MINUTES of MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL held in the Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Tuesday, 28 June 2011 at 2.00 pm.


Religious Representatives Present (Non-Voting Observers) for Education

Business:- Mr V Bourne, Mr P Hayes and Mrs M Harkness.

Apology for Absence:- Councillor Brown

1 Order of Business.

The Council noted advice from the Clerk that the following papers had been circulated for the meeting:-

(a) a “to follow” report of the Seminar of the Council held on 23 June 2011, which was dealt with under paragraph 22 hereto;

(b) a “to follow” report by the Director, Corporate Resources, concerning Lasswade High School, which was dealt with under paragraph 4 of the Addendum hereto; and

(c) an “additional” report by the Director Corporate Resources, concerning Dalkeith Community Centre: Miners Club Relocation, which in view of the late circulation of the paper, the Provost had agreed to accept as urgent business in view of the Council’s interest in the matter, as dealt with under paragraph 6 hereto, it having been also agreed to take the matter in public in view of the public interest in the matter.

2 Declarations of Interest

Depute Provost Russell declared an interest in item 26 on the agenda (Dalkeith Community Centre: Miners Club Relocation) and confirmed that as she was a Member of Dalkeith Miners Club she would not participate in any deliberation thereof.

Councillor Thacker declared an interest in item 23 on the agenda (Relocation of Midlothian Sure Start’s Stepping Forward Project and Lease Agreement) and confirmed that as his wife was Chair of Midlothian Sure Start he would not participate in any deliberation thereof.
3 Minutes

The Minutes of the undernoted meeting of Midlothian Council were held as read and to be a true record of proceedings and were thereupon signed by the Provost.

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<td>Councillor Imrie</td>
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4 Cabinet and Other Meetings

The undernoted Minutes of Meetings of Cabinet and Committees were submitted. The Council noted the Minutes and approved the recommendations contained therein:

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5 Leader of the Council’s Response to Written Questions

It was noted that no written questions to the Leader of the Council had been received in terms of Standing Order 4.2 (vii).

Sederunt

With reference to paragraph 2 above, Depute Provost Russell declared an interest in the following item of business and accordingly left the meeting at 2.05 pm thereby not taking part in the discussion thereof.

Prior to leaving the meeting, Depute Provost Russell expressed her disappointment at being unable to participate in discussion of an issue of such importance to her ward. She emphasised that she did not believe that this was a situation that the Code of Conduct had been designed to create; a view which was shared by a number of other Members.
6 Dalkeith Community Centre: Miners Club Relocation

With reference to (i) paragraph 1 above; and (ii) paragraph 2 of the Addendum to the Minutes of 22 March 2011, there was submitted report, dated 16 June 2011, by the Director, Education and Children’s Services, providing an update on progress in relocating key users of Dalkeith Community Centre to the Dalkeith Miners Welfare Club (DMWC) and seeking approval for additional funds, primarily as a result of regulatory requirements, in order to complete the planned extension of the DMWC building to allow it to operate as a multifunctional community facility.

The Council, having heard from the Head of Communities and Support Services, who responded to Members’ questions, discussed the matter at some length.

Thereafter, Councillor Imrie, seconded by Councillor Aitchison, moved:-

1 Council notes the positive partnering arrangements with the Dalkeith Miners Welfare Club and their co-operation throughout the project.

2 Council has already unanimously agreed the closure of the Dalkeith Community Centre and the demolition of the former Thornybank Nursery, and for that site to be used as part of the Council’s new house build programme.

Council now agrees that the Nursery provision in the Woodburn area be increased at the new Woodburn Primary School using existing facilities; and that the concept of a Community Hub in Woodburn be explored in liaison with Dalkeith Miners Club.

