

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – BLENDED MEETING

Council Chamber, 6th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

20 February 2025

**10.00 am – 12 pm
and 12.45 pm – 4.05 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Leishman (Provost), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Blair Allan, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Karen Beaton, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Rod Cavanagh, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Jean Hall Muir, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes, Cara Hilton, Stefan Hoggan, Gary Holt, Andy Jackson, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, David MacDiarmid, Julie MacDougall, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Gordon Pryde, Bailey-Lee Robb, David Ross, Sam Steele, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Craig Walker, Darren Watt, Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE: Councillor David Graham.

The Provost, Councillors Beare, Ross, Calder and Watt, referred to the recent sad passing of Councillor Ross Vettraino and paid tribute to the distinguished public service rendered by him. Thereafter, a minute's silence was observed in memory of Councillor Vettraino.

153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Caffrey made a transparency statement in regard to paragraph 154 below – General Fund Revenue Budget 2025 – 2028 (budget saving CM-019) - as he had previously been employed by a third party provider.

154. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2025 - 2028

In connection with the consideration of the General Fund Revenue Budget 2025-28, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services advising of the terms of section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which restricted the voting rights of elected members who were in arrears in respect of the payment of community charge or council tax. The report also referred to the provisions of the Councillors' Code of Conduct which enabled members to participate, discuss and vote on matters relating to the setting of the council tax without the need to declare a financial interest, notwithstanding that members might have an interest in any item of expenditure;

2025 FC 221

- (b) Local Government Finance Circular No.10/2024 providing details of the provisional total funding allocations for each council for the financial year 2025-26;
- (c) report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services which provided members with sufficient information to enable the council to approve a budget for 2025-28 as required by statute; and
- (d) Administration's Motion and Revenue Budget Proposals 2025-28.

Administration Motion

Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Craik, moved as follows:-

“That the Council:-

1. Approves the report by the Executive Director, Finance & Corporate Services and the resolution for the levying and collection of council tax and rates for the year 2025-26 as detailed below and specifically:-
 - a. notes the details of the provisional settlement announced by the Scottish Government as outlined in Finance Circular 10/2024, and the terms of the settlement as outlined in the letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government, dated 4 December 2024;
 - b. agrees a rise of 8.2% council tax to be levied for the financial year 2025-26 at Band D equivalent and the revenue budget which can be sustained by this level of income;
 - c. note the indicative levels of expenditure, subject to further detailed analysis in respect of the financial years 2026-27 and 2027-28;
 - d. note the prudential indicators will be approved alongside the Capital Investment Plan review;
 - e. agree an additional contribution of £9.596m to the Fife Health & Social Care (H&SC) Partnership in respect of additional funding contained in the settlement;
 - f. note the heightened level of future financial risk and uncertainty
 - g. agrees that the council set for 2025-26 the council tax at £1,498.76 for valuation Band D properties and proportionately for other Bands; and
 - h. approve the terms of the Administration's Budget Statement and the attached appendices and investment proposals.
2. Agrees that early work commences in relation to the development of options for the preparation of the 2026-27 and 2027-28 revenue budgets.

RESOLUTION FOR THE LEVYING AND COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX AND RATES FOR THE YEAR 2025-26

Fife Council resolves for the financial year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 as follows:-

- (i) in terms of Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf to set the amount of council tax to be paid in their area in respect of a chargeable dwelling listed in valuation Band D at £1,498.76 and to determine the amounts for all the valuation bands as follows:-

Valuation Band	Council Tax
A	£999.17
B	£1,165.70
C	£1,332.23
D	£1,498.76
E	£1,969.20
F	£2,435.49
G	£2,935.07
H	£3,671.96

- (ii) in terms of sections 7 and 7B of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, to levy within their area the non-domestic rate as prescribed by the Scottish Ministers and in accordance with the relevant Non-Domestic Rates (Levying) (Scotland) Regulations.

