

MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 26 October 2022.

Present:

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

Provost Montague in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance.

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); Anthony McReavy, Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Leisure and Culture Trust (*); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Raymond Prior, Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Linda Hutchison, Senior Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

Also attending:

John Boyd and Louisa Yule, Audit Scotland.

Introductory Remarks

Provost Montague congratulated Councillor Macdonald on winning the Community Champion 2022 Award at the recent Local Government Information Unit Awards.

Referring to the forthcoming retirement of the Director of Environment, Provost Montague referred to the high regard in which he was held, thanking him for his contribution to the Council's work over many years. She confirmed there would be a further opportunity for Elected Members to make their own remarks to him following the meeting.

Variation in Order of Business

In accordance with the terms of Standing Order 20, and with a view to making the most effective use of officers' time, Provost Montague agreed to vary the order of business in order to facilitate the conduct of the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

184. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COUNCIL – 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

185. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 7 September 2022, subject to the following amendment:-

Page 159, Item 116, Paragraph 7 – that the words “Democratic Services Team” be replaced with the words “Administration Group”.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

186. The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted, except as otherwise referred to in Item 187 below:-

- (a) Licensing Committee – 13 September 2022;
- (b) Planning Applications Committee – 14 September 2022;
- (c) Local Review Body – 14 September 2022;
- (d) Cabinet – 15 September 2022;
- (e) Appointments Committee – 15 September 2022;
- (f) Planning Applications Committee – 20 September 2022;
- (g) Appointments Committee – 21 September 2022;
- (h) Cabinet (Police and Fire) – 22 September 2022;
- (i) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 29 September 2022;
- (j) Teaching Staff Appeals Committee – 30 September 2022;
- (k) Education Committee – 6 October 2022;
- (l) Licensing Committee – 11 October 2022;
- (m) Teaching Staff Appeals Committee – 11 October 2022;
- (n) Appointments Committee – 12 October 2022;
- (o) Cabinet – 13 October 2022; and
- (p) Appointments Committee – 13 October 2022.

CABINET – 13 OCTOBER 2022 – PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23

187. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 13 October 2022 (Page 235, Item 178 refers), when it had been agreed to approve schemes for the 2022-23 Place Based Investment Programme, Councillor Wallace suggested that important comments made had not been reflected in the Minute. Having referred to those made on there being insufficient

time to consider alternative proposals to those put forward for Cowan Park, regarding the £100k approved for the Bandstand refurbishment, he expressed concern that the Convener responsible for the proposal, who had local knowledge of the area, had indicated not only that he had just been made aware of it a few days prior the Cabinet meeting, but also that he considered there to be better ways to use the funds in the park.

Whilst acknowledging time constraints faced, Councillor Wallace stated that the funds available had been known since November 2021, as reflected in a Cabinet report at that time, which had recognised related challenges and outlined the approach to be taken. He suggested that neither the time available to develop the proposals nor the Convener's comments had been adequately recorded.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded Members that Minutes were not a verbatim record of proceedings and that a recording of the meeting which would show the full discussion that had taken place was available to view on the Council's YouTube Channel. Notwithstanding, Councillor Wallace's comments as outlined above would be reflected in the Minute of this meeting.

STATEMENTS BY CONVENER/REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

188. The following statements were made:-

(a) Councillor Pragnell – Convener for Social Work and Health

Councillor Pragnell reported that at the Integration Joint Board (IJB) meeting on 21 September various annual reports had been presented, including on performance, clinical and care governance, and the Chief Social Work Officer's report. These had highlighted continuing challenges faced due to the pandemic and wider economic issues faced. There was increased demand for health and social care services, and particular pressures on older adults and children's services. Despite this, support had continued to be provided to the most vulnerable residents, with services performing well against many outcome focused performance indicators. Across the reports, numerous examples of success had been provided which the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) would continue to build on.

As part of the IJB's financial reporting, cost pressures from demand and inflation had been recognised in mitigation to which a moratorium on non-essential expenditure was in place. Councillor Pragnell confirmed that an update had also been provided on the recovery and renewal programme, detailing activities planned over the coming months, which would help with the financial challenges faced and the future design of services.

The Chief Financial Officer had presented the charging for services report, also to be presented to Cabinet in November. The IJB had recognised that, whilst the annual inflationary uplift was significantly higher than usual, this reflected the current, unprecedented times. The IJB had agreed, given the financial landscape and likely future changes to charging associated with the National Care Service, that it was inappropriate to implement the individual contributions element for non-residential care, as potential income generated would be outweighed by the resource required to implement the change, and there would be a significant impact on individuals at present.

She was delighted to confirm that Raymond Prior had been appointed Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice (Chief Social Work Officer), who, having been a senior manager within the service, brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role.

(b) Councillor O'Donnell – Leader

Councillor O'Donnell reported that the next phase of budget engagement with residents and staff would commence shortly, explaining that like other public bodies the Council faced extreme funding pressures. He referred to the long-term and structured approach to be taken to these, whilst doing everything possible to protect services for as long as possible.

Having referred to the uncertainties linked to the cost of living crisis, high interest rates and energy costs, the war in Ukraine, and the long term impact of COVID-19, he expressed the view that investment in public services was needed for communities, not cuts. However, based on analysis, a budget gap needed to be addressed of approximately £30m in core services, £18m in the HSCP, and £1.5m in the Culture and Leisure Trust. He explained that councils expected to receive a flat cash settlement from the Scottish Government for the next three years when inflation was running at 10%, arguing that the Scottish Government had made consistent choices over the past 15 years to underfund local authorities, resulting in them facing severe cuts to local service delivery. It was of no comfort that East Renfrewshire was not the only council facing this scale of cuts, and all councils were united through COSLA to lobby the Scottish Government to revisit its spending priorities.

Councillor O'Donnell stressed that the current position was not the fault of the Council or previous Administrations, East Renfrewshire having consistently been one of the best managed and performing councils in Scotland, as evidenced in benchmarking results.

