

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 7th February, 2006. – Minute of Meeting of the RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Fletcher, Convener: Councillor Smith, Vice-Convener: Vice-Chairperson Dean; and Councillors Cassie (as substitute for Councillor Leslie), Cormack, Ironside, Kiddie (as substitute for Councillor Jaffrey), James Lamond, McLeod, Milne, Porter, Kevin Stewart and Webster.

MOTION BY COUNCILLOR IRONSIDE – FREEDOM OF OUR CITY – COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

1. With reference to Article 27 of Minute of Meeting of Council of 29th June, 2005, the Committee had before it the following Notice of Motion by Councillor Ironside:-

“That this Council produce a commemorative plaque for display in the Town House listing those people who have received the Freedom of Our City and dates.”

The Council agreed the terms of the motion and remitted the matter to Resources Management Committee to allocate the resources required.

The Committee had before it a background report by the Head of Democratic Services. The report stated that the City Archivist had advised that the list of Free Burgesses of Aberdeen was extensive and suggested that the period from the Scottish Burghs Reform Act 1833 would suitably reflect the reformed Council. A list of the sixty-one conferrals awarded since 1833 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The cost of three A-3 sized brass plaques mounted on wooden plinths was estimated at £1,086. The report presented options for the siting of the plaques both in the Old and New Town Houses.

The Committee heard Councillor Ironside speak in support of his motion.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee agree

- (a) that a list of Free Burgesses and Guild Brother/Sister recipients dating from the Reform of Local Government Act 1833 be detailed on three plaques;
- (b) to note the estimated costs associated with the plaques of £1,086;
- (c) that the costs be met from a specific allocation from the Common Good Fund in the current financial year 2005/06; and
- (d) to provide guidance on where in the Town House they wish the plaques to be located.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations and to receive a further report on the matter of a suitable location based on the proposals contained in the report.

MOTION BY COUNCILLOR IRONSIDE - SUMMERHILL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

2. With reference to Article 28 of the Minute of Meeting of Council of 29th June, 2005, the Committee had before it the following Notice of Motion by Councillor Ironside:-

“That this Council agrees to honour the promise made to Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill Community Council to retain the community facilities located on the Summerhill campus. In the event that the office components of the complex are relocated and the whole site sale gives best value this Council to proceed only after all community facilities have been reprovisioned in the area.”

The Committee heard Councillor Ironside speak in support of his motion.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree the terms of the motion with the provision that local residents may agree some changes in order to provide enhanced community facilities; and
- (ii) that the Convener of Resources Management Committee become a member of the Summerhill Project Board.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The Committee had before it the Minute of its previous Meeting of 22nd November, 2005.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the Minute.

A PARTNERSHIP FOR ABERDEEN – PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development advising on progress and implementation of the administration’s policy statement entitled “A Partnership for Aberdeen”. The report had attached to it as Appendix A a list of policy statements relevant to the terms of reference of the Resources Management Committee together with information on progress.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the progress in relation to the policy statements concerned.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS FOR RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management which contained performance information in respect of Finance and ICT, Personnel and Organisational Development and Legal and

Democratic services for the period October to November 2005. The Corporate Director for Resources Management highlighted a consistent improvement in the Benefits Administration service, good performance in Council Tax and Business Rates collection levels and the percentage of Council House sales completed within the target of twenty-six weeks.

The report highlighted exceptional performance within the Communication Centre and the Graphics Design Team who had completed a number of key projects during the period reported.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the content of the performance reports;
- (ii) to note the transition stage of these reports and that future performance reports would reflect the new structure bringing together all functions under Resources Management with Revenues, ICT and Internal Audit moving to the Continuous Improvement service; and
- (iii) to send to the Finance Minister and the Finance Committee of the Scottish Parliament the figures relating to Council Tax and Business Rates collection levels highlighting the high level of performance.

ABERDEEN CITY MUSIC SCHOOL

6. With reference to Article 7 of Minute of Meeting of Education and Leisure Committee of 16th January, 2006, the Committee had before it a request to include provision in the Non-Housing Capital Plan for replacement boarding accommodation for pupils of Aberdeen City Music School together with the report by the Head of Culture & Learning, Neighbourhood Services (North) considered by Education & Leisure Committee and supplementary information from the Director of Aberdeen City Music School advising on an alternative option.

The original report had indicated that Aberdeen City Music School would be unable to continue using boarding accommodation leased from the Scottish Agriculture College at Bucksburn from 2008 and that alternative arrangements would have to be made. It was remitted to Resources Management Committee to consider the inclusion of a sum of £100,000 in the Non Housing Capital Programme for the financial year 2006/07. The Education & Leisure Committee had also instructed the Asset Management Manager to investigate the availability and suitability of using part of Cordyce site, near Dyce Academy and any other options identified in the course of further investigations. The estimated cost of building new boarding accommodation was £7m.

The supplementary information advised that further investigations had identified that a suitable facility could be built at Dyce Academy for around £2.75m. The report detailed the requirements of boarding accommodation at Aberdeen City Music School and outlined other options investigated. Building a replacement at Dyce Academy would enable savings to be made in respect of dining, kitchen and music facilities. Other savings in respect of rental costs and considerable transportation costs indicated that the overall cost could be reduced to around £2.75m. There would also be an opportunity for the Council to generate income from other uses of the facility for twelve weeks of the year.

It was estimated that there would be a short-fall in funding required in terms of Prudential Borrowing of between £0.75m and £1.25m. It was stated that it was the policy of the Scottish Executive, in allowing the buildings at the Scottish Agricultural College to be sold, that had created the need for a replacement facility. Whilst Aberdeen City definitely wanted to keep the Music School in the area it was suggested that it was not the Council's responsibility to provide the additional funding required.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request the Scottish Executive to provide the additional capital funding of between £0.75m and £1.25m required for replacement boarding accommodation for Aberdeen City Music School;
- (ii) in the meantime, to recommend to the budget consideration process 2007/08 the inclusion of this sum in the Non-Housing Capital Programme to ensure the school's continuation; and
- (iii) to agree that a feasibility study for the building of boarding accommodation at Dyce Academy be commissioned and that the sum of £100,000 be included in the Capital Plan 2006/07 for this purpose.

COASTAL PROTECTION SCHEME

7. With reference to Article 17 of Minute of Meeting of Environment and Infrastructure Committee of 24th January, 2006, the Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Environment and Infrastructure on the Scottish Executive's offer of grant aid and its preferred coastal protection scheme option for Aberdeen beach.

The report advised that the Scottish Executive had refused grant aid for the Council's preferred option at the beach which was the provision of three rock "T" heads and two rock "L" heads at the end of groynes 7 to 11, a beach recharge and construction of a rock armour revetment at the Donmouth at an estimated cost of £10million. The approved scheme would qualify for 80% from the Scottish Executive. The Scottish Executive had, however, advised that the Council's preferred scheme was unacceptable as it did not offer best value for money. The Scottish Executive's favoured option was that of rock armoured protection to the toe of the sea wall and had offered grant aid for this scheme valued at £2.7m.

The Environment and Infrastructure Committee had resolved:-

- (1) in view of the current condition of the sea wall, to accept the Scottish Executive's offer and to instruct the Corporate Director for Resources Management to proceed with the promotion of a coastal protection scheme in accordance with the Coast Protection Act 1949;
- (2) to make representations to the Scottish Executive seeking additional money to allow the full beach recharge scheme to proceed once a local source of sand had been identified and that the Executive be requested to meet the costs of £250,000 to locate such an off-shore source;
- (3) to note that the approved coast protection scheme would require planning permission;
- (4) to note that the work should commence as early as possible in the next financial year 2006/07 and be completed in approximately four months; and

- (5) to refer the report to the Resources Management Committee to amend the existing provisions in the Non Housing Capital Plan 2005/06 and 2006/07 to meet the requirements of the revised project and to approve annual revenue funding of £15,000 for beach monitoring.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to refer to the Non Housing Capital Programme 2006/07 budget consideration process the inclusion of the total capital funding required to implement the full coastal protection scheme preferred by the Council whilst discussions with the Scottish Executive were continuing which would include trying to identify other ways of meeting the requirements of the full scheme and alternative sources of sand; and
- (ii) that the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Environment and Infrastructure Committee and appropriate opposition members be involved in these discussions.

ELLON ROAD/NORTH DONSIDE ROAD ROUNDABOUT WIDENING

8. With reference to Article 13 of Minute of Meeting of Environment and Infrastructure Committee of 24th January, 2006, the Committee had before it, by way of remit, a report by the Corporate Director for Environment and Infrastructure which provided an updated cost in respect of the widening of the roundabout at Ellon Road/North Donside Road required to enable the part-time prohibition of right-turns from Ellon Road. The estimated costs were £130,000 of which only the initial survey and design costs could be met from within existing budgets.

The Committee resolved:-

to refer the matter of funding to the Non Housing Capital Programme 2006/07 budget consideration process.

NEWHILLS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS – PHASE 2

9. With reference to Article 15 of Minute of Meeting of the Environment and Infrastructure Committee of 24th January, 2004, the Committee had before it, by way of remit, a report by the Corporate Director for Environment and Infrastructure on proposed modifications to the scheme for improvements at Newhills Road, Phase 2. The Environment and Infrastructure Committee had resolved to approve the proposed alterations to Phase 2 of the scheme, to acknowledge that the outstanding widening of the C88C route would not be completed because of the high cost of purchasing sufficient land from Newhills Church and because of the limited benefits that would accrue and to refer the report to Resources Management for consideration of the allocation of additional funds of £87,000 to complete the revised version of the Phase 2 involving the widening of the carriageway at Brimmond Cottage and the acquisition of a small piece of land from Newhills Church to allow for visibility improvements at Newhills House.

