

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 2 March 2018.**

**Present:**

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Annette Ireland
Depute Provost Betty Cunningham	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Paul Aitken	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Paul O’Kane
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Jim Swift
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Gordon Wallace
Councillor Barbara Grant	

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Candy Millard, Head of Strategic Services; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor David Macdonald.

**IAN HUTCHISON OBE**

**315.** Provost Fletcher advised the Council of the recent sad death of Mr Ian Hutchison, OBE, a former Provost and Councillor of Eastwood District Council until local government reorganisation in 1996 and an East Renfrewshire Councillor from 1996 until 2007. He commented that despite their political differences Mr Hutchison was a man he had greatly respected and had enjoyed debating with him. Having referred to some of the offices held by Mr Hutchison both locally and nationally, Provost Fletcher referred to his own early days as a member of Eastwood District Council when Mr Hutchison had been the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee and how Mr Hutchison had never been afraid to make a difficult decision if he considered it was the right decision to make.

Thereafter the Council observed a minute’s silence in honour of Mr Hutchison.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**316.** Councillors Devlin, Grant, Merrick and O’Kane declared a non-financial interest on the items East Renfrewshire Council Revenue Estimates 2018/19 (Item 325) and General Fund Capital Plan 2018/19 – 2025/26 (Item 327) on the grounds that they were members of the Board of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

## **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**317.** The Council considered the Minute of the meeting held on 13 December 2017.

Councillor Merrick referred to an article which appeared in the local press following the last meeting which indicated that no vote had taken place in relation to the exempt item that was considered at the meeting, and sought clarification whether a vote should have taken place.

In reply, the Democratic Services Manager explained that as there was no amendment at the meeting to the proposals contained in the report, a vote was not required.

The Council noted the position and approved the Minute.

## **MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

**318.** The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted, except as otherwise referred to in Item 319 below:-

- (a) Local Review Body – 17 January 2018;
- (b) Licensing Committee – 23 January 2018;
- (c) Cabinet – 25 January 2018;
- (d) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 25 January 2018;
- (e) Education Committee – 1 February 2018;
- (f) Planning Applications Committee – 14 February 2018;
- (g) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 19 February 2018;
- (h) Licensing Committee – 20 February 2018; and
- (i) Cabinet (Police and Fire) – 22 February 2018.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 14 FEBRUARY 2018 – NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEALS AND APPEAL DECISIONS**

**319.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Planning Applications Committee of 14 February 2018 (Page 271, Item 304 refers), when the committee noted a report by the Director of Environment regarding the notification of planning appeals and appeal decisions, Councillor Ireland stated that at the meeting it had been agreed that a request be made to the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals for a Reporter to visit a future meeting of the committee to explain the reasons why two of the most recent appeals had been upheld and the committee’s decisions overturned resulting in planning permission being granted for the respective applications. This decision had been omitted from the Minute and she requested that the Minute be amended accordingly.

In reply, the Democratic Services Manager stated that notwithstanding, he understood that arrangements would be made to contact the Scottish Government’s Reporters Unit requesting that a Reporter attend a future meeting of the committee for the purpose outlined above.

Noting the position, the Council approved the Minute subject to the following amendment:-

That at the end of the item there be added the following:-

“That an invitation to attend a future meeting of the committee to explain reasons why 2 recent appeals had been upheld, overturning the committee’s decision to refuse planning permission, be extended to the Scottish Government Reporters Unit.

## **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT**

**320.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 19 February 2018 (Page 277, Item 307 refers), when it was agreed amongst other things to recommend to the Council that the Treasury Strategy Statement Report 2018/19 be approved, including the amendment of treasury management practices in accordance with Annex F to the report; and that the policy on the repayment of loans fund advances as specified in Section 6.4 of the report be approved, the Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, advising on the Treasury Management Strategy for the financial year 2018/19.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) that the Treasury Strategy Management Strategy for 2018/19 be approved, including the amendment of treasury management practices in accordance with Annex F to the report; and
- (b) to approve the policy on the repayment of loans fund advances as detailed in the report.

## **STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS/REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS/COMMITTEES**

**321.** The following statements were made:-

- (a) **Integration Joint Board – Councillor Bamforth**

Prior to making her statement, Councillor Bamforth expressed her thanks to Health and Social Care Partnership staff who had battled through the recent treacherous weather to ensure that the most vulnerable residents in the Council’s local communities received support. She also thanked staff and councillors who had volunteered their time and vehicles to drive staff to and from the residents’ homes.

She then reported that at the most recent meeting of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on 14 February a presentation had been given by Dr Michael Smith on the new mental health strategy for Glasgow, the emphasis of the new strategy being on recovery.

Furthermore, the IJB had approved the consultative draft of its new Strategic Plan for health and social care in East Renfrewshire which linked to community, regional and NHSGGC developing plans. The Plan built upon the work over the last 3 years with a new set of focussed strategic priorities and an ambitious change programme. She highlighted that the next phase of the

work was to develop the Financial and Commissioning Plan which would consider the budget decisions made at this meeting. The HSCP and partners would be consulting on this over the coming months.

