

**MINUTE VOLUME**

**25 FEBRUARY 2021**

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**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

**Minute of meeting held at 8.30am in the Ballroom, Eastwood House, Eastwood Park, Giffnock on 16 December 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan  
Councillor Jim McLean  
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Paul O’Kane  
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Attending:**

Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services and Mark Ratter, Director of Education Services.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1469.** No declarations of interest were intimated.

**Resolution to Exclude Press and Public**

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**HEAD OF EDUCATION (EQUALITY AND EQUITY)**

**1470.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Appointments Committee of 1 December 2020 (Page 1345, Item 1450 refers), the committee proceeded to interview four of those short listed candidates who had been selected for interview following the assessment centre exercise that had taken place.

Having conducted the interviews the committee, after discussion, agreed to offer the post to Siobhan McColgan, Head Teacher, Carlubar Primary School.



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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 7.00pm on 16 December 2020.**

**Present:**

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

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Ian Harper, Stallan-Brand.

**Apology:**

Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham.

**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**1471.** Provost Fletcher reported that this year’s recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award was Alison McGown of Thornliebank Together for her work in tackling food poverty during the pandemic as well as other community work. He reminded Members that the winner was normally invited to attend this meeting to receive their award but this was not possible in the current circumstances. Arrangements had been made for him to meet Ms McGown informally on Friday 18 December but arrangements would be made for Ms McGown to attend a future meeting where she would be formally presented with her award.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1472.** Provost Fletcher and Councillors Grant, Merrick and O'Kane declared a non-financial interest in items 1487 and 1488 below on the grounds that they were members of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board.

Councillors McLean and Miller declared a non-financial interest in item 1490 below on the grounds that they were friends of the landowner.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**1473.** The Council considered the Minutes of the meetings held on 28 October and 26 November 2020.

Councillor Macdonald referred to the discussions at the meeting on 28 October in relation to COVID-19 recovery actions, (Page 1308 Item 1412 refers). He stated that the Minute did not record comments he had made, questions he had asked of, and answers given by, the former Director of Education in relation to the use of floodlit outdoor pitches by Busby Amateur Football Club. In particular he highlighted that the club had made it clear they were prepared to use the pitches without access to buildings for toilet facilities and also to the possibility of portable facilities being made available similar to those used by construction workers at Busby Nursery. In this regard he directed Members to the video recording of the meeting.

In response the Democratic Services Manager reminded Members that Minutes were not a verbatim record of meetings, that members of the public were able to view Councillor Macdonald's contributions and the responses given in the video recording already available online, and that his comments about the omission of the matters outlined above would be recorded in this Minute.

Councillor Wallace having confirmed that he had received the information on Huntly Park, the Council:-

- (a) approved the Minutes; and
- (b) noted Councillor Macdonald's comments and the response by the Democratic Services Manager.

## **MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

**1474.** The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted, except as otherwise referred to in Items 1475 to 1479 below:-

- (a) Local Review Body – 4 November 2020;
- (b) Cabinet – 5 November 2020;
- (c) Education Committee – 12 November 2020;
- (d) Cabinet (Police & Fire) – 19 November 2020;
- (e) Cabinet – 26 November 2020;
- (f) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 26 November 2020;
- (g) Appointments Committee – 1 December 2020;
- (h) Planning Applications Committee – 2 December 2020;
- (i) Local Review Body – 2 December 2020;
- (j) Cabinet – 3 December 2020;

- (k) Licensing Committee – 8 December 2020; and
- (l) Appeals Committee – 9 December 2020.

### **CABINET – 26 NOVEMBER – GARDEN WASTE CHARGING PROPOSAL**

**1475.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 November (Page 1326, Item 1432 refers), when it had been agreed that the decision on whether or not to implement the scheme would be taken at a future meeting in conjunction with overall budget proposals when the Council's financial position was clearer, Councillor Miller welcomed the deferral of the decision. He referred to Council Tax increases in recent times and the impact of any additional charging on local residents, and requested that these matters be taken into account when the 2021/22 budget was being finalised.

The Council noted the comments.

### **AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER - EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2019/20**

**1476.** Under reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 26 November 2020 (Page 1332, Item 1440 refers), when it had been agreed to remit the Annual Accounts and draft Audit Report to the Council later that day for consideration, Councillor Wallace referred to questions he had asked at the Council meeting in relation to the internal audit service. He expressed concerns at the slow progress in taking forward audits as set out in the internal audit plan with the number of available audit hours being reduced and a number of audits being carried forward to 2021/22. He referred also to comments made by John Cornett, Audit Scotland, in relation to the Corporate Management Team's response to the questions set out in the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* published by Audit Scotland. He further referred in particular to the question on internal audit support and that it did appear that the service was not being sufficiently supported in order for it to undertake its role.

Councillor Miller, Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, having commented on some of the challenges facing the service and having shared some of Councillor Wallace's concerns, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that the reduction in routine audit work by the service had been as a result of COVID-19, and had not been a decision to move staff away from scheduled audit work. She clarified that due to a focus on COVID issues across departments the Chief Internal Auditor was unable to deliver her normal programme of work. In light of this, staff had been moved on other non-audit duties to support other services.

Noting the comments made, Councillor Wallace referred to the ability of Audit Scotland to conduct their audit of the Council's accounts during the pandemic. He suggested that the levels of support provided to Audit Scotland to enable them to conduct their audit must have been significant and it was important that similar supports were provided to the Council's own audit service.

The Council noted the comments.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER**

**1477.** Councillor Miller thanked planning officers for arranging the recent informative meeting that had taken place between members of the committee and Scott Ferrie, Acting Chief Reporter from the Scottish Government Reporter's Unit prior to the meeting of the committee on 2 December.

## **CABINET – 3 DECEMBER – EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (EXPANSION 2020)**

**1478.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 3 December 2020 (Page 1356 Item 1461 refers) when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council the approval of additional capital expenditure in relation to the expansion of the Council's early learning and childcare estate, Councillor Wallace referred to the Council's already difficult financial position, to the recommendation that additional funding be given to contractors and how this would be perceived by residents suffering financial hardship.

He also referred to the challenges for councillors in obtaining information quickly in general in light of current remote working arrangements and asked that some thought be given to how this could be addressed.

In reply, Provost Fletcher reminded Councillor Wallace in respect of the matter of the additional expenditure that the matter had been remitted to the Council to give all Members the opportunity to discuss it in detail and it would be considered later in the meeting.

He also reminded Members of the existing call-in procedure and encouraged Members to contact relevant Conveners and officers in advance of Cabinet meetings if they had questions about any of the matters being considered.

The Council noted the comments made.

## **APPEALS COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER**

**1479.** Having heard Councillor Convery, Chair of the committee, the Council agreed that the Minute be approved subject to the following amendment:-

That at the end of the last sentence there be added the words "and support".

## **GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21**

**1480.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 November 2020 2019 (Page 1328, Item 1435 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/2120 be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), recommending adjustments to the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The Council approved the movements within the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21

## **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20**

**1481.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 November 2020 (Page 1329, Item 1436 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that

the proposed adjustments to the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved, the Council considered a joint report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Director of Environment, recommending adjustments to the 2020/21 Housing Capital Programme in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The Council approved the movements within the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21.

### **INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21**

**1482.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 26 November 2020 (Page 1334, Item 1441 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) providing details of the Council's treasury management activities for the period 1 April to 30 September 2020, and seeking approval of the organisations specified in the report for the investment of surplus funds.

The report explained that in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee was responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of treasury management activities. The submission of the report to the committee had been in accordance with that requirement.

Councillor Wallace referred to the table appended to the report setting out the long-term debt maturity profile. He highlighted the relatively high number of loans not maturing until 2065 to 2070 and sought details of these.

In reply the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that the loans had been taken in support of the Council's capital programme. She explained that the Council had made significant investment in long-term assets including in the education estate. She also referred to the exceptionally low borrowing rates at present which the Council had taken advantage of, whilst still operating within the Council's existing treasury management policies.

Noting the information Councillor Wallace reminded Members that there would be an ongoing commitment to repay these loans which would impact on future Council Tax payers.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) note the Interim Treasury Management Report for 2020/21; and
- (b) approve those organisations specified in the report for investment of surplus funds.

### **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (EXPANSION 2020)**

**1483.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 3 December 2020 (Page 1356, Item 1461 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that additional capital costs and a contractual compensation payment in relation to coronavirus issues be made, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update in relation to the progress of the project to deliver the expansion of Early Years provision in East Renfrewshire to meet Scottish Government requirements.

The report explained that building contractors were appointed for the six Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) projects; that completion was originally expected by July 2020; and that the projects had since been delayed due to COVID-19 and Scottish Water issues. Negotiations

had taken place with both the contractors and Scottish Water in order to resolve matters as quickly as possible. The building contractors had been working under a restrictive regime since June 2020 as a result of Government guidance, and in order to prevent any costly legal claims in future, it was proposed that the Council would share the additional COVID-19 related costs with the contractors. In addition, due to a tightening of regulations by Scottish Water, costs which had not previously been identified would now be incurred for surface water drainage. Given the urgency of the projects and the advanced stage of construction, approval had already been given for the works to go ahead as without these connections the centres could not open. Further information was also provided on other additional costs which had been incurred including an allowance for the sum of post-contract changes; additional contingency allowance; and additional equipment and services.

Referring to the report the Director of Environment clarified that it contained a typographical error at Paragraph 23 in relation to the additional Scottish Water related costs and that the correct figure was £576,000 and not £526,000. This had a corresponding impact on the additional cost of the capital works, increasing it from £910,000 to £960,000.

Responding to Councillor Wallace the Director of Environment then gave a detailed explanation of the reasons why the additional capital expenditure was being proposed. In particular he highlighted the importance of having the works finished as quickly as possible, potential lengthy and costly legal proceedings, and that the sum proposed to be paid to the contractor was a 50% share of the additional contract costs that had been incurred. He explained that the contractors had worked constructively with the Council during the pandemic with the aim of completing the nurseries as quickly as possible.

Thanking the director for the clarification, Councillor Wallace suggested that the Council appeared to have no option but to agree the additional costs and requested that when the overall cost to the Council of the pandemic was being calculated costs such as these were included. The financial implications for the Council were significant and it was important in ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government about additional funding that these costs were included.

Noting the comments from the director, Councillor Miller referred to the contract conditions that would be in place and questioned why the additional costs were not being borne in full by the contractor. The comments from both Councillors Wallace and Miller were echoed by Councillor Macdonald. He suggested that a review of contract conditions should be carried out to put the Council in a stronger position to deal with requests for additional contract payments in future. He also sought clarification from the director on the comparative time differences from ground breaking to completion for Busby Nursery and Crookfur Family Centre.