The Committee resolved:-

to refer the matter to the Non Housing Capital Programme 2006/07 budget consideration process and to instruct officers to consult with the local member on the most appropriate solution for this junction.

TOILET PROVISION IN PUBLIC PARKS

10. With reference to Article 16 of Minute of Meeting of Environment and Infrastructure Committee, the Committee had before it, by way of remit, a report by the Corporate Director for Environment and Infrastructure on options for providing enhanced public toilet facilities in some of the City's parks.

The Environment and Infrastructure Committee had resolved (1) that the existing toilet block in Duthie Park be demolished and replaced with an Automatic Public Convenience (APC) in a more suitable location; (2) that the existing public toilets at Victoria Park be replaced with an APC and the block demolished or an alternative use identified for the building; (3) that the existing toilet block in Seaton Park be replaced by an APC and the building converted for Council operational use; (4) that the report be referred to Resources Management Committee for consideration of the capital and revenue funding requirements of the proposals; (5) that future options for more effective utilisation of the toilet facilities within public buildings located within or adjacent to public parks and greenspaces be considered within the context of the Parks and Greenspace Strategy and a further report submitted; and (6) that local members and Community Councils be consulted on the siting of the new APCs.

The Committee resolved:-

to refer consideration of this matter to the Non Housing Capital Programme and General Fund Revenue Budget 2006/07 consideration process.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING FROM THE INTERNATIONAL BUDGET 2005/06

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Community Development presenting an application received for financial assistance from the International Budget in respect of the financial year 2005/06.

Aberdeen Disabled Coaching Group – Visit to Stavanger

The Committee considered a request for financial assistance towards the costs of Aberdeen Disabled Coaching Group participating in the Nordic Games, a biennial event in Stavanger, to be held from 25th to 29th May, 2006. Thirty-eight people would take part in the trip comprising twenty-six people with learning and physical disabilities, who would participate in boccia, curling, swimming and shooting, and their support team. The total cost of the visit was estimated at £18,998. Participants would contribute £200 each and undertake fundraising to raise £3,000.

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £8,248 towards the visit by Aberdeen Disabled Coaching Group to Stavanger in May 2006.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Community Development presenting applications received for funding from the Equality of Opportunity Grants Budget 2005/06.

(A) Aberdeen Chinese Association

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of Aberdeen Chinese Association (formerly known as Aberdeen Chinese Women Association) for financial assistance towards the costs of an event to mark International Women's Day in March 2006. The report also referred to Article 15(C) Minute of Meeting of 22nd November, 2005, when it was agreed to set aside £1,000 for New Year celebrations following a late request from Aberdeen Chinese Women Association and to request officers to identify the costs associated with the event and to report back to Committee. The venue hire costs were £900 and corkage costs of a minimum of £200 for this event.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to award financial assistance of the £1,000 set aside at the previous meeting for the New Year celebrations;
- (ii) to award financial assistance of £500 to this group for their International Women's Day event; and
- (iii) to request that officers work with voluntary organisations to ensure that deadlines for reporting to Committee were met to enable proper consideration of all relevant applications and supporting information at one time.

(B) WEA Women's Group

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of the Workers Educational Association (WEA) Women's Group for financial assistance towards an event to mark International Women's Day entitled "Women of Substance, Substance of Women".

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £250 towards this event.

(C) Chinese Family Welfare Association

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of Chinese Family Welfare Association for financial assistance towards the costs of an event to celebrate Chinese New Year for local communities not participating in the City centre celebration.

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £630 towards this event.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Culture and Learning, Neighbourhood Services (North) presenting the applications received for financial assistance from the Grants to Sports Organisations budget 2005/06.

(A) Scottish Junior Men's Basketball

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of the Scottish Men's Junior Basketball Team towards hall hire costs incurred in training for their participation in the European "B" Championships in Romania in July and August 2006.

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £500.

(B) Aberdeen Secondary Schools Football Association

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of the Aberdeen Secondary Schools Football Association towards their running costs.

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £500.

(C) Aberdeen Diving Club

The Committee considered a request for a development grant submitted on behalf of Aberdeen Diving Club to assist in the establishment of a diving club for young people in the City.

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £1,000.

(D) Aberdeen Amateur Swimming Club

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of Aberdeen Amateur Swimming Club for financial assistance towards the costs incurred in hosting a swimming gala to be held at the Bon-Accord Baths to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Club.

The Committee resolved:-

to award financial assistance of £500.

VICTORIA ROAD PLAYING FIELD REPLACEMENT – MULTI-USE GAMES AREA

14. With reference to Article 44 of Minute of Meeting of the Resources Management Committee of 7th June, 2005, the Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services (South) advising on the identification of a replacement site for the Victoria Road Primary School playing fields.

The report referred to a previous decision that a replacement site for Victoria Road School playing field be identified before that site was declared surplus to requirements. The tennis courts at Torry Outdoor Sports Centre on Victoria Road had been identified as an appropriate location for the installation of a multi-sports surface that would meet the needs of the school and the wider community. A plan of the area was attached as Appendix A to the report. To progress the procurement of this replacement facility a sum of £490,000 was required to be included in the Non-Housing Capital Programme for the financial year 2006/07. It

was estimated that additional income from the facility would amount to £20,000 in the financial year 2007/08.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee agree to the inclusion of this project in the Council's Non Housing Capital Programme for the financial year 2006/07 in order to secure the procurement and funding of the replacement facility at Torry Outdoor Sports Centre.

The Committee resolved:-

to refer the matter to the Non-Housing Capital Programme 2006/07 budget consideration process.

COUNCIL TAX ON SECOND HOMES AND LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES

15. With reference to Article 15 of Minute of Meeting of Resources Management Committee of 8th February, 2005, the Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management seeking determination of the rate of discount to be applied to Council Tax on certain categories of second homes and long-term empty properties with effect from 1st April, 2006.

The report explained that the Council had resolved to use its discretion in terms of new legislation to reduce the Council Tax discount available in relation to second homes and long-term empty properties to 10% of the value of the Council Tax bill will effect from 1st April, 2005. The income raised from reducing the discount was retained locally and routed through local Registered Social Landlords for the provision of new affordable housing. It was estimated that in the financial year 2005/06 £1.2m would be collected. Attached as Appendix A to the report was information on the rates of discount applied by other local authorities. The report proposed that the discount remain unchanged at 10% providing additional estimated revenue of £1.2m. This would result in an additional cost to the Housing Revenue Account of £350,000.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee use its discretion to set the rate of discount at 10% for second homes and long-term empty properties from 1st April, 2006.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to retain a rate of discount of 10% on Council Tax on second homes;
- (ii) in relation to long-term empty properties, to set a rate of discount of 10% from 1st April, 2006, and to request officers to report, as soon as possible, on the possibility of redetermining this discount at 50% in the Wards of Woodside/Tillydrone, Auchmill, Seaton and St. Machar in order to minimise payments from the Housing Revenue Account in respect of long term empty properties for the long term benefit of these areas.

COUNCIL TAX RECOVERY – INTRODUCTION OF A COMBINED REMINDER/FINAL NOTICE

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management seeking authority to issue a combined reminder/final notice for Council Tax recovery purposes with effect from the financial year 2006/07 in order to expedite the arrears recovery process.

The report outlined the procedure currently used to recover arrears of Council Tax with the issue of a reminder and a separate final notice prior to the Council applying to the Sheriff for a Summary Warrant. The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2000 provided Councils with the option of combining the reminder and final notice into one notice. The report listed the perceived advantages and disadvantages of adopting this revised procedure.

Concerns were expressed that adopting this limited procedure would result in Summary Warrants being issued in circumstances, for example, when the owner was working abroad and something went wrong with their direct debit, there being no intention not to pay the Council Tax. Officers advised that the new arrangements would be well publicised in the first year and officers would be sympathetic to unusual circumstances.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the adoption of a combined reminder/final notice for Council Tax recovery purposes with effect from the financial year 2006/07.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations whilst noting the concerns expressed and the response of the Revenues service.

PENSION FUND – EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION RATES

17. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management advising on the outcome of the three-yearly actuarial valuation of the Pension Fund and recommending changes to the employer's contribution rates for the next few years 2006/07 to 2008/09.

The report advised that the results of the March 2005 actuarial valuation indicated that, in common with other final salary schemes, the Local Government Pension Scheme had come under pressure in recent years due to increasing life expectancy, stockmarket performance and the increased cost of providing future pensions.

The report recommended:-

- (a) to note the outcome of the actuarial valuation; and
- (b) to approve the changes to the employer contribution rates set by the actuary for Aberdeen City Council Pension Fund of 275%, 285% and 300% of the employees' contribution for the financial years 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 respectively.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE BUDGETARY AND IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

18. With reference to Article 34 of the Minute of Meeting of Community Services Committee of 31st January, 2006, the Committee had before it, by way of a remit, a report by the Head of Accommodation Policy advising on the Supporting People budgetary position for the financial years 2005/06 and 2006/07.

