

MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 11 September 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson	Councillor Chris Lunday
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor David Macdonald (*)
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Councillor Jim McLean (*)
Deputy Provost Kate Campbell	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Andrew Morrison
Councillor Betty Cunningham (*)	Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Annette Ireland	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Julie Murray, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP); Kenny Marwick, Head of Environment (Operations); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Raymond Prior, Head of Children's Services and Justice, Chief Social Work Officer; Kirsty Stanners, Head of Finance; Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement); John Buchanan, Operations Manager; Arlene Cassidy, Children's Services Strategy Manager; Barry Tudhope, Democratic Services Manager; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

Apologies:

Councillors Devlin and Merrick.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1002. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

PROVOST'S AWARD – CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Before moving to the first item of business, the Provost referred to the community volunteer work of Sandra Douglas of the Back to School Bank in Spiersbridge. This service ensured that children across East Renfrewshire had brand new school uniforms and other school supplies

they needed, while giving dignity and compassionate support to their carers. The organisation had helped 400 children over the past year.

The Provost recognised Mrs Douglas as the driving force behind the organisation and, while recognising that the calibre of nominations had been very high, she was pleased to give the award to her for her outstanding work. The Provost presented Mrs Douglas with her award and other members of the Council spoke in glowing terms about her ongoing work in the community.

Mrs Douglas responded in appropriate terms, thanking the Council for its support over the year and going forward.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1003. The Council considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 11 September 2024 and 26 September 2024.

The minutes were approved.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

1004. The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Cabinet (Police & Fire) – 12 September 2024;
- (b) Special Licensing Committee – 17 September 2024;
- (c) Education Committee – 26 September 2024;
- (d) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 26 September 2024;
- (e) Planning Applications Committee – 2 October 2024;
- (f) Local Review Body – 2 October 2024;
- (g) Cabinet – 3 October 2024;
- (h) Licensing Committee – 8 October 2024

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BODIES AND COMMITTEES

1005. Two statements had been received and summarised as follows:

- (a) Councillor Anderson – Convener for Education and Equalities

Councillor Anderson gave an update on the re-opening of the tennis courts at Cowan Park following their renovation. Over 200 local primary school pupils had participated in supervised play with Sports Leaders from St Luke's High School. The Courts would host a number of events aimed at getting local people active and learning to play the game. The courts could be booked using a new booking system with associated gate access technology, meaning it was now easier to book a court in advance and guarantee availability.

He also remarked on the Summer Reading Challenge, where public libraries across Scotland supported children aged 4 to 11 to participate in reading during the summer holidays. Over 800 children had participated in the event and it was expected that East Renfrewshire would continue to be among the top quartile in terms of participation and completion.

Finally, Councillor Anderson referred to the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Staff awards at Dalmeny Hotel at the end of September. Staff had been

nominated for awards by their colleagues and recognised for outstanding performance in a number of categories, reflecting the Trust's core values of Professionalism, Pursuit of Excellence, Teamwork, Community and Customer Service. Councillor Anderson offered his congratulate all nominees and winners and thanked them for their outstanding contribution to the communities of East Renfrewshire.

(b) Councillor Pragnell – Convener for Social Work and Health

Councillor Pragnell reported on the recent meeting of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) where, the audited Annual Report and Accounts for the IJB was agreed. She indicated that the IJB had received an unqualified audit opinion, however, the key message remained financial sustainability, with concern over the current and ongoing level of savings required.

An overall projected overspend of just under £1.7 million had been reported, mainly against the NHS element of the budget.

Councillor Pragnell also provided an update on the charging for services in 2024/2025 and beyond. A seminar had been planned for the end of October to further discuss this, with proposals to be presented to Cabinet in December. The other items on the meeting were also summarised for members' information.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

1006. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting on 11 September 2024.

The Council noted the report.

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2024 – INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2024/25 – QUARTER 1

1007. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 26 September 2024 (Page 726, Item 705 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the organisation for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) reporting on the Treasury Management activities for the first quarter of 2024/2025.

