MINUTE of MEETING of the PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 1 FEBRUARY 2019.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Frank Anderson (substituting for Peter Johnston), Tom Kerr (substituting for Chris Horne), Dave King, George Paul and Damian Timson

Apologies – Councillors Chris Horne and Peter Johnston

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 13 (Proposed Car Park Charging) – Councillor Tom Kerr declared an interest in that he was a council appointed member of Linlithgow BID who had recently discussed the contents of the report.

2. MINUTE

The Panel approved the Minute of its meeting held on 7 December 2017. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3 OF 2018/19

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive examining the current levels of performance for all indicators that supported the council's Corporate Plan and were the responsibility of the Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

Of the 64 performance indicators, 41 were categorised as green, 8 were amber, 10 were red and 5 were unknown. The Panel noted that in the appendix to the report an explanation was provided for each indicator.

The report also provided a summary of those indicators that were categorised as red and those that were not categorised.

The Panel was asked to note the performance information and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary for any of the performance indicators.

Decision

To note the terms of the report

4. SICKNESS ABSENCE (1 APRIL 2018 - 31 DECEMBER 2018)

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing sickness rates for the 9 month period from 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018 together with a brief commentary on the application of the new Policy and Procedure on

Supporting Attendance at Work which came into effect from 1 September 2018.

The sickness absence Standard Performance Indicator (SPI) for the full council for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018 was set out at Appendix 1 to the report, together with the SPI performance indicators for the full years (2015/16, and 2016/17 and 2017/18).

The sickness absence SPI for each service area (teachers and non-teachers were shown separately) for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018 was set out in Appendix 2. Of the seven council service areas, four reported sickness absence rates above the council target of 3.6% these being; Housing, Customer & Building Services, Operational Services, Planning & Economic Development and Social Policy.

The report went on to provide details of Long-Term Absence/Continuous Absence and Disregarded Absences. It also provided an analysis of categories of Absence, highlighting that the most common reason for long term absence across the council fell within the category of Mental and Behavioural.

The Head of Corporate Services advised that the absence management team within HR Services had continued to work closely with managers across the council, providing advice and guidance on the monitoring and management of sickness. Table 1 in the report showed the number of employees at each stage of the Policy and Procedure as at 31 December 2018 compared to the previously reported positions and Table 2 in the report showed a breakdown of live cases as at 30 September 2018.

The report also provided commentary on other support initiatives that the council had in place including the Occupational Health Contract, which was currently out to tender, the HR Adviser input to Management meetings, the Employee Assistance Programme and Employee Wellbeing.

The Head of Corporate Services also provided the Panel with an update on the Supporting Attendance at Work Policy which had come into effect on 1 September 2018. It was noted that since its introduction, 53 requests for management discretion had been discussed with HR, 42 (79%) of which had resulted in discretion being applied to suspend application of the trigger level for a limited period taking into account the circumstances of the individual case.

The Panel was asked to note the content of the report

The Panel requested that for future sickness reports further detail be included on those absences that fell within the category “Mental and Behavioural”.

<u>Decision</u>

1. To note the contents of the report; and

2. To request that future sickness absence monitoring reports include

further details on those absences that fell within the category “Mental and Wellbeing”.

5. CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2019/20 TO 2022/23

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services presenting the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23, a copy of which was attached to the report.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23 had been developed to support the delivery of the priorities in the council’s Corporate Plan. The Strategy was intended to ensure that there was sound governance and a framework to help the council meet national and local obligations including targets defined by the Scottish Government.

The Strategy supported the council’s vision for procurement to achieve superior procurement performance through advanced sustainable procurement practices for the benefit of the council and its stakeholders.

The Corporate Procurement Strategy built upon previous strategies. There were five outcomes in the strategy and these were set out in the report under the headings of Contracts; Compliance; Accessibility; Community Benefits; and Sustainability. The Outcomes would also target an increased percentage of council suppliers paying the living wage however it was to be noted that the council was not authorised to enforce payment of the living wage by suppliers.

Key measures of the success for each outcome had been identified and these would be used to track, monitor and report on performance throughout the lifetime of the strategy. An annual review would be undertaken and reported to the council’s Corporate Management Team and to the Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

There were 31 actions that had been identified to support the delivery of the Corporate Procurement Strategy outcomes. Progress against these actions would be included in the monitoring arrangements for the strategy.

A discussion was then undertaken by the Panel members in relation to the detail contained in procurement reports that were submitted to Council Executive for approval. The Head of Corporate Services explained the process followed by officers in presenting these reports but confirmed that if members required more detail on all the bids received this could be included in future committee reports.

