

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

**Minute of meeting held at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 29 June 2022.**

**Present:**

Councillor Andrew Anderson (*)	Councillor Chris Lunday
Councillor Caroline Bamforth (*)	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Kate Campbell	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Andrew Morrison (*)
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Owen O'Donnell
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Annette Ireland (*)	Councillor Gordon Wallace

(\*) indicates remote attendance.

Provost Montague in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; 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); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Housing and Property Services); Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement; Rachel Forbes, Communications Officer; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Morag Brown, Strategic Services Senior Lead; Elaine Rodger, Principal Officer (Capital Projects); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Introductory Remarks**

Provost Montague advised the Council of the appointment of Councillor Buchanan as COSLA spokesperson for children and young people, and congratulated him on his appointment.

Provost Montague also paid tribute to Jim Sneddon, former Head of Democratic and Partnership Services, who had recently passed away. She expressed her condolences and those of the Council to his family and friends at this sad time. Councillors Buchanan and Wallace also added their condolences to those of the Provost.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Betty Cunningham and Jim McLean.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

44. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

## **MINUTE OF MEETING OF COUNCIL – 25 MAY 2022**

45. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 25 May 2022.

## **MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

46. The Council considered and approved the minutes of the undernoted except as referred to in Paragraph 47 below:-

- (a) Licensing Committee – 7 June 2022
- (b) Cabinet (Police and Fire) – 9 June 2022
- (c) Planning Applications Committee – 15 June 2022
- (d) Cabinet – 16 June 2022
- (e) Education Committee – 23 June 2022
- (f) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 23 June 2022

## **CABINET – 16 JUNE 2022**

47. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 June 2022 (Page 41 Item 22 refers), Councillor Wallace referred to the Cabinet's opinion that there were no areas of council performance requiring further investigation at that time. He related this to discussions regarding developmental milestones that took place at the Education Committee on 23 June 2022 (Page 48 Item 28 refers) when it had been noted that the Council was behind 6 other local authorities in these milestones. The committee had been advised that there was no national measure for developmental milestones in early years and each local authority used their own suite of tools to examine them. Therefore, it was not possible to benchmark the current data on those milestones against other authorities as it was unclear the same sort of data was being compared. In view of the importance of this issue for young people in East Renfrewshire Councillor Wallace enquired if there was anything that could be done to develop a national measure to allow comparisons to be made.

In reply, in relation to the Cabinet meeting confirmed that the Cabinet had not requested any investigations to be carried out but pointed out that a number of areas that had been investigated in the past were discussed at the meeting. In addition the Director of Education added some clarity on the specific point around Developmental Milestones in Early Years. The measure referred to at the Education Committee relative to a question at the meeting from Councillor Campbell, was collected by Health Visitors and there was not a nationally agreed measure which meant comparisons with different areas was not possible.

Noting the comments made by the Chief Executive and the Director of Education Councillor Wallace requested that the Chief Executive request the Improvement Service Board to focus on the development of national developmental milestones. The Chief Executive confirmed she would take this forward.

## NOTICE OF MOTION – SENIOR COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

48. In accordance with Standing Order 25, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Anderson.

*That a Senior Councillor Allowance for the Vice Chair of Planning will be created and the Senior Councillor Allowance removed from the position of Convener of Environment.*

Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Bamforth, moved an amendment in the following terms:-

*That a Senior Councillor Allowance for the Vice Chair of Planning will not be created and the Senior Councillor Allowance not be removed from the position of Convener of Environment.*

Provost Montague invited Councillor O'Donnell to speak in terms of the motion.

Councillor O'Donnell stated that the allowance was to recognise the expected additional workload of the Vice Chair of the Planning Applications Committee, with major capital expenditure to be reviewed in the coming years. He added that the allowance would bring payment of Senior Councillor Allowances to 7 from a maximum of 9.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Anderson was invited to speak, indicating his support for the comments made by Councillor O'Donnell.