The Council agreed that the organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report.

CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024 – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

1008. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 3 October 2024 (Page 973, Item 985 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme and the use of Developer Contributions to fund the increase in the total budget for Maidenhill Primary School be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Finance, recommending adjustments to the Programme as at 30 June 2024 in light of developments that had arisen since the Programme had been approved.

In response to questions on the Maidenhill Primary School Extension, it was confirmed that, while no final price had been established, it was vital to approve the extra funding to time was not lost on the project. The situation in terms of the use of developer contributions was also clarified as these had been earmarked for use in education, justifying this spend.

Following further clarification in terms of developments in the Aurs Road project, the Council:-

- (a) approved the movements within the 2024/2025 Programme;
- (b) approved 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) noted the shortfall of £0.215m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024 – HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

1009. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 14 December 2023 (Page 974, Item 986 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the Housing Capital Programme be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Finance, monitoring expenditure as at 30 June 2024 against the approved 2024/25 Programme.

The Council:-

- (a) noted and approved the current movements within the Programme; and
- (b) noted the shortfall of £0.101m and that income and expenditure on the Programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

THE NEW EAST RENFREWSHIRE PROMISE BOARD AND DELIVERING OUR CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES

1010. The Council considered a report by the Head of Children’s Services and Criminal Justice, Health and Social Care Partnership, on the proposed creation of the East Renfrewshire Promise Board and the introduction of a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme.

The Promise to care experienced children and young people that, *“You will grow up loved, safe and respected. And by 2030, that promise must be kept”* had been made following the Independent Care Review, which found that the current “care system” in Scotland wasn’t working. The Promise, and associated 10 year plan, which were launched on 5 February 2020, were attached as an appendix to the report and summarised within the report.

The report also provided context around the corporate parenting responsibilities of involved agencies in terms of looked after and care experienced children and young people. This was recognised as the collective responsibility of the Council, elected members, employees and other key partners to provide the best possible care and protection. The key to delivering this would be for all corporate parents to commit to full implementation of all aspects of the Promise 10 Year Plan and the foundations of Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding which underpinned it.

In order to meet the Council’s obligations in terms of the Promise, it was proposed to establish an East Renfrewshire Promise Board, and the model for this was outlined in the report. To accompany this, a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme had been devised to

support Promise Champions, their workforce and all corporate parents to understand the purpose and intent of the Promise. The full programme was attached as an appendix to the report.

In discussion, the Council broadly welcomed the report and the direction of travel in terms of working to deliver on the Promise. Members also expressed thanks for a seminar which had taken place prior to the meeting which had been very informative in the work currently ongoing within East Renfrewshire and the impact it was having.

The Council noted:-

- (a) approved the proposed East Renfrewshire Promise Board model;
- (b) delegated authority to the Chief Social Work Officer, as set out in paragraph 13 of the report, to determine Board membership in the event of a surplus of nominations from the Council's elected members; and;
- (c) agreed to the new three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme and to promote attendance and engagement across the partnership in East Renfrewshire.

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

1011. The Council considered the Chief Social Work Officer's (CSWO's) Annual Report for 2023/24, seeking approval for the content for submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

The Annual Report, a copy which was appended to the report, provided an overview of professional social work activity within East Renfrewshire in 2022/23 through the delivery of statutory functions and responsibilities held by the CSWO. Although there were many examples of success to celebrate and build on, there continued to be significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care, with financial sustainability and uncertainty being core pressures. These challenges could not be met without the continued commitment and dedication of social work and social care staff.

There followed a discussion around the increase in enquiries for Social Work services, the effect of ongoing financial restrictions on the provision of care, the increased in recorded incidents of domestic abuse and the potential reasons for the increase. The Council was broadly thankful for the information provided and for the work of the Chief Social Work Officer and his team in providing the best possible service they could in difficult circumstances.

The Council agreed to approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, for submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

BROWN BIN (GARDEN/FOOD WASTE) COLLECTION PROPOSAL

1012. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment on proposed changes to the collection of brown bins (garden and food waste) from Monday 5 May 2025.

