

MINUTE VOLUME

24 April 2024

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MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 28 February 2024.

Present:

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

Provost Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement); Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Anthony McReavy, Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust; Lesley Bairden, Head of Finance and Resources (Chief Financial Officer)(HSCP); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Paul Parson, Principal Accountant; Barry Tudhope, Democratic Services Manager; Jennifer Graham, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

753. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023

754. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 13 December 2023.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

755. The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Appointments Committee – 11 December 2023;
- (b) Cabinet – 14 December 2023;
- (c) Appointments Committee – 17 January 2024;
- (d) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 18 January 2024;
- (e) Cabinet – 25 January 2024;
- (f) Education Committee – 1 February 2024;
- (g) Cabinet (Police and Fire) – 8 February 2024;
- (h) Licensing Committee – 13 February 2024;
- (i) Planning Applications Committee – 14 February 2024;
- (j) Local Review Body – 14 February 2024;
- (k) Cabinet – 22 February 2024; and
- (l) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 22 February 2024.

CABINET – 14 DECEMBER 2023 – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

756. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 14 December 2023 (Page 713, Item 690 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), recommending adjustments to the Programme as at 30 September 2023 in light of developments that had arisen since the Programme had been approved.

In response to questions the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) confirmed that, in relation to the extension at Overlee House, an additional source of funding had been identified but some legal restrictions required to be dealt with prior to the project going back out to tender. The Director of Education confirmed that the Crookfur Primary School extension had been delayed due to a retendering process but the school would continue to be managed within the available space until the extension was operational. Thereafter, the Head of Accountancy advised that construction costs in Scotland remained higher than those in England leading to increased tender quotes for a number of projects. She added that monitoring reports would provide regular updates on committed costs.

The Council noted:-

- (a) and approved the movements within the Programme;
- (b) the shortfall of £0.238m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis; and
- (c) otherwise, the comments made.

CABINET – 14 DECEMBER 2023 – HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

757. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 14 December 2023 (Page 714, Item 691 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the Housing Capital Programme be approved, the Council considered a joint report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Director of Environment, monitoring expenditure as at 30 September 2023 against the approved 2023/24 Programme.

In response to a question, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) clarified that there was no start date for external structural works as the Scottish Government was currently in the process of revising the Scottish Housing Net Zero Standard which may have an impact on the type of work to be carried out. He added that only essential works would be carried out before the outcome of the consultation was known.

The Council noted:-

- (a) and approved the current movements within the Programme; and
- (b) the shortfall of £0.097m and that income and expenditure on the Programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 JANUARY 2024 – INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2023/24 – QUARTER 3

758. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 18 January 2024 (Page 726, Item 705 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the organisation for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report, the Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer reporting on the Treasury Management activities for the quarter ending 31 December 2023.

The Council agreed that the organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report.

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 FEBRUARY 2024 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024-25

759. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 22 February 2024 (Page 766, Item 751 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 be approved, including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and the amended list of organisations for investment of surplus funds in accordance with Annex E to the report; that the policy on the repayment of Loans Fund advances as specified in Section 3.4 of the report be approved; and the forms of investment instruments for use as permitted investments in accordance with Annex C to the report be approved, the Council considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, reporting on the Treasury Management Strategy for the financial year 2024/25.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 be approved, including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and the amended list of organisations for investment of surplus funds in accordance with Annex E to the report;
- (b) to approve the policy on the repayment of loans fund advances as specified in Section 3.4 of the report; and
- (c) to approve the forms of investment instruments for use as permitted investments in accordance with Annex C to the report.

Variation in Order of Business

In accordance with Standing Order 20, and with a view to making the most effective use of officers' time, Provost Montague agreed to consider Motions (Item 6) at the end of substantive business.

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERNERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BODIES AND COMMITTEES

760. The following statement was made:-

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

Councillor Pragnell provided an update from the last meeting of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) held on 31 January 2024.

Councillor Pragnell reported that there had been detailed discussion on the HSCP's financial position, including current challenges and the measures being taken to make savings and to mitigate the current deficit of £4.5 million. She added that the following year would be very challenging and the position would continue to be refined to inform budget proposals in March, but it was expected that the level and range of services provided by the HSCP would need to reduce. She added that the IJB recognised the Council's commitment in terms of financial support and ongoing discussions with the Health Board had been positive.