Additionally with regards to community benefits the Head of Corporate Services explained that on pages 24 and 25 of the strategy a commitment was provided for on the monitoring of community benefits and that officer's continued to engage with local companies.

It was recommended that the Panel consider and provide comment upon the content of the draft Corporate Procurement Strategy which was intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;

2. To agree that future procurement reports being presented to Council Executive for approval provide more detail on all the bids received; and

3. To agree that the report be presented to Council Executive for approval.

6. WELFARE REFORM: QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising of recent developments in and the continuing implications of, the ongoing programme of welfare changes.

The report recalled that major changes that had been introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Act had also provided for major DWP-led reforms to the welfare system, most notably the introduction of Universal Credit to replace six current working age benefits/credits, which had gone live in West Lothian on 16 May 2018.

The Panel noted that the Scotland Act 2016 devolved certain aspects of welfare in Scotland to the Holyrood Parliament. Consultation had been undertaken and the Scottish Government had now announced draft timetables and arrangements to implement the devolved welfare powers over the course of the current Parliament. The Social Security (Scotland) Bill had been introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 20 June 2017 and received royal assent on 1 June 2018.

The report then went on to provide an overview of the following subject matters :-

- Discretionary Housing Payment Fund
- Scottish Welfare Fund
- Universal Credit
- Universal Support Provision
- The Scotland Act 2016 and Devolution of Welfare
- Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018
- Further welfare changes

With regards to Universal Credit the Head of Finance and Property Services provided the Panel with an update following a recent announcement by the UK Government which would see some changes to the overall operation of Universal Credit.

The Head of Finance and Property Services concluded by advising that as further changes took effect, officers would assess the cumulative effects of these challenges in order to develop and shape work going forward.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

7. HORIZON SCAN

The Panel considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services and the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing a summary of the latest UK economic indicators, including potential implications following the referendum vote to leave the EU and an update on the estimated revenue budget position facing the council as a result of ongoing unavoidable spending pressures and government funding constraints.

The report provided the Panel with a Horizon Scan for the UK covering areas such as the UK leaving the EU, debt and borrowing, economic growth, exports and inward investment, inflation, interest rates unemployment and house prices. A similar horizon scan was also provided for in the report specifically relating to Scotland and to West Lothian Council.

With regards to budget planning the revenue budget for 2018/19 to 2022/23 was approved by Council on 13 February 2018. The approved financial plan included a budget gap of £65.3 million over the five years to 2022/23, with approved savings of £60 million. Officers would continue to monitor announcements and other information to review and refine budget assumptions.

The Head of Finance and Property Services continued to explain that the nature of forecasting meant that it was challenging to identify with any certainty expenditure pressures and income. Therefore in general the following risks and uncertainties would be monitored :-

- Economic growth being less than forecast, resulting in further public spending reduction;
- Funding not provided to fully cover costs of introducing new legislation;
- Policy changes by the UK or Scottish Government which restricted the council’s flexibility to decide how to deliver services locally;
- Ring fencing of grant funding, constraining how local authorities allocated resources; and
- Changes to local government remits with uncertainty for service provision and funding.

The report concluded that the report provided a high level overview of the latest economic indicators and other announcements likely to have an impact on the council and that based on forecasts and commentary the outlook would suggest that in the short, medium and long term public finances would continue to be constrained.

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Notes the results of the horizon scan for the UK, Scotland and West Lothian;

2. Notes the horizon scan for West Lothian Council;

3. Notes that officers were currently updating the council's budget model for 2019/20 to 2022/23;

4. Notes that the constraints in funding and expenditure pressures would lead to an increased budget gap for 2019/20 to 2022/23; and

5. Notes the risks and uncertainties in relation to the council's budget model.

Decision

To note the content of the report

8. AFFORDABLE CREDIT UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the first year of trading by Conduit Scotland and the two local credit unions, Blackburn, Seafield and District Credit Union and West Lothian Credit Union.

The Panel were advised that the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) along with economists and policymakers had voiced increased concern about household debt and that financial exclusion from mainstream sources of credit was an increasing problem for households that, in turn, had led to many seeking alternative high cost lenders such as home collected credit, pawn shops and pay day lenders.

A CDFI (Community Development Finance Initiative) was a social enterprise which offered affordable loans and budgeting advice and supported people to engage with other financial services, such as savings with institutions like credit unions, income maximisation and debt management.

Falkirk, Fife and West Lothian Councils had formed a consortium to improve access to affordable loans through a preferred provider, Conduit Scotland. Conduit Scotland operated four shops across the three local authority areas with the West Lothian shop operating in Bathgate.