Councillor Buchanan was heard in support of his amendment. He believed that the motion highlighted a serious problem within the current administration. He remarked upon the previous coalition administration and his experience of it, with the first discussions of those coalitions being about what could be delivered for East Renfrewshire. However, it was clear that, in his opinion, this motion was only to buy needed votes. It was his view that the administration had already lost one of its number, and now were looking for Conservative votes, which he believed was a failure of the administration. It was his belief that the administration should be focused on delivery, not trying to prop themselves up with payments to other councillors.

In seconding the amendment, Councillor Bamforth criticised the actions of the Labour Party across the country in establishing unofficial coalitions and it was her opinion that the current administration were relying on a backroom deal with the Conservatives to prop themselves up.

Councillor Merrick pointed out that were the motion to be passed, every Conservative Councillor bar one would be a Senior Councillor. He said that despite the objections of the Labour Party, they were now in coalition with the Conservatives.

Councillor Ireland voiced her opposition to the motion. Having started her political life in the Labour Party, she expressed shock that the party would choose to go into coalition with the Conservatives and that their first motion of a new administration was to award money to a Conservative councillor. She felt that the actions of the administration amounted to a betrayal of Labour's principles and it was plain to see that the Conservatives would now control every decision the administration would take.

Councillor Macdonald commented on the position that the Leader of the Council was in given the restraints placed upon him by Labour Party leadership that he was unable to enter into formal coalitions with the Conservatives or SNP. He stated that coalition would involve

members of the Conservatives being appointed to political appointments. Given that the SNP and Conservatives would not enter into any sort of arrangement, he felt it fell to the Leader to find an arrangement to form an administration, with no credible deals on the table to establish a working administration other than the current arrangement. He stated that in his view both the Chair and Vice Chair of a committee should not receive a Senior Councillor Allowance. He indicated that the public may question why if both the Chair and Vice Chair were receiving a Senior Councillor Allowance, similar provision was not being proposed for the Vice Chairs of other committees.

Councillor Lunday stated that the motion showed how desperate Labour were to form an administration now that they had given Senior Councillor Allowances to 4 out of 5 Conservative Councillors. He believed it was the residents who would struggle with the outcomes of this decision. He expressed disappointment that Labour was giving extra money to the Conservatives in exchange for votes.

Councillor Wallace explained that there was a political stalemate and, regardless of political affiliation, the job of local politicians was to serve the residents, not to stop their political opponents. Had the stalemate been allowed to continue, the residents would have suffered as nobody would be able to run the Council. He stated that despite not being offered political leadership roles by the Labour Party, the Conservatives would not walk away from the deal as they felt it was important for a working administration to be in place. However, the Conservative group would continue to work on an issue by issue basis.

At this stage, Provost Montague invited Councillor O'Donnell to sum up.

Councillor O'Donnell said it was clear that the SNP members were unhappy with no longer being in administration. He pointed out that the SNP refused to engage following being offered all of the Chairs of quasi-judicial groups on 3 separate occasions. He made the point that all policy convener positions remained within the Labour Party and complied with the national ruling that the Labour Party not enter into formal coalitions. In response to Councillor Macdonald's point about allowances, he felt this could be looked at in future.

On the roll being called, Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Provost Montague, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion. Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday and Merrick voted for the amendment. Councillor Macdonald abstained.

There being 9 votes for the motion, 6 for the amendment and 1 abstention, the motion was declared carried.

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

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

**(a) Councillor Pragnell – East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust**

Councillor Pragnell began by thanking her predecessor, Councillor Merrick for his efforts. She went on to discuss her attendance at the first Board meeting as a newly appointed trustee. She was delighted to join the Board and looked forward to working with Professor Jarvie and other members.

The Board had reviewed and updated all of the Trust's governance and standing orders and the Trust was continuing to perform well, making a strong recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. This was testament to the work of staff within the Trust and the Board, with activity now at 90% of pre-COVID levels.

The Trust was working with Education and Social Work to provide places on the summer holiday programme and the programme was now fully subscribed.