The Community Services Committee had resolved, amongst other things, to approve the amendment of the non-residential charging policy in line with COSLA guidance and remit the additional staffing requirements to the Resources Management Committee for approval. It was estimated that to deliver the increase in the service an additional 1.5 full-time equivalent staff plus administrative support would be required. The staff would be based within Resources Management to ensure a more streamlined and customer focussed service. The business case would be submitted in due course.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the report with the exception of the proposed increases in charges for housing support services including sheltered housing warden service;
- (ii) to congratulate officers of this Council and the voluntary sector on the way in which they had dealt with this very difficult situation; and
- (iii) to request that one copy of the Senior Counsel's opinion regarding the possibility of a judicial review be sent to the leader of each political group on the Council.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to provide the Committee with the most up-to-date position.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE FUNDING TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF MONEY ADVICE

19. With reference to Article 15 of Minute of Meeting of 12th April, 2005, the Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services (Central) advising on action being taken to facilitate the provision of money advice following the receipt of additional funding from the Scottish Executive.

The report provided information on progress which included (1) the attainment of the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) approval by one officer in the Trading

Standards service; (2) a response from the Scottish Executive that they wished to see additional money advisers in post at an early date and that these should be approved under the DAS system; (3) that funding allocated to the Citizens Advice Bureau has been used to appoint a temporary administrative support officer to clear a backlog of debt advice and update procedures and that the post of trainee money adviser was expected to be filled early in 2006; and (4) that an officer group had met to consider the difficulties in recruiting Trading Standards officers and to consider the need for creating a team leader post in the debt counselling team.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and instruct the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services (Central) to report back before the end of June 2006 with an update on progress.

The Committee resolved:-

to refer the provision of any additional staffing to the Finance Monitoring Sub-Committee for determination and to delegate powers to that Sub-Committee to deal with the personnel issues in this matter.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to implement the revised arrangements as soon as possible.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS UPDATE

20. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management seeking approval for amendments to the Financial Regulations – Issue 10 to take account of changes in personnel, the management structure and areas of responsibility in the Council since April 2005.

The report outlined the proposed revisions to the financial regulations which encompassed changes in titles as well as the shift of responsibilities for services from Corporate Directors to Heads of Service. The report also suggested amendments to Financial Regulation 3 relating to budgetary control, particularly regulations 3.5.2 and 3.8; to Financial Regulation 6 relating to gifts and hospitality; and Financial Regulation 7 relating to income, namely 7.2.5 to address money laundering regulations.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee approve the changes outlined in the report which would be incorporated into Issue 10 of the Financial Regulations; and
- (b) to note that a future report will be submitted regarding budgetary virement, scope and limits.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to progress the development work for regeneration initiatives in Torry.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Milne declared an interest in the subject matter of the report referred to in the following Article and absented himself from the meeting during its consideration.

TORRY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE – PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECOND STAGE

21. With reference to Article 16 of Minute of Meeting of 15th September, 2005, the Committee had before it a report by the Head of Culture and Learning, Neighbourhood Services (South) advising on the proposed development of the second stage of the Torry Neighbourhood Centre on Oscar Road as part of the Community Regeneration of Torry.

The report provided background information regarding the development of the Neighbourhood Centre at Oscar Road, Torry. The second stage of the project, focussing on service delivery to the community and new ways of working, would involve a new building to be occupied by Grampian Police, NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Council. It was likely that building works would commence in 2007. Funding of £25,000 was requested in the financial year 2006/07 to enable the development of the business case and options appraisal. Future costs were estimated at £75,000 in 2007/08 for demolition and site works; and £800,000 in 2007/08 and £600,000 in 2008/09 for building works. In addition, revenue funding would be required to service the loan charges and it was anticipated that these would be allocated on the basis of the percentage of floor space used by each organisation.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee endorse the development of new accommodation for the creation of the second stage of the Torry Neighbourhood Centre in Oscar Road;
- (b) that this recommendation be referred to Council on 9th February, 2006 with the request that the funding allocations be given appropriate consideration during deliberations on the Non-Housing Capital Plan for the next three financial years, 2006/07; and

- (c) that, subject to recommendation (b) above, the Committee approve in principle the indicative development bid of £1.5 million for inclusion in the Non-Housing Capital Plan estimates for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09, noting that a sum of £25,000 in 2006/07 was sought to fully develop the business case and options appraisal as detailed in the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

HOUSING CAPITAL EXPENDITURE DRAFT BASE BUDGET FOR 2006/07 AND INDICATIVE BUDGETS FOR 2007/08 TO 2010/11

22. With reference to Article 22 of the Minute of Meeting of Community Services Committee of 31st January, 2006, the Committee had before it a report by the Head of Accommodation Policy presenting a draft target budget for housing capital expenditure for the financial year 2006/07 and indicative programmes for the financial years 2007/08 to 2010/11. The Community Services Committee had resolved, amongst other things, to refer the report to the Resources Management Committee for information.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to be appraised of the most up-to-date financial information in respect of this project.

GARTHDEE SPORTS AND ALPINE ADVENTURE PARK UPDATE

23. With reference to Article 16 of the Minute of Meeting of the Finance Monitoring Sub-Committee of 25th October, 2005, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Corporate Directors for Resources Management and Neighbourhood Services North providing information on the current financial and operational position of the Garthdee Sports and Alpine Adventure Park.

The report provided background information on the Adventure Park. The financial position of the Adventure Park had been closely monitored and recently showed a decrease in the level of income being achieved which would further increase the net expenditure of the facility. As at 23rd January, 2006, the facility had incurred expenditure of £502,000 (excluding capital financing charges) and income of £186,000, giving a net expenditure figure of £316,000. The revised projected out-turn was £366,000.

The report outlined a number of initiatives which had been implemented following a review of the operation of the facility: a Garthdee Sports and Alpine Adventure Park Steering Group had been established; work was ongoing to transfer the facility to a Trust; staffing levels had been reviewed; the take-up of individual courses was under constant review with the aim of achieving at least 80% capacity; and work was continuing in an attempt to attract new client groups to the facility. Part of the reduction in income was attributed to the forced closure of the facility due to the tows not working. It was anticipated that remedial works would necessitate the closure of part or all of the site at some time. Discussions were being held with the company responsible for the construction work to resolve the structural issues. The report had attached to it, as an appendix, a detailed financial statement for the Adventure Park together with explanatory notes. Information on the financial position of other sports centres operated by the Council was included for comparative purposes.

The Committee resolved:-

following initial discussions, to further discuss this matter when the press and public were excluded from the meeting (this is referred to in Article 37 of this Minute).

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency to enable the necessary preparations to be made.

TARTAN WEEK NEW YORK 2006

24. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Economic Development seeking approval for Aberdeen City Council to participate in the Scottish Executive's Tartan Week New York activities in April, 2006.

The report stated that Tartan Week would be held in New York from 1st to 8th April, 2006. In addition to a programme of events a "Scotland village" would be constructed at Grand Central Station. The village would include various zones and Aberdeen had the opportunity to take space within the Scottish Cities zone at a cost of £10,000. As required by all local authorities wishing to undertake overseas promotional and trade development activities, a request for the permission of the First Minister to participate had been made. The report detailed the travel and accommodation costs associated with the proposed attendance of the Lord Provost, a Town Sergeant and two officers from Aberdeen City Council. VisitScotland – Aberdeen and Grampian had agreed to provide two members of staff and the appropriate financial resources to support Aberdeen City Council's presence in New York at this time.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve Aberdeen City Council's participation in conjunction with VisitScotland – Aberdeen Grampian in Tartan Week New York 2006, subject to approval by the First Minister;

- (ii) to approve the participation of the Lord Provost and two members of staff from Aberdeen City Council in Tartan Week New York, 2006;
- (iii) to approve the attendance of a Town Sergeant to accompany the Lord Provost to Tartan Week New York;
- (iv) to approve expenditure of no more than £15,225 from the Energising Aberdeen City Growth Fund to meet the costs of this initiative; and
- (v) to receive information on Aberdeen City Council's participation in Tartan Week New York 2006 following the event.

SPORTS SERVICE INTERIM MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

25. With reference to Article 22 of the Minute of Meeting of the Education and Leisure Committee of 16th January 2006, the Committee had before it, by way of remit, a report by the Head of Culture and Learning (North) which provided information on the present situation in regard to the interim management arrangements relating to sports service provision and sought approval for the continuation of those arrangements.

The report advised (a) that initial disaggregation of sports services was undertaken in July 2003 within the context of an interim management agreement; (b) that the management responsibilities were allocated within the three Neighbourhood Directorates, with Neighbourhood Services (North) taking the lead across the city; (c) that a number of posts were transferred either on a temporary or fixed term basis; (d) that a series of proposals relating to the revised sports structure were developed and submitted to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) in September 2005, following which Heads of Service had been asked to review the proposals and re-submit the revised proposal to CMT with a view to reaching agreement on implementing a revised sports structure by April 2006; (e) that the six temporary positions within Neighbourhood Services (North) for which approval for extension was sought, to deliver a range of duties on behalf of the neighbourhoods, were as follows - Assistant Marketing Manager, Technical Assistant, Golf/Outdoor Manager, Training Co-ordinator, Health and Safety Assistant and Administrative Assistant; and (f) that the financial cost of £25,394 for the six positions for the period January to March 2006, would be met from existing budgets.

The Education and Leisure Committee had resolved:- (1) to note the position with regard to the present interim management arrangements; (2) to remit the request for the extension for existing temporary working arrangements relating to six positions until 31st March 2006, to the next meeting of the Resources Management Committee; and (3) to instruct the appropriate officers to report back at the conclusion of this period in the event of a failure to reach agreement on a revised structure by 31st March 2006.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the extension of the six temporary posts detailed in the report until 31st March 2006.

