

**Highland Council
Corporate Resources Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Commercial Board** held in Committee Room 3, Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday 9 November 2017 at 10.00 am.

Present

Mr Gordon Adam
Mr George Cruickshank
Mr Jimmy Gray
Mr Derek Louden

Mrs Angela MacLean
Mr Peter Saggars
Ms Maxine Smith

Also in attendance

Mr A Baxter

Mr A Rhind

Officials in attendance

Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance, Highland Council
Mr S Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance, Highland Council
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Highland Council

BUSINESS

Items are recorded in the sequence that they were taken at the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Lobban, Mrs D Mackay and Mrs F Robertson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There was circulated the Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 September 2017, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Exclusion of the Public

The Board **RESOLVED** that under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the matter for discussion would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

5. Combined List of Commercial Opportunities

There had been circulated Report No CB/01/17 by the Director of Finance which set out a list of the commercial ideas that were discussed at the last meeting, together with savings proposals with a commercial theme.

A brief overview was provided on each of the commercial ideas as listed and the Board discussed initial thoughts on how these could be taken forward. During discussion, it was indicated that a list of the social enterprise initiatives being conducted across the Highlands was available and it was proposed that a copy of this be circulated to the Board. It was highlighted that there was an obvious link between items 9 and 11 and it was requested that the Head of Development and Regeneration be invited to attend the next meeting to provide further advice on progressing these ideas.

It was emphasised that the role of the Board was to identify commercial opportunities and it was therefore felt that there was a need to prioritise the list so that focus could be concentrated on progressing several of the most lucrative ideas. On that basis, it was recommended that items 2, 3, 9, 10, 11 and 14 from the list presented be taken forward as a priority with an Outline Business Case being developed in order to determine the commercial viability of each initiative. In addition, it was also highlighted that there could be a requirement for investment, potentially from capital, in order to set-up projects that would then generate income.

Following discussion, the Commercial Board **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that:-

- i. items 2, 3, 9, 10, 11 and 14 from the list presented be taken forward with an Outline Business Case being developed for each;
- ii. a list of the social enterprise initiatives operating across the Highlands be submitted to a future meeting; and
- iii. the Head of Development and Regeneration be invited to the next meeting to discuss potential options available in regard to taking forward items 9 and 11 from the commercial ideas list.

6. Hostel Accommodation

There had been circulated Report No CB/02/17 by the Director of Finance which provided details of the mini review of hostel accommodation carried out between October and November 2016, as part of the Council's Redesign process.

The Commercial Board welcomed the recommendations as set out the report but recognised that further work was required in order to fully scope out the management options available and the associated costs. The Head of Corporate Finance explained that a Project Officer within the Corporate Improvement Team had been charged with examining the feasibility of opening hostels during the summer period and a formal report on the outcome of this would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

It was suggested that the Millburn Youth Hostel and Orkney Islands Council, which also operated youth hostels, be used as models of success and that these be used to help inform the report.

Following discussion, the Commercial Board **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that a report be submitted to the next meeting comprising an Outline Business Case on extending the use of hostel accommodation.

8. Byelaws - Outline of Legal Powers

The Head of Corporate Governance gave a verbal report on Byelaws during which he advised that the Local Government Act 1973 gave local authorities the powers to make byelaws, subject to final approval by the Scottish Government, for the good rule and government for the whole or part of their area and for the prevention and suppression of nuisances.

However, as the effect of byelaws was essentially to create criminal offences breaching these could lead to prosecution and the income from any fine imposed was paid to the Crown not the Council. The Head of Corporate Governance further explained that the Council also had powers to make management rules in terms of the Civic Government Act and enforcement of this was by a Civil Order, i.e. not a financial penalty.

Thereafter the Commercial Board **NOTED** the update.

At this point, Mr J Gray left the meeting (11.25 am).

7. Income Generation Workstream

There had been circulated Report No CB/03/17 by the Director of Finance which set out proposals under the Council's income generation workstream for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The Commercial Board **NOTED** the proposals.

9. Future Meetings

The Commercial Board **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held at 2.30 pm on Thursday 7 December 2017 and **APPROVED** the following meeting dates for 2018:-

- Tuesday 16 January 2018 - 10.30 am
- Friday 16 February 2018 – 10.30am
- Monday 19 March 2018 *
- Thursday 19 April 2018
- Wednesday 16 May 2018
- Wednesday 20 June 2018 - 10.30 am
- Thursday 9 August 2018
- Thursday 13 September 2018
- Wednesday 17 October 2018
- Thursday 22 November 2018
- Thursday 11 December 2018

All meetings to be held at 2.00 pm unless indicated.

* The feasibility of rescheduling this meeting would be investigated.

The meeting was closed at 11.30 am.