

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber,
Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells,
TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 18th August, 2015 at
10.00 am

Present:- Councillors J. Mitchell (Chairman), S. Aitchison (from para. 7), S. Bell, J. Brown, M. Cook, V. Davidson (from para. 4), G. Edgar, D. Paterson, F. Renton, R. Smith.

Also Present:- Councillors M. Ballantyne, J. Fullarton, I. Gillespie, G. Logan, S. Mountford,

Apologies:- Councillors C. Bhatia, D. Moffat, D. Parker.

In Attendance:- Depute Chief Executive – People, Depute Chief Executive – Place, Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Service Director Strategy and Policy, Service Director Commercial Services, Service Director Neighbourhood Services, Service Director Capital Projects, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (K. Mason).

1. **CHAIRMAN**
In the absence of Councillor Parker, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Mitchell.
2. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**
The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.
3. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**
DECISION
AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

MEMBER

Councillor Davidson joined the meeting during discussion of the following item.

4. **SBC CONTRACTS FINANCIAL STRATEGY**
The Committee considered a joint report by the Chief Financial Officer and the Service Director Commercial Services outlining a financial strategy for SBc Contracts and approved the recommendations contained therein.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

5. **MINUTE**
The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 9 June 2015 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

6. **CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS REPORT**

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of 9 June 2015, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director presenting an update on progress in developing and delivering the Council's Corporate Transformation Programme since the last update report on 9 June 2015 and setting out planned activity in the reporting period to the end of October 2015. The main areas of progress since June included the Railway Programme; Culture Trust; Alternative Service Delivery Models; ICT Programme; Property and Assets; Energy Efficiency; and Scoping of Briefs. The Corporate Transformation and Services Director referred specifically to the work on the Culture Trust, and the ICT Programme, advising that the implementation plan and the business plan for ICT required more time to complete, therefore it was proposed that the report on the way forward would be brought to Council on 17 December 2015 and not 8 October as originally planned. In response to a question the Programme Manager, Borders Railway Blueprint advised that good progress had been made and there was optimism about the ripple effect the Borders Railway would have for Hawick. She explained that discussions were ongoing regarding cashmere tours and tourism trails etc. and it was noted that a paper would be considered by the Executive Committee on 1 September 2015 demonstrating the inward investments of the railway being reinstated in the Scottish Borders. The impact should not be limited to the railway corridor and the return of the railway was changing the perception that the Scottish Borders was on the periphery of Scotland. The Blueprint highlighted over 100 development sites for housing, industry, etc. within the Borders. In response to a question, the Programme Manager advised she would check on whether a local company had received funding to move from Selkirk to larger premises in Edinburgh. The cultural aspects of the Borders were already part of Visit Scotland's programme, and it was noted that Abellio had already participated in two events and so they were being supportive. There had been quite a bit of interest from Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and Transport Scotland in the working of the Blueprint and a review was planned over the next 6 – 9 months to analysis its success. With regard to the Property & Assets programme, details of the financial benefits should be reported to the Executive Committee in October. The 'hop on, hop off' bus service was based on the Eildon Explorer and had been expanded, connecting Galashiels, Tweedbank, Abbotsford, Melrose and Scotts View. Other increases in bus services would come on stream from 7 September 2015. It was noted that unfortunately Appendix 2c to the report had been omitted from publication and this would be emailed directly to Members.

DECISION

NOTED:

- (a) **the progress made in developing and delivering the Corporate Transformations Programme;**
- (b) **that the full proposal for ICT would be presented to Council on 17 December 2015 rather than to Council on 8 October 2015 as originally planned.**

MEMBER

Councillor Aitchison joined the meeting during discussion of the following item.

