

MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 25 October 2023.

Present:

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

Provost Montague in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Raymond Prior, Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Colin Sweeney, Democratic Services Manager; Linda Hutchison, Senior Committee Services Officer; and John Burke, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Caroline Bamforth, Angela Convery and Annette Ireland

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

640. Provost Montague referred to the following issues:-

(a) **Recent Events in Middle East**

Having referred to the events that had unfolded recently in both Israel and Palestine, Provost Montague commented on the shock shared amongst Elected Members regarding what was happening and the terrible loss of lives. On behalf of the Council, she expressed great sympathy to those who were suffering and offered support to local communities affected by the conflict.

(b) Former Director of Education - John Wilson

Provost Montague referred to the recent sad death of John Wilson who, having been a Head of Service within the Education Department, had been the Council's Director of Education from 2002 to 2013. She highlighted his significant impact on improving outcomes for learners, particularly the most vulnerable children and young people; his leadership and ambitions on raising attainment; his passion for inclusion; and his legacy such as on continuous improvement and the use of evidence and data. Having commented on the recognition of his work at a national level, on behalf of the Council, she offered condolences to his family.

(c) Hindu Festivals

On behalf of the Council, Provost Montague passed on best wishes to members of the Hindu community who had recently celebrated the festivals of Navratri and Dusshera, adding that she had enjoyed attending a Hindu temple at which she had met inspirational young people who were a credit to themselves and their families.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

641. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COUNCIL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

642. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 13 September 2023.

MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023

643. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the special meeting held on 26 September 2023.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

644. The Council considered the Minutes of meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Appointments Committee – 12 September 2023;
- (b) Cabinet (Police and Fire) – 14 September 2023;
- (c) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 26 September 2023;
- (d) Education Committee – 28 September 2023;
- (e) Licensing Committee – 3 October 2023;
- (f) Planning Applications Committee – 4 October 2023;
- (g) Local Review Body – 4 October 2023;
- (h) Cabinet – 5 October 2023; and
- (i) Cabinet – 12 October 2023.

The Minutes were approved, subject to the following amendments to the Minute of the Education Committee meeting of 28 September, namely that on:-

- (i) Page 657, Councillor O'Donnell's name be removed from those present and that his apologies for absence be recorded;
- (ii) Page 658 (Sub-Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Paragraph 610), the references to "Cameron Gibbs" be amended to read "Cameron Gibb";
- (iii) Page 660 (Paragraph 615), the sentence after "(c) Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement" be amended by removing the words "include comments from the Communications Team" and replacing these with "be produced by a graphic design team"; and
- (iv) Page 661 (Paragraph 616), the penultimate paragraph be amended by:-
 - (A) removing the words "...intimated that work had been done on the key words" and replacing these with "...spoke on the engagement that had taken place with key stakeholders"; and
 - (B) removing the words "...and provide further recognition of the work involved." and replacing these with "He also mentioned the self-evaluation framework that had been developed, and included in the Appendix to the report, and that this was being used to strengthen impact."

INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2023-24 – QUARTER 1

645. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 26 September 2023 (Page 642, Item 596 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) on treasury management activities for the first Quarter of 2022-23.

Having heard Councillor Morrison comment on the report, in response to him and Councillor Anderson who referred to the importance of considering the ethics of organisations with which funds were invested by the Council, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that the surplus funds referred to in the report were not invested in long-term investments such as shares. Rather, they were deposited securely on a short-term basis, typically for one to six months, taking account of regularly updated advice provided by the Council's treasury management advisors. The approach taken was amended as required, this being why the Council was asked to approve the list of counterparties quarterly.

The Council approved those organisations specified in the report for the investment of surplus funds.

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

646. The following statements were made:-

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

Councillor Pragnell summarised matters discussed at the meeting of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on 27 September, referring first to the approval of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23 and a recommendation made regarding the need for urgent work with partners to develop a sustainable funding position, recognising budget challenges and pressures faced. Despite ongoing work to identify further savings and mitigate cost pressures, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) remained in a very challenging financial position, with a potential overspend of just over £3m projected due to growing demand and the complexity of services provided. It remained focussed on delivering savings, with £2.4m achieved thus far against a £7m target, the projected overspend further adding to this pressure.

A report on charges for services had proposed increasing these in line with the inflation rate identified by the Council, prior to consideration of these by the Cabinet. A short life working group to support income generation continued to meet, and any further changes proposed would be submitted to the Cabinet.

Reference was made to both the Clinical and Care Governance Annual Report and Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report discussed by the IJB, both of which demonstrated a significant amount of work being delivered by the HSCP. The IJB had commended ongoing prevention work in light of the pressures faced.