Thereafter, she reported that the new Adult Carers Strategy; the revised Participation and Engagement Strategy; and the new Promise model had all been approved by the IJB and a full update on The Promise would be presented to Council in April.

The Council noted the statement.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

761. The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting on 13 December 2023.

The Council noted the report.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST 2024-25 BUSINESS PLAN

762. The Council considered a report by the Director of Education, seeking approval for the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCL) 2024-25 Business Plan.

The Business Plan identified the projected resources and/or expenditure of the Trust; the Trust's current delivery structure; a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified; and a proposal for the next Annual Service Payment. The Business Plan had been developed through consultation with staff, board members and stakeholders to strategically plan how the Trust would deliver quality services and an exciting portfolio of culture and leisure programmes whilst building its resilience, sustainability and brand; and a number of strategic aims had been identified.

The Business Plan gave clear strategic direction in accordance with the Council's strategies and took account of the successful recovery following the pandemic and the current financial pressures across the Council. It was supported by detailed operational plans to deliver the Council's objectives under the Community Plan, Fairer East Ren Plan and Outcome Delivery Plan and to support tackling inequalities within communities and to guide the work of the Trust and its staff to deliver high quality services for residents.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust confirmed that there were no plans to close any facilities in 2024/25.

The Council approved the proposed East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust 2024-25 Business Plan, subject to confirmation of the Council budget.

RESERVES POLICY

763. The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) proposing for consideration an updated Reserves Policy for the Council.

The report explained that it was regarded good financial practice that the Council had a documented and approved Financial Reserves Policy, making reference to Local Authority Accounting Practice (LAAP) Bulletin 99 published in July 2014 which provided advice from CIPFA on local authority reserves and balances. Having clarified that the proposed policy reflected key messages from that bulletin, the report referred to their practical application within the Council.

Whilst commenting on related issues in further detail, the report made reference to the various types of reserves operated by the Council, following which the importance of clarity on the rules and responsibilities in respect of governance of the Council's funds and reserves was referred to. The governance arrangements in respect of the General Fund Non-Earmarked Reserve and Earmarked Reserves were summarised, following which it was clarified that the Policy would be reviewed no less frequently than 3-yearly.

The Council agreed that the Reserves Policy be approved.

FINANCIAL PLANNING 2024-2030

764. The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), on the updated Outline Revenue Financial Plan for 2024-2030.

The report explained that capital planning was undertaken over a rolling 10 year period, reflecting the contents of the Capital Investment Strategy and the need to plan infrastructure over an extended period, adding that, although the Council had been unable to prepare and publish detailed 3 year budget plans due to the recent production of single year budgets by the Scottish Government, the Council continued to maintain a rolling 3 year departmental budget to assist with its Outcome Delivery Plans and produced a Financial Planning document each year.

Whilst commenting on related issues in further detail, the report explained that the Council aimed to resume multi-year detailed budget setting as soon as the UK and Scottish Government settlement provided sufficient medium term clarity; and would continue to submit longer term financial outlooks and associated financial plans at the annual budget meeting. Further information was provided on the financial outlook, including in relation to grant funding if a Council Tax freeze was agreed; the Scottish Government's spending review; and costs associated with introduction of the National Care Services (NCS)

(Scotland) Bill. A number of demand pressures were highlighted and further information was provided on capital infrastructure, city deal, and legislative changes in relation to education services; participatory budgeting; welfare reform; net zero carbon targets; and wider political societal and economic changes which would all impact on future financial planning.

Further information on the Outline Revenue Financial Plan was provided, including in relation to the latest local government settlement figures, and a number of mitigating actions which had been taken by the council had been highlighted, including in relation to community planning and the Council's strategy; digital transformation; partnership working; service reductions; income generation; and use of reserves.

The report highlighted that it was essential that financial plans were updated regularly in line with the Council's agreed financial policy of basing decision on an assessment of medium to long term needs and consequences, particularly in view of the significant financial and demand pressures facing the Council over the current and next six years.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) that the continuing budget pressures anticipated in the next 6 years and mitigating actions proposed be noted; and
- (b) that the Outline Revenue Financial Plan 2024-2030 be approved.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL REVENUE ESTIMATES 2024-25

765. The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) on the outline revenue estimates of income and expenditure as the basis for the Council Tax declaration for 2024-25. A copy of the Revenue Estimates 2024-25 was appended to the report.