(b) **Environment Department – Roads Service**

Councillor Lafferty paid tribute to the staff in the Roads service for all their endeavours in keeping the Council's roads network clear of snow during the recent bad weather.

(c) **Education Department - Closure of Schools**

Councillor O'Kane echoed the comments of Councillors Bamforth and Lafferty and in addition paid tribute to the Director of Education and the Council's Head Teachers for making an early decision to close Council schools as a result of the recent bad weather.

The Council noted the statements.

## **PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**322.** The Council considered and noted a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Fletcher since the previous meeting.

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT MEMBER**

**323.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking a new member to serve on the Education Committee following the resignation of Councillor Aitken.

The Council agreed that Councillor McLean be appointed to the Education Committee as a replacement for Councillor Aitken.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING 2018-24**

**324.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 9 February 2017 (Page 2212, Item 2381 refers), when it was agreed amongst other things to approve the Outline Revenue Financial Plan 2017-22, the Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, seeking approval of the updated Outline Revenue Financial Plan for 2018-24.

The report explained that in view of the significant demand pressures facing the Council over the current year and following 5 years it was essential that the Council's financial plans were updated regularly for consideration by the Council, indicating that this was in line with the Council's agreed financial policy of basing decisions on an assessment of medium to long-term needs and consequences.

The report explained that the revised Plan had taken account of the 2018-19 settlement and confirmed very significant pressures expected to continue for the next 6 years with the need to plan for a range of financial scenarios. Details of the financial, economic, legislative and demographic pressures, and the range of mitigating actions open to the Council to address the forecast annual spending gaps in the coming years were outlined in the report.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the increasing budget pressures anticipated in the next 5 years and the mitigating actions proposed; and
- (b) approved the Outline Revenue Financial Plan 2018-24.

### **EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL REVENUE ESTIMATES 2018-19**

**325.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, together with the proposed Revenue Estimates for 2018/19 of income and expenditure as the basis for the Council Tax declaration for 2018/19. A copy of the Revenue Estimates 2018-19 was appended to the report.

The report outlined the revenue budget process, commented on the Scottish Government Grant Funding 2018/19 and explained that in determining the grant distribution the Scottish Government had again put in place the “Floors” arrangement to ensure year-on-year stability in grant at individual Council level. It was noted that under this arrangement the Council would contribute £1.077 million by way of deduction from Aggregate External Finance (AEF) grants in 2018/19. Details of this contribution had been reflected in the figures outlined in the report.

Having provided information in relation to Non-Domestic Rates income, the report referred to the Council’s financial outlook and to the practice in recent years of setting multi-year budgets, highlighting that despite the Council’s grant only having been confirmed for 2018/19, it was proposed to continue with recent practice and agree budget plans for 2018/19 and indicative budgets for 2019/20 and 20/20/21 as part of the Council’s good practice approach to longer-term financial planning. Whilst noting that taking account of the 2018/19 settlement announcement and updated expenditure information, the report advised that there would be a budget shortfall of £6.397 million for the coming year and that the total expected shortfall the Council would be required to close over the period 2018/21 was £28.581million.

The report explained that in the budget consultation exercise, it had been proposed that a 3% increase in Council Tax be agreed for 2018/19 and the subsequent two years to assist in addressing the financial challenges facing the Council. This would increase income by £1.567million per year and that after application of the above Council Tax increase, a budget shortfall of £4.830million remained for 2018/19 with an overall 3-year shortfall of £23.677million.

Furthermore, the report highlighted that as the Council’s unallocated General Reserve of £9million was currently at the top end of the accepted prudent range of 2-4%, it was proposed to apply £1.5million of these funds in each of the next three years to ease the introduction of the savings and to invest in services that would strengthen the Council for future challenges. Due to the healthy level of reserves built up through the Council’s long-term financial planning, this could be accommodated without reducing the unallocated General Reserve balance below 2% of net expenditure.

Details of the budget savings proposals were also outlined in the report. It was noted that of the budget shortfall of £4.830million for 2018/19, it was proposed that £4.382million of the savings consulted on during the Council’s three year budget consultation were applied to reduce this shortfall. Furthermore, it was proposed that £0.448million of the 2018/19 savings proposals be deferred on a short term basis by a drawdown from reserve funds. A similar

approach was also proposed for the following two years and this would permit time to phase savings in gradually and reduce the impact on services for as long as possible.

Whilst noting the list of savings which had been consulted upon and had been reduced or had not been included in the three year budget, the report provided details of reserves and balances, particular reference being made to a number of funds including the General, Modernisation, Insurance, Equalisation and Repairs and Renewals Funds and the Capital Reserve.

The report concluded by indicating that the revenue estimates which were appended to the report were based on a Band D Council Tax level of £1,194.57 being set for 2018/19 representing a 3% increase when compared to the current year's level.