Conduit Scotland had commenced lending in August 2017 and had since lent £589,518 to 1,179 individuals. The average loan value was £500 and 55% of customers had previously used a high cost lender. In West Lothian, 362 loans totalling £177,679 were agreed.

By working with Conduit customers had saved £281,404 compared to high cost loans. Importantly 9 out of 10 customers felt they had got the help they needed.

The report continued by providing an update in relation to West Lothian Credit Union and Blackburn, Seafield and District Credit Union in that they had received £66,920 of funding from West Lothian Council through time limited funding. This funding was to support the development of an online presence through new websites, mobile apps, online loan application and electronic signature processes.

Most of this work had either been completed or was progressing with roll out expected over the coming months. Jointly the two local credit unions had over 7,000 members with 654 new members in the last year. The credit unions had loaned £1.65m and had combined member savings of £4.17m. West Lothian Credit Union had also reported that 57% of members were accessing online, demonstrating that new technology in a short space of time had increased access, attracted new members and made it easier for members to get a loan.

The report concluded that Conduit Scotland had filled a gap within West Lothian for small amounts of credit to low income, vulnerable households whilst referring significant numbers onto further support.

The Panel was asked to note the contents of the report and in particular :-

1. £589,518 had been loaned to 1,179 financially excluded individuals through the CDFI;

2. The utilisation of new technology to support widening access to affordable credit; and

3. The valuable contribution Blackburn, Seafield and District Credit Union along with West Lothian Credit Union were making to improve financial inclusion options for low income families.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

9. DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATES RELIEF SCHEME

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising of the criteria relating to the current Discretionary Non Domestic Rates Relief Scheme in relation to charitable organisations and those who were assisting in the delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Head of Finance and Property Services explained that West Lothian Council was responsible for the administration of Non Domestic Rates as the rating authority. Relief was available to ratepayers under both mandatory and discretionary schemes and the council was required to determine a scheme for discretionary relief.

The Local Government (Financial Provisions, etc) (Scotland) Act 1962 provided for discretionary rate relief to be given to :-

- Registered Scottish charities where the ratepayer was entitled to 80% mandatory relief
- Organisations not established or conducted for profit; and
- Clubs or societies not established or conducted for profit

The current grant scheme was amended following the Council meeting on 20 November 2018 to provide relief from rates for Foodbanks. The current scheme was effective from 1 April 2018 and was set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report. A detailed list of organisations that currently received discretionary non domestic rates relief was set out in Appendix 2, also attached to the report.

The Head of Finance and Property Services continued to provide details of organisations that received either discretionary or mandatory rates relief of either 80% or 100% and included organisations such as West Lothian Credit Union, Open Door Accommodation Project and The Bridge Community Project.

It was proposed that the current scheme be amended from 1 April 2018 to provide a 20% discretionary relief top up to an 80% mandatory relief entitlement as a Scottish registered charity for :-

- ❖ Organisations who were a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and whose charitable objects included the prevention of relief of financial hardship through the provision of affordable personal loans to financially excluded individuals; and
- ❖ Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

The additional cost of just under £2,000 in 2018-19 could be met from the existing revenue budget.

The report concluded that the proposed amendment to the current discretionary non domestic rates relief scheme would allow the council to continue to assist those organisations previously targeted, as well as targeting other partners assisting in the delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Notes the on 20 November 2018 the Council resolved that officers bring a report to the Panel in relation to the criteria attached to the Discretionary Rates Relief Scheme in West Lothian and its application to charitable organisations in general and those assisting delivering the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

2. Notes and considers the following recommendations which were intended to be submitted to the Council Executive on 26 February 2019

The current Discretionary Non Domestic Rates Relief Scheme is amended from 1 April 2018 to include :-

- A 20% “top up” relief for those organisations registered as a Scottish charity and with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Community Development Financial Institution whose charitable objects included the prevention or relief of financial hardship through the provision of affordable personal loans to financially excluded individuals; and

- A 20% “top up” relief for Citizens Advice Bureau

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;

2. To agree that the report be presented to Council Executive for approval; and

3. To agree that the Head of Finance and Property Services confirm with Panel Members the position with regards to sports social clubs with a licence.

10. LOANS FUND REVIEW

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising of proposed actions following a review of the operation of the loans fund.

The Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) Regulation 2016 came into force on 1 April 2016. The Regulations stipulated that local authorities must operate a loans fund, which was a way for councils to recognise the amount of capital expenditure that was being financed by borrowing each year and also the amount of this borrowing that was being repaid each year and charged to the revenue account.