SNP Amendment

Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Glen, moved as follows:-

“That the council:-

1. Approves the report by the Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services) and the resolution for the levying and collection of council tax and rates for the year 2025-26 as detailed below and specifically:-
 - (a) notes the details of the provisional settlement announced by the Scottish Government as outlined in Finance Circular 10/2024, and the terms of the settlement as outlined in the letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government, dated 4 December 2024;
 - (b) agrees a rise of 6.4% council tax to be levied for the financial year 2025-26 at Band D equivalent and the revenue budget which can be sustained by this level of income;
 - (c) note the indicative levels of expenditure, subject to further detailed analysis in respect of the financial years 2026-27 and 2027-28;
 - (d) note the prudential indicators will be approved alongside the Capital Investment Plan review;

2025 FC 223

- (e) agree an additional contribution of £9.596m to the Fife Health & Social Care (H&SC) Partnership in respect of additional funding contained in the settlement;
 - (f) note the heightened level of future financial risk and uncertainty;
 - (g) agrees that the council set for 2025-26 the council tax at £1,473.83 for valuation Band D properties and proportionately for other Bands; and
 - (h) approve the terms of the SNP Group's Budget Statement and the attached appendices and investment proposals.
2. Agrees that early work commences in relation to the development of options for the preparation of the 2026-27 and 2027-28 revenue budgets.

RESOLUTION FOR THE LEVYING AND COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX AND RATES FOR THE YEAR 2025-26

Fife Council resolves for the financial year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 as follows:-

- (i) in terms of Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf to set the amount of council tax to be paid in their area in respect of a chargeable dwelling listed in valuation Band D at £1,473.83 and to determine the amounts for all the valuation bands as follows:-

Valuation Band	Council Tax
A	£982.55
B	£1,146.31
C	£1,310.07
D	£1,473.83
E	£1,936.45
F	£2,394.97
G	£2,886.25
H	£3,610.88

- (ii) in terms of sections 7 and 7B of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, to levy within their area the non-domestic rate as prescribed by the Scottish Ministers and in accordance with the relevant Non-Domestic Rates (Levying) (Scotland) Regulations.

The meeting adjourned at 12.00 pm and reconvened at 12.50 pm.

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 40 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Karen Beaton, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Margaret Kennedy,

2025 FC 224

Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougall, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 31 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Blair Allan, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.

155. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2025-35

In connection with the consideration of the Capital Investment Plan 2025-35, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services which provided members with sufficient information to approve a capital plan for the period 2025 – 2035; and
- (b) Administration's Motion and Capital Investment Plan Proposals 2025-35.

Administration Motion

Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Craik moved as follows:-

“That the council:-

- i. note the pressures on the capital plan since the last capital plan review;
- ii. note the clear relationship between the capital plan and the revenue budget;
- iii. note that the assumptions relating to future funding levels will be kept under review;
- iv. agree that the next biennial review of the capital plan will be carried out during 2026-27;
- v. approve the Administration's Capital Investment Plan for 2025-35 in line with the attached investment proposals; and
- vi. approve the Prudential Indicators 2025-28 which have been prepared to reflect the attached Capital Investment Plan.”

SNP Amendment

Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Barratt, moved as follows:-

“That the council:-

- i. note the pressures on the capital plan since the last capital plan review;
- ii. note the clear relationship between the capital plan and the revenue budget;
- iii. note that the assumptions relating to future funding levels will be kept under review;
- iv. agree that the next biennial review of the capital plan will be carried out during 2026-27;
- v. approve the SNP Group Capital Investment Plan for 2025-35 in line with the attached investment proposals; and
- vi. approve the Prudential Indicators 2025-28 which have been prepared to reflect the attached Capital Investment Plan.”

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 40 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Karen Beaton, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougall, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 32 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Blair Allan, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxil Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Sam Steele, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.

The meeting adjourned at 2.40 pm and reconvened at 2.50 pm.