Councillor Aitken having questioned how the additional contract costs had been determined and whether or not these related to a single or multiple contractor, Councillor Buchanan suggested that the report clearly explained the reasons why the additional costs had been incurred with local authorities across the country being faced with similar circumstances. He confirmed that costs associated with the pandemic were raised regularly with the Scottish Government who in turn raised the matter with the UK Government.

Councillor McLean also commented on the additional contract costs. He questioned why the Council was paying these additional costs when the site restrictions and the inability of the contractor to operate at full capacity were down to Scottish Government guidance.

The Chief Executive was then heard on the report in the course of which she clarified that the additional costs in relation to Scottish Water were not payments to the organisation, but were for works needed to comply with Scottish Water requirements. In response to earlier questions from Councillor Aitken she clarified that the additional costs had been negotiated

with Heron Brothers by the Council's consultants and were considered by them to be reasonable. A similar exercise had been undertaken in respect of the contractors for Cross Arthurlie Nursery and other works packages with £803,000 being the total figure across all works.

Councillor Macdonald reiterated earlier comments about the need for a review of contract conditions and in general to learn lessons to ensure the Council was better protected contractually in future.

Responding to the comments and questions raised, the Director of Environment confirmed that without having agreed to the additional works requested by Scottish Water none of the nurseries would have been able to open. As this was considered to be a Council priority the decision was taken to proceed with the works. He emphasised the role of the Council's consultants in negotiating the additional costs associated with the contractor, and in relation to comments regarding operating levels on site stated that whilst the contractor would have liked to increase operating capacity they were prevented from doing so by Scottish Government guidance. He explained he would obtain the information on timescales for Busby Nursery and Crookfur Family Centre and share these with Councillor Macdonald. Finally he confirmed that a review of contract conditions in light of lessons learned would be undertaken.

Thereafter in response to a further question from Councillor McLean on whether or not the contractors received any government grants in relation to their inability to operate at full capacity due to social distancing, the director explained that the Council's consultants had carefully examined the claim from the contractors and stripped out any costs for which government funding had been obtained directly by the contractors.

The Council approved:-

- (a) the additional capital expenditure of £960,000 to cover the additional committed works; and
- (b) a compensation payment of £803,000 to contractors in relation to coronavirus issues as outlined in the report.

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

**1484.** The following statement was made:-

### **Councillor Bamforth – Integration Joint Board**

Councillor Bamforth reported on the most recent meetings of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and its Performance and Audit Committee both held on was on 25 November 2020.

She explained that the IJB had received a presentation on Care at Home and heard about a number of areas of progress within the service including an update on recent recruitment success and how well the embedded Hospital Discharge team and Pharmacy support was working.

Results from the September user survey had seen an 84% positive response from the 206 returns received.

She explained that service demand was almost back to pre-COVID levels with an increasing number of people with complex needs.

A detailed overview of a number of operational and governance measures was provided and the hard work of all staff in the service over a very challenging time was also recognised.

The IJB approved its Participation and Engagement Strategy, and agreed to a one year bridging Strategic Plan for 2021/22 with the usual 3 year planning cycle thereafter.

She referred to the different nature of the current year's Winter Plan with much more cross system working given the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce in addition to the usual winter challenges. Also recognised was constant demands on HSCP staff, including the significant challenge of delivering the flu vaccination programme and the IJB acknowledged our appreciation the effort, hard work and resilience of the workforce.

The IJB were also given an overview of the current financial position and the likely challenges in the coming year including likely legacy savings, the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Planning work continued in preparation for the January budget announcement.

The Council noted the statement.

## **PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**1485.** The Council considered and noted a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of an event attended by Provost Fletcher, highlighting that appropriate social distancing and other safety measures had been adhered to.

## **COVID-19 RECOVERY ACTIONS - UPDATE**

**1486.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 (Page 1308, Item 1412 refers) when the Council noted a report on further actions that had been taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive providing a further update on recovery work taking place across the Council.

Prior to the consideration of the report the Provost reminded Members it was important not to lose sight of the effect the pandemic had had on local people not least in respect of those who had sadly died with the associated impact on their families.

Thereafter the Director of Environment gave an update in relation to the newly established COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund established by the Scottish Government. He explained the purpose of the new fund which was to give local authorities more flexibility to support local businesses and that in order to allow local arrangements to be put in place quickly he was seeking delegated authority from the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to put in place local arrangements to disburse payments from the fund.

Echoing Provost Fletcher's earlier comments about the impact of the pandemic on local people, Councillor Buchanan also commented on the new business support scheme. He referred to the arrangements in place for the disbursement of business grant funding

currently available. This had operated well to date allowing support to be provided quickly to eligible local businesses. The new scheme would enable the Council to provide financial support to those businesses ineligible for support from the current schemes.

Thereafter he again referred to the impact of the pandemic on all facets of everyday life and that the report showed what the Council was doing in response. He paid tribute to the hard work of local communities and businesses in dealing with the effects of the pandemic, and in particular mentioned the work of Council staff and the public sector in general. He thanked the local trades unions for their support and assistance in ensuring that the Council was able to maximise its support efforts for local residents.

Councillor Buchanan also explained that at a recent COSLA Council Leaders' meeting he had been happy to support proposals calling for the Scottish Government to recognise the efforts of the entire local government workforce for the work carried out in response to the challenges of the preceding months as well as the efforts of Scottish local government generally in responding to the pandemic.

Supporting Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Miller thanked Council and Trust staff for their efforts over the preceding 9 months which was in some cases at personal cost. He thanked the Corporate Management Team, senior managers and staff for their efforts to keep services operational during the pandemic in addition to those extra services such as humanitarian hubs introduced specifically in response to the pandemic.

Also supporting the earlier comments made, Councillor Wallace suggested that the local responses to the pandemic had clearly demonstrated the value of local government which he hoped would be recognised by the Scottish Government, particularly in relation to the forthcoming financial allocations to local authorities.

Councillor O'Kane intimated his association with the earlier comments in relation to the human cost of the pandemic, paid tribute to the work of education staff in all their efforts to keep schools open and support young people and more generally paid tribute to all Council staff for their work throughout the year. He referred to the cross-party political commitment locally to tackle the pandemic at all costs with similar commitments now needed from the Scottish Government and also to the campaign by trades unions for local government workers to be recognised in the same way health and care workers had been recognised.

The Chief Executive thanked Elected Members for their comments in relation to Council staff. In particular she highlighted the additional challenge of continuing to support recovery whilst at the same time reintroducing day to day services many of which had been temporarily suspended. She also reminded Members that the challenges would continue for the foreseeable future. In response to earlier questions from Councillor Aitken on the request for delegated powers she further explained the background to the new fund and clarified that the delegated powers that were being sought were in relation to the development of a grant scheme, the principles of which would be used thereafter by officers in the economic development service to determine applications for assistance. Neither the director nor the Leader of the Council would be involved in the consideration of individual applications for funding.

In support of the Chief Executive Councillor Buchanan confirmed that robust monitoring arrangements would be in place to make sure all funding was accounted for. He also gave examples of why some businesses had been unable to access funding from existing schemes and that the new discretionary fund would allow the Council to address these issues at a local level.

Councillor O'Kane thanked staff in the economic development service and other officers such as the Licensing Standards Officer for their efforts in supporting local business, following which the Director of Environment and Chief Executive were heard further on arrangements for the scheme.

Thereafter the Council:-

- (a) noted the report and comments made; and
- (b) agreed that delegated powers be granted to the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to put in place local arrangements to develop a scheme to disburse payments from the COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund.

### **EASTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE AND EASTWOOD PARK MASTERPLAN**

**1487.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 26 June 2019 (Page 875, Item 937 refers) when amongst other things the Council approved Eastwood Park as the preferred site for a new Eastwood Leisure Centre and theatre; noted the progress being made with the Eastwood Park master planning exercise; that the Director of Environment would report back on the wider issues and opportunities/possibilities in due course; and to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 18 December 2019 (Page 1053, Item 1141 refers), when the Council had noted the position at that time and agreed to the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group as part of the arrangements to take the project forward, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on the development of a new leisure centre and theatre and an Eastwood Park Masterplan. Accompanying the report was a copy of the most recent consultant's report as endorsed by the working group. The report demonstrated that with regard to the leisure centre and theatre, it was potentially a high quality, visually attractive, transformational and state-of-the-art facility that was much more than simply a leisure centre development, the focus being on customer appeal, future flexibility and income generating opportunities.

The report set out details of the progress that had been made in challenging circumstances, summarising the key points since December 2019. In particular it was noted that the new leisure centre and theatre could be accommodated within the park as a tandem build allowing all existing uses to remain open during construction.

Thereafter the report outlined the financial position referring to the indicative £26 million allocated by the Council in February 2020. It clarified that whilst a further report to the Council in February 2021 as part of the Council's capital planning process would address total project costs, affordability and future expenditure phasing, the existing provision of £12.85 million for 2021/22 would be sufficient to cover that year's project costs.

Councillor Grant having welcomed the commitment that Shawwood and Broomburn Parks would remain as protected urban green spaces in terms of the Local Development Plan, Councillor Wallace whilst acknowledging the general support for the new centre and the proposed location, suggested that the greatest concern was now the affordability of the project in light of the current and future difficult financial circumstances facing the Council, exacerbated by the costs of tackling the pandemic.

Councillor O'Kane welcomed the report suggesting it was the next stage of the journey to deliver a quality facility in Eastwood Park. He acknowledged that the project was taking place at a challenging time for the Council but that the careful use of capital investment would contribute to local economic recovery.

Councillor Buchanan having echoed the comments from Councillor O’Kane in relation to contributing towards recovery as well as delivering a quality facility, the Director of Environment reminded Members that whilst the report related only to progressing the leisure centre and theatre, the masterplanning of the entire Eastwood Park area was ongoing with plans at a relatively advanced stage.

The Council then heard from Ian Harper of Stallen-Brand who were working with the Council in the overall development of the park. Mr Harper explained that in taking forward proposals one of the key challenges was reinvigorating the park and taking advantage of its location and features, in particular Eastwood House. He then commented on the initial design proposals for the new building which had been strongly informed by the park itself, commenting on some of the proposed building features and associated landscaping. He also highlighted that the proposed location of the building had been carefully selected in order to maximise the available space that could be used as part of the overall park proposals.

Councillor Merrick welcomed the presentation and expressed support for the earlier comments about using the construction of the building as part of the Council’s contribution to local economic recovery. Councillor Macdonald also supported the project which would benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of residents long after the pandemic had passed. He acknowledged the significant costs associated with the proposals and suggested that it was important increasing Council Tax was not seen as the simple solution to covering costs and that the Council should look carefully for more income generating opportunities.

Provost Fletcher having thanked Mr Harper for his presentation the Council:-

- (a) noted the briefing and feasibility study accompanying the report as an ambitious vision for Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre and Eastwood Park more generally;
- (b) approved the proposal that the priority in the short to medium term was to progress the Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre as opposed to the wider masterplanning issues;
- (c) noted that a further report specifically with regard to the Leisure Centre and Theatre options, costs and potential phasing of costs would be submitted to the Council for consideration in February 2021;
- (d) noted that the existing provision of £12.85 million for 2021/22 was sufficient for that year; and
- (e) noted that a further report with regard to the wider masterplanning issues in Eastwood Park would be submitted to the Council at some time in the future.