Councillor Buchanan, Leader of the Council, was then heard on the proposals. By way of introduction, he highlighted that the financial pressures being faced by councils across Scotland were significant although the budget which was being proposed would outline the steps the Council was taking to protect services most valued by Council residents and importantly would protect jobs.

Whilst highlighting the demographic pressures being faced in East Renfrewshire such as the growing elderly and younger populations which placed a high demand on both schools and social care services, Councillor Buchanan also stated that other pressures including new legislation in relation to recycling targets; Landfill Tax; and the significant impact of Welfare Reform also needed to be considered when planning how best to deliver Council services in the future.

Thanking his Administration colleagues, staff in the Accountancy section and the Council's Corporate Management Team for their dedicated work in bringing forward the budget which would continue to deliver the Council's ambitious programme of capital investment whilst directing resources to those residents who needed them most, Councillor Buchanan also acknowledged the work of the Council's Trade Union partners, who had provided both written and verbal submissions in respect of their concerns.

Turning to the Council's grant settlement for 2018/19, Councillor Buchanan stated that the final settlement was anticipated to be almost £179million which was slightly higher than the Council had originally forecast for 2018/19. He indicated that the settlement also included additional funding as part of the Barrhead High School new build project, money for an increase to teachers' pay, as well as investment to support changes to the way the Council delivered health and social care including changes as part of the Carers Act, such as increased payment for sleepovers and supporting the Living Wage. He further stated that with additional funding to support the expansion of Early Years still to be provided by the Scottish Government, there was still the potential for the settlement figure to increase. However, it was noted that in cash terms this was a like for like settlement compared to previous years. He emphasised that the additional pressures on the Council's budget such as pay rises, inflation and population growth needed to be factored into the Council's planning and meant that savings were still required.

Whilst referring to the grant settlement projections for 2018/21 and to the 7-week consultation process that started in October 2017 as part of which the Council had put forward around £28million worth of savings options to give some flexibility and to enable it to be guided by the responses to the consultation, Councillor Buchanan explained that since the conclusion of the public consultation, the latest savings estimate had been reduced to less than £24million. This meant that the Council was now able to remove more than £4million worth of the most difficult proposals which had been put forward.

Councillor Buchanan also highlighted that when setting the Council's savings proposals, all financial estimates had been based on increasing Council Tax by 3% in each of the next 3 years. He indicated that it was recognised that this increase would add an additional burden to Council residents. However he further indicated that without generating this additional income, major reductions in funding for Council schools, public infrastructure including roads, local environment such as parks, and cleansing services would be required, together with large scale reductions in social care budgets. He emphasised that the Council Tax in East Renfrewshire remained below the national average and the proposed increase was an option which was supported by 61% of the residents who had taken part in the Council's budget consultation process.

Commenting on the challenges in setting the budget and having reiterated that the Council still had a £24million savings gap to address in the coming 3 years and that it wanted to reduce this as much as possible in order to reduce the impact on residents and staff, Councillor Buchanan stated that due to the Council's sound long-term financial planning it currently had a healthy level of reserves at around £9million. By using some reserves in each of the next 3 years this would reduce the gap to just over £22million, and also maintain the Council reserves at above the minimum level recommended by the Council's Auditors. He also emphasised that the Council's 3-year plan was based on the Council's actual budget for Year 1 and prudent estimates for the following two years during which time the Council would hope to see improvements to funding levels to local authorities.

Councillor Buchanan then outlined the savings options which had been removed. He highlighted that a reduction of around £5million had been originally been proposed to the funding devolved to Head Teachers. However, he indicated that the proposals now reduced this amount to just £0.5million over the next 3 years, helping to protect the quality of education provided in all the Council's schools. In addition, the roads maintenance budget was currently £4million per year and it was proposed to retain it at that level and not implement the proposed reduction of £400,000, as the consultation had identified the condition of roads as one of the most important issues for residents.

Whilst noting the reduction in savings levels from the Council's employability services and housing support provided to vulnerable residents, Councillor Buchanan also referred to the proposed reduced savings requirement from the Property and Technical Services section, emphasising that this would be crucial as the Council took forward the expansion of its Early Years provision and would also support ongoing work to ensure that all Council buildings met required standards. He also indicated that it had originally been proposed to reduce the working hours of the Council's valued community warden service to day time only. However, it was now proposed to retain the valued late night service on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The requirement for savings within Community and Support Services which included Community Safety, Equalities, Learning and Development, ICT and others had also been reduced by £485,000. Furthermore, he stated that as the Council continued to focus on the most vulnerable groups within society, it had also been able to reduce by £1.8million the savings target required to be met by the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Councillor Buchanan then outlined details of the savings challenge faced in preparing the budget and commented on the investment that would be made to Council services in the future. He indicated that the Council would be making a series of investments during 2018/19, totalling more than £1million to support lasting improvements across Council services. He referred to the already significant commitment to improving the digital infrastructure in schools and that it was proposed to invest £250,000 in the provision of additional tablets and laptops which would provide the opportunity to build on the Council's already successful 'Bring your Own Device' policy in schools. He also indicated that it was proposed to make additional funding of £150,000 available in the coming financial year for the Council's well established mixed tenure scheme which tackled some of the problems

associated with communal repairs and the need for improvements in estates where there was a mix of occupancy. He also highlighted that during the previous year's budget a Reading Recovery Scheme had been introduced in primary schools which provided further early intervention for pupils who were having difficulty with reading. It was now proposed to commit £62,000 to this extremely beneficial project which would allow it to continue for another year.

