

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

**Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 5 October 2023.**

**Present:**

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)                      Councillor Danny Devlin  
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair)              Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer)(\*); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Debbie Hill, Chief Procurement Officer; Michael McKernan, Economic Development and Inclusive Growth Manager; Paul Parsons, Principal Accountant; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

**629.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) to monitor both income and expenditure as at 30 June 2023 against the approved General Fund Capital Programme and recommending adjustments where possible.

The report updated project costs and phasings based on current progress and anticipated progress to 31 March 2024.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) in speaking to the report, highlighted that rising construction costs, general inflation and shortages of materials and labour were leading to increased pricing for works. Consequently, project expenditure was being constantly monitored so that additional cost pressures on key projects could be covered by deferring or reducing other projects to compensate.

The current position was outlined as a budget shortfall of £0.180m, which was within manageable limits

The main income and expenditure movements to June 2023 were detailed in the report, including a transfer of £0.275m from Property Maintenance to St John's Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Places. The school building required a wide range of works to accommodate increased nursery spaces together with roof improvements.

It was specifically noted that the projected expenditure figure significantly exceeded the actual outturn achieved during the previous financial year. A number of projects had been scheduled to start on site later in the financial year and the actual expenditure would be dependent on the completion of the procurement process and progress achieved by contractors in those projects. While overall expenditure levels to June 2023 supported an increased level of capital expenditure, the target of £58.740m remained ambitious and further reductions in the projected outturn were likely as the year progressed.

In response to a query from the Leader about the absence of 10 year projections from the initially published papers, the Clerk explained that there had been an error when converting the submitted papers for issue. However, the unintentionally omitted documents had been included in the pack before the meeting and the papers available on the Council's website were updated to reflect the full range of figures in terms of the Capital Monitoring reports.

The Leader expressed disappointment in the lack of clarity over LEAP funding, which had been due to be given in December 2022 but still not been received. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) stated that the funding was included as an assumption within each quarter's reporting and remained in plans, but was marked as delayed. A further report would come to Council once the situation was clarified.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) also provided some information on how the Council's departments would work to deliver the ambitious plans laid out, given the constrained environment.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted and approved the movements within the 2023/24 programme outlined in the report;
- (b) approved the transfer of £0.275m from Property Maintenance to St John's Primary School, Early Learning and Childcare Places; and
- (c) noted the shortfall of £0.180m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

## **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

**630.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) to monitor both income and expenditure as at 30 June 2023 against the approved Housing Capital Programme and recommending adjustments where required.

The report updated project costs and phasings based on current progress and anticipated progress to 31 March 2024.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) in speaking to the report, highlighted that rising construction costs, general inflation and shortages of materials and labour were leading to increased pricing for works. Consequently, project expenditure was being constantly monitored so that additional cost pressures on key projects could be covered by deferring or reducing other projects to compensate.

The current position was outlined as a budget shortfall of £0.188m, which was within manageable limits

The main income and expenditure movements to June 2023 were detailed in the report.

It was confirmed that the 10 year projections had been added to the papers before the meeting and would be circulated to members after the meeting to clarify the position.

Officers responded to members' questions about the progress of heating system renewals in council housing and the Scottish Government guidance around this project, as well as discussion of the plans for new build council housing and the purchase of appropriate properties to meet housing demand where possible.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted and approved the movements within the 2023/24 programme outlined in the report;
- (b) noted the shortfall of £0.188m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

#### **ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT 2022/23 – PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023-2026 - UPDATE**

**631.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Procurement Officer on the Annual Procurement Report 2022/23 and an update on the implementation of the Procurement Strategy 2023/2026.

The Annual Procurement Report (APR) was required under Section 18 (2)(a) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 where it was stated that councils must publish a summary of their regulated procurements completed during the year covered by the report. The APR provided an opportunity for the Council to demonstrate to stakeholders that procurement spend was being used to achieve not only best value, but also supporting the Council's vision of being modern and ambitious to create a fairer future with all.

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 also required the Council to develop a Procurement Strategy and review it annually to demonstrate how procurement played a fundamental role in delivery of the Council's strategic objectives. It was a key enabling strand for continuous improvement and identifying efficiencies across the Council.

Copies of both documents were attached as appendices to the report and the key points within both were summarised by the Chief Procurement Officer.

The Chief Procurement Officer was heard in response to members' questions about embedding payment of the living wage and payment of tax into procurement agreements, the difference between regulated and unregulated activities, insurance procurement and the work to improve prompt payment.

In particular, the Chief Procurement Officer agreed to provide more specific details to the Leader on the insurance procurement.

Thereafter, the Cabinet approved the Annual Procurement Report 2022/23 and the update on the Procurement Strategy.

## **CLARKSTON PARKLETS – COMMUNITY REVIEW RESULTS**

**632.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment on the results of a public consultation regarding the future of the Clarkston Parklets and seeking approval of an option to progress with, as detailed in the report.

In 2019, a temporary widening of the pavement and provision of benches and planters, known as Parklets, were installed by East Renfrewshire Council on Busby Road, Clarkston. This provided people with places to congregate, rest, eat and places to secure cycles within the town centre. The Parklets had a total cost of £172,546.

As the introduction of the Parklets was a temporary measure, they were installed using materials suited to a temporary project and had a lifespan of approximately 5-10 years. A decision on the future of the Parklets was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, in March 2021, the Council had commissioned Stantec to undertake a public consultation on the Parklets in Clarkston to gauge attitudes across the wider community in respect of their introduction and future.

The responses to the consultation were summarised within the report, with 927 responses being received from local residents, businesses, visitors and those travelling through the area for online and face to face surveys.

Of those, 461 had responded that they were not in favour of the parklets being made permanent, 430 had responded that they would like to keep the parklet, or keep them with some changes of design or location.

It was noted that there were no responses from local businesses via face to face survey, however, the Clarkston Business Improvement District had confirmed that they were generally supportive of the Parklets, but wished to see tables, bins and an ongoing maintenance regime.

Three options were outlined to the Cabinet within the report, and they were asked to choose which would go forward. The report recommended that the existing Parklets and planters be retained and refurbished with an established maintenance regime put in place until 2026 (Option 2).

Councillor Pragnell raised the issue of the vagueness of the survey which was carried out, as well as the lack of any maintenance budget in the initial implementation. She also suggested that community groups and schools could assist with the refurbishment and maintenance of the Parklets and had expressed a willingness to do so.

Councillor O'Donnell asked for clarity around the timing of the long term strategy and the Economic Development and Inclusive Growth Manager agreed to come back with further information on the strategy to Cabinet. Councillor O'Donnell also noted the mixed response to the survey and lack of response from local businesses, who would be directly impacted by the proposed works.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the background of the Clarkston Parklets;
- (b) approved the retention and refurbishment of the Clarkston Parklets until 2026, subject to review of the costs for that delivery and working to minimise those as much as possible;

- (c) that clearer timescales in terms of the strategy be provided to Cabinet.

CHAIR

