

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 5 February 2008 at 4.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors BOB MYLES, IAN MACKINTOSH, IAIN GAUL, ALEX KING, DAVID MAY, RUTH LESLIE MELVILLE MBE, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, JIM MILLAR, MARGARET THOMSON, ROB MURRAY, HELEN OSWALD, MARK SALMOND and JOHN WHYTE.

Councillor MYLES, Convener, in the Chair.

### 1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Frank Ellis and Peter Murphy with Councillor Margaret Thomson substituting for Councillor Murphy.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Committee agree to note that no declarations of interest were made.

### 3. MINUTES

#### (a) Previous Meeting

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 December 2007](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

#### (b) Audit Sub-Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 18 December 2007](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

#### (c) Sounding Board

The [minute of meeting of the Sounding Board of 18 December 2007](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX II**).

#### (d) Monitoring Group

The [minute of meeting of the Monitoring Group of 15 January 2008](#) was submitted and noted.

### 4. REVENUE MONITORING/PROJECTED OUTTURN STATEMENT 2007/2008

With reference to Article 27 of the minute of meeting of the Corporate Services Committee of 31 January 2007, there was submitted [Report No 143/08](#) by the Director of Corporate Services advising the Committee of actual revenue expenditure incurred and income received for the period 1 April to 30 November 2007, together with the anticipated year end position in respect of each Council department.

The Report indicated that there was currently a projected overall underspend on the General Fund of £5.56 million. The Housing Revenue Account was projecting a deficit of £182,000 due in the main to an overspend on planned maintenance following opportunities to accelerate spend programmes on priority service provision. This overspend could be met from reserves.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report and in particular the comments in the financial implications section regarding the projected year end position; and
- (ii) to note that measures to address the projected overspend on Community Services and the Waste Management Trading Account had been identified which had been the subject of a separate Report to Corporate Services Committee on 31 January 2008.

## 5. 2007/2008 REVENUE BUDGET FLEXIBILITY BETWEEN FINANCIAL YEARS

With reference to Article 4 above, there was submitted [Report No 148/08](#) by the Director of Corporate Services making recommendations with regard to requests from departments for flexibility between financial years and transfers to special funds in respect of the 2007/2008 revenue budget.

The Report detailed proposals for £2.613 million of projected underspends to be carried forward, which would reduce the net underspend to £1.988 million. Of this sum, a further £0.503 million would be capable of carry forward under the arrangements set out in Financial Regulations, which would leave an uncommitted balance of £1.485 million that would be added to the Council's General Fund Balance at 31 March 2008.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed revenue budget carry forwards and transfers, as detailed in Appendix A to the Report.

## 6. ADVERTISING AGENCY CONTRACT 2008-2010

With reference to Article 29 of the minute of meeting of the Resources and Central Services Committee of 29 January 2004, there was submitted [Report No 150/08](#) by the Chief Executive recommending the appointment of Euro RSCG Riley as the Council's Advertising Agency for the purposes of recruitment, public, statutory and event notice advertising services from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2010 with the option of extending the contract for a further one year, subject to Committee approval.

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

## 7. EFFICIENCY DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

There was submitted [Report No 151/08](#) by the Chief Executive advising members of a project delivering a diagnostic study for the Council that was aimed at identifying opportunities for efficiencies in the future.

The Report indicated that to enable local authorities to use this diagnostic tool, the Scottish Government had funded a programme that allowed each local authority to bid for up to £150,000 to support the work involved. As the opportunity had come about in December 2007, the Chief Executive had submitted a bid which had now been agreed by the Scottish Government and it was expected that the project would be delivered by June 2008. Future opportunities for spend to save initiatives would be based on the evidence gathered through this diagnostic project.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to homologate the decision of the Chief Executive to accept grant funding from the Scottish Government to conduct a diagnostic study; and
- (ii) to note the establishment of a temporary Project Team and recruitment of consultants, as required.

## 8. ANGUS FUNDING WEBSITE WWW.ANGUS4COMMUNITY.COM

With reference to Article 35 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 28 August 2007, there was submitted [Joint Report No 43/08](#) by the Chief Executive, Director of Education and the Director of Infrastructure Services proposing the renewal of the subscription to the Angus Funding website [www.angus4community.com](http://www.angus4community.com) and also advising members of the success to date of this website.

The Report indicated that the website had been established as a key support tool for Angus Council staff and community groups in Angus seeking funding information and there had been a consistent high usage and feed-back which had been important in determining a need to maintain the site.

The Committee agreed, subject to securing the other funding contributions detailed in Section 5 of the Report:-

- (i) to approve the contribution of £7,865 from the Economic Development Division; and
- (ii) to note the contribution of £700 from the Education Department towards the renewal of a three-year subscription to [www.angus4community.com](http://www.angus4community.com).