On 8 June, Councillor Pragnell had attended the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Sports and Physical Activity Awards held at Clarkston Hall, recognising the work of clubs, groups and individuals. She stated that the event was inspirational and it was good to see young people being rewarded for their hard work across coaching and volunteering work. She also referred to the award given to a member of Busby Lawn Tennis Club receiving a lifetime achievement award.

The Council noted the statement.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

**50.** Provost Montague sought nominations for the undernoted positions:-

- (i) Convener for Social Work and Health

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, moved that Councillor Pragnell be appointed Convener for Social Work and Health. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Merrick, moved as an amendment that Councillor Bamforth be appointed Convener for Social Work and Health.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 10 votes for Councillor Pragnell and 6 votes for Councillor Bamforth Councillor Pragnell was appointed Convener for Social Work and Health.

The Democratic Services Manager advised that as Councillor Pragnell had been appointed as Convener of Social Work and Health, there was now a vacancy on the Integration Joint Board.

- (ii) Member of Integration Joint Board

Councillor Pragnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, moved that Councillor O'Donnell be appointed as a member of the Integration Joint Board. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Convery, moved as an amendment that Councillor Buchanan be appointed as a member of the Integration Joint Board.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 9 votes for Councillor O'Donnell and 7 votes for Councillor Buchanan, Councillor O'Donnell was appointed as a member of the Integration Joint Board.

(iii) Appeals Committee Vice Chair

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Pragnell, moved that Councillor Devlin be appointed Vice Chair of the Appeals Committee. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Bamforth, moved as an amendment that Councillor Merrick be appointed as Vice Chair of the Appeals Committee.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 10 votes for Councillor Devlin and 6 votes for Councillor Merrick, Councillor Devlin was appointed as Vice Chair of the Appeals Committee.

(iv) Appeals Committee Ordinary Members

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, moved that Councillor Pragnell be nominated and proposed that the Conservative and SNP groups also nominate a member. Accepting this proposal, Councillors Wallace and Merrick were nominated by their respective groups.

(v) Audit and Scrutiny Committee Vice Chair

Councillor Morrison received clarification from the Democratic Services Manager that the position would be open to any member, including those who did not express an interest in the position at the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee where the position was discussed.

Councillor Merrick, seconded by Councillor Convery, moved that Councillor Buchanan be appointed Vice Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Wallace, seconded by Councillor Edlin, moved as an amendment that Councillor Macdonald be appointed Vice Chair.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, Merrick, and O'Donnell voted for the motion.

Councillors Campbell, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison and Wallace voted for the amendment.

Councillors Anderson, Devlin and Pragnell abstained,

There being 8 votes for Councillor Buchanan, 5 votes for Councillor Macdonald and 3 abstentions, Councillor Buchanan was appointed as Vice Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

(vi) Member of Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Pragnell, moved that Councillor Macdonald be appointed as a member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Merrick, moved as an amendment that Councillor Lunday be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 10 votes for Councillor Macdonald and 6 votes for Councillor Lunday, Councillor Macdonald was appointed as an ordinary member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

(vii) Member of Civic Hospitality Committee

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Pragnell, moved that Councillor Devlin be appointed as a member of the Civic Hospitality Committee. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Convery, moved as an amendment that Councillor Lunday be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 10 votes for Councillor Devlin and 6 votes for Councillor Lunday, Councillor Devlin was appointed as a member of the Civic Hospitality Committee.

(viii) Community Asset Transfer Review Panel (5 members)

The Democratic Services Manager reminded Elected Members those who were eligible to sit on the Community Asset Transfer Review Panel. Councillor O'Donnell also indicated that, as he had been appointed to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Macdonald was no longer eligible.

The Council agreed that Councillors Campbell, Bamforth, Lunday, Merrick and McLean be appointed to the Panel.

(ix) Vice Chair of Licensing Committee

Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Edlin moved that Councillor Macdonald be appointed as Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Merrick, moved as an amendment that Councillor Convery be appointed.

On the roll being called, Councillors Campbell, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison and Wallace voted for the motion.

Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Devlin, Ireland, Lunday, Merrick, O'Donnell, and Pragnell voted for the amendment.