The report outlined the revenue budget process, commented on the Scottish Government's Grant Funding for 2024-25, and explained that in determining the grant distribution the Scottish Government had again put in place the "Floors" arrangement to ensure year-on-year grant stability at individual council level. Under this arrangement, the Council would contribute £2.769m by way of deduction from Aggregate External Finance (AEF) grants in 2024-25.

Having commented on Non-Domestic Rates income, the report referred to the financial outlook and the practice in recent years of setting multi-year budgets. Given the ongoing financial outlook, it was proposed that the Council continued to adopt a longer-term financial planning approach, but as multi-year Scottish and UK Government settlements were not available, it was proposed to agree plans only for 2024-25. Officers would continue to model departmental figures for 2025-26 and beyond and update figures as set out in the Council's report on Financial Planning 2024-30 for longer-term planning purposes. It was anticipated that a move back to full multi-year budgets would take place once multi-year planning figures had been announced by the UK and Scottish Governments.

Taking account of a range of matters, the report referred to a total initial budget shortfall of £11.992m for the coming year. Additional grant funding had been offered to Councils which opted to freeze Council Tax charges for 2024-25 and the £3,148m available to East Renfrewshire equated to slightly less than a 5% Council Tax increase. Referring to the May 2022 Scottish Spending Review figures, a flat cash settlement was forecast for 2025/26, with a 0.9% uplift anticipated for 2026/27.

If the Council applied the Council Tax freeze and received grant compensation, the budget gap would reduce to £8.844m for 2024-25.

It was explained that budgets were closely monitored throughout the year and the latest monitoring had forecast a non-COVID related underspend of £4.087m by the year-end. As set out in the report, the general reserve was forecast to be at least £10.745m at 31 March 2023. This represented 3.43% of the Council's annual revenue budget and was an increase on the level held at 31 March 2023. As a result of the Scottish Government permitting Councils a new fiscal flexibility in relation to accounting for debt on PFI/PPP style service concession projects over a longer period, the Council received a one-off benefit of £14.812m as at 31 March 2023. This money was used to set up a new earmarked reserve and it was agreed that this fiscal flexibility should be fully utilised in the next three years to mitigate the impact of the expected flat cash settlements.

It was explained that a further £5m of the outstanding 2024-25 savings requirement could be deferred on a short term basis by a drawdown from the new fiscal flexibility resources reducing the budget shortfall to £3.844m. The remaining fiscal flexibility resource would be utilised to assist with budget pressures in 2025-26. In addition, application of the fiscal flexibility would produce a recurring revenue benefit which had been recognised in the base position for 2024-25.

It was highlighted that whilst the Council continued to make every effort to minimise impact on front line services, the cumulative impact of successive real terms cuts in grant settlements meant that the scope for further efficiencies to be identified was significantly reducing. Nevertheless, £1.122m (36%) of the Council's savings proposals for 2024-25 related to efficiencies or to the Council's digital Transformation Programme and the focus on the Council's 5 capabilities.

The report then summarised total proposed departmental budgets for 2024-25. Reference was also made to the continuing impact of Welfare Reform on Council services. As these changes, particularly Universal Credit, were still being rolled out, the budget for 2024-25 included contingency provision to help the Council make the necessary investment to support the changes and to progress measures to mitigate their impact on the public. As the financial impact of the changes was clarified in future years, the contingency provision would continue to be allocated to appropriate service areas.

Reference was also made to the assumed Council Tax collection rate of 98% for 2024-25 and reserves and balances issues, particularly the General, Modernisation, Insurance, Equalisation, and Repairs and Renewal Funds, Capital Reserve, Devolved School Management Reserve, unspent Covid-19 Grants Reserve, Service Concessions Flexibility, and Workforce Restructuring Fund. Having referred to efficiency issues and the equality impact assessment carried out on the budget saving measures, the report concluded by indicating that the Revenue Estimates appended to the report were based on a Council Tax Band D level of £1,415.22 being set for 2024-25, representing a Council Tax freeze compared to 2023-24.

Provost Montague then invited Councillor O'Donnell to speak on the proposals outlined in the report.