Reference was also made to the Council's new Local Outcome Improvement Plan as part of which the Council had two specific locality plans in place. These were targeted at supporting Council communities with the greatest need. He indicated that by investing a further £134,000 into this area it would help the Council to extend this work and also support additional participatory budgeting processes. Furthermore, the Council would also be investing £25,000 to support scrutiny work within the Council as it aimed to build on the recommendations outlined in the Best Value Audit Report by Audit Scotland.

Whilst noting the Council's commitment to delivering the very best for East Renfrewshire, Councillor Buchanan stated that the Council would continue through its ambitious plan for delivering on the Scottish Government's requirement to increase the level of free early learning and childcare provision by August 2020. He indicated that the Council's plan would see a number of new nursery facilities created, as well as more than 200 jobs. In addition, the Council would create much needed additional nursery places, as well as offering increased flexibility for parents.

Details of capital investment proposed by the Council were then outlined by Councillor Buchanan. He referred to investment of around £183million in ambitious capital schemes between 2018 and 2026. These schemes would drive growth, support the delivery of new schools, the delivery of Early Years establishments to help deliver the Scottish Government requirement to increase levels of Early Years care, ensure that the Council's Glasgow City Region City Deal plans such as a new train station for Barrhead South and the further development of the Dams to Darnley Country Park were delivered and would create new opportunities, as well as delivering benefits for the area. Furthermore, he indicated that the Council also had almost £11million in place for roads improvement projects, a significant investment to improve the network across the area.

It was noted that the Council's proposed Capital Plan being considered later at the meeting included around £26million for the potential to develop a new leisure centre within the Eastwood area. The consultation on the options for future leisure provision would begin soon and by building this capacity into the Capital Plan it ensured that the Council was well prepared to deliver on whichever option was preferred by Council residents. He indicated that the Council was also proposing that the Capital Plan would be reviewed in 6 months' time when the Council had certainty over additional Scottish Government funding and when the consultation into future leisure provision was concluded.

Councillor Buchanan indicated that the 3-year budget which was being presented had undoubtedly presented the Council with some of the toughest budget decisions it had been faced with in recent years. However, he emphasised that by using a range of measures the Council had still delivered a budget which addressed its savings gap and protected front line services and jobs as far as possible. Noting that when the Council initially consulted on its proposals it had been estimated that the number of jobs in the Council would reduce by around 300 over the next three years, Councillor Buchanan highlighted that the proposals now put forward for consideration saw this figure reduce by around 45. Furthermore, the reductions would be further offset by the creation of more than 200 Early Years support roles. This highlighted the Council's commitment to protecting staff, with any reductions being managed through natural turnover and no compulsory redundancies being required in the coming year.



Concluding his remarks, Councillor Buchanan stated that the Council had listened to its residents and amended savings proposals to reflect their feedback as it tried to minimise the impact of the changes which required to be made in the way in which it delivered services. Stating that the proposed significant capital investment in the coming years would continue to ensure that East Renfrewshire was a great place to live in, work in and visit, he reiterated his thanks to all those who had been involved in the budget process and moved that the Council:-

- (a) approve the 2018/19 Revenue Estimates;
- (b) approve the indicative Revenue Estimates for 2019/20 and 2020/21;
- (c) approve the recommended level and utilisation of reserves;
- (d) determine the 2018/19 Council Tax Band D at £1,194.57; and
- (e) note that management of the Council's finances and service plans would continue to be undertaken on a longer term basis.

Seconding the motion, Councillor O'Kane echoed Councillor Buchanan's earlier remarks in relation to the fact that the Administration had worked extremely hard to deliver a budget which provided long-term financial stability for the Council against a backdrop of financial uncertainty and ongoing reductions to Local Government funding. He emphasised that the Council had also been proactive in consulting with its residents and partners on the potential savings required over the next 3 years. He also emphasised that the budget presented had removed some of the most challenging savings proposals which had been put forward. In particular, he was pleased that £4.5million had been removed from the proposed £5million reductions to devolved school budgets as this should ensure that there would be no detriment to the high quality teaching and learning in the Council's schools and maintain their position as amongst the best in the country. Furthermore, the reduction of proposed savings to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) budget and the removal of savings to the roads budget would also mean continued support for the Council's eldest and most vulnerable residents and a continuous improvement agenda in relation to roads.

