

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 20 June 2006 at 4.00 pm.

Present: Councillors ROB MURRAY, BILL ROBERTON, IAN ANGUS, JACK GIBB, ALEX KING, IAN MACKINTOSH, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, JOY MOWATT, BOB MYLES, GEORGE NORRIE MBE, DAVID SELFRIDGE, JENNIFER SPEIRS, RICHARD SPEIRS and TERRY WOOD.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor FRANK ELLIS
Councillor MURRAY, Convener, in the Chair.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Wood and Murray declared an interest in item 9 as a Montrose Port Authority Trustee and as a member of the Selection Panel for the recruitment of Board members respectively.

Councillor Mowat declared an interest in item 8 as an Angus Council delegate to and Chair of the City of Brechin Partnership.

2. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 9 May 2006](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Angus Community Planning Partnership

The minutes of meetings of the Angus Community Planning Partnership of 8 March and 9 April 2006 were submitted and noted.

(c) Monitoring Group

The minute of meeting of the Monitoring Group of 1 June 2006 was submitted and noted.

3. CAPITAL MONITORING - COMPOSITE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/2006

With reference to Article 28 of the minute of meeting of the Resources and Central Services Committee of 15 June 2006, there was submitted [Report No 778/06](#) by the Acting Director of Finance advising members of the capital expenditure incurred for the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 and measuring actual capital expenditure for the year against budgeted provision and available resources.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed to approve the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.

4. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 6 September 2006, there was submitted [Report No 789/06](#) by the Chief Executive highlighting health and safety issues for the year 2005/2006 within his department and setting out the actions planned for 2006/2007.

The Committee agreed to note and approve the contents of the Report.

5. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND THE LOCAL CODE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 June 2005, there was submitted [Report No 790/06](#) by the Chief Executive advising members of the arrangements that had been put in place for the management of the local code of corporate governance and summarising the findings of the review of compliance with the requirements of the local code.

The Report detailed the progress that had been made with regard to managing and delivering corporate governance arrangements across the Council as a whole, highlighting a number of actions, along with areas where further work was currently underway. This work would strengthen the Council's ability to demonstrate high standards of corporate governance across all of the Council's functions.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the management and review arrangements which had been implemented by the Chief Executive;
- (ii) to note the Chief Executive's view that, while a range of work would continue during 2006/2007 to improve the extent to which, and the ways in which, the Council complied with the local code, in general, high standards of corporate governance were in place; and
- (iii) to note that the findings of this review, along with the Chief Internal Auditor's independent review, and assurances provided by Chief Officers, would form the basis for the annual corporate governance statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and published in the Council's Annual Report and Accounts document in September 2006.

6. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND THE LOCAL CODE – CHIEF INTERNAL AUDITORS ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 June 2005, there was submitted [Report No 754/06](#) by the Acting Director of Finance advising members of the Chief Internal Auditor's independent assurance opinions in relation to both the overall corporate governance arrangements and the internal financial controls for 2005/2006.

The Report indicated that work had continued in a number of areas raised in the 2004/2005 assurance statement, including the development of performance management, updating of departmental risk registers and the development of a draft Public Performance Reporting Strategy. However, there still remained a number of areas of a longer term nature to be addressed at 31 March 2006, to fully meet the requirements of the local code of corporate governance.

In addition to the overall Corporate Governance Statements, the Chief Internal Auditor was also required to provide an independent opinion on the Council's internal financial controls. This indicated that there was some slippage in the discharge of recommendations in audit reports and instances of non-compliance with financial guidance. However, the Report confirmed that the internal control arrangements and framework within which the Council operated, were sound.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion in relation to corporate governance and the local code;
- (ii) to note the Chief Internal Auditors Annual Internal Financial Control Report and assurance statement; and
- (iii) to note that a full internal audit report in relation to 2005/2006 corporate governance would be presented to both the Strategy Policy Committee and the Audit Sub-Committee after the summer recess.

7. PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 7 February 2006, there was submitted [Report No 792/06](#) by the Chief Executive advising members of a revised approach to the public reporting of corporate performance, which would be implemented in 2006 in response to the requirements of Section 13 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

The Report indicated that the Scottish Executive were currently finalising supplementary guidance to the Act which would define some specific areas of information which every Council would have to make available on an annual basis. In anticipation of the nature of that guidance, and in response to the general spirit of the Act, it had been agreed that the format and content of the Council's public performance reporting arrangements should be reviewed.

Consideration had been given as to how the Council could more effectively inform citizens across Angus how the Council was performing. Arrangements had been put in place for the production of a Performance Report, which would be presented in a user-friendly format and delivered to every household in Angus in September 2006 and a more traditional Annual Report and Accounts document, which would continue to meet a range of more formal requirements and be distributed on a more limited basis, again in September 2006.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the legal requirements of the duty of public performance reporting; and
- (ii) to note the revised approach which would be implemented to report to the public Angus Council's performance during 2005/2006.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IN ANGUS – QUARTERLY REPORT

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 March 2006, there was submitted [Report No 793/06](#) by the Chief Executive providing members with an update on Community Planning activities in Angus for the period February to April 2006.

The Report detailed the activities which the Angus Community Partnership had been engaged in along with the activity of the thematic partnership groups and an update of local community planning activities, incorporating a Financial Report by the Acting Director of Finance on the management of Community Planning budgets, managed by Angus Council.

The Convener provided an update to the Committee in relation to the Scottish Executive's Think Piece "Transforming Public Services. The Next Phase", and Audit Scotland's published baseline study findings – "Community Planning: An Initial Review". An Angus Community Planning Partnership planning day had been held on Friday 16 June which had been aimed at beginning the process of preparing a new Community Plan for Angus for 2007.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report and the updated position.

9. MONTROSE PORT AUTHORITY – PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE FOR BOARD MEMBERS

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 18 March 2003, there was submitted [Report No 791/06](#) by the Director of Law and Administration setting out proposals for a revised procedure in relation to the appointment of Board Members to the Montrose Port Authority.

The Report indicated that Angus Council had been approached by the Chairman of the Montrose Port Authority Board and the Harbour Master with a proposal to amend the recruitment process to bring it more into line with recognised good personnel practice. The proposals for future selection of Board Members was that there should be one panel, made up of:-

- The Chairman of Montrose Port Authority
- An Angus Council Representative (the Leader of the Council)
- A Montrose Community Council Representative

- A Member of the Scottish Executive Panel
- A Port user or local business person (to be agreed by the Chairman of Montrose Port Authority and the Leader of the Council).

Should these new arrangements be adopted, it was suggested that a proviso be built into this agreement to enable either party (i.e. Angus Council and the Montrose Port Authority) to revert to the original arrangements, should the new arrangements prove to be unsatisfactory.

Having heard Councillor Wood welcome the Report, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the revised arrangements including the make-up of the Selection Panel, as detailed in paragraph 3 of the Report.

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 27(2) that the public and press be excluded, during consideration of the following item so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, paragraph 1.

11. EQUAL PAY – PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

With reference to Article 41 of the minute of meeting of the Resources and Central Services Committee of 15 June 2006, there was submitted [Report No 787/06](#) by the Chief Executive advising members of recent developments in regard to equal pay claims and detailing a proposed offer of settlement to employees within Angus.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed to note and approve the proposed offer of settlement to employees of Angus Council, as detailed in the Report.