He confirmed that a cross-party group had been working with officers to understand the extremely challenging options available to address the funding gap. Having acknowledged that no members of the group wanted to consider any such options, he highlighted the legal obligation the Council had to balance its budget. Councillor O'Donnell thanked Opposition councillors for engaging in the discussions in relation to budget preparations, commenting on the importance of residents seeing constructive cooperation between Elected Members in these difficult times. He also thanked them for joining the cross-party group to consider options to deliver on the recent COVID and cost of living crisis plan, adding that he was sure residents appreciated a united front on these issues.

Whilst commenting further on the forthcoming engagement with residents and staff on the budget options on core council services, Councillor O'Donnell explained that the £40m of options identified significantly exceeded the £30m required, none were easy, and many involved cutting services and the scale of the workforce. Given the hard work and commitment of officers during COVID, these were considered particularly difficult to contemplate.

Having acknowledged that the cost of living crisis was already worrying lower paid officers, Councillor O'Donnell emphasised the wish to do everything in the Council's power to minimise service cuts and job losses. Whilst having to plan for the worst, he sincerely hoped the situation would improve.

APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT MEMBER ON EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST BOARD

189. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, seeking the appointment of a replacement representative on the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board, following the resignation of Councillor Pragnell.

The Council approved the appointment of Councillor Anderson as the replacement representative on the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

190. 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 7 September 2022.

The Council, having noted that Provost Montague had also attended the East Renfrewshire Girl Guides Annual Review on 2 October in Newton Mearns, noted the report.

2021-22 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT (INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ON AUDITING 260) REPORT

191. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee held earlier that day (Page 241, Item 182 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explaining that the audit of the amalgamated 2021-22 Annual Accounts for the seven charitable trusts for which the Council acted as Trustee had been completed, and that a copy was now submitted for consideration. In addition, the External Auditor's report in respect of the Trusts, in compliance with the International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260, was also submitted for consideration.

The Council, having heard Councillor Morrison, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, comment on the Accounts which had been awarded a clean audit certificate, and confirm there were no material issues that needed to be highlighted, approved the 2021-22 Annual Accounts for the Trusts and the associated External Auditor's report.

2021-22 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

192. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held earlier that day (Page 242, Item 183 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) regarding the Annual Accounts for 2021-22, the associated draft Annual Audit Report prepared by the External Auditor, and a further report by the External Auditor on matters arising from the audit of the Council's financial statements for 2021-22 reported under ISA 260 requirements. The draft Audit report provided an overview of the main issues arising from the 2021-22 audit.

The Council had received an audit certificate which was unqualified. It had operated within budget, with Directors having again taken action to avoid non-essential expenditure during 2021-22 to provide more flexibility to address the significant financial difficulties to be faced in coming years. It had not required to draw down £3,750k from reserves as planned, but rather made a contribution of £102k to the Council's Non-Earmarked General Fund reserve, resulting in a balance of £11,772k as at 31 March 2022, representing an improvement of £3,852k. This

equated to 4.4% of the annual budgeted net revenue expenditure, which was slightly above the Council's most prudent target of 4%. However, £5,253k of this had already been committed in balancing the 2022-23 budget.

The Council's General Fund reserve balances as at 31 March 2022 totalled £46,189k. This was a decrease of £1,075k from the previous year, and was mainly due to the utilisation of the Modernisation Fund and a decrease in unspent grants.

Significant COVID-19 related spend of £14,474k had been incurred, of which £6,390k was funded from the reserve set up at the end of 2020/21. Further funding had been received during the year allowing additional contributions to be made to the COVID reserve, resulting in a year-end balance of £14,085k, representing an in year increase of £1,270k

Capital expenditure of £35,901k had been invested. In addition, there had been an operating deficit of £354k on the Housing Revenue Account, thus decreasing the accumulated surpluses carried forward to that account to 1,867k.

Councillor Morrison highlighted that an unqualified audit certificate had been awarded; and that expenditure had been within budget with action taken to avoid non-essential expenditure towards the end of the year to provide additional flexibility to address anticipated budgetary challenges in 2022/23 and beyond. He reported that the balance on the non-earmarked General Fund, which was 4.4% of annual budgeted net revenue expenditure, was expected to fall back to approximately 2.4% by 31 March 2023 as a result of the Council's 2022/23 budget decisions. He confirmed that the outcome of the audit had been largely positive with, as always, various audit findings and related actions itemised in the Annual Audit Report.

He thanked the Audit Scotland team for their work and advice over the past six years, and looked forward to working with the new team from Ernst & Young. Having commented that the Accounts covered a period impacted by COVID measures, he commended both council officers and the auditors for their hard work meeting the 31 October deadline for the Accounts.

Regarding the financial plan for 2022/23 which indicated a budgetary shortfall of £9.5m for that year, Councillor Ireland asked if the position on voluntary early retirement and redundancies, which had been important to the previous Administration, would be continued. She also commented that, contrary to what Councillor O'Donnell had stated earlier, there was no cross party budget group, that Scottish National Party (SNP) Elected Members had been attending budget discussions in a listening capacity, and that she expected the 2022-23 budget to be proposed by Labour and Conservative councillors.

Councillor O'Donnell having clarified the reference to cross party working, reported that endeavours would be made to make any redundancies voluntary and minimal, adding that statements on this issue by previous Administrations had been for one year at a time after the conclusion of the budget process. He confirmed the intention to make a statement on this issue in March 2023 when the budget was being set, taking account of the budgetary position at that time, stating that no guarantee could be provided in view of the savings required, and suggesting that any party may struggle to give a commitment on this in light of the legal obligations on the Council to set a balanced budget.

Councillor Wallace questioned Councillor Ireland's comment on a Labour and Conservative budget, adding that the Leader's comment on a united front had been short lived. Councillor Macdonald, who referred to redundancies as a last resort and stated that decisions on cutting livelihoods were not taken lightly, asked if redundancies would be considered at all levels within the organisation, which he considered important.

Councillor Buchanan welcomed that the audit certificate on the Accounts was unqualified, thanking the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Chief Accountant for this achievement, and all officers for their hard work ensuring good services were delivered

appropriately within budget. He stated he had been surprised by the Leader's statement on agreements on cross party working, which did not reflect his understanding of the current position, adding that funding issues would not be able to be clarified until after the Scottish Government settlement was received from the UK Government.

