

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 2 March 2017.

Present:

Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Ian McAlpine
Councillor Elaine Green	

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Louise Pringle, Head of Business Change and Revenues; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement; Debbie Hill, Principal Category Manager; Steven Skelly, Revenues and Business Support Manager; Stuart Free, Principal Officer (Asset Management); Suzanne Conlin, Tenancy Services and Service Improvement Manager; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Danny Devlin, Mary Montague, and Vincent Waters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2410. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

EASTWOOD NURSERY ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

2402. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet on 1 September 2016 (Page 2020, Item 2158 refers), when the Cabinet approved the recommendation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee that the existing wall at Eastwood Nursery Allotments be allowed to remain, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment. The report confirmed that the boundary wall at the Eastwood Nursery Allotments was structurally safe and also sought approval of funding of £5,000 to fund a number of measures to allow the Eastwood Nursery Allotments Association (ENAA) to improve the appearance of the boundary wall and the surrounding area. A copy of the consulting engineers report was appended to the report.

The report explained that following a further independent structural inspection of the boundary wall by a firm of consulting engineers most recently appointed by the Council, the Council had been advised by the engineers that in their view the brickwork elements of the wall were in a safe structural condition.

However, the consulting engineers recommended that further investigation be carried out with regard to the design and installation of the timber infill panels to ensure that these could adequately sustain design wind loads. As a result, officers from Property and Technical services had subsequently inspected the wall and examined the method of fixing the timber infills to the brick piers. The conclusion that was reached was that the wall was in a safe condition and therefore no further action was planned.

The report explained that positive discussions had taken place with ENAA regarding various improvement measures that could be carried out to improve the visual appearance of the boundary wall and surrounding area, and that arising from these discussions ENAA had agreed to carry out the improvement works commencing in March 2017 at an anticipated cost of £5,000.

The report sought authority to approve funding of £5,000 to resource a number of measures to improve the appearance of the wall and the surrounding area it being noted that ENAA would provide details of all expenditure incurred through this process in order that the expenditure incurred was auditable.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted that the boundary wall at Eastwood Nursery Allotments was considered structurally safe by independent consulting engineers; and
- (b) approved funding of £5,000 to resource a number of measures to improve the appearance of the wall and the surrounding area.

ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2016/17

2403. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, detailing the estimated projected revenue out-turn for 2016/17 and providing details of the expected variances, together with summary cost information for each of the undernoted services as at 6 January 2017:-

- (i) Objective and Subjective Summaries;
- (ii) Education Department;
- (iii) Health and Social Care Partnership;
- (iv) Contribution to Integration Joint Board;
- (v) Environment Department;
- (vi) Environment Department – Support;
- (vii) Corporate and Community Services Department – Community Resources;
- (viii) Corporate and Community Services Department – Support;
- (ix) Chief Executive's Office;
- (x) Other Expenditure and Income and Other Housing; and
- (xi) Housing Revenue Account.

Whilst noting that the estimate projected revenue out-turn position was reported as an operational underspend of £3,503,700 and that as the Housing Revenue Account was projecting a nil balance at year end, the report highlighted that for the General Fund the

projected underspend was also £3,503,700. However, as Council Tax collection had been higher than budgeted with additional income of £400,000 now anticipated, the total underspend on General Fund services would now be £3,903,700.

The report highlighted that the main reasons for the increased underspend were additional income in Education and Other Housing, an underspend on teachers' costs due to the lack of availability of supply teachers and that Council Tax collections continued to be above budgeted levels. It was noted that a number of operational variances required management action to ensure that expenditure would be in line with budget at the end of the financial year.

Furthermore, the report explained that it was expected that management action would lead to all overspends being recovered, that all underspends would be consolidated wherever possible and that spending up to budget levels would not take place.

The report also explained that the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 placed a statutory requirement on significant trading operations to achieve a breakeven position over a rolling three year period. However, it was noted that none of the Council's services fell within the definition of a significant trading operation.

The Cabinet, having noted the reported probably out-turn position of the Revenue Budget 2016/17, agreed that:-

- (a) all departments currently on target to remain within budget be required to monitor and maintain this position to the year-end;
- (b) those departments currently forecasting a year-end overspend position be required to take action to bring net expenditure back within budget; and
- (c) all service departments ensure that effective control and measurement of agreed operational efficiencies are undertaken on a continuous basis.

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2017/18 AND PROCUREMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/18

2404. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement, providing details of both the Council's Procurement Strategy and Procurement Improvement Plan and the actions that would be undertaken under each. A copy of the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2017/18 was appended to the report.

The report explained that the provisions of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 required all contracting authorities with regulated procurement spend in excess of £5 million to produce an annual strategy. The first strategy was intended to cover the period January 2017 to the end of the following financial year.

Whilst noting that the strategy outlined how the Council's approach to procurement reflected and assisted in meeting the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement and the Council's 5 Capabilities, the report highlighted how it narrated the Council's policy with regard to community benefits, engagement with stakeholders, sustainable procurement and fair working practices. Details of the improvement plan covering the period 2016-18 were also outlined in the report it being noted that the plan was split into 4 sections including Leadership and Governance; Development and Tender; Contract; and Key purchasing process.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the terms of the Procurement Strategy 2017/18; and
- (b) noted the actions contained within the Procurement Improvement Plan 2016/18.

TRADING UNDER BEST VALUE

2405. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, requesting that consideration be given to the classification of Council activities in terms of trading operations as defined by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and as modified in June 2013 by the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC).

The report explained that in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council was required to consider its trading operations on an annual basis and determine those which should be regarded as significant. Having noted the criteria that required to be met for a trading operation to be considered as “significant” and a further test of significance that required to be taken into account, the report explained that having taken these conditions into account, the result of the review for 2016/17 was that the Council had no significant trading operations.

The Cabinet approved that in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 that there were no trading services operated by the Council that should be classified as “significant”.

WRITE-OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE COUNCIL TAX; NON-DOMESTIC RATES; SUNDRY DEBT INCOME AND HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

2406. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval to write-off as irrecoverable sums associated with Council Tax and Water Charges; Non-Domestic Rates; Sundry debt income and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the write-off of the following sums, totalling up to £339,155.92, without prejudice to subsequent recovery procedure:-
 - (i) Council Tax arrears totalling up to £173,305.94;
 - (ii) Non-Domestic Rates totalling up to £52,593.30;
 - (iii) Sundry debt income totalling up to £41,383,75; and
 - (iv) Housing Benefit Overpayments totalling up to £71,872.93.
- (b) noted that Water and Sewerage charges totalling up to £65,079.12 were also being written off in discussion with Scottish Water.

WRITE-OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE RENT AND COURT EXPENSES

2407. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to write-off Rent and Court Expenses which could not effectively be recovered through the Council’s debt collection process.

The Cabinet agreed:-

- (a) the write-off sum up to the value of £399,633.90 of irrecoverable Rent and Court Expenses;
- (b) that a total of £370,919.20 be written-off against Housing Revenue Account (HRA), former Rent Arrears and Court Expenses; and
- (c) that the remaining sum of £28,714.70 be written off against non-HRA accounts as this was accrued by homeless households occupying temporary accommodation.

CHAIR