Whilst recognising that the increase in Council Tax would impact on residents, Councillor O'Kane stated that without this additional income drastic reductions in services right across the board would have been necessary. He highlighted that the Council was committed to continuing to deliver a range of high quality services and that by raising the Council Tax it would allow the Council to make the necessary investments in services. He also welcomed the proposals for more than £1million of investments for the coming year which would make a real difference to residents' lives immediately, citing as an example the continuation of the Reading Recovery Scheme which would ensure that the Council continued to develop all of the Council's young people from the earliest stage to ensure their learning journey was positive from the outset especially those who were in the lowest 20% of attainment levels. He also emphasised that over the coming years the Council would continue to modernise services to make them more cost effective and that by driving up efficiencies at every opportunity and harnessing the power of new technology the Council would continue to improve across all its services.

Noting the current and future impact of technology on the lives of residents, particularly young people, Councillor O'Kane was pleased that the budget built on its previous investment in technologies for schools such as the provision of more tablets, laptops and cutting edge technology such as virtual reality headsets. Such investment linked to the Council's 'Bring Your Own Device' policy, where children and young people in secondary and the senior phase of primary schools learned at appropriate points in the curriculum using their own device (i.e. tablet or laptop) or school provided devices.

The proposed additional investment in this policy continued to ensure that all children and young people had access to a device to enhance their learning. Furthermore, it ensured only registered devices were used on the Council's secure network and the Council taught its young people about reasonable use and staying safe online.

Concluding his remarks, Councillor O'Kane highlighted the Council's ambitious programme of capital investment worth more than £183million over the next 8 years which would see a range of infrastructure projects. He emphasised that the Council was investing wisely for the future of the services which mattered most to its residents and that the proposed budget ensured greater stability in future years and was one which would protect jobs and services.

Thereafter, Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Swift, moved as an amendment that the estimates be approved, subject to the details as set out in Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute.

Councillor Miller began by thanking by thanking the Council's Corporate Management Team and all the staff who had provided advice and support to him in the preparation of the Conservative Group amendment, particularly the Head of Accountancy and her staff. He was then heard in further explanation of the savings outlined in the amendment. Referring firstly to proposals put forward by the Administration, he stated that it was encouraging to see that they had taken on board suggestions made by the Conservative Group in the past to reduce the temperature in schools and to reduce the hours of Community Wardens. Furthermore, he indicated that he was pleased to see that the Administration had decided to sell advertising space on Council vehicles and buildings; something the Conservative Group had urged for a number of years. He highlighted that the Conservative Group not only agreed with advertising and commercialisation of buildings and vehicles but also thought the Council should be much more ambitious and referred to the potential revenue which could be generated over the next 3 years as detailed in the amendment.

Commenting on the proposed school meal price increases as part of the Administration budget proposals, Councillor Miller stated that whilst this was supported by his group their view was that the price paid should closer reflect the cost price. As a result, he indicated that the Conservative Group believed the price of these meals should rise by 20p in 2018/19 and 10p the following year which would still leave a small subsidy on school meals. He emphasised that the details of the Conservative Group's amendment also reflected that there might be some dissatisfaction and acknowledged that it may be difficult for some parents who had two or three children at school. However, he was of the view it still represented excellent value for money.

Councillor Miller then referred to the ongoing concerns expressed by Councillor Ireland and others about posters on the railings at Netherlee Park and Williamwood Golf Club. He expressed surprise that the Council did not have the power to address the problem of businesses using the Council's street furniture and railings etc for commercial gain and that the Conservative Group amendments included proposals for the Council to introduce a byelaw and introduce charging for the use of street furniture which the Conservative Group considered could bring in a modest sum and it would also give the Council some control over what could adorn its street furniture.

Councillor Miller also proposed savings by a reduction in the paid time off given to employees who also acted as union officials, stating that he found it very hard to justify this expenditure when local residents were bitterly complaining about a Council Tax increase.

Councillor Miller also highlighted that the Conservative Group were proposing to save more money on Early Years technology funding by purchasing less expensive equivalent equipment for youngsters in nurseries and primary schools as in his opinion the Council did

not need to purchase state of the art equipment. He also suggested that there was some overlap between the work of the Council's Money Advice and Rights Team and Citizens Advice with some scope for savings to be made and with some of the savings being passed to Citizens Advice and the Council saving the remainder.

Referring to the problem of road maintenance which was a consistent source of complaint, Councillor Miller stated that the Conservative Group was proposing to use most of the above savings, which totalled over £4.5million, to invest in road repairs. Again the Conservative Group were proposing to go even further and borrow another £5.5million to try and bring the Council's roads network up to a standard that would take East Renfrewshire roads into the top half of the national league table. He referred to the terms of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA3) which stated that "East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses to grow" and stated that this could not happen with a crumbling road network and that businesses with all their inward investment would go elsewhere.

