

THE FIFE COUNCIL - CABINET COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

2 November 2023

10.00 am – 2.35 pm

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, John Beare, James Calder, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Graeme Downie, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall (substituting for Councillor Craig Walker), Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Kathleen Leslie (substituting for Councillor Dave Dempsey), Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jonny Tepp, Ross Vettraino and Jan Wincott.

ATTENDING: Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive; Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Helena Couperwhite, Democratic Services Manager and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; Pam Ewen, Head of Planning, Bill Lindsay, Service Manager and Shona Cargill, Lead Officer (Climate Change and Zero Waste, Planning Service); Alan Paul, Head of Property Services and Michael O'Gorman, Service Manager (Estates), Property Services; Shelagh McLean, Head of Education and Children's Services, Avril Graham, Team Manager, Gavin Waterston, Quality Improvement Officer and Pamela Colburn, Quality Improvement Officer, Education and Children's Services; John Mills, Head of Housing Services and Paul Short, Service Manager, Housing Service; Fiona McKay, Head of Strategic Planning, Performance and Commissioning and Viv Smith, Change Programme Manager, Health and Social Care.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Dave Dempsey and Craig Walker.

On behalf of the Committee, the Convener wished to pay tribute to all those involved in dealing with the recent fire in Lochgelly and all also to those involved with the flooding issues due to the recent adverse weather and thanked them for their hard work and efforts.

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

162. MINUTES

- (i) Minute of the Cabinet Committee of 5 October 2023.

Decision

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

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(ii) The following minutes were submitted for noting:-

Education Appointment Committee of 2 and 6 October 2023.

Decision

The minutes were noted.

163. REVENUE MONITORING 2023-24

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing a strategic overview of Fife Council's finances and reporting the current forecast position for 2023-24.

Motion

Councillor David Alexander, seconded by Councillor Brian Goodall, moved the recommendations contained in the report.

Amendment

Councillor David Ross, seconded by Councillor Altany Craik, moved the following:-

"Add recommendation 6:-

Note the forecast balances position set out in Appendix 5 and the financial risks and challenges for the medium and longer-term referenced in the report and the recent announcement by the First Minister regarding proposals for a council tax freeze and therefore:-

1. note that, following the council tax freeze announcement, public consultation on budget proposals will be taken forward as required in advance of setting the 2024/25 budget; and
2. agree to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Scottish Government expressing the Council's anger and extreme disappointment at both the substance and the way in which this announcement was made by the First Minister with no prior discussion with local government, flying in the face of the recently signed Verity House Agreement and insisting that full funding for a council tax freeze should be in the context of the overall local government settlement which should allow councils to protect their local services and provide funding to cover inflation and a fair pay rise for local government workers."

Roll Call Vote

For the motion – 9 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, John Beare, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Rosmeary Liewald, Carol Lindsay and Ross Vettrano.

For the Amendment – 13 votes

Councillors James Calder, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Graeme Downie, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Kathleen Leslie, David Ross, Jonny Tepp and Jan Wincott.

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Having received a majority of votes, the amendment was accordingly carried.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the high-level financial position as detailed in the report;
- (2) noted that there were ongoing financial impacts arising from the current economic climate which continue to be managed by services with an element of protection from inflationary risk being accounted for centrally;
- (3) instructed services to mitigate overspends as far as possible and ensure strong financial management;
- (4) noted that detailed monitoring reports would be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committees;
- (5) requested that scrutiny committees ensure appropriate level of support and challenge in relation to financial reports; and
- (6) noted the forecast balances position set out in Appendix 5 and the financial risks and challenges for the medium and longer-term referenced in the report and the recent announcement by the First Minister regarding proposals for a council tax freeze and therefore:-
 - (i) noted that, following the council tax freeze announcement, public consultation on budget proposals would be taken forward as required in advance of setting the 2024/25 budget; and
 - (ii) agreed that the Leader of the Council would write to the Scottish Government expressing the council's anger and extreme disappointment at both the substance and the way in which this announcement was made by the First Minister with no prior discussion with local government, flying in the face of the recently signed Verity House Agreement and insisting that full funding for a council tax freeze should be in the context of the overall local government settlement which should allow councils to protect their local services and provide funding to cover inflation and a fair pay rise for local government workers.

164. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE 2023-24

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing a strategic financial overview of the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the provisional outturn for the 2023-24 financial year.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the projected outturn position and that the level of financial risk continued to be heightened due to high levels of inflation and supply chain challenges;

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- (2) that more detailed capital outturn reports for 2023-24 would be submitted to relevant scrutiny committees of the council;
- (3) that budget variances would be managed by the appropriate Directorate in conjunction with the Investment Strategy Group; and
- (4) the updated prudential indicators provided and that these would be reported on a quarterly basis.

165. FIFE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 13

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Services seeking approval of the Fife Development Plan Scheme, thirteenth edition for publication.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved, for adoption, the 2023 Fife Development Plan Scheme (thirteenth edition) for publication, deposit and copying to Scottish Ministers (Appendix 1); and
- (2) delegated non-substantive edits to the Head of Planning.

The meeting adjourned at 11.25 am and reconvened at 11.40 am.