MANAGING SUBSTANCE USE

26. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development which proposed revisions to the current policy to support staff with substance use problems to bring it up-to-date with best practice.

The report (a) referred to the Council's Substance Abuse policy approved by the Personnel Committee on 7th October 1997; (b) advised that the existing arrangements worked effectively but that the policy had been developed to ensure continuous improvement and to reflect latest developments in employment practice; (c) highlighted areas where the current policy could be viewed as insufficient; (d) emphasised that the positive features of the current policy had been retained, such as provision for employees to be referred to appropriate agencies and allowance of time off to deal with substance use problems; (e) in the context of testing, suggested that randomly testing employees for substance use without good cause (i.e. there was some evidence to suggest the employee had a substance use problem) was a disproportionate response; (f) proposed that the approach to substance use testing be on a "with cause" basis, which would mean managers would have to ensure a basis for testing existed; (g) explained that any employee who refused to submit themselves to Occupational Health for testing would not be eligible for the support provided within the policy; (h) in referring to consultation with trade unions, highlighted the sensitive nature of the proposals relating to testing and proposed that usage of the policy be closely monitored; (i) in describing the process for approval of policies and procedures relating to terms and conditions for teachers, explained that the Council's Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) would consider the revised policy at its next meeting, and that should there be agreement, which was expected, the policy would be implemented as soon as practicable, however if agreement could not be reached, or if significant amendments were proposed, the matter would be reported to Committee for decision; and (j) appended the Managing Substance Use policy and procedure for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the revised Managing Substance Use policy and procedure appended to the report;
- (b) note that the policy and procedure would be reported to the next meeting of the LNCT, and should it be endorsed that implementation would take effect from 18th April 2006;
- (c) instruct the Head of Human Resources to arrange adequate briefing sessions for managers on the implementation of the new policy and procedure;
- (d) request all Corporate Directors to ensure that their managers understand and are competent in their role and responsibilities in applying the new procedure; and
- (e) instruct the monitoring of the number and reasons for referral to Occupational Health for "with cause" tests.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

MANAGING AND PREVENTING HARASSMENT AT WORK

27. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development seeking approval for revisions to the existing policy dealing with bullying and harassment at work to bring it up-to-date with best practice.

The report (a) demonstrated the need for a revised policy and procedure dealing with harassment at work in view of issues such as changing legislation; (b) in referring to the consultation process, highlighted that consultation with the trade unions had been positive and agreement had been reached on all areas of significance; (c) in describing the process for approval of policies and procedures relating to terms and conditions for teachers, explained that the LNCT would consider the revised policy at its next meeting, and that should there be agreement, which was expected, the policy would be implemented as soon as practicable, however if agreement could not be reached, or if significant amendments were proposed, the matter would be reported to Committee for decision; (d) highlighted the main features of the revised policy, which emphasised the Council's commitment to promoting a safe, healthy and fair working environment to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect; (e) advised that the policy was intended to be separate from the new policy and procedure on Managing Discipline and would provide a positive and structured framework to ensure that issues of harassment are managed through early intervention on a fair and consistent basis; (f) informed that the procedure contained an informal and formal stage with employees expected to attempt to resolve matters informally in the first instance, however where the formal approach was taken five critical steps had been introduced: (1) making the complaint; (2) responding to the complaint; (3) the investigation; (4) the decision; and (5) appeal; (g) acknowledged that a series of management briefings would be required prior to a proposed implementation date of 18th April 2006; and (h) appended the revised Managing and Preventing Harassment at Work policy and procedure for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the revised Managing and Preventing Harassment policy and procedure appended to the report;
- (b) note that the policy and procedure would be reported to the next meeting of the LNCT, and should it be endorsed that implementation would take effect from 18th April 2006;
- (c) instruct the Head of Human Resources to arrange adequate briefing sessions for managers on the implementation of the new policy and procedure; and
- (d) request all Corporate Directors to ensure that their managers understand their role and responsibilities and are competent in applying the new procedure.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

MANAGING LEAVERS PROCEDURE

28. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development which proposed revisions to the current procedure

for exit interviews to bring it up-to-date with best practice and provide a more robust process.

The report (a) emphasised the importance for the organisation to retain its employees to ensure that investment in training, development and knowledge is not lost; (b) anticipated that implementing an effective process to capture information from employees on their reasons for leaving, and using it in the right way, would contribute to an effective retention strategy; (c) summarised the reasons for reviewing the former Exit Interview procedure; (d) described the main features of the revised procedure, which included the opportunity for employees to complete a Leavers Questionnaire and participate in a Leavers Interview; (e) advised that Personnel and Organisational Development would produce regular reports and identify any organisational trends that might require to be addressed by monitoring the reasons why employees leave on a corporate level; (f) reiterated that by implementing a more robust system for managing leavers, the Council would begin to collect more reflective and accurate data on employees' reasons for leaving; (g) underlined that management would also have the opportunity to ensure there was a hand-over of important knowledge throughout the process and could use the information provided by departing employees to improve work practices and identify training and development needs; (h) informed that briefings would be provided by Personnel and Organisational Development to ensure managers are made aware of the new procedure and how to apply it; and (i) appended the Managing Leavers policy and procedure for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the revised version of the exit Interview procedure, now entitled 'Managing Leavers', appended to the report;
- (b) instruct the Head of Human Resources to arrange for managers to be briefed to apply and use the Managing Leavers procedure; and
- (c) request all Corporate Directors to ensure that their managers are sufficiently briefed and trained in the use and application of the revised procedure.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations; and
- (ii) if possible, that summaries of the types of reasons identified by leavers be included in the performance report to Committee.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency to enable timeous implementation of the revised arrangements.

MANAGING ATTENDANCE

29. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development seeking approval for a revised policy and procedure following review of the Absence Management policy.

The report (a) by way of background referred to a report considered by the Council's Corporate Management Team, which sought to put in place an action plan to reduce sickness absence to a level of 4% by 2009/10; (b) highlighted the current position whereby the procedure for managing and monitoring sickness absence did not cover all employees; (c) explained that the revised policy and procedure would cover all employees and had been the subject of extensive consultation with trade unions; (d) summarised the rationale for reviewing the current procedure for managing and monitoring sickness absence; (e) described the main features of the revised policy and procedure, entitled 'Managing Attendance', which placed an emphasis on the need for managers to deal with attendance issues promptly and informally, where possible, to avoid the matter being dealt with under the formal managing attendance procedure; (f) emphasised that where there was no underlying medical cause and absence was excessive the matter would be dealt with through the disciplinary process; (g) outlined the four stages in the formal procedure for addressing short term absence, namely: (1) the attendance review meeting; (2) the attendance improvement meeting; (3) a capability hearing; and (4) the appeal stage; (h) informed that the part of the procedure dealing with long term absence would apply where the employee had been absent for a continuous period exceeding four calendar weeks, and the employee would be referred to the Occupational Health Adviser for medical assessment; (i) anticipated that the policy and procedure would be implemented on 18th April 2006, and that briefings would be provided by Personnel and Organisational Development to ensure that the provisions were understood by managers; (j) in describing the process for approval of policies and procedures relating to terms and conditions for teachers, explained that the LNCT would consider the revised policy at its next meeting, and that should there be agreement, which was expected, the policy would be implemented, however if agreement could not be reached, or if significant amendments were proposed, the matter would be reported to Committee for decision; and (k) appended the Managing Attendance policy and procedure for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the revised Managing Attendance policy and procedure appended to the report;
- (b) note that the policy and procedure would be reported to the next meeting of the LNCT, and, should it be endorsed, that implementation would take effect from 18th April 2006;
- (c) instruct the Head of Human Resources to arrange adequate briefing sessions for managers on the implementation of the new policy and procedure; and
- (d) request all Corporate Directors to ensure that their managers understand and are competent in their role and responsibilities in applying the new procedure.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

MATERIALS TESTING LABORATORY, DYCE

30. The Committee had under consideration, upon a remit from the Environment and Infrastructure Committee (Article 19 of the Minute of Meeting on 4th November, 2005), a request by that Committee to arrange for the appropriate disposal of the Council owned Materials Testing Laboratory, located at Kirkhill Place, Kirkhill Industrial Estate, Dyce, following its transfer from Roads Account to Property Account. The report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, which was before the Environment and Infrastructure Committee, was again circulated.

The report contained a brief description of the facility, which had been declared surplus to requirements following its vacation on 31st March, 2005; confirmed that there had been no expressions of interest from other Council Services in response to the circulation of the property as being available; and outlined the process that would be followed in order to either lease the premises or sell the property on the open market.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that the remit had been dealt with at its meeting on 22nd November, 2005 by way of an instruction to the appropriate officer to market the property for lease and to report further.

1 ROUSAY PLACE

31. Reference was made to Article 11 of the Minute of Meeting of the Community Services Committee of the Council on 31st May, 2005, at which time it was resolved to declare the property at 1 Rousay Place, Aberdeen, a ground floor flat within a block of four flats which had, until May, 2004, been the subject of a lease to Mental Health Services, surplus to operational requirements. The outcome of the decision taken by the Committee was that the availability of the property was circulated to other Council Services.

The Resources Management Committee now had before it a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services which advised that no expressions of interest had been received following the circulation of the property's availability; and sought Committee approval to advertise the property for sale on the open market. The views of the local member, Councillor Ironside, and the members representing adjoining wards, where known, were referred to in the report.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Head of Economic Development be authorised to market the property for sale; and
- (b) that it be remitted to the appropriate officer to report back to the Committee with the detail of the offers received.