The statutory purpose of the Loans Fund was summarised in the report and the 2016 guidance set out four options for the calculation of the repayment of loans fund advances and simplified the statutory process of the loans fund.

As reported to Partnership and Resources PDSP on 5 October 2018 and to full Council on 20 November 2018 officers had been investigating options to review the operation of the loans fund, including any potential opportunities for savings. Following the introduction of the new regulations, a review of both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account loans fund advance repayments had been carried out. The review covered a number of areas and these were outlined in the report.

After reviewing and considering the options and recommendations resulting from the Loans Fund Review, officers were proposing a number of changes to the way that the statutory loans fund was currently operated and these were set out in the report.

As outlined in the 2016 guidance local authorities must, at the time of making a loans fund advance, determine the period over which the advance was to be repaid to the loans fund and the amount of repayment to be made to the loans fund in each financial year over the period. As a result of this part of the guidance a number of Scottish local authorities, including West Lothian, had been reviewing their historic debt repayments to assess whether the repayment methodology applied to historic loans fund advances was still the most prudent advice.

However it was to be noted that this part of the 2016 guidance had been subject to differing views and interpretations details of which were summarised in the report. As a result COSLA was raising the matter with the Scottish Government and Audit Scotland was also seeking an external legal opinion on its interpretation of the 2016 regulations. The Scottish Government has stated that it would issue further guidance once Audit Scotland had received its legal opinion. Once the position is clarified then a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Panel on possible further recommendations

It was recommended that the Panel notes :-

1. The review of the operation of the loans fund;

2. The proposal to review the method of interest apportionment between the general fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA);

3. The proposal to adopt the asset life method for all loans fund advances from 1 April 2018;

4. The proposal to adopt a repayment period of 35 years for all loans fund advances from 1 April 2018;

5. The proposal to adopt a repayment interest rate of 5.5% for all loans fund advances from 1 April 2018;

6. The current position regarding the application of a re-profiling adjustment to loans fund repayments, and notes the intention of officers to provide further reports on this issue when the position was clarified; and

7. The intention to include these proposals in the treasury management report to Council in February 2019.

<u>Decision</u>

1. To note the contents of the report; and

2. To agree that the subject matter was included on the workplan so an update report could be brought back to a future meeting of the Panel.

11. PROPOSED CAR PARK CHARGING

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising of the intention to progress a review of car parking controls in West Lothian.

The Head of Finance and Property Services explained that the council, as part of its Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2018/19 to 2027/28, aimed to manage its assets effectively and efficiently for the benefit of all West Lothian communities.

In relation to car parks, the aim was to maximise the benefits from these; to regulate and improve parking; to sustain and improve the condition and suitability of car parks; achieve costs savings on maintenance and non-domestic rates; and to generate income.

The report then outlined the context of the review that would be undertaken and would include consideration of: - in-house direct management, external management, decriminalised parking enforcement; and a lease agreement approach.

The development of a parking strategy would be progressed by officers from various relevant services to ensure that any proposals that came forward in the future were comprehensive and would seek to achieve corporate and service level objectives. Any previous consideration of parking and management approaches would be included in the review including decriminalised parking and regulated parking.

It was recommended that the Panel: :-

1. Notes that a wider review for the management of parking (both on and off street) would be progressed to ensure a comprehensive approach to parking controls in West Lothian; and

2. Notes the review would consider the various models for the delivery of parking controls.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and

2. To note the Labour Group’s position that the saving of £260,000 should be removed from the planned savings for 2019/20 and the Panel’s agreement that the wider review proposed by officers should proceed

12. THE KEEP SAFE INITIATIVE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising of proposals to establish “Keep Safe Places” at a range of council facilities across West Lothian.

The Keep Safe Initiative worked with a network of local businesses such as shops, libraries and cafes who had agreed to make their premises a “Keep Safe Place” where vulnerable members of the public could go if they felt frightened, stressed or were the victim of crime when out in the community. The initiative was supported by Police Scotland and the I Am Me Charity.

Members of the public wishing to use the initiative were issued with a contact card containing their details. Businesses taking place in the initiative were issued with a Keep Safe sticker to display in their premises window. The service was provided free of charge by the I Am Me Charity and training for staff in participating premises was provided free of charge by Police Scotland.

Council agreed on 22 January 2019 that officers should identify suitable council premises across the county that could potentially provide a Keep Safe Place for vulnerable members of the public.

It was considered that prominent public buildings in accessible locations would best serve the aims of the initiative and that council Partnership Centres would be particularly well suited for the role. Therefore it was proposed that the opportunity for establishing a Keep Safe Place at each partnership centre would be explored.