## **NEILSTON LEARNING AND LEISURE CAMPUS AND WIDER REGENERATION UPDATE**

**1488.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 27 February 2020 (Page 1128, Item 1218 refers) when amongst other things the Council had made provision of £30.4 million in the capital plan to take forward a learning campus development in Neilston comprising new build replacements for Neilston Primary and St Thomas’ Primary Schools, Madras Family Centre, a new library and improved leisure facilities, the Council considered a joint report by the Director of Environment and Director of Education, providing an update in respect of the learning campus as well as wider regeneration proposals.

Having explained the basis for the allocation of capital costs for the project and set out the cost phasing across the years 2020/21 to 2023/24, it being noted that it had been reported to Cabinet in March 2020 that the £30.4 million in the capital plan was likely to be insufficient for the full extent of the revised development, the report reminded Members that the campus was being developed with a two phase – two site approach. Phase one was the construction of the 2 new schools, family centre and library on the current Neilston Primary/Madras Family Centre site, whilst Phase 2 would be the construction of the new leisure and wellbeing centre on the St Thomas's site, with the development of further regeneration projects.

The report then provided an update in respect of each of the 2 project phases. It was noted that the indicative programme for the learning campus had a scheduled construction start of November 2021 with completion in June 2023. However these dates were dependent on an absence of unforeseen complications and an assumption COVID-19 would not continue to hamper development. The report also explained that further recent advice from Hub West Scotland had resulted in an indicative cost for Phase 1 alone of some £28 million.

It was further noted that Phase 1 was time dependent in relation to Scottish Futures Trust revenue incentives and had to be delivered by 2024 at the latest. Accordingly it was proposed that this element of the project be prioritised within the existing capital provision.

In respect of Phase 2 it was explained that recent feasibility calculations had suggested a cost of around £8.5 million. In addition the report outlined some of the wider potential regeneration plans for the area, noting that initial financial provision of around £3.5 million would allow these to be progressed as well as enabling the Council to try and obtain match funding from a range of external sources. At £40 million, the total indicative cost was £9.6 million above the capital funding already allocated and this would be the subject of a future report to the Council,

Councillor O'Kane was heard in support of the proposals. He highlighted that the meeting had considered major capital projects bringing investment and renewal across the authority. Commenting on the importance of the project to the local community he reminded Members that this had been a long standing project in the Council's capital plan also supported financially through the Scottish Futures Trust which would contribute to the overall regeneration of the village.

Councillor Buchanan also welcomed the report which would present an excellent development opportunity in the village.

The Council:-

- (a) noted that despite working practices being impacted by the Covid pandemic, to date the project team had undertaken much development work to progress the Learning Campus, including design consultation;
- (b) noted the existing provision of £30.4 million within the General Fund Capital Programme;
- (c) approved the proposal that phase one of the project to provide the new Learning Campus (Neilston and St Thomas primary schools, Madras Family Centre and library) at an estimated cost of £28 million is prioritised in terms of the available £30.4 million and is progressed as set out in the report; and

- (d) noted the shortfall of potentially around £9.6 million for the remaining elements of the project relating to improvements in leisure, well-being and wider regeneration and that a further report regarding these remaining elements would be submitted to the Council for consideration in February 2021.

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000 – STANDARDS COMMISSION HEARING**

**1489.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive outlining the terms of the written decision made by the Standards Commission in relation to Councillor Swift.

Following a hearing on 13 November 2020 the Commission had decided that Councillor Swift had breached Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.6 of the Code and suspended him from meetings of the full Council for 1 month.

The Council noted the report.

### **Resolution to Exclude Press and Public**

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Provost, the Council unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the item 1414 below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

### **Sederunt**

**Having declared a non-financial interest in the following item Councillors McLean and Miller left the meeting at this point.**

## **ADDITIONAL LAND ACQUISITION AT AURS ROAD NEWTON MEARNIS/BARRHEAD**

**1490.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the increase in land area to be acquired as part of the Aurs Road City Deal Project between Newton Mearns and Barrhead. This was considered necessary to incorporate an enlarged active travel corridor within the scope of the project.

Having heard the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) in further explanation of the report and in response to question from Members in relation to costs, and following full discussion the Council:-

- (a) approved the acquisition of the additional 1.09 acres as outlined in the report;
- (b) noted that the accommodation works formed part of the agreement of the sale and was within the overall project cost envelope; and
- (c) delegated authority to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal & Procurement to progress and complete the acquisitions.

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**SEASON'S GREETINGS**

**1491.** This being the last meeting of the Council prior to Christmas Provost Fletcher wished all councillors the compliments of the season.

PROVOST

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 19 January 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Angela Convery (Chair)  
Councillor Charlie Gilbert

Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Convery in the Chair

**Attending:**

Jacqui McCusker, Senior Solicitor; Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Chief Inspector Bryan McGeogh; and Sergeants Lisa Campbell and David Gilmore, Police Scotland.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Betty Cunningham (Vice Chair) and Paul O’Kane.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1492.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**Resolution to Exclude Press and Public**

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the undernoted items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER’S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR GRANT**

**1493.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the grant of a Private Hire Car Driver’s Licence (Agenda Item 3 refers).

Chief Inspector McGeogh and Sergeants Campbell and Gilmore representing the Chief Constable were present.

The Senior Solicitor reported that a letter had been received on 15 January 2021 from Police Scotland advising that they were withdrawing their representation in respect of the application.

Sergeant Gilmore confirmed that the representation had been withdrawn as a result of changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act which had come into force in November 2020.

Noting that there was no longer a police representation, the committee agreed to grant the application subject to standard conditions.

#### **PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR GRANT**

**1494.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the grant of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 4 refers).

The applicant was present accompanied by his Solicitor, Mr Hussain.

Chief Inspector McGeogh and Sergeants Campbell and Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were also present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the committee to decide what weight it wished to attach to the objection by the Chief Constable and its relevance to the type of licence being applied for.

Sergeant Gilmore was heard in respect of the objection by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from Members.

Mr Hussain was then heard in respect of the application and in response to questions from Members.

The committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the committee, having taken account of the applicant's previous conviction, its seriousness and relevance to the licence being applied for, and the objection by the Chief Constable, agreed that the application be granted for a period of 1 year subject to standard conditions.

#### **PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR GRANT**

**1495.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the grant of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 5 refers).

The applicant, having been invited to attend, was not present.

Chief Inspector McGeogh and Sergeants Campbell and Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were present.

The committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow the applicant to make a personal appearance and for a decision on the pending court action to be made.

**PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL**

**1496.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 6 refers).

The licence holder was present accompanied by his Solicitor, Mr MacIver.

Chief Inspector McGeogh and Sergeants Campbell and Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had made a representation in respect of the application, were also present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the committee to decide what weight it wished to attach to the representation by the Chief Constable and its relevance to the type of licence being applied for.

Sergeant Gilmore was heard in respect of the representation by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from Members.

Mr MacIver was then heard in respect of the application and in response to questions from Members.

The committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the committee, having taken account of the licence holder's previous convictions, their seriousness and relevance to the licence being applied for, and the representation by the Chief Constable, agreed that the licence be renewed for a period of 1 year subject to standard conditions.

**PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL**

**1497.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 7 refers).

The licence holder was present.

Chief Inspector McGeogh and Sergeants Campbell and Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were also present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the committee to decide what weight it wished to attach to the objection by the Chief Constable and its relevance to the type of licence being applied for.

Sergeant Gilmore was heard in respect of the objection by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from Members.

The Licence holder was then heard in respect of the application and in response to questions from Members.

The committee, having taken account of the objection by the Chief Constable, agreed that the licence be renewed for a period of 1 year subject to standard conditions.

## **PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – REQUEST FOR SUSPENSION**

**1498.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to a request for suspension of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence on the grounds that the licence holder was no longer a fit and proper person to be the holder of such a licence in terms of Paragraph 11(2)(a) of Schedule 1 of the Act by virtue of the circumstances outlined in the letter from the Chief Constable (Agenda Item 8 refers).

The licence holder was present together with his solicitor Mr McShane.

Chief Inspector McGeogh and Sergeants Campbell and Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had submitted the request for suspension, were also present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the committee to decide what weight it wished to attach to the request for suspension by the Chief Constable.

Sergeant Gilmore was heard in respect of the request by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from Members.

Mr McShane was then heard in respect of the request and in response to questions from Members.

Following discussion the committee agreed not to suspend the licence in terms of Paragraph 12(1) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**LOCAL REVIEW BODY**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 20 January 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Convery  
Provost Jim Fletcher

Councillor Jim McLean  
Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Jim Swift

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Matt Greenen, Senior Strategy Officer (Planning Adviser); Katherine Robb, Senior Solicitor (Legal Adviser); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager (Clerk) and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Betty Cunningham.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1499.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2020/14 – ERECTION OF ONE AND A HALF STOREY REAR EXTENSION FORMING GABLE END WITH ASSOCIATED RAISING OF RIDGE HEIGHT AND INSTALLATION OF DORMER WINDOW AT FRONT AT 29 LAWRENCE AVENUE, GIFFNOCK (REF NO: 2020/0293/TP)**

**1500.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mrs Katherine Keane against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the erection of a one and a half storey rear extension forming gable end with associated raising of ridge height and installation of dormer window at front at 29 Lawrence Avenue, Giffnock.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

Members of the Local Review Body were not able to visit the site prior to the meeting due to the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. However photographs were previously taken as part of the planning officer's assessment of the planning application had been circulated in advance of the meeting to members of the LRB.

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The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

Having heard the Planning Adviser and following discussion, Councillor Ireland moved that the Local Review body uphold the decision to refuse planning permission for the reasons as outlined in the decision notice. In the absence of a seconder her motion fell.

Having heard the Planning Adviser that in the event the Local Review Body decided to grant planning permission there would be no need to attach additional conditions, the Local Review Body agreed to overturn the decision of the Appointed Officer and grant planning permission.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 21 January 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Paul O’Kane (Chair)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Colm Merrick (Vice Chair)	Councillor Gordon Wallace
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Danny Devlin	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Mr Des Morris

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources); Siobhan McColgan, Head Teacher, Carlibar Primary School; Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Driving Business Change); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Jim McLean.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1501.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2019/20**

**1502.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the proposed content of the Education Department’s draft 2019/20 Standards and Quality Report, a copy of which accompanied the report.

The Director of Education explained that the report was the result of the annual self-evaluation exercise carried out by the Quality Improvement Team and measured the impact and the outcomes achieved as a result of the work undertaken to implement the department’s Local Improvement Plan. The report was organised under the department’s vision of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving Through Excellent Experiences*. Following feedback the format of the report had been designed to provide a more concise, visual and high-level summary of the progress that had been made in implementing the 2019–2022 Local Improvement Plan.