7. **QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 1, 2015/16)**

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of 9 June 2015, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive presenting a quarterly performance update for members, as well as information on Audit Scotland's recent assessment of how SBC performance was reported publicly. A copy of Corporate Priority 2 infographic page was tabled at the meeting. The report explained that a summary of the main changes made to performance indicators was provided at Section 4 of the report, followed by a high level summary of performance. Appendix 1 provided a more detailed presentation and explanation of each Performance Indicator (PI). Where possible, information which was collected on a quarterly basis was presented but this was not possible for all areas of

Council business, for example, school attainment. The presentation used in Appendix 1 to the report was consistent with what was presented to Council on 26 June 2014 and to the Executive Committee each quarter thereafter. All information contained within the report was also available on the SBC website using the public facing part of SBC's Performance Management software (Covalent). This could be accessed at: http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/691/council_performance/1353/our_performance_as_a_council and by clicking on "Scottish Borders Performs". As this report was a key part of the Council's public performance reporting, a summary of Audit Scotland's recent assessment of the Council's public performance reporting was also included within this report. Members discussed various aspects of the performance details, including staff surveys, the presentation of data, customer satisfaction surveys, Local Government Benchmarking, external funding sources including grants from landfill tax, focussing on trends and comparative data, council tax collection, and the cost of utilities. In terms of landfill tax grant now to be managed by SEPA, changes had been made that these monies could only be used within 10 miles of a landfill site which would be detrimental to the Borders. Officers advised a letter had recently been received from SEPA the contents of which would be discussed by Officers. The Service Director Strategy and Policy advised of a letter recently received from SEPA and undertook to make representations regarding this change and make enquires to ascertain who had made the changes and why these had come about. A request was made for a briefing note giving further explanation of the cost and levels of usage of utilities in Council property.

DECISION

(a) NOTED:-

- (i) the changes to performance indicators as detailed in Section 4 of the report;**
 - (ii) and acknowledged the performance presented within Appendix I to the report and the action which was being taken within Services to improve or maintain performance; and**
 - (iii) the findings by Audit Scotland in relation to the Council's Public Performance reporting and actions being taken to improve.**
- (b) AGREED that a briefing paper giving further explanation of the cost, and levels of usage, of utilities in Council property, be presented to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.20 a.m. and reconvened at 11.30 a.m.

8. MONITORING OF THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing budgetary control statements for the Council's General Fund based on actual expenditure and income to 30 June 2015 together with explanations of the major variances between projected outturn expenditure/income and the current approved budget. The revenue monitoring position set out in the report was based on actual income and expenditure to 30 June 2015. The position reported assumed significant pressures highlighted in the remainder of the report would be managed within existing departmental budgets. Failure to manage these identified pressures would result in a significant budget shortfall in the Council. The management team was progressing with the programme to modernise and transform the Council, and identified corrective action where budgets were diverting from plan and had confidence that pressures would be managed and that a balanced out turn would be delivered. Pressures evident at month 3 included out of area children's placements, a higher than anticipated level of placements for Older People in Residential Care, and care packages for people with Physical Disabilities Community-Based services. Action was being taken by the People department to contain these pressures. At 30

