

## **MINUTE VOLUME**

**28 APRIL 2021**

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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 7.00pm on 25 February 2020.**

**Present:**

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Annette Ireland
Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Paul Aitken	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Paul O’Kane
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Jim Swift
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); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Arlene Cassidy, Children’s Services Strategy Manager, HSCP; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Anthony McReavy, Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust; and Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1535.** Provost Fletcher and Councillors Grant, Merrick and O’Kane declared a non-financial interest in items 1544, 1547 and 1548 below on the grounds that they were members of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board.

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1536.** The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 16 December 2020.

## **MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

**1537.** The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted, except as otherwise referred to in Items 1538 and 1539 below:-

- (a) Appointments Committee – 16 December 2020;
- (b) Licensing Committee – 19 January 2021
- (c) Local Review Body – 20 January 2021
- (d) Education Committee – 21 January 2021;
- (e) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 21 January 2021;
- (f) Cabinet – 28 January 2021;
- (g) Cabinet – 4 February 2021;
- (h) Planning Applications Committee – 10 February 2021;
- (i) Local Review Body – 10 February 2021;
- (j) Cabinet (Police & Fire) – 11 February 2021;
- (k) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 18 February 2021.

### **CABINET – 28 JANUARY – MIXED TENURE SCHEME**

**1538.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 28 January (Page 1401, Item 1514 refers), when amongst other things, it had been noted that the contract would be competitively retendered to run from 31 March 2021, Councillor Grant requested clarification on the timescale for the tendering process. In response, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) advised that, although the timescale for processing the tender had been tight, it had been processed appropriately and was on schedule to be finalised by the end of the financial year.

The Council noted the comments.

### **CABINET – 4 FEBRUARY – BETTER POINTS INITIATIVE**

**1539.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 4 February (Page 1406, Item 1519 refers), when the tender for the Better Points Initiative was approved, Councillors Grant and Wallace requested clarification respectively on how the initiative would be evaluated and how long the project would operate for. In response, the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) reported that the App could be downloaded voluntarily and consultants would analyse and measure a vast range of data recorded via the App including number of registered/active users; age/gender; activity undertaken; distance travelled; calories burned, etc. She added that introduction of the App had been put on hold because East Renfrewshire had been placed in the highest tier of restrictions, as a result of which Sustrans did not expect the project to be completed by the original date of April 2021. Councillor Wallace proposed that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee should seek updates on the project's progress in due course to ensure value for money was being provided.

Having heard the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) advise that she would provide further information to Councillors Grant, Wallace and Swift in response to some of the questions raised, the Council noted the comments.

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

**1540.** The following statement was made:-

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

Councillor Bamforth reported on the most recent meeting of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) held on 3 February 2021 which had mainly focussed on recognising the pressures that staff were working under and providing information on the latest response to the pandemic. She advised that referrals to support mental and physical health had increased; and updates were provided on adult support and protection work, and relocation of care home residents due to a recent closure. An overview of the 2021-22 budget process and a review of the medium term financial plan for the board were noted together with the Revenue Budget Monitoring report for the period up to 30 November 2020. Even though a modest underspend had been reported, it was highlighted that 2021/22 would be a difficult and challenging year, although it was expected that all COVID related costs would be fully funded by the Scottish Government. The Board also considered and noted the East Renfrewshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-23 and the HSCP Strategic Plan Update.

The Council noted the statement.

## **PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**1541.** The Council considered and noted a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of a photoshoot and virtual event attended by Provost Fletcher.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING 2021-2027**

**1542.** Under reference to the Minute of meeting of 27 February 2020 (Page 1118, Item 125 refers), when the Outline Revenue Financial Plan for 2020-26 had been approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) seeking approval of the updated Outline Revenue Financial Plan for 2021-27.

The report explained that despite a recent move to annual budgets by the Scottish Government and significant shifts in the local government budget allocation which made long-term planning challenging, the Council had continued to plan its detailed revenue budgets over a 3 year time horizon, updating them annually. The Scottish Government had been unable to move to publishing multi-year settlements from 2020/21 as intended due to the General Election and the impact of COVID-19 on financial planning timescales in 2020, but hoped these would recommence from 2022/23, which would facilitate the Council's revenue planning. The Plan had taken account of the 2020/21 draft settlement, which was subject to change when the final Scottish and UK budget plans were confirmed on 9 and 3 March respectively. The Council's Outcome Delivery Plan and outline multi-year plans for 2022/23 onwards would be refined once the impact of the final figures was known.

It was highlighted that financial planning was extremely difficult in the present economic and political situation, that Brexit and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic uncertainty further complicated matters, and that there was a need to plan for a range of scenarios. Having commented on the financial outlook, the report summarised the position on various demand pressures, making reference to issues such as demographics, capital infrastructure, the City Deal and legislative change in addition to wider political, societal, and economic change.

Issues pertaining to the Outline Revenue Financial Plan and a range of mitigating actions open to the Council, such as through its Modern Ambitious Programme, partnership working, service reductions, income generation and the use of reserves were commented on.

Following discussion, the Council:-

- (a) noted the increasing budget pressures anticipated in the next six years and the mitigating actions proposed; and
- (b) approved the Outline Revenue Financial Plan 2021-27.

## **RESERVES POLICY**

**1543.** The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) proposing for consideration an updated Reserves Policy for the Council.

The report explained that it was regarded good financial practice that the Council had a documented and approved Financial Reserves Policy, making reference to Local Authority Accounting Practice (LAAP) Bulletin 99 published in July 2014 which provided advice from CIPFA on local authority reserves and balances. Having clarified that the proposed policy reflected key messages from that bulletin, the report referred to their practical application within the Council.

Whilst commenting on related issues in further detail, the report made reference to the various types of reserves operated by the Council, following which the importance of clarity on the rules and responsibilities in respect of governance of the Council's funds and reserves was referred to. The governance arrangements in respect of the General Fund Unallocated Reserve and Earmarked Reserves were summarised, following which it was clarified that the Policy would be reviewed no less frequently than 3-yearly.

The Council agreed that the Reserves Policy be approved.

## **EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL REVENUE ESTIMATES 2021/22**

**1544.** The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) relative to the proposed Revenue Estimates for 2021/22 of income and expenditure as the basis for the Council Tax declaration for 2021/22. A copy of the Revenue Estimates 2021/22 was appended to the report.

The report outlined the revenue budget process, commented on the Scottish Government's Grant Funding for 2021-22, and explained that in determining the grant distribution the Scottish Government had again put in place the "Floors" arrangement to ensure year-on-year grant stability at individual council level. Under this arrangement, the Council would contribute £1.799m by way of deduction from Aggregate External Finance (AEF) grants in 2021/22. This was higher than in recent years and was reflected in the figures in the report.

Having commented on Non-Domestic Rates income, the report referred to the financial outlook and the practice in recent years of setting multi-year budgets. Given the ongoing financial outlook, it was proposed that the Council continued to adopt a longer-term financial planning approach, but as multi-year Scottish and UK Government settlements were not available, it was proposed to agree plans only for 2021/22. Officers would continue to model departmental figures for 2021/22 to 2023/24 and update figures as set out in the Council's report on Financial Planning 2021-2027 for longer-term planning purposes. It was

anticipated that a further 3 year budget would be set in February 2022 when multi-year figures were announced by the Scottish Government.

Taking account of a range of matters, the report referred to a total initial budget shortfall of £8.519m for the coming year. This was lower than expected when the indicative budget had been estimated, with the main reasons for this being summarised.

The report explained that the Council's settlement included additional grant of £1.802m (equivalent to a 3% Council Tax increase) on condition that Council Tax was frozen for 2021/22. The Council's published forecasts had been based on a 3% assumed Council Tax increase and it was therefore proposed to accept this additional grant and avoid any increase for local Council Tax payers.

It was explained that budgets were closely monitored throughout the year and the latest monitoring had forecast a non-COVID related underspend of £2.472m by the year end, which had been taken into account when considering the scope for a draw on reserves. It was therefore considered that a further £3 million of the outstanding 2021/22 savings requirement could be deferred on a short term basis by a drawdown from unallocated general reserve funds resulting in the budget shortfall for 2021/22 being reduced to £5.519m.

In order to permit the Integrated Joint Board and the East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Trust to proceed with their scheduled budget setting plans it was proposed that the Council confirm their contributions to these bodies, leaving a savings figure of £3.503m to be addressed by Council Departments. It was confirmed that Directors had compiled savings options for 2021/22 totalling £9.434m which was sufficient to cover the remaining gap.

Related issues commented on included scope for further changes to the grant settlement, the intention to await details of the final figures before identifying further savings, and the possibility of the most challenging savings being deferred subject to the final budget settlement.

The report explained that further cash reductions in grant were forecast for the years following 2021/22, producing ongoing shortfalls for the next 5 years. For 2022/23 a mid-range budget shortfall of £9.338m was forecast after applying an assumed 3% Council Tax increase for that year.

The report commented on the Revenue Estimates for 2021/22 following which specific reference was made to the impact of Welfare Reform on Council services and contingency provision to help the Council support change. Reference was also made to the assumed Council Tax collection rate for 2021/22 and reserves and balances issues, particularly the General, Modernisation, Insurance, Equalisation, and Repairs and Renewal Funds, Capital Reserve and Devolved School Management Reserve. Having referred to efficiency issues and the equality impact assessment carried out on the budget saving measures, the report concluded by indicating that the Revenue Estimates appended to the report were based on a Council Tax Band D level of £1,289.96 being set for 2021/22, representing a Council Tax freeze compared to 2020/21.

Councillor Buchanan referred to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and proposed that Members pause for a minute's silence to remember those who had lost their lives. He was then heard on the proposals highlighting that councils had played a key role in the COVID-19 response including through supporting shielding residents; offering grants to businesses and individuals; providing key links to the voluntary sector; establishing a humanitarian food hub; establishing new ways of working to support children and young people with their education; setting up two mass vaccination centres; and operating an asymptomatic testing centre. He

added that staff had risen to meet the challenge of providing new services on top of the ones already in place and he expressed his thanks to everyone involved in supporting the Council's response. He paid further tribute to all Health and Social Care Staff, and in particular the staff at Bonnyton Care Home, and referred to the human and financial cost which had been paid by councils and residents during the pandemic.

Councillor Buchanan explained that the Scottish Government grant settlement remained the biggest source of funding for the Council with only 18% of income being obtained from Council Tax payments. In October, a shortfall of £11.8m had been predicted but this figure had been reduced to £3.5m due to internal savings; an improved settlement; and using £3m from reserves. The Council had made a substantial commitment to avoid reductions in vital services, and this included an increase in funding to both the HSCP and the Culture & Leisure Trust. He proposed that the Council's savings plan would be considered at a special meeting of the Council in March 2021 and would include ambitious capital project plans. In addition, he supported the Scottish Government's request to freeze Council tax and confirmed that there would be no Council Tax increase in 2021/22.

In conclusion Councillor Buchanan having thanked all Council, HSCP and Leisure Trust staff for their hard work in ensuring high quality services could be delivered and for supporting local people moved that the Council:-

- (a) approve the 2021/22 revenue estimates;
- (b) agree that the detailed budgets and savings to be applied should be determined by Council after the final confirmation of the Scottish Government grant settlement;
- (c) agree to hold a further meeting of the Council on 15 March 2021 to determine detailed budgets and savings to be applied for 2021/22;
- (d) approve the recommended level and utilisation of reserves;
- (e) determine the 2020/21 Council Tax Band D level at £1,289.96; and
- (f) note that the management of the Council's finances and service plans would continue to be undertaken on a longer-term basis.

Seconding the motion, Councillor O'Kane highlighted that the Budget was set in the difficult context of the financial settlement becoming known late, commenting that the Administration had worked hard to deliver it in the circumstances and against a background of financial uncertainty and ongoing local government funding reductions. He added that the budget had been set in a different context this year and praised the generosity and kindness of people who assisted during the pandemic across all the Council's communities. Staff had worked hard to keep vulnerable people safe and connected; supported children and young people at home; set up local vaccination centres; and ensured that services continued to operate. He added that Directors had worked hard to reduce spend and the budget gap and continued to lobby the Government for an improved settlement. He highlighted that it was prudent to wait on the outcome of both the Scottish and UK Government's budget processes before finalising any decisions on savings.

Thereafter, Councillor O'Kane thanked officers for their hard work during a difficult year and during the budget process, and thanked residents for working together to make lives better.

A full discussion took place in the course of which concerns were expressed about the use of Council reserves and the Floors arrangement. Councillor Wallace highlighted that local



government services and decision making were vital but, the grant received from the Scottish Government remained low and related to a cut in funding in real cash terms. Councillor Miller agreed that the amount of work undertaken in local areas during the pandemic had not been sufficiently recognised by the Scottish Government in terms of additional funding to deliver local services. Concluding the discussion, all Members agreed that the response to the pandemic by local people and Council employees had been outstanding and supported the proposed Council Tax freeze.

Summing up, Councillor Buchanan was heard in response to some of the issues raised during discussion, emphasising that the Council had and would continue to push for a fairer settlement from the Scottish Government, no matter which party was in control, to ensure that vital local services could continue to be provided.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to approve the 2021/22 revenue estimates;
- (b) that the detailed budgets and savings to be applied should be determined by Council after the final confirmation of the Scottish Government grant settlement;
- (c) to hold a further meeting of the Council on 15 March 2021 to determine detailed budgets and savings to be applied for 2021/22;
- (d) to approve the recommended level and utilisation of reserves;
- (e) to determine the 2020/21 Council Tax Band D level at £1,289.96; and
- (f) to note that the management of the Council's finances and service plans would continue to be undertaken on a longer-term basis.

### **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – RENT SETTING 2021/22 AND 2022/23**

**1545.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 27 February 2020 (Page 1128, Item 1219 refers), when the Council had approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2020/21, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment making recommendations in relation to the proposed rent increase for council housing for 2021/22.

Having referred to the need to review legislative requirements, local priorities, related costs and what would be sustainable, affordable and acceptable to tenants when determining the level of rent increase required, the report clarified that a key legislative challenge for the Council in recent years had been meeting and maintaining the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), in addition to which sustainability improvements to the energy efficiency rating of its housing stock under the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) were required by 2020. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, 91% of the Council housing stock had been brought up to meet the standard required and it was expected that the remaining 9% would be completed by the end of the 2020/21 financial year. These challenges were in addition to addressing routine requirements. Having commented on considerable service improvements in recent years but also related challenges, such as in relation to Universal Credit and ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the report explained that approval of the proposed rent increase of 1% for 2021/22 effective from April 2021 and a further 1% increase in April 2022 would assist the Housing Service to address some of the issues tenants considered priorities. It was explained that the Council was also keen to continue to

provide new homes for local residents. 45 new homes had already been built with a further 116 units currently under construction.

The report commented on a range of related matters further, including affordability, the impact of the rent increase, staffing, loan charges and additional investment. It was also explained that the Housing Service was currently undertaking a significant redesign, which included implementation of new digital technologies to ensure customers could use self-serve tools and allow officers to spend greater time in the community delivering customer focused services. It was further reported that COVID-19 had led to an increase in both void rent loss and rent arrears, in addition to which the need to minimise the rent increase but maintain investment had created a projected deficit of £606,000 for 2020/21. However, the deficit would be addressed by the 30 year Housing Business Plan which had sufficient reserves in place.