The report included details of how East Renfrewshire schools and early-years establishments had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted the strength of team working across the department and its ability to adapt, collaborate and support children and families, and in particular those considered to be most vulnerable.

The director concluded by explaining that the report also outlined a number of next steps that had been used to develop the Local Improvement Plan 2021–2024 which was the subject of a separate report to this meeting (Item 1503 below refers).

It was proposed to issue the report electronically to all parents with children attending East Renfrewshire schools or Early Learning and Childcare centres and it would be available to view online or download from the Council's website.

Councillor Bamforth, amongst others, commended the report, including how well the department was coping with the impact of COVID-19. She also sought clarification on the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) in the process of recovery from learning loss and on the current number of digital devices which had been made available to pupils.

In response, the director explained that he and other members of the directorate had met with head teachers to discuss the issue of recovery from learning loss and had been informed that most schools considered that the majority of pupils were back on track although there was still some further work to be done in this regard. A further meeting had recently taken place following the implementation of the current lockdown when it had been noted that schools and pupils were taking advantage of the high quality remote learning that was currently available. The department was making excellent use of current research in this field and clear and detailed guidance had been produced. He quoted the case of 1 school where 403 out of 404 pupils had engaged with remote learning in one week and expressed the view that a considerable amount of new online learning was going on as well as live engagement and online "check-ins".

The Education Senior Manager (Driving Business Change) explained that the department had been in a strong position in respect of the availability of digital devices as a result of capital investment decisions taken over the past few years. He stated that more than 700 additional devices had recently been received including Chromebooks and digital connectivity devices. In addition, the Deputy First Minister had recently announced further funding for this purpose and the Council was awaiting confirmation of how much it would receive. The department was working closely with its suppliers to procure additional devices as soon as the funding became available.

Councillor Merrick, whilst welcoming the report, expressed the view that parents and carers remained extremely concerned about how COVID-19 would impact on their children's education, possibly for a number of years, but recognised that the department and all staff were doing their utmost to mitigate the possible long-term impact and were learning as the situation developed. He also expressed the view that the Council's past investment in early learning was reaping benefits for the future and would continue to do so.

Responding to a comment regarding attendance levels, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that the department had introduced a number of proactive measures designed to improve attendance including ensuring that school holidays, where possible, started on Friday and that the Educational Psychology team was involved in devising further measures to persuade and encourage pupils to attend school.

Councillor Wallace, whilst commending the department on a well presented report, highlighted some of the questionnaire indicators where the performance was lower. However, he noted that the department had set out actions to address this through the next steps

In response, the director undertook to seek feedback from Parent Council Chairs on the content and layout of the report, to compare the content and layout with that of other local authorities, and to continue to work closely with the Council's Communications Team in this regard.

Councillor O'Kane explained that the past year had been like no other as a result of COVID-19 and expressed his thanks to all staff, pupils and parents on how well they had adapted to remote and online learning. He also highlighted the excellent work carried on in the department's hub schools in providing emotional and pastoral support to those children and young people considered most vulnerable and commended the Facilities Management team who had provided up to 1350 school meal packs per week.

He concluded by expressing the view that there was still a considerable degree of uncertainty over when schools would restart after the current lockdown and looked forward to receiving further reports regarding future recovery plans and on the outcome of the forthcoming consultation with parents on the issue of how the current provision of free school meals could be improved.

Thereafter, the committee:-

- (a) approved the 2019/20 Standards and Quality Report; and
- (b) authorised the Director of Education to take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the report for stakeholders.

#### **LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-2024**

**1503.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan 2021-2024. A copy of the plan accompanied the report.

The Director of Education explained that the plan was designed to give an indication of the department's key areas for improvement over the next three years and was updated annually to take account of changing priorities. Areas of improvement were outlined and priorities would be developed through self-evaluation and information gathered through external evaluations and the implementation of the plan. The draft plan took account of the current national priority areas including the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and was informed by East Renfrewshire's Community Plan. Cognisance had been taken of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the report set out how the department would support recovery and address learning loss. In addition there would be a continued focus on addressing teacher workload with a further reduction in the number of activities planned over the three year period.

The expected, outcomes and impact were organised under the department's vision statement of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* and had been reviewed and amended to reflect national developments and the department's ongoing self-evaluation. The plan had a clear focus on improving outcomes for all learners. In line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 the plan also set out how the department would address the inequalities of outcomes that existed for different equity groups and how it would achieve the priorities associated with the NIF. The timescale for the implementation of the plan was over school sessions 2021-22 to 2023-24 and the department would continue to report on progress made with the plan through the annual Standards and Quality Report.

The Director concluded by explaining that the draft plan had been developed in time to allow establishments to take account of the priorities as they developed their own improvement

plans and working time agreements. It was intended to help and guide individual establishments in planning for improvement but not to prescribe what those improvements should be or how they should be taken forward. Once the plan was finalised it would be submitted to the Scottish Government in line with the requirements of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000.

Councillor Buchanan commented that this was a high-level report and, as a result, contained a considerable number of assumptions as it sought to address a number of significant unknowns. However, it addressed the issue of the Education Department's aspirations over the forthcoming 3 year period and, as a result, had to be considered as a working document. He commended all staff within the department who had worked hard to continue to deliver high quality services throughout the past year and would continue to do so over the life of the plan.

Councillor Wallace, whilst welcoming the focus on recovery actions over the life of the plan, sought clarification on the apparent dropping of the *Getting It Right For Every Child* (GIRFEC) approach and suggested that this could send a message that GIRFEC was no longer important.

In response, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that the GIRFEC approach was so firmly embedded within all educational settings across the department that it was now considered to be business as usual. She also suggested that a presentation on GIRFEC could be made to a future meeting of the committee if that was considered appropriate.

Ms Graham welcomed the report and expressed the view that GIRFEC was firmly embedded in the culture of the department. She commended the report for being all-encompassing and ambitious as well as for its flexible approach in response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councillor O'Kane commended the department for producing an excellent, high-level, and aspirational plan which focussed firmly on the actions required to address recovery from the learning loss resulting from the current public health situation.

Thereafter, having heard the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) reiterate that the finalised plan would be submitted to the Scottish Government in due course, the committee agreed to approve the Local Improvement Plan 2021-2024.

## **RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENTITLEMENT TO 1140 HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE**

**1504.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the results of the consultation on the implementation of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) in East Renfrewshire and the proposals for taking this forward from August 2021 and beyond.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) briefly outlined the Scottish Government's transformational change agenda to provide 1140 hours of ELC for all eligible children and East Renfrewshire's response and models of delivery. In particular she referred to the committee's approval in June 2020 of the department's proposal to progress with plans to deliver 1140 hours of ELC for all eligible 2, 3, and 4 year-old children from August 2020 albeit in a more limited way given the impact of COVID-19 on plans.

She went on to explain that The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 set out a requirement for local authorities to consult on ELC every 2 years and to build, year-on-year, more flexible models of delivery through reconfiguration of services. East Renfrewshire had conducted its consultation from 26 October to 22 November 2020. Key points from the consultation included, amongst others, 80% of parents expressing a high level of overall satisfaction with their current offer of 1140 hours of ELC; the introduction of 1140 hours suited work and family life, relieving financial pressures and reducing the amount of time grandparents were being asked to provide childcare; an increase in the number of families wishing to access core hours i.e. similar to school hours; further flexibility requested in family centres; and satisfaction being highest in the Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham community at 94% and lowest in the Giffnock/Thornliebank community at 64%.

Analysis of the responses had helped inform the models of delivery for session 2021/22 and the department would continue to operate the same models but would extend core provision to family centres. Although core provision was the least efficient model, this would increase flexibility and choice for families, give greater access to the most popular model and reduce the oversubscription of nursery classes as the exclusive providers of term-time models. As capacity within the ELC estate increased and facilities became established greater flexibility for parents would be reintroduced through the purchase of additional hours in response to demand while at the same time being mindful of the ongoing public health guidance in relation to social distancing and “bubbles” and the increase in the number of places being used as part of the least efficient model i.e. core hours.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) concluded by outlining the financial challenge in the expansion to 1140 hours of ELC for eligible children and reminded members of the anticipated and annual shortfall in Scottish Government funding from 2021/22. The department had used the flexibility associated with this funding to maximise the amounts carried forward each year as well as continuing to lobby the Scottish Government and CoSLA to review the distribution methodology. Whilst the outcome of the national review was still awaited the Council would continue to seek to manage the costs of expansion closely through the annual budget setting process.

Councillor Wallace commented on the amount of work that had gone into providing 1140 hours for many children and sought clarification on the reason for the low satisfaction rating in Giffnock/Thornliebank and also further information on the financial shortfall which the Council was facing in respect of the cost of providing new and enhanced ELC facilities.

In response, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that Giffnock/Thornliebank had the smallest nursery class across the Council and the lack of parental satisfaction arose because many parents were unable to secure a place in the nursery class at the school where their children were expected to attend in P1. It was anticipated that the ability to provide greater flexibility would improve when the new Glenwood Family Centre became fully operational.

The Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources) explained that, due to the delay in completing the construction of the new and extended ELC facilities as a result of the enforced shut-down of the construction sector in March 2020, there was currently a shortfall in funding. Where possible, funding had been carried forward early on in the financial year but this would still result in an overall shortfall unless additional funding was forthcoming from the Scottish Government or the Council. The Scottish Government was currently reviewing its model of funding allocation so there remained the possibility that additional funding could come to the Council once that review was concluded. The current estimated shortfall figure was in the region of £2m but she undertook to contact Councillor Wallace with a more up to date estimate.

Councillor Buchanan expressed the view that the Council had taken the correct decision when it endorsed the Education Department's proposal to proceed with provision of 1140 hours from August 2020, albeit with less flexibility due to the late delivery of the new facilities and the requirements of social distancing. This decision had put the Council in a strong position compared to some other authorities and had contributed to the high overall levels of satisfaction expressed by parents in their responses to the consultation.

Following further brief discussion, in the course of which Councillor O'Kane reiterated that CoSLA continued to lobby the Scottish Government to complete its review of the current model of funding allocation as a matter of urgency, the committee agreed to note the report and the department's proposals to further increase flexibility for parents to address parental and family needs.

### **EAST RENFREWSHIRE'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PLAN 2020-2023**

**1505.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education, presenting for consideration *At Our Heart*, East Renfrewshire's Children and Young People's Services Plan for the period 2020-2023, a copy of which accompanied the report.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) was a key part of the Scottish Government's strategy to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Part 3 of the Act placed new children's services planning duties on local authorities and health boards and required every local authority and its associated health board to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the local authority area in respect of each 3-year period.