Councillor Miller highlighted that the Council was in the process of building a new road (Balgraystone Road), which in his opinion was not needed, and was re-scheduling by two years the realignment of Aurs Road, a road that was well used and was needed. He stated that in his opinion, building a new road when insufficient funding was provided to maintain the existing network was inappropriate. He stated that the Conservative Group proposed to inject £7million into the roads budget in Year 1 followed by £1.5million extra in Years 2 and 3. Acknowledging that some might consider the increase in borrowing imprudent, he stated that his group's view was that refurbishment of the existing leisure centre in Eastwood Park rather than a proposed new build would be more appropriate because most of the customers who used the current facility stayed in Giffnock and Thornliebank and had all the benefits of a road network and car parking already provided. If the Council followed this course of action the estimated cost of the project would be £11million and that would leave a reduced borrowing burden of £19million and that was £13.9million less borrowing as detailed in the Conservative Group proposals.

Concluding his remarks, Councillor Miller expressed his thanks to all those who had helped the Conservative Group prepare its amendment and commended the terms of the amendment to the Council.

Councillor Swift, in seconding the amendment, stated that whilst acknowledging that the Council should prioritise services in Education and Social Care, such resourcing in the long term was not sustainable. He welcomed the proposal to empower Head Teachers in Education associated with the devolved school management and the self-directed support initiative in social care. He also highlighted that the Conservative Group's amendment reflected less bureaucracy and emphasised the need to invest in the Council's road network.

Councillor Aitken moved as a further amendment that the Administration's proposals be approved, subject to the removal of proposed savings of £138,000 associated with instrumental music redesign over the next three years. He stated that in his opinion, the provision of music within the Council's schools was one of East Renfrewshire's jewels in the crown. He cited a range of achievements by Council pupils in terms of their representation in the National Youth Orchestra both at junior and senior level. He also commented that the Council charged in excess of £300 for tuition fees whereas two of the Council's neighbouring authorities that did not charge for such tuition. He proposed that the Council should reconsider this savings proposal. In the absence of a seconder, Councillor Aitken's further amendment fell.

Thereafter, a full discussion on the proposals followed.

Councillor Grant sought clarification on the “floors” arrangement and whether representations had been made by the Council to COSLA given that she understood the arrangement was to operate on a temporary basis.

Councillor Lafferty questioned how the Conservative Group’s amendment would increase revenue in the course of which he expressed the view that the proposal to display advertisement posters at roundabouts as a means of generating revenue would be dangerous as they would create a distraction for motorists. He also suggested that the proposal to make savings in the Council’s Media Services section was a retrograde step emphasising the importance of having good communication channels. He also expressed concern about the Conservative Group’s proposal to reduce the facility time for officers involved in trade union duties. He stated that the Council enjoyed good relationships with its workforce and in his opinion such a proposal would be a retrograde step. He also commented on the increased savings for Head Teachers and Social Care highlighting that the outcome of the budget consultation indicated that residents did not want to see further savings in Education and similarly savings in Social Care should also be avoided.

Councillor Ireland stated that she did not support the Conservative Group’s proposals to generate revenue by charging a fee for those wishing to display adverts on the Council’s street furniture highlighting that the Council was attempting to reduce the number of adverts/posters that were being displayed rather than increasing them. She also highlighted that she did not support either the increase in savings from Head Teachers or the proposals for the savings associated with the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Bamforth stated that she was surprised at the Conservative Group’s proposals in relation to increased savings associated with health and social care highlighting that the Health and Social Care Partnership was attempting to keep people at home. She also responded to the comments made by Councillors Miller and Swift regarding the condition of the Council’s roads in the course of which she highlighted that in terms of the Council’s performance in relation to the maintenance of its main roads and that out of 32 authorities in Scotland only one other authority had performed better than the Council in this category.

Councillor Merrick emphasised that the budget proposed reflected the views of Council residents in response to the budget consultation and commented that in response to Councillor Aitken’s remarks about the budget savings associated with music tuition, highlighted that these were not being made immediately as they were earmarked for Years 2 and 3 of the budget.

In response to Councillor Grant’s comments about the “floors” arrangement, Councillor Buchanan highlighted that he had raised this matter with Scottish Ministers and that it was also a subject of regular discussions at meetings of COSLA. He emphasised that the “floors” arrangement was part of the overall grant funding arrangements. He then responded to the terms of the Conservative Group’s amendment in the course of which he stated that in his opinion the proposals lacked clarity. He expressed concern that the proposals would penalise those who relied most on the services provided by the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership and ultimately they would impact on staff and result in job losses. Concluding his remarks, he stated that the proposals outlined in the Conservative Group’s amendment did not support the services the Council provided and would in effect punish staff. He commended the budget to the Council.

Thereafter on a vote being taken, 10 Members voted for the motion and 6 Members voted for the amendment. The motion was accordingly declared carried and it was agreed to:-

- (a) approved the 2018/19 Revenue Estimates;
- (b) approve the indicative Revenue Estimates for 2019/20 and 2020/21;
- (c) approve the recommended level and utilisation of reserves;
- (d) determine the 2018/19 Council Tax Band D at £1,194.57; and
- (e) note that management of the Council's finances and service plans would continue to be undertaken on a longer term basis.