Councillor Devlin was heard in support of the proposals during which he referred to the balance needed between making improvements to the housing stock and keeping rent levels reasonable, particularly this year as many people's incomes had been badly affected by the pandemic. He confirmed that the authority's rent levels were lower than other local landlords.

The Council agreed that a rent increase of 1% be applied for the financial year 2021/22 with effect from April 2021, and that a further increase of 1% be applied in April 2022.

#### **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 TO 2030/31**

**1546.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval of the proposed 10-year Housing Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2030/31.

The report clarified the position on various matters, including how the programme had recently been dominated by the need to invest to meet the Scottish Quality Housing Standard (SQHS) and first Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH1) by 2020/21. 91% of housing stock had already been brought up to meet the standard by the end of December 2020 and it was expected that the remaining stock would be completed by the end of 2020/21. Having clarified that the Scottish Government was introducing further energy efficiency targets for social housing to be achieved by 2025 (ESSH2), the report explained that the targets would be extremely challenging to achieve and the actual cost of ESSH2 would be dependent on further research and feasibility studies. It was also reported that, due to the impact of COVID-19, many planned works had been moved to 2020/21 and there may be further slippage in 2020/21 due to progress made on contracts and the impact of government restrictions.

Having commented on the need to achieve a difficult balance between tenants' aspirations regarding housing improvements, investment affordability, and the implications of the age of the Council's housing stock, the report provided details of key areas on which the Housing Capital Programme would focus for the next ten years, including investment of £43.7m to complete the delivery of 310 new council houses; of £6.8m in central heating; of £2.2m primarily in house re-wiring and the upgrading of smoke detectors; of £19.2m in external structural projects; and of £15.5m in the installation of internal elements such as kitchens. Other projects itemised included investment of £150k to fund house purchase opportunities such as through the Scottish Government's Mortgage to Rent Scheme; of £1.5m in sheltered housing; and further development of the new Housing Management IT system.

The report commented on a range of further matters, including how the programme was financed, related issues and monitoring arrangements. It concluded that the levels of

investment within the programme were essential to allow the Council to continue to meet the SQHS, to meet the future requirements of EESSH, and to provide homes that would address the needs and aspirations of current and prospective tenants. It was emphasised that although continued investment was affordable and would be welcomed by tenants, resources were tight and prudent financial management was required.

Councillor Devlin highlighted that the 10 year capital programme would continue to meet the SHQS and EESSH standards and aimed to mitigate fuel poverty and climate change emissions. He added that a number of planned improvements had been delayed due to COVID-19 but had been included in the 2021/22 programme, including fitting integrated smoke and fire alarms in properties.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the proposed 2021/22 to 2030/231 Housing Capital Programme; and
- (b) authorised the Director of Environment to progress the projects contained within the 2021/22 programme.

#### **EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST 2021/22 BUSINESS PLAN**

**1547.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Education, seeking approval of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCL) 2021/22 Business Plan. A copy of the plan was appended to the report.

It was highlighted that the report had been delayed this year due to COVID-19 to allow the Trust to plan more effectively for 2021/22 and align the plan more closely with the budget setting process. The report provided background details about the establishment of the Trust as an independent charity and indicated that the business planning process was outlined in the Services Agreement between the Trust and the Council that vested the Trust with the assets to deliver culture and leisure services on behalf of the Council. Details of what the business plan identified together with its strategic aims were outlined in the report.

Whilst noting that this was the sixth East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Business Plan which gave clear strategic direction that was in accordance with the Council's strategies, the report highlighted that the plan was supported by detailed operational plans which delivered the Council's objectives under the Community Plan, Fairer East Ren Plan and Outcome Delivery Plan and would guide the work of the Trust and its staff to deliver high quality services to the residents and communities of East Renfrewshire.

The Council approved the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust 2020/21 Business Plan.

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

**1548.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 16 December 2020 (Page 1376, Item 1487 refers), when it was 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, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on the Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre options, costs and potential phasing of costs.

The report highlighted that the Leisure Centre/Theatre had the potential to deliver extremely wide benefits and the basic construction costs, including demolition of the existing buildings, contingencies and inflation was estimated at £47,500,000. In order to demonstrate value for money, the project had been benchmarked against other relevant projects, including the Allander Leisure Centre in East Dunbartonshire, although it was highlighted that there were a number of key differences between the two projects which made an exact comparison difficult. Key additions to the Eastwood Park project included, a library; theatre; 50m pool; a gymnastics zone; and café, kitchen and theatre bar, amongst other things. The cost data benchmarking exercise had confirmed that the estimated cost level was appropriate for a leisure centre of this ambition, size and scope.

Further information was provided on the benefits of the site selected; design and impact of the project; and option appraisal. It was further reported that considerable progress had been made since the previous report was considered by the Council in December 2020, including review and refinement of the project brief; having a full project design team in place; agreement reached on project governance arrangements and reporting schedules with the project managers; and submission of a Proposal for Application Notice; amongst other things. Further information was also provided on the next stages, which included surveys and investigations; and wider masterplanning issues.

Councillor Wallace was heard in respect of the proposals indicating that, although overall he was in favour of the project, he was concerned at the scale as the costs and aspirations for the facility had increased significantly since the original proposal. Councillor O'Kane added that this was a very ambitious and aspirational project which would serve the needs of all residents for many years to come and would generate additional income for the Culture and Leisure Trust. Councillor Buchanan highlighted that the project had developed significantly since the original plans and would include facilities which allowed local residents, and those from further afield, to look after their health and wellbeing in a modern, future-proof environment. He added that the project would provide jobs within the local community, including during the building phase of the project, and that this was the perfect time to progress with such an ambitious project as borrowing costs remained low.

Further discussion took place in the course of which some concerns were raised about the costs involved; whether this type of facility would be used in the post COVID landscape; and the status of the wider masterplan. In response, Mr McReavy advised that the Trust had been keeping in touch with customers over the past year and the overwhelming response was that people were keen to return to leisure facilities as quickly as possible and return to normal. However, it was acknowledged that customers remained wary and would require a number of additional facilities to be put in place to allow them to return safely including additional handwashing facilities/cleaning regimes, and that areas such as saunas/steam rooms/showers may be out of use for some time to come. He added that swimming lessons and fitness classes had been particularly well received when leisure centres reopened after the first lockdown and he expected this to be the case again when further restriction were eased in due course. The Director of Environment reported that a meeting of the working group, which had been established to consider the project in more detail, would be convened as soon as possible to allow decisions on the project to be finalised; and advised that the wider master plan had been put on hold at the present time, to allow Elected Members/officers to concentrate on the Leisure Centre/Theatre project, and would be brought forward to the Cabinet for consideration at a future date.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that interest rates remained low at the moment which would reduce the project's costs going forward; that the annual repayment could be approximately £2.2-2.5 million each year; and that half of the financial provision had already been included in the Capital Plan.

The Council:-

- (a) agreed to proceed with the current proposals for Eastwood Leisure Centre/Theatre at an estimated £55m capital cost; and
- (b) noted that a further meeting of the member officer working group would be arranged in the near future to discuss progress.

## **PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

**1549.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval to change the Planning Scheme of Delegation, for onward submission to Scottish Ministers, and to clarify certain criteria.

The report explained that the current Scheme of Delegation had been approved in 2013, taking account of the Scottish Government's modernisation of the planning system and the Town & Country Planning (Schemes of Delegation and Local Review Procedures)(Scotland) Regulations 2013, and allow appointed officers to make decisions on local and less controversial planning applications. In 2019/20, the delegation rate to officers was just under 99%.

In order to take account of changes to the management and staff structures within the Environment Department and to allow the planning applications process to operate more efficiently, a number of changes to the current Scheme of Delegation were proposed, including delegation to appointed officers; applications with an Elected Member or staff member interest; and objections which triggered referral to the Planning Applications Committee. It was considered that the modifications would result in more efficient decision-making with decisions being made at an appropriate level.

The Council:-

- (a) approved updates to the Planning Scheme of Delegation, subject to a minor amendment at Appendix 2, paragraph (x) to replace "emails" with "electronic communications"; and
- (b) noted that the updated Planning Scheme of Delegation would be submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval.

## **PROPOSED LEASE AND IMPROVEMENT OF CAPELRIG HOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>**

**1550.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment and Head of Public Protection and Children's Services (CSWO), seeking approval to enter into a 25 year lease with Children 1<sup>st</sup> for their pioneering project "Child's House for Healing" (Scotland's first Barnahus) and to acknowledge the benefits to the Council in progressing this project.

The report highlighted that Children 1<sup>st</sup>, in collaboration with Victim Support Scotland, Edinburgh University and Children England, had obtained People's Postcode Lottery funding to progress a project to allow every child victim and witness in Scotland and Britain to receive support in a house for healing. East Renfrewshire had been chosen to lead a national pilot to develop this approach, in partnership with neighbouring HSCPs and Strathclyde Police colleagues, and premises for the project had been sought in the local area. Capelrig House had been identified as a possible venue.

Further information was provided on the repair costs, which would be shared between the Council and Children 1<sup>st</sup>, and the annual running costs for the building which were currently incurred by the Environment Department. It was estimated that the Council would benefit from revenue savings of around £38,000 per annum but would have a potential capital contribution of around £440,000.

Children 1<sup>st</sup> had approached the Council regarding use of the building and a fresh condition survey was carried out identifying repair costs of £879,000. Following discussion it was proposed that Children 1<sup>st</sup> would work jointly with the Council to address the repairs and improvements required, sharing the cost of improvements, and would be prepared in principle to enter into a full repairing and insurance lease for 25 years and meet the annual running costs for the building.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the terms of the proposed joint financial commitment of the Council and Children 1<sup>st</sup> investing up to £879,000 in the Capelrig House/Child's House for Healing Project;
- (b) that provision be made within the General Fund capital programme of £440,000 for 2021/22 being the Council's contribution towards the improvements;
- (c) to note that this expenditure would be contained within existing Environment Department capital resources and any resultant adjustments to the programme would be part of the General Fund Capital Plan report to be considered by the Council in March 2021;
- (d) to approve the proposal to release Capelrig House to Children 1<sup>st</sup> for 25 years to deliver the pioneering project (Child's House for Healing);
- (e) to note the benefits in securing the preservation of Capelrig House and the longer term potential financial savings of £950,000 to the Council; and
- (f) to delegate to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Solicitor to conclude the lease and repair/improvement financial arrangements with Children 1<sup>st</sup> with regard to Capelrig House.

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

**1551.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer, presenting for consideration *At Our Heart*, the East Renfrewshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-2023, a copy of which accompanied the report.

The report referred to the obligations placed on local authorities, in conjunction with their relevant health board, to jointly prepare a 3-year Children's Services Plan for the local authority area, as well as the requirement on the local authority and health board to jointly publish an annual report detailing how the provision of children's services and related services in the area had been provided in accordance with the plan. It was noted that the submission date for new children's services plans had been extended by the Scottish Government due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Referring to the plan, the report explained that in accordance with the statutory guidance, the plan had been framed within the national *Getting it Right for Every Child* agenda and in particular the Wellbeing Indicators. Having set out the Wellbeing Indicators, the report provided details of the consultation and partnership working that had taken place in the development of the plan. In particular, the overarching role of the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership was outlined.

The report concluded by confirming that the purpose of the plan was to set out the vision for East Renfrewshire's children, young people and their families, and demonstrate the commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for them.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) acknowledge the new duties of the Children and Young People Act 2014 as they relate to Part 3 Children's Services Planning; and
- (b) approve the content of the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020–2023 prior to its submission to the Scottish Government.

#### **SCHEME FOR MEMBERS' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES 2021-22**

**1552.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive on the Scheme of Members' Remuneration and Expenses for 2021/22. A copy of the Scheme was appended to the report.

The report explained that the Scheme provided details of the levels of basic salary payable to all councillors, and the increased salaries paid to the Leader and the Civic Head (Provost), these amounts being prescribed in legislation. The Scheme also provided details of those positions in the Council that had been identified as Senior Councillor positions for the purpose of the regulations, and the levels of salary to be paid to each postholder. In addition, the Scheme provided details of those other categories in respect of which Elected Members were entitled to claim expenses, such as the performance of approved duties, travelling expenses, and subsistence allowances.

The Council agreed to approve the Scheme of Members' Remuneration and Expenses for 2021/22.

PROVOST





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

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

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth  
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Colm Merrick  
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues and Change; Andy Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Alison Ballingall, Senior Revenues Manager; Joe Abrami, Principal Solicitor; Mark Waugh, Principal Accountant (Capital); and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Danny Devlin.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1553.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CHARGING FOR SERVICES 2021/22 - LICENSING**

**1554.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement, seeking approval of proposed licensing fees and charges for 2021/22, details of which were appended to the report.

Whilst noting that the Council presently had a policy of accepting only wheelchair accessible vehicles as new taxi and private hire vehicles, the report explained that the policy was due for review and might require adjustment to remove private hire vehicles from this requirement due to numbers reaching adequate levels and the move towards ultra-low emission vehicles.

The report proposed that a financial incentive be offered to keep existing and encourage new wheelchair accessible vehicles in circulation should the policy be amended. In addition,

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a review of the cost of some business licences had highlighted a discrepancy with neighbouring local authorities and therefore it was proposed to discontinue having two levels of fees.

The Cabinet agreed to:-

- (a) alter charges for 2021/22 in accordance with the table in Appendix 1 to the report and noted that where an increase occurred, the increases were approximately 1.9% being the inflation rate advised by the Chief Accountant ;
- (b) reduce charges for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) Licences for the purpose of encouraging the increased availability of these vehicles; and
- (c) removes the difference between business and employee rates for some licences.

#### **DEBT MANAGEMENT FOR NON-DOMESTIC RATES, SUNDRY DEBT INCOME, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS AND COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION ADJUSTMENT**

**1555.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval to write-off as irrecoverable sums associated with Non Domestic Rates, Sundry Debt income and Housing Benefit overpayments. Approval was also sought for Council Tax Reduction adjustments as a result of the new Council Tax and Benefits system implementation.

The report highlighted that the debts recommended for write-off had previously been included in bad debt provision and the adjustments already accounted for, and therefore the write offs/adjustments had no net impact on the revenue accounts of the Council.

The Cabinet agreed:-

- (a) approved the write-off of the following sums, totalling up to £143,736.05 without prejudice to subsequent recovery procedure:
  - Non Domestic Rates arrears totalling up to £47,419.54
  - Sundry debt income totalling up to £50,473.61
  - Housing Benefit Overpayments totalling up to £45,842.90;
- (b) approved the Council Tax Reduction adjustments of £23,958 in 2019/20 and £22,666 in 2020/21;
- (c) noted that a further report in relation to Council Tax arrears and historical Non Domestic rates arrears would be submitted to a future meeting during the course of 2021/22; and
- (d) noted that all sums written off/adjusted had been accounted for already.

## ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2020/21

**1556.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, detailing the projected revenue budget out-turn for 2020/21 and providing details of the expected year-end variances together with summary cost information for each of the undernoted services as at 31 December 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 December 2020, the estimated year-end position showed a net favourable variance on net expenditure of £1,718k based on current information and taking account of additional grant funding confirmed and anticipated to date, the report highlighted that for General Fund services the projected underspend was £1,814k and together with the projected shortfall in Council Tax collection of £450k the total forecast underspend on General Fund services was £1,364k.