She went on to explain that every Children's Services Plan had to be prepared with a view to securing the achievement of 5 aims. In addition the plan was required to take account of guidance relating to a number of key messages which the plan had to include. Full details of the 5 aims and the statutory key messages were set out in detail in the draft plan.

The Children's Services Plan was also required to align with a number of other existing plans and legislative requirements including, amongst others, the Community Planning Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan; the local Health Board's Strategic Plan; Early Years Strategies; and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The draft plan provided details of the joined-up, multi-agency working across all services to focus on all of the themes and related indicators to improve the outcomes for the children and young people of East Renfrewshire. Included in the draft plan was a "plan on a page" which detailed the vision, approach, priorities, outcomes, and measures, all of which focussed on keeping children and young people safe, the mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, care experienced children and care leavers, families, and children with complex needs.

Councillor Wallace welcomed the focus on the health and wellbeing of children and young people and questioned the impact of the publication of the national Independent Care Review report entitled *The Promise* on services within East Renfrewshire and sought clarification on which Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were new to the plan.

In response, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that *The Promise* provided a baseline from which to start and that the draft plan had been modified to take account of its content. She also explained that the KPIs had also evolved to link in with the recommendations contained in the report.

Dr Angell referred to data within the draft plan relating to levels of dental decay in P1 pupils and expressed the view that this was closely related to the intake of sugar and asked if catering staff in schools could encourage pupils, especially younger pupils, to make healthier choices with a view to addressing this situation.

In response, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that health visitors and nursery staff encouraged young children to participate in the Daily Smile which included daily teeth brushing as a group activity, and Councillor O’Kane explained that the Council was working to improve the availability and choice of healthier options within its catering operations.

Councillor Bamforth welcomed the report and the draft plan and in particular the focus on mental health and wellbeing and the establishment of the Healthier Minds Wellbeing Team. She also commended the strong collaborative working between the Education Department and the HSCP.

Councillor Buchanan echoed the comments made by others and again commended the strong partnership working across all departments of the Council and its partners. He commended the department on a highly significant report but cautioned that, while the report highlighted that the Council was starting from a strong baseline, there was still a considerable way to go to deliver on the desired outcomes.

Following further brief discussion, in the course of which Councillor O’Kane welcomed the useful discussion that had taken place and the strong across-the-board support that had been expressed, the committee noted:-

- (a) the Children and Young People’s Services Plan 2020-2023; and
- (b) that the plan would be considered by the Integration Joint Board prior to being submitted to the Council for approval.

## **ARCHBISHOP PHILIP TARTAGLIA**

**1506.** Councillor O’Kane referred to the recent death of Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow whose funeral was due to take place later in the day.

He reminded the committee that Archbishop Tartaglia had previously been Bishop of Paisley and in that role had taken a keen interest in the work of the committee and the Education Department.

He requested that the representative of the Catholic Church, Ms Dorothy Graham, convey to the Archdiocese of Glasgow his condolences and those of the committee.

Ms Graham thanked Councillor O’Kane and the committee for their kind remarks and undertook to pass these on through Bishop Keenan of Paisley.



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 21 January 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Stewart Miller (Chair)	Councillor Annette Ireland
Councillor Barbara Grant (Vice Chair)	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Jim Swift

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Bill Lennox, Digital Customer Experience Manager; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer; and Lona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**Apology:**

Councillor Angela Convery.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1507.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**1508.** The Chair reported, and it was noted, that Elected Members who were not members of the committee, had been given the opportunity to observe the presentation on the Council's new website later in the meeting, which he hoped was considered helpful. Alternatively they could view the presentation after the meeting when the footage of the meeting would be made available on the Council's YouTube channel.

## **PRESENTATION – EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL WEBSITE**

**1509.** Councillor Miller welcomed Graeme Smith, Communications Manager, and Bill Lennox, Digital Customer Experience Manager (DCEM), who had been invited to the meeting to make a presentation on the Council's new website.

The Communications Manager briefly outlined the context and history of the digital customer experience project, during which he explained that a project team had been established in 2017 to take this work forward, the membership of which included officers from the Communications, ICT and Customer First teams. The aim had been to improve the digital experience offered to customers by the Council, both in terms of what was being done and could be done digitally, a key part of the project being the updating, improvement and launch of the Council's newly designed website. Despite challenges for the team associated with COVID-19, the new website had been launched as planned on 7 July 2020, without any interruption to online services, following a major procurement exercise. The Communications Manager reported that the website's modern design and greatly improved functionality had received positive feedback from both users and industry commentators, and clarified that work was continuing to improve and increase the number of processes that could be done online.

The DCEM demonstrated use of the website, during which he highlighted improvements made to it. He referred first to various legacy issues relating to the old website which there had been a wish to address. These included that it was text heavy, problematic to navigate, did not meet the newest accessibility standards introduced in 2020, and was not mobile device friendly.

Having referred to liaison that had taken place with representatives of each department on the website's content and future requirements, and a review of commercial websites undertaken to help inform discussions on the best way forward, the DCEM highlighted a range of key features of the new website, including in terms of its design and layout. It was explained that, in contrast to the previous version, the website's new design was highly user-centred with data-driven homepage content, adopted a mobile friendly approach, demonstrated sector-leading accessibility as confirmed through a recent external audit, and was compliant with current Government Digital Services (GDS) standards. The new homepage had been designed to be more aesthetically pleasing, with more consistent branding and customised icons designed in-house to take residents to the pages they needed to access most frequently at any given time. More concise and focussed information, such as on services provided by each department, had also been made more accessible from the homepage.

The DCEM clarified that to meet current expectations 60% of the previous website content had been removed, 1200 pages had been rewritten, and all pages had been given friendly URL identities making them easier and quicker to search for through search engines. The layout could also feature a number of dedicated sub-sites, such as the one currently accessible from the homepage which provided COVID-19 related information. Such sub-sites could have additional branding whilst adhering to the Council's overall design parameters. Features of the new website were demonstrated, including its dynamic search facility; a commercial-style local authority housing search facility featuring photographs and locations of properties designed to replicate the appearance of an estate agency webpage; and how past agendas, reports and Minutes could be located. The DCEM confirmed that work on the website was ongoing, such as to develop further custom homepage icons, on integrated social media feeds, and on the redesign of online forms which complied with GDS standards. He encouraged people to use the website and provide feedback to him on issues if they wished.

Councillor Ireland commented on an issue she had encountered with the dynamic search facility on the homepage to locate planning application information. In reply, the DCEM confirmed that the project team was aware of the issue, which was linked to the extent

information was held in PDF format, and was working on a solution. In response to a further comment Councillor Ireland made on access to historic Minutes being limited at present, he confirmed that this was linked to the same issue, that thus far the website had only been populated with Minutes back to 2017, but that work would be progressed soon to add those for previous years.

Councillor Grant referred to general difficulty she had reading non-highlighted narrative on the website, which she did not consider particularly visible, and asked if anything could be done to make the text clearer. The DCEM and Communications Manager commented that they had not received such feedback thus far, referred to ways in which the text could be enlarged on the screen already to assist, and confirmed that the font used had been selected to be as accessible and readable as possible to help address the needs of people with eyesight problems for example. However, they undertook to relay the comment back to the protect team's accessibility partners to determine if this issue had been raised elsewhere and if anything further could be explored.

Having heard Councillor Swift commend the team on the improvements and progress they had made and express the view that the new website was immeasurably better than the previous version and much easier to navigate, Councillor Miller thanked the Communications Manager and the DCEM for their informative and interesting presentation.

The committee noted:-

- (a) the presentation on the website, and related comments and observations made; and
- (b) that any further comments or feedback on the website could be sent to the Communications Manager for consideration.

## **COUNCIL'S NEW-BUILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

**1510.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 24 September 2020 (Page 1279, Item 1378 refers), when it had been agreed that the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) would submit a report to a future meeting outlining the challenges involved in delivering social housing in East Renfrewshire, the committee considered a report by the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) providing information on the Council's ambitious new build development programme.

The report explained that over the past 40 years, approximately 50% of rented housing stock owned by the Council had been sold through the Right to Buy scheme, the greatest proportion of properties sold having been more popular family homes in sought after areas, leaving a stock of just under 3,000 homes. Council housing remained highly sought after, with many people opting for the Council as a landlord rather than a private landlord or housing association. The Council also remained the area's most affordable housing provider.

It was highlighted that the ambition for the new build development programme had grown in the past few years, in respect of which, in November 2016, the Cabinet had approved a proposal to build up to 120 Council houses in two phases subject to consultation. This included approximately 80 properties at 4 sites in Barrhead (phase 1), and a further 30-40 on the Eastwood side of the authority (phase 2). Subsequently, in January 2018, the Cabinet had approved a proposal for phase 3 to increase the new build project target from 120 to 240 units. It had been recognised then that the delivery of new housing could take 2-4 years, depending upon the infrastructure developments required beforehand.

There had been infrastructure delays at phase 1 sites which had impacted on delivery of the project. It was highlighted that the Maidenhill sites in phases 2 and 3 were not owned by the Council, with development times based on the progress of the landowners/house builders. It was clarified that subsidy funding was only available in annual tranches.

Further details on progress made on each phase and site and on related issues was provided, including the number of units to be built relative to the initial target set. Reference was also made to related procurement options and financial issues. The report confirmed that the proposals for all sites were discussed with local Tenant & Residents Associations, and that Housing Services had written to all residents in the surrounding areas for the first 3 completed sites inviting them to comment on proposals. Although this approach would continue, online methods might need to be used for this due to COVID-19 related restrictions on public gatherings.

It was concluded that the ambitious council house new build programme was on track to deliver the target of 240 new council homes which, on completion, would include approximately 141 new homes in Barrhead and 101 in Newton Mearns. The programme had been designed not only to meet local housing needs, but also to make best use of land availability in the area. Whilst ambitions remained to extend the programme further, clarity on the level and availability of Scottish Government grant funding was required to determine the feasibility of doing so.

Whilst commenting on the report, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) explained that challenges involved in delivering social housing included having suitable, clean land in the required location with access to services including utilities. He added that, although the Council had an entitlement to an affordable housing contribution of 25% from developers on land they owned if the authority chose to exercise that right, it was the developers who controlled the timetable for construction on such sites. Having highlighted that most available land within East Renfrewshire was located in the Levern Valley, whereas demand for social housing was highest in the Eastwood side of the authority, he referred to various associated issues, such as the higher costs of building on land that required to be decontaminated or where signalled road junctions had to be created, clarifying that subsidy was not usually available to meet such extra costs.

The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) explained that the Scottish Government currently offered a standard subsidy of £59k per housing unit, regardless of the size of house or flat constructed or the unit cost of construction, which impacted on the scale of the remaining costs to be met by the Council. Although extra subsidy was provided in some limited circumstances, such as to restore heavily contaminated land, he reiterated that the subsidy did not always cover the extra costs in full; and that many tenants aspired to renting houses, as opposed to flats, which were dearer per unit to construct and impacted on the number of units that could be accommodated on a site. He clarified further that no additional subsidy was made available to adapt homes to meet the needs of those with disabilities or special needs, referred to the additional costs of building properties which were energy efficient, and commented on the need for the Council to balance cost issues, such as for capital borrowing, with ensuring that rents remained affordable such as to help address issues relating to poverty.