The Committee resolved:-

that the recommendations contained within the report be adopted.

WALKER ROAD SCHOOL – REMEDIAL WORK

32. The Committee had under consideration upon a remit from the Education and Leisure Committee (Article 9 of the Minute of Meeting on 16th January, 2006), a request to consider as a matter of urgency the detailed costings (estimated at £2.64m) of works to strip out and rebuild the interior of the nursery/infant block at Walker Road School, where asbestos had been discovered to be present. The report by the Head of Service, Culture and Learning, Neighbourhood South, which had been before the Education and Leisure Committee, was again circulated to Members.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the decision taken by the Education and Leisure Committee to deal with the asbestos problem at Walker Road School; and
- (ii) to remit the matter of the costings involved, with a recommendation of approval, to the 2006/07 budget process.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS AND OUTSTANDING MOTIONS LIST

33. The Committee had before it a list of notices of motion and outstanding matters of business and for this Committee prepared by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to move item 1 on Victoria House from Resources Management Committee business list to Community Services Committee Business list;
- (ii) to request a report on item 2, Peripheral Staffing, at the next meeting;
- (iii) to receive a report on item 3, Procurement of Park and Ride Services, as soon as possible;
- (iv) to request a report, oral if necessary, to the next meeting on item 4, Denburn Multi-storey Car Park and Health Centre;
- (v) to remove item 8 on the Coastal Protection Scheme as this was referred to in Article 7 of this Minute;
- (vi) to remove item 9, Supporting People, this matter having been dealt with in Article 18 in this Minute;
- (vii) to remove item 11, Arts Centre, as this matter was considered under Article 45 in this Minute;
- (viii) to remove item 13 on Records Management and Freedom of Information Services;
- (ix) to request a report to the next meeting, oral if necessary, on item 14, Whistleblowing/Victoria House;
- (x) to urge officers to expedite matters regarding item 15, Westburn House;
- (xi) to remove item 17, Denmore Road, Bridge of Don as this item had been included in the capital programme considered by Council at their meeting on 14th December, 2005;
- (xii) to note that item 20, Scottish Executive Funding to Facilitate the Provision of Money Advice had been remitted to the Finance Monitoring Sub-Committee to deal with as referred to in Article 19 of this Minute; and
- (xiii) to remove item 27, Howes Road, Aberdeen – Industrial Site, as a report on this matter was dealt with in Article 49 of this Minute.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LORD PROVOST SUB-COMMITTEE

34. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Democratic Services proposing the establishment of a Lord Provost Sub-Committee as discussed by the Civic Representation Working Party.

The report outlined the issues discussed by the Civic Representation Working Party and their recommendations. Attached as Appendix 1 to the report were the proposed terms of reference for the Lord Provost Sub-Committee and attached as Appendix 2 were copies of all Minutes of Meetings of the Civic Representation Working Party. The proposed Sub-Committee would consider and act with powers in determining all aspects of civic hospitality, currently undertaken by the Civic Hospitality Working Group; consider the functions which the Lord Provost was regularly called upon to attend; oversee the Lord Provost's Gift Fund; consider applications for grants of patronage; and keep under review the process for inviting Councillors to civic events.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee approve the establishment of a Lord Provost Sub-Committee acting with powers to determine the matters within the orders of reference appended to the report, subject to any amendments agreed by the Committee;
- (b) that the membership of the Sub-Committee be five elected members, three members of the administration and two members from the opposition groups; and
- (c) that, should the Committee approve the establishment of the Sub-Committee, then early items of business would be (1) the consideration of the definition of "significant" expenses (in relation to the attendance of the Lord Provost at local events) as detailed in the report; (2) the consideration of the definition of "customary" events as detailed in the report; and (3) to review the process for inviting Councillors to civic events so that adequate attendance can be maintained.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Councillor Kevin Stewart:-

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

Councillor James Lamond moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Milne:-

That no action be taken in regard to this report.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (9) – the Convener; Vice-Convener; Vice-Chairperson Dean; and Councillors Cassie, Cormack, Kiddie, McLeod, Porter and Kevin Stewart; for the amendment (4) – Councillors Ironside, James Lamond, Milne and Webster.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the terms of the motion whilst noting that this Sub-Committee would replace the Civic Hospitality Working Group; and
- (ii) to note the appointment of the Lord Provost, Vice-Chairperson Dean and Councillors James Lamond, Kevin Stewart and Wisely to the Sub-Committee.

CONFERENCE – DELIVERING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

35. The Committee had before it details of a conference entitled “Delivering Local Democracy” to be held in Glasgow on 3rd and 4th March, 2006.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the attendance of one member of the administration and one member of the opposition at this event; and
- (ii) to note that the workshop for elected members on the single transferable voting system to be used in the 2007 elections would be held after the outcome of electronic vote counting trials due to be held in February and April, 2006 were known.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the following paragraphs of Schedule 7(A) to the Act:- Article 36 (paragraphs 2 and 6); Article 37 (paragraphs 1 and 9); Article 38 (paragraphs 8, 9 and 10); Article 39 (paragraphs 1 and 11); Article 40 (paragraphs 1 and 11); Article 41 (paragraphs 1 and 11); Article 42 (paragraphs 1 and 11); Article 43 (paragraphs 6 and 9); Article 44 (paragraphs 6 and 9); Article 45 (paragraphs 6 and 9); Article 46 (paragraphs 6 and 9); Article 47 (paragraphs 6 and 9); Article 48 (paragraph 9); Article 49 (paragraphs 6 and 9); and Article 50 (paragraph 1).

HOUSING DEBT WRITE-OFF TO 31ST JANUARY, 2006

36. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Accommodation Policy seeking approval to write-off debts accumulated in respect of former housing tenants’ arrears and associated legal expenses for the period to 31st January, 2006.

The report advised that, in accordance with procedures agreed between the Corporate Directors for Finance and ICT and Community Services, debts held on tenants’ rent accounts were recommended by the Corporate Director for Community Services for write-off as they were, in his opinion, irrecoverable for a variety of reasons including death or permanent institutionalisation of the tenant or the expiry of five years without contact. Appendix 1 to the report listed debts over £500 and Appendix 2 to the report listed debts under £500 which had already been written off by the Corporate Director for Community Services under powers delegated to him.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the write-off of the debts listed within Appendix 1 to the report and to note the write-off of the debts listed in Appendix 2 to the report.

GARTHDEE SPORTS AND ALPINE ADVENTURE PARK

37. With reference to Article 23 of this Minute the Committee resumed consideration of the Garthdee Sports and Alpine Adventure Park having due regard to contractual and employee issues which were ongoing. The City Solicitor read a statement by the Chief Executive to be issued to all Councillors regarding the rectification of structural works.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) consider and note the update position in relation the forecast out-turn for the Garthdee Sports and Alpine Adventure Park for 2005/06; and
- (b) instruct the Corporate Directors for Resources Management and Neighbourhood Services North to continue to report on the financial and operational position of the Garthdee Sports and Alpine Adventure Park for the remainder of this financial year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations subject to the amendment of recommendation (b) to read “instruct the Corporate Directors for Resources Management and Neighbourhood Services North to continue to report on the financial and operational position of the Garthdee Sports and Alpine Adventure Park until the Trust takes over its operation”; and
- (ii) to request the Chief Executive to update Group Leaders on all aspects of the matter as soon as possible.

APPOINTMENT OF LONG TERM PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST

38. With reference to Article 33 of Minute of Meeting of Community Services Committee of 31st January, 2006, the Committee had before it, by way of a remit, a report by the Head of Accommodation Policy seeking approval to appoint a specialist consultancy firm to assist the Council in the modernisation of its procurement of construction and maintenance services in the housing sector. The Community Services Committee had resolved:- to approve the appointment of the preferred specialist consultancy firm for a period of three years, with an option of a two year extension, to assist the Council in the modernisation of its procurement of construction and maintenance services in the housing sector and to refer the report to the Resources Management Committee for its consideration.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the report for their interest.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Ironside, Kiddie, Milne and Kevin Stewart declared interests in the subject matter of the following Article by virtue of their membership of UNISON. They did not consider the nature of their interest required them to leave the meeting during the Committee’s deliberations.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STAFFING STRUCTURES FOR CUSTOMER ACCESS POINTS AND CONTACT CENTRE

39. With reference to Articles 6 and 7 of the Minute of Meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee of 27th September 2005, the Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Directors for Neighbourhood Services (South) and Resources Management seeking approval for the establishment of the staffing structures for the Customer Access Points and Contact Centre and the principles to be adopted when appointing staff.