The report indicated that the variance was made up of unfunded COVID pressures, £1,108k offset by managed underspends of £2,472k. This reflected a significant improvement on the position reported to the meeting of the Cabinet on 28 January 2021 and was due to various increases in anticipated grant funding, a substantial reduction in the shortfall forecast by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, a significant reduction in the projected PPE operational expenditure, and Directors continuing to avoid all non-essential spend as instructed by the Council. The report also sought approval for a number of service virements and operational budget adjustments, details of which were outlined in the report.

The report concluded by highlighting that a number of operational variances required management action to ensure that expenditure would be in line with budget at the end of the financial year. At this time, it was expected that management action would lead to all overspends being recovered, that all underspends were consolidated wherever possible and that spending up to budget levels did not take place.

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

- (a) to approve the service virements and operational adjustments as set out in the notes to the tables and note 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; and

- (d) that all departments continue to closely monitor their probable out-turn position.

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

**1557.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, monitoring expenditure as at 31 December 2020 against the approved General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21 and recommending adjustments where necessary in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The report highlighted the latest developments relating to the programme, including the latest income and expenditure movements and cash flow management issues and indicated that the projected shortfall of £425,000 which represented 1.35% of the resources available was within manageable limits. Detailed explanations of the reasons for the major movements within the programme were outlined in the report.

The Chief Financial Officer referred to the previous report submitted to the Cabinet on 26 November 2020, when it was noted that no capital receipts would be assumed in the current year's General Fund capital programme as their timings were uncertain. However since the publication of the papers for the meeting capital receipts of £1.96m had been secured and it was proposed that it be recommended to the Council that these should be applied under fiscal flexibility powers granted to councils by the Scottish Government to help address anticipated unfunded COVID pressures arising in 2020/21 and 2021/22, with any unspent elements being reallocated to support the Council's capital plans from 1 April 2022.

The Cabinet agreed to:-

- (a) **recommend to the Council** that the movements within the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved;
- (b) approve the revision of maintenance work plans to address priority areas in respect of ventilation works within existing resources;
- (c) note the shortfall of £425,000 and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis; and
- (d) **recommend to the Council** that £1.96m of capital receipts generated in the current year should be applied under fiscal flexibility powers to help address anticipated unfunded COVID pressures arising in 2020/21 and 2021/22, with any unspent elements being reallocated to support the Council's capital plans from 1 April 2022.

### **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21**

**1558.** The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Environment, monitoring expenditure as at 31 December 2020 against the approved Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 and recommending adjustments where necessary in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The report highlighted the latest developments relating to the programme, including the latest income and expenditure movements and cash flow management issues and indicated that the projected shortfall of £135,000 which represented 1.9% of the resources available was within manageable limits.

The Cabinet agreed to:-

- (a) **recommend to the Council** that the movements within the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved; and
- (b) note that the shortfall of £135,000 and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

## **TRADING UNDER BEST VALUE**

**1559.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, requesting that consideration be given to the classification of Council activities in terms of trading operations as defined by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and as modified in June 2013 by the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC). Details of the review of services that had been undertaken; a summary of trading operations and the criteria used to determine if they were “significant” were appended to the report.

The report explained that in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council was required to consider its trading operations on an annual basis and determine those which should be regarded as “significant”. Having noted the criteria that required to be met for a trading operation to be considered as “significant” and a further test of significance that required to be taken into account, the report explained that having taken these conditions into account, the result of the review for 2019/20 was that the Council had no Significant Trading Operations.

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

## **AUTHORISATION TO SIGN LEASES ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE LET OF HOUSES**

**1560.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval for the amendment of the Scheme of Delegated Functions in relation to approving additional officers to sign tenancy agreements to permit the Council to let homes.

The Cabinet approved the addition of the following officers to the list of those already authorised to sign tenancy agreements for the let of houses:

- (a) Repairs Delivery Manager;
- (b) Assistant Repairs Delivery Manager;
- (c) Lead Officer (Strategy Improvement & Support); and
- (d) Lead Officer (Property & Capital).

## **CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

**1561.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing an update on the proposed actions to be undertaken in 2021 to permit the Council to publish a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and contribute towards Scotland’s ambition to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases to ‘net-zero’ by 2045 at the latest.

Whilst noting that the Council’s current policy framework and activities would not achieve the Scottish Government’s target to be carbon neutral by 2040 or achieve net-zero for

greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, the report explained that it was not enough for the Council alone to change its behaviours as its residents and businesses also required to respond. Details of the Council's approach to reducing emissions from its own activities were outlined in the report it being noted that the role of residents and businesses would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

The report explained that there was a requirement to establish accurate baseline data for the Council's greenhouse gas emissions and to have a robust system of measurement in order to track progress. Furthermore, the foundation of the Council's new Climate Change Strategy would be to define clear baselines and to fully understand what action was required to bridge the gap from what current policy delivered in terms of carbon reductions and what needed to change to reach 'net zero'.

Whilst noting that the Council would be engaging the services of a consultant to provide a baseline for carbon emissions using best practice methodology and tools, the report indicated that the outputs of the exercise would provide a breakdown of core emission sources from all Council buildings, fleet and operations, including waste management, as a minimum; and their percentage contribution to the Council's total emissions. This exercise would identify which priority areas required action and inform the Council's next steps.

The report also proposed that the concept of 'carbon budgeting' be explored as a key instrument for driving better environmental performance highlighting that this approach was supported by the UK Climate Change Committee and the Scottish Government and would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Cabinet. Details of the definition of a carbon budget were outlined in the report.

Whilst noting that the Council proposed to make use of 'what good looks like' as a framework for the development of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the report highlighted that the actions outlined in the report were the first steps of a journey that would take over twenty years. However, the long time frame should not be seen as a reason to delay what is essential action. These proposed actions would see the Council by the end of the calendar year to begin to draft a meaningful climate strategy action plan.

The Cabinet noted:

- (a) the requirement to establish accurate baseline data for the Council's greenhouse gas emissions and a robust system of measurement in order to track progress;
- (b) the intention to explore the use of carbon budgeting as a key instrument for driving better environmental performance; and
- (c) the use of 'what good looks like' as a framework for the development of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

## **CROOKFUR PLAYING FIELDS: LEASE BY ST CADOC'S YOUTH CLUB**

**1562.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing details of a request from St Cadoc's Youth Club to lease an area of the Council-owned Crookfur playing fields.

Whilst noting that the club had recently approached the Council seeking to lease a piece of land at Crookfur Playing Fields to develop as a home ground, the report stated that the Council could allow the club to take on these playing fields at Crookfur with little impact on

other clubs and which could potentially release other venues currently used by the club to be used by other smaller clubs.

The report explained that the proposal from the club was to firstly take responsibility for operating and maintaining the two grass pitches at Crookfur. Thereafter, the club would develop these pitches at its own expense and subject to planning permission seek to build two artificial pitches and associated changing facilities over a period of time. However, this would dependent on the club's ability to raise funds and maintain a sustainable business model.

The Council would require the club to sign a long-term lease agreement to take over and be responsible for all aspects of maintaining and operating the area of Crookfur park as detailed in the plan attached to the report. The initial proposal regarding the rental for the site was £1 per annum in order that the club's funds could be directed to the future development of the facility. However, any decision to offer such a lease at less than market value would require to be justified and evidenced in accordance with the terms of the Disposal of Land By Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010.

The report highlighted that should the proposal be agreed it was intended that the changing room lets at Crookfur Pavilion along with any associated income would be transferred from the Council (currently administered through the Environment Department) to East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust which should help compensate for any potential income stream losses from any other venues that the club currently hired from the Trust such as the pitch at Eastwood High School, although this was considered unlikely. It was assumed that the changing rooms would be rented to St Cadoc's Youth Club for a substantial part of the 25 year lease.

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the proposal to grant a 25 year lease of an area of the Crookfur Playing Fields to St Cadoc's Youth Club; and
- (b) instructed the Director of Environment to undertake the necessary advertisement process in respect of such a proposal and in due course to bring a further report to Cabinet advising of the terms of any objections received in response to the advertisement.

## **PROPOSALS FOR CHARGES FOR NON-STATUTORY PLANNING SERVICES**

**1563.** The Cabinet considered and approved a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to introduce charges for some non-statutory planning services. Accompanying the report was an appendix setting out the proposed charges across the following range of services:-

- Charges for planning pre-application advice
- Planning Non-Material Variation Charges
- Administration charges for planning applications submitted in paper form
- Charges for Street naming and numbering

## **WRITE-OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE FORMER TENANT RENTS**

**1564.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 January 2017 (Page 2197, Item 2361 refers), when the new rent arrears policy had been approved, the

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Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to write-off former tenant rental debt which could not be recovered through the debt collection process.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the write-off sum up to the value of £190,267.67 of former tenant irrecoverable rents & court expenses whilst acknowledging these could be pursued and recovered in future should additional information and opportunities arise;
- (b) noted that £165,087.27 of this amount is written off against the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the remaining £25,182.40 is written off against the Non HRA as this was accrued by homeless households placed in temporary accommodation; and
- (c) noted that the write-off of these historic unrecoverable debts would have no net impact on the Council's accounts as provision had been made for the debt, in full, in previous years.

CHAIR



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

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

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Betty Cunningham  
Provost Jim Fletcher

Councillor Jim McLean  
Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Jim Swift

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Graham Shankland, Planning and Building Standards Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Angela Convery.

**FORMER COUNCILLOR KENNY HAY**

**1565.** Prior to the start of the meeting, the committee noted that the funeral of former Councillor Kenny Hay, who had been the Chair of the committee from 2012 to 2017 had taken place earlier in the week, and it was agreed that a letter of condolence be sent to his family on behalf of the committee.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1566.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

**1567.** 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) 2020/0550/TP - Erection of 17 no. flatted units contained within 4 no. villas following demolition of existing equestrian centre and stables; formation of driveway to Hazelden House, Hazelden Riding School, Hazelden Road, Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire by Dickie & Moore Homes Limited

Having heard the Planning and Building Standards Manager refer to the number of representations received and provide details of the proposal in the course of which he advised that the applicant's agent had submitted an additional plan which had been received after the report had been circulated, a copy of the plan was exhibited to the committee,.

Whilst noting that the plan addressed the concerns of the Council's Roads Service, the Planning and Building Standards Manager advised that notwithstanding the details contained in the plan, the application was still being recommended for refusal. However, one of the reasons for refusal (i.e. Reason 4) which referred to the concerns of the Roads Service could now be deleted.

Councillor Miller expressed concern about the number of vehicles that were likely to come out of the development onto Hazelden Road once the flats were developed. Whilst he had no objection to the site being developed, in his opinion the proposal represented an overdevelopment of the site.

Councillor Swift stated that although he had objected to a number of developments in the Newton Mearns area in the past, he highlighted that the proposed development was not as dense as other developments that had been approved in the past.

Provost Fletcher was heard in support of the recommendation to refuse the application, in the course of which he noted that the applicant had not taken on board the advice of the Planning Service in respect of the proposed development. He suggested that if the site was to be developed it should reflect the existing built environment.

Councillor McLean echoed Provost Fletcher's comments and suggested that building houses on the site would be preferable to the proposed development of flats in course of which Councillor Cunningham was heard in support of Councillor Miller's earlier remarks.

The committee, having heard Councillor Ireland express the view that the proposed development was too dense for the size of the application site, agreed that the application be refused for the reasons detailed in the report, subject to the deletion of Reason 4 as one of the grounds for refusal.

- (ii) 2020/0597/TP - Change of Use of land for outdoor pre and after school/education classes, formation of parking spaces and siting of 2no. portacabins (amended parking layout) at site Adjacent East of Williamwood High School, Eaglesham Road, Clarkston by Clarkston After School Care

The Planning and Building Standards Manager referred to the number of representations received and provided details of the proposal in the course of which he exhibited a plan of the site. He stated that having assessed the proposal it was recommended that planning permission be granted for a temporary period of 3 years.

Councillor Miller referred to the problems that residents of Newford Grove had experienced with indiscriminate parking on the road and stated that in his opinion, this would be exacerbated by the proposal. Whilst he acknowledged that Clarkston After School Care provided a great service, he expressed the view that the application site was simply in the wrong place and that the application should be refused.

Provost Fletcher sought clarification whether the Council's Roads Service was now satisfied with the proposal as in his opinion, the proposed site was probably as suitable a site as could be found for the applicant to operate from. Subject to the Roads Service being satisfied with the terms of the proposal he would support the application being granted.

In reply, the Planning and Building Standards Manager stated that the Roads Service was not opposed in principle to the proposal as some of its concerns had been addressed by the new plan, subject to a condition being attached to the planning permission requiring the applicant to provide a footpath from the site to the crossing on Newford Grove. However, as the area of ground in question was outwith the application site it would not be possible to attach such a condition.

Councillor McLean stated that he was concerned about the additional traffic travelling to and from the site on a daily basis on Newford Grove that would be generated by the proposal. He was also concerned about the absence of a pathway leading from the site to the crossing on Newford Grove in the course of which Councillor Swift suggested that as there were plenty of other facilities in East Renfrewshire the after school care service could operate at another site and in view of this, the application should be refused.

Councillor Ireland stated that whilst she was sympathetic to the after school care service, she was concerned about the road safety issues in the area and by the comments of the Council's Roads Service about the lack of parking spaces at the site. She also expressed concern about the indiscriminate parking that takes place on Newford Grove.

The committee agreed that the application be refused on the grounds that the proposal was contrary to Policy D1(9) of the East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan, in that the Council's access requirements were not being met, and in the interests of road and public safety.

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  
10.03.2021

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**Reference No:** 2020/0500/TP

**Ward:** 5

**Applicant:**

Mr Hugh Orr  
1 Byrestone Avenue  
215 Brenfield Road  
Glasgow  
United Kingdom  
G77 5SH

**Agent:**

Michael Kavanagh  
215 Brenfield Road  
Glasgow  
United Kingdom  
G44 3PB

**Site:** 1 Byrestone Avenue Newton Mearns East Renfrewshire G77 5SH

**Description:** Erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension

**Decision:** Refused

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**Reference No:** 2020/0550/TP

**Ward:** 5

**Applicant:**

Dickie & Moore Homes Limited  
9 Montgomery Street  
The Village  
East Kilbride  
Scotland  
G74 4JS

**Agent:**

DTA Chartered Architects  
9 Montgomery Street  
The Village  
East Kilbride  
Scotland  
G74 4JS

**Site:** Hazelden Riding School Hazelden Road Newton Mearns East Renfrewshire G77 6RR

**Description:** Erection of 17 no. flatted units contained within 4 no. villas following demolition of existing equestrian centre and stables; formation of driveway to Hazelden House

**Decision:** Refused

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**Reference No:** 2020/0597/TP

**Ward:** 4

**Applicant:**

Clarkston After School Service  
Tay House  
300 c/o North P&D  
Bath Street  
Glasgow  
UK  
G2 4LH

**Agent:**

David Campbell  
Tay House  
300 Bath Street  
Glasgow  
Scotland  
G2 4LH

**Site:** Adjacent East Of Williamwood High School Eaglesham Road Clarkston East Renfrewshire

**Description:** Change of Use of land for outdoor pre and after school/education classes, formation of parking spaces and siting of 2no. portacabins (amended parking layout)

**Decision:** Refused

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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.30pm on 10 March 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
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); and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Angela Convery and Jim Swift.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1568.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2021/01 – ERECTION OF ONE AND A HALF STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND THE ERECTION OF A FRONT DORMER, INCLUDING RAISING THE RIDGE LINE AND FULL RE-ROOFING OF DWELLING AT 14 DORIAN DRIVE, CLARKSTON (REF NO: 2020/0555/TP)**

**1569.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr and Mrs Teaz against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the erection of one and a half storey rear extension and the erection of a front dormer, including raising the ridge line and full re-roofing of dwelling at 14 Dorian Drive, Clarkston.