3 To achieve these aims Council further agrees:

a) to increase the capacity and staffing at the new Woodburn Primary School Nursery to a maximum of 160 places on a basis of 80 am/80 pm if required;

b) the £27,000 identified at Council on 22 March as necessary for the refurbishment of the Miners Club remain available to the Club for work that may be required to facilitate community use;

c) for one year to fully fund the provision of a development worker for the Woodburn area, dedicated to progressing the feasibility of creating a hub in partnership with Dalkeith Miners Club;

d) to explore developing further community use (excluding nursery provision) of Dalkeith Miners Club in partnership with the Club;

e) to request the Director, Corporate Resources explore leasing options for community use of facilities within Dalkeith Miners Club; and

f) to receive a further detailed progress report in August.
As an amendment, Councillor Statham, seconded by Councillor Thompson, moved that the local community be offered the opportunity to bring forward a business case to take on the former Thornybank Nursery as alternative accommodation for the nursery group.

The Provost directed that in terms of Standing Order 7.14, in order for the amendment to be competent, Standing Orders would require to be suspended so that the earlier decision of the Council to demolish the former Thornybank Nursery, and for the site to be used as part of the Council’s new house build programme could be reconsidered in light of new information not previously available; which was then moved by Councillor Statham, seconded by Councillor Thompson.

On a vote being taken the motion to suspend Standing Orders failed to secure the two thirds of Members present required in terms of Standing Order 3.1; the vote being six in favour and nine against.

The amendment having fallen, the Provost then directed that a vote be taken for or against the original motion by Councillor Imrie, seconded by Councillor Aitchison.

Prior to this Councillors Imrie and Aitchison consented to the wording of the motion being adjusted to allow the words “including feedback on the community consultations” to be added to point 3(f) and the word “hopefully” inserted immediately prior to “August”.

On a vote then being taken thirteen members voted for the motion and none against.

Councillor Statham asked that in terms of Standing Order 11.3(vi) his dissent be recorded.

**Decision**

(a) Council notes the positive partnering arrangements with the Dalkeith Miners Welfare Club and their co-operation throughout the project.

(b) Council has already unanimously agreed the closure of the Dalkeith Community Centre and the demolition of the former Thornybanc Nursery, and for that site to be used as part of the Council’s new house build programme.

(c) Council now agrees that the Nursery provision in the Woodburn area be increased at the new Woodburn Primary School using existing facilities; and that the concept of a Community Hub in Woodburn be explored in liaison with Dalkeith Miners Club.

(d) Council further agrees:

i) to increase the capacity and staffing at the new Woodburn Primary School Nursery to a maximum of 160 places on a basis of 80 am/80 pm if required;
ii) the £27,000 identified at Council on 22 March as necessary for the refurbishment of the Miners Club remain available to the Club for work that may be required to facilitate community use;

iii) for one year to fully fund the provision of a development worker for the Woodburn area, dedicated to progressing the feasibility of creating a hub in partnership with Dalkeith Miners Club;

iv) to explore developing further community use (excluding nursery provision) of Dalkeith Miners Club in partnership with the Club;

v) to request the Director, Corporate Resources explore leasing options for community use of facilities within Dalkeith Miners Club; and

vi) to receive a further detailed progress report, including feedback on the community consultations, in hopefully August.

(Action: Director, Education and Children’s Services)

Sederunt

Councillor Chalmers left the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item of business at 2.45 pm and Depute Provost Russell rejoined the meeting upon its conclusion at 2.55 pm.

7 Notices of Motion

(a) Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) “Care Accolade” Award

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillor Aitchison, countersigned by Councillor Imrie, as follows:-

“Midlothian Council has won a SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council) Care Accolade for our contribution to the Transformation of Older People’s Services in Midlothian. It is all the more exciting that we won in the category described as “The Chairs Award” which is drawn from across all categories and finalists. We were also given a special commendation in the category “Adults and Older People”.

This award is not just about the new services that we have developed it is also about the way in which we have transformed our mainstream work with older people.

Council records its thanks to all staff involved for their contributions towards making this award possible.”