## **9. PROPOSED TRANSFER OF BUSINESS GATEWAY SERVICES FROM SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE AND PROPOSALS FOR WIDER BUSINESS ADVISORY SUPPORT SERVICES IN ANGUS**

With reference to Article 34 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 28 August 2007, there was submitted [Report No 154/08](#) by the Director of Infrastructure Services in connection with the transfer of Business Gateway contracts to Scottish Local Authorities and identifying the need for Angus Council to fill a gap in business advisory services to local companies which would enable it to delivery its corporate priorities for business support throughout Angus.

The Report indicated that in order to fill the gap left by the closure of Tayside Business Gateway Limited and in the context of the Council's aims of improving relationships with the business community in giving priority to key sectors, it was deemed necessary to enhance the capacity to deliver approved business support services from Angus Council. The proposed establishment of a Business Advisory Service, as detailed in the Report, would give the Council direct control of key services on a cost effective basis.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the recent decision by the Scottish Government to transfer existing Business Gateway contracts and regeneration functions from Scottish Enterprise to local authorities and await a further Report on the outcome of negotiations between COSLA and the Scottish Government along with recommendations on how this should be implemented within Angus and Tayside;
- (ii) to support in principle the invitation to Dundee City Council to be the lead authority for the Business Gateway contracts in Tayside, subject to a detailed shared Service Level Agreement being brought back for approval in due course; and
- (iii) to approve the proposals to establish a small Business Advisory/Support Team commencing with the immediate recruitment of one full-time and one part-time Business Adviser posts and one part-time Clerical Assistant to focus as a priority on providing support to tourism, food and drink and energy sectors.

## **10. FAIRER SCOTLAND FUND: IMPROVING LIVES, REGENERATING COMMUNITIES**

There was submitted [Report No 155/08](#) by the Director of Corporate Services in connection with the new Fairer Scotland Fund introduced by the Scottish Government for 2008/2009 and making recommendations for its use in the first year.

The Report indicated that in the context of the recent Spending Review, the Scottish Government had announced the creation of a new fund aimed at tackling poverty and deprivation across Scotland. The Fairer Scotland Fund had replaced a number of current programmes and funding streams and an allocation from this Fund was to be made to each local authority area to enable Community Planning Partnerships to work together to tackle area based and individual poverty and to help more people access and sustain employment opportunities.

Angus would benefit from the new way in which the Fairer Scotland Fund was distributed on the basis of both multiple deprivation and patterns of individual deprivation with an additional allocation of £66,000 in 2008/2009 rising to an additional £571,000 by 2010/2011.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to extend all projects and posts outlined in Appendix A to the Report for a period of one year;
- (ii) that use of the balance of funding available in 2008/2009 (£59,669) be considered by the Angus Community Planning Partnership, with their recommendations being subject to a future report to this Committee;
- (iii) that a comprehensive evaluation of all four programmes currently underway be undertaken to inform future decisions on the use of these resources beyond 2008/2009; and
- (iv) to note that this evaluation process would reassess priorities against the key outcomes within the Community Plan and consider the employability report recommendations from consultants in the context of future action to be taken.

#### **11. ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES**

With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 December 2007, there was submitted and noted [Report No 156/08](#) by the Chief Executive summarising changes to the Chief Executive's, Corporate Services, Education, Infrastructure Services and Social Work and Health establishments during the period 12 November 2007 to 4 January 2008.

#### **12. SICKNESS ABSENCE JULY - SEPTEMBER 2007**

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 December 2007, there was submitted and noted [Report No 157/08](#) by the Chief Executive advising of the level of sickness absence within Angus Council for the period 1 July to 30 September 2007.

#### **13. CONSULTATION ON THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF PROPOSALS FOR MAJOR CHANGE IN NHS SERVICES**

There was submitted [Report No 158/08](#) by the Chief Executive appending a copy of a response by Angus Council to the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce independent, external scrutiny of proposals for major change in NHS services.

These proposals would allow for robust and rigorous scrutiny of the information and evidence available and would ensure that decisions were informed by a strong and appropriate evidence base. The Report indicated that the move towards the independent examination of proposals for major change in NHS Services was to be welcomed and would ensure a consistency of approach across all NHS Board areas where major change was being proposed.

Having heard from a number of members, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the responses to questions 1-5 as set out in the Appendix to the Report and to instruct the Chief Executive to forward this to the Scottish Government; and
- (iii) to refer consideration of the responses to questions 6 and 7 to the Council meeting on 14 February 2008.