### **CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2018-23**

**326.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 9 February 2017 (Page 2220, Item 2384 refers) when it was agreed that the proposed Capital Investment Strategy be approved, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval of the updated Capital Investment Strategy for the period 2018-23. A copy of the revised strategy was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that the strategy was intended to cover the 5 years from 2018-19, the main aim of which was to build upon the success of works already achieved, the report explained that in particular it would enable the Council to make rational capital investment decisions linked to the achievement of its strategic aims, objectives and future service needs; provided a framework for determining the relative importance/priority of individual capital projects by requiring an objective and detailed evaluation of them; and clearly linked the investment priorities to the Council's Asset Management Plans for Property, Fleet, ICT, Open Space, and Roads, lighting and water structures. These asset management plans were regularly reviewed.

The Council approved the updated Capital Investment Strategy.

### **GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PLAN 2018/19 – 2025-26**

**327.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, seeking approval of the General Fund Capital Plan covering the eight years from 2018/19 to 2025/26. A copy of the Plan, prepared in line with the approach within the Capital Investment Strategy, accompanied the report.

Councillor Buchanan explained that the Council was experiencing a period of significant financial constraints, and stated that the proposed Plan continued to deliver very significant levels of capital investment which would make a major contribution to the Council's strategic objectives. The plans would require a significant increase in borrowing and the utilisation of a large element of the Council's Capital Reserves. However this was regarded as both affordable and sustainable.

Councillor Buchanan also indicated that two areas where the Plan would require review in the course of the year as updated information became available would be in relation to any additional Early Learning and Child Care funding provided by the Scottish Government, and the proposals in relation to leisure facilities in the Eastwood side of the authority which would depend on the responses received to the consultation exercise.

Concluding his remarks, Councillor Buchanan seconded by Councillor O’Kane moved that the Council:-

- (a) approve programme for 2018/19 and authorise officers to progress the projects contained therein; and
- (b) agree to revise the plan during the year in light of updated information relating to leisure facilities and early learning and child care developments.

Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Swift, moved an amendment as set out in Appendix 2 accompanying this Minute.

Councillor Swift stated that he did not support the proposal to build a new leisure centre at another location within East Renfrewshire, particularly given that £26million had been earmarked for the project. He stated that the residents who used the existing facility at Eastwood Leisure Centre did so due to its location and in his opinion those same individuals would be unlikely to travel to another location to use any new facility on a different site. He expressed the view that East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust was not working and that he did not think it was appropriate to give the Trust the responsibility of operating a new facility. He also suggested that the revenue targets associated with new build proposals could not be justified and stated that as the Council’s roads network was in such a terrible condition, he supported Councillor Miller’s earlier comments to upgrade the existing leisure centre as this would free up additional money to invest in the Council’s roads network.

In response to the comments about the proposal to build a new Eastwood Leisure Centre, Councillor Merrick emphasised that the project was subject to consultation and once the outcome of the consultation exercise was known the Council would make a decision on what option to pursue.

Councillor Wallace was heard in support of the comments made by Councillors Miller and Swift and stated that in his opinion, the Eastwood Leisure Centre should remain in its current location. He emphasised that the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust were competing with the private sector in terms of attracting business and that it was his understanding that service users wanted the facility to stay where it was.

Councillor Lafferty suggested that the Council should await the outcome of the consultation exercise before making a decision about the future of the facility. He also replied to the comments made about the condition of the Council’s roads network in the course of which he highlighted that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Cabinet which would provide details of further investment to the roads network. Concluding his remarks, he indicated that the Council would need to invest a sum of approximately £25million to bring the Council’s roads network up to a good condition.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Miller about the delay to the Aurs Road realignment which formed part of the Dams to Darnley project, Councillor Buchanan stated that this was due to delays in the City Deal and the fact that additional works were required as part of the project. In view of this, the project would require to be re-tendered. He also responded to the comments made in relation to Eastwood Leisure Centre reiterating the earlier remarks that the Council was consulting on proposals and the cost to the Council of either upgrading the existing leisure centre or building a new facility. He stated that a number of options had been put forward and the Plan could be revised once the consultation had taken place and the Council had agreed a way forward.

Thereafter, on a vote being taken, 11 Members voted for the motion and 6 Members voted for the amendment. The motion was accordingly declared carried and the Council:-

- (a) approved the programme for 2018/19 and authorised officers to progress the projects detailed therein Plan; and
- (b) agreed to revise the Plan during the year in the light of updated information relating to leisure facilities and early learning and child care developments.