Councillor Aitchison moved the motion accordingly, with Councillor Imrie seconding.

The Council thereafter approved the motion unanimously.

(Action: Director, Communities and Wellbeing)
(b) **Football Bigotry and Sectarianism**

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Provost Montgomery, countersigned by Councillor Bennett, as follows:-

“Midlothian Council supports the actions of the SNP Administration in Holyrood in their efforts to stamp out bigotry and sectarianism in football.

There is no place for this in a mature adult country, and any aspirations Scotland has in the future can only be hindered by this blight on our national game.

Council calls on First Minister Alex Salmond to include Scotland internationals in his efforts, and attempt to stop foul-mouthed anti-English sectarian chanting that takes place even when we are not playing the ‘auld enemy’.

Council agrees that we write to all local authorities in Scotland, the Scottish Football Association who administers our game and the Scotland Travel Club to advise them of our decision.”

Provost Montgomery moved the motion accordingly, with Councillor Bennett seconding.

As an amendment, Councillor Statham, seconded by Councillor Thompson, moved as follows:-

“Midlothian Council supports the actions of the SNP Administration in Holyrood in their efforts to stamp out bigotry and sectarianism in football.

There is no place for this in a mature adult country, and any aspirations Scotland has in the future can only be hindered by this blight on our national game.

Council recognises that supporters of the National team are highly regarded but feels that current efforts to stamp out bigotry and sectarianism require to be extended to all levels of our national game.

Council agrees that we write to all local authorities in Scotland, the Scottish Football Association who administers our game and the Scotland Travel Club to advise them of our decision.”

**Decision**

On a vote being taken, six Members voted for the amendment and eleven for the motion which accordingly became the decision of the meeting.

(Action: Legal and Secretariat Manager)

**Declaration of Interest**

Councillor C Beattie declared an interest in the following item of business and took no part in the discussion thereof.
8 Renunciation of Councillor Allowance

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minutes of 24 May 2011, there was submitted report, dated 8 June 2011, by the Director, Corporate Resources, advising that following his election to the Scottish Parliament, Councillor Colin Beattie had decided to forego his Members’ Allowance and seeking approval of a request from Councillor Colin Beattie that his members’ allowance be utilised for the benefit of the Midlothian South Ward.

The Council, heard from the Director, Corporate Resources, who responded to Members’ questions.

Decision

To approve the utilisation of Councillor Colin Beattie’s members’ allowance for the benefit of the Midlothian South Ward as detailed in the Director’s report.

(Action: Director, Corporate Resources)

9 Application for Planning Permission in Principle (10/00339/PPP) for the Erection of a Hotel, Tourist Retail Outlet and Tourist Orientation Centre and Formation of Associated Car Parking and Vehicular and Pedestrian Access and Associated Works on Land to South-West of Fordel Junction A68 from Junction A6106 to Main Street, Pathhead.

(a) Note of Pre-Determination Hearing of 31 May 2011

There was submitted and noted a Note of the Pre-Determination Hearing held on 31 May 2011 in regard to the above application.

(b) Application Report

There was submitted report, dated 16 June 2011, by the Head of Planning and Development, concerning the above application.

The Council, having heard from the Head of Planning and Development, who responded to Members’ questions, discussed the application at length.

Thereafter, Councillor Imrie, seconded by Councillor Bennett, moved that the potential benefits of the proposed development in terms of generating additional tourism and employment opportunities, together with the provision of much needed hotel accommodation at a key gateway location provided sufficient grounds to depart from the Structure and Local Plans and that planning permission should therefore be granted subject to:- (i) appropriate conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, which should include the requirement to provide a green travel plan; (ii) referral of the application to the Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan Joint Committee; and (iii) appropriate provision, either by way of condition(s) and/or a legal agreement to ensure that the retail element offered the type of tourist related retail experience envisaged by the applicants.
As an amendment, Councillor Boyes, seconded by Councillor L Beattie, moved that planning permission be refused for the reasons detailed in the Head of Planning and Development’s report.