In response to both Councillor Macdonald and Councillor Buchanan, Provost Montague stated that discussions on such issues were for a future when the next budget was discussed. Councillor Morrison highlighted that, as Vice-Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Buchanan had had ample opportunity to raise questions on this item at its meeting earlier, suggesting that the time allocated to the item at the Council meeting should be for those who were not members of the committee.

The Council, having heard the Provost thank Louisa Yule and John Boyd from Audit Scotland for their work, and officers across the Council for their contribution to the outcome on the Accounts, agreed to:-

- (a) approve the Council's Annual Accounts for 2021-22; and
- (b) note the draft Annual Audit Report to the Council and Controller of Audit 2021-22 and the External Auditor's report on matters arising from the audit of the Council's 2021-22 Financial Statements prepared under requirements of ISA 260.

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

193. The Council considered a report by the Interim Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO), providing details of his Annual Report for 2021/22, and seeking approval of the report for submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government.

The Annual Report, a copy which was appended to the report, provided an overview of professional social work activity within East Renfrewshire in 2021-22 through the delivery of statutory functions and responsibilities held by the CSWO. There continued to be significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care. It was explained that the landscape for all health and social care services would change over the coming years as a consequence of COVID-19, and that statutory social work and social care would require to adapt to ensure rising demand and renewal associated with protecting and caring for the most vulnerable citizens. A commitment existed to enabling and supporting vulnerable individuals to make positive, sustainable changes to their lives to achieve the best outcomes for them, their families and communities.

Provost Montague confirmed that the report had been prepared by the new CSWO before he had been formally appointed to that role, congratulating him on his appointment.

The CSWO thanked those working in the service and partners for their hard work and dedication to delivering services in such challenging times. He referred to the robust public protection arrangements in place for child protection, initial referral discussions undertaken jointly with police, health and education, and the joint social work/police Scottish child interview model which had received a strong evaluation from the Crown Office, also confirming that East Renfrewshire was a gold standard champion in domestic abuse training via the safe and together model of practice. Other issues referred to included, an increase in adult support and protection awareness raising and associated training; support for the launch of adults with incapacity procedures and related training; and East Renfrewshire's robust Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

Regarding the report on the Care Inspectorate Joint Inspection of Children and Young People at Risk of Harm, East Renfrewshire had been proud to receive a sector leading excellent grading, with no improvement recommendations highlighted. That report recognised the need to continue to implement these excellent standards on which work would continue with adult services. Challenges and new areas of increased demand requiring cross departmental collaboration were referred to.

Having highlighted statutory duties and responsibilities in managing risk and protecting residents under the auspices of child protection, adult protection, MAPPA or violence against women and girls, the CSWO explained that since the start of the pandemic child assessments had increased, requiring further intervention. There had also been increases in mandated responsibility to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children, in domestic abuse concerns, related demand for refuge accommodation, and private guardianship orders to be supervised. Reference was made to challenges delivering services in the current financial climate and during the cost of living crisis, related hardship for children, families, adults and the elderly population, and related implications for referrals to protection services.

Councillor Bamforth, supported by Councillor Pragnell, congratulated the CSWO on his appointment, highlighting that a lot of the work referred to in the report had been led by him.

Councillor Campbell expressed concern about the 30% increase in the number of children on the Child Protection register and large increase in peer on peer sexually harmful behaviour and sexual abuse identified, seeking clarification on the reasons for this and how such issues were being addressed. The CSWO confirmed that East Renfrewshire was not alone in witnessing increased child protection referrals during the pandemic, and that social work officers and others were doing their utmost to support children and families, an added difficulty having been that other services had not functioned fully. Peer on peer sexual behaviours were a concern, with support provided to children who displayed such behaviours, including through close partnership working. Other issues commented on included the Healthier Minds team, that child protection or perpetrator issues were dealt with appropriately depending on the degree of risk, and the tracking of data and actions taken to address concerns.

Councillor Buchanan thanked the new CSWO and his predecessor Kate Rocks for the report which highlighted hard work, including on sector leading child care services, welcoming the content despite some issues it raised. He highlighted that, from this strong position, the service needed to continue the good work undertaken to date. He added that hardships and related difficulties would continue whilst austerity measures remained, that the UK Government was not providing appropriate funds to tackle such issues, and that the Scottish Government was providing some additional resources for services which he anticipated would continue.

Councillor Wallace welcomed that an SNP education questionnaire that was to have been sent to parents and pupils in 2021 and which he considered indicative of the normalising of certain behaviours, had not been issued.

The Council, having heard Provost Montague thank all officers involved in this area of work, approved the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

NATIONAL CARE SERVICE BILL - SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

194. The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive requesting that the submission of the Council's response to the Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's consultation on the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill, be homologated. A copy of the response was appended to the report.

It was clarified that the Scottish Government had introduced the Bill on 20 June 2022, that related consultation began on 8 July 2022 and closed on 2 September 2022, but that the Council had been granted an extension by the Scottish Parliamentary Committee until 9 September 2022 to allow Elected Member engagement to be concluded as the window for the consultation was very tight for various reasons, including the local elections in May.

The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill was enabling legislation that would allow Scottish Ministers to bring forward various components required to establish a National Care Service in phases. The Council's response had set out its opposition to this approach; highlighted the success of East Renfrewshire's current integration arrangements; and local concerns around the National Care Service, as proposed, eroding local democratic accountability. It had made clear that the fundamental challenges faced were not structural but rooted in underfunding of public services and social care as a whole. The way in which Elected Members had been given the opportunity to comment on and shape the response was summarised.

Councillor O'Donnell thanked the Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager for collating the views expressed, referring to unanimous, cross party opposition to the Bill locally and how the work done on the response was a good example of how Elected Members could cooperate on proposals all opposed. Councillor Wallace and Councillor Buchanan concurred that an exceptional job had been done collating the response and on related communication with Members, commending the wide and inclusive approach taken to produce a very comprehensive response which reflected the views of all Elected Members.

The Council agreed to homologate the response submitted, on behalf of the Council, to the Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's consultation on the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S LEARNING ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (LEIP)

195. The Council considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval to make a submission or submissions to the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP).

