

MINUTES of MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Tuesday, 13 January 2015 at 11.00am.

Present:- Councillors Thompson (Convener), Constable (Depute Convener) and Councillors Bryant, Johnstone and Rosie.

Religious Representatives Present:- Mr V Bourne, Mr P Hayes and Mrs M Harkness.

1 Order of Business

The Clerk advised that:-

- (a) (i) the “To Follow” report for Agenda Item 9 had been circulated on 9 November 2014 under the amended title of “Gorebridge North and Bilston Primary Schools – Progress Report – Report by Head of Property and Facilities Management” and (ii) the Convener had agreed to accept this as urgent business in view of the Council’s interest in the matter (as dealt with under paragraph 1 of the Addendum hereto); and
- (b) Agenda Item 10, namely the “Minutes of Meeting of Midlothian Joint Consultative Group of 1 July 2014,” had an education interest and therefore fell to be considered as such under private business (as dealt with under paragraph 2 of the Addendum hereto).

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were intimated.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of (a) the Special Meeting of the Cabinet of 18 November 2014; (b) the Ordinary Meeting of the Cabinet of 18 November 2014; and (c) the Special Meeting of the Cabinet of 16 December 2014, were submitted and approved as correct records.

4 Minutes of Education Appointment Committee

The Cabinet noted and approved the Minutes of Meeting of the Education Appointment Committee of 18 December 2014, as shown at **Appendix I** hereto, thereby approving the following teaching appointment:-

School	Post	Appointee
Stobhill Primary School	Head Teacher	M Sykes

(Action: Director, Education, Communities and Economy)

5 Inspection of Cornbank St James Primary School and Nursery Class

There was submitted report by the Head of Education, outlining the outcome of an inspection carried out by Education Scotland at Cornbank St James Primary School and Nursery Class in October 2014. The evaluations were as follows:-

Cornbank St James Primary School:-

Improvements in performance	Good
Children's experiences	Good
Meeting learning needs	Good

Nursery Class:-

Improvements in performance	Good
Children's experiences	Good
Meeting learning needs	Good

The Inspectors also evaluated the following aspects of work of the school and nursery class:-

The curriculum	Good
Improvement through self-evaluation	Satisfactory

The report set out the key strengths found by the inspection team and areas for improvement which had been agreed with the Education, Communities and Economy Division.

Overall, the inspection team had indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of provision and were confident that the school's self-evaluation processes were leading to improvements. As a result, they would be making no further visits in connection with the inspection. However, the Council would inform parents about the school's performance.

Decision

- (a) To note the content of the inspection report;
- (b) To pass the report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration;
- (c) To congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with Cornbank St James Primary School and Nursery Class on the key strengths highlighted in the report; and
- (d) To note that, whilst acknowledging the progress reflected in the report, the Council would continue to challenge, support and monitor the service in relation to achieving excellence through further improving performance.

(Action: Head of Education)

6 First Statutory 'Biodiversity Report' on Pursuance of Statutory Duty to Further the Conservation of Biodiversity

There was submitted report, dated 18 December 2014, by the Director, Resources, recalling that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 18 November 2014, had considered a report by the Head of Communities and Economy, seeking approval of the Council's First Statutory Biodiversity Report.

Following consideration, the Cabinet approved the Biodiversity Report and *inter alia* agreed to refer it to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee for its interest. The report was thereafter presented to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee on 25 November 2014. At that meeting the Committee had expressed concern that there was no officer resource dedicated to biodiversity and accordingly agreed to recommend to Cabinet that it review the staffing resources available to support biodiversity with a view to ensuring that the Council fully met its statutory obligations.

The report advised that the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee had also agreed to invite the Cabinet Portfolio holder with responsibility for biodiversity to discuss the matter with them at their next meeting on 20 January 2015. Arrangements had therefore been made for Councillor Bryant, the Portfolio-holder, to attend this meeting.

The Cabinet was invited to consider the aforementioned recommendation of the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee and to note that Councillor Bryant, Cabinet Portfolio-holder, would be discussing the subject matter with the Committee on 20 January 2015.