2025 FC 226

156. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2025 - 2026 (INCLUDING OPTIONS FOR THE HRA & GENERAL FUND HOUSING ACCOUNT (GFHA) RENTS AND CHARGES)

In connection with the consideration of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025-26, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) joint report by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Finance which brought forward budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account with a view to determining rent levels and other charges which would apply during 2025-26; and
- (b) Administration's Motion on the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2025-26.

Administration Motion

Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Erskine, moved as follows:-

“That the council:-

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025-26 report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance and agrees the following:
 - a. Approves a rental increase of 6% for 2025-26 HRA rents and charges for 2025-26.
 - b. Approves a rental increase of 6% on Homelessness Temporary Accommodation to keep rental increase on the General Fund Housing Account in line with increases on HRA rents and charges for 2025-26.
 - c. Approves the terms of the Administration's HRA budget statement attached.

FIFE COUNCIL

HRA REVENUE BUDGET 2025-26

	2025-26 £m
Estimated Budget Gap in Year as per report by Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services	8.560
Investment/Financing Costs (CFCR) supporting Capital Investment	0.505
Revised Budget Gap	9.065
Proposed Savings	
Increased income generated by 6% Rental Increase	(8.616)
National Insurance funding contribution from General Fund	(0.449)
Revised Budget Gap	0.000

Decision

The council approved:-

- (1) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025-26 report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance;
- (2) a rental increase of 6% for 2025-26 HRA rents and charges for 2025-26;
- (3) a rental increase of 6% on Homelessness Temporary Accommodation to keep rental increase on the General Fund Housing Account in line with increases on HRA rents and charges for 2025-26; and
- (4) the terms of the Administration's HRA budget statement above.

157. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2025-29

In connection with the consideration of the Housing Revenue Account: Capital Investment Plan 2025-29, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) joint report by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Finance which brought forward budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account: Capital Investment Plan 2025-29 aligned to council priorities for investment in component replacements, wider works and new affordable housing; and
- (b) Administration's Motion and Capital Investment Plan Proposals 2025-35.

Administration Motion

Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Erskine moved as follows:-

"That the council:-

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Plan 2025-29 and, in particular, agrees the following:-
 - a. the proposed investment of £210.739m over the four years 2025-29 for Wider Works which maintains existing HRA assets;
 - b. the proposed investment of £239.412m to extend the Affordable Housing Programme to March 2029 and the additional borrowing required to support this; and
 - c. the proposed investment of £4.810m to extend the Property Acquisitions Programme to March 2026 and the additional borrowing required to support this."

SNP Amendment

Councillor Goodall, seconded by Councillor Backhouse, moved as follows:-

"That council approves the Housing Revenue Account Capital Plan 2025-29 in principle, including (a) the proposed investment of £210.739m over the four years 2025-29 for Wider Works which maintains existing HRA assets; (b) the proposed investment of £239.412m to extend the Affordable Housing Programme to March 2029 and the additional borrowing required to support this; and (c) the proposed investment of £4.810m to extend the Property Acquisitions Programme to March 2026 and the additional borrowing required to support these programmes.

2025 FC 228

Council notes that the current financial assumptions supporting the proposed allocation of funding between the Affordable Housing Programme and the Property Acquisitions Programme are based on the application of the subsidy arrangements, set out by the Scottish Government, on the current policy balance between new build homes and acquisitions;

Council notes that to remodel the balance between acquisitions and new build would require the capital plan to be revisited, in terms of the impact on borrowing and a re-determination of the numbers of houses that can be built or acquired. This is not capable of being re-modelled in advance of the budget deadlines and without Scottish Government engagement; and

Therefore, council agrees that the Cabinet Committee should receive a report on the options for the policy balance of new builds and acquisitions following the determination of the overall budget by council, so that the Cabinet Committee can make the final decision on the balance of the allocation of funds. Council agrees that one of the options contained in the report should be an increase of property acquisitions.”

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 39 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Karen Beaton, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 32 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Blair Allan, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Julie MacDougall, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Sam Steele, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.