

THE FIFE COUNCIL - CABINET COMMITTEE - BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

8 February 2024

10.00 am - 12.40 pm

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, James Calder, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Graeme Downie, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall (substituting for Councillor Carol Lindsay), Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes (substituting for Councillor John Beare), Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Kathleen Leslie (substituting for Councillor Dave Dempsey), Rosemary Liewald, Ross Vettrano, Craig Walker 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, Steven Paterson, Solicitor, Helena Couperwhite, Committee Services Manager and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; Pam Ewen, Head of Planning Service, Bill Lindsay, Service Manager (Policy and Place), Alastair Hamilton, Service Manager (Development Management), Dominic Mennie, Lead Officer and Craig Walker, Lead Officer Planning Service, John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation and Mark Dewar, Service Manager (Roads and Lighting Contracts), Roads and Transportation Service, Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services, Morag Millar, Strategic Growth and City Region Deals Manager and Ronnie Hair, Property Investment and Development Manager, Business and Employability Services; John Mills, Head of Housing Services and Gavin Smith, Service Manager (Housing Access), Housing Service, Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service and Peter Duncan, Allotments Officer, Communities and Neighbourhoods Service.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Christine McLean, Head of Cultural Heritage and Wellbeing and Gavin Grant, Service Development Team Leader (Collections), Fife Cultural Trust.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors John Beare, Dave Dempsey and Carol Lindsay.

Change of Membership - The committee noted that Councillor Allan Knox had replaced Councillor Jonny Tepp as a member of the Cabinet Committee.

202. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Alycia Hayes declared an interest at para. 213 - Tay Cities Region Deal - University of St. Andrews - Eden Enterprise Centre - as she had recently taken up employment at St. Andrews University.

203. MINUTES

- (i) Minute of the Cabinet Committee of 11 January 2024.

Decision

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

- (ii) The Education Appointment Committee minute of 22 January 2024 was submitted for noting.

Decision

The minute was noted.

204. BUDGET PLANNING 2024-27 - UPDATE

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing an update on the financial implications for the council's General Fund Revenue Budget position for 2024-25 to 2026-27 following the publication of the Scottish Government's budget and the Local Government Finance Settlement and also providing an update on all other budget planning matters.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the minor revision to the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and
- (2) noted the information contained within the report and the strategy and the approach to setting a balanced budget for both the General Fund Revenue and HRA budgets.

205. FIFE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EVIDENCE REPORT

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Service presenting the Fife Local Development Plan Evidence Report for consideration prior to its submission to full Fife Council for approval.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) agreed the Fife Local Development Plan Evidence Report and referred it to full Fife Council for approval as required by statute;
- (2) delegated non-substantive edits to the Head of Planning Service; and
- (3) delegated a small number of substantive edits including the following:-
 - Annex 5 - Summary of Areas of Dispute - adding statements from Homes for Scotland regarding the proposed site assessment methodology and criteria; and
 - Section 13 - the implications for the new LDP highlighted throughout the Evidence Report to be repeated in Section 13 to assist readers and provide the Gate Check reporters a ready compiled list.

Councillor Craig Walker joined the meeting during discussion of the above item.

206. FIFE COUNCIL PLANNING SERVICE ENFORCEMENT CHARTER 2024

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Service seeking approval of the Fife Council Planning Service Enforcement Charter confirming the approach to planning enforcement to be adopted by Fife Council Planning Service for the next two years.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the proposed Enforcement Charter 2024;
- (2) delegated to the Head of Planning Service to finalise and publish the Charter; and
- (3) agreed that a report be submitted within the next four months to the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee providing a progress report and the details of the enforcement process and policy.

207. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services setting out the legal framework for housing access and proposing a review of the housing allocations policy. The aim of the review would be to simplify the council's approach to prioritising applicants for housing in the knowledge that the council would experience a shortage in social rented housing for many years to come.

Decision

The committee agreed:-

- (1) the proposals to establish a short life Task and Finish Group with cross party and wider stakeholder membership, including tenant and resident engagement;
- (2) to review the allocations approach as well as the policy framework, including an assessment of the benefits of moving to a Choice Based Lettings Approach; and
- (3) that the review should be time limited, evidence based and focused on addressing current and anticipated housing pressures with a report back to Cabinet Committee following completion of the Task and Finish Group remit in the autumn.