Decision

- (a) To note advice from the Head of Communities and Economy that the previous half funded post of biodiversity officer had become vacant in October 2011 and had been deleted from establishment to meet further savings targets around that time;
- (b) To note the intention of the Cabinet Portfolio-holder, Councillor Bryant, to discuss the position further with the Head of Communities and Economy and that he would also be discussing the subject matter with the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2015; and
- (c) Pending the aforementioned discussions, to take no action on the recommendation of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee at this stage.

(Action: Head of Communities and Economy)

7 Midlothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20

There was submitted report, dated 12 December 2014, by the Joint Director, Health and Social Care, appending a copy of the Midlothian Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2015/16 – 2019/20.

The/

The report advised that the Scottish Government required local authorities to prepare a SHIP every two years which identified the main investment priorities for affordable housing in their area. The SHIP as presented set out the Council's approach to promoting affordable housing investment and meeting the housing supply targets identified in the Local Housing Strategy.

The SHIP acknowledged that there had been significant achievements in affordable housing investment in Midlothian and pointed out that since 2006, when the Council had began its social housing programme of developing new council housing, a total of 1,368 new affordable homes had been developed. Key achievements in 2013/14 were also highlighted.

Despite the considerable level of investment which had taken place, the SHIP nevertheless identified a requirement to increase the supply of affordable housing in all areas of Midlothian to meet a growing number of households that had a housing need. In addition, it was pointed out that property in the private rented sector and owner occupied tenures would not be affordable as a housing option for a significant number of households in Midlothian.

To address this demand the SHIP identified and prioritised sites in Midlothian for future investment in developing new affordable rented housing. The total level of new supply by 2019/20 was estimated to be 672 units, with the following breakdown of tenures:-

- 322 units - Council housing.
- 260 units - RSL social rented housing.
- 90 units - For RSL mid-market rent.
- Additional 2 units to be rented as social housing (To be purchased on the open market for re-housing Newbyres Crescent residents.)

The report also provided information on the highest levels of subsidy available to both the Council and RSLs, which had been increased by £16,000 per unit in July 2013 to support affordable housing providers in undertaking an increased level of development.

Decision

- (a) To note the content of the report;
- (b) To agree that the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20 be submitted to the Scottish Government; and
- (c) To commend the officials for the work they had undertaken in preparing the Plan.

(Action: Head of Customer and Housing Services)

8 Exclusion of Members of the Public

In/

In view of the nature of the business to be transacted, the Cabinet agreed that the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the undernoted items, as contained in the Addendum hereto, as there might be disclosed exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8, 9 and 11 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:-

(a) Gorebridge North and Bilston Primary Schools – Progress Report:-

- To approve the designs for Gorebridge North and Bilston Primary Schools;
- To recommend to Council that the provision in the General Services Capital plan be revised accordingly for the two schools;
- To note the anticipated delivery programme as outlined in the report;
- To approve the use of a Design and Build Procurement route for the projects;
- To instruct the Director, Resources to proceed with the tender process for Gorebridge North and Bilston Primary Schools;
- Subject to tenders being returned within the parameters set out in the report, to ask the Director, Resources to contract with the successful bidding contractor following completion of the tender period; and
- To congratulate the officials for the work which they had undertaken in bringing forward the plans.

(b) Minutes of Meeting of the Midlothian Joint Consultative Group of 1 July 2014 – Noted and approved.

The Cabinet thereafter agreed to proceed as detailed in the Addendum hereto.

The meeting terminated at 11.25 am.

Appendix I
(relative to paragraph 4)

MINUTES of MEETING of the EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE held in the Committee Room, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Thursday 18 December 2014 at 9.45am.

Councillors Present:- Councillors Constable and Muirhead.

Stobhill Primary School Parent Representatives Present:- Mrs A Hutchison and Mrs L Robb.

In Attendance:- Ms N McDowell and Ms J Fox.

Exclusion of Members of the Public

In view of the nature of the business to be transacted, the Committee agreed that the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the undernoted item, as contained in the Addendum hereto, as there might be disclosed exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:-

Appointment of Head Teacher, Stobhill Primary School.

The meeting terminated at 12.05pm.