

RESOURCES TASK GROUP

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The Resources Task Group met on 28th February.

1. **Minutes – adopted**

2. **New Posts**

Recruitment process commenced for the Building Control Officer post and new waste management posts -

1 No. refuse collection driver

1 no. refuse collector

1.5 skip site attendants

3. **Vacant Posts**

It is recommended that the post of caretaker at Social Centre, due to become vacant soon, on retirement of postholder, be filled.

4. **Review Variance Reporting Arrangements**

The Group has agreed a number of variance reporting matters it will address, including agency and bought in labour costs, review of trading accounts for a number of operations.

5. **Financial Training**

The Group has agreed financial training session which will be open to all members.

6. **Review of contributions**

The report produced on this has been considered and the Group will consider issues arising.

7. **Date of next meeting. – Thursday 3rd April 2.30 p.m.**

James Simpson, Alderman
Chair

RESOURCES TASK GROUP

Report of meeting of Resources Task Group held in the **McKinley Room**, Riada House, on Thursday 28th February 2008 at 3.30 p.m.

Chair Ald J Simpson

Present

Ald. F Campbell, C Cousley
Cllrs. J Finlay, M McCamphill, E Robinson
CE, HCDS, HFIT

Apologies

Cllrs P McGuigan & M McCamphill
DBS, DCLS

1. Minutes of last meeting 23/1/08

Minutes of the last meeting on 23/1/08, as circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay seconded by Alderman Cousley and **AGREED:**

- ***That the minutes of meeting on 23/1/08, be confirmed as a correct record.***

2. New Posts

Arising from adoption of the rate for 2008-09 the recruitment process has now commenced for the new waste management posts approved, as follows:

1 No. refuse collection driver

1 no. refuse collector

1.5 skip site attendants

and also the full time Building Control Officer post.

Councillor Robinson highlighted the difficulty in recruiting a temporary BCO last year and the backlog of work arising from this, also the change in the nature of work to be dealt with which necessitated an additional officer.

3. Vacant Posts

The part-time caretaker at the Social Centre is to retire in April 2008 and approval is sought to fill this post which is essential for the operation of the facility.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay seconded by Councillor Robinson and **AGREED:**

To recommend that the post be filled through a recruitment exercise and that a letter of thanks be sent to the postholder for her service to Council.

4. **Review Variance Reporting Arrangements**

Following consideration of this matter at the last group meeting CMT has given some consideration to financial reporting arrangements and the CE will bring forward to the next meeting proposals for examination of accounts and monitoring of spend. The issue of financial monitoring spend at JDLC& Café will also be addressed.

CE advised that this matter had been considered at CMT on Monday and DCLS wished more time to consider this and what the implications would be. During discussion members advised that they did not expect information to the level included in the rates book to be provided, but they would wish to examine in detail budget areas which they would identify. At this point in time they wished to see :

- ❑ ***a breakdown of agency spend by service/directorate, the reason for deployment, how vital it was for the various posts to be filled, for the year 2007/08 to date. – AGREED.***
- ❑ ***Similar report in respect of sub-contractors who tender, on an annual basis, for supply of labour – painter, joiners, labourers, electricians, plumbers. (tender no. 7) – AGREED.***
- ❑ ***regularly monitoring of income budgets (method to be agreed following report to be presented by DCLS)***

Members accepted that there was need to cover posts vital to service delivery and they wished the posts concerned identified. They indicated a desire for increasing the establishment rather than long term use of agency workers. CE explained, however, that where agency workers were engaged for prolonged periods it may be that they were engaged on a variety of posts over a period. He also advised that currently the use of agency labour to cover seasonal posts was being reviewed.

Members discussed monitoring of JDLC spend/income and HFIT requested that that in addition to monitoring of the JDLC facility and focus on café facility there the group should give attention, also, to other spend areas – Drumaheglis Marina, Fitness Suite and Trade Waste. HCDS indicated that under internal audit production of monthly trading accounts for the centre café was likely to be recommended. HFIT advised that trading account had previously been included in the annual accounts but not in recent years and this year the auditor required that these be included in the annual accounts. It was **AGREED**:

- ❑ ***that monthly trading accounts be produced for JDLC, Café Facility, Fitness Suite, Drumaheglis and Trade Waste, wef 1.4.08.***
- ❑ ***that variance report would be base document for monitoring purposes and arising from consideration of this members would identify specific services were more detailed reports would be required, the focus being on the bigger spend areas, in order that members could check on the economic soundness of budgets.***
- ❑ ***That the variance report include management notes of any issues/problems encountered which impacted on budget, positively or negatively.***

HFIT indicated that he and DCLS were considering a de-minimis level for monitoring purposes as an approach to monitoring and DCLS would report further on this at the next meeting. He indicated that the 12 month variance report would be available at end of June following closure of the annual accounts.

Arising from discussion on the level of absenteeism and steps by the Civil Service to tackle absenteeism it was noted that absence levels in the Civil Service were not much different from local government.

5. **Financial Training**

Member training on financial issues, as suggested, will be addressed under the member training programme. An introductory session involving officers outlining service budgets/activities will be arranged. Members comments are invited on content and further financial training requirements. Members indicated that they wished to have a clearer understanding of the financial workings of Council. It was **AGREED**:

- ***That an in-house awareness session on budgets in the various service areas be organised as a member training session and at the conclusion of the session members could identify further training requirements.***

6. **Review of contributions**

The report on review of contributions to other bodies was tabled at the recent rates meetings (copy circulated). Benefits of the larger areas of spend will continue to be monitored through internal audit process. The group is invited to consider if it wants any further work on this matter. It was **AGREED**:

- ***That members review the report and bring suggestions to the next meeting.***
- ***That the report summary be updated to include service area relating to contribution.***

7. **Date of next meeting. – Thursday 3rd April 2.30 p.m.**

Meeting closed at 4.45 p.m.