Councillor O'Donnell stated that the budget which he presented today would continue to deliver for the people of East Renfrewshire despite the very real funding challenges facing the council. He referred to the Verity House agreement which had been hailed as a historic new partnership with Scottish councils but added that the harsh reality for local government in Scotland was a cash cut of more than £62million to revenue funding and a £55million cash cut to capital funding. In addition, the settlement provided did not offer full compensation for the Scottish Government's decision to freeze council tax which could cost councils an additional £156million nationally. It was recently reported that additional funding may be provided to councils but this wouldn't be clarified until after the UK budget was announced in April. He added that, whether additional funding was to be provided or not, cuts would still be required in

East Renfrewshire which would harm important services, including those to help residents who continued to feel the effects of the Cost of Living crisis. However, the Council would continue to focus on the matters most important to local residents including education; improving local roads; protecting green spaces and caring for vulnerable people.

Councillor O'Donnell referred to the Scottish Government Grant Settlement for 2024/25, which had increased since last year, some of which would be used to fund employee pay increases and some of which had been ringfenced for specific purposes. He added that, taking account of inflation, the settlement equated to a real-terms cut, and the council was facing a budget shortfall of £12million for the year ahead.

Although the money provided by the Scottish Government to freeze Council Tax fell short of the additional funding required, Councillor O'Donnell proposed that Council Tax should be frozen in East Renfrewshire in 2024/25. In order to close the funding gap, the council would use £5million from reserves and a further £3.1million of savings would be made, the majority of which had been unanimously agreed by Councillors in December 2023. The report before Council today proposed an additional £900,000 of proposed savings with an additional £700,000 being taken from the general reserves fund to close the funding gap completely.

Councillor O'Donnell expressed concern about the effect the ongoing financial challenges would have on the vital frontline work provided by the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) due to increased demand, adding that the council had supported the HSCP with an additional £6million funding during the current financial year. He added that the HSCP continued to face financial challenges in the coming year which could lead to the reduction, or cessation, of some services, with the focus remaining on providing statutory services. The council would contribute £69.5million to health and social care services in East Renfrewshire in 2024/25 and would continue to support the IJB and HSCP to ensure the best possible outcomes for our communities.

Referring to tougher savings challenges ahead, Councillor O'Donnell proposed that funds from reserves which had been boosted by a short-term reduction in employer's pension contributions should be moved to a separate fund which could be used to invest in future council projects. Thereafter, he stated that the council remained determined to plan for a better future for all our residents which included continued investment in local communities and early years services; opening of the Neilston Learning Campus; publication of the Get to Zero climate action plan; and helping the most vulnerable in our communities, including older people and people with long-term conditions. He emphasised that staff across the council and HSCP often went above and beyond to deliver vital services and he thanked them for their continued efforts and for demonstrating the council's value of Ambition, Kindness and Trust. He also thanked trade union partners for their valuable input during the budget process.

In conclusion, Councillor O'Donnell referred to the difficult decisions which had to be made, adding that the Council would continue to prioritise delivery of the services which mattered most to residents and would continue to show ambition in building new schools and leisure centres; delivering new council housing and spending additional money on resurfacing local roads and protecting green spaces. Councillor O'Donnell's motion, to accept the recommendations within the report, was seconded by Councillor Anderson.

Provost Montague then asked Councillor Buchanan to propose his amendment which was circulated at the meeting. Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Ireland, moved the following amendment:-