Councillor Miller sought further clarification on why the Council received a subsidy of £59k per unit, whereas housing associations received more. The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) explained that this was an historic issue attributable to local authorities being considered to have access to borrowing at a lower cost which, in turn, led to a reduction in the subsidy made available to them. He was not aware of any recent research to substantiate that, but was aware of discussions being pursued by COSLA with the Scottish Government to try to make the position more equitable. In response to Councillor Ireland, he confirmed that those discussions had been ongoing for over 2 years and were becoming more intense, but there

was no indication yet of when, or if, a solution would be forthcoming. He stated that achieving parity with housing associations would be welcomed, as would addressing how extra costs of making properties energy efficient for example could be met.

Councillor Grant welcomed developments at the Barrhead Road site in Newton Mearns, and expressed the view that it was not optional, but rather essential, to ensure that properties were made energy efficient as part of any project. She sought clarification on when the subsidy for new-build social housing was actually paid to councils, in response to which the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) explained that this was usually on completion of projects. However, in the case of some larger and lengthier projects, interim payments were sometimes made.

Councillor Grant referred to the construction of social housing in Vienna which had attracted some recent, positive media coverage which she thought might be of interest to the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) to review.

Councillor Swift asked if it was possible to vary rent levels taking account of the energy efficiency of individual properties, and if it was borrowing costs that primarily drove the disparity in rents between housing association and local authority housing, the latter tending to be lower. The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) explained that there was no legal impediment to varying rents in relation to energy efficiency, but added that most Council properties already met the Scottish Government's Energy Efficiency in Scottish Homes standards following investment such as in new windows and central heating. He clarified that on average rent charged by housing associations was higher than that set by the Council, commenting that the reasons for this were not fully clear in the absence of any research on this. In response to a further issue raised by Councillor Swift, he stated that he was not aware of any proposals to harmonise rents across the local authority at present, commented on related issues, and confirmed that it remained an option for the Council to explore this further if it wished.

Councillor Miller asked if the new-build properties in Fenwick Drive, Barrhead would attract the same type of rent as similar houses in Eastwood. The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) reported that it was not intended to have higher rents in the Eastwood area to the Levern Valley, and that if he recalled the position correctly the rents for the newer properties were slightly higher than for existing stock which reflected that the incoming tenants would be living in newer houses with better amenities.

The committee noted the report and the related comments made, including that discussions remained ongoing at a national level on the subsidy provided to local authorities for each housing unit built.

## **AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2020/21**

**1511.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 25 June 2020 (Page 1205, Item 1297 refers), when it had been noted that progress on delivering the committee's 2020/21 Work Plan would be reviewed in due course and be the subject of a further report to a future meeting, the committee considered a report by the Clerk providing an update on the Work Plan.

The report explained that some scheduled meetings of the committee had required to be cancelled or rescheduled linked to the current COVID-19 emergency which had also impacted on when some matters were considered. It also made reference to issues relating to the publication of both national and local external audit reports in the context of the emergency, including that the Accounts Commission was considering the implications of the emergency for its own strategy and was reviewing the scheduling of its work to recognise the new reality in which local government found itself.

The report commented on the updated version of the 2020/21 Work Plan appended to the report, referring to progress thus far on various issues and related matters, including the current position on the in-depth investigations the committee had completed on income generation and commercialisation, then climate change, with support from the Scrutiny and Evaluation Officer who had been in post from April 2019 to March 2020. Reference was also made to the current position on some other potential review areas identified thus far, on which there were plans to pursue some work in future, and some new issues pursued during the year, such as the report the committee requested and considered in November 2020 on Audit Scotland's COVID-19 Scrutiny Guide for Audit and Risk Committees.

It was proposed that the committee agree that the development of the Plan, and future plans, including the position on more detailed work be kept under review, taking account of the fact that the Scrutiny and Evaluation Officer who had supported the delivery of in-depth work which formed part of the committee's 2019/20 Work Plan was a resource that was no longer available.

The committee, having heard the Clerk highlight key aspects of the report:-

- (a) noted performance against the 2020/21 Annual Work Plan thus far; and
- (b) agreed that development and implementation of the 2020/21 Work Plan should continue, and that a further report on performance against it and on the 2021/22 Work Plan be submitted to a future meeting.

#### **VALEDICTORY – RON LEITCH, COMMITTEE SERVICES OFFICER**

**1512.** Councillor Miller highlighted that this would be the last meeting of the committee to be attended by Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer, who was retiring from the Council shortly. He thanked Mr Leitch for his work in support of the committee, commended his approach, and on behalf of the committee, wished him a long and happy retirement.

Mr Leitch responded in appropriate terms.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 28 January 2021.**

**Present:**

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

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Colm Merrick  
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1513.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**MIXED TENURE SCHEME**

**1514.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment advising on the current circumstances with regard to the expiry of the contract with the Council’s third-party provider for the management of the Mixed Tenure Scheme.

The report explained that the Mixed Tenure Scheme had been established in 2013 to improve the condition of mixed tenure estates which comprised both Council houses and private properties and the current contract had been awarded following a competitive tender process in December 2015. Further information was provided on the contract advising that the service was of high quality and represented good value for money. The scheme had been welcomed by residents and Elected Members and provided employment opportunities for, amongst others, Care Experienced Young People.

It was reported that the contract had expired in November 2019 and, due to an oversight, the re-tendering process was not progressed prior to that date. The re-tendering process commenced in March 2020, but was further delayed due to emerging COVID related issues, and the new contract was expected to begin on 31 March 2021.

It was recognised that the Mixed Tenure Scheme delivered essential rapid response neighbourhood services, ensuring mixed tenure areas within East Renfrewshire were well maintained for all residents and, in order to support key Council services, it was essential that this service continued. It had therefore been agreed that the contract would continue on

a monthly basis with the same terms and conditions approved previously. Since March 2020, due to COVID restrictions, some scheme employees were able to assist with wider COVID related services including delivering food parcels and equipment to vulnerable residents; assisting the wider Environment Department in providing bank holiday cover; undertaking sanitising duties at Montgomery Court Sheltered Housing complex; removing waste generated by increased fly tipping; and removing excess garden waste.

Following discussion, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted that the contract with VERG (the Council's third-party Mixed Tenure Scheme provider) expired at the end of November 2019 and that due to an oversight and subsequently coronavirus related issues the contract was not retendered within the timescale required;
- (b) noted that the tendered contract was considered to have provided from December 2015 important high-quality services and value for money;
- (c) noted that for the reasons outlined in the report the contract had been continued on the previous terms and conditions and competitively tendered rates between the period from December 2019 to 31 March 2021 at a projected cost of £375,000;
- (d) noted that the total expenditure was above EU threshold but was appropriate under the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015, Regulation 33 (1) (C) which permitted a negotiated contract without prior publication for reasons of urgency due to events unforeseen by the contracting authority;
- (e) approved the continued use of the contract on this basis until 31 March 2021 which was within the budgetary provision which had been made for the scheme over that period; and
- (f) noted that the contract would be competitively retendered to run from 31 March 2021.

## **ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2020/21**

**1515.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (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 October 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 October 2020, the estimated year end position showed a net overspend of £60k based on current information and taking account of additional grant funding confirmed and anticipated to date, the report indicated that for General Fund services there was a projected underspend of £41k and together with the projected shortfall in Council Tax collection of £450k the total forecast overspend on General Fund services was £409k. This reflected a significantly improved position from that reported to the meeting of the Cabinet on 22 October 2020 and was due to various increases in anticipated grant funding, a significant reduction in the projected PPE operational expenditure, 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 budget out-turn position was reported as an operational overspend of £60k 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 needed to 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 significant 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;
- (d) that all departments continue to closely monitor their probable out-turn position.

CHAIR



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 4 February 2021.**

**Present:**

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

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Colm Merrick  
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive (to Item 1519 only); Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**FORMER COUNCILLOR KENNY HAY**

**1516.** Prior to the start of the meeting Councillor Buchanan referred to the recent sad death of former Councillor Kenny Hay and offered condolences on behalf of the Council.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1517.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**HOUSING SERVICES ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2019/20 (SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER)**

**1518.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment providing details of the Council’s performance for 2019/20 against the annual return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter; seeking approval of the 2019/20 Annual Assurance Statement, and providing information on the impact of COVID-19 on the Housing Service during 2020/21.

The report explained that the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) required all social landlords to provide the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) with details of performance against a large range of key indicators at each year end, with the information provided being used to produce a summary Landlord Report for every social landlord in Scotland. This also enabled comparison of performance.

The report also explained that each social landlord was required to publish a detailed report on their performance against the SSHC for tenants and customers. A copy of this Annual Landlord Performance Report (ALPR) accompanied the report.

Furthermore, it was explained that the SHR had introduced a new requirement in the preceding year for every social landlord to produce an Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) confirming compliance with SSHC standards and statutory obligations. The statement, which incorporated an improvement plan, also accompanied the report.

Both the ALPR and the AAS would be used by the SHR to make a risk assessment of services and prepare an Engagement Plan detailing areas they wished to scrutinise further.

It was explained that in addition, the SHR had asked for information on how COVID-19 had impacted on the Housing Service, with details being set out in the report.

Thereafter the report summarised the performance information contained in the ALPR it being noted that East Renfrewshire had performed above the Scottish council average in approximately 70% of key indicators. Details of improvement actions in the AAS were also summarised.

The Head of Environment was heard in response to questions on the report, in particular the challenges associated with making void houses available for let, the additional impact COVID-19 had in this regard, and the positive effect on void turnaround times that the new housing management software system would bring.

Councillor Devlin having highlighted that delays were often due to external factors such as utility companies, and Councillor Buchanan having acknowledged that quick turnaround of void properties continued to be a challenge but that work was underway to address this, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted performance for 2019/20 as outlined in the Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter which would be published via the Council's Housing Services Annual Performance Report; and
- (b) approved the Annual Assurance Statement for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

## **BETTER POINTS INITIATIVE**

**1519.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment providing information in relation to the introduction of the Better Points Initiative and seeking approval for the an exemption from tendering to enable Ansons Consulting to be appointed to deliver the programme in East Renfrewshire.

The report explained that Better Points was an incentivisation programme which encouraged users of a Better Points mobile app to travel sustainably by offering rewards for doing so. Users collected points or 'BetterPoints' which could be exchanged for rewards, ranging from a drink in a local coffee shop, money off shopping or a donation to charity. The programme was flexible offering scalability and a variety of customisation, enabling programmes across the country to vary widely in terms of scope and purpose. It was noted that Ansons Consulting had an exclusive partnership with Better Points to deliver programmes in Scotland.