### **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – RENT SETTING 2018/19 AND 2019/20**

**328.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval of the Housing Revenue Account for 2018/19 and associated rent levels for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The report proposed that Council house rents should increase by 3.9% each year with effect from April 2018 and April 2019 and noted that this increase would also apply to all lock ups and garage sites held on the Housing Revenue Account. Whilst noting that the proposal of 3.9% in each of the next two years would ensure that the income from rents was at a level which was sufficient to meet the statutory requirements of the service, the report indicated that it would also allow the Council to continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and improving energy efficiency required by the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). Furthermore, the increase would also allow the Council to address the emerging local priorities of its tenants.

The Council approved a 3.9% rent increase with effect from April 2018 and that a further increase of 3.9% be applied in April 2019.

### **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 – 2022/23**

**329.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval for the proposed 5-year Housing Capital Programme from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The report provided details of the key areas that the Capital Programme would focus on for the next 5 years. These were noted as an investment of nearly £4.5m in central heating; investment of £1.8m in electrical works, primarily property and common close re-wiring and upgrading of smoke detectors; investment of more than £10m primarily targeted at continuing the Council's programme of roof and render renewal; investment of £4m in installing new internal elements including kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors and investment of £1.6m in sheltered housing. Furthermore, the Council would invest the sum of £30 million in new Council house building.

The report further advised that the high levels of investment contained within the programme were essential to allow the Council to continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) to meet the future requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) and to provide homes that met the needs and aspirations of existing and prospective tenants.

Furthermore, it was noted that the continued investment was affordable and would be welcomed by Council tenants who would see the quality of their homes continue to be improved. However, it was noted that resources were tight and prudent financial management was required.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the proposed 2018/19 to 2022/23 Housing Capital Programme; and
- (b) authorised the Director of Environment to progress the projects contained within the 2018/19 programme, and to commence preparations for future years up to, but not including, legal commitment of resources until future budgets had been approved.

### **PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLOR/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

**330.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval of a local protocol for Councillor/employee relations to supplement the protocol contained in the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

The report explained that by its nature, the protocol for Councillor/employee relations annexed to the Councillors' Code of Conduct did not deal with processes and procedures at an individual Council level. As a result, the report proposed the introduction of a local protocol which provided more local context which in turn would assist councillors to more fully understand their roles and responsibilities within the Council, particularly in respect of the relationships between councillors and employees.

The Council approved the East Renfrewshire Council Protocol for Councillor/Employee Relations.

### **EAST RENFREWSHIRE HSCP INTEGRATION SCHEME – AMENDMENT**

**331.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership, seeking approval for an amendment of the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Scheme required in light of recent amendments to the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act Regulations.

The report advised that the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board and East Renfrewshire Council were undertaking a process to update the integration scheme for East Renfrewshire, as required by recent amendments to the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act Regulations.

Whilst noting that the updates were minor changes to the schedules of delegated functions to support the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act, the report advised that once the updated integration scheme was approved by the Scottish Government, the Integration Joint Board would have delegated responsibilities for the implementation of carers legislation.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the amendments to the East Renfrewshire HSCP Integration Scheme;
- (b) authorised the submission of the amended scheme to Scottish Ministers for approval; and
- (c) authorised that delegated powers be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive to amend the Council's Scheme of Delegated Functions once the amended integration scheme had been approved by Scottish Ministers.



**SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION – AMENDMENTS**

**332.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval for changes to the Council’s Scheme of Administration. A copy of the amended Scheme of Administration was appended to the report.

The Council approved the amended Scheme of Administration.

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE LOCAL LICENSING FORUM – APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER**

**333.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval for the appointment of a new Licensee Member to the East Renfrewshire Local Licensing Forum.

The Council approved the appointment of Mr Bhart to the East Renfrewshire Local Licensing Forum.

PROVOST



**CONSERVATIVE AMENDMENT PROPOSALS**

	18/19	19/20	20/21	Totals
Increased revenue from Advertising/Commercialisation	33	172	341	546
School meals (which we will continue to subsidise)	180	90		270
New Bye law to reduce nuisance posters			50	50
Reduce PR function/monitoring of social media		60		60
Trade Union taxpayers subsidy	60			60
Sharing of HR resources and admin		312	437	749
Reflecting better absence rates	83	164	213	460
Increased savings from IJB	125	250	250	625
Increased savings from Head teachers	250	500	250	1000
Participatory budgeting (Digital Option)	134			134
Early Years tech funding	250			250
Increased saving from Community and Support (Backroom)	100	200	100	400
Employability Services	132			132
Review of non-landlord funding	76			76
Improved efficiency CAB and Rights advice	500			500
Total Annual Savings	1847	1824	1641	5312
Roads Loan Repayments	1617	1697	1482	4796
Annual Surplus	230	127	159	516



**CONSERVATIVE CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT**

Total	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Roads	£5,500							
Culture & Leisure Trust		-£3,000	-£10,000	-£2,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Changes in spending	£5,500	-£3,000	-£10,000	-£2,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Running changes	£5,500	£2,500	-£7,500	-£9,500	-£9,500	-£9,500	-£9,500	-£9,500