166. CLIMATE CHANGE - PUBLIC BODIES DUTIES REPORT

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning seeking approval of the Council's annual submission of Fife Council's 'Public Bodies (Climate Change) Duties Report' for financial year 2022-23.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the draft Public Bodies Duties Report appended to the report and instructed officers to submit to the Scottish Government by 30 November 2023; and
- (2) noted the refresh of the Delivery Plan for Climate Fife would be presented to Cabinet Committee on 30 November 2023.

167. ROTHESAY HOUSE, GLENROTHES

The committee considered a report by the Head of Property Services outlining proposals to demolish Rothesay House.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) considered the proposals outlined;
- (2) noted that approval of the recommendation would reduce revenue costs and have the potential to support economic recovery through future redevelopment of the cleared site, potentially increasing access to housing and assist with community wealth building thus providing benefits across several key Plan for Fife themes; and

- (3) authorised the Head of Property Services to arrange for the demolition of the property.

168. SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2025/26, 2026/27 AND 2027/28

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Services outlining the proposed schedule of terms, holidays and in-service training days for school sessions 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Decision

The committee approved the schedules recommended for school terms, holidays and in-service training days as detailed in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of the report.

169. ANTIBULLYING POLICY

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Services presenting the revised Anti-bullying Policy for the Education and Children's Services Directorate and seeking comment on the content and amendments to the Policy which had been developed via the Relationships and Behaviour Strategy group.

The meeting adjourned at 1.05 pm and reconvened at 1.40 pm.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the work carried out in relation to the development of the policy;
- (2) approved the content of the Anti-bullying policy;
- (3) authorised officers to make such amendments to the Policy as may be necessary;
- (4) agreed to implementation of the approved final policy across all educational establishments;
- (5) agreed to formally review the policy in August 2024 to ensure that it remained current and that a report be brought back to the Cabinet Committee in November 2024 and that a progress report be brought back to the appropriate committee in six month's time; and
- (6) agreed to establish a Working Group – as per the guidance in Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Policy – to review and improve the draft policy with a view to ensuring:-
 - (i) it included more explicit and comprehensive anti-racism training for all teaching and education support staff across Fife, incorporating the National Anti-Racism Framework for ITE launched nationally in July 2023;
 - (ii) it explicitly supported and kept The Promise, adopted in February 2020 by the Scottish Government, in order to better equip teachers and Education Support staff to support care-experienced young people; and
 - (iii) effective consultation with both Parent Councils and pupil representative bodies on the draft policy was carried out and taken into account.

Councillor Carol Lindsay left the meeting on conclusion of the above item.

170. MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA POLICY FOR FIFE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Services presenting the revised Mobile Technologies and Electronic Media Policy for the Education and Children's Services Directorate which had been developed via the Relationships and Behaviour working group and the Education Child Protection Strategic Oversight Group.

Motion

Councillor David Ross, seconded by Councillor Cara Hilton, moved the recommendations contained in the report.

Amendment

Councillor Derek Glen, seconded by Councillor David Barratt, moved as follows:-

"That the recommendations contained in the report not be accepted, requested that further work be undertaken on the Mobile Technologies and Electronic Media Policy and that a further report be brought back to the Cabinet Committee in due course".

Roll Call Vote

For the Motion – 13 votes

Councillors James Calder, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Graeme Downie, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Kathleen Leslie, David Ross, Jonny Tepp and Jan Wincott.

For the Amendment – 8 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, John Beare, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Rosemary Liewald and Ross Vettraino.

Having received a majority of votes, the motion was accordingly carried.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the work carried out in relation to the development of the policy;
- (2) approved the content of the Mobile Technologies and Electronic Media Policy;
- (3) authorised officers to make such non-substantive amendments to the policy as may be necessary;
- (4) agreed to implementation of the approved final policy across all educational establishments;

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- (5) agreed to a review of the policy in August 2024 to ensure that it remained current; and
- (6) agreed that the Head of Education and Children's Services consult with Councillors on the format and language contained in the Policy prior to it being formally issued.

171. FIFE YOUNG PEOPLE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY - RESULTS

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Service informing on the results of the Fife Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey carried out in March 2023.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted and commented on the survey results as provided through the Fife Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey; and
- (2) endorsed the next steps outlined in response to the survey results and agreed that reports be submitted to Area Committees in due course.

Councillor Ross Vettraino left the meeting during consideration of the above item and Councillor Rosemary Liewald left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

172. CUPAR CARE VILLAGE - UPDATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Director of Health and Social Care and the Head of Housing Services providing an update on the revised costs and timescales for the work towards delivering the Cupar Care Village on the site of the former Dalgairn Centre at Bank Street, Cupar.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the content of the report, including the revised timescales and increase in costs of £2.137m; and
- (2) agreed the revised business case.

173. HOUSING DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services seeking approval for the new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy. The policy had been to the Domestic Abuse Intervention Board, chaired by Councillor Hamilton, and was recommended to move forward to the Cabinet Committee for discussion and approval.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy; and

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- (2) agreed the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy and that a report be brought back to the Cabinet Committee in a year's time.

Councillor Graeme Downie left the meeting during consideration of the above item.