The report highlighted that the purpose of a scheme in East Renfrewshire would be to encourage sustainable travel and boost the local economy by encouraging footfall in town centres. It was noted that the total cost of Phase 1 of the project was £80,000 covered by external funding and that an optional Phase 2 project could follow if the project met/exceeded objectives and if further funding became available.

A summary of the proposal was outlined with a comprehensive proposal from Ansons for an East Renfrewshire programme accompanying the report.

In response to questions the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) explained the reasons why Ansons Consulting were being used to deliver the project and commented on the technology used to determine modes of travel.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved an exemption from tendering in accordance with Contract Standing Order 15(iii) to enable Ansons Consulting to be appointed to deliver the programme; and
- (b) delegated to the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) to approve and sign the Service Level Agreement between East Renfrewshire Council and Ansons Consulting in line with Council policy.

### **Sederunt**

**The Chief Executive left the meeting at this point.**

### **CITY DEAL – BALGRAYSTONE ROAD PROJECT**

**1520.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment advising on the current position in relation to the Balgraystone Road City Deal project.

Having reminded Members that the Balgraystone Road project was one of a number of projects that sat within the Council's overarching M77 Strategic Corridor Programme, and having outlined the benefits of the project, the report referred to the decision of the Council in March 2018 to make provision of £12.564 million in the capital programme for the Barrhead Station project. This was subsequently broken down in February 2019 with £2.21 million being apportioned to construction of the Balgraystone Road project and the remaining balance being allocated to the station.

The report explained that the contract for the road construction was let for £1.769 million. Work started in June 2019 with a scheduled completion of December 2019. Due to a number of challenges completion was subsequently delayed until October/November 2020.

The report thereafter explained that due to the required procurement method for City Deal projects contractors could claim additional time and payments for "compensation events". Examples of these events were set out in the report and included where project changes were made such as increasing the scope of the project.

The report then set out the various reasons why the overall contract cost had increased from £1.769 million to £3.242 million. This included a range of improvements to the scope of the project. It was noted that these changes, not included in the original project cost amounted to £670,000.

A breakdown of the current funding position was then set out it being noted that the final project shortfall was £362,000 and whilst there was no overall impact on the overall total capital budget for all City Deal projects a proposed adjustment would be made to the existing allocation of resources between the Barrhead Station and Balgraystone Road projects to reflect the current situation and provide clear visibility of all project costs. This would be

reported to a future meeting along with an update on all City Deal projects in relation to scope, timescales and costs.

The Director of Environment was heard in detailed explanation of the report and thereafter the director and Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) were heard in response to questions from Members in relation to various issues including contract contingency levels; staff training on contract development and use of contract standing orders and financial regulations; potential costs of not carrying out the additional work as part of the initial project; and the need for relocation of a foul waste pumping station and extension of a water supply pipe, amongst other things.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) also clarified the position relative the timing of adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme when project costs came in under the initial estimated cost.

The position in relation to the use of funds from the Housing Capital Programme having been clarified, the Cabinet noted:-

- (a) the considerable additional betterment provided through the revised project;
- (b) the contract compensation event changes in relation to redesigns and on-site conditions
- (c) that a further report regarding the scope, timescales and costs for all City Deal projects would be submitted to the Cabinet in the near future.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 10 February 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Convery  
Councillor Betty Cunningham

Provost Jim Fletcher  
Councillor Jim McLean  
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Graham Shankland, Planning and Building Standards Manager; David Love, Principal Planner; Derek Scott, Planner; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Jim Swift

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1521.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2020**

**1522.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Environment providing details of the performance of the planning service as set out in the Planning Performance Framework along with details of the feedback provided by the Scottish Government.

The report explained that every planning authority in Scotland was required to produce a Planning Performance Framework (PPF) annually for submission to the Scottish Government. Every Council used a similar format including the reporting of comparable performance statistics. As well as statistics, the document summarised positive actions undertaken during the year and improvement actions planned for the following year. The Scottish Government then undertook an assessment of the Framework and provided feedback and 'ratings' on how each planning authority had performed against various markers.

The report summarised the service's performance over the reporting period (2019/20) whilst appended to the report was Scottish Government Feedback. It was explained that the Scottish Government used 15 markers with a traffic light system used to rate performance. Whilst the service had been rated green in respect of 8 of the markers 3 amber and 2 red ratings had been awarded, with 2 of the markers not being applicable. Comments in respect of the non-green markers were provided.

The Planning and Building Standards Manager was heard further on the report and in particular on the amber and red ratings. He suggested that in his opinion the red rating in respect of application processing time was overly critical and explained the reasons why it was considered that an amber rating would have been more reasonable.

He also explained the challenges facing the service in relation to the time it could take to conclude legal agreements and that whilst there was a policy in place which aimed to conclude legal agreements as quickly as possible it may be necessary in future to implement that more strictly; and where appropriate re-present applications to the committee for further consideration when legal agreements could not be concluded within a reasonable timescale.

Having heard members of the committee support the comments from the Planning and Building Standards Manager in relation to the ratings applied by the Scottish Government, the Planning and Building Standards Manager clarified that the reporting period was to the end of March 2020 and so activities had not been impacted significantly by the onset of the pandemic. This would be a more significant factor for the 2020/21 report.

The committee noted the report.

## **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEALS AND APPEAL DECISIONS**

**1523.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of the intimation by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) of the outcome of two appeals against the committee's decision to refuse planning permission, and advising on the status of 1 further appeal yet to be determined.

The report explained that the appeals in respect of 37 Busby Road, Clarkston (Ref 2019/0858/TP) and 18 Gordon Road, Netherlee (Ref 2020/0330/TP) had both been dismissed and planning permission refused, whilst the appeal in respect of 29 East Kilbride Road, Busby (Ref 2020/0585/TP) was ongoing with a target determination date of 3 March 2021.

The committee noted the report.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

**1524.** The committee considered reports by the Director of Environment, on applications for planning permission requiring consideration by the committee.

It was agreed that the applications be determined as indicated at Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute, particular reference being made to the following:-

- (i) Application 2020/0510/TP - Demolition of existing unlisted buildings, conversion of former care home to flatted residential development, the erection of new flatted residential development comprising 56 units, landscaping, engineering and associated works – application for planning permission; and
- (ii) Application 2020/0511/LBC - Demolition of outbuildings within grounds of listed building and demolition of extension to listed building. Internal and external alterations to listed building associated with conversion of building to four residential flats; application for listed building consent, at:

Eastwoodhill Eventide Home 238 Fenwick Road Giffnock East Renfrewshire

The Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) was heard in detailed explanation of the proposed development in the course of which she clarified that the number of flats reported in the report of handling was incorrect and that the numbers should be 21 x 2 bedroom flats and 35 x 3 bedroom flats. She outlined the site history, proposed traffic management arrangements at the Fenwick Road/Berryhill Road junction, that the site was considered to be a brownfield windfall site and that it complied with the relevant national and local planning policies. She referred to the site in the context of the surrounding area and that the development was considered to be compatible with other properties in the vicinity. She also commented in detail in relation to the removal of trees from the site and the proposed replanting scheme.

Thereafter in response to questions from members of the committee, she explained that any concerns in relation to public safety on Berryhill Road had been taken into account in the consideration of the application and had been assessed by the Roads Service. The introduction of the traffic lights at the Berryhill Road/Fenwick junction would help to control traffic flow in addition to which a 2 metre wide footpath on Berryhill Road was to be constructed.

Councillor Cunningham having commented on some of the antisocial behaviour that had occurred on the site that would be removed due to development, the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) in response to Councillor Miller provided details in respect of the number of available car parking spaces.

Responding to Councillor McLean she also provided further clarification in respect of tree felling on the site, drawing the distinction between the original planted trees on the site and those that had self-seeded. It was further confirmed in response to Councillor Ireland that the age and size of replacement trees would be controlled by one of the proposed conditions.

In relation to the application for listed building consent the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) highlighted that no objections had been raised by Historic Environment Scotland whilst the Scottish Civic Trust had indicated they had no comments.

Following discussion the committee agreed that:-

- (a) Application 2020/0510/TP be approved subject to conditions as set out in the Report of Handling;
- (b) Application 2020/0511/LBC be approved subject to conditions as set out in the Report of Handling.

1412

(iii) Application 2020/0540/TP - Change of use of existing open space and erection of meeting space building formed from shipping containers at Building 3, Kirkhill, 81 Broom Road, East, Newton Mearns

In response to questions, officers explained the reasons why planning permission was required and undertook to clarify the position in respect of other apparently similar structures elsewhere. They also confirmed that discussions had taken place with the applicant about the possibility of space in the existing building being used for meeting space and that the applicant had explained that whilst there was space on the top floor of the building this was for office space. The proposal would create dedicated meeting room space that was not available at present.

In response to further questions from Members it was clarified that the application was not retrospective; that the issue of the number of sides of the structure to be covered in cladding would be dealt with through proposed Condition 1; that the amenity of the area had been taken into account in the assessment of the application, and that a temporary permission to February 2023 was recommended due to the temporary nature of the development, which would give the planning authority the opportunity to reassess any future proposals.

Having heard Councillor Ireland suggest that in respect of Condition 3 the opening hours should be strictly imposed with no flexibility, the committee agreed that the application be approved subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the report of handling subject to Condition 3 being amended as follows:-

“The building hereby approved shall only be used between the hours of 9am and 6pm.”

CHAIR

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006  
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Index of applications under the above acts considered by Planning Applications Committee on  
10.02.2021

**Reference No:** 2020/0510/TP

**Ward:** 3

**Applicant:**

c/o Westpoint Homes Ltd  
3 Arthur Street  
Clarkston  
United Kingdom  
G76 8BQ

**Agent:**

Sara Cockburn  
177 West George Street  
Glasgow  
UK  
G2 2LB

**Site:** Eastwoodhill Eventide Home 238 Fenwick Road Giffnock East Renfrewshire G46 6UU

**Description:** Demolition of existing unlisted buildings, conversion of former care home to flatted residential development, the erection of new flatted residential development comprising 56 units, landscaping, engineering and associated works.

**Decision:** Disposed to grant subject to a legal agreement

**Reference No:** 2020/0511/LBC

**Ward:** 3

**Applicant:**

Westpoint Homes Ltd, John Brawley & Brendan Brawley  
3 Arthur Street  
Clarkston  
G76 8BQ

**Agent:**

Sara Cockburn  
177 West George Street  
Glasgow  
G2 2LB

**Site:** Eastwoodhill Eventide Home 238 Fenwick Road Giffnock East Renfrewshire G46 6UU

**Description:** Demolition of outbuildings within grounds of listed building and demolition of extension to listed building. Internal and external alterations to listed building associated with conversion of building to four residential flats.