Having outlined background information, the report explained that the LEIP was an opportunity to bid for capital funds to improve the Council's school estate on the basis of school condition, increasing the number of children educated in highly evaluated school buildings in terms of condition and suitability. The Council had 4 educational establishments regarded to be in a poor (C status) condition, either fully in the case of Carolside and Cross Arthurlie Primary Schools, or partly in the case of Woodfarm and Mearns Castle High Schools, their condition having been highlighted in the Council's Capital Investment Strategy as the properties in most need of refurbishment or replacement.

Having outlined options, it was proposed that a bid for LEIP funding for the development of schools at the locations of both Carolside and Cross Arthurlie Primary Schools (Option 4) be submitted by the required deadline of 31 October as part of Phase 3 of the LEIP, this being the last phase of that programme. The bid required political and financial support from the local authority, and the main priority bid required to be determined as required by the Scottish Futures Trust. Details of the bids were appended to the report.

It was anticipated that it would be some time before additional funding became available to support local authorities improve their school estate. The position on a range of other financial issues, consultation undertaken and related partnership working on the proposed submissions was summarised. Should the bids be successful, further consultation would take place with the local community and service users. The proposals were considered to be an excellent

opportunity to improve learning provision at the schools concerned by accessing up to 50% of the capital costs, and to support the Council's objective of becoming net carbon zero by 2040.

Of the options listed, Councillor Anderson was heard in support of Option 4, which was to submit a bid for the development of a new school at both locations with a priority bid being submitted for Carolside Primary School, following which Councillor Ireland supported the same option, commending the Head Teacher and staff at Carolside Primary School for their tireless work, and emphasising that the school was in urgent need of a major new build replacement. She welcomed the discussion around wider community use of the facility. Whilst supporting the prioritisation of the Carolside Primary School bid, she hoped both bids would be successful. Councillor Campbell commented in the same terms.

Councillor Ireland also welcomed the positive results of the pilot traffic reduction project at Giffnock Primary School, which limited times vehicles could access streets adjacent to the school to reduce vehicle emissions and increase the number of children using active travel measures, and asked if this could be incorporated into the Carolside Primary School proposals, expressing support for introducing the approach at further primary schools. She welcomed the extensive exercise planned at the design stage of the school, if the bid succeeded, to gain a thorough understanding of the specific requirements of all users, and looked forward to encouraging as many people as possible to get involved in that consultation.

Councillor Merrick also thanked the Education Department for their work, and supported the comments made on prioritisation. Regarding the successful pilot traffic project, he commented on interest in rolling out such schemes which proved their worth. He considered the partnership working between departments and with external partners to develop and deliver the project a good example of what was achievable through such an approach.

Councillor O'Donnell thanked the Education Department for the huge amount of work undertaken thus far, referring to the proposals as exciting opportunities for local communities, if the bids were successful. He supported Carolside Primary School being the top priority, as it was in the worst condition. Councillor Wallace regarded education as the most important thing provided as a society and although he also considered Carolside Primary School to be the top priority, he stressed he would be delighted if both bids were successful.

Councillor Pragnell highlighted the importance of ensuring the needs of those with disabilities were addressed. Referring to a tour of schools some Members had undertaken, Provost Montague commented that they had been impressed with the provision made on such issues.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the key Learning Estate Improvement Programme guidance and criteria;
- (b) that a bid for Learning Estate Improvement Programme funding for the development of a school at the locations of both Carolside and Cross Arthurlie Primary Schools (Option 4) be submitted, with top priority afforded to the Carolside Primary School bid; and
- (c) to note that the Cabinet would be advised of the outcome of the bid.

MANAGEMENT RULES – EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST

196. The Council considered a report by the Director of Education seeking permission to advertise proposed Management Rules to regulate the use of, and conduct of persons while using, any council property operated under licence by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure

(ERCL), and to consult with, and seek the views of, members of the public in East Renfrewshire as required by legislation. A copy of the proposals was appended to the report.

Having summarised related legislative requirements regarding the introduction of the Management Rules under the terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) 1982, the report clarified that they would replace those in place previously which had expired. It was proposed, in the absence of objections, to introduce the Management Rules without submitting a further report to the Council. Given continued pressure on budgets and expenditure, the Management Rules were considered critical to ensuring sites operated in a proper manner, mitigating the possible risk of vandalism, damage or behaviours that could impact negatively on staff, customers and residents.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Chief Executive of the ERCL Trust confirmed that the previous Management Rules in place for 10 years had expired prior to the COVID-19 lockdown. Those proposed were almost entirely the same as before but had been harmonised across all facilities, now took account of the co-location of some services, and had been slightly updated.

Councillor Wallace referred to the extensive powers invested in the authorised officer, seeking clarification if individuals or groups could appeal a decision made. It was confirmed that there was provision for appeals, that individuals were very rarely excluded and then only for situations such as for violent behaviour, and that exclusions were normally time limited. It was also confirmed Paragraph 19 of the proposed Management Rules set out the means of challenging an Exclusion Order.

The Council:-

- (a) agreed by virtue of the powers conferred on it by the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, that the Council introduce Management Rules for East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Premises as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- (b) agreed that the Council's proposals to make the Management Rules be advertised in accordance with the provisions in the said Act;
- (c) agreed that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Education to proceed to make said Management Rules, subject to no objections being received; and
- (d) noted that if objections were received, a further report detailing the objections would be submitted to the Council to provide an opportunity for it to consider these and allow any objector the opportunity to be heard by the Council before authority was given to make the Management Rules.

DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING

197. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking approval to homologate the decision taken to approve a public holiday on 19 September 2022 to mark a Day of National Mourning following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

The Council agreed to homologate the decision to treat Monday, 19 September 2022 as a public holiday for employees to mark a Day of National Mourning for HM Queen Elizabeth II's State Funeral.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

198. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships regarding proposed arrangements for the re-establishment of the East Renfrewshire Local Licensing Forum, including the reappointment of former members and proposals for the filling of any subsequent vacancies.

Having explained that the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced a requirement for each local authority to establish such a forum, the report itemised their general functions as set out in the legislation, and limitations to the extent to which such bodies could keep under review the operation of the 2005 Act in their area, give related advice and make recommendations.

