

THE FIFE COUNCIL - CABINET COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

17th November, 2022.

10.00 a.m. – 12.40 p.m.

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

ATTENDING: Steve Grimmond, Chief Executive; Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Laura Robertson, Finance Operations Manager, Emma Lennon, Accountant, Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Helena Couperwhite, Manager (Committee Services) and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; John Mills, Head of Housing Services and Mhairi Mullen, Service Manager (Income, Poverty and Private Housing), Housing Services; Pam Ewen, Head of Planning, John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation Services, Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services, Ronnie Hair, Property Investment and Development Manager, Bill Lindsay, Service Manager (Development Plan), Michael Anderson, Consultant Engineer (Bridges and Structures), Shona Cargill, Lead Officer (Climate Change and Partnerships); Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services), Shelagh McLean, Head of Education and Children's Services (Early Years and Directorate Support), Vivienne Sutherland, Principal Psychologist, Rona Weir, Education Manager and Pam Colburn, Quality Improvement Officer, Education and Children's Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Linda Erskine and Carol Lindsay and Mr. Brian Blanchflower, Church of Scotland and Alastair Crockett, Cupar Baptist Church, Religious Representatives.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 7.1.

42. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of the Cabinet Committee meeting of 20th October, 2022.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

43. REVENUE MONITORING 2022-23

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided members with a strategic overview of Fife Council's finances and advised of the current forecast position for 2022-23.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) approved the increase to the weekly free school meal holiday payment;
- (2) noted the ongoing financial impacts arising from recovery from the pandemic which continue to be managed using one off additional funding and from underspends;
- (3) noted the high level financial position as detailed in the report; and
- (4) noted that detailed monitoring reports would be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committees.

44. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE - PROJECTED OUTTURN 2022-23

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided a strategic financial overview of the Capital Investment Plan and the projected outturn for the 2022-23 financial year.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

- (1) the projected outturn position, that the level of financial risk appeared to be increasing and noted the mitigating actions for the major projects within the Capital Investment Plan;
- (2) that more detailed capital outturn reports for 2022-23 would be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committees of the Council; and
- (3) that budget variances would be managed by the appropriate Directorate in conjunction with the Investment Strategy Group.

45. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) CONSULTATIVE BUDGET 2023-24

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance to agree appropriate consultative rent options for 2023-24 to enable the Council to carry out its statutory duty to formally consult with Council tenants during December, 2022 and January, 2023. The outcome of the formal tenant consultation would be reported in the HRA budget report at the Council meeting in February, 2023.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) agreed to survey Council tenants around options for a rent increase in 2023-24 of 0%, 1%, 2% and 3% to also apply to charges for services, garage sites, lockups and temporary accommodation;
- (2)/

- (2) noted that the outcome of the full tenant consultation would be reported to full Council in February, 2023;
- (3) noted the current HRA financial position, including the projected £6.627m shortfall for 2023-24;
- (4) noted the high level of financial risk the HRA was expected to be exposed to because of current pressures and assumed rental increases in 2023-24 and beyond;
- (5) noted that the HRA Business Plan Review was continuing with results to be reported to Council in February, 2023;
- (6) noted the balance of current HRA reserves as £7.005m; and
- (7) noted the legislative implications in relation to the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022.

46. DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND POLICY

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Planning which updated members on changes to development planning and sought approval of the Fife Planning Obligations Framework Supplementary Guidance 2017 as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the information in the report describing current changes in planning legislation affecting statutory development planning; and
- (2) approved the published Planning Obligations Framework Guidance as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Councillor Craig Walker left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

47. FIFE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 12

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Planning which sought approval of the Fife Development Plan Scheme, 12th edition for publication and approval of future arrangements for subsequent editions of the scheme.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) approved the Fife Development Plan Scheme, 12th edition for publication, deposit and copying to Scottish Ministers (Appendix 1); and
- (2) agreed to delegate non-substantive edits to the Head of Planning.

Councillor Craig Walker re-joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

48./

48. LEVEN RAILWAY BRIDGE WORKS - CAPITAL FUNDING

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services which sought approval for the assurance of additional funding of £1.904m to allow the Leven Railway Bridge (Bawbee Bridge) contract to be signed with Network Rail and the works to commence.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve additional funds of £1.904m to be funded from the Council's Future Construction Inflation budget.

49. CLIMATE CHANGE - PUBLIC BODIES DUTIES REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Planning which sought approval of Fife Council's annual submission of the Public Bodies (Climate Change) Duties Report for financial year 2021/22.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) approved the draft Public Bodies (Climate Change) Duties Report and instructed officers to submit this to the Scottish Government by 30th November, 2022;
- (2) noted the new reporting requirement to advise how the Council would align spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing carbon emissions as detailed in section 3d of the report; and
- (3) noted the availability of "Climate Knowhow" training for members.

50. REVIEW OF MOTHBALLING OF MILTON OF BALGONIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) which responded to the decision of the Cabinet Committee of 22nd September, 2022 by outlining the legal position regarding the previous decision to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School and clarified the position regarding any previously approved planning applications within the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area. The report also provided the detail of the August 2022 formal review of the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the terms of the report in respect of the matters that the Committee on 22nd September, 2022 asked to be addressed; those being the legal position regarding the previous decision to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School and clarification of any previously approved planning applications within the catchment area; and
- (2)/

- (2) agreed to continue with the existing mothballing arrangements for Milton of Balgonie Primary School;
- (3) agreed that, during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enroll at Milton of Balgonie Primary School would continue to be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they met the distance criteria; and
- (4) noted that a further review of the mothballing by the Education Service was to take place in June, 2023, reporting the outcomes to the earliest available Committee thereafter.

51. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES' MENTAL WELLBEING SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) which responded to the Cabinet Committee's request of 22nd September, 2022 "to undertake an urgent rapid review of the Council's support for mental health, particularly for young people through schools and bring a report back to the Committee as soon as possible".

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the current context of Fife young people's mental health needs following on from the Covid-19 pandemic and at a time where many families were experiencing financial pressures;
- (2) noted the overview of the strategic approach and the key actions taken with regards to provision of mental health support for young people through schools and partnerships; and
- (3) noted the next steps as detailed in the report.

Councillor Craig Walker left the meeting following conclusion of the above item.

The meeting adjourned at 12.00 p.m. and reconvened at 12.15 p.m.

52. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22 AND UPDATE 2022-23

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which was prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) publication, Treasury Management in the Public Services - Code of Practice and Cross Sectorial Guidance Notes which had been adopted by the Policy and Co-ordination Committee on 12th April, 2018. The report provided an update against the Annual Treasury Policy and Investment Strategy for both the previous year and the current year to date.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

53. RETIREMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources which asked members to note that the Chief Executive had advised of his intention to retire in June 2023 and to outline the recruitment process for a new Chief Executive.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) agreed to initiate a recruitment exercise for a new Chief Executive with membership of the Appointments Sub-Committee as detailed in paragraph 2.5 of the report; and
- (2) noted that the Appointments Sub-Committee would agree the process for the recruitment exercise with the salary in line with nationally agreed rates.

54. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT, FIFE INTERCHANGE NORTH, SANDPIPER DRIVE, DUNFERMLINE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services and the Senior Manager, Property Services which sought approval to the disposal of land at Fife Interchange North, Dunfermline extending to 1.89 ha or thereby.

Decision

The Committee approved the disposal of land extending to 1.89ha at Fife Interchange North, Sandpiper Drive, Dunfermline on terms as set out in the report and otherwise all on terms to the satisfaction of the Head of Business and Employability Services and the Head of Legal Services.