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.

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Having heard the Planning Adviser and following discussion, the Local Review Body agreed that the decision of the Appointed Officer as set out in the decision notice of 8 February 2021 be overturned and that planning permission be granted.

CHAIR



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

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

**Present:**

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

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Danny Devlin; Jim McLean; and Colm Merrick.

**Also Attending:**

Christine Downie, Head Teacher, St Luke’s High School; Alasdair McDonald, Head Teacher, Maidenhill Primary School.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1570.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF REMOTE LEARNING**

**1571.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising on remote learning activity in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, and primary, secondary and special schools in East Renfrewshire.

By way of background, the report explained that from January 2021, following the announcement of further school closures in December 2020 in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the context for learning and teaching in ELC settings and schools moved to remote learning with staff facing the challenge of providing responsive and progressive learning experiences for children/young people attending school/nursery as vulnerable learners/children of keyworkers, as well as those who would be learning remotely during lockdown at home.

It was highlighted that the move to remote learning had not diluted the expectation that schools would deliver high quality (remote) learning to meet the needs of their children and young people and in January and February, Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) had engaged with school leaders to look at the remote learning on offer. The audit tool used, a copy of which accompanied the report as Appendix 1, covered key aspects of the work of ELC settings and schools and identified particular strengths and areas for improvement.

Following the audit, an evaluation report; *How Effective is Our Remote Learning Offer: An Overview of Remote Learning in East Renfrewshire, February 2021* had been produced, a copy of which accompanied the report as Appendix 2.

The evaluation report focussed on 4 key themes, gave further information on the range of activity carried out across ELC settings and schools, identified a number of key strengths which were listed, and made a number of recommendations at departmental, cluster, and ELC and school level.

The committee also received presentations from Alasdair McDonald, Head Teacher, Maidenhill Primary School and Christine Downie, Head Teacher, St Luke's High School respectively on the particular activities taking place in their own establishments.

In the course of the presentations it was explained that while nothing could or would replace face to face interactions of children learning together, a great deal of experience and learning had been gained by establishments during this period of remote learning which would be carried forward into a post-COVID environment. Furthermore, whilst appreciating the overarching guidance and strategic support provided, both Head Teachers were pleased to note the level of autonomy they were provided in order to find the best solutions for their particular establishment and the children within it.

The ability to have live check-in sessions via the internet with pupils was very beneficial and had allowed additional support to be provided where necessary; additionally, the schools had provided pupils with recorded online lessons. Pupils could revisit those lessons provided by their teacher which, through various feedback, they had indicated had been a great asset to their revision.

Virtual playgrounds and experiences had also been established to facilitate interaction between friends and peers as part of the school day.

It was explained that schools had developed tracking tools to monitor engagement with families and identify any additional support that may be required. It was noted that the families who did require additional support would change from week to week, indicating the changing nature of individual circumstances. Focused interventions were provided when issues were identified via that engagement activity.

Quotes from pupils within both learning communities were also provided which outlined aspects of the remote learning package that they felt were most beneficial.

Councillor O’Kane thanked both Head Teachers for their attendance and the very informative and detailed presentations they had provided. It was apparent that a great deal of learning had been taken from the first lockdown which had, evidently, been put into place during the second lockdown period.

Councillor O’Kane and other members of the committee also took the opportunity to express their great admiration and thanks to those working within schools during the COVID-19 situation for their enthusiasm and hard work during what was a very difficult time.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the content of the report and the presentations.

### **PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE**

**1572.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing an update on progress made in the implementation of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in East Renfrewshire as part of the 2021 certification process.

The Director of Education explained that, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the examination diet for 2021 had been cancelled and replaced by the ACM.

A working group had been established with representation from each high school and an Assessment and Moderation Policy developed. A copy of the policy accompanied the report. The policy had been peer reviewed by another local authority and it was believed that East Renfrewshire’s schools, building on their previous work in 2020, were well placed to implement the ACM and ensure that the work of learners throughout the year was, rightly and fairly, recognised.

Councillor Buchanan welcomed the report and the clarity it provided for the process in 2021 given the issues that had arisen during the 2020 process at a national level.

Councillor O’Kane noted the synergy in terms of the two reports that had been presented to the committee and the important work being done in schools to both enable learners to continue their learning journey during lockdown but, further, to ensure that they could move on with robust and meaningful qualifications that would stand them in good stead going forward.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the content of the report.

CHAIR



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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 11 March 2021.**

**Present:**

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

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

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

**Also Attending:**

Louisa Yule and Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**Apology:**

Councillor Jim McLean.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1573.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT FOR 2020/21**

**1574.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting 26 November 2020 (Page 1334, Item 1441 refers) when, having considered a report on treasury management activities for the first six months of 2020/21, it had been agreed to recommend to the Council approval of organisations for the investment of surplus funds, the committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explaining that, in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice 2017, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee were responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Council's treasury management strategy and policies.

In accordance with that requirement, a copy of the Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2021/22 was attached for consideration in advance of its submission to the Council. The

Strategy Report included a proposal to amend treasury management practices in accordance with Annex F accompanying the report which listed organisations approved for the investment of surplus funds, in respect of which information was provided on related issues such as credit ratings and limits. It was also proposed that a policy on the repayment of loans fund advances, as specified in Section 3.4 of the report, be approved.

The Chief Accountant confirmed that the report was similar to previous years subject to two amendments. Regarding the Council's current policy on loan fund advances as referred to in Section 3.4 of the report, she explained that the current policy was to repay advances using an annuity method over the life of an asset. However, with effect from 1 April 2021, it was proposed instead to use a straight line method for any new debt, this being a cheaper option over the lifetime of assets. Regarding the second amendment, she referred to some high level guidance provided on fiscal flexibilities the Scottish Government had allowed to address COVID-19 pressures, including the use of capital receipts and a loans fund repayment holiday, both of which would impact on the loans fund repayments charged in 2020/21 and beyond.

The Chief Accountant confirmed that, from a borrowing or investment perspective, the approach remained as before, with the remainder of the report concentrating on the Council's borrowing and investment strategies, and setting out parameters that helped monitor both. To allow borrowing to be controlled, Prudential Indicators (PIs) had been set up which monitored permissible borrowing and allowed this to be compared against actual gross debt. She highlighted plans to use the Council's reserve balances temporarily rather than fully funding capital expenditure by external borrowing, this being considered prudent and cost effective taking account of not only the cost of borrowing until it was used but also the possibility of Capital Programme slippage. However, the Chief Accountant also highlighted the need for care to be taken by the Council to take advantage of historically low interest rates. Having explained that the PIs had been set using the Council's 2021/22 Capital Programme, she confirmed that any movement in this would affect how well the limits set could be adhered to, and that mid-year and year-end reports would be provided on this.

Having clarified that it remained the case that the primary objectives of the investment strategy were security and liquidity, the Chief Accountant referred to the types of investments that could be made and associated risks set out in Annexes D and E to the report respectively; the proposed list of investors itemised in Annex F; the importance of investing with bodies with good credit quality; and related monitoring arrangements. Reference was also made to a range of economic background information provided within the report.

The Chief Accountant confirmed that she would be happy to arrange further treasury management training for Elected Members if that would be useful, requests for which could be made through the Clerk. She confirmed that she would also be happy to be contacted at any time if that was considered helpful to gain a better understanding of any specific issue referred to within the report.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Chief Accountant confirmed that it was an option to arrange a training session for all Elected Members if there was sufficient demand. The Clerk confirmed that, irrespective of what was arranged in the months ahead, discussions would take place on offering treasury management training to Elected Members as part of their induction programme following the local government elections in 2022.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that the figures within the report were up to date in terms of the latest changes to the phasing and cost of projects within the Capital Programme; that further updates on the repayment of loans using the new straight line method and on fiscal flexibility would be provided; and that the position on COVID-19 related grants and related implications would become clearer with time.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) **to recommend to the Council** that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 be approved, including the amended list of organisations for investment of surplus funds in accordance with Annex F to the report;
- (b) **to recommend to the Council** that the policy on the repayment of loans fund advances as specified in Section 3.4 of the report be approved;
- (c) to note that further training on treasury management issues could be arranged if requested; and
- (d) otherwise, to note the report and related comments made.

CHAIR





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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 15 March 2021.**

**Present:**

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

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer - Health and Social Care Partnership; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Mark Waugh, Principal Accountant; Colin Hutton, Senior Communications Officer; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Linda Hutchison, Senior Committee Services Officer; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Louisa Yule and Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**Apologies:**

Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham and Councillor Paul Aitken.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1575.** Provost Fletcher and Councillors Grant, Merrick and O’Kane declared non-financial interests in relation to Items 1579 and 1581 by virtue of the fact that they were members of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board.

**GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21**

**1576.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 4 March 2021 (Page 1442, Item 1557 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved, and approval of proposals regarding the application of capital receipts generated in the current year under fiscal flexibility powers to help address anticipated unfunded COVID-19 pressures arising in 2020/21 and 2021/22, 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:-

- (a) approved the movements within the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21; and
- (b) agreed that £1.96m of capital receipts generated in the current year should be applied under fiscal flexibility powers to help address anticipated unfunded COVID-19 pressures arising in 2020/21 and 2021/22, with any unspent elements being reallocated to support the Council's capital plans from 1 April 2022.

**HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21**

**1577.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 4 March 2021 (Page 1442, Item 1558 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:-

- (a) approved the movements within the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21; and
- (b) noted the shortfall of £135,000 and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22**

**1578.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 11 March 2021 (Page 1459, Item 1574 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 be approved, including the amended list of organisations for investment of surplus funds in accordance with Annex F to the report, and that the policy on the repayment of Loans Fund advances as specified in Section 3.4 of the report be approved, the Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, reporting on the Treasury Management Strategy for the financial year 2021/22.

Councillor Miller clarified that, in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee was responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Strategy, including the approved list of investors and the policy on the repayment of

Loans Fund advances. He reported that clarification on various matters had been provided, highlighted that the report set out the parameters within which the treasury function operated, highlighted that the strategy explained various fiscal flexibilities available to the Council to help address COVID-19 pressures, and confirmed that related mid-year and annual reports would be submitted to the committee in due course.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/21 be approved, including the amended list of organisations for investment of surplus funds in accordance with Annex F to the report; and
- (b) to approve the policy on the repayment of loans fund advances as specified in Section 3.4 of the report.

### **EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL DETAILED REVENUE ESTIMATES 2021/22**

**1579.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 25 February 2021 (Page 1428, Item 1544 refers), when it had been agreed to approve outline Revenue Estimates for 2021/22 due to the possibility of late changes being made to the Council's grant settlement, and that the detailed budgets and savings to be applied should be determined by the Council after the final confirmation of the settlement, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) relative to the proposed detailed Revenue Estimates for 2021/22 of income and expenditure and associated utilisation of £3.465m of reserves. A copy of the Revenue Estimates 2020/21 was appended to the report.

The report explained that the Council had identified sufficient savings options to balance its budget, but had only wished to implement those considered absolutely necessary. Following the finalisation of the UK and Scottish budgets during the preceding two weeks, it had been confirmed that the Council Tax freeze funding for 2021/22 would be baselined. Some additional new monies for 2021/22 were also expected the amount of which remained to be confirmed, but for specific purposes associated with reducing class sizes and pupil equity funds rather than to support existing service pressures. Regarding budget planning, this effectively represented no net change from the figure announced on 28 January 2021.

It had been confirmed through the Scottish budget that non-recurring funding would be made available to each Council to address COVID-19 pressures in 2021/22. Although the full amount remained to be confirmed, officers would closely monitor such costs in the coming year and consider using fiscal flexibility powers should costs exceed the grant available, with a view to a further report being submitted on proposed actions available.

It was also confirmed that on 25 February 2021 the Council had approved outline departmental non-COVID spending plans totalling £258.343m. This figure included confirmation of the Council's contributions to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Trust (ERCLT), together with savings of £3.503m still to be allocated to Council departments. The report clarified that detailed budgets and savings for the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) would be determined by the IJB, and confirmed that the total allocation to the IJB for 2021/22 included new government grant funding and was £2.4m higher than in 2020/21 taking account of demographic, pay and contract pressures together with the savings target for the HSCP. Likewise the ERCLT determined the detailed budget and savings plans for services it provided, with specific provision having been made in the Council's support for the Trust for 2021/22 to consolidate the Living Wage for Trust staff in line with the position for Council employees. Any COVID-19 related pressures impacting on the Trust in 2021/22 would be funded by the Council via government grants and/or fiscal flexibilities.

The report explained that as a result of the confirmed settlement figures, the savings requirement for Council departments remained unchanged, but that the forecasted reserves position had been reviewed.

Following close budget monitoring during 2020/21 and as reported to the Cabinet on 4 March, a non-COVID related underspend of £2.472m had been expected by the year-end. Since then continuous review of Education revenue and capital expenditure plans and anticipated grant income had identified a further forecasted underspend of £0.465m through the funding of some equipment purchases from the capital programme rather than the revenue budget. As this would result in an improved year-end General Fund unallocated reserve position, it was proposed that the drawdown from reserves in 2021/22 be increased by this sum to a total of £3.465m to minimise Education savings requirements for that year. This would leave the forecasted, unallocated General Fund reserve at £5.615m (2.2%) at 31 March 2022 as approved by the Council in February 2021.

The report confirmed that scrutiny of the 2020/21 revenue position would continue at the year-end, when the final position on the Devolved School Management (DSM) budgets would be confirmed. Having explained that schools were permitted to carry forward up to 2% of unspent DSM resources into 2021/22 using the DSM reserve, with any excess underspends attributed to the General Fund unallocated reserve, early indications were that the DSM reserve would increase by £0.4m, totalling over £4m by 31 March. DSM underspends were expected to be larger than usual due to the impact of COVID-19, and it was suggested that, if this was the case, the Council might wish to consider making an additional allocation to DSM budgets in 2021/22 to help manage schools' savings requirements. The Council would be asked to consider this when approving the draft Annual Accounts for 2020/21 in June 2021.

The report referred to the revised departmental budgets itemised in Annex A to the report, and the detailed service budgets provided for approval, clarifying that where it had been possible to forecast COVID-19 related grant funding and associated expenditure, this had been reflected in the detailed estimates to assist with monitoring. Savings to be applied were provided in Appendix B, some of which were non-recurring requiring alternative proposals to be identified by relevant departments for future years. Reference was made to equality impact assessments undertaken on budget savings measures and related consultation.

Councillor Buchanan highlighted that when the outline Budget had been agreed in February, it had been confirmed that there would be no Council Tax increase in East Renfrewshire for 2021/22, with charges in every Band remaining below the Scottish average. He explained that clarification received since then from the Scottish Government on the financial settlement had enabled detailed spending plans and a range of ambitious capital projects across the Council's area to be set out.