June, 50% (£3.829m) of planned efficiency savings had been delivered as per the Financial Plan, with a further 44% (£3.406m) profiled to be delivered over the remainder of the financial year. Of the remaining 6%, £40K had been achieved by alternative, permanent measures and £158k temporarily. A further £228k remained profiled to be achieved by alternative means. Paragraph 3.3 of the report also highlighted two unbudgeted pressures which had the first results from management action taken early in the year to preserve service provision to vulnerable adults, delivered through two additional care home contracts that were now being provided in house following decisions out-with the Council's control by care providers to hand back these contracts. A further area of additional cost was anticipated from changes in night time support legislation. Taken together, these cost pressures were anticipated to total £0.307m and they would require a tactical draw-down from reserves in year. Full details of pressures, risks and challenges and the significant majority of areas of the Council's operation where budget plans remained on track were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. The Chief Financial Officer advised of a correction to the recommendation at paragraph 2.1(e) in the report which referred to Appendix 1 and should have referred to Appendices 2 and 3. In the discussion which followed Members commented on the number of out of authority foster care and complex needs placements. The Depute Chief Executive People spoke of the challenges of out of authority placements, with foster care costs out-with the area being double. A review of foster care in the Borders was underway and officers were currently speaking to families, reviewing costs and payments, and looking at marketing foster care. Facilities being developed at Duns, Earlston and Langlee would address the issue of keeping children within their own communities in the Borders. A request was made that a report by the Depute Chief Executive Place giving an update and clarifications on out of area placements and foster care be brought to a future meeting of the Executive Committee for consideration in private and this was unanimously accepted. Members also highlighted the potential impact of staff transferring in to SB Cares following the termination of 2 major homecare contracts; the Neighbourhood action plan; and recharges to the non-General Funds. It was further noted that the graphs appended to the report may not have been updated and the Chief Financial Officer undertook to check these and reissue them if necessary.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the projected corporate monitoring position reported at 30 June 2015, the underlying cost drivers of this position and the identified areas of financial risk;**
- (b) that the Depute Chief Executives for People and Place and their Service Directors would continue to work with their management teams to ensure a balanced budget position was delivered 2015/16;**
- (c) the action set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report to realign the budgeted contribution from SB contracts to the general fund;**
- (d) to approve a drawdown from unallocated reserves of £0.307m to corporately fund the newly emerged pressures identified in paragraph 3.5;**
- (e) to approve the virements set out in Appendices 2 and 3 of the report;**
- (f) to note that the Corporate Management Team would develop proposals to permanently address budget pressures as part of the 2016/17 Financial Planning process; and**
- (g) that a report by the Depute Chief Executive People giving an update and clarifications on out of area placements and foster care would be considered in private at a future meeting of the Executive Committee.**

9. **PROJECTED BALANCES TO 31 MARCH 2016**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an analysis of balances as at 31 March 2015 and of the projected balances at 31 March 2016. The report advised that the unaudited Council's General Fund useable reserve (non-earmarked) balance was £8.121m at 31 March 2015. This reflected an increase of £0.962m from the draft revenue outturn projected position of £7.159m presented to Members on 9 June 2015 prior to the production of the unaudited accounts. The increase was mainly the result of a one off write back of Scottish Water bad debt provision (£0.938m) but also included minor technical adjustments (£0.024m). The Council's allocated reserve balance was £3.379m at 31 March 2015 which was an increase of £0.262m from the draft revenue outturn projection of £3.117m. This increase was as a result of CFRs not yet applied to finance capital expenditure in 2015/16. There were a number of areas of potential financial pressures identified in the accompanying revenue monitoring report identified for 2015/16, which if uncontained by management action might require a call on these reserves. The total of all useable balances, excluding developer contributions, at 31 March 2016 was projected to be £22.519m, compared to £27.504m at 31 March 2015. As the financial year progressed, earmarked balances to be carried forward to 2016/17 and future years would increase. The projected balance on the Capital Fund of £6.199m would be affected by any further capital receipts, developer contributions, interest credited and any expenditure authorised to be financed from the Fund during the remainder of the financial year.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) **the unaudited 2014/15 revenue balances as at 31 March 2015;**
- (b) **the projected revenue balances as at 31 March 2016 as detailed in Appendices 1 & 2 to the report; and**
- (c) **the projected balance in the Capital Fund as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.**