There being 5 votes for Councillor Macdonald and 11 votes for Councillor Convery, Councillor Convery was appointed as Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee.

(x) Member of Licensing Committee

Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor O'Donnell moved that Councillor Macdonald be appointed as a member of the Licensing Committee.

There being no amendment Councillor Macdonald was appointed a member of the Licensing Committee.

(xi) Members of Teaching Staff Appeals Committee (2 posts)

The Council agreed that Councillors Merrick and Wallace be appointed to the Teaching Staff Appeals Committee.

(xii) Member of Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE)

Councillor Pragnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, moved that Councillor O'Donnell be appointed as the Council's representative on APSE. Councillor Merrick, seconded by Councillor Lunday, moved as an amendment that Councillor Buchanan be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 9 votes for Councillor O'Donnell and 7 votes for Councillor Buchanan, Councillor O'Donnell was appointed as the Council's representative on APSE.

(xiv) Substitute member of Glasgow City Deal Cabinet

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Pragnell, moved that Councillor Anderson be appointed as the substitute member of the Glasgow City Deal Cabinet. Councillor Merrick, seconded by Councillor Bamforth, moved as an amendment that Councillor Buchanan be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, and Merrick voted for the amendment.



There being 10 votes for Councillor Anderson and 6 votes for Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Anderson was appointed as the substitute member of the Glasgow City Deal Cabinet.

- (xv) Representative on the Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association

Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Edlin moved that Councillor Wallace be appointed as the Council's representative on the Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

There being no amendment the Council agreed that Councillor Wallace be appointed.

- (xvi) Named substitutes on the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

The Council agreed as follows:-

Councillor Convery (substitute for Councillor Ireland)  
 Councillor Devlin (substitute for Councillor Macdonald)  
 Councillor O'Donnell (substitute for Provost Montague)  
 Councillor Campbell (substitute for Councillor Morrison)

- (xvii) Representative on the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

Councillor Pragnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin moved that Councillor O'Donnell be appointed as the Council's representative on the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Convery, moved as an amendment that Councillor Lunday be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 9 votes for Councillor O'Donnell and 7 votes for Councillor Lunday, Councillor O'Donnell was appointed as the Council's representative on the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee.

- (xviii) Representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and SPTA.

Councillor Pragnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, moved that Councillor O'Donnell be appointed as the Council's representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and SPTA. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Bamforth, moved as an amendment that Councillor Ireland be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 9 votes for Councillor O'Donnell and 7 votes for Councillor Ireland, Councillor O'Donnell was appointed as the Council's representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and SPTA.

- (xix) Substitute representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and SPTA.

Councillor Edlin, seconded by Councillor Morrison, moved that Councillor McLean be appointed as the substitute representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and SPTA. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Convery, moved as an amendment that Councillor Ireland be appointed.

On the roll being called, Provost Montague and Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Devlin, Edlin, Macdonald, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion.

Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 10 votes for Councillor McLean and 6 votes for Councillor Ireland, Councillor McLean was appointed as the Council's substitute representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and SPTA.

## **PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**51.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting on 25 May 2022.

Councillor Wallace pointed out the number of Jubilee celebrations that had taken place over the period and thanked the Provost for her attendance at those events.

The Council noted the report.

## **STRATEGIC END-YEAR COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-22 AND DRAFT ODP 22-23**

**52.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing a summary of Council performance at end-year 2021-22 based on performance indicators in the Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) 2021-24 and seeking approval for the one year Draft ODP 2022-23, which was attached as Annex 3 to the report. An end-year complaints report was also included as Annex 2 to the report.

The Chief Executive, particularly for the benefit of newly elected members, gave an overview of the documents mentioned within the report and described how they linked together.

The report first set out a summary of the ODP 2022-23, which set out the Council's contribution to the partnership outcomes in the Community Plan. The ODP would build on Vision for the Future and conveyed what the Council was doing to contribute to the delivery of agreed Community Planning outcomes.

While the ODP was usually a 3 year rolling plan, updated annually, ODP 2022-23 had been developed as a one year operational plan as a consequence of COVID-19 and to allow for a strategic planning review.