He welcomed extra funding secured to allow free school meals to be provided to all children in P1 to P4 during 2021/22, and to all primary pupils from 2022/23. Having referred to more than £2m the Council expected to receive to help with its education recovery from COVID-19, he clarified that substantially more was expected to further support local businesses, council services and tackle poverty.

Councillor Buchanan commented that the Council's budget shortfall had improved significantly recently, with the predicted shortfall in October being £11.8m but saving requirements having fallen to £5.5m by February. With £2m of the savings having been allocated to the IJB and ERCLT, the Council required to identify savings of £3.5m. He emphasised that despite painful savings for 2021/22, everything possible had been done to protect vital frontline services, highlighting that despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Council had delivered many new services required as part of the emergency response whilst delivering longer-term infrastructure projects.

Councillor Buchanan made reference to new nurseries in Busby, Eaglesham and Glenwood which formed part of the Council's £26.9m commitment to almost doubling free provision of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours. Although the Scottish Government had extended the deadline for offering this due to COVID-19, the Council had met the original target of August 2020 through cooperation between services and the foresight of the Education Department, which continued to lead the way in Scotland. Whilst commenting also on the unprecedented working changes school staff had experienced as pupils and parents adapted to home learning, Councillor Buchanan also acknowledged the challenges for families associated with this and the hard work done to implement measures to ensure equity of learning, including through the distribution of Chromebooks to pupils. Having referred to a further 700 Chromebooks to be deployed in schools, he acknowledged the range of methods schools had used to deliver home learning, and the 95% engagement level by pupils across the authority. He highlighted that in-school provision had continued for vulnerable and key worker children throughout, thanking pupils and staff for their efforts in the most challenging of years.

He commented on ambitious education projects that remained on track, including the £40m plan to transform Neilston, confirming that funding for the first phase of the project, to build replacements for Neilston Primary, St Thomas's Primary and Madras Family Centre, and for new library provision had been secured. Having clarified that following consultation with the local community work would start towards the end of 2021 with a view to the new schools opening in 2023, he made reference to a second phase of work to improve Neilston's leisure facilities, make further improvements to other schools, such as to extend Crookfur Primary School, and provide a new, all-weather pitch and athletics track at Mearns Castle High School, progress on the latter having been delayed due to COVID-19.

Councillor Buchanan highlighted that the single biggest project the Council had made a commitment to was a new, high-quality leisure centre in Eastwood Park costing up to £55m which would provide three new pools, other sports and gym provision, a new theatre and a library. He explained that the design team would work closely with local groups to ensure the project met the needs of the local community, that there would be related public consultation in May, and that a detailed planning application was expected to be submitted soon afterwards.

He emphasised that all of the Council's new buildings would meet or exceed the latest energy efficient requirements, including the 310 new council houses to be built in the next four years. It was reported that the house-building programme remained on track, with tenants due to move into new homes in Maidenhill in the current week. He highlighted that such projects boosted the local economy, and cited examples of how the Council had been at the forefront of efforts to support businesses suffering the economic impact of COVID-19, including through the promotion of the Shop Local campaign, the distribution of government grants to local businesses, help provided by employability advisers, and the upgraded Work EastRen website.

Thereafter, Councillor Buchanan also cited examples of how digital innovation lay at the heart of Council activities, such as a smart gritting system in Barrhead which monitored road temperatures, and a pilot project involving sensors in grit bins to alert crews to when they required to be filled. He added that, in response to views expressed by residents, local residential roads continued to be the focus of £15m extra capital investment announced in 2019, with £5.3m having been spent in the previous two years and 35 resurfacing projects having been completed in the preceding year despite progress having slowed due to COVID-19.

It was explained that due to severe funding pressures and the need to make multi million pound savings most years and protect key services and assets, as a last resort alternative

vital income sources had required to be examined to avoid difficult decisions being made. Councillor Buchanan reported on plans to introduce a small annual charge, on an opt-in basis, for collecting garden waste, as more than a third of Scottish councils had introduced and many others were considering. However, he confirmed two important changes planned to the original proposals, namely the implementation of charges in the summer rather than April, and looking at instalment payments for those facing financial hardship.

He highlighted the importance of frontline services such as for health and social care, and of resources such as parks and open spaces during the COVID-19 response. He reported that attractions such as Rouken Glen had seen a huge increase in visitor numbers and that local walks and cycle routes had been promoted to help residents with their physical and mental health. He also referred to support offered to the many who had suffered the economic impact of COVID-19, the distribution of food parcels, help provided by the Money Advice and Rights Team, and the formation of new links with the voluntary sector to direct those who had volunteered. The response had also involved assisting those who had struggled to pay bills agreeing a reduction in their Council Tax where appropriate, the modernisation of the CCTV service to protect properties, and rapid improvements to support systems to allow most staff to work from home.

It was emphasised that these COVID-19 related changes complemented ongoing work, such as the successful replacement of three internal computer systems, and use of digital technology to streamline processes and increase efficiency. Councillor Buchanan confirmed that residents had been able to carry out more business with the Council online through the new website launched in July, adding that other modernisations had continued also, such as upgrading telecare systems to allow older and vulnerable people to remain in their own homes. Such technology complemented the work of HSCP staff who had been on the frontline of coping with the tragic impact of COVID-19.

Repeating comments made in February, Councillor Buchanan thanked all staff for the level of commitment shown over the last year, adding that it had been a heartening experience to witness how much the Council had helped people across East Renfrewshire as part of the emergency response. He emphasised that staff remained the Council's single biggest asset, in recognition of which the Council had announced that the Scottish Local Government Living Wage would be embedded into its salary scales. As a result, the majority of lower paid employees in the Council and ERCLT, including care workers, cleaners, refuse workers and catering staff, would receive significant pay rises from April in addition to the national pay settlement for council employees which would help boost the local economy. He thanked Trade Unions partners for their constructive approach when consulted on these proposals and in relation to discussions on the budget.

Whilst commenting on the remaining budget shortfall, the £3.5m savings required and related difficulties due to years of reduced funding, Councillor Buchanan explained that around 50 posts might be affected by this year's savings. In most cases these would be managed by not filling vacancies. He reaffirmed the Council's long-standing commitment to making no compulsory redundancies in the coming year, confirming that the overall number of Council employees would increase by 265 as new roles were created, such as in early years support.

In conclusion, Councillor Buchanan emphasised that over the preceding 12 months Council employees had played a key role in tackling head-on the challenges of COVID-19 and helping more people across East Renfrewshire than ever before. He clarified that this important work to support residents and businesses would continue during the time it was hoped to emerge from lockdown. At the same time, substantial capital projects bringing long-term benefits to local communities would be delivered to help achieve the ambition of improving the lives of everyone in East Renfrewshire. He thanked all those involved in the preparation of the budget.

Councillor Buchanan then moved that the Council approve the detailed Revenue Estimates for 2021/22 and the associated utilisation of £3.465m of reserves.

Seconding the motion, Councillor O'Kane commented that the decision to discuss the outline budget in February followed by consideration of the detailed Revenue Estimates at this meeting had been prudent and allowed the Scottish Government's financial settlement to local government to be confirmed. Having expressed disappointment that discussions with the Scottish Government had not yielded an increased local government settlement, he reported that COSLA had also been disappointed regarding this outcome, and that Council Leaders had restated that the settlement did not represent fair funding for councils. He confirmed that he would continue to argue for a resetting of the relationship between the Scottish Government and local government.

Councillor O'Kane referred to the challenging position facing the Council at present in respect of which difficult decisions had to be made, thanking officers for their strenuous efforts to help reduce the savings required without adversely impacting front line services, whilst still in the midst of the impact of COVID-19. He highlighted the use to be made of reserves, stressing the value of work and consultation with the Trade Unions on this and the budget. Having welcomed that once again a budget had been proposed without the need for compulsory redundancies, Councillor O'Kane highlighted that a gap remained for which there was no additional funding. This required difficult choices to be made. He emphasised the challenges presented by various savings measures, but referred also to how alternative ways forward would have impacted on services that needed to be protected. He made specific reference to the work that would be done to support DSM budgets and ensure that underspends could be used throughout the academic year.

Councillor O'Kane was also heard in support of the Capital Plan, welcoming that young people were returning to school, some of whom were attending new nursery schools due to the investment made in early learning and childcare expansion. He expressed pride in the investment to be made in Neilston, and welcomed progress and investment in the Eastwood Leisure Centre and other projects, particularly after delays attributable to COVID-19 which had impacted on the construction sector. He also welcomed that tenants were moving into the new Council built homes built at Maidenhill.

In conclusion he too thanked all staff for going above and beyond the call of duty, and also residents for supporting the Council and one another. He expressed the view that the Council had done everything possible to support front line services in these difficult circumstances, commented on the increasing challenges of doing so, and called upon the Scottish Government to fund local government fairly and improve parity of esteem between local and central government.

In response to Councillor Grant, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that the NHS would be invoiced for the use of buildings for COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, and also how catering costs were recharged internally, citing the example of how school meals were provided.

Also in response to Councillor Grant who questioned the provision of free school meals to all children, arguing that some parents could afford to pay, Councillor O'Kane referred to the decision on this made recently by the Scottish Government and related capital and revenue implications the authority would consider, adding that the Council was keen to understand the position on related funding. Having heard him add that parents were not required to make use of free school meals, Councillor Buchanan reported that it was hoped that clarification on various issues requested would be forthcoming soon.

Councillor Miller thanked the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), the Chief Accountant and their teams for all their work on the budget, especially given the late notification of the financial settlement. Having expressed disappointment regarding the settlement, he acknowledged it had risen by 0.45%, but highlighted that when the rate of inflation was taken into account, this amounted to a real terms cut of 1.5%, adding that local residents who would feel the impact of the lack of investment in local government.

Councillor Miller expressed disappointment regarding the proposed reduction in the roads budget, given that he and his former colleagues on the Conservative Group had campaigned for further roads investment and had been delighted when the Administration had promised an extra £3m of annual expenditure for five years. He commented that he had been assured that the £25k reduction was in administrative costs not repairs themselves.

Councillor Miller referred to the reduction in the cleansing budget which he had been advised reflected budget projections associated with the new garden waste scheme charges. In his capacity as Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee which had initially proposed the adoption of this scheme, he welcomed its introduction without raising Council Tax. Having queried the reduction of £91k in the Community Warden budget, he referred to a very recent meeting he had held with the Chair of the Performance and Audit Committee of the IJB, reporting that East Renfrewshire had a poor record on funding adult social care.

Councillor Wallace referred to the comments made by Councillor Buchanan on roads that had been resurfaced, but emphasised that there were still many in need of repair. Referring to the Leader's comments on the Council's house building programme in future years, he commented on delays in progressing the programme in the previous ten and expressed the view that the vision presented on some issues contrasted with reality.

Referring to recent concerns expressed by the Labour Party at a national level on £1bn cuts to local authority funding, he challenged the allegiances that the Labour Party had made with minority Scottish National Party Administrations in various councils, highlighted that a very small proportion of the Barnett formula consequential funding coming to Scotland was passed on to local authorities, expressed the view that things need not be as they are, and stated that he hoped for a change of Government in May. He commented that if local government received the funding it was entitled to, stealth charges need not be introduced, reserves could be increased, and investment in roads for example could be made. Councillor Wallace stressed his concerns regarding the current Scottish Government's ongoing centralisation agenda, the detrimental impact of this on local authority budgets, and the damaging consequences this had for residents.

Councillor Swift referred to the financial collapse of Greensill, and the £600m guarantee the Scottish Government had provided when it had underwritten the project that would require to come out of its Capital Plan if Greensill did fail, which he considered likely and would be known shortly. He asked what action would be taken locally if the capital funding which had been anticipated was not ultimately forthcoming. In response to Councillor Bamforth who referred to the role the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, had had in this venture, Councillor Swift commented that Mr Cameron's actions were as a private citizen whereas Councillor Swift was questioning the Scottish Government's actions.

Whilst responding to various issues raised, Councillor Buchanan stated that local authorities were not responsible for the actions and spending plans of the UK and Scottish Governments or misdemeanours outwith East Renfrewshire, questioning some of the comments made. Regarding the Council housebuilding programme, he reminded the Council what the position had been ten years ago, including the legislative position, which made building such housing at that time unviable. The programme which was



now possible was addressing significant need that had built up over a long time, expressing pride in how work was proceeding. In the absence of any amendment, he commended the budget proposals to the Council.

The Council approved the:-

- (a) detailed Revenue Estimates for 2021/22; and
- (b) associated utilisation of £3.465m of reserves.

## **CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

**1580.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 27 February 2020 (Page 1128, Item 1217 refers), when an update to the Capital Investment Strategy had been approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) seeking approval of a new Capital Investment Strategy.

Taken together with the Treasury Management Strategy report, it provided background information on the scale, objectives, affordability and risks associated with the Council's capital plans. A copy of the revised Strategy, which all councils were required to prepare, was appended to the report specifying the long-term capital ambitions of the Council and associated resource implications and risks, having been compiled with regard to these requirements, the Prudential Code 2017, and Treasury Management Code of Practice 2017.

Having clarified that the Strategy adopted a long-term approach to capital planning beyond the span of the Council's current capital plans, taking direction from the Outcome Delivery Plan and other key plans and strategies, the report confirmed that Council determined objectives within the strategy would be driven forward by the CMT working with partner organisations and local communities to ensure investment aligned to strategies, and that performance was measured against expected outcomes. A long-term strategic and financial view was considered essential for resilience in uncertain times and the strategy would be updated as required. A prudent approach to affordability and risk would continue to be taken, with delivery of projects to be closely monitored at officer and Elected Member level. Against the background of the Council's significant capital investment ambitions, the strategy, together with the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Plan and Revenue Estimates and financial planning reports, set out how these would be funded and managed.

Having thanked the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Chief Executive for their work on the strategy, Councillor Miller highlighted that housing, climate change, transport and education were the main issues being progressed in terms of the national strategy, suggesting that keeping these as local as possible could have an enormous effect on all four and arresting urban expansion. Whilst acknowledging the need for housing, he favoured retaining as much of the area's green space as possible, not only in the interests of maintaining residents' mental and physical health but also because Scottish and local farmers could produce high quality food on productive farm land whilst helping to minimise related mileage costs. He added that East Renfrewshire lay within an agricultural area that was good for growing, expressing disappointment that both grass and trees, the biggest single carbon sinks in the area, were being lost to both roads and housing.

Councillor Miller highlighted the loss of three local farms in recent years for housing development, arguing that such development on productive land also increased reliance on transport and fuel use, exacerbating climate change. Having referred to the work the Audit and Scrutiny Committee had done on climate change to help mitigate its effects, he commended some issues that were being taken forward such as by the Environment

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Department. He supported the construction of the rail halt at Barrhead South, for local people to use, close to where further houses were being built, but questioned the commitment to building a new road from the halt to Junction 5 of the M77, arguing it was not needed, would in his view be an ecological disaster, and would be constructed on more tracts of land and open up the green space between Barrhead and Mearns to various types of new development. He advocated contacting Transport Scotland requesting that they use the funds to build a diamond junction at J4 of the M77 earlier than they otherwise would.

Regarding the Scottish Government plans to increase forested areas across Scotland, including in the Council's area, he referred to the importance of managing this properly and in a way which ensured productive land was not lost to woodlands.