The report (a) referred to the decision of the Policy and Strategy Committee of 27th September 2005 to approve, amongst other things, that the Customer Access Points be located in Mastrick and Kincorth, with Woodside as part of a medium term strategy, and that the Contact Centre be located at the Council offices at Kittybrewster; (b) outlined the proposed staffing structure, by way of an appendix, for the Customer Access Points and Contact Centre; (c) advised that the specific number of posts required were yet to be confirmed; (d) proposed that posts of Team Leader be established at salary grade AP3-4, at a total maximum cost of £28,562 per post, that posts of Customer Service Adviser be established at salary grade AP1, at a total maximum cost of £19,984 per post, and that posts of Clerical Assistant be established at salary grade GS1/2-3, at a total maximum cost of £17,633 per post; (e) appended job descriptions and person specifications for the posts of Team Leader, Customer Service Adviser and Clerical Assistant within the Customer Access Points and Contact Centre; (f) explained that the resources needed for the staffing requirements would be funded by a redirection of financial resources from existing service budgets; (g) clarified that the management responsibility of an individual Customer Access Point would fall within the Neighbourhood Service in which it was located and would form part of the review of the third and fourth tier structures, however it was proposed, on an interim basis, that existing neighbourhood management arrangements would absorb responsibility for their Customer Access Point until the outcome of the restructuring became apparent; (h) reminded members that the Policy and Strategy Committee had agreed that Environmental Services and Housing Repairs would be rolled into the Contact Centre in the first phase and that the Switchboard and Regional Communications Centre would co-locate following feasibility studies having been carried out; (i) updated that the outcome of the feasibility studies indicated that co-location of the Switchboard and the Regional Communications Centre was not a viable option at this time, and proposed that responsibility transfer to the Continuous Improvement Service, under the management of the Head of Customer Relationship Management, who would also be responsible for the Contact Centre; (j) in considering the appointment process proposed that job matching apply where the roles and responsibilities of an existing job are the same or largely similar to those of a new post; (k) further proposed that the job matching process would be carried out on a ring-fenced basis and that if it did not prove possible to fill all posts through this process, the posts would be opened up Council wide and, if necessary, advertised externally; (l) advised that the appointment process would commence with an open event to which all directly affected candidates would be invited, and where applicable an assessment centre would be established to assess applicants; (m) concluded that as the Customer Access Points and Contact Centre developed, staffing numbers at each level would be monitored and any future requirements for the redirection of resources would be reported accordingly; and (n) appended correspondence from Unison, which expressed a number of concerns regarding the report's proposals.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve -

- (a) the staffing structure for the Customer Access Points and Contact Centre appended to the report;
- (b) the posts for Team Leader, Customer Service Adviser and Clerical Assistant as set out in the job descriptions and person specifications appended to the report;
- (c) the appointment process for the Team Leaders, Customer Service Advisers and Clerical Assistant;
- (d) the proposed interim management arrangements for the Customer Access Points and Contact Centre;
- (e) that the Switchboard and the Regional Communications Centre become part of the Continuous Improvement Service; and
- (f) that a future report be received outlining the final outcome of the implementation of the proposed structures.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice-Convener, moved:-

That the recommendations be approved and that Unison's concerns be noted.

Councillor Milne, seconded by Councillor Ironside, moved as an amendment:-

To defer consideration of the report to the next meeting to enable Unison's concerns to be resolved.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (7) - the Convener; Vice-Convener; Vice-Chairperson Dean; and Councillors Cassie, Cormack, McLeod and Porter; for the amendment (6) - Councillors Ironside, Kiddie, James Lamond, Milne, Kevin Stewart and Webster.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations; and
- (ii) to note Unison's concerns.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to confirm arrangements to staff on contracts due to expire.

STAFFING REPORT

40. The Committee had before it a report by the Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development which presented business cases for additional staffing or amendments to the current staffing establishment.

The report advised that the cumulative effect of the proposals was that 5 additional permanent posts be established; that 7 fixed term posts be converted to permanent status; that 5 fixed term posts be established; and that 11 fixed term posts be

extended. The total maximum cost of the proposals amounted to £636,767, including a charge to Capital of £31,352 and £244,685 to be met from external funding.

The report appended staffing totals for each service, with additional information on overtime costs and absence rates. The report then presented the detailed business cases in respect of the following proposals:-

(A) Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route - Managing Agent Team

With reference to Article 12 of the Minute of Meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee of 8th April 2003, it was proposed that two fixed term posts of Technical Officer be established within the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Managing Agent Team for an expected period of two years, at salary grade Tech 4-5. The total maximum cost to the Council of £6,200 in a full year, based on a 9.5% share of the full cost, would be charged to the Non Housing Capital Plan.

(B) Voids Project Manger

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Voids Project Manager, established under delegated powers, at salary grade PO7, in an attempt to radically improve the Council's performance in re-letting empty Council houses, be extended for twelve months from 31st January 2006. The total maximum cost of £37,167 in a full year would be funded from the Housing Revenue Account voids budget.

(C) ICT Technician (Telecommunications)

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Telecommunications Technician, established under delegated powers at salary grade AP2-3, be extended until the workload created from the move from St. Nicholas House and other major accommodation tasks reduced, or funding ceased, whichever occurred first. The total maximum cost of £25,152 in a full year would be recharged to the Marischal College Relocation Project, which had been allocated funding in the Capital Plan.

(D) Administrative Assistant, Regional Communication Centre

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Administrative Assistant, established under delegated powers at salary grade AP1, be established on a permanent basis to provide administrative and clerical support within the Regional Communication Centre. The total maximum cost of £23,572 in a full year would be met by £20,000 in external funding from Aberdeenshire Council, with the remainder from existing budgets.

(E) Corporate Records Management Team

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Records Manager be established as team leader for Corporate Records Management and Freedom of Information at salary grade AP5 - PO6. It was also proposed that the fixed term post of Records Management Assistant be established on a permanent basis at salary grade GS1-2/3, with a formal extension of the temporary contract to bridge the gap until the permanent post could be filled. It was further proposed that posts of Freedom of Information Compliance Officer, at salary grade AP3-4, and Freedom of Information Compliance Assistant, at salary grade GS1-2/3, be established on a permanent basis. It was also recommended that the designation of the City Archives section be

changed to Archives and Records Management Services. The total maximum cost of £99,600 in a full year would require to be met from the Revenue Budget and as such would be submitted to the budget process.

(F) Neighbourhood Community Planning Officers

It was proposed that three existing fixed term posts of Neighbourhood Community Planning Officer, at salary grade PO10-13, be extended until 31st August 2006 to maintain and develop the neighbourhood planning process while third and fourth tier structures and roles are agreed and established. The total maximum cost of £55,500 would be met from existing budgets.

(G) Private Landlord Registration

With reference to Article 20 of the Minute of Meeting of the Community Services Committee of 31st January 2006, it was proposed that a post of Private Landlord Registration Officer be established on a permanent basis at salary grade AP4. It was also proposed that a post of Clerical Assistant be established on a fixed term basis for a period of twelve months at salary grade GS1/2. The posts would be based within Shelter and Environment (Central) and would assist in the registration of private landlords as required by the Anti-Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004. The total maximum cost of £49,015 in a full year would be met by funding from the Scottish Executive and ongoing income from registration fees.

(H) Support Assistant, Environmental Health

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Support Assistant within the Commercial Team of the Environmental Health Service, established under delegated powers at salary grade GS1-3, be extended for a period of up to twelve months to assist the existing administrative support team. The total maximum cost of £17,633 would be met from the existing staffing budget as a result of unfilled vacancies.

(I) Smoking Ban Enforcement Officers

It was proposed that two posts of Enforcement Officer be established on a fixed term basis of two years, at salary grade AP3, within the Environmental Health Service to enforce the legislation created by the Scottish Parliament to prohibit smoking in enclosed public places with effect from 26th March 2006. The total maximum cost of £50,018 in a full year would be met by additional funding from the Scottish Executive.

(J) Community Support Worker, Criminal Justice Social Work

It was proposed that a post of Community Support Worker be established on a permanent basis at salary grade SCP18-22 to undertake the duties associated with phase two of Throughcare Service provision within Criminal Justice Social Work. The total maximum cost of £22,167 in a full year would be met from additional grant under Criminal Justice Social Work funding arrangements

(K) Senior Outdoor Education Tutor

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Senior Outdoor Education Tutor, created for three years and part funded by a grant from the National Priorities Action Fund, be established on a permanent basis, at salary grade AP4, to continue work

across the city to deliver an enhanced service provision. The total maximum cost of £28,620 per annum would be met from existing budgets.

(L) Project Executive - Communications

It was proposed that the existing fixed term post of Project Executive - Communications, be extended until 31st March 2006, at salary grade PO1-3, within the Office of the Chief Executive to provide key skills and support for improving communication across the organisation. The total maximum cost of £8,323 would be met from existing budgets.

(M) Children's Services Information Service Development Officers

It was proposed that three existing fixed term posts of Development Assistant within the Children's Services Information Service be established on a permanent basis at salary grade AP2. The total maximum cost of £67,683 per annum would be met from existing budgets, following confirmation from the Scottish Executive of continued funding of the Childcare Strategy until 2008, which was expected to continue thereafter.

(N) Community Regeneration Fund Support Team

With reference to Article 19 of the Minute of its Meeting of 8th February 2005, it was proposed that the existing fixed term posts of Community Regeneration Fund Co-ordinator, salary grade PO3-6, Community Regeneration Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, salary grade AP4-5, and Development Officer (Community Regeneration), salary grade AP4-5, be extended until 30th March 2008, following confirmation of the Regeneration Outcome Agreement with Communities Scotland. The total maximum cost of £103,485 per annum would be met from the Community Regeneration Fund.

(O) Development Officer (Community Capacity)

With reference to Article 44 of the Minute of its Meeting of 23rd November 2004, it was proposed that the existing fixed term part-time post of Development Officer, supporting the Civic Forum and City Assembly, be extended from 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007, at salary grade AP4/5. The total maximum cost, to the Council, of £10,000 would be met from existing budgets.

