

## Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Thursday, 23 April 2015

### Present

Councillors Balfour (Convener), Blacklock, Child, Gardner, Keil, Lunn, Main, Mowat, Munro, Orr, Shields and Tymkewycz.

### 1. Third Party Grant: Challenge Fund Awards

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#### (a) Deputation – by the Edinburgh Trade Union Council

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Des Loughney and Terry Anderson from the Edinburgh Trade Union Council.

The deputation raised the following points in relation to the report:

- The Support@Work project only learned of the recommendation to end their funding three days prior to the report being considered by the Economy Committee, which made it difficult to make their case to the Committee. It was felt that the timescales involved and method of communication (email) did not reflect the spirit of partnership which had been expected after working with the Council for 11 years.
- The report did not contain information on the organisations which were not awarded grants and whose funding was to cease. The Committee were not informed of the consequences of the decision, such as the loss of five jobs, including by redundancy.
- The deputation felt that there had been inadequate consultation with their organisation throughout the decision making process and in regard to the impact of the cessation of funding.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report.

#### (b) Third Party Grant: Challenge Fund Awards

The Economy Committee of 13 February 2015 had considered a report on the Third Party Grant: Challenge Fund Awards. At Governance, Risk and Best Value

Committee on 5 March 2015, the following motion by Councillor Blacklock was agreed:

'Due to concerns raised at the Economy Committee on 13 February 2015 regarding Item 7.8 Third Party Grant: Challenge Fund Awards, Committee agrees to scrutinise this report and the processes that led to it in the presence of the appropriate Council officers.'

It was noted that the process agreed by the Economy Committee had been followed, however lessons had been learnt in regard to how such decisions were communicated and these could be applied across the Council.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To request that the Director of Corporate Governance reports to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on 13 August 2015 regarding the Committee report process and whether there were opportunities to accelerate the process.

(References – Economy Committee of 13 February 2015 (item 7.8); Motion by Councillor Blacklock – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 5 March 2015 (item 8.1); report by the Director of Economic Development, submitted.)

## **2. Minute**

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### **Decision**

To approve the minute of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 5 March 2015 as a correct record.

## **3. Outstanding Actions**

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Details were provided of the outstanding actions arising from decisions taken by the Committee.

### **Decision**

To agree to close actions 8, 16, 23, 24 and 31.

(Reference – Outstanding Actions - April 2015, submitted.)

## 4. Work Programme

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### Decision

To approve the Work Programme - April 2015.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Work Programme – April 2015, submitted.)

## 5. Freedom of Information – Code of Practice on the Discharge of Functions by Public Authorities

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Committee was provided with a report describing the main features of the revised Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) Code of Practice and information on the Council's compliance with the Code in terms of policy, process and practice.

### Decision

To note the Council's compliance with the revised Code of Practice on the Discharge of Functions by Public Authorities under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (2004), and that the Council's processes are fit for purpose in responding to requests for information under Freedom of Information legislation.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## 6. Governance of Major Projects – Update on Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC)

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An update was provided on the financial position of the EICC. The company was anticipating a net loss for 2014 of £0.9 million compared to £1.2 million projected in August 2014.

The Chief Executive of the EICC also provided a verbal update on progress since December 2014.

### Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To ask the Head of Finance to provide a briefing note for Elected Members in regard to the payment from the former Edinburgh District Council to the EICC in 1996.

## **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Gordon Munro declared an interest in the above item as a Board member of the EICC.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **7. Summary of Audit Scotland's 'Major capital investment in Councils' follow up review**

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A summary of Audit Scotland's recent follow up review on major capital investments in councils was provided. Details were given of how Audit Scotland carried out the follow up review, a summary of their main findings and recommendations, as well as an update on the Council's action plan.

Representatives from Audit Scotland were present for this item.

### **Decision**

To note the contents of the report and the existing or planned actions to address its recommendations.

(Reference – report by the Chief Internal Audit and Risk Officer, submitted.)

## **8. External Audit: Annual Audit Plan 2014/15**

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The External Auditor provided Committee with the detailed Annual Audit Plan, in line with the 'Audit Code of Practice'.

Representatives from Audit Scotland were present for this item.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the external auditor's annual audit plan.
- 2) To note that progress against the plan would be reported to Committee.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **9. Council Policy Register – Update**

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Progress in developing and maintaining a Register of Council Policies was outlined. A policy framework has been developed to strengthen governance arrangements by ensuring that all Council policies could be easily accessed and were created, revised and renewed in a consistent manner and to an agreed standard.

## **Decision**

To note the progress in developing and delivering a policy framework for the Council.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **10. Children and Families Risk Register**

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The Education, Children and Families Committee on 3 March 2015 considered a report on an updated Children and Families Risk Register. The Committee agreed to refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for further scrutiny.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To request that the Severe Weather Contingency Plan be circulated to the Committee.
- 3) To request that training be arranged for elected members on scrutinising risk registers prior to their consideration at the relevant executive committee.

(Reference – referral report by the Education, Children and Families Committee, submitted.)

## **11. Response to ‘School Education’ – a report of an audit by the Accounts Commission, June 2014**

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Committee was provided with a response to the recommendations made by the Accounts Commission in a report on School Education. This report was the result of an audit to assess how efficiently and effectively councils were using their resources to maximise pupil achievement in schools.

### **Decision**

To note the content of the report including the areas of progress and further improvement.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

## 12. Looked After Children: Transformation Programme Progress Report

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An update was provided on the Looked After Children transformation programme, which was designed to shift the balance of care towards more preventative services that reduce the need for children to come in to care. The programme aimed to secure better outcomes for children, avoid a continued increase in costs and deliver cashable savings by 2015/16. Progress to the end of December 2014 was detailed.

### Decision

- 1) To note the progress made to date against the targets as set out in appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Children and Families.
- 2) To note the actions in progress to achieve the targets to March 2018.
- 3) To note that the next update would be provided in August 2015.
- 4) To note the annual update to Family and Community Support.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

## 13. Resolution to consider in private

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The Committee, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, excluded the public from the meeting for consideration of item 17 below on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 12 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act and item 18 below on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

## 14. Whistleblowing – Monitoring Report

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Committee considered an updated report on Whistleblowing arrangements which provided an overview of allegations and investigation outcomes during the six month period 1 August 2014 to 16 February 2015.

### Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## 15. Morningside Library 2011 Upgrade Works

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Culture and Sport Committee had considered a report on the remedial works carried out by contractors at Morningside Library in 2011 on 10 March 2015. The report was referred to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for further scrutiny.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

(Reference – referral report by the Culture and Sport Committee, submitted.)