On a vote being taken, four Members voted for the amendment and eleven for the motion which accordingly became the decision of the meeting.

**Decision**

That planning permission be granted subject to:-

(i) appropriate conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, which should include the requirement to provide a green travel plan;

(ii) referral of the application to the Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan Joint Committee; and

(iii) appropriate provision, either by way of condition(s) and/or a legal agreement to ensure that the retail element offered the type of tourist related retail experience envisaged by the applicants.

(Action: Head of Planning and Development)

**Sederunt**

Councillor Statham left the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item of business at 3.42 pm.

**10 Outline Business Case for a Shared Services proposal for Education and Children’s Services**

With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minutes of 22 February 2011, there was submitted report, dated 21 June 2011, by the Chief Executive, providing a summary outline business case for a Shared Services proposal with East Lothian Council for the management of Education and Children’s Services, giving details of potential benefits, governance options and next steps.

The report highlighted that the outline business case:

(a) set out the case for change, with evidence of the financial and demographic pressures on Councils;

(b) delivered a strategic case, informed by a shared vision, for how the required transformational and operational benefits could be realised through shared delivery;

(c) provided financial modelling for a portion of the staff group in scope and made recommendations for future modelling work;
(d) delivered information and an option appraisal on the potential governance options available; and

(e) provided a high-level implementation plan for the coming 18 months.

In moving forward with these shared services arrangements both East Lothian and Midlothian Councils were provided with the opportunity to be at the leading edge of public sector reform in Scotland. If there was agreement to proceed in principle then a number of next steps would be initiated to progress the shared service project leading to a progress report being submitted for Members’ consideration in October 2011, viz:

(i) Further financial modelling work would continue between now and October 2011 in order that well-founded estimates of savings on the other areas of staffing and non-staffing costs could be assessed for actual savings potential;

(ii) Further work would be completed by officers in consultation with the Joint Liaison Group to provide Elected Members with a recommendation on a preferred governance model;

(iii) Recognising the predominance of analysis given to Education within the work done to date, further work would be undertaken specifically in respect of Children’s Services;

(iv) Further work would be completed by officers to develop proposals for the formation of a Joint Project Team to ensure the effective delivery and continued momentum of the project; and

(v) Both East Lothian and Midlothian Councils would seek to work with the Scottish Government and other national and regional partners on any issues relating to shared services which might best be addressed in light of the emerging national agenda for governance of public services or as a consequence of the recommendations of the Christie Commission which was due to report in June 2011.

Decision

(a) Noted that the Council’s share of the Project costs would be accounted for as part of the Business Transformation Fund;

(b) Agreed that the Religious Representatives who served on the Council’s Cabinet when Education matters were being discussed be kept informed of progress on discussions regarding the resolution of the governance model and other outstanding issues identified in the Chief Executive’s report;

(c) Agreed in principle to develop shared service arrangements for strategic management and operational support services for Education and Children’s Services;
(d) Agreed to make a final decision on shared service arrangements, contingent upon resolving the governance model and outstanding issues identified in the Chief Executive’s report;

(e) Agreed that following a decision in Autumn 2011 on the appropriate governance model, to move to the preferred model, and for it to appoint a senior management team at the earliest possible opportunity;

(f) Agreed to now allocate appropriate staff resources from the two Councils to a Joint Project Team to ensure the effective delivery and continued momentum of the project; and

(g) Agreed to work with the Scottish Government and other national and regional partners on any issues relating to shared services which might best be addressed in light of the emerging national agenda for the governance of public services or as a consequence of the recommendations of the Christie Commission.

(Action: Chief Executive/Head of Business Transformation)

Sederunt

Councillor Boyes left the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item of business at 4.25pm.