The report explained that when the forum was established there had to be no fewer than 5 and no more than 20 members, the maximum number having increased to 21 since then. Having outlined the composition of the membership of the local forum comprising 18 members, the report clarified it had been well attended initially, but summarised difficulties experienced latterly in terms of dwindling interest and filling vacancies, especially licence holders and young people vacancies. The position had been exacerbated by COVID-19 and related issues as a result of which it had not met for some time.

The report quantified the number of current vacancies for local residents, young people and premises/personal licence holders, referred to intended dialogue with the Communications Team on encouraging individuals to apply for membership, and the effort to be made to ensure all geographical areas of East Renfrewshire were represented. The position on existing members and their willingness to continue, as far as it was known at present, and related proposals were referred to. Liaison would take place with the Director of Education and the Chief Officer of the IJB regarding the nomination of officers to represent education, health and social work interests on the forum.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Democratic Services Manager confirmed the intention to work with the Communications Team to advertise the vacancies and seek expressions of interest to serve on the forum. Approval of applicants was a matter for the full Council, so there would be a further opportunity to consider specific appointments.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the proposals for the re-establishment of the East Renfrewshire Local Licensing Forum, including the reappointment of former members;
- (b) agreed to the continued membership of Caroline Church and Onker Singh and the potential continued membership of Helena Shanks and Thomas Henderson;
- (c) noted the proposals for filling any vacancies; and
- (d) noted that, following the completion of the recruitment exercise, arrangements would be made for the Forum to meet.

NETHERLEE AND STAMPERLAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL – REQUEST FOR AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

199. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnership regarding a request from Netherlee and Stamperland Community Council to make amendments to the community council's constitution.

In June 2015 the Council had approved the new East Renfrewshire Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils. The Model Constitution and Model Standing Orders were also approved at that time and subsequently adopted by the new community councils, including Netherlee and Stamperland Community Council following its establishment in 2021.

Although the Scheme of Establishment could not be altered without full public consultation, community councils could request that the Council amend their Model Constitution and Standing Orders, subject to any proposed alterations not contradicting, prejudicing or undermining the terms and objectives contained within the Scheme, or negatively impacting on the transparency and accountability of the community council. The report specified the alterations Netherlee and Stamperland Community Council had requested to their Constitution, specifically the insertion of an additional Clause 13A and sub-clauses 13A.1 to 13A.4, on principles, behaviour and procedures for breaches, details of which were provided.

The addition of sub-clauses 13A.1 and 13A.2 on upholding principles of non-discrimination, equality and fairness; and displaying zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, discrimination or threatening or intimidating behaviour by members of the community council were both considered compatible with the Code and could be included in the Constitution if the Council choose to do so. Clause 12 of the Scheme of Establishment contained specific provisions on the conduct of community councillors, how complaints should be dealt with, and the sanctions that could be imposed. Therefore the requested addition of sub-clauses 13A.3 and 13A.4 relating to a member's membership being terminated with immediate effect following a majority vote in favour of this from the Community Council, and a related appeal process, were not compatible with the provisions in the Scheme.

The Council had already granted delegated powers to officers to deal with any future requests from community councils for alterations to their Constitution, as long as the requested change was the same as one already approved by the Council. Taking account that changes proposed that contradicted provisions within the current Scheme of Establishment could not be considered or approved, with a view to removing the need for requests of such a nature to be presented to Elected Members, it was proposed that delegated powers be granted to the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and the Head of HR & Corporate Services to refuse requests where the proposed amendment contradicted, prejudiced or undermined the terms and objectives within the Scheme of Establishment.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that following publication of the report, the Chair of the community council had made contact to clarify the situation in relation to the background to their request for amendments to the community council constitution.

Councillor Ireland requested further clarification on why proposed sub-clauses 13A.3 and 13A.4 were directly contrary to Section 12 of the Scheme of Establishment, expressing concern that the options open to community councils were limited, especially given the seriousness of the clauses recommended for approval. She asked what options were open to the community council if sub-clauses 13A.3 and 13A.4 could not be approved and a member was acting in a way that was contrary to sub-clauses 13A.1 and 13A.2. She was not fully clear why all 4 sub-clauses could not be approved, referring to Schemes of Establishment in place elsewhere which seemed to provide further latitude to community councils to take further action than was possible locally. She questioned whether or not the Council's Scheme of Establishment, last reviewed in 2015, remained fit for purpose in light of the proposals the Council was being asked to consider, asking when it would an option to amend it which she felt appropriate given the serious issues under consideration.

Councillor Ireland also asked how many complaints had been received by the Council since 2015, and how many Conduct Review Panels had been convened, emphasising why she favoured the requested changes being approved in full. She felt uncomfortable approving the proposed amendments to the delegated powers.

The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the basis for anything community councils did was the Scheme of Establishment, with there being prescribed and protracted legislative procedures to be followed to change it which he outlined. Whilst there was little to disagree on in terms of 13A.1 and 13A.2 allowing them to be approved should the Council wish to, the other two sub-clauses effectively concerned the introduction of additional sanctions for dealing with complaints about community councillors, when a complaints procedure was already in place as were proposed sanctions and a means to appeal them. It was not currently permissible to make those changes without changing the Scheme. He undertook to check and provide the additional statistics requested following the meeting.

Councillor McLean referred to his involvement with community councils in 2014/15 when the new Scheme of Establishment was implemented, previous community councils had been dissolved, and few people had signed up to become involved in the new ones. He asked if any of the proposed amendments, if approved, would impact on other community councils or if that would require full consultation on the Scheme of Establishment. He expressed concern regarding proposed sub-clause 13A.3, as it would allow the community council to exclude an individual by virtue of a single vote. He had been involved in one review panel.

The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that individual community councils could request an amendment to their Constitution alone, and confirmed that the delegated powers introduced before concerned approval of changes similar to ones already approved, in the interests of making the most effective use of everyone's time. In response to the related point raised by Councillor Ireland, he stated that the proposed change to delegated powers referred to at (c) in the report also concerned efficient use of time, as there was little point taking up time at Council meetings to report requests that could not be approved, this being the only circumstance to which the delegation would apply.