**Decision:** Approved Subject to Conditions

**Reference No:** 2020/0540/TP

**Ward:** 5

**Applicant:**

Mr Graham Mitchell  
Office 4.6, The Studio  
81 Broom Road East  
Newton Mearns  
Glasgow  
G77 5LL

**Agent:**

Alistair Connell  
30 Ellisland  
East Kilbride  
Glasgow  
Scotland  
G74 3SF

**Site:** Building 3 Kirkhill 81 Broom Road East Newton Mearns East Renfrewshire G77 5LL

**Description:** Change of use of existing open space and erection of meeting space building formed from shipping containers

**Decision:** Approved Subject to Conditions



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**LOCAL REVIEW BODY**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.30pm on 20 January 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Convery  
Councillor Betty Cunningham

Provost Jim Fletcher  
Councillor Jim McLean  
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Matt Greenen, Senior Strategy Officer (Planning Adviser); Siobhan Wilson, Solicitor (Legal Adviser); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager (Clerk) and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Jim Swift

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1525.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2020/15 – ERECTION OF ONE AND A HALF STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSION AND INSTALLATION OF DORMER WINDOW AT FRONT AT 2 BRIARLEA AVENUE, GIFFNOCK (REF NO: 2020/0283/TP)**

**1526.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr and Mrs Shahban against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the erection of a one and a half storey side and rear extension and installation of dormer window at front at 2 Briarlea Avenue, Giffnock.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

Having heard the Planning Adviser and following discussion, the Local Review Body agreed to uphold the decision of the Appointed Officer and refuse planning permission.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2020/16 – ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING RAISED DECKING AT REAR AT 14 DUNGLASS PLACE, NEWTON MEARNs, (REF NO: 2020/0298/TP)**

**1527.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Ms Kayleigh Lawson against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of alterations to existing raised decking at rear at 14 Dunglass Place, Newton Mearns.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

Having heard the Planning Adviser and following discussion, the Local Review Body agreed to uphold the decision of the Appointed Officer and refuse planning permission.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**  
**(POLICE AND FIRE)**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 11 February 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Colm Merrick (Chair)  
Councillor Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Tony Buchanan  
Councillor Barbara Grant  
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Merrick in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Superintendent Joe McKerns (substitute for Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland), and Chief Inspector Bryan McGeogh, Police Scotland; and Area Commander James McNeill, and Station Commander Scott Macmillan, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

**Apology:**

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1528.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT OVER THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2020/21**

**1529.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the third quarter of 2020/21. The report also provided statistical information in relation to various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period together with comparative statistics for the corresponding period in 2019/20.

Chief Inspector McGeogh reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. He began by highlighting that in terms of drug dealing and seizures the police had made several arrests and seized a quantity of controlled drugs with the number of detections having decreased slightly from 20 to 19 when compared to the corresponding period the previous year. He also reported that, compared to the previous year, crimes of violence had reduced from 368 to 318 but serious assaults had increased slightly from 20 to 21. It was further highlighted that there had been a reduction in the number of domestic abuse crimes from 238 to 233 when compared to the corresponding period for the previous year and the number of domestic incidents attended by the police had also reduced from 400 to 383. In addition, the number of reported sexual crimes, acquisitive crimes and crimes of vandalism had all seen a reduction compared to the previous year. He further reported that the police recorded an increase of 967 calls from the public in relation to anti-social behaviour over the reported period, which included a number of firework calls in the run up to and including Bonfire Night (5 November), and Police Scotland continued to work closely with their colleagues from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service during that time.

Concluding his remarks, Chief Inspector McGeogh reported that following in depth investigations of two separate violent crime incidents in Giffnock and Barrhead, two males had been charged with offences. He added that community engagement continued to highlight road safety as a priority and a number of people had been reported for road traffic offences. The report also referred to introduction of the "Herbert Protocol" which had recently been rolled out in the Greater Glasgow Division encouraging family members/carers of people diagnosed with dementia to complete and store an information pack containing vital information for the Police in the event that their family member went missing.

Superintendent McKerns referred to the Take 5 for Fraud initiative, which used social media to raise awareness of online and telephone fraud, adding that the Serious Crime Directorate were investigating this issue nationally. He provided further information relating to breaches of the latest lockdown restrictions, advising that the number of fixed penalty notices issued had increased recently and more detailed statistics would be provided in due course.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Superintendent McKerns and Chief Inspector McGeogh responded to a number of questions and provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the crime statistics recorded in the report.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

### **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2020/21**

**1530.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the third quarter of 2020/21. An analysis of the incidents identified in the six areas for demand reduction that had taken place in each of the Council's five wards during the reported period was outlined in the report.

Area Commander McNeill commented briefly on the challenges the service had faced prior to Bonfire Night (5 November) and how important partnership working had been during that period. He also advised that the Strategic Plan for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would be reviewed following the Scottish Government Elections and a draft Interim Local Plan would be submitted to the Cabinet in due course.

Referring to the report he provided an overview of the activity during the reported period. He highlighted that during the course of quarter 3 there had been 9 accidental dwelling fires with 1 casualty arising from these fires. In terms of unintentional harm and injury 2 non-fire casualties had been recorded. He reported that there had been 45 incidents of deliberate fire setting and 3 non-domestic fires. Reporting that there had been 73 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during the quarter, Area Commander McNeil highlighted that this was a significant reduction on the 3 year average.

Station Commander Macmillan reported on the "Take 5" initiative which had been launched in East Renfrewshire on 1 February to help reduce the number of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) in the area. The project was launched in partnership with colleagues in East Renfrewshire Council to investigate the common causes of UFAS incidents and included educational initiatives and posters highlighting five focus areas these being; testing of fire alarms; aerosol use; knowledge of responsibility for fire safety; equipment use; and thinking about actions. The initiative would initially target all Council and educational premises and crews in attendance at UFAS incidents would take time to engage with and educate staff about the Take 5 initiative. He advised that a more formal launch would take place when the current restrictions had been lifted and the initiative would be reviewed and rolled out to additional premises in due course.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Area Commander McNeill provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the statistics recorded in the report.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

#### **VALEDICTORY – CHIEF INSPECTOR BRYAN McGEOGH**

**1531.** Councillor Merrick reported that Chief Inspector Bryan McGeogh would be leaving East Renfrewshire to take on a new role elsewhere. He praised the excellent working relationship the Council had enjoyed with him as Local Commander and on behalf of the Council wished him well for the future.

Chief Inspector McGeogh replied in suitable terms.

CHAIR



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 18 February 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Stewart Miller (Chair)	Councillor Charlie Gilbert
Councillor Barbara Grant (Vice Chair)	Councillor Annette Ireland
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Jim McLean

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Michelle Blair, Chief Auditor; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**Apology:**

Councillor Jim Swift.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1532.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**1533.** The following matters were raised during the Chair's report:-

Special Meeting of Committee

- (i) Further to consultation, the Chair proposed that a special meeting of the committee take place on 11 March to enable the Treasury Management Strategy to be considered prior to its submission to the full Council.

Audit Scotland COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees

- (ii) Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 November 2020 (Page 1337, Item 1444 refers), when the committee had noted a report on the issues raised within the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* published by Audit Scotland in August 2020, agreed that a further update be provided in due course, and that the Clerk should liaise with members of the committee at an appropriate time to ascertain which specific issues they wished to seek further feedback and focus on, or seek further assurances about, the Chair reported that he had requested that a report on issues of further interest to the committee be submitted to its first meeting after the end of the current financial year. He clarified that, to enable appropriate feedback to be sought, he had asked the Clerk to write to members of the committee to ascertain their views on the feedback to be sought, encouraging them all to respond when requested.

The committee agreed that:-

- (a) a special meeting of the committee be held on 11 March 2021 as proposed; and
- (b) a further report on issues raised in the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* be prepared as proposed, and submitted to a future meeting of the committee.

**INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2020/21 – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2020 AND REVISED ANNUAL PLAN**

**1534.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 13 August 2020 (Page 1229, Item 1322 refers), when it had been agreed to approve revisions to the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2020/21, the committee considered a report by the Chief Auditor regarding progress made on the implementation of the revised Plan from 1 October to 31 December, and proposing further revisions.

It was confirmed that three audit reports in relation to planned 2020/21 audit work had been issued in quarter 3, information on which was provided. Reference was also made to the quarterly performance indicators (PIs) for the section, some of which were not being met due to COVID-19 restrictions on audit work that could be carried out, and delays in departments responding to audit queries. It was confirmed that there had been two new requests for assistance dealt with using contingency time, neither of which had resulted in financial loss to the Council, in addition to which some contingency time had been used to assist the core systems team.

Due to continuing restrictions and a further reduction in audit days available, the report proposed the deletion of further items from the 2020/21 Audit Plan, making reference to various staffing issues, including a vacancy in the section due to an internal secondment. It was highlighted that it had been intended to carry out the remaining audits in the revised Audit Plan approved in August in the latter part of the financial year, but this had proved impractical as key employees within the services involved remained unavailable to answer audit queries as they had been facilitating COVID-19 priority tasks or providing core services in alternative ways. In the circumstances, the completion of audits to enable some year-end assurance to be provided to management had been prioritised. An estimated shortfall of 66 available days remained which would be kept under review until the end of the financial year.

In addition to the above, it was reported that five audits remained outstanding from the 2019/20 plan, with efforts to progress and complete these having proved difficult.

Whilst commenting on the report, the Chief Auditor confirmed that no high risk recommendations had been made in the three audit reports issued, and that all the recommendations made had been accepted. She referred to the challenges associated with pursuing audit work remotely due to the restrictions since March 2020, confirming that some slow progress had been made but how this had been hampered for reasons specified in the report. She added that her section was continuing to provide assistance to other sections, in particular with business grants. The Chief Auditor also referred to the use made of contingency time in the last quarter.

The Chief Auditor commented on the further revisions proposed to the Annual Plan for 2020/21, referring to the extent of the changes made to it since it had been approved originally in March 2020, and the emphasis being placed on trying to complete those audits that were most relevant to being able to provide as much assurance as possible to management on the main systems within the Annual Report. Regarding the main underlying reasons for the proposed changes, she confirmed that these were COVID-19 related restrictions which had impacted on access to premises, documents and officers; greatly reduced staffing resources in her section due to secondment and long term sickness absence; and the impracticality of trying to progress audits in some departments where key officers with whom contact was required had been diverted to addressing COVID-19 related activities. She emphasised that everything possible was being done to strive to complete the revised Plan despite the challenges associated with that.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Chief Auditor confirmed the current position on each of the five audits that had been outstanding from the 2019/20 Plan and the challenges associated with progressing most of these. Having confirmed that one report had been completed and issued recently, she reported that the remaining audits would be progressed but probably as part of a Plan for a future year.

In response to Councillor Miller, she clarified that it had just been confirmed that the member of her team who had been on secondment would return to the section in April which would be helpful.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) not to seek any of the reports issued during the quarter at this stage;
- (b) to approve the revised Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2020/21; and
- (c) otherwise, to note the report and related comments.

CHAIR