11 People Strategy

There was submitted report, dated 16 June 2011, by the Chief Executive seeking agreement to a new People Strategy for Midlothian Council for the period 2011-2014 as one of the six workstreams in the Business Transformation Programme. A copy of the People Strategy was appended to the report.

The report explained that the People Strategy was transformational. It had a strategic intention to develop a supported, engaged and high performing workforce. This was to be achieved through five key strategic areas:-

- Culture
- Recognition
- Working lives
- Management
- Performance and development

Included as part of the Strategy was an Action Plan setting out how the Strategy would be delivered over the next three years. This included some significant new pieces of work, set alongside some smaller but strategically important activities which, when put together, constitute an integrated Strategy.
**Decision**

Agreed to approve the People Strategy 2011-2014 and associated Action Plan.

(Action: Chief Executive/Head of Finance and Human Resources)

**12 Business Transformation Service Review Programme**

With reference to paragraph 13 of the Minutes of 22 March 2011, there was submitted report, dated 16 June 2011, by the Chief Executive, providing an overview of the service reviews that were at the scoping stage and which in accordance with the service review programme were submitted for consideration and approval. Copies of the respective Service Review Scope documents had been lodged in the Members’ Library.

**Decision**

To approve the scope of the service reviews for the following service areas:-

i. Adult Care Services  
ii. Older People’s Services  
iii. Children’s Services  
iv. Community Learning and Development  
v. Arts and Creativity  

(Action: Chief Executive/Head of Business Transformation)

**13 Housing Revenue Account – Final Outturn 2010/11 and Capital Plan 2011/12 to 2013/14**

There was submitted report, dated 26 May 2011, by the Head of Finance and Human Resources, presenting (i) the final outturn for 2010/11 on the Housing Revenue Account capital plan and revenue account; and (ii) a revised capital plan for 2011/12 to 2013/14 reflecting the carry forwards from 2010/11.

In summary, the report advised that:-

- capital investment in the year totalled £26.364 million;  
- there was net underspend of £1.366 million on the HRA revenue account; and  
- the HRA Reserve at 31 March 2010 was £11.681 million.

The Council, heard from the Head of Finance and Human Resources, who responded to Members’ questions.
Decision

(a) To note the final outturn on the capital plan and revenue budget for 2010/11; and

(b) To approve the capital plan for 2011/12 to 2013/14 as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.

(Action: Head of Finance and Human Resources)

14 General Services Capital Plan 2010/11 – Final Outturn

There was submitted report, dated 31 May 2011, by the Head of Finance and Human Resources, presenting the final outturn for 2010/11 on the General Services Capital Plan.

Decision

To note the General Services outturn position for 2010/11 as shown in the appendices to the report.

15 General Services Capital Plan 2011/12 to 2014/15

There was submitted report, dated 7 June 2011, by the Head of Finance and Human Resources, presenting (a) a revised capital plan for 2011/12 to 2014/15 reflecting carry forwards and incorporating changes that had arisen since the plan was last approved on 25 January 2011; and (b) an outline of the emerging unavoidable projects.

The Council, heard from the Head of Finance and Human Resources, who responded to Members’ questions.

Decision

(a) To approve the proposed General Services Capital Plan 2011/12 to 2014/15 as detailed in the Appendices to the report;

(b) To note the emerging unavoidable projects and to continue to provide briefings for Members on these, as appropriate;

(c) To note the uncertainty over the level of Government grants; and

(d) To otherwise note the content of the report.

(Action: Head of Finance and Human Resources)

16 Final Outturn 2010/11 – General Fund Revenue

There was submitted report, dated 7 June 2011, by the Head of Finance and Human Resources, providing details of the final performance against budget in 2010/11 and information on the material variances that occurred.
The report summarised financial performance for 2010/11 as follows:-

- Expenditure on General Fund services was £3.551 million less than budgeted;
- There was a General Fund balance at 31 March 2011 of £12.288 million of which £6.414 million was earmarked for specific purposes.

**Decision**

Following questions from Members, the Council endorsed the content of the report.