Regarding the proposed amendments at 13A.1 and 13A.2, Councillor Macdonald referred to the need for swift action against such behaviours which he did not feel the Scheme of Establishment permitted in a meaningful way. Regarding a current issue, he referred to the option to set up a review panel as permitted by the Scheme, which had been refused despite the issue concerning threatening and bullying behaviour. He argued that if 13A.1 and 13A.2 were permissible to add to the Constitution, appropriate sanctions to allow a zero tolerance approach to be upheld were also required. He did not support the proposed delegation which would allow an officer to refuse a request without full justification, which he did not feel was in the public interest and to be a closed door approach. He also did not favour a power resting with one officer to decide the outcome of a complaint, considering this unfair to the complainant and person against whom a complaint was made. Councillor Macdonald expressed the view that a serious current matter on dealing with bullying and harassment was not being dealt with effectively, on which basis he did not support the recommendations in their current format. Finally he sought clarification if removal of community council members, other than through the complaints procedure, was expressly forbidden by the Scheme of Establishment and if it was stated anywhere, and if so where, that the only way a member could be removed was through the complaints procedure.

The Democratic Services Manager stated it was incorrect that the Council had refused to convene a conduct review panel on an issue raised, clarifying that the way forward on the complaint was being considered at present which had led to a delay in the matter being progressed. A response to the complainant and community council concerned would be provided. Regarding sanctions, he clarified that the Scheme set out what could and could not

be imposed, those sanctions being the only ones available at present and there being a need to adhere to the current Scheme. Whether it remained fit for purpose was a different issue.

Concerning dealing with fellow community councillors, Councillor Wallace's view was that the current Scheme and generic terminology within it and adherence to that was sufficient, expressing the view that changes on this issue for one community council should apply to them all. The Democratic Services Manager reiterated that consideration of two of the proposals was not possible.

Councillor Merrick referred to representations he had received from a community council to the effect that some procedures set out in the Scheme of Establishment were inadequate and out of date, as they failed to protect community councillors from bullying and harassment and intimidation whilst allowing previous and current members to continue to act in such a way. He felt the issue on delegated powers specified at (c) in the report undermined the Council's policy on equality and fairness for all and negated due diligence.

Councillor Morrison was an advocate of community councils which he considered played a vital role, suggesting that close attention should be paid to legitimate concerns raised, and supporting the view that the Scheme of Establishment did not meet requirements. He requested that, in future, community councils be consulted when the Scheme of Establishment was reviewed to help ensure it met their needs and there was buy-in to a Scheme considered fit for purpose. The Democratic Services Manager confirmed there was a statutory requirement to consult community councils, and the public more widely, whenever the Scheme was reviewed.

Following further related discussion, Councillor Ireland proposed that the Council approved the addition of a new Clause 13A and sub-clauses 13A.1 and 13A.2 to the Netherlee and Stamperland Community Council Constitution; noted why the addition of sub-clauses 13A.3 and 13A.4 could not be considered; and agreed that the Council review the Scheme of Establishment as soon as practically possible.

In response to Councillor O'Donnell who sought confirmation on the cost of such a review taking account of the scale of savings the Council required to make, the Democratic Services Manager considered this difficult to quantify as it was subject to, for example, the amount of time required to conduct the review, the time involved to consult and the related mechanisms used, and whether or not external legal advisors needed to be employed as had been the case before. Whilst unable to provide definitive costs, there would be costs involved. Councillor McLean concurred these could be substantial.

In light of this, Councillor Wallace asked Councillor Ireland to consider supporting sub-clauses 13A.1 and 13A.2 alone, taking account of the possible costs of a review in the current financial climate. Councillor Ireland was amenable to this, but expressed the view that the issue of a review was likely to be raised again in future as she considered one was required.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) approve the addition of a new Clause 13A and sub-clauses 13A.1 and 13A.2 to the Netherlee and Stamperland Community Council Constitution; and
- (b) note why the addition of sub-clauses 13A.3 and 13A.4 could not be considered as they contradicted the procedures as set out in Clause 12 of the Scheme of Establishment.

EASTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE/THEATRE

200. The Council considered a report on the potential increased costs regarding the delivery of a new Eastwood Leisure Centre/Theatre due primarily to recent substantial construction cost inflation in the current challenging market. The report also highlighted the impact of market volatility and that a further report would be brought back to Council.

It was reported that in February 2021, the Council had considered a report providing an update on the Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre options and costs, referring to the unique nature of the opportunity, related benefits, the focus of the project, and income generating opportunities. The Council had agreed to proceed as planned, the overall estimated development cost being £55m, subject to refinement through further detailed design, market testing and value engineering, provision for which was included in the Council's General Fund Capital Programme. Since then, preliminary investigations had been carried out, planning permission granted, and BAM Construction Ltd. had been appointed in April/May 2022 as the primary and preferred contractor. Subsequently, in June 2022, BAM advised that the estimated budget had risen to £74m, mainly due to high inflation experienced across the construction sector. Through a value engineering exercise, it was subsequently estimated that the costs could be reduced to £67 million, including £8.8m for contingency without reducing quality and/or functionality and adversely affecting whole life costs.

Having referred to 5 options it had been intended to present to Council, the report explained that whilst analysis work was undertaken, there had been significant volatility in interest rates as a result of which the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) was currently reviewing the existing capital plan. It was explained that the impact on the affordability of the plan could be significant. Issues concerning energy costs were commented on, including that further work was required to understand their significance in the overall running costs of the new building.

Having heard Councillor O'Donnell highlight key aspects of the report, issues affecting the Business Plan for the project and related issues currently under review, Councillor Wallace referred to a suggestion made, but disregarded, over 10 years ago to increase funds to improve the maintenance of the current facility which in his view had been neglected since then. He commented on how the costs of the new build project had increased several times from £26m since 2018. He did not question the need for a facility for the local community, but stressed the importance of considering the affordability of the project.

Councillor Morrison highlighted that consideration of the project was new for many current Elected Members, referred to the 5 options specified in the report, and indicated he would like to know the costs of all of them to enable an informed decision to be made. He considered £67m a significant sum, referred to cuts to be made to the revenue budget and the need for caution, requested a breakdown of the £67m for the various facilities, and asked if any consideration had been given to involving the private sector, such as through sponsorship or having part of the facility run by the private sector.