While summarising the structure of the ODP 2022-23, the report indicated that it was a light touch review, taking into account recovery planning and the impact of COVID-19 across the Council and its partners. Although there had been no significant changes, critical activities had been revised and updated accordingly. Targets, which reflected the impact of COVID-19 on many services, had been included for the majority of indicators.

Trend data was included to provide context to the indicators within ODP 2022-23. It was also pointed out that the school attainment and exclusion data referred to the relevant academic year as opposed to the financial year as with other data sets.

Community Planning Partnership performance would be considered in a separate paper on the agenda.

In terms of end-year performance, the report outlined that the Council was performing well across the majority of the ODP indicators, considering the additional services created and resources required to respond to the pandemic, and noted that the pandemic would continue to have an impact on future performance and delivery of services. The Council's focus remained on moving to a renewal phase whilst still responding to the challenges of COVID, aiming toward achieving pre-pandemic levels of service, particularly in areas where services were most impacted.

Councillor Morrison thanked the Chief Executive for the report and referred to statistics provided on the percentage of total complaints of reporting anti-social behaviour which had recurred. He was concerned by a spike in such complaints and asked what strategy the Council had for tackling this. The Director of Business Operations and Partnerships responded that it was being monitored carefully and the spike had been due to COVID restrictions being eased at that time. The figures would be reviewed regularly in partnership with the Police and Community Learning and Development teams and resources would be targeted accordingly.

Councillor Pragnell referred to the gender pay gap and asked what action the Council was taking to address this. In response the Head of HR and Corporate Services explained that the gap had decreased over the past 5 years and it had been targeted by the Council. In particular, contributing factors had been investigated such as occupational segregation. The introduction of flexible family policies in homecare, catering and cleaning had been looked at as well as a process of regrading posts. The Council would continue to monitor and benchmark progress against other local authorities, with a view to eliminating the gap.

Councillor Ireland raised concerns with the drop in library visits over the COVID-19 period and, while visit had recovered to 50% of pre-COVID levels, she asked when it was expected that numbers would return to normal. She further enquired about the Council's Accommodation Strategy review and when it was anticipated that this would be presented to the Council.

Responding to Councillor Ireland on the issue of library visits, the Director of Education explained that the latest meeting of the Leisure and Culture Trust Board had considered a Business Plan which aimed to see recovery take place by the end of 2022.

In relation to the Accommodation Strategy, the Chief Executive explained that the Council was always looking at its property to see if it could be made more efficient. A number of options were being considered and a report was expected to come forward in September. That report would not have any firm recommendations but would provide an update on progress.

Councillor Wallace asked what complaints were made in relation to the embedding of the new Council Tax system and how the Council's level of complaints compared to those of other councils.

The Director of Business Operations and Partnerships responded that the Revenues and Benefits system had been changed in 2020, which had unfortunately taken place when staff and suppliers were working from home. This led to a backlog in Council Tax and benefits cases. A range of actions had been taken to deal with the backlog and the situation was now under control.

The Strategic Services Senior Lead explained that there was a National Complaints Handlers Network, however, only 17 Councils had provided data to it at the time of the meeting. It was hoped that the national figures would be in place in September, which would allow benchmarking to take place.

Councillor Wallace having asked if the Chief Executive could take the issue with benchmarking to the Improvement Service it was noted that that this was not organised by the Improvement Service.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the summary of the Council's performance at end-year 2021-22, attached as Annex 1 to the report, and noted the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on Council services;
- (b) noted the end-year complaints report attached as Annex 2 to the report; and
- (c) approved the one year operational Draft Outcome Delivery Plan 2022-23, attached as Annex 3 to the report.

#### **COMMUNITY PLAN ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-22; FAIRER EAST REN TRANSITION PLANS 2022-23; AND LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT: YEAR 4**

**53.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships presenting the 2021-22 annual progress report on the Community Plan, including Fairer East Ren (Local Outcome Improvement Plan); the proposed 2022-23 transition plans for Fairer East Ren; and the fourth East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Report required under the Child Poverty Scotland Act 2017.