An update had been provided on the National Care Service, including some agreement reached around shared legal responsibility between the Scottish Government and councils, and the fact that a decision remained to be taken on whether or not children services or criminal justice would form part of the Service. The Scottish Government remained committed to delivering the related legislation by the end of the 2026 parliamentary year.

Regarding delayed discharge from hospital, East Renfrewshire ranked 3rd in Scotland for standard delays. However the number of people waiting had increased, with capacity and increasing complexity amongst factors impacting on performance. The number of people requiring two carers continued to increase and there had been delays regarding adults with incapacity.

(b) **Councillor Anderson – Convener for Education, Culture and Leisure**

Councillor Anderson explained that, under the national strategy for public libraries in Scotland, East Renfrewshire libraries worked in partnership with various agencies to deliver on key strategic aims, one of the strongest partnerships being with MacMillan. More specifically he referred to the *Macmillan East Ren* partnership launched in 2019 which provided drop-in face-to-face support and information and also weekly support and information sessions at Barrhead Foundry and Clarkston Library through trained volunteers to help people affected by cancer access support in their local community. Following another successful funding application, the partnership was being extended to 2026, and a recent MacMillan Coffee Morning in Clarkston Library had raised nearly £600 for the charity.

Councillor Anderson commended the Culture and Leisure Trust's Swim Development Team which, for the 2nd consecutive year, had been runner up in the Swim Provider of the Year awards run by Scottish Swimming, having again been shortlisted in the top 3 of over 40 public, private and third sector swim providers across Scotland. This reflected significant recent programme growth, with over 1200 new members recruited in the current year and the total programme now exceeding 3000 members for the first time. The Trust had received strong feedback on improvements in developing a very strong and committed workforce invested in delivering the national framework.

Reference was also made to work done with schools to revise a programme focused on water safety which was now cited as a national example, and praise from Scottish Water for the promotion of wider public safety messaging around open water. The Trust's crash course swimming lessons focussed on water safety, complementing the summer holiday free swimming programme and opportunities for care-experienced young people.

Finally, Councillor Anderson highlighted that 23 to 29 October was Care Experience Week which, as in previous years, was an opportunity to celebrate with the area's care experienced young people, their families and those who supported them. The event, again hosted at Eastwood Theatre, encouraged young people to understand their care identity and connect with their peers, and provided a great opportunity to raise awareness of the care experienced community within East Renfrewshire.

The Council noted the statements.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

647. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, which provided details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting of the Council held on 13 September 2023.

Council noted the report.

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

648. The Council considered the Chief Social Work Officer's (CSWO's) Annual Report for 2022/23, and sought approval of the content for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, 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 2022/23 through the delivery of statutory functions and responsibilities held by the CSWO. Although there were many examples of success to celebrate and build on, there continued to be significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care, with financial sustainability and uncertainty being core pressures. These challenges could not be met without the continued commitment and dedication of social work and social care staff.

It was highlighted that the experience of many in local communities post pandemic had been challenging, with there being added complications and pressures such as the cost of living crisis. This had involved responding to higher demand for support and increased complexity

in continued unpredictable times. 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.

Councillor Pragnell thanked the CSWO for the report which had also been submitted to the most recent IJB meeting, commended the wide range of good work being done, and thanked everyone involved including those involved in partnership work.

The CSWO highlighted key aspects of the report during which he referred to the ongoing and increased demand for services and associated high levels of need and complexity, some of which continued to relate to COVID. He referred to the excellent and sector leading grading awarded following the Care Inspectorate's inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm, and confirmed that notification of the inspection of adult support and protection had been received during the period covered by the report, the outcome of which had been that the services were regarded as very good. He expressed immense pride in the outcome of both and the services provided for residents. He cited a range of other strengths referred to in the Annual Report, including the support provided for those with mental and emotional well-being needs, victims of domestic abuse and asylum seeking children, and for delivering The Promise. Regarding the Bairns Hoose, the Scottish Government had just confirmed that the service had been successful as part of the North Strathclyde Bairns Hoose partnership in becoming a pathfinder site.

Referring to the unprecedented financial circumstances encountered, the CSWO reported on the need for a voluntary redundancy scheme which would significantly reduce HSCP posts and require restructuring. It was stressed that this would impact on the workforce, the service's greatest strength, who were dedicated to service provision in challenging circumstances. He also referred to the benefits accrued from a range of partnership working.