In conclusion he welcomed the formulation of a future strategy, referred to the need to consider future needs carefully including in the context of changing attitudes, and commented that what had been done in the past four or five years was not necessarily appropriate moving forward. He added that whereas a new road might not be required, food would be.

Councillor Buchanan welcomed the strategy. He highlighted that the Cabinet had recently considered a report on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, which commented on the impact of environmental issues and the climate emergency faced, in which it was suggested that an impact assessment be considered in terms of all future plans. Having confirmed this would be considered, he also referred to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) that was scheduled to take place in Glasgow later in 2021, expressing confidence that issues such as those raised would be considered at that event and taken into account.

The Council approved the updated Capital Investment Strategy.

## **GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PLAN 2021/22-2030/31**

**1581.** The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), seeking approval of the General Fund Capital Plan covering the 10 years from 2021/22 to 2030/31. A copy of the Plan, prepared in line with the approach within the Capital Investment Strategy, accompanied the report.

Having heard Provost Fletcher confirm that the plans for 2022/23 to 2030/31 were indicative only and Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor O'Kane, in support of the proposals, Councillor Swift referred to his comments earlier in the meeting regarding Greensill and the potential need for the Scottish Government to reduce its Capital Programme. He argued in favour of delaying approval of the Capital Programme for a short while until the position on this was fully clear, considering an impact on local authorities likely.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) reported that the Capital Grant for 2021/22 had been confirmed. She explained that, following a review by the Scottish Government later in the year, it would become clearer what the future grants would be. She expressed the opinion that any change to the Grant, whilst unwelcome, could be managed for one year.

The Council, having heard Councillor Buchanan refer to the role of COSLA in negotiations on future capital provision for Scottish councils:-

- (a) approved the Programme for 2021/22 and authorised officers to progress the projects contained therein; and

- (b) agreed to allow a degree of flexibility within the Plan, subject to prudential indicators being adhered to during the year, if required in the light of updated information relating to the time critical Neilston Learning Campus project.

## CHIEF OFFICER ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

**1582.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive providing an update on changes within Chief Officer posts, and seeking approval to put arrangements in place to ensure continuity and stability within the Education Department and HSCP, for the establishment of an Appointments Committee for the Head of Education post, and for changes of Head of Service remits within the HSCP.

The report explained that the Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources) and the Head of Adult Health and Social Care Localities, HSCP had intimated they would retire on 25 June and 30 June respectively. Regarding the former, the report outlined the timetable for filling the Head of Education Services post, and proposals to put in place interim arrangements as necessary pending a successor being appointed.

Regarding the latter, it was proposed to change the current remits for the Head of Adult Health & Social Care Localities (NHS filled) and the Head of Recovery & Intensive Services, with these becoming the Head of Adult Services, Learning Disability & Recovery Services (NHS filled) and the Head of Adult Services, Communities & Wellbeing. Further information was provided on the proposed structure, the revised remits, and how these changes would impact on the General Manager, Hosted Learning Disability post, which was an NHS post. Given the challenging financial context, it was proposed that the management structure be streamlined by deleting the General Manager post and re-designating this role as the Head of Adult Services, Learning Disability & Recovery to more accurately reflect the role and additional responsibilities. The General Manager, who met the essential criteria for the post, would be matched into the position, with the changes made by NHSGGC which was supportive of this change. As part of the overall redesign, there would be further changes to management teams to increase capacity in recognition of service demands, including the recruitment of an additional post and making changes to the remits of other posts. There would be no budget savings arising from this proposal, with funds reinvested within services.

The Council, having heard Provost Fletcher, Councillor O'Kane and Councillor Lafferty thank those retiring for their contribution to the work of the Council:-

- (a) noted the retirement of the Head of Education Services with effect from 25 June 2021 and the Head of Adult Health and Social Care Localities with effect from 30 June 2021;
- (b) approved the recruitment procedure for the Head of Education Services post as detailed in the report;
- (c) agreed to delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Education, to make the necessary arrangements for the recruitment;
- (d) agreed that Councillors O'Kane, Merrick, Buchanan, McLean and Wallace be appointed to the Appointments Committee;
- (e) authorised the Director of Education to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Department if required;

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- (f) approved the changes of remit to the Head of Service positions in the HSCP; and
- (g) approved, in principle, the General Manager, Hosted Learning Disability Services being matched into the Head of Adult Learning Disability and Recovery Services as part of the NHSGGC process.

#### **PLATINUM JUBILEE HOLIDAY 2022**

**1583.** The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive seeking approval to move the May Bank Holiday in 2022 to June and adopt an extra holiday on 3 June 2022 created to mark The Queen's 70 years on the throne.

It was explained that the Minister of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport State had announced the UK Government's plans to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and that the Scottish Government had confirmed that the traditional late May Bank Holiday in 2022 would be moved to Thursday, 2 June and that the extra holiday on Friday, 3 June 2022 would apply to Scotland. All employee conditions of service applying to public holidays would no longer apply on 30 May 2022 but instead apply on 2 and 3 June 2022.

The Council agreed to move the Bank Holiday on Monday, 30 May 2022 to Thursday 2 June, and approve a further holiday on Friday, 3 June 2022 to mark the Platinum Jubilee.

PROVOST

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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 16 March 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Angela Convery (Chair)	Councillor Charlie Gilbert
Councillor Betty Cunningham (Vice Chair)	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 Alan Gray and Sergeant David Gilmore, Police Scotland (Items 1585 to 1588); Michael McEwan and Savio D'Souza, East Renfrewshire Disability Action (ERDA) (Item 1589 only).

**Apology:**

Councillor Paul O'Kane.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1584.** 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 Items 1585 to 1588 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**

**1585.** 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).

The applicant was present.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant 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.

Having heard Sergeant Gilmore confirm that the case was still live but no trial date had been set, the committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow a decision on the pending court action to be made.

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

**1586.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to a request for the 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 4 refers).

The licence holder, having been invited to attend, was not present.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had requested the suspension, were 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 confirmed that the case was still live but no trial date had been set.

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.

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

**1587.** 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 Gray and Sergeant Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were 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.

Having heard Sergeant Gilmore confirm that the case was still live but no trial date had been set, the committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow a decision on the pending court action to be made.

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

**1588.** 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.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant 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 advised that the case was still live but no trial date had been set.

Thereafter the licence holder reported that he had attended Court on 11 March 2021 and was advised that the case would not be pursued. He was awaiting confirmation of this decision from the Court.

The committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to the next meeting to allow confirmation of the Court decision to be provided.

**Sederunt – Councillor Cunningham left the meeting at this point.**

**The meeting was opened to the public.**

### **PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT TO CURRENT WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE POLICY AND OTHER POLICIES**

**1589.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement proposing an amendment to the current policy in force within East Renfrewshire regarding applications for vehicle operator's licences in respect of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs); seeking a temporary amendment to the age limits of vehicles due to COVID-19; and proposing the introduction of a knowledge test for Private Hire drivers.

The report explained that a policy had been introduced in 2017 which required any vehicles associated with new vehicle operator's licences, both public and private hire, to be wheelchair accessible (WAVs). It had been agreed that the policy would be reviewed after 3 years to determine its effectiveness, but this review has been delayed due to COVID-19. Further information was provided on the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on the Taxi and Private Hire Car trade, and it was proposed that the current restrictions be relaxed to reduce the financial burden on new applicants. It was further proposed that, in order to reduce the financial burden on current licensees due to COVID-19 restrictions, the age limits for private hire and taxi vehicles be temporarily increased.

The report further explained that the Civic Government (Scotland) Act, 1982 had recently been amended to allow the introduction of knowledge tests for private hire drivers and the committee had been asked to consider whether or not to introduce this test in East Renfrewshire.

Mr McEwan, ERDA, advised that he had only recently been made aware that a report proposing changes to the WAV Policy was being submitted to the Licensing Committee and asked the committee to postpone consideration of this matter to allow members of ERDA to be consulted on the proposal.

The committee had a brief adjournment to consider this request.

Thereafter, on reconvening, in answer to questions the Civic Government Enforcement Officer provided further information on the proposal to temporarily increase the age limit of private hire car and taxi vehicles, and on the introduction of a knowledge test for private hire car drivers.

Following discussion, the committee agreed:-

- (a) to continue consideration of a request to amend the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Policy to a future meeting to allow interested community groups and the taxi/private hire trade to consult with members/colleagues;
- (b) to temporarily increase the current age limits for private hire and taxi vehicles by 2 years, for a period of 2 years; and
- (c) to introduce from 1 April 2021, the requirement for all new private hire car driver applicants, and those private hire car drivers having held a private hire driver's licence for less than 3 years (as of that date) on renewal, to sit and pass a practical and/or theory knowledge test.

CHAIR



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

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

**Present:**

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

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Michelle Blair, Chief Auditor; Gill Darbyshire, Chief Executive's Business Manager; Anthony Jenkins, Brexit Coordinator; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**Apology:**

Councillor Angela Convery.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

**1590.** Councillor Grant declared a non-financial interest in relation to Item 1595 by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board.

**Variation in Order of Business**

In accordance with the terms of Standing Order 19, Councillor Miller agreed to vary the order of business in order to facilitate the conduct of the meeting.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**1591.** The following matters were raised during the Chair's report:-

Appointment of External Audit Manager

- (i) Councillor Miller confirmed that Louisa Yule had been appointed as the External Audit Manager for the Council as well as the Integration Joint Board. He added that the committee looked forward to working with her in future.

Audit Scotland COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees - Feedback

- (ii) Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 18 February 2021 (Page 1442, Item 1533(ii) refers), when the committee had agreed that a further report on issues raised in the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* published by Audit Scotland in August 2020 be prepared and submitted to a future meeting; and noted that the Clerk would liaise with members of the committee to ascertain which specific issues they wished to seek further feedback and focus on now by exception, Councillor Miller reported that he had sought confirmation that the feedback received in November on changes to internal controls required due to COVID-19 remained current. It had been confirmed that this was the case.

He confirmed that taking account of this and other information that the committee already had access to, including reports on risk and Internal Audit's work, no issues had been identified that needed to be followed up at this stage. However it remained an option to seek further updates on specific issues at any point through either himself or the Clerk. He suggested that it might be useful to review the position later in the year in any case, perhaps in late summer, to pick up any issues that may be raised from the year end Accounts process or from the transition to the "new normal" working arrangements which should start to be introduced by then.

Investigation on Income Generation and Commercialisation

- (iii) Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 November 2020 (Page 1338, Item 1445 refers), when it had been noted that an invitation would be extended from the Chair of the committee to the Chair of the Performance and Audit Committee of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) to share information and discuss good practices arising from the Income Generation and Commercialisation review completed by the committee, Councillor Miller confirmed that the meeting had taken place on 15 March 2021. He reported that the matters discussed had been wide-ranging and had included why and how the committee's review had been pursued; the outcome and related recommendations; challenges facing the IJB in the delivery of services including in the context of COVID-19; commercial and ethical issues in relation to the provision of services; and changes in future that could stem from the review of Adult and Social Care in Scotland.

He confirmed that it had been agreed at the meeting that having representation from this committee on the IJB and other related bodies continued to be useful, and that if further discussions on any issue in future would be valuable, that could be arranged.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) that it might be useful to review the position later in 2021 on issues raised in the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* published by Audit Scotland, perhaps in late summer, to pick up any issues that may be raised from the year end Accounts process or from the transition to the “new normal” working arrangements which should start to be introduced by then; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the content of the Chair’s report.

## **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS – BIENNIAL REPORT**

**1592.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 24 September 2020 (Page 1276, Item 1375 refers), when the position on the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) and progress with risk management across the Council had been noted, the committee considered a report by the Chief Executive regarding the most recent biennial update of the register and general progress on risk management.

The SRR, a copy of which was appended to the report, itemised key risks that required to be considered and associated actions put in place to manage these. Having referred to related operational risk registers in place, the report confirmed that several strategic risks had been amended to include additional control measures and rescored for significance, clarifying that a thorough review of all the strategic risks had been undertaken by the Corporate Management Team (CMT). In total there were now 42 strategic risks, 18 of which had been evaluated as high and 24 as medium. Risks evaluated as low had been removed from the SRR and would be monitored within departmental or operational registers as appropriate. Relevant significant risks which could impact on achieving the Council’s outcomes regarding the work of the IJB and the Culture and Leisure Trust had been considered.

In addition to referring to risks added to the SRR, information was provided on risk scores that remained high; risks that had been rescored from high to medium; and those that retained the same score but where the risk descriptions had been amended to reflect the current position or provide further clarity. It was confirmed that although reports on the SRR were submitted to the committee every 6 months and the Cabinet annually, the register was considered to be a live document and updated continually, with the review of the SRR playing a fundamental role in ensuring that the Council met its objectives as detailed in Fairer East Ren, the Modern Ambitious Programme and the Outcome Delivery Plan. A risk owner for each strategic risk had been identified from amongst the CMT.

The Business Manager highlighted key aspects of the report, during which she confirmed that the mitigated risk score for risk 6.9 on Brexit had been documented incorrectly as 12. She clarified that the likelihood and impact scores should have been recorded as 2 and 3 respectively, resulting in a risk score of 6.

Councillor Swift commented on the referendum being sought by the Scottish Government on Scottish independence, potential financial consequences of independence and related issues, seeking clarification why such issues were not referred to in the SRR. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) clarified that this issue had been raised at some other meetings, confirming that only risks which at present were considered likely to crystallise were included in the SRR. In terms of recent consideration of the economic and financial outlook for the Council, she reported that independence had not been perceived as an issue that required to be reflected in the SRR for the time being, but that should the Council’s economic

or treasury advisors or banks raise matters associated with independence, the position could be reassessed at a future date. She added that it was possible that the position may be reviewed depending on the outcome of the Scottish Parliamentary elections. Elected Members confirmed that the issue had been raised before, including at the most recent Council meeting, and acknowledged that the SRR was considered live and subject to review.

The committee, having heard Councillor Miller request that Members refrain from raising political issues at meetings of the committee:-

- (a) agreed that feedback be provided to appropriate senior officers on comments made at the meeting on the SRR for consideration; and
- (b) otherwise, noted the development of the SRR; that it was considered to be a live document; and that it would be updated and amended by the CMT.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION – UPDATE**

**1593.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 November 2020 (Page 1335, Item 1319 refers), when the committee had agreed that a further update on the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) should be provided to a future meeting, the committee considered a joint report by the Directors of Corporate & Community Services and Environment, providing a further update on the UK's exit from the EU and work within the Council in response to this.

The report confirmed that the UK had ceased to be a member of the EU on 31 January 2020, entering a transition period then until 31 December 2020. Both sides had announced that a Trade and Cooperation Agreement had been reached on 24 December 2020, following the ratification of which the UK and EU had entered a new relationship from 1 January 2021. Details on the main points of the Agreement and the particulars of that new relationship in terms of such matters as trade and citizen's rights were outlined. The report also made reference to the potential for supplementary agreements, particularly on issues yet to be resolved, such as financial services, or which may have been unforeseen during the negotiations, clarifying also that the overall Agreement would undergo a substantial review every five years. The position on issues in relation to trade and the economy; data and information sharing; funding; laws and regulations; the EU Settlement Scheme; the work of the Brexit Working Group (BWG); and the Multi Agency Coordination Centre on EU Exit was also summarised.