(P) Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer

It was proposed that a post of Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer be established on a permanent basis, at salary grade AP4-5, to develop information and support services for Gypsy Travellers in the area and appropriate mechanisms for consultation. The total maximum cost of £32,632 would be met from existing budgets in 2006/07, thereafter funding at neighbourhood level would require to be explored.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the proposals within cases (A) to (J) and (L) to (O);
- (ii) to refer the proposals contained within case (K) to the General Fund Revenue Budget 2006/07 consideration process;

- (iii) to instruct officers to prepare a full report on case (P), detailing all elements of funding provided in relation to Gypsy Travellers and all relevant issues; and
- (iv) to note the information in relation to staffing numbers, overtime costs and absence levels.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to secure necessary advice and support timeously.

SENIOR DEPUTE RETURNING OFFICER

41. The Committee had before it an additional business case prepared by the Head of Democratic Services which proposed that a post of Senior Depute Returning Officer be established on a fixed term annualised contract basis from May 2006 to June 2007.

The business case referred to the elections to be held in 2007, which would consist of three different types of count, namely, first past the post and the list system for the Scottish Parliament and Single Transferable Vote for local government. The suggested short-term post of Senior Depute Returning Officer would have line management responsibility for the Elections Unit and would report directly to the Head of Democratic Services. It was proposed that the post would run from May 2006 to May 2007 on an annualised hour basis and as such the postholder would work the equivalent of six to seven months in total at a grade equating to a third tier post. The total maximum cost would be approximately £25,000 to £30,000, which would be met from existing budgets.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the establishment of a post of Senior Depute Returning Officer on a fixed term annualised contract basis from May 2006 to June 2007.

CRAFTWORKER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

42. With reference to Article 40 of the Minute of its Meeting of 28th September 2004, the Committee received a verbal report from the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services (Central), wherein it was advised that negotiations were ongoing with trade unions, on behalf of approximately 250 craft operatives, in an effort to modernise building services by introducing more flexible working and consolidating existing pay and bonus arrangements on a cost neutral basis.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that a report would be prepared for Committee on 30th March 2006.

BON ACCORD CENTRE – EXTENSION TO MANAGEMENT SUITE

43. The Committee had under consideration a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, which advised of an approach by the owners of the Bon Accord Centre requesting that the Council agree to lease to them a portion of the landing level of the access stairwell to the Bon Accord Indoor Bowling Centre and Skyline Restaurant, which is in Council ownership, in order to provide additional space for the Centre Management Suite of offices which are considered to be quite cramped.

The report gave a brief indication of the reason for the request; described the area of landing involved; confirmed that the proposal would still permit access to and egress from the indoor bowling area and the Skyline Restaurant by way of the stairwell; and contained the views of Building Control Officers who, subject to minor amendments to the plans, felt that a satisfactory secondary fire escape exit route could be created.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve in principle the lease of an area of the landing to the access stairwell of the Bon Accord Indoor Bowling Centre to the owners of the Bon Accord Centre and remit to the Head of Economic Development to negotiate provisional terms and conditions of lease and, thereafter, to conclude a formal lease agreement.

The Committee resolved:-

that on the understanding that disabled access to the Bowling Centre and Skyline Restaurant would not be adversely affected by the proposal, the recommendations contained within the report be adopted.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Fletcher declared an interest in the report referred to in the following article by reason of his membership of the Board of Castlegate Arts Limited. Councillor Fletcher did not consider it necessary to leave the meeting during consideration of the item and participated fully in the Committee deliberations.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency so that any budgetary considerations could be included in the Capital and Revenue budget consideration process.

ARTS CENTRE, 31-33 KING STREET

44. Reference was made to Article 53 of the Minute of Meeting of the Resources Management Committee on 23rd November, 2004, at which time there was under consideration a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services which related to the Arts Centre and Children's Theatre buildings, 31 - 33 King Street, Aberdeen, currently the subject of a long lease by the Council to Castlegate Arts Limited, which report advised with regard to issues that had arisen in connection with the implementation of a programme of works necessary to ensure the buildings compliance with access requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and also other works designed to address defects in the external fabric of the Children's Theatre at 31 King Street. The resolution of the Committee at the time was to note the award of a grant of £50,000 by the Board of Energising Aberdeen to Castlegate Arts towards the cost of DDA compliance work and, in light of that, to await the preparation of a fully costed development scheme for the site, which would safeguard the long-term future of Castlegate Arts at that location.

The Committee now had before it a report by the Head of Economic Development which advised that, Energising Aberdeen, at their meeting on 26th January, 2005, had approved a further grant of £30,000 in favour of Castlegate Arts, to fund a development appraisal/feasibility study of the subjects 31 – 33 King Street; confirmed that the study had been carried out by a private firm of arts consultants who had examined how the existing range of activities carried out in the building might be grown and developed and had also employed a firm of architects to carry out a detailed appraisal of how the buildings might be improved to better deliver arts and cultural services to performers and the general public; and confirmed that the main findings and recommendations of the study (available to members as detailed) had been the subject of a report to the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy Task Group at a meeting on 22nd November, 2005. The relevant part of the Minute of the Task Group Meeting in November was appended to the report as was a copy of the summarised/collective comments of the Directors of Castlegate Arts on the appraisal study.

The report before Members outlined the findings of the study as regards the property development issues arising, which were summarised under three option headings, being:-

Option 1 – internal re-configuration of the layout and the construction of a new, glass fronted, linking building between the Arts Centre and the Children's Theatre which included an indication of the provisional costings;

Option 2 – renunciation by Castlegate Arts of the lease of the Children's Theatre Building which the Council would then sell on the open market, the proceeds to be used to part-fund the redevelopment of the Arts Centre and construction of a similar glass-fronted linking building, which also included provisional costings; and

Option 3 – the carrying out by Castlegate Arts of the minimum works necessary to resolve some of the DDA Access problems and basic renovation/refurbishment works as and when budgets allowed, in respect of which no costings were given.

The report having identified possible sources of funding for the options identified, confirmed the willingness of officers to engage with and assist Castlegate Arts

Limited in pursuing funding sources and highlighted the fact that should either Option 1 or Option 2 be chosen, the Art Centre would require to close down during such a works programme.

The Head of Service, in the remaining part of her report, commented generally on the overall situation affecting the buildings at 31 – 33 King Street, as detailed within the comprehensive report before the Committee at its meeting on 23rd November, 2004; outlined a possible fourth option (Option 4) available to the Council, albeit one involving the continuation of a piecemeal approach which does not really tackle the serious issues identified in the earlier report; and also suggested a way forward which would provide the Council and Castlegate Arts with peace of mind as regards the current lease arrangement. The observations of various Members and officials on the content of the report were also provided.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee defer making a decision on any of the Options outlined;
- (b) that in order for the Committee to be fully informed about all options available, it be remitted to the Asset Management Manager to arrange a structural survey of the buildings in accordance with the terms of the remit outlined within the report (paragraph 4.3); and
- (c) that the Asset Management Manager report to a future meeting of the Committee on the outcome of the survey and also on the outcome of discussions held with Castlegate Arts Limited on the future use of the building.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the Asset Management Manager organise a structural survey of the building, with the remit as specified in paragraph 4.3 and report to a future meeting of this Committee on:- the structural survey's findings and the outcome of discussions with Castlegate Arts on the future use of the building; and
- (ii) that the Committee approve the principle of a bid of £500,000 being included in the budget consideration process for the Non-Housing Capital Programme or Energising Aberdeen, for the financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08, to potentially fund the structural survey's recommendations.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to consider the financial implications at the appropriate time.

PEACOCK VISUAL ARTS – CASTLEGATE DEVELOPMENT

45. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, on the matter of the redevelopment by Peacock Visual Arts, Aberdeen of their existing premises off the Castlegate,

involving acquisition and refurbishment of adjacent buildings and the erection of a new build “structure” in the Castlegate itself, as part of a drive to stimulate regeneration of the area by establishing in its centre a vibrant, creative hub for the cultural life of Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland.

The report made reference to the decision taken by the Board of Energising Aberdeen at a meeting in November, 2004, to approve a grant in favour of Peacock for the purpose of creating a development budget for the project; made reference also to other grants which Peacock have attracted, from Scottish Enterprise Grampian and the Scottish Arts Council which, together with money from their own reserves, had created a reasonable fund for the purpose; and referred Members to the supporting statement provided by Peacock and circulated with the report, which represented a more detailed explanation of the background, the context and the overall intent of the project which included a history of the Council’s involvement to date.

In drawing attention to the possible future financial implications of the project for the Council as one of the key funders, the Head of Economic Development identified the main purposes of her report, as being:- (i) to advise the Committee of the current appraisal/feasibility study carried out by Peacock and to invite Members to indicate their views; (ii) to invite Members to consider allowing Peacock to hire a design team for the project; (iii) to invite Members to consider in principle, the grant of a long-term ground lease to Peacock of the central portion of the Castlegate to permit the construction of a new build structure as described in the report; (iv) to advise Members of the possibility of the Council being asked to authorise a capital grant in favour of Peacock Visual Arts in 2007/08 and 2008/09, in order to implement the scheme; and (v) to advise the Committee of the advise issued by the Scottish Arts Council on the potential award of major capital grants in respect of this and other potential “arts and cultural” development schemes in Aberdeen.

In the matter of the development appraisal/feasibility study, the report highlighted the facts that, for many years Peacock had sought to expand and develop their activities, being of the view that they were constrained by the nature and location of their existing premises; that while the intention by Peacock was to expend the development budget amassed on the preparation of a fully worked-up development scheme capable of being implemented, the initial goal was to hire a design team for the project; that while it had been their intention to appoint a team in January, 2006, at the request of Council officers and Scottish Enterprise Grampian, that decision had been put on hold pending consideration of this report by the Committee; and that with a view to formalising the situation, a letter requesting the Council’s consent to appoint the design team had been lodged, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 2.

