

MINUTES of SPECIAL MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN PERFORMANCE REVIEW**AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chambers, Midlothian House,

Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Wednesday 29 August 2012 at 11.00 am.

Present: Councillors Milligan (Chair), Baxter, Coventry, Imrie, Muirhead and Russell

Apologies for Absence Councillors Bennett, Boyes, Montgomery and Pottinger

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were intimated.

2. 2012/13 Performance Reports – Quarter 1

There were submitted performance reports detailing progress of the Corporate Plan for the Council; and the plans for Customer Services; Commercial Operations; Property and Facilities Management; Planning and Development; and Finance and Human Resources, for Quarter 1 2012/13. Each report contained a summary of the major successes achieved; the major challenges to be faced in 2012/13 and the actions to address them; the budget position and the impact of efficiencies and service reductions. Thereafter, the Committee received verbal updates in respect of each of the reports.

Decision

- (a) To note the impact of continual reduced funding and the challenges arising therefrom in delivering balanced budgets and affordable capital plans for the foreseeable future;
- (b) To note that in terms of the Transformation Programme it was essential that Midlothian enter into partnership working where possible;
- (c) That significant progress had been made in processing invoices efficiently and that the improvements would be sustainable as processes and procedures were simplified throughout the Council;
- (d) To note that in terms of the Competency Framework there would be a report on projects by Division showing weaknesses and strengths, monitoring how services are being delivered and looking at the impact and consistency on a Council wide basis showing both positive and negative analysis;
- (e) To note that payments were now accepted by a number of methods including debit and credit cards, pay point and pay zone and that the ability of customers to pay online was being further rolled out;

- (f) To note the roll out of flexible working and a seminar of the Council was to be held on Effective Working in Midlothian (EWiM);
- (g) To note that the low level of staff wages in the waste services continued to be a problem and that this was addressed in a number of ways including where possible giving staff extra training that might help them in career progression;
- (h) To acknowledge and thank the good work of the staff in securing bus services to replace those services withdrawn due to the closure of the First Group Dalkeith Garage and to request that any further developments in bus services be reported to Elected Members at the appropriate time;
- (i) To note that Council seminars would be held on Asset Management Rationalisation and also the Phase 2 Housing Development;
- (j) To note that “direct debit dodgers” – i.e. customers who revoke their direct debit instructions and continue to use Council leisure facilities were being targeted;
- (k) To note that the expenditure at the Snowsports Centre was being monitored on a monthly basis to ensure costs were kept under control;
- (l) To note that in terms of the move from Phase 1 House Build to Phase 2 House Build there would be a period of about a year of reduced activity in terms of house constructions while plans/permissions were sought.

(Sederunt - Councillor Milligan left the meeting at this stage and thereupon the meeting agreed that Councillor Imrie assume the Chair.)

- (m) To note that the Scottish Government would be introducing new Performance Indicators for processing planning applications and that there was a potential for a two tier set of fees to be introduced based on the speed a Council dealt with planning applications; and
- (n) To note that in terms of planning applications for large scale developments various processes such as Section 75 consents should be processed in a parallel timescale to shorten the lead in time for developments;

(ACTION: (h) Head of Commercial Operations)

The meeting terminated at 11.35 am