(Action: Head of Finance and Human Resources)

17 **Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2011**

There was submitted report, dated 14 June 2011, by the Head of Finance and Human Resources, providing a brief overview of the main issues in the Council’s Financial Statements for 2010/11, which had been circulated to Members.

The report advised that in accordance with regulation 4 of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1985 (as amended), the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2011 required to be prepared and submitted to Council and to the Controller of Audit by 30 June 2011. These Statements had now been completed and were accordingly laid before the meeting.

The report also highlighted the major changes to the accounts under the International Financial Reporting Standards code which had been implemented in 2010/11. The detailed impact of these changes was shown in the Disclosure Note to the Accounts on Prior Period Adjustments and transition to International Financial Reporting Standards.

**Decision**

(a) To note that the Council no longer classifies any assets as Investment Properties and no longer reports on them as a Statutory Trading Account;

(b) To note that the re-stated General Fund Balance at 31 March 2010 was £9.197 million but the unallocated part of it remained the same at £4.892 million as reported to Council in June 2010; and

(c) To endorse the contents of this report and approve the Council’s Financial Statements for 2010/11.

(Action: Head of Finance and Human Resources)
18 Revenue Budget 2012/13 to 2014/15

There was submitted report, dated 13 June 2011, by the Head of Finance and Human Resources, providing an early projection of the budget prospects for the next three financial years, encompassing:

- the projected budget shortfall for financial years 2012/13 to 2014/15;
- an update on the savings projections arising from the Council Business Transformation Programme;
- the anticipated timetable leading to the grant settlement announcement for 2012/13 and beyond; and
- a proposed timetable which will enable Council to set a budget for 2012/13 before 11 March 2012.

The report advised that the initial indications were that the budget gap, before the Business Transformation Programme savings would be £3.6 million in 2012/13, rising to £12 million in 2014/15. It was also explained that there was a great deal of uncertainty over public sector funding and that the position would only become clearer towards the end of 2011.

The report also set out the strategy and key milestones for finalising the budget for next financial year, 2012/13, together with arrangements for reporting to Members at the key points in the budget cycle.

The Council, heard from the Head of Finance and Human Resources, who responded to Members’ questions.

Decision

(a) To note the continued significant uncertainty in relation to Scottish Government grant and that the position would remain fluid until the end of 2011;

(b) To note that the current projections were a budget shortfall of £3.6 million for 2012/13 rising to £12 million by 2014/15;

(c) To note the latest projection of savings from the Business Transformation Programme;

(d) To agree the reporting timetable set out in section 6 of the report; and

(e) To agree that in developing Corporate and Divisional Priorities, funding bids should, continue to be restricted to unavoidable cost pressures.

(Action: Head of Finance and Human Resource /All Directors to note)
Sederunt

Councillor L Beattie left the meeting during the foregoing item of business at 4.44 pm.

19 Best Value Framework

There was submitted report, dated 1 June 2011, by the Director, Communities and Wellbeing presenting an updated Best Value strategy, which had been renamed as the ‘Best Value Framework’ to reflect its role as a signpost document rather than delivering a suite of actions.

The Framework now included:

- more information about how Midlothian Council planned to deliver improvement, to ensure activities were relevant to the Council and generate real improvements.

- more guidance for managers and all employees about the practical requirements of ensuring Best Value.

A copy of the Best Value Framework had been lodged in the Members’ Library.

Decision

To approve the Best Value Framework

(Action: Director, Communities and Wellbeing /All Directors to note)

20 Reducing the Road Maintenance Backlog

With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minutes of 26 April 2011, there was submitted report, dated 15 June 2011, by the Director, Corporate Resources, examining the impact of previous spending and assessing future needs in relation to the maintenance of both the road and footpath networks in Midlothian.

