

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 22 October 2020.

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Councillor Danny Devlin

Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Debbie Hill, Chief Procurement Officer; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1392. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER) – MINUTE OF MEETING OF 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

1393. The Cabinet considered and noted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 10 September 2020 and which forms Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute.

ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT – 2019/20 AND CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2019/22 UPDATE

1394. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Procurement Officer, seeking approval of the Annual Procurement Report 2019/20 and providing an update on the implementation of the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019/22. Copies of the documents were appended to the report.

The report explained that the Annual Report 2019/20 and updated Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019-22 provided a review of annual activities whilst ensuring the strategic direction of corporate procurement was set to meet the current and future needs of the Council. Publication of the Annual Report and Strategy also ensured that the Council complied with the duties under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

Members having commended offices for their work, the Cabinet approved the Annual Procurement Report 2019/20 and noted the update on the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019/22

END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20 – ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

1395. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, in relation to the End-Year Performance Report 2019/20 in respect of the Environment Department details of which were appended to the report.

Having heard the Director further on the report and in response to questions the Cabinet approved the report as a summary of the Environment Department End-Year Performance for 2019/20.

ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2020/21

1396. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, detailing the projected revenue budget out-turn for 2020/21 and providing details of the expected year-end variances together with summary cost information for each of the undernoted services as at 31 August 2020:-

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

Whilst noting that as at 31 August 2020, the estimated year end position showed a net overspend of £2,082k based on current information and taking account of additional grant funding confirmed and anticipated to date, the report indicated that for General Fund services the projected overspend was £1,788k and together with the projected shortfall in Council Tax collection of £450k the total forecast overspend on General Fund services was £2,238k. This reflected an improved position from that reported to the meeting of the Cabinet on 27 August 2020 and was due to various increases in anticipated grant funding (including assumptions as to Government support for income losses from sales, fees and charges), together with very close expenditure controls across all departments.

Approval was sought for a number service virements and operational budget adjustments, details of which were outlined in the report.

The report concluded by highlighting that the Council’s projected revenue out-turn position was reported as an operational overspend of £2,082k largely as a result of COVID pressures the position having been arrived at after taking account of both confirmed and anticipated additional grant funding in relation to COVID. The report

demonstrated the serious financial implications on operational services arising from the current pandemic and highlighted the remaining budget shortfall still to be closed. Whilst the Council continued to work with COSLA in seeking further grant resources and/or additional fiscal flexibilities, departments must continue to do all they could to avoid non-essential expenditure, to closely monitor and manage the impact of COVID-19 on their operational services and on the probable outturn position and to maintain and increase any operational underspends wherever possible.

The Cabinet, having noted the reported probable out-turn position, agreed:-

- (a) to approve service virements and operational adjustments as set out in the notes to the tables in the report and noted the reported improvement in the probable out-turn position;
- (b) to instruct departments to continue to avoid all non-essential spending;
- (c) that management action be taken to remedy any avoidable forecast overspends; and
- (d) that all departments continue to closely monitor their probable outturn position.

SALE OF HRA LAND AT BARRHEAD SOUTH

1397. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, in relation to progress in the sale of land off Springfield Road/Balgraystone Road at Barrhead South Strategic Development Opportunity.

The report explained that the Council had a piece of land at Barrhead South held on the Housing Revenue Account that it was felt appropriate to sell for private housing in order that a capital receipt could be raised, to be used to finance the construction of council housing provision across East Renfrewshire. Details of the proposed process of the sale designed to secure the maximum receipt for the Council were outlined in the report.

Following discussion and having heard the Director in response to questions on the potential location for any council houses to be built, the Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the proposal that the Council disposes of its land holding on the open market for residential development on the basis outlined in this report and that the sale proceeds are used to finance the construction of Council housing provision elsewhere within the Council area;
- (b) noted the progress made in bringing forward the sale of HRA owned land at Barrhead South;
- (c) noted the appointment of Ironside Farrar Limited as consultant planners and engineers to secure Planning Permission in Principle and to investigate and prepare technical information required for marketing purposes in respect of the sale of land at Barrhead South; and
- (d) noted the intention to appoint a residential development agent to assist with the marketing and disposal of the land in order to secure best value to the Council.

UPDATE ON CLEANING SERVICES IN PFI SCHOOLS

1398. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 28 November 2019, (Page 1031, Item 1114), when it was agreed to approve the option to use the contractual provision within the PFI contract to bring cleaning services in-house at Mearns Primary School and St Ninian's High School, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education, providing an update of the current position of cleaning services at the PFI schools (i.e. St Ninian's High School and Mearns Primary School) provided under the PFI contract and seeking agreement to again consider the cleaning service in PFI schools at the next service review period due in August 2021.

The report explained that unfortunately the actions of the working group established to conclude the next stages of the removal of the cleaning service from the PFI contract were impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown and preparations, and the continued focus to keep all schools and early years' facilities safe and operational following the resumption of full-time education in August.

However, the standards of cleaning at the two PFI schools had improved in 2020 and Bellrock had engaged well with the Council in their response to the impact of COVID-19. These cleaning services would be reviewed in 2021 and in the interim would be closely monitored. The outcome of this review would determine whether cleaning services were ultimately removed from the services provided by ProjectCo. There was a pause on the progress of the original plan to take over this service. It should be noted that there remains the prospect that cleaning be removed from services provided by ProjectCo (Bellrock).

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report and agreed that the cleaning service in PFI Schools is considered at the next review period due in August 2021.

CHAIR