10. **MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer presenting an update on the progress of the 2015/16 Capital Financial Plan and seeking approval for projected outturns and associated virements, and the reallocation of funds. The monitoring tables in Appendix 1 to the report detailed the actual expenditure to 30 June 2015. Key issues identified in these tables were summarised within the main report. The tables identified a net variance of £14.922m against the approved budget. The net in-year budget reduction of £17.529m was primarily due to a budget change of £14.531m relating to the funding model for Kelso High School and the revised presentation of £4.2m for Next Generation Broadband (BDUK). The net budget timing movements amounted to £2.606m, of which the most significant were the forward timing movements of £1.0m for General Roads and Bridges Block, £2.0m for Selkirk Flood Protection, and £0.849m for Langlee and Broomlands Primary Schools, partly offset by a timing movement of £0.836m to 2016/17 for Complex Needs – Central Education Base. Appendix 3 contained a summarised list of timing and budget movements within the 2015/16 Capital Plan. Appendix 2 contained a list of the block allocations approved for this year and the various approved and proposed projects to be allocated from them within the 2015/16 Capital Plan. At this stage in the year it was estimated that these adjustments would allow an element of re-prioritisation of the capital programme and it was suggested that Members use this flexibility to bring forward investment in the roads network and energy efficiency projects to help the Council's revenue position and carbon commitments. During the discussion which followed it was noted that the Chief Financial Officer would bring back details of the energy efficiency programme. A request was made for an update of progress on the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme and it was agreed that this would be presented to a future meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) the projected outturns and associated virements as identified in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised capital budget;
- (b) to note the adjustments made to the budget for Kelso High School to reflect its status as a fully funded revenue project and agreed to maintain a £1m budget contingency within capital while discussions continued with SFT to finalise the project delivery arrangements and determine the start date;
- (c) to note the change to the Kelso High School funding model and clarification of allowable costs had allowed the reallocation of £0.375m from Kelso High School and agreed to reallocate this funding to Energy Efficiency Projects across the Council School Estate resulting in reduced revenue costs for these properties;
- (d) the acceleration of £1.0m from 2018/19 Road Block to augment the roads budget for 2015/16 to allow improvements to key areas of the roads network;
- (e) the list of block allocations detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (f) to instruct project managers and budget holders to ensure that robust arrangements were in place to achieve the projected out-turns; and
- (g) an update on the progress of the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme be presented to a future meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum.

11. **ASSET TRANSFER - JEDBURGH TOWN HALL**

There had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director and the Service Director Commercial Services seeking consideration of community asset transfer issues which had arisen since the Executive approved in principle the Transfer of Jedburgh Town Hall to Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust (JLFT) at its meeting on 18 February 2014. The report considered at Executive on 18 February 2014 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The Minute of that meeting was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. Since the decision in February 2014 there had been ongoing discussion about the possible Transfer of the Town Hall to JLFT but no satisfactory conclusion had been reached. Officers were now recommending that the decision to transfer the asset taken in February 2014 was set aside and that the Town Hall was considered with all other similar assets as part of the transfer of services to a Culture Trust. Council was likely to make a decision on this matter in October 2015. Members discussed the issues which had arisen about the proposed lease; the business case and future financing; and whether there was sufficient community support for the transfer. Councillor Brown, the local member for Jedburgh and District, spoke in support of the transfer of Jedburgh Town Hall to Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust which as the Town Hall would revert back to the Council if the Trust ran into difficulties in future, so the Council would not be giving up ownership of this asset.

VOTE

Councillor Davidson, seconded by Councillor Cook, moved that the recommendations in the report not to pursue the transfer of Jedburgh Town Hall to Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust at this time, be approved.

Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved as an amendment that the original decision of the Executive on 18 February 2014 be enacted and Jedburgh Town Hall be leased to Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust.

On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-

Motion - 7 votes
Amendment - 2 votes

The Amendment accordingly fell.

**DECISION
DECIDED:-**

- (a) **not to pursue the transfer of Jedburgh Town Hall to Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust at this time; and**
- (b) **to consider Jedburgh Town Hall as part of the possible transfer of similar assets and services to a Culture Trust.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Aitchison declared an interest in the following item of business (application from The Bridge) in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the Chamber during the discussion.

12. SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME - GENERIC BUDGET

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Strategy and Policy recommending 4 applications for funding from the Community Grant Scheme (CGS Generic Budget. The applications put forward for approval were Scottish Borders Community Development Company (The Bridge) Gala Wheels – award request £5,000; Youthborders – Sounding Out – award request £5,000); Border Samaritans – Support Grant – award request £2,500); and NTC Touring Theatre Co Ltd – award request £2,361. The report explained that the projects recommended for approval totalled £14,861 and there was only £13,840 available in the CGS Generic Budget for 2015-16. It was recommended to award Border Samaritans a grant at the lower level of £1,700. Following discussion with the organisation it transpired that £800 of the original request was to cover IT equipment which had already been purchased and was not fundable under the terms of the scheme. It was also recommended to award NTC Touring Theatre Co Ltd a grant at the lower level of £2,140 being the balance remaining in the Generic budget, subject to the recommendations of this report being approved. The organisation received a project grant for a pilot project in 2014/15 which proved popular. The organisation was returning for a one-off support grant for this year's activity whilst it worked towards future sustainability.

**DECISION
APPROVED:-**

- (a) **a grant to the value of £5,000 to The Bridge;**
- (b) **a grant to the value of £5,000 to Youthborders;**
- (c) **a grant to the value of £1,700 to Borders Samaritans, the grant being conditional on the organisation revising its fundraising plans to bridge this gap in future years; and**
- (d) **a grant to the value of £2,140 to NTC Touring Theatre Co Ltd, the grant being conditional on the organisation revising its fundraising plans to bridge this gap in future years.**

13. CONTROL OF CONTRACTORS POLICY AND PROCUREMENT

There had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Transformation and Services Director providing an update on the requirement for Constructionline accreditation as part of the Control of Contractors Policy (Design, Construction, Maintenance and Repair). The policy defined how the Council would uphold its Health and Safety responsibilities, and the principles contained within it extended to all employees, and those employed to undertake contracted works for and on behalf of the Council. The policy was owned and managed by Wellbeing & Safety Management Services and contained a requirement that SBC only employed contractors who were fully accredited SSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement) members of Constructionline and had green status. The requirements of the policy were applied to all relevant Construction, Maintenance and Repair procurement exercises, including the recent Repair & Maintenance Framework Agreement. The Senior Wellbeing and Safety Adviser and the Procurement and Payment Services Manager were in attendance and answered Members' questions on the benefits to the Council of contractors having accreditation, and the overall reduction in paperwork for contractors in the longer term. Members were also advised that others in the public sector e.g. NHS, Fire and Rescue Services, and SBHA, were also moving towards the requirement for Constructionline or other similar accreditation. Details were given of the number of contractors on the framework, which had reduced from 225 to 138. However, previously not all contractors had been used, with some were based out-with the Scottish Borders so had not been able to meet the time requirements within some contracts. The 138 contractors were all registered with Construction pipeline at different stages of accreditation A potential £1.8m worth of contracts was available for those contractors on the framework which, if these were awarded evenly, would give a potential £13k income against a cost of £240 for accreditation for smaller firms. It was recognised that this accreditation cost would be on top of the cost for contractors of belonging to their specific trade association. Members were advised that the report was for noting because the Policy had previously been approved.

DECISION

NOTED the update on the requirement for Constructionline accreditation as part of the Control of Contractors Policy (Design, Construction, Maintenance and Repair).