Responding to a question from Councillor O'Donnell on the preparation of a Transport Plan and concerns regarding the lack of measures to monitor progress on accessibility for transport links in the area, the Director of Environment explained that there was commitment to prepare an action plan, prepared in parallel with a Transport Strategy for the Council area. He indicated that not only was there a requirement for both national and regional work to be carried out before those documents could be prepared, but the study of transport issues had been hugely skewed by COVID-19. It would be developed and brought back to Cabinet as soon as possible. In terms of indicators on accessibility, the work on this had been put back as a result of the pandemic and changes in people's transport behaviours. It would be looked at in terms of how quickly it could be developed.

Responding to Councillor O'Donnell's request for a timescale, the Director of Environment indicated that he would expect it to be completed within the next 12 months.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the Community Plan Annual Progress Report for 2021-22, attached as Annex 1 to the report;
- (b) approved the Fairer East Ren transition plans for 2022/2023, attached as Annex 2 to the report; and
- (c) approved the Local Child Poverty Action Report, attached as Annex 3 to the report.

## **SECOND ROUND OF UK LEVELLING UP FUND 2022**

**54.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment on a proposed bid to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (Round 2).

A bid for £20 million was proposed, which had been the subject of a members' briefing held on 23 June 2022.

The report explained what sort of bids the Council was allowed to submit and how many bids could be submitted. The initial bid, if successful, would be focused on Barrhead and Thornliebank.

Councillor O'Donnell made it clear that, as the Council was in Category 2, it was not certain if the bid would be successful. However, he thanked staff for their work on developing the bid and stated that he felt it was ambitious, innovative and inspiring, with links to the industrial past of the areas targeted. The bid would provide an opportunity to transform towns which had been disproportionately affected by industrial decline.

If the bid was successful, the Council would be expected to provide a financial contribution of £2.2 million, taking the full fund to over £22 million.

Artists' impressions of the proposed works to be carried out with the funding were presented.

Councillor Macdonald asked if the whole Council fell within Category 2 or if it was just the areas outlined in the bid. In reply, the Director of Environment confirmed that the categories were applied to the whole Council area. Councillor Macdonald expressed his disappointment with this approach, as it meant that areas in need of investment were possibly adversely affected by being in a Council area with areas of relative affluence. The Director of Environment indicated that this very point had been raised with COSLA, however, the approach had been decided upon by UK civil servants.

Councillor Ireland indicated that she had not received an invitation to the members' briefing on the bid. She asked for further clarification on the £2.2 million contribution and how it would be funded. The Director of Environment explained that given the nature of the bid and timescales, only ward Councillors for the area affected by the bid were invited. In terms of the financial contribution, it would come from the Council's general services capital programme.

Councillor Wallace was then heard on the history of the areas being targeted, particularly Thornliebank, and expressed his delight that they were being considered for this funding. He pointed out that Thornliebank was the entry point to East Renfrewshire for many visitors and

it was only right that investment be made in it. He also pointed out, with reference to Councillor Ireland's question, that while the financial contribution would come from the capital programme, there would be revenue implications going forward following the completion of works. He wished the bid every success and gave it his endorsement.

Councillor Buchanan expressed his pleasure at seeing the paper coming before the Council, as an amalgamation of many projects that had been taking place over a number of years. He did express some disappointment that the funding available was significantly less than it was initially supposed to be, and lower than the EU funding that had previously been available. He also made reference to the point raised by Councillor Macdonald and stated that numerous representations had been made on this point, but had not been taken into account by Westminster civil servants. Notwithstanding those points, he wished the project every success.