Councillor O'Donnell referred to the detailed nature of the questions posed which would be reflected on before and when a more detailed report was submitted to a future meeting.

Councillor Ireland sought clarity on plans to make any part of the centre private or for private use. Councillor Morrison confirmed his focus on costs and ways to reduce these through sponsorship, freeing up resources to use elsewhere. Councillor O'Donnell confirmed that privatisation of the Leisure Centre was not being considered, but that sponsorship and commercial opportunities might be. Councillor Macdonald supported that way forward to offset costs, referring to the operation of various facilities in that way such as in Glasgow.

Councillor Buchanan was comfortable with the way forward and waiting to see how issues with the economy developed over the next few weeks.

The Council noted:-

- (a) the effect of construction inflation on the projected cost of a replacement Eastwood Leisure Centre;
- (b) the recent volatility in interest rates and energy prices; and
- (c) that a further report would be submitted to the Council in the near future following an analysis of the impact of interest rates and energy prices on the cost of options for the Eastwood Leisure Centre and the overall capital plan.

NOTICE OF MOTION – DEFIBRILLATORS IN ALL SCHOOLS

201. In accordance with Standing Order 27, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor Bamforth, seconded by Councillor Lunday.

Council notes that every year, over 3,000 people in Scotland, including children and young people, experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA). Council notes that, unfortunately, only 1 in 10 people survive such an event.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) can play a significant role in saving the lives of people who suffer heart attacks in public. It is estimated that a shock from an AED, alongside Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) treatment, increases survival rates to 75-80%.

Council notes that, although there are public defibrillators in various places across East Renfrewshire including some council premises and assets, there are gaps, especially in the provision of publicly accessible AEDs within or at our local schools.

Therefore, Council agrees to bring a report to Full Council no later than December 2022, detailing a plan to roll out more publicly accessible AEDs at all our primary and secondary schools.

Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor O'Donnell, moved an amendment in the following terms:-

Council is asked to agree that, in the absence of any support, funding or strategy for deploying PAD's (Public Access Defibrillators) in Scotland from the Scottish Government, to instruct officers to formulate a council-wide strategy for the deployment and maintenance of public access defibrillators (PADs), and to lobby the Scottish Government to provide additional funding to allow it to partner with voluntary, charity, and community groups to implement this policy.

Provost Montague invited Councillor Bamforth to speak to the terms of the motion.

Councillor Bamforth referred to the number of people in Scotland, not just adults and the elderly, who suffered cardiac arrests outwith hospital, only 10% of whom survived, explaining that the chance of survival increased to 70% when there was access to a defibrillator within 3 minutes. Having also referred to the comfort such access provided to those caring for a baby with a congenital heart defect, she confirmed that the Hospital Cardiac Strategy 2021-26 recommended that defibrillators should be as accessible as possible, welcoming that she had been a member of the Cabinet when it had agreed to fund devices throughout East

Renfrewshire. Whereas there were currently two in her Ward, she highlighted there were 6 schools there serving the local community, citing a recent incident when an AED had not been easily accessible.

Councillor Bamforth supported AEDs being sited in publicly accessible places around schools as some other local authorities had already done. Having commended schools which had raised funds for the devices, and highlighted that she had been approached by many people relating to schools about the funding of the devices, she expressed the view that the Council should maintain these and encouraged Elected Members to support the motion.

Councillor Lunday thanked Councillor Bamforth for submitting the motion and related work she had done. Having reported on statistics on survival rates linked to CPR and access to defibrillators conveyed at a recent heart start course he attended, he commended fundraising for AEDs instigated in 2018 by former Councillor Douglas Yates when he had discovered no such devices were located in Barrhead. Former Councillor Yates had set up the Levern Valley Defibrillator Community Partnership (LVDCP) which had funded 16 such devices.

Councillor Lunday reported being approached regarding the siting of AEDs in schools as Renfrewshire Council had done at primary schools and Edinburgh City Council had done at secondary schools. Despite work done often on a voluntary basis to fund AEDs, he referred to many existing gaps and how this could be addressed by making them widely accessible at schools where amongst other people, every pupil would be aware of them. He urged all Elected Members to support the motion.

Councillor Anderson was heard in support of the amendment during which he referred to the Administration's support in principle regarding the value and merits of defibrillators, which had also been referred to in the local Labour manifesto. A list of where these devices were was available on the Council's website but required updating. He commented that the most important thing to address was the lack of coordination and a Council-wide strategy or policy which the motion failed to recognise, in addition to which it made no reference to funding for deployment and maintenance of public access defibrillators at any location. He considered that it would be beneficial if Councillor Bamforth, who was aware of the budget process, and others supporting the motion could provide related costs and suggest how it could be funded in the current financial climate through corresponding cuts elsewhere.

Councillor Anderson also referred to the lack of a Scottish Government nationwide policy and funding for public access AEDs, the Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy that simply aimed to equip people with CPR skills, and advice on the Scottish Government website which was limited to providing advice on what to consider when installing AEDs. He referred to the option for SNP colleagues to convey their views to appropriate Scottish Government Ministers on the need for funding for AEDs. He also suggested that Councillor Buchanan could raise issues on this matter as COSLA spokesperson for Children and Young People.

He referred to a parliamentary question raised by former councillor Paul O'Kane MSP in February 2022 on what consideration had been given to installing defibrillators in schools, in response to which he had been advised that the decision to install these was for local authorities to consider. This was difficult given diminishing funds available. Whilst acknowledging that AED issues needed to be addressed, he queried why SNP councillors had not raised this issue when part of the Council's Administration.

Councillor O'Donnell supported the amendment, welcomed debate on this important issue and was encouraged that the SNP supported Labour's local Election manifesto pledge on local AEDs, which they could have included in their own manifesto. He encouraged SNP colleagues to discuss such issues with him and others, rather than communicating through motions, expressing confidence that productive and constructive discussions could be pursued. Complementing Councillor Anderson's comments, he highlighted that the motion made no

reference to funding. He accepted that widely accessible defibrillators could be the difference between life and death, stating that Scottish Government funding would be welcomed to roll these out nationally. He added that such funding had been available in the devolved Administration in Wales since 2015, and that all schools in England would have one installed by 2023, commending this and encouraging the Scottish Government to address this. Councillor O'Donnell also commended the campaign Provost Montague had been running for some time to encourage supermarkets to install defibrillators, and her petition to the Scottish Parliament on funding.

