

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 3 October 2024.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader) Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair)

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Kirsty Stanners, Head of Finance; Barry Ashcroft, Head of ICT and Resilience; Michaela Sullivan, Head of Place; Debbie Hill, Chief Procurement Officer; Suzanne Conlin, Senior Housing Manager; Paul Parsons, Principal Accountant, and John Burke, Democratic Services Officer.

Apology:

Councillor Danny Devlin

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

984. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

985. The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Finance to monitor both income and expenditure as at 30 June 2024 against the approved General Fund Capital Programme and recommending adjustments where possible.

The report updated project costs and phasings based on current progress and anticipated progress to 31 March 2025.

The Principal Accountant outlined that the current position was a budget shortfall of £0.215m, which was within manageable limits.

The main income and expenditure movements to June 2024 were detailed in the report. In particular, the proposed use of Developer Contributions to fully fund the estimated £0.526m increase in the total budget for the Maidenhill Primary School Extension.

Following a brief discussion, the Cabinet agreed to recommend that Council:-

- (a) note and approve the movements within the 2024/25 programme;
- (b) approve the use of Developer Contributions to fully fund the estimated £0.526m increase in the total budget for the Maidenhill Primary School Extension; and
- (c) note the shortfall of £0.215m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

986. The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Finance to monitor both income and expenditure as at 30 June 2024 against the approved Housing Capital Programme and recommending adjustments where required.

The report updated project costs and phasings based on current progress and anticipated progress to 31 March 2025.

The Principal Accountant outlined that the current position was a budget shortfall of £0.101m, which was within manageable limits.

The main income and expenditure movements to June 2024 were detailed in the report.

Following a discussion, the Cabinet recommended that Council:-

- (a) note and approve the movements within the programme;and
- (b) note the shortfall of £0.101m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP – CHARGING FOR SERVICES IN 2024/2025 AND BEYOND

987. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership on the progress of moving to implementation of charging for non-residential services in 2025/26 and to request an increase to existing charges for Community Alarms and Bonnyton House.

The legislation supporting the integration of health and social care within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) determined that the authority and approval for setting charges for social care remained with the Council and not delegated to the Integration Joint Board (IJB).

HSCP had set up an Income Generation Short Life Working Group to explore the implementation of wider charging for non-residential care as well as a review of existing charges. The recommendations of the Working Group had been endorsed by IJB on 14 August 2024 and those recommendations had formed the basis of the report.

HSCP budget savings for 2024/25 had included £0.2 million for additional income, with further savings required in future years. This would require charging for non-residential care to be in place by April 2025 to meet those targets. The report proposed that the charges be put in place from 1 January 2025 to meet that deadline.

The full detail of the proposals was outlined in the report, as well as the increased income that was expected to result from their introduction.

Following discussion, the Cabinet:

- (a) noted the update on charging within the HSCP;
- (b) agreed the proposed increase to existing charges for Community Alarms to £4.90 per week and Bonnyton House to £960 per week, effective from 1 January 2025; and
- (c) noted that the Annual Report in November/December would provide the detail on new charges as well as the usual approach to annual inflation.

ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT 2023/2024 AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023-2026

988. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Procurement Officer on the Annual Procurement Report 2023/2024 and an update on the implementation of the Procurement Strategy 2023-2026.

The Annual Procurement Report (APR) was required under Section 18 (2)(a) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 where it was stated that councils must publish a summary of their regulated procurements completed during the year covered by the report. The APR provided an opportunity for the Council to demonstrate to stakeholders that procurement spend was being used to achieve not only best value, but also supporting the Council's vision of being modern and ambitious to create a fairer future with all.

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 also required the Council to develop a Procurement Strategy and review it annually to demonstrate how procurement played a fundamental role in delivery of the Council's strategic objectives. It was a key enabling strand for continuous improvement and identifying efficiencies across the Council.

Copies of both documents were attached as appendices to the report and the key points within both were summarised by the Chief Procurement Officer.

Following a discussion, the Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the Annual Procurement Report 2023/24 and noted the update on the Procurement Strategy, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report; and
- (b) noted that the Chief Procurement Officer would advise members in terms of the contract for maintenance of CCTV in Maidenhill and the historical difference between indicative costs and actual costs of such maintenance.

INVESTMENT FUND – ICT INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

989. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships on the proposed utilisation of the Investment for the Future reserve to undertake essential works from a review of ICT infrastructure.

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The new Head of ICT and Resilience had taken up post in January 2024. Following on from two ICT outages in early January, a full review of the Council's ICT infrastructure and mobile device management environments had been commissioned.

The objectives and conclusions of that review were detailed in the report and the financial cost or upgrading, maintaining or replacing the identified issues was itemised. The total costs arising from the conclusions of Phase 1 of the review were £515,000, with further resources required for Phase 2 works and any unplanned implementation issues. For example, it was anticipated that replacing the network cabling in Council Headquarters would have a cost in the region of £200,000. It was anticipated that spend would be spread between the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

There followed a discussion where Cabinet members expressed their support for the works as there were clearly issues that required to be addressed with ICT infrastructure.

Thereafter, the Cabinet agreed funding of up to £850,000 from the Investment for the Future reserve for essential works over the next 12-24 months as a result of the recent ICT Infrastructure Review.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS END YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024

990. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships summarising the performance of the Business Operations and Partnerships Department in 2023/24.

The report detailed the functions carried out by the Business Operations and Partnerships Department and provided further detail on some of the operational highlights from the year. The full performance report was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Members recognised the excellent work being done in the department, particularly the many functions of the department that were conducted out of the public view.