Councillor Morrison asked why the bid had been pulled together at such short notice given the length of time available. The Director of Environment responded that the department dealing with the bid was relatively small and had been supported by the City Deal team in putting the bid together. The guidance was extremely complex and onerous and made preparing a £20 million bid an enormous undertaking and had taken a wide range of resources being redirected into the preparation of it, on top of other work priorities.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the key Levelling Up Fund (Round 2) guidance and criteria;
- (b) approved the proposed Levelling Up Fund bid for East Renfrewshire with a focus on Thornliebank and Barrhead;
- (c) approved the required East Renfrewshire Council financial contribution of £2.2 million should the grant application for £20 million be successful;
- (d) noted that the Cabinet would be advised of the outcome of the Round 2 process; and
- (e) noted that further detail on the proposed projects for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) would be provided in due course.

## **NATIONAL CARE SERVICE**

**55.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive on the progress of legislation regarding the setting up of a National Care Service.

The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill had been introduced at the Scottish Parliament on 20 June and published on 21 June. It set out a framework for community health, social care and social work from 2026 onwards. It was expected to take some time to identify the full implications of the bill.

The Bill provided for Scottish Ministers to become accountable for the delivery of adult social care and social work, in addition to their existing accountability for the NHS.

The report went on to provide details of what the bill contained in relation to local care boards, children and families and justice social work services, information sharing and standards, the NCS charter of rights and other reforms.

The implications for the establishment of the National Care Service on East Renfrewshire Council were also detailed in the report.

Councillor Edlin expressed his dismay at the Bill and what he described as the policy of centralisation from the Scottish Government. He felt that the Council's existing services did a fantastic job and he could not see why centralising those services would improve them.

Councillor O'Donnell said that, as a new councillor, it would be helpful for the views expressed by the former Council to be circulated to all Elected Members to get a sense for the feeling of the former Council. In response, the Chief Executive pointed out that the Council's response to the consultation was linked in the supporting documents of the report and could be accessed there. She remarked that COSLA had also made the case strongly.

While there were many aspects of the proposals that could be good and some others that perhaps needed more discussion, ultimately it was for MSPs to make the decision on the National Care Service.

Councillor Buchanan felt the response from the Council had been very strong and was unanimous. It put forward what a National Care Service could do, but emphasised that local government involvement and local delivery was important. An oversight body would be welcome but what was currently done well also needed to be looked at. It was clear that ongoing discussion was necessary.

Councillor Morrison stated that this process echoed the centralisation of Police and Fire services. He agreed with Councillor Buchanan that the process may start off with good intentions but may not end up in a good place. He asked for reassurance that all Elected Members would be fully consulted to ensure their views were taken into account as the matter progressed. In reply the Chief Executive explained it would not be possible to give such an assurance as the continuing development of the proposals was now in the hands of MSPs. It was noted that the Scottish Government had committed to a co-design process with people with lived experience and the Chief Officer Health and Social Care Partnership gave some further details on that process and indicated that more consultation with Council officers would follow as part of that process.

The Council noted:-

- (a) the announcement of the start of the legislative process for a National Care Service;
- (b) that the National Care Service would have implications for East Renfrewshire Council; and
- (c) that further reports would be brought to the Council as more information became available.

## **ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES - CHIEF OFFICER**

**56.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, noting the retirement of the Director of Environment from 1 November 2022 and the recruitment process that would take place as a result. Furthermore, the report proposed a change to Head of Service remits within the Business Operations and Partnerships Department and Health and Social Care Partnership.

Councillor O'Donnell detailed the process proposed in the report, which would see Elected Members participate in a recruitment process to appoint the new Director of Environment but

delegate the appointment of Heads of Service to the Chief Executive and officers. He indicated that it was now felt that this was not appropriate and it was preferred to continue with the existing process with Elected Member involvement in the recruitment process for both Director and Head of Service level appointments. For that reason, appointment committees would be required for each role being recruited for.

With that being the case, Councillor O'Donnell asked that members of the Appointments Committee members agree to ensure that timetables were met and processes were as efficient as possible. Following the process, it was proposed to hold a review of how well the process had gone and seek possible improvements.

In terms of the composition of the Appointments Committee, Councillor O'Donnell proposed that there would be 3 representatives on the committee for the appointment of Director of Environment from the Labour Group, namely, Provost Montague as well as Councillors O'Donnell and Devlin, with one representative from each of the SNP and Conservative Groups.

