

Minute of Meeting Leadership Board

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 16 September 2015	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

PRESENT

Councillors Devine, Glen, Harte, Henry, Holmes, Kelly, Lawson, K MacLaren, M MacLaren, McCartin, I McMillan and Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE

S Black, Chief Executive; M Crearie, Director of Development & Housing Services; S MacDougall, Director of Community Resources; P Macleod, Director of Children's Services; and A Russell, Director of Finance & Resources, D Amos, Head of Policy & Commissioning (Chief Executive's); K Graham, Head of Corporate Governance, E Shields, Operational Services Manager and L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager (all Finance & Resources).

CHAIR

Councillor Holmes, Depute Convener, presided.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Cameron and M Macmillan.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 BETTER COUNCIL CHANGE PROGRAMME UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Better Council Change Programme (BCCP), providing an update on the implementation of the programme and seeking approval to proceed to the procurement phase for two projects, replacement of the ICT system and the introduction of a customer portal.

The report intimated that the BCCP had been set up to identify, manage and deliver changes across the Council that would improve efficiency, modernise ways of working and support long-term financial sustainability as well as delivering savings specifically to contribute to addressing the Council's forecast medium-term budget deficit of £30m through to 2017/18.

Two key elements of the BCCP were replacement of the current ICT system and the customer access project. The report outlined the projected costs and potential savings of each of these proposals.

The current ICT systems required to be replaced as they were complex, relatively expensive and, being housed in the same building, could constitute business continuity risks. A business case had been developed which forecast savings arising from replacement of the current disparate systems with an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system.

The customer access project aimed to maintain and enhance the quality of services provided to customers and deliver future cost savings through the introduction of online delivery channels for transactional services with the largest volume of contacts. A business case had been developed which had identified that the implementation of a full customer portal solution had the potential to realise significant savings whilst improving the service to customers.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the progress made with the implementation of the Better Council Change Programme be noted;
- (b) That the proposal for the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project be approved and that it be agreed to move to the procurement phase of the project; and
- (c) That the proposal for the Customer Access Portal for the delivery of Council digital services be approved and that it be agreed to move to the procurement and implementation phase of the project.

2 WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to changes to welfare and personal taxation announced by the UK Government. The report summarised the key reforms and provided an initial assessment of the impact on households in Renfrewshire. In addition, the report highlighted measures introduced previously as a result of welfare reform.

The report intimated that in total the welfare measures announced by the Chancellor would cut welfare spending across the UK by £13 billion per year by 2020/21. The key reforms included a freeze on the level of benefits paid to people of working age and changes to tax credits for working age people, including restricting child tax credit; changes to housing benefit rules for families and for people aged 18-21; to the length of time housing benefit could be backdated; to the overall amount of welfare support a household could receive; to the amount paid to people receiving Employment and Support Allowance; and to the rules for receiving Universal Credit for lone parents. These changes would result in significant implications for a range of Council services and citizens. The report proposed that a welfare reform work stream be established within the Tackling Poverty Programme to develop an effective response to manage the financial and social impact on the most vulnerable; to identify and assess the impact of the proposed changes on Council finances, policies and strategies; and to propose effective strategies to mitigate the impact. The report highlighted the plans that would be developed to take account of these objectives.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 DEVOLUTION OF FURTHER POWERS - WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE CALL FOR EVIDENCE

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Smith Agreement Inquiry. The report intimated that a report by the Smith Commission was published on 27 November, 2014 which outlined the agreement reached among all of Scotland's main political parties to devolve more powers to the Scottish Parliament. Thereafter in January 2015 the UK government published its report which presented draft clauses in response to the Smith Agreement which would form part of a future Scotland Bill. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 28 May, 2015 and included the proposed devolution of powers across a number of sectors including the welfare system. The Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee, which was focusing on the practical implementation of the social security schemes outlined in the Smith Agreement, had invited all interested individuals and organisations to submit written evidence on the Smith Agreement and the proposed devolved powers to better deliver benefits in Scotland. The deadline for receipt of written evidence was 28 August, 2015 and the draft response, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, had been submitted on behalf of the Council, subject to approval by this Board.

DECIDED: That the content of the response be approved.

4 SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Development & Housing Services relative to the work of the Council to support service veterans living locally in accordance with the Armed Forces Community Covenant to which the Council and its Community Planning Partners signed up in February, 2012.

The report provided an update on the work of the Veterans' Support Co-ordinator in developing pathways for service veterans through the customer service model being developed in partnership with East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils and also recommended a change, following an approach from Poppy Scotland, to the treatment of war disablement pension income in calculations for non-residential social care costs for veterans who were injured prior to 5 April, 2005.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the work of the Council in supporting service veterans and the progress made in development of a customer service model and pathways for veterans of the armed forces be noted;
- (b) That it be agreed that the War Disablement Pension income be disregarded in full when calculating clients' contribution towards non-residential care costs with effect from 1 October, 2015; and
- (c) That an in-year adjustment to the adult services budget for 2015/16 be approved and that an appropriate base budget adjustment be made moving into 2016/17 as part of the budget process.