In considering this matter, officers had concluded that properties within the council’s school estate should be disregarded on safety and logistical grounds. Community Education Centres were also discounted on the basis that these were leased to and run by individual management committees with widely varying opening hours, facilities and staffing capacities.

Preliminary discussions had also been held with representatives from West Lothian Leisure, who had expressed a willingness to explore opportunities for establishing Keep Safe Places at suitable Xcite locations.

The report concluded that the Keep Safe initiative could make a significant difference to the lives of vulnerable members of the community in times of need and distress and that it was proposed that officers work with Police Scotland and I Am Me Charity to explore opportunities for establishing Keep Safe Places throughout West Lothian.

A further update on progress would be provided to the Panel in due course.

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Considers and notes the content of the report; and

2. Notes that it was planned to present a further update to the Panel in due course.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;

2. To record a note of thanks to officers for the work done to date so soon after agreement by Council.

13. REVIEW OF DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Governance Manager considering improvements that could be made to the council's decision-making arrangements.

The report recalled that part of the council's decision on the revenue budget on 13 February 2018 was "to review the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of its present decision-making arrangements and to report to the Partnership and Resources PDSP for consideration of possible changes".

The Group Leaders and the independent councillor were consulted before the summer recess in 2018 on the council's existing decision-making arrangements. The Corporate Management Team and Committee Services were also consulted. There emerged some areas of common interest and/or concern, although not a consensus on how to address them all. Those common themes were fed back to the Partnership and Resources PDSP at meetings held on 24 August 2018 and on 5 October 2018.

After discussion at the October meeting officers were requested to circulate additional information to members, details of which was summarised in Appendix 2 attached to the report. It was noted that this list whilst not exhaustive contained a number of suggestions that were either completed or already in hand, could be taken forward by officers and those that required a decision or direction by elected members

At the various meetings held with councillors a number of constraints were explained and included :-

- Statutory requirements
- Volume and timing of business
- Meeting dates and times
- Political composition
- The need for some committees to exist
- The council's response to the 2016-17 external audit report and the Best Value Assurance Report; and
- Existing Senior Councillor posts and payments

In moving forward the Panel was asked to :-

1. To note the updated note of themes and concerns that had emerged from officers' discussions with members and at the PDSP meetings following council's instruction in February 2018 to review decision-making arrangements; and

2. To consider those issues to assist in identifying potential improvements and in taking the review forward for decision-making.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report;

2. To agree that a report to Council Executive was required outlining options and seeking further direction from elected members; and

3. To note that officers would discuss those options on request with members or political groups prior to the report being presented to Council Executive

14. CONSULTATION ON PRISONER VOTING

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Chief Executive informing the members of the Scottish Government consultation on prisoner voting, which set out proposals for ensuring compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights on the matter of prisoners voting.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found in 2005 that the UK's ban on any convicted prisoners voting in elections breached their human rights.

The Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee published a report on Prisoner Voting in Scotland on 14 May 2018. The committee asked the Scottish Government to consider a wide range of views on this issue going forward and to consult as many stakeholders as possible.

The consultation set out the background to the issue and sought views on a proposal to allow only those prisoners sentenced to short sentences to vote. The Scottish Government's view was that it was not appropriate to give all prisoners the right to vote.

The options examined in the consultation paper were as follows :-

- To link disenfranchisement to the length of a prisoner's custodial sentence;

- To make disenfranchisement an additional sentencing option, to be applied at the discretion of the sentencing judge;

- To link disenfranchisement to the type of crime committed; and

- To link a prisoner's regaining the right to vote to the length of time remaining on this custodial sentence.

The report continued by providing a summary of the questions being posed in the consultation. It was also noted that the consultation paper was proposing that prisoners would not be able to vote in person but would need to register for a postal or a proxy vote in the same way that prisoners on remand currently did.

The Panel was further advised that electoral administrators had offered no view on whether prisoners should be entitled to vote as that was a matter of policy for legislatures to determine. However they had previously highlighted a number of issues and these were outlined in the report.

The Electoral Management Board for Scotland was collating feedback on a number of practical issues from electoral administrators across Scotland and would respond to the consultation from this perspective.

It was not anticipated that there would be any significant impact on council resources. There could be a very small proportionate increase in the number of postal votes to be issued and counted and awareness raising activities would have to take into account any changes in voting rights.

The Panel was asked to consider the Scottish Government's consultation with a view to informing the council's response.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;

2. To agree that the report be forwarded to a future meeting of the Council Executive

15. WORKPLAN (HEREWITH).

A copy of the workplan was circulated for information.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the workplan; and

2. To agree the inclusion of an update on the Loans Fund Review