The report outlined the current situation in terms of brown bin collection as a weekly collection, 50 per year. The collection of garden waste required an annual permit, while the collection of food waste was statutory and collected without a need for a permit. Approximately 22,800 permits had been issued for 2024/25, along with 442 permits for an additional brown bin, demonstrating a high demand for the service.

Following a benchmarking exercise, it had been discovered that East Renfrewshire was the only council that offered a weekly collection of garden waste, with the vast majority either charging for the service, or not providing it at all. Only 3 councils did not currently charge for the collection of garden waste, and two of those were seeking to introduce charges in 2025/26. A full breakdown of the information from the benchmarking exercise was provided in the report.

It was indicated that garden waste collections were expected to operate at an under recovery of £753,398 after disposal costs for the collected waste. In response to this, and to bring the Council more in line with other local authorities, it was proposed that the permit charge be maintained at £52.20 but change the frequency of collections to a fortnightly service. This change was anticipated to reduce costs by £356,000.

In discussion, members did not welcome the proposed change, however, it was expressed that such changes would be necessary to meet ongoing savings targets. While there was a proposal that collection could be moved to a seasonal collection, with no collections during winter months, it was indicated that this had been investigated and would not provide the saving outlined in the report. There were also concerns raised around timing as it was not yet clear what budget settlements would look like, while it was conceded that it was unlikely the budget would see an increase sufficient to eliminate the need for this saving.

Following the discussion, Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Anderson moved in terms of the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Macdonald, moved as an amendment that the paper be noted and the communications strategy continue, with a final decision on the proposal deferred until budget information was available.

On the roll being called, Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Cunningham, Edlin, McLean, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell, Wallace and Provost Montague voted for the motion and Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, and Macdonald voted for the amendment.

There being 10 votes for the motion and 6 votes for the amendment, the motion was declared carried and the Council:-

- (a) noted the information provided as background on the costs and usage of the current brown bin (garden and food waste) collection scheme; and
- (b) approved the change of frequency of brown bin collections to a fortnightly service, while maintaining the current cost of the garden waste permit scheme within this.

CHANGES TO ORGANISATIONAL REMITS – ENVIRONMENT

1013. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking approval for a change to the Head of Service remits within the Environment Department.

The current structure of three Heads of Service in Environment was detailed in Appendix 1a to the report. Following review, it was determined that, in order to better reflect local and national priorities, there was a need to consider how to maximise the capacity of the Environment Department to continue to meet the challenges associated with the Council's strategic vision.

The changed structure, which were also included as an appendix to the report, and were summarised within the report, would continue to meet the Department's priorities within the context of changes in each distinct area of work.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the changes to the Head of Service remits within the management structure in the Environment Department; and
- (b) delegated to the Head of HR and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Director of Environment, to make the necessary arrangements.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT AND SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

1014. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships on the engagement and work being carried out in support of the Armed Forces Covenant to support serving personnel, regulars and reserve, veterans, their partners and dependent children in East Renfrewshire. The report also provided an update on the Council's work toward gaining Gold accreditation from the Ministry of Defence's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERC).

The report was presented by Councillor Campbell, as Armed Forces Champion for East Renfrewshire, who highlighted the work ongoing in East Renfrewshire to secure funding through charity bids and ensuring signposting of resources to all requiring support.

In particular, Councillor Campbell highlighted the Health for Heroes programme, which offered free gym and fitness centre memberships and was the first of its kind in the UK. She also highlighted the quarterly Veteran's Breakfast Club, which had a positive effect on the mental and physical health of veterans in their return to civilian life.

Councillor Campbell also pointed out that many aspects of the Gold accreditation from the Ministry of Defence ERC were already recognised within the Council.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the progress that had been made by the Council, Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust in supporting the armed forces community and implementing the Armed Forces Covenant duties;
- (b) noted the work of the Veterans Support Officer in supporting service personnel and all the activities in the area; and
- (c) recognised the work to pursue the Ministry of Defence's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold recognition award.

PROVOST