208. LEVEN REGENERATION - ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK CAPITAL FUNDING

The committee considered a report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services providing an update on the delivery of the Levenmouth Connectivity Project - Active Travel Network (Phase 1) - as part of the River Leven Regeneration Programme.

Decision

The committee noted that:-

- (1) Option 3 in the Business Case was the preferred delivery approach for Phase 1 of the Active Travel Programme;
- (2) to realise £1.558m of funding from Sustrans Scotland by the deadline of 31 March 2024:
 - (a) the active travel works within and around the new station at Leven had been awarded to Network Rail, of which £1.035m was programmed to be delivered this financial year, as part of an overall contract of £2.100m;
 - (b) three active travel links on the approaches to the new stations at Leven and Cameron Bridge were to be delivered through Roads and Transportation Services' Road Maintenance and Civil Engineering Minor Works Framework at a cost of £0.523m, subject to contractor availability;
 - (c) delegated authority was sought for this spend as an urgent decision given the deadlines for delivery in this financial year and the time limited opportunity to realise Sustrans funding. The paper provided the required report to Cabinet Committee after the exercise of urgent decision making powers; and
- (3) the remainder of the Phase 1 active travel works would also be delivered through Roads and Transportation Services' Road Maintenance and Civil Engineering Minor Works Framework at an estimated cost of circa £4.804m.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 am and reconvened at 11.50 am.

209. ALLOTMENT & COMMUNITY GROWING STRATEGY 2024-2029

The committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service seeking approval for the Allotment and Community Growing Strategy 2024-2029, noting the monitoring and reporting of the strategy and action plan.

Decision

The committee agreed:-

- (1) the Allotments and Community Growing Strategy 2024-2029 but noted that there would be further work on resourcing, integration with other strategies and the council's approach to decentralisation with a further report back to Cabinet Committee in due course; and
- (2) that a report be submitted to the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee in six months providing an update on the progress of the Strategy.

210. MUSEUMS COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2024-2028

The committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service seeking approval of the Collections Development Policy for the Museum collections for the period 2024 to 2028.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) delegated to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service to amend section 16 of the Policy to clarify the disposal procedure to confirm the role of the Fife Cultural Trust Board and partner directors;
- (2) agreed that a further bullet point be included within page 3 of the Policy taking into consideration ethical and reputational issues; and
- (3) approved the updated Museums Collections Development Policy 2024-2028

Councillor Fiona Corps left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

211. FIFE'S UK SHARED PROSPERITY INVESTMENT PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Place), seeking approval for the updated Fife's UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan 2022/25.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the updated Fife's UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan and the interventions for 2024/25;
- (2) noted that there would be an Annual Report to the UK Government in Quarter 1 of 2024/25 with the outturn for 2023/24;
- (3) delegated to the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Services) and (Place) to deliver Fife's UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan within the operational parameters set out in the funding award; and
- (4) agreed that Councillors be encouraged to lobby the UK Government for future continuation, clarity and streamlining of the system.

212. OUTSTANDING REMITS FROM COMMITTEES

The committee considered the list of outstanding remits from committees.

Decision

The committee noted the list of outstanding remits from committees.

The committee resolved, under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in para. 6 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Having declared an interest in the following item, Councillor Alycia Hayes left the meeting at this stage.

213. TAY CITIES REGION DEAL - UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS - EDEN ENTERPRISE CENTRE (PRIVATE REPORT)

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services seeking approval to enter into a legal agreement with the University of St. Andrews to part fund the delivery of an Enterprise Hub within Building 3 at Eden Campus, Guardbridge.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted that further to previous reporting at the Policy and Co-ordination Committee, a formal Heads of Terms agreement was entered into in February 2022 between the council and the University of St. Andrews setting out the basis upon which the council would invest towards the creation of an Enterprise Hub within Buildings 9 and 9A comprising part of the wider Eden Campus;
- (2) noted that, as a result of capital delivery costs, the University would now deliver the Enterprise Hub within an alternative building (Building 3) at the Eden Campus site;
- (3) noted that outline design proposals had been completed up to RIBA Stage 2 for Building 3 which included an outlined budget cost plan which confirmed the estimated capital cost; and
- (4) approved the contribution of the original sum currently allocated within the capital plan noting that this required to be converted to revenue as no asset would be acquired by the council and also noted that further investment, secured through commuted payments under section 75 planning agreements, and further funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would also form part of the council's total contribution to the Hub.