Councillor Macdonald thanked Councillors Bamforth and Lunday for bringing forward their motion, considered locating AEDs in primary schools sensible and logical, reminded Elected Members that this was a motion to submit a report to the Council, and expressing confidence that officers involved in preparing it would explore available funding streams including through partnership working. Like all Elected Members he was acutely aware of the financial strains and hardships the Scottish Ambulance Service was under. He referred to relatively high statistics on cardiac arrests in the central belt, and suggested that discussions with that service on funding streams might be worthwhile to help offset their costs which could help address the concerns raised by Councillor Anderson. He acknowledged comments made by Councillor O'Donnell, but was concerned that discussions on this issue had become political when communities should be supported.

Councillor Edlin stated he would have considered it useful to have been made aware of the amendment before the meeting, agreeing with many of comments made by Councillors Anderson and Councillor O'Donnell. He did not consider the first two paragraphs of the motion to be as simple to implement as presented and stated that the statistics provided were not straightforward. He suggested that it was possible that having AEDs outside a supermarket, as opposed to a school, could be more effective given the unpredictability of when and where cardiac arrests occurred.

Councillor Ireland agreed with Councillor Macdonald's comments on the unnecessary politicisation of this issue. Supporting the motion, she referred to many Parent Council meetings she had attended where the desire for additional defibrillators had been discussed, commenting that many residents wanted to have these devices installed throughout the area. She stressed the importance of knowing where they were located nearby immediately when needed to save lives, which all residents could be made aware of. She applauded Renfrewshire Council's approach, confirming that that Council had funded the devices at primary schools and those secondary schools where existing ones were not already publicly available. She considered public access to AEDs at schools to be important.

Provost Montague explained that where there was a need to locate the nearest defibrillator, by dialling 999 the location of the nearest device and code to use it could be confirmed.

Councillor Buchanan supported the motion, concurred with various points made, and confirmed that COSLA Leaders determined the position he could take on issues as a COSLA Spokesperson. He considered the issue to be straightforward, and supported the rationale behind the motion to increase the number of devices to support communities as other local authorities were doing. He confirmed that the Council had already funded AEDs in a number of locations, supporting the submission of a report that outlined the current position and covered what else could be done. He expressed the view that Labour were reneging on their manifesto commitment which had not been subject to external funding.

Councillor Wallace stated that the benefits of defibrillators were undisputed, acknowledged Councillor Edlin's comments given his occupational background, and questioned the complete absence of costs in the motion. Referring to the SNP's stated position that they were only

attending Budget Strategy Group meetings in a listening capacity, he suggested that more active participation in the discussions held at these could potentially result in a way forward on funding being found. He supported the amendment given the lack of costings in the motion.

Councillor Pragnell highlighted that nobody was disputing the importance of installing AEDs across the area, but referred to the need to consider funding streams in the face of local authority budget cuts. She stated it was clear through discussions with officers that there was no clear strategy on this issue, supporting the amendment and commending all those who had contributed to the installation of defibrillators in the area. She depicted the issue as a very personal one to the Labour family and an important commitment in its local manifesto and thanked Provost Montague for the initiative she had taken on this issue.

Councillor Merrick supported the motion, stating that it was interesting to hear the challenge made on the lack of costs, which were not a feature of the amendment. He expressed the view that the amendment closed off avenues and just blamed the Scottish Government, stating that this was a further unfortunate example of Labour simply not allowing a SNP amendment to proceed. He considered that regrettable. He thanked Provost Montague for the important and useful comments she made on how to locate the nearest defibrillator.

Councillor Morrison agreed there was consensus on the benefits of defibrillators, suggesting that if the SNP or independent Elected Members wanted to canvass him or others to support a motion on a non-party political basis, the opportunity existed to do so in advance of Council meetings. Supporting the amendment, he commented that there was quite good coverage in secondary and various primary schools already due to the efforts of many groups including community councils and charities, which was not mentioned in the motion. He stated it was possible that activity could be ongoing on defibrillators at present that may be unknown of within the Council, encouraging closer collaboration with third sector partners on this issue.

To sum up and responding to issues raised during the debate, Councillor Bamforth confirmed that it was a report that was being requested, adding that she did have costings from various departments which may need to be updated which could be addressed in the report it was suggested be submitted in December. Regarding the comments made previously on the SNP's option to raise this issue before, she reminded Elected Members that a joint SNP/Labour Administration had been in place previously for 15 years and that either party could have raised this before, as former Councillor Paul O'Kane could have done rather than waiting until he was an MSP. She commented that Renfrewshire Council and some other councils had made a choice to fund defibrillators in schools adding, in response to Councillor Edlin, that there were not supermarkets in all wards, that she considered locating them in schools practical, and that she expected an overview of the current provision to be included in the suggested report. Regarding funding, she stated that she would welcome this being provided by the Scottish Government, but its budget had been reduced by 2.9% equating to £1.7bn making this difficult. She supported the local funding of AEDs.

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

There being 7 votes for the motion and 9 for the amendment, the amendment was declared carried.

NOTICE OF MOTION – COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION

202. In accordance with Standing Order 25, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Convery.

This Council will, as a matter of urgency, investigate the changes implemented to East Renfrewshire Council's Council Tax collection and the capacity in East Renfrewshire to establish repayment instalment schedules.

East Renfrewshire Council's Policy previously allowed payment arrangements to be made at Final Notice and this prevented customers having to go to Summary Warrant and paying an additional 10% Statutory Addition. The new system does not allow for arrangements at Final Notice stage. This is now accommodated by Sheriff Officers at Summary Warrant stage.

Council will investigate, and report back at the next Full Council meeting, how this system will be amended to accommodate the flexibility once given to customers for payment arrangements.

In the absence of an amendment, the motion was declared carried.

PROVOST

