units.

Appendices to the report provided details of Council ownership and adjoining uses, summary lease details and anticipated disposal values; planning requirements; timescales for disposals; and headline assessment criteria for offers for units being marketed.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

1. to note the position with the disposals to sitting tenants that would generate receipts as detailed in the submitted report, on the basis that all tenants concluded their acquisitions from the Council;
2. to market sites 2A, 3, 5, 14 & 15, which would generate receipts in the region as detailed in the submitted report, on the basis of a price/quality disposal campaign as outlined in Appendix 5 to the submitted report, and that the offers would be reported back to an appropriate Committee for approval;
3. to note the developments regarding the Equinox Ltd site and agree the principle of establishing a Sinking Fund as outlined in paragraph 3.16 of the submitted report should the site be recovered by the Council to contribute towards non-budgeted expenditure;
4. to agree to a further report to the relevant Committee later in the year on progress with all aspects relating to the disposal and future development of the Estate.

(Reference: Report by Head of Assets & Support dated 6 February 2013, submitted).

EX74 TENDER (SERVICES) FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF FOUR BUNGALOWS AT DOWNIE PLACE BANNOCKBURN

A report by the Head of Housing & Customer Service advised that the Housing Service had agreed with community and planning colleagues that an identified site in Downie Place, Bannockburn be developed to provide four 2 bedroom bungalows in the form of two blocks.

The Head of Housing & Customer Service advised that the scheme would be funded by Housing Revenue capital investment and Scottish Government grant funding. Members were advised that the grant funding element was dependent on site completion by March 2015.

An appendix to the submitted report set out the prior overall weighting model used to evaluate three tenders received.

The report sought authority to accept a tender over £250,000 which represented the most economically advantageous tender for the provision of a design and build service for the site.

Members of the Executive noted their appreciation that this paper had come to Executive. Some concerns had been raised by some Members with regard to

funding. The Head of Housing & Customer Service confirmed that funding would still be available until March 2015.

Decision

The Executive agreed to accept the most economically advantageous tender for the provision of the design and construction of four bungalows at Downie Place, Bannockburn submitted by Marshall Construction Ltd.

(Reference: Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service dated 6 February 2013, submitted).

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.50 pm