The report summarised the findings of the SCOTS report which stated, that in order for the Midlothian road network to remain at a steady state in its current condition, an additional £1.0M required to be spent annually over and above the existing maintenance budget. The footway maintenance backlog had previously been estimated at £12.5M. Following significant investment over the last 2 years this had resulted in the backlog figure reducing to around £7M. For both the roads and footway backlog figures the further into the future the backlog clearance date was pushed, the more costly an exercise this became as illustrated by the five scenarios/timescales to remove the current backlogs contained in the tables 2.8 and 2.9 of the report.

The Council, having heard from the Director, Corporate Resources, who responded to Members’ questions, considered a proposal to utilise a further £1.0M from the reserves, split £500,000 for roads and £500,000 for footways, in order to address the maintenance backlog.
Decision

(a) To note and endorse continued investment in road and footway maintenance in order to reduce the respective backlogs; and

(b) To agree to utilise a further £1.0M from the reserves, (£500,000 for roads and £500,000 for footways), towards addressing the maintenance backlog.

(Action: Director, Corporate Resources)

Sederunt

Councillor L Beattie rejoined the meeting during the foregoing item of business at 4.48 pm.

21 Midlothian Speed Limit Review of A and B Class Roads

There was submitted report, dated 30 May 2011, by the Director, Corporate Resources, setting out the results of the review carried out jointly by Midlothian Council and URS Scott Wilson of the speed limits on all A and B class roads.

The report advised that in accordance with Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (Scotland) (ETLLD) Circular No 1/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits, Midlothian Council had been requested to review formally the speed limits on all A and B class roads in their area by 2011. The initial analysis had indicated that two sections of road the A703 (between A702 and A701) and the A6124 (East Lothian to the A68) where speed limit changes could be beneficial. Further more detailed analysis however, showed that any potential accident reduction was so small that it was insignificant, as was any reduction in average (mean) speeds. These sections of road would however continue to be monitored.

Decision

(a) To note that the speed limits on A and B class roads have been reviewed;

(b) To agree that the two routes on the A703 and the A6124 identified as being borderline continue to be monitored and the analysis repeated if accident levels increase.

(Action: Director, Corporate Resources)


There was submitted and approved the Report of the Seminar of Midlothian Council of 23 June 2011, as detailed in the Appendix hereto.
23 **Exclusion of Members of the Public**

In view of the nature of the business to be transacted, the Council agreed that the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the undernoted items of business, as contained in the Addendum hereto, as there might be disclosed exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

(a) Home to Work Travel and Vehicle Tracking - Arrangements approved;

(b) Relocation of Midlothian Sure Start’s Stepping Forward Project and Lease Agreement - Arrangements approved;

(c) Developer Contributions Agreement – Land to the West of Orchard View, Eskbank – Continue consideration; and

(d) Lasswade High School – Arrangements approved.

The Council thereafter agreed to proceed as detailed in the Addendum hereto.

The meeting terminated at 5.20 pm.
APPENDIX
(relative to paragraph 22)

REPORT of SEMINAR of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL held in the Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Bucleuch Street, Dalkeith on Thursday 23 June 2011 at 11.00 am.

Present:- Depute Provost Russell (Chair) and Councillors L Beattie, Bennett, Chalmers, Milligan, Muirhead, and Thacker.

Apology for Absence:- Councillor Constable

1. Effective Working in Midlothian

There was submitted report dated 16 June 2011 by the Director, Corporate Resources detailing the key aspects of the Effective Working in Midlothian (EWiM) strategy from which all office work areas would be reconfigured and corporate property assets rationalised. The report advised that in order to maximise the utilisation of available office and business administration properties a strategic property management strategy had been drafted entitled “Effective Working in Midlothian, Strategic Property Management the catalyst for change” based on the background research of effective practice as part of a benchmarking activity carried out by the Property Strategy Manager. The EWiM strategy provided the basis for the plans for best use of Council Office properties using a business transformation approach towards delivering an office infrastructure that promoted and supported effective working. Once approved, the EWiM strategy would provide the guiding principles to which the office building infrastructure would be reconfigured and which in turn would provide the Council with the opportunity to rationalise some of its corporate property assets. The key principles of the strategy were as follows:

(a) To provide a property infrastructure that will support a Customer first approach; and

(b) To promote and support effective working practices through four work styles: fixed, mobile, flexible and home working.