It was concluded that EU Exit procedures and preparations were well established, having been implemented for previous Brexit deadlines; and that these would be key mechanisms in responding to impacts arising from the exit from the EU that may develop, as the new UK-EU relationship becomes established.

Whilst referring to key aspects of the report, the Brexit Coordinator highlighted some concerns raised on the potential for increased costs or delays when purchasing goods imported from the EU or even Northern Ireland which could impact of services. Having referred to the relaxation of controls for a further 6 months, he cited examples of goods that may be affected in due course, such as fresh food for school meals and care homes, vehicle parts and building materials. In terms of negative impacts, he reported that it was difficult to confirm which impacts were caused by Brexit or COVID-19, or a combination of both.

The Brexit Coordinator highlighted that a lot of guidance and information remained to be received on what would replace EU funding, clarifying that it was intended that the UK Shared

Prosperity Fund would replace EU Structural Funds from 2022/23, pending which the UK Community Renewal Fund would be in place to assist with transition arrangements. Related issues would be discussed as required.

Councillor Grant sought clarification regarding which specific local services would require to assess the implications of replacement funding in terms of service provision, and be impacted in terms of State Aid. Regarding the former, the Brexit Coordinator indicated that changes would impact on investment in skills, local businesses, communities and places and supporting people into employment, and would, for example, impact on services promoting economic development. He undertook to seek and provide further information on this for circulation to members of the committee and to do likewise regarding State Aid.

Citing various examples throughout the document such as the impact of Brexit on Health and Safety and environmental standards, data sharing, State Aid and labour rights amongst others, Councillor Ireland commented that there remained a lack of clarity on the detailed impact of many changes and exactly when many things would transpire. The Brexit Coordinator indicated that, for the time being, some dates remained unclear, such as in relation to State Aid on which information was expected in the autumn, with further clarity on other issues being dependent on progress on the particular issues concerned. For example, the position on import controls would be clarified further in July.

Councillor Ireland sought further clarification on applications to the EU Settlement Scheme, which stood at 58% locally, and asked if this was indicative of the rate across Scotland and the UK. The Brexit Coordinator reported that the position was broadly similar to that in Inverclyde and a couple of neighbouring authorities, that the rates varied considerably across other areas, that the exact number of EU nationals who had applied in East Renfrewshire could potentially vary from 1500 to 2500 as the statistics provided were rounded up to the nearest 500, and that a range of ways of signposting individuals to the Scheme, examples of which were cited, would continue to be promoted locally as the application deadline approached, to complement the promotion of the Scheme at a Scottish and UK level.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) that the Brexit Coordinator provide further information to the Clerk for circulation to members of the committee as requested on funding issues and State Aid;
- (b) that a further update be provided to a future meeting following the summer recess prior to the end of September; and
- (c) otherwise, to note the report and related comments made.

## **NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – HOUSING BENEFIT PERFORMANCE AUDIT – ANNUAL UPDATE 2020**

**1594.** The committee considered a report by the Clerk on the publication by Audit Scotland of a report entitled *Housing Benefit Performance Audit: Annual Update 2020*, which, under the committee's specialisation arrangements, had been sent to Councillors McLean and Swift for review. The Head of Communities, Revenues and Change had been asked to provide comments and a copy of her feedback was attached to the report.

The report commented on the scale of the Council's Housing Benefit (HB) service and related issues, including planning for the gradual phasing out of Housing Benefit (HB) as a result of

the implementation of Universal Credit (UC), referring also to the national HB Performance Audit produced annually by Audit Scotland. Regarding the Annual Update, it was explained that the focus had moved to thematic reviews while a smaller programme of work on assessing risk at individual councils also continued, the former having been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reference was made to the findings of a thematic review by Audit Scotland which had revealed a 20% increase in HB overpayments, that the continued roll-out of UC had impacted on councils' recovery options, that only a quarter of councils were reporting improved recovery and five improvements identified, in respect of which East Renfrewshire had been highlighted for good practice where a review of ongoing deductions had provided increased recovery of £42k in 2017/18. Measures and policy changes implemented by the Department of Work and Pensions due to COVID-19 were also itemised. Within that context, the report confirmed that the Council continued to make good progress against key HB performance indicators, that speed of processing times had improved, but accuracy ratings had remained static. It was confirmed that a new compliance resource had been appointed with particular focus on making improvements in that area.

Having referred to various actions underway to recover the historic HB Overpayment debt, the review of data and processes as part of the implementation of the new Council Tax and Benefits system in 2020/21 and related issues, it was concluded that benefits was a complex and frequently-changing area, with a nationally driven landscape and a range of agencies involved. National delays in UC implementation had required HB caseloads to be maintained for far longer than predicted. Against a background of reducing DWP funding and wider pressures on council budgets, it continued to be a challenging time for service delivery both locally and nationally, but the Council had progressed initiatives to understand and improve benefits processing. A firm action plan had been put in place which was starting to deliver results, and the Council remained committed to continuous improvement and high degrees of accuracy. It was anticipated that the current COVID-19 pandemic would have some impact on performance results, with the implementation of the new Council Tax and Benefits system in 2020/21 ensuring that improvements made were embedded, supported by up to date technology to enable the Council's benefits teams to continue to deliver improved performance and meet customer expectations.

The committee agreed to note the report and the related comments made.

### **Sederunt**

Councillor Grant having declared a non-financial interest in the following item left the meeting prior to its consideration.

### **EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST – BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN**

**1595.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 June 2020 (Page 1201, Item 1292 refers), when the committee had noted recommendations contained within the Best Value Review of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT); and agreed, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, that the Director of Education in partnership with the Chief Executive of the Trust review the recommendations and report to a future meeting on those still considered valid, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education on this issue and the associated action plan.

The report clarified that the committee had approved the deletion of an audit of the operation of the Trust from the 2019/2020 Internal Audit Plan on the basis that the Scrutiny and

Evaluation Officer in post at that time would progress a Best Value Review (BVR) of the Trust, the findings of which would be reported to the committee in due course. The BVR, which was undertaken prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, had been submitted to the committee on 25 June 2020, a copy of which was attached to the report as Appendix 1, setting out the key strengths of the Trust and 23 recommendations for improvement.

Having referred to the scope of the BVR, the conclusions reached, and opportunities for further improvement identified originally, the report explained that following a review of the recommendations it had been concluded that 9 required no further action, a further one was considered closed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that Recommendation 17, on Service Level Agreements, was considered annually as part of the year end performance report and would be considered at that time. The remaining 12 recommendations had been incorporated into the action plan associated with the Business Report prepared by SOLACE which had been approved by the Trust's Board in June 2018 and was overseen by the Director of Education, the Chief Finance Officer, and the Trust's Chief Executive. A copy of the updated action plan also accompanied the report.

It was concluded that the ERCLT would continue to self-evaluate its performance and take the necessary steps, in partnership with the Council, to improve those areas identified for improvement in the action plan as part of its business planning process.

The Director of Education highlighted key aspects of the report, during which he emphasised the extent to which COVID-19 was continuing to impact on the operation of the Trust, and commented on three actions for which specific timescales remained to be provided. Regarding the recommendation to market the vacant space at the Foundry in Barrhead, he reported that the space was currently being used for COVID-19 vaccinations as a result of which this action had been suspended, but that it was anticipated that the timescale for this work would be March 2022. He confirmed that the timescales for supporting the further development of improved financial planning for the Trust, and implementing revised procedures for complaints were November and June 2021 respectively.

Councillor Ireland thanked everyone involved in the production of the report and associated action plan, indicating that she was impressed with the Trust's business plan and the extent to which work was being done as referred to in the report.

The committee noted the East Renfrewshire Council and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Finance and Business Review and Best Value Review Action Plan, including the timescales for progressing various actions.

CHAIR





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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 1 April 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Danny Devlin and Colm Merrick.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1596.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CABINET WORK PLAN 2020-21 PROGRESS AND CABINET WORK PLAN 2021-22**

**1597.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on progress made against the 2020/21 Cabinet work plan and presenting a draft work plan for 2021/22.

It was noted that overall, good progress had been made against the plan with 81% of business considered within the stated timescales or the following month. Due to conflicting operational pressures as a result of the pandemic 19% of business had been delayed but all delayed reports had been included on the 2021/22 draft workplan.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted performance against the work plan for 2020/21;
- (b) approved the content of the draft work plan for 2021/22; and
- (c) agreed that the plan be reviewed after the local government elections in May 2022.

## ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21 AS AT 31 JANUARY 2021

**1598.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), detailing the estimated projected revenue out-turn for 2020/21. The report provided details of expected year end variances for each department at period 10 and was based on the financial position as at 31 January 2021 and subsequent assessment of pressures arising from COVID-19: Approval for a series of budget virements was also sought.

- (i) Education Department;
- (ii) Environment Department;
- (iii) Environment Department – Support;
- (iv) Corporate and Community Services Department – Community Resources;
- (v) Corporate and Community Services Department – Support;
- (vi) Chief Executive's Office;
- (vii) Other Expenditure;
- (viii) Integration Joint Board (IJB) Contribution/ Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP);
- (ix) HRA.

The report outlined that on the basis of the latest information, a year end underspend of £3.723m or 1.4% of the annual budget was forecast with the reasons for departmental variances being set out. The overall improvement related mainly to increased government grant support to compensate for loss of Council and Trust income and to further reductions in spend forecast by the Education and Environment departments.

It was explained that the forecast outlined in the report reflected confirmed government funding to address COVID pressures, however further funding had been announced since the report was compiled and this would be carried forward to assist in addressing COVID pressures in the next financial year.

The report noted that directors had already taken action to stop all non-essential expenditure, however as the increased level of grant to cover COVID costs was now expected to be provided in 2020/21, any underspend at year end on mainstream Council services could be applied to reserves to aid the Council's future budget planning. Any unspent COVID grant would be carried forward to help address COVID pressures in 2021/22.

In response to questions from Councillor Bamforth on the additional expenditure required for COVID safe measures in preparation for the election on 6 May 2021. The Democratic Services Manager explained the funding mechanism for parliamentary elections confirming that election costs would be covered by government funding whilst the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) outlined the accounting procedures in place for recording election related expenditure.

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

- (a) Approved service virements and operational adjustments as set out in the report and noted the significant reported improvement in the probable out-turn position;
- (b) instructed departments to continue to avoid all non-essential spending;
- (c) agreed management action is taken to remedy any avoidable forecast overspends; and

- (d) agreed all departments continue to closely monitor their probable out-turn position.

**THE EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL (BALGRAYSTONE ROAD, BARRHEAD)  
(STOPPING UP) ORDER 2021**

**1599.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval for the making and confirmation of “The East Renfrewshire Council (Balgraystone Road, Barrhead) (Stopping Up) Order 2021”.

In response to Councillor Bamforth, the Director of Environment explained that this process was to ensure the safe flow of traffic by closing a section of Balgraystone Road which was subsequently no longer required for public access following the realignment and construction of a new section of road.

The Cabinet: -

- (a) approved the making and confirmation of the Order and;
- (b) delegated to the Director of Environment to implement the Order in accordance with the associated statutory procedures.

CHAIR



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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 7 April 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Provost Jim Fletcher

Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Jim Swift

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Andrew Bennie, Planning Adviser; Siobhan Wilson, Solicitor (Legal Adviser); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager, Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer (Clerk) and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Angela Convery, Betty Cunningham and Jim McLean

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1600.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2021/02 – ERECTION OF TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION WITH SIDE DORMER WINDOWS AT 10 LANGTREE AVENUE, GIFFNOCK (Ref No: 2020/0448/TP)**

**1601.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr and Mrs Brown against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the erection of a two storey rear extension with side dormer windows at 10 Langtree 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.

The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as outlined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice. The Planning Adviser further outlined that should Members be minded to grant planning permission a suggested additional condition would be that :-

*'the development hereby approved shall not commence until samples of the materials to be used on the external surfaces of the building and any other hard surfaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with these approved details.'*

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 the motion fell.

Thereafter Councillor Miller seconded by Provost Fletcher moved as an amendment that the Appointed Officer's decision be overturned and planning permission approved subject to the inclusion of the additional condition as suggested by the Planning Advisor. Councillor Swift confirmed that he was in agreement with the proposed amendment.

The Local Review Body therefore agreed that the Appointed Officer's decision as set out in the decision notice of 13 January 2021 be overturned and planning permission approved subject to the following condition:-

*The development hereby approved shall not commence until samples of the materials to be used on the external surfaces of the building and any other hard surfaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with these approved details.*

#### **NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2021/03 – INSTALLATION OF DORMER WINDOW TO FRONT AT 2 MANSEFIELD CRESCENT, CLARKSTON (Ref No:- 2020/0341/TP)**

**1602.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr J Bryers against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the installation of dormer window to front at 2 Mansefield Crescent, Clarkston.

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.

The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as outlined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice. The Planning Adviser further outlined that should Members be minded to grant planning permission a suggested additional condition would be that *'The dormer shall be clad in tiles to match the colour of those tiles used on the existing dwelling house.'*

Having heard the Planning Adviser and following discussion, Councillor Ireland, seconded by Provost Fletcher moved that the Local Review Body uphold the decision to refuse planning permission for the reasons as outlined in the decision notice.

Councillor Miller seconded by Councillor Swift moved as an amendment that the Appointed Officer's decision be overturned and planning permission approved subject to the inclusion of the suggested condition by the Planning Advisor.

On a vote being taken Councillor Ireland and Provost Fletcher voted for the motion.

Councillor Miller and Councillor Swift voted for the amendment.

There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order 36(d) the Chair had a casting vote which she cast in favour of the motion.

The motion was accordingly declared carried and the Local Review Body agreed to uphold the decision of the Appointed Officer to refuse planning permission for the reasons as outlined in the decision notice of 19 January 2021.

CHAIR





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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 13 April 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Angela Convery (Chair)  
Councillor Charlie Gilbert

Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Convery in the Chair

**Attending:**

Joe Abrami, Principal Solicitor; Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Chief Inspector Alan Gray and Sergeant David Gilmore, Police Scotland (Items 1604 to 1608); Michael McEwan and Savio D’Souza, East Renfrewshire Disability Action (ERDA); Brian Cherry, Eastwood Mearns Taxis (Item 1609 only).

**Apology:**

Councillor Betty Cunningham (Vice Chair)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1603.** 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 Items 1604 to 1608 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 RENEWAL**

**1604.** 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 3 refers).

The licence holder was present together with his Solicitor Mr Philip Cohen.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant 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.

Mr Cohen explained that a trial date had been set for 2 November 2021 and proposed that the case be continued until after the court date.

Having heard Sergeant Gilmore confirm that the case was still live with a trial date set on 2 November 2021, the committee agreed to continue consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow a decision on the pending court action to be made.

#### **TAXI DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL**

**1605.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the renewal of a Taxi Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 4 refers).

The licence holder was present.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant 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.

Having heard Sergeant Gilmore confirm that the case was still live with a trial date set on 13 May 2021, the committee agreed to continue consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow a decision on the pending court action to be made.

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

**1606.** 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 5 refers).

The licence holder, having been invited to attend, was not present.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant Gilmore representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were 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.

Sergeant Gilmore confirmed that the objection had been withdrawn as the case against the licence holder had been dismissed.

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

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

**1607.** 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 6 refers).

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

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant 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.