14. ROAD SAFETY - ANNUAL POSITION STATEMENT

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Commercial Services presenting an update on reported road casualties in 2014 and on the progress towards meeting the Scottish Government casualty reduction targets. The report explained that in June 2009 the Scottish Government set revised targets for accident reduction across a number of key headings. The base taken for this was the 2004 – 08 annual average and the target reduction was by the year 2020 with interim targets set for 2015. In June 2009 the Scottish Government set revised targets for accident reduction across a number of key headings. The base taken for this was the 2004 – 08 annual average and the target reduction was by the year 2020 with interim targets set for 2015. The five areas identified as national reduction targets were as follows :- the number of people killed in road accidents; the number of people seriously injured in road accidents; the number of children under 16 killed in road accidents; the number of children under 16 seriously injured in road accidents; and the slight injury accident rate. Progress against these national targets was the main focus of the report. The national position was generally positive based on the official 2013 figures, with reductions continuing to be shown across all the accident reduction areas identified above and all but the second category outlined currently exceeding the level of reduction needed to meet interim 2015 and/or 2020 reduction targets. Provisional 2014 figures however indicated some worrying increases in key categories at national level. At a local Scottish Borders level 2014 was another positive year for the area, with the long term trend of accident casualty reduction in the Scottish Borders being continued across all categories. Members discussed various types of accidents and the particular vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists, the use of 20mph zones and other ways to slow down traffic, and the use made of Borders roads by motor cyclists.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the position with respect to injury accidents in 2014 and the progress being made in relation to meeting the Scottish Government targets for road casualty reduction; and
- (b) to endorse the proposals for accident prevention going forward:
 - (i) to continue to concentrate its Accident Investigation and Prevention resources on locations identified through the moving cursor programme;
 - (ii) and that broader elements such as education, encouragement and communications will continue to be addressed through the Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group. In particular, maintaining close liaison with the police in terms of appropriate enforcement as necessary.

15. DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION, LAND SOUTH OF MEIGLE ROW, CLOVENFORDS

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Neighbourhood Services seeking approval to utilise the developer contribution of £42,995 from Meigle Row, Clovenfords in line with details contained within the negotiated agreement ref: 06-0104-FUL to provide additional equipment to the play area adjacent to Muscat Brae. As part of the development at land South of Meigle Row, Clovenfords, the Council negotiated a developer contribution for the amount of £42,000 as a contribution towards the provision of additional equipment at the play areas adjacent to Muscat Brae, Clovenfords. However, after allowing for indexation and interest charged the balance held by the Council in relation to this agreed contribution was currently £42,995. Included in the sum was £17,890 towards costs associated with ongoing maintenance, insurance and depreciation of the equipment as per the developer contribution policy. This left a remaining capital budget of £25,105. In addition to this, the Tweeddale Area Forum had agreed to contribute £10,000 from its Quality of Life Budget to this sum to further improve access, boundary and surfacing, creating an overall capital budget of £35,105. Officers from Neighbourhood Services had been working with local Elected Members and the Community Council to agree a design for the extra play equipment to be delivered. This preferred design had now been agreed locally and officers had undertaken a procurement exercise and identified preferred providers. Officers were now pursuing the delivery of the approved design using the developer contribution. Members expressed their frustration at the length of time it had taken to get the developer to make the necessary contribution as he had resisted at all stages.

DECISION

AGREED to include £25,105 funded by a Developer Contribution within the Financial Capital Plan for 2015-16

16. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS - 2015/16 PERFORMANCE REPORT

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Neighbourhood Services detailing the activity of the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme in the first quarter of 2015/16. An amended appendix 1 to the report was tabled at the meeting. The report provided an update on the funding and performance of the scheme. The total amount of Discretionary Housing Payments awarded in the first quarter of 2015/16 was £518,080. The total amount of Discretionary Housing Payments awarded and paid in 2014/15 was £733,398. There were 1,101 Discretionary Housing Payment applications received in the first quarter of 2015/16. Of the 1,048 decided 993 (95%) were successful. The high rate had been achieved by the Council working jointly with Citizens Advice Scotland and Housing Associations to identify people who might be eligible and improve

the quality of applications. Members considered the long term trend and impact of the spare room subsidy, which was predicated on people being able to move to alternative properties which in reality were not available in many areas.

DECISION

NOTED the activity relating to Discretionary Housing Payments in the first quarter of 2015/16 and that the progress would continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis.

17. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

DECISION

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

18. **MINUTE**

The Committee approved the private Executive Minute of 9 June 2015.

The meeting concluded at 1.20 p.m.