The composition of the committee for the positions of Head of Communities and Transformation would be the same as described above. In terms of the Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice, which only had a panel of 3 Elected Members, Councillor Pragnell would sit on the committee with the addition of one member from each of the Conservative and SNP Groups. It was noted that the remaining 2 positions on this committee would be taken up by 2 of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde representatives on the Integration Joint Board.

Councillor Wallace was pleased that Elected Members would continue to be involved in the recruitment of Heads of Service and asked if substitute members would be permitted, it being confirmed that this would be the case. Specific substitutes for specific members would not be required, rather a pool of substitutes would be appointed.

Councillor Buchanan expressed his support for the proposed process, as described with the inclusion of substitutes.

Councillor Macdonald questioned composition of the committees and the lack of an independent councillor.

The Democratic Services Manager asked that the Conservative and SNP Groups nominate their representatives in due course to enable the Appointments Committee to be established as soon as possible.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the retirement of the Director of Environment with effect from 1 November 2022;
- (b) approved the revised Head of Service remits within the Business Operations and Partnerships Department and Health and Social Care Partnership;
- (c) noted that the Head of Service recruitment would not be delegated to officers and would remain in control of the elected members;
- (d) approved the recruitment procedure as detailed for the Director of Environment, Head of Communities and Transformation and Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice;



- (e) authorised the Chief Executive to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Environment Department if required; and
- (f) that nominations for the Appointments Committees would be submitted to the Democratic Services Manager in due course.

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

**57.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive on the response, recovery and renewal work taking place across the Council and the Culture and Leisure Trust since the previous update in December 2021.

The Chief Executive outlined the details within the report and gave a department by department update in terms of the current situation in relation to COVID-19 work. She stated that there had been a great improvement since lockdown restrictions had eased and joined Provost Montague in thanking all staff for their hard work during a difficult period. She stressed the importance of staff taking time to relax and enjoy their holidays.

Councillor Edlin added his thanks to those of Provost Montague and the Chief Executive. He remarked on the helpfulness of staff to him as a new Councillor. He felt it would be helpful if masks continued to be compulsory in terms of face to face meetings for those attending. While he agreed that face to face meetings would be his preference, the proviso of mask wearing would help in preventing any spread of COVID. The Chief Executive replied that the Council was following all relevant Scottish Government guidance on mask wearing and the guidance was different for different Council services. Current guidance was to wear a mask when moving around the building but not necessary when seated. Schools had a different set of guidelines. She further remarked upon the gradual return of face to face meetings, while recognising there were still some challenges as there were still members of staff who had COVID, which made the option of hybrid meetings more efficient for the moment. Safety would remain the first priority when making decisions in this regard.

Councillor Buchanan added his thanks to those already given to staff. He stated that they had put themselves at risk to deliver for East Renfrewshire residents and he had lost count of the number of times he has had cause to thank them. He described the range of work that was required in order to deliver services during the pandemic and stated that it had been a fantastic piece of work and those involved could never be thanked enough for their efforts.

Provost Montague asked that the Chief Executive relay the thanks of the full Council to staff on their behalf.

Councillor Bamforth expressed her thanks to staff in the Health and Social Care Partnership for all the work they had done and were still doing in terms of COVID. While she welcomed a return to face to face meetings, she also expressed a note of caution where there were people who were clinically vulnerable and so would need to continue to meet using the online facility, stressing the need for hybrid meetings to support them. Provost Montague thanked Councillor Bamforth for her work as previous chair of the Integration Joint Board and also the Democratic Services Manager and his team for enabling the governance of the Council to continue.

## **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023**

**58.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships on the 2023 meetings calendar.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the 2023 meetings calendar; and
- (b) noted the draft dates of meetings of the Integrated Joint Board.

#### **KIRKING OF THE COUNCIL**

**59.** The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships on proposals for the Kirking of the Council Service.

The Council:-

- (a) agreed that the service be held in St Andrew's Parish Church on 4 September 2022; and
- (b) delegated authority to the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships to make the appropriate arrangements.

PROVOST