The Strategy had been endorsed by the Business Transformation Steering Group.

Decision

To recommend to the Council adoption of the Effective Working in Midlothian Strategy
2. Property Asset Management Rationalisation – Office Relocations

There was submitted report dated 2 June 2011 by the Director, Corporate Resources outlining a strategy and programme for rationalising the Council’s office portfolio. The report explained that the key drivers for promoting the approach outlined in the report were:

The need to increase occupancy rates and drive down the cost of office accommodation across the Council on a per capita basis;

The need to reduce the number of office buildings operated and serviced by the Council;

The need to make better use of space to reduce the number of buildings required to deliver Council services;

The identification of surplus properties no longer fit for purpose to allow the release of capital and monies locked in such accommodation to be reinvested in technology and retained assets to improve capacity, effectiveness and flexibility of future service delivery which was a key strand of the Council’s Business Transformation Programme;

To focus current maintenance expenditure on a reduced portfolio thus ensuring assets were maintained and were effective in supporting customer services;

A reduction in the Council’s carbon footprint contributing to improved sustainability and reduced energy costs;

To align service delivery with customer requirements at key core locations; and

To focus limited resources on improving the quality and maintenance of physical assets.

The report provided detailed information in respect of operational benefits; the proposed approach; staff occupancy levels; document management; car parking; the Council image; the property strategy; completed staff moves to date; proposed relocations within Divisions. The Director supplemented the report with a presentation on the issues contained within the report. In respect of staff relocations it was proposed to adopt the principle of “one move” only. The estimated cost of the asset management rationalisation was up to £1m.

Decision

(a) To note that the current vacant area on the second floor of Midlothian House was intended for use as a “decant” area in relation to staff relocations;

(b) To note the Director’s intention to begin consultation with constituent Trades Unions;
(c) To note that a robust management system would be introduced in respect of any electronic document management system;

(d) To note the need to maintain areas to allow confidential issues to be discussed by both elected Members and officials;

(e) To recommend to the Council that the space ratios to be allocated to staff likewise apply to elected Members subject to detailed consultation;

(f) To recommend to the Council that visits be undertaken to other authorities/public bodies where office rationalisation had been undertaken to learn from their experiences;

(g) To note the intention of the Director Corporate Resources to undertake a further assessment of the Technical, Financial, Human Resource, and IT aspects of this report; and

(h) To recommend to the Council that the principles and strategy outlined in the report be adopted.

3 Establishment of Contact Centre in Midlothian House

There was submitted report dated 8 June 2011 by the Director, Corporate Resources outlining a strategy and implementation plan to locate the Council’s frontline Customer Services on the ground floor of the Council’s Headquarters, Midlothian House. The report provided information on current operating arrangements; the essential moves necessary to facilitate the proposal; signposting positioning; waiting areas; enquiry desks; payment desks; secure interview/meeting rooms; self service kiosks; children’s play area; queue management systems; open plan desks; managers office; print/copy areas; and furniture. Diagrams of the proposed layouts together with the visual images of the proposals were incorporated into the report.

The report further advised that at the request of Business Transformation Steering Group, the Director Corporate Resources in liaison with the Director Communities and Wellbeing were looking at the options available for appropriate facilities for vulnerable customers within the reception area.

Decision

(a) To recommend to the Council adoption of the principle of establishing the Contact Centre in Midlothian House which, if possible, should include seating for the elderly/infirm; and

(b) To note the intention of the Director, Corporate Resources to review the proposed costs and report back in the autumn of 2011.

The meeting terminated at 12.05 pm