The report made reference to the fact that indicative “artist impressions” of the proposed structure for the Castlegate would be on display at the Committee meeting; emphasised that while these were only the initial ideas proposed, they did contain several elements which have been constant in Peacock’s future plans, i.e. the desire to create a modernist, focal point building in which to advertise Peacock’s activities and bring them to public attention and also the idea that a new building for contemporary arts in the middle of the Castlegate would enliven that public space and prove a catalyst for the creation of an “Arts Quarter”; and highlighted the need on the part of Peacock to get some indication from the Council of its thinking on the matter. The capital cost implications and the timing

considerations were also outlined in the report, as was the supportive attitude for the project being expressed by Scottish Enterprise Grampian and the Scottish Arts Council. In this latter regard the report contained a clear indication of the view held by the Scottish Arts Council to the effect that should a site other than the Castlegate be chosen, SAC would consider that to be a new bid in respect of which the grant process would require to start afresh with no guarantee of success.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note that Peacock Visual Arts have been awarded capital grants from various bodies in respect of their redevelopment project, including a grant from Energising Aberdeen's 2005/06 budget;
- (b) that the Committee indicate their consent to the hiring by Peacock Visual Arts of a design team for the project;
- (c) that the Committee indicate their views, in principle, relative to the grant by the Council to Peacock of a long-term ground lease of a site in the middle of the Castlegate, at a peppercorn rent, to permit the erection of a new build structure, the lease to be on terms and conditions provisionally negotiated between the parties;
- (d) that the Committee indicate their views on the direction and scope of the redevelopment project and also the possibility that at some stage during 2007/08 and 2008/09, the City Council may be asked to match fund a Scottish Arts Council grant as part of a development budget to implement the scheme; and
- (e) the Committee note the view of Scottish Arts Council on the matter of the location of the new building.

The Committee resolved:-

that in view of the insistence on the part of the Scottish Arts Council that the new building be centrally located at the Castlegate, the report be noted, but to express their support for Peacock Visual Arts and the Council's willingness to consider alternative locations for the development.

HOWE MOSS AVENUE (1.81 ACRE SITE), KIRKHILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, DYCE

46. Reference was made to Article 38 of the Minute of Meeting of the Resources Management Committee on 7th June, 2005, at which time there was under consideration a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, which outlined difficulties being experienced in marketing the 1.81 acre site at Howe Moss Avenue, Kirkhill Industrial Estate, Dyce for lease, in accordance with the Council's policy of not selling land designated for industrial use. The resolution of the Committee at the time was to instruct the Corporate Director for City Development Services to market the site again, for sale or lease and to report. The Committee now had before it the report requested.

The report by the Head of Economic Development confirmed, that following advertisement of the availability of the site, only offers to purchase were received; gave a brief account of each of the offers; and highlighted the reason why the preferred offer was in the Council's best interests and should be accepted.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the offer to purchase the site submitted on behalf of Knight Real Estate (Scotland) Limited be accepted; and
- (b) that it be remitted to the City Solicitor to conclude the legal formalities of the sale on the basis of the offer received and otherwise on terms and conditions which protect the Council's interests.

The Committee resolved:-

that the recommendations contained within the report be adopted.

PITMEDDEN ROAD PLAYING FIELDS SITE, DYCE

47. Reference was made to Article 49 of the Minute of Meeting of the Resources Management Committee on 22nd November, 2005, at which time there was under consideration a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services relative to the 16.0 acre playing field site at Pitmedden Road, Dyce, in respect of which the Committee resolved to re-affirm a decision taken in 2001 to lease the site to Dyce Sports Forum as playing pitches for use by residents of Dyce; to instruct appropriate officers to negotiate provisional terms and conditions of lease with the Forum, now incorporated as Dyce Sports and Leisure Development Trust; and to instruct the same officers to report on the outcome of the negotiations, which were to be conducted on the basis that the advantages of a long lease (thirty years) and the imposition of only a peppercorn rent in the early stages, would be of benefit to the Trust. The Committee now had before it the report requested.

The report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, outlined the terms and conditions of the lease provisionally agreed between the parties.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the provisionally agreed terms and conditions of lease and remit to the City Solicitor to conclude the agreement on that basis.

The Committee resolved:-

that subject to an adjustment to the terms and conditions provisionally agreed by replacing the reference therein to the first building warrant completion certificate issued (point (2) at paragraph 1.3 of the report) with a reference to the award of a lottery grant, the recommendation contained within the report be adopted.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order to respond timeously to the tenants.

HOWES ROAD, BUCKSBURN – INDUSTRIAL LAND

48. Reference was made to Article 48 of the Minute of Meeting of the Resources Management Committee on 22nd November, 2005, at which time there was under consideration a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, regarding a request received from tenants of Council-owned land at Howes Road, Bucksburn, currently in industrial use for oil-related purposes, that they be permitted to acquire the Council's interest in their site as part of a wider strategy to release the development value of the land involved for possible residential use in order to fund their re-location to a larger and more suitable site. The resolution of the Committee at the time was to defer consideration of the request and to remit to appropriate officers to consider various points raised by members as to the best course of action for the Council in all the circumstances and report further. The Committee now had before it the further report requested.

The report contained an assessment of the situation in the context of the points raised by members at the November 2005 meeting.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the terms of the report be noted; and
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Head of Economic Development to negotiate with the tenants of the Council-owned land at Bucksburn, the sale to them of the Council's interest in that land on the basis that while the sale price will reflect current value, the concluded bargain will make provision for the Council to receive an agreed share of any increase in that value arising from future development in the area.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Ironside declared an interest in the report referred to in the following Article. He did not consider the nature of his interest to be such that he should leave the meeting during the Committee's deliberations.

LAND AT GARTHDEE (9 ACRES) – ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

49. The Committee had under consideration a report by the Head of Economic Development, City Development Services, which advised of an approach by Robert Gordon University to take up the final part of the option granted in its favour by the former City of Aberdeen District Council, subsequently approved by Aberdeen City Council, to purchase land at Garthdee (former Garthdee Caravan Park site) in order to pursue in stages the development of a single University Campus at Garthdee.

The report by the Head of Economic Development outlined the various stages of the wider development which involved the sale by the Council of parcels of land at Garthdee extending to 13.00 acres (first phase) in 1996, 8.00 acres (health faculty) in 2000 and 4.00 acres (medical centre) in 2002; indicated that the University now wished to exercise the option to purchase the remaining 9.00 acre site; and gave an indication of the resources implications arising.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the request from Robert Gordon University to purchase the remainder of the option land at Garthdee and instruct the Head of Economic Development to negotiate appropriate terms and conditions of sale in respect thereof and to report.

The Committee resolved:-

that the recommendation contained within the report be adopted.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the Committee consider the following item of business as a matter of urgency in order that members be apprised of the latest developments.

CORPORATE DIRECTORS AND HEADS OF SERVICE – ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

50. With reference to Article 54 of the Minute of its Meeting of 22nd November 2005, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Executive which provided an update on changes to the first and second tier structure of the organisation in terms of appointments made and Corporate Directors and Heads of Service leaving the organisation.

The report (a) reminded members of the decisions of Council to approve a new six service model, to advertise the six new Corporate Director posts externally, to create 24 new Heads of Service positions and to advertise those posts internally; (b) updated that Deirdre Robertson had been appointed as Corporate Director for Continuous Improvement in November 2005, following the position having been readvertised; (c) outlined that the following Heads of Service appointments had been made at the time of drafting the report:-

- Ewan Sutherland - Head of Human Resources
- Hazel Spalding - Head of Democratic Services
- Susan Cooper - City Chamberlain
- Jane MacEachran - City Solicitor
- Maggie Bochel - Head of Planning and Infrastructure
- Dave Tumelty - Head of Health and Care
- Kath Beveridge - Head of Community Planning and Regeneration
- Jacek Nowak - Head of Customer Relations

(d) highlighted that interviews were forthcoming for a number of Heads of Service posts and that the posts of Chief Social Work Officer, Head of Service Policy and Planning for Services to Adults, Head of Health and Care (2 posts) and Head of Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability would be subject to external advertisement; (e) informed that the cost to date for the recruitment process for Heads of Service was £107,238, which included recruitment advertising and assessment centres; (f) provided details of the redundancy and pension payments for two Corporate Directors which had not been reported to Committee; (g) intimated that a

separate contractual arrangement was being considered for the former Corporate Director for Personnel and Organisational Development which would be funded from existing budgets; (h) provided details of the redundancy and pension payments for the 13 Heads of Service who had chosen not to apply for the new Head of Service positions; (i) estimated that annual savings from the first round of the change programme would be a minimum of £1.2million; and (j) emphasised that the restructuring was part of a wider change programme of continuous improvement for the Council to become a consistently highly performing organisation.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the costs of the recruitment process for the appointment of the Corporate Director for Continuous Improvement which was readvertised and those costs incurred for the recruitment of Heads of Service to date;
- (b) note the details of the exit costs for Corporate Directors and Heads of Service leaving the Council's employment, which had been approved through delegated authority;
- (c) note that annual savings of £1.2million would accrue as of financial year 2006/07; and
- (d) note that the restructuring was part of a wider change programme designed to achieve a consistently high performing Council.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations; and
- (ii) to delegate powers to the Finance Monitoring Sub-Committee to consider a report on the position with regard to a former Corporate Director.

- COUNCILLOR FLETCHER, Convener