Thereafter, the Cabinet noted the content of the report as a summary of the Business Operations and Partnerships Department's performance throughout 2023/24.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE END YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024

991. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive summarising the performance of the Chief Executive's Office for 2022/23.

The report detailed the functions carried out by the Chief Executive's Office and provided further detail on some of the operational highlights from the year. The full performance report was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Members recognised the excellent work of the Chief Executive's Office and, as in the previous item, highlighted those roles which were often carried out in the background and outside of the public eye, but were vital to the functioning of the Council.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:-

- (a) scrutinised the performance and achievements of the Chief Executive's Office; and

- (b) noted the contents of the report and appendix as a summary of the Chief Executive's Office end of year performance for 2023/24..

EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST END YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024

992. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education informing the Cabinet of the end year performance of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure (ERCL) for 2023/22.

The report detailed the functions carried out by ERCL and provided further detail on some of the operational highlights from the year. The full performance report was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Members expressed their thanks for the excellent performance, and requested some information relating to membership retention in ERCL facilities.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:-

- (a) scrutinised the summary of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure end year performance for 2023/24; and
- (b) noted that the Director of Education would come back to members with detail on membership retention in ERCL facilities.

ENVIRONMENT END YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024

993. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment summarising the 2023/24 performance of the Environment Department.

The report detailed the functions carried out by the Environment Department and provided further detail on some of the operational highlights from the year. The full performance report was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Members recognised the excellent work being done within the Department, in very difficult times for local authorities, highlighting the key role the Environment Department played in providing some of the most front-line services to residents. They recognised some issues around staff absences, which were largely due to the physical nature of many of the roles carried out in the department.

Thereafter, the Cabinet noted the content of the Environment Department's end of year performance report for 2023/24.

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

994. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment on the proposed publication of the Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covering the period 2024-2029, and the implementation of the LHS in conjunction with key partners and local stakeholders.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 required local authorities to prepare a LHS covering a period every 5 years, setting out the strategic direction for housing and related services for the local area. The document should reflect priorities for development and investment in housing and

housing related services in the local area, taking into account all housing tenures. Though the Council was not responsible for all housing in its area, it was the “strategic housing authority” with a strategic and enabling role in ensuring that improvements sought and delivered helped to support sustaining and improving the quality of life for its residents. The report set out the specific evidence base and priorities identified within that context.

The East Renfrewshire LHS had been developed at a time of unprecedented housing pressure both locally and nationally, culminating in the declaration of a housing emergency by several councils, including East Renfrewshire Council, and the Scottish Parliament.

The LHS 2024-2029 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and the report summarised the vision and strategic priorities laid out in the document. It also set out the key targets set by the Scottish Government in its “*Housing to 2040*” document, to which a link was provided in the report.

Appendix 2 provided a visual storyboard, providing a comprehensive overview of the issues identified and the outcomes that the LHS would seek to deliver.

In discussion, a concern was highlighted around communication difficulties around residents being discharged from hospitals to a home setting with particular needs. It was recognised that there could be difficulties in meeting specific needs of individuals, but the Council would always seek to meet all needs of its residents and find appropriate solutions.

Thereafter, the Cabinet

- (a) noted the vision and strategic housing priorities identified for the Local Housing Strategy 2024-2029;
- (b) noted that the draft Local Housing Strategy was subject to a formal “peer review” process led by Scottish Government and feedback provided in March 2024 had been taken into account in subsequent revisions; and
- (c) approved the Local Housing Strategy 2024-2029 and its publication.

PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

995. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment on the changes to the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) award from the Scottish Government for 2024/25 and the Council’s application for approval of continued funding for two existing projects. The report also provided an update on other Scottish and UK Government regeneration and infrastructure funding.

The Scottish Government had announced the PBIP in February 2021, indicating that it would be introduced over the 5 year period of the parliament. This would aim to ensure all place-based investments were shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities and accelerate the delivery of improved connectivity, town centre action, community led regeneration and community wealth building.

The full breakdown of funding was detailed in the report. East Renfrewshire Council had initially been allocated £635,000 of capital grant funding for the financial year 2021/22. For subsequent years, this had been set at £551,100 in 2022/23 and £385,000 in the following 3 years, representing a total funding programme of £2.34m for the Council over 5 years.

The report went on to explain that the Scottish Government had advised on 11 July 2024 that there was uncertainty around PBIP funding and that allocations for 2024/25 would not be at the full level. No funding would be released to support new projects and an element of funding up to a maximum of 50% would be released to support existing projects. Local Authorities had been asked to complete a template to identify their priority regeneration projects that needed funding to progress to completion.

Two projects had been identified, the Thornliebank Playing Fields Access Improvements Project and the Off Grid Community Facilities Improvements Project. The details of those projects were provided in the report. It was indicated that five other projects could no longer be funded under PBIP due to the reduction in funding.

The report went on to provide information of other regeneration programmes for which funding had been paused and indicated the significant impact this had on the Council's place-making priorities and local community assets. In particular, it was indicated that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was scheduled to close in March 2025, and this would have an impact on local authorities in terms of delivering important local projects.

In light of this, it was proposed by the Leader that a letter be drafted to both UK and Scottish Governments asking for clarity on those sources of funding and, in particular, plans for a successor programme to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Cabinet was supportive of this proposal.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the changes to the Place Based Investment Programme funding to Local Authorities in 2024/25;
- (b) noted the new, reduced bidding process for funding in 2024/25;
- (c) approved the continuation of two projects, outlined in the report;
- (d) noted the updates on other regeneration and infrastructure funding; and
- (e) requested that the Director of Environment write to both UK and Scottish Governments to seek clarity on regeneration funding and, in particular, any successor programme to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

CHAIR