In response to Councillor Edlin, the CSWO acknowledged the large increase in demand for various services, including in respect of the on-going post pandemic fall out, but expressed hope that needs could be addressed due to the standard, quality and accessibility of services. He cited examples of high referral rates regarding parental mental health and domestic abuse, and confirmed that the challenging financial position faced required the removal of posts and redesign of services to be considered, whilst trying to mitigate against potential risks of changing front-line services, considering child and adult protection risks and supporting the increasing number of children with complex additional support needs. Councillor Edlin highlighted his concerns regarding these enforced cuts and their impact on the community and staff morale.

Having commended the range of excellent work being done referred to in the Annual Report, Councillor Campbell supported by Councillor Wallace expressed concern regarding the increase in referrals regarding peer to peer sexually harmful behaviour, seeking further clarification on the reasons for this. The CSWO referred to the complexity of the different cases, the background to which varied and impacted on the support provided. He expressed confidence in the strong local partnership work done to identify and address such issues, as evidenced through the inspection of this area of work. Also in response to Councillor Campbell, the CSWO outlined the strong work being done to address the needs of those at risk of financial harm, including through targeted provision of information to communities and good partnership working, such as with Trading Standards.

In response to Councillor Morrison regarding resources, the Chief Officer, HSCP confirmed that no further COVID related funding, over and above that already provided, was anticipated from the Scottish Government.

Councillor Buchanan commended the excellent range of work done in challenging circumstances, and welcomed the most recent development regarding the Bairns Hoose.

The Council, having heard Councillor O'Donnell commend the report and outcome of the inspections, approved the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP REVISED INTEGRATION SCHEME - DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

649. The Council considered a report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership providing an update on work to review the Integration Scheme between East Renfrewshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and presenting a draft revised Integration Scheme for approval to go out for consultation.

Having summarised the background to the review, the report made reference to review activity and proposed amendments to the Scheme which had been approved initially in June 2015 and amended in 2018 to meet requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. The current revision provided a light-touch update and did not result in any changes to the powers and functions of the IJB. The revised draft had been developed in partnership with officers from the other five HSCPs in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health board area through a working group, allowing for greater consistency and minimal duplication of effort. The draft revised Scheme would be the subject of a light-touch consultation exercise between October 2023 and January 2024, which would include making it available on the website, sharing it with key partners and engagement with the Strategic Planning Group

The Council:-

- (a) agreed to approve the draft revised Integration Scheme for consultation; and
- (b) otherwise, noted the content of this report.

STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING SCHEME

650. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships advising the Council of the need to carry out a statutory review of its Polling Scheme, and seeking approval of the draft Polling Scheme for consultation as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. A copy of the statutory review timetable was also appended to the report.

The report summarised the background to the review, provisions of the Elections Act 2022 and proposed way forward. It was confirmed that the Council required to conduct a review of polling places and polling districts by 2025, and that the review being conducted took into account future population growth, the Council's own development plans and, where possible, the concerns of parents and carers about needing to arrange alternative childcare on polling day. It was clarified that once the final scheme had been approved a further review would not be required until October 2028. Further consideration would be given to any additional comments received and any alternative venues investigated. Responses to the comments made would be included in the next report on the outcome of the consultation submitted to the Council in due course.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the requirements to undertake a Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025:

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- (b) approved the timetable relating to the Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report, and delegated to the Chief Executive authority to make such changes to the timetable as they considered necessary;
- (c) approved for consultation the draft Polling Scheme as referred to in Appendix 1 to the report and authorised the Chief Executive to commence the eight-week consultation on 1 November 2023; and
- (d) noted that a further report would be submitted to the Council on 24 April 2024, or earlier, once the consultation had ended.

POST OF HEAD OF PLACE

651. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, referring to the retirement of the Head of Place with effect from 25 April 2024, proposing arrangements to ensure continuity and stability within the Environment Department if for any reason a successor was not in place by then, and seeking approval of proposals to fill the vacancy through the establishment of a related Appointments Committee.

The Council, having heard the Provost invite nominations for appointment to the Committee:-

- (a) noted the retirement of the Head of Place with effect from 25 April 2024;
- (b) approved the proposed recruitment procedure to fill the vacancy;
- (c) agreed that authority be delegated to the Head of HR & Corporate Services, in consultation with the Director of Environment, to make the necessary arrangements;
- (d) approved the appointment of members to the Appointments Committee as follows:-
 - Provost Mary Montague
 - Councillor Kate Campbell
 - Councillor Chris Lundy
 - Councillor Owen O'Donnell
 - Councillor Katy Pragnell; and
- (e) authorised the Director of Environment to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Department if required.

PROVOST