Prior to consideration of the application, the committee were asked whether they wished to accept the Chief Constable's request to consider the representation even though it was considered "out of time". Following discussion, the committee agreed to consider the item.

Having heard Sergeant Gilmore confirm that the case was still live with a trial date delayed to July 2021, the committee agreed to continue consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow a decision on the pending court action to be made.

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

**1608.** 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, having been invited to attend, was not present.

Chief Inspector Gray and Sergeant 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.

Having heard Sergeant Gilmore confirm that the case was still live with no trial date set, the committee agreed to continue consideration of the application to a future meeting to allow a decision on the pending court action to be made.

**The meeting was opened to the public.**

**PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT TO CURRENT WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE POLICY AND OTHER POLICIES**

**1609.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement proposing an amendment to the current policy in force within East Renfrewshire regarding applications for vehicle operator’s licences in respect of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs); and make a temporary amendment to the inspection schedule applicable to older vehicles.

The report explained that a policy had been introduced in 2017 which required any vehicles associated with new vehicle operator’s licences, both public and private hire, to be wheelchair accessible (WAVs). It had been agreed that the policy would be reviewed after 3 years to determine its effectiveness, but this review has been delayed due to COVID-19. Further information was provided on the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on the Taxi and Private Hire Car trade, and it was proposed that the current restrictions be relaxed to reduce the financial burden on new applicants. It was further proposed that, in order to reduce the financial burden on current licensees due to COVID-19 restrictions, the age limits for private hire and taxi vehicles be temporarily increased.

The report further explained that, due to current capacity at the Council Depot based at Carnwadric Road, Thornliebank, the committee were asked to amend the requirement for inspection of licenced vehicles over 7 years old every 6 months.

In response to a question from Councillor O’Kane, it was confirmed that the WAV capacity in East Renfrewshire had increased from 4 vehicles at the introduction of the policy to 41 vehicles.

Mr D’Souza, ERDA, advised that he had only recently been made aware that a report proposing changes to the WAV Policy was being submitted to the Licensing Committee and they had not been consulted on the proposals being brought forward. He highlighted the need for an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to changes to Council policy and queried if this had been carried out properly. In response, Mr Abrami indicated that the impacts of the change of policy had been taken into account and it had been considered that there would be no adverse impact to the availability of WAV to disabled people in East Renfrewshire as a result. Mr Abrami also referred to the policy adopted by the Council under the 2010 Disability Act that companies should list the specific vehicles available to customers to allow disabled customers to select the most appropriate vehicle for their needs.

The committee also heard from Mr Cherry of Eastwood Mearns Taxis who stressed the importance of encouraging both new operators into the trade and operators who had left the trade to return. Mr Cherry offered to provide statistics recorded by his company on the availability and demand for WAV.

Following discussion, the committee agreed:-

- (a) to amend the current Council policy in respect of WAVs to remove the requirement for all new private hire operators’ licences to be wheelchair accessible, with a review of this amendment to be held in 1 year; and
- (b) to amend the current requirement for all licensed vehicles more than 7 years old be subject to full vehicle inspections at 6 monthly intervals to inspections at intervals of 1 year, with a review of this amendment to be held in 2 years.

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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 15 April 2021.**

**Present:**

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

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Andrew Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Gill Darbyshire, Chief Executive’s Business Manager; Colin Hutton, Senior Communications Officer, Rachel Forbes, Communications Officer, Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer

**Apology:**

Councillor Colm Merrick.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1610.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

**1611.** A minute’s silence was held to mark and respect the passing of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER) – MINUTE OF MEETING OF 11 FEBRUARY 2021**

**1612.** The Cabinet considered and noted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 11 February 2021.

**REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

**1613.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, outlining the latest biannual update of the Council’s Strategic Risk Register and providing a summary of risk management progress.

It was noted that the previous update of the Strategic Risk Register had been considered by the Cabinet on 24 September 2020 and recently on the 18 March 2021 by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The Strategic Risk Register, a copy of which accompanied the report, set out the key strategic risks to be considered by the Council and detailed the actions that management had put in place to manage these risks.

The report outlined that since the Strategic Risk Register was last considered by the Cabinet, a thorough review of all risks on the register had been undertaken. The result of the review was 12 risks remained as high; 4 risks had been rescored from high to medium; 10 risks had been added to the register; no risks had been removed from the register; and 10 risks retained the same score as before although the risk descriptions had been amended to reflect the current position or provide further clarity.

The various categories and risks therein were set out.

The Chief Executive's Business Manager advised that within the report a risk tolerance map was included and the risks set out by outcome. The Corporate Management Team continued to discuss and review the Strategic Risk Register on a regular basis and it remained a standing item on the Corporate Management Team agenda.

In summary, there were now 42 risks on the register of which 17 were classified as "high" risk.

The Cabinet noted the development of the Council's Strategic Risk Register, that it was considered a "live" document and would be updated and amended by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) as appropriate.

## **MIXED TENURE SCHEME**

**1614.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet on 28 January 2021 (Page 1401, Item 1514 refers), when amongst other things it was noted that the contract for the Mixed Tenure Scheme would be retendered, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, now seeking approval to bring the scheme in-house and to transfer the existing relevant staff into the employment of the Council.

Having referred to the report considered by the Cabinet in January the report explained that as part of the tender process an options appraisal had been carried out assessing the respective merits of stopping delivering the service, retendering to the market or bringing the service in house, with an overview of each of these options being set out.

The report outlined that in terms of an options appraisal, bringing the service in-house represented best value in the circumstances by avoiding the uncertainty over future service provision and the potential additional cost of going out to the market. In-house service provision also ensured the continued delivery of added social value in relation to employment and the local economy.

Having heard the Director of Environment in detailed explanation of the proposals and various Members refer to the benefits already delivered by the scheme and the further benefits that would be accrued by bringing the scheme in-house, the Cabinet:-

- a) agreed that for the reasons detailed in the report in relation to Best Value the service provided under the existing contract be brought in-house;

- b) noted that the relevant employees from VERG would transfer to the Council as employees through Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, (TUPE);
- c) agreed to extend the contract for a few months on the same terms and conditions and rates and within the existing budget as noted in the 28 January 2021 report until the transfer can take place which would be done as quickly as possible;
- d) noted that there were no financial implications at this stage since budgetary provision already existed for the delivery of the scheme; and
- e) delegated to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement and Deputy Chief Executive to make the necessary arrangements for the transfer.

### **GARDEN WASTE CHARGING PROPOSAL UPDATE**

**1615.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing further information on the details of the proposed commencement of the scheme for charging for the collection of Garden Waste. The scheme was approved in principle at the Cabinet meeting on 26 November 2020 and formally approved as part of the Council's budget setting on 15 March 2021.

The report outlined that the Council's current collection of Garden Waste provided a high number of weekly collections per annum compared with many other councils. Maintaining this level of service during the summer months resulted in pressure to the service due to the large volume of garden waste produced.

The proposal to implement the charging for Garden Waste scheme would generate income for the Council whilst at the same time allowing for the reliability of the scheme to be improved through additional staffing and an additional refuse collection vehicle. Three new operational posts and one administrative post would be created within Neighbourhood Services.

Commenting further the Director of Environment advised of a change to the proposed commencement date in the report from the 7 June 2021 to 5 July 2021 to ensure the effective operation of the online payment system.

Having heard officers in response to questions and following discussion, the Cabinet:-

- a) noted the further detailed information provided as to the background to the proposed scheme; and
- b) approved the commencement of the Charging for Garden Waste Scheme for East Renfrewshire Council from 5 July 2021 and not Monday 7 June 2021 as proposed in the report.





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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 22 April 2021.**

**Present:**

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

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); Leanne Knox, Business Support Supervisor; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Dr Frank Angell.

**Also Attending:**

Shirley Gibson, Depute Head Teacher, Williamwood High School; Anthony Hutcheson, Head Teacher, St Mark’s Primary School.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1616.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT ON GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE**

**1617.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising on how Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) was embedded within East Renfrewshire Schools.

By way of background, the report explained that GIRFEC was a National Policy Framework established by the Scottish Government, which aimed to improve outcomes and support the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. GIRFEC assisted in addressing issues of poverty experienced by families and the associated attainment gap. It also promoted partnership working to ensure greater equality for children and young people within the council's settings and schools.

GIRFEC was underpinned by 5 key principles to ensure that policy around children and young people was: child focused with children and their families at the centre of decision making with support available to them; centred around the wellbeing of children and young people within communities; based on identifying and addressing needs (including developmental needs) early to ensure the right support was implemented and later difficulties avoided; focused on joined-up working with services working in a coordinated way alongside families to meet needs and improve wellbeing; and focused on intervention approaches based on clearly planned outcomes.

GIRFEC had been embedded in East Renfrewshire Council's Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools for a number of years. The Council's aim was to ensure that all children in East Renfrewshire were safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. Through consideration of those 8 wellbeing indicators, consistent language was used by children, young people, staff and partners to work collaboratively to ensure the collective assessment of needs, risks and strengths of a child and ensure good decision making and planning.

A staged approach was in place which took account of the National Practice Model where the wellbeing indicators, Resilience Matrix and My World Triangle were all used to gather information, analyse, plan and review to meet the needs of the child or young person concerned. This process was supported by the Council's Educational Psychology team and partner agencies to ensure all necessary supports were in place for each individual child.

Progress was tracked against targets outlined in Wellbeing Plans and Coordinated Support Plans within individual settings and attainment, achievement, attendance, exclusion rates and leaver destinations were tracked for all pupils. Details were also provided in the report of actions taken in terms of children and young people with additional support needs, support provided in terms of transitions between settings and the self-evaluation process carried out using questionnaires completed by children and young people.

The Children and Young People's Plan for 2020-2023 placed GIRFEC at the heart of its vision. with details being provided of the partnership working that took place to provide essential services to meet that aim, including work with CAMHS, Children 1<sup>st</sup>, Educational Psychology, Social Work, RAMH and School Nursing through the Healthier Minds Service, which offered support for the mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. Details of other partnership work ongoing were provided in the report.

Information was also provided on the comprehensive Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) programme which aimed to build capacity among staff to ensure that they could meet identified needs and ensure they are getting it right for every child.

The committee also received presentations from Shirley Gibson, Depute Head Teacher, Willamwood High School and Anthony Hutcheson, Head Teacher, St Mark's Primary School respectively on the implementation of GIRFEC within their own establishments.

In the course of the presentations it was explained that priorities for implementation of GIRFEC in the school setting relied on building capacity of both pupils and staff, with particular attention toward the health and wellbeing of both groups. Both establishments had a strong ethos of nurture and support and had embedded GIRFEC priorities into all aspects of planning and delivery. A range of support, both group and individual based, as well as a wide variety of teacher training opportunities and supports were available. These resources, combined with targeted interventions for identified needs had made an extremely positive impact on all factors identified in GIRFEC.

A strong emphasis on partnership working was identified, and it was clearly stated that the achievements of individual establishments were not achieved in isolation. In particular, the work of the Education Department, its Healthier Minds Service, and Children 1st were highlighted as important contributors across a range of factors, in enabling establishments to respond effectively to challenges and to provide supports that were useful for individual children and young people rather than adopting a “one size fits all” approach. Furthermore, this joined-up approach allowed best practice to be replicated across other establishments in the context of their own provision and the particular needs of the children and young people engaged with those establishments.

Councillor O’Kane, on behalf of the committee, thanked Mrs Gibson and Mr Hutcheson for their presentations as well as the excellent work they had carried out in helping to Get it Right for Every Child in East Renfrewshire.

Councillor Buchanan asked that the information provided in the presentations provided could be shared more widely to allow the wide range of achievements of East Renfrewshire’s children and young people, supported by educational establishments and partners, be more widely recognised and appreciated.

In response to a question from Councillor Wallace, Mrs Gibson and the director indicated that the statistics in terms of children feeling safe at school were gathered through very carefully worded questionnaires, which explicitly explained to each individual completing it, what was meant by the term “safe”, for example. It was stressed that any child or young person who had indicated that they did not feel safe at school was immediately contacted before leaving school, in order to establish any interventions or supports that were required and to ensure that they were implemented with the utmost urgency. However, the majority of those who had indicated not feeling safe were due to very specific, personal circumstances rather than any issue within the school itself.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the report.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD**

**1618.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the outcome of the most recent Customer Service Excellence assessment of the Education Department.

By way of background, the Customer Service Excellence standard tested in great depth those areas that research had indicated were a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There was also an emphasis placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user’s experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction. The previous review of the Education Department had taken place in November 2019 and was carried out on an annual basis.

As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, the assessor had undertaken the review online and reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence as well as reviewing practice and interviewing staff, partners and customers. The two-stage process of the review was detailed in the report.

The review had concluded that the Customer Service Excellence standard would continue to be awarded to the Education Department. The full assessment report, which recognised the department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and seeking continuous improvement, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It also highlighted 31 areas of 'Compliance Plus', where the Education Department had exceeded the requirements and were viewed as exemplary. This represented an increase from 26 in the 2019 assessment.

One area for improvement was highlighted, in relation to communication between the Education Department, other providers such as colleges, and young people. This would be taken forward by the vocational learning team.

Councillor O'Kane, followed by Councillor Buchanan, commended the strong performance outlined in the report and particularly welcomed the 31 areas of Compliance Plus which showed that the Education Department was engaged in continuous improvement and not being complacent on performance.

In response to a question from Councillor Wallace, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) stated that while the number of vocational courses on offer had reduced initially as a result of lockdown and the closure of colleges, the numbers had subsequently returned to normal and, in fact, increased from the previous number on offer.

Thereafter, the committee:

- (a) noted the continuing high standard of the award in recognition of the Education Department's high quality services; and
- (b) approved the approach to ensuring the Education Department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

## **WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE – INTERIM ACTION PLAN – JANUARY 2021**

**1619.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 1 October 2020 (Page 1293, Item 1389 refers), when the committee had noted the progress of the West Partnership and the content of its Improvement Plan, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the contents of the West Partnership's Interim Action Plan, a copy of which accompanied the report.

The Improvement Plan 2020-2023 set out the key areas for collaborative action to bring about improvement across the Glasgow City Region, capturing those areas where collaboration between partners would be beneficial. In recognition of the impact of COVID-19, a major aim of the plan was to address both recovery and renewal.

In January 2021, the Interim Action Plan was drawn up at the request of directors to address the challenges of the ongoing pandemic. In particular, the challenges of delivering a meaningful education provision while most children and young people were unable to attend school. Based on the West Partnership's Plan 2020 to 2023, the Interim Action Plan identified 7 priority projects, each of which had specific relevance during the COVID-19 restrictions. Those included: important and heavily subscribed leadership activities; supporting learners with additional needs; tracking learners' wellbeing; and significant contribution to the national

digital learning offer, West OS. The Interim Action Plan had been endorsed by the Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 2 March 2021 and it was recommended that each Council area considered the report through its own local governance arrangements.

It was noted in the report that the Scottish Government had invited bids to support the implementation of each Improvement Plan and the West Partnership had secured funding of £1,339,000.

Councillor O’Kane, on behalf of the committee, thanked the director for a comprehensive report.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the report.

CHAIR



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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 26 April 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan

Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Apology:**

Councillor Gordon Wallace.

**Attending:**

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

**QUORUM**

**1620.** There being only 2 Elected Members present at the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 46, the meeting was declared inquorate and no business transacted.

CHAIR