Savings Proposals 2024/25

Description of Saving	Pre-agreed 13 December 2023	Further Proposals 28	2024125 Total	Deferral
BUSINESS OPS & PARTNERSHIPS	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	YIN
HR/Payroll: Staff reductions			55	
Customer First: Reductions in service Revenues	55.4		133	
& Benefits: Restructure	132.7		109	
Business Support & Accounts Receivable: Restructure	109.0		62	
CCD: Staff & service reductions	62.0		41	
Citizens' Advice Bureau: Reduce support	40.6		10	
Water Direct: Introduce deductions	10.0		51	
ICT Contracts savings	51.0	50.0	50	
Increase Registration & Duke of Edinburgh fees		2.5	3	
	460.7	52.5	514	
EDUCATION				
Primary Teacher: Remove Equity Mgmt Time Allocation			54	
Reduction other staff groups (excluding teachers) in EI-C/school	54.0		170	80 only
Reduction in centrally based business support & budget teams	170.0		86	
Reduction in Centrally Based Support Posts	86.0		109	
Reduction in Catering Services (ELC & Schools)	109.0		510	
Reduction in centrally managed budgets which support schools	510.0		15	
ELC - Delay in eligibility for statutory entitlement	15.0		40	
Removal of funding for junior conservatoire	40.0		3	
Income generation - School meals price increase	3.0		25	
Remove balance of R&R funding re ICT Tech Refresh Reduction in Janitorial	25.0		-400	
Reduction in Cleaning (ELC & Schools)	-400.0		131	
Reduction in Psychological Services	131.0		334	
Removal of Early Intervention & Prevention resource	334.0		37	
	37.0	43.0	43	
	1,114.0	43.0	1,157	
ENVIRONMENT				
Increased Income/Staff reductions Planning/Building Standards	100.0			
Increase Rents - Temporary Accommodation	40.0		100	
Housing: Reduce CAB funding	42.0		40	
Prevention Services	12.0		42	
Reduction in School Crossing Patrol Service	170.0		12	
Close Connor Road Young Persons Accommodation			170	
Increase Factoring Fees		1.	170	
Environment Dept Staff Reductions		0.61	61	
		.0	61	
	534.0	62.0	596	495
OTHER				
Corporate Budget Management (additional savings target)		800.0	800	
	0.0	800.0	800	
TOTAL SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2024125	2,108.7	957.5	3,067	495

Councillor Buchanan proposed that increased support be taken from the general reserve, increasing this figure to £1.577million, which would allow the proposal to include the potential underspend of £800,000 as an upfront pressure to be deferred. He added that delaying a decision on the 2024/25 service reductions, savings annotated with a "Y" in that above table, until the April Council meeting to allow the potential additional funding following the March UK

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budget to be considered, would alleviate/remove some of the pressures outlined. He further proposed that an additional £1million from the Pension windfall money be allocated to the IJB to support vital services during transition and enable prevention/innovation support without adding to current workload pressures.

In supporting the amendment, Councillor Ireland added that it was sensible to wait until after the UK budget announcement before making some final decisions in order to take unnecessary pressure off of services in the short term.

Thereafter, Members were heard in support of both the motion and amendment.

On the roll being called, Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Cunningham, Devlin, Edlin, McLean, Provost Montague, Councillors Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell, and Wallace voted for the motion and Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 11 votes for the motion and 7 votes for the amendment, the motion was declared carried and the Council:-

- (a) Noted that the revenue estimates for 2024/25 (Annex A) had been prepared with the budget gap of £11.992m, closed on the basis of a Council Tax freeze funded by £3.148m of additional grant support, the utilisation of £5.000m of resources made available through Service Concession Flexibilities agreed by the Scottish Government, a draw of £0.777m on general reserves, and savings proposals of £3.067m (Annex B);
- (b) Noted that £2.109m of the listed 2024/25 savings had already been agreed by Council;
- (c) Noted that a 1% change to the level of Council Tax set would produce an adjustment of £0.676m to the level of income available;
- (d) Noted that gross outstanding budget gaps for 2025/26 and 2026/27 had been estimated at £15.147m and £5.110m respectively, before application of any new savings, utilisation of fiscal flexibilities, drawdown from general reserves or increases in Council Tax in these years;
- (e) Noted the estimated funding gaps of £6.326m, £2.184m and £2.638m also faced by the Integration Joint Board (IJB) in respect of social care in 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27;
- (f) Agreed that the management of the Council's finances and services would continue to be undertaken on a longer term basis;
- (g) Agreed the Council Tax Band D level for 2024/25;
- (h) Agreed the utilisation of reserves and the savings to be implemented for 2024/25;

- (i) Agreed to establish a new Investment in the Future reserve to hold the funds available due to the short term reduction in employer's pension contributions, with officers working with the Budget Strategy Group to bring forward proposals to Cabinet during the year for utilisation which would benefit the Council in future: and
- (j) Agreed that, where possible, savings for implementation in 2025/26 which required significant preparatory work should be brought back for approval later in the year to permit this to be undertaken timeously.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

766. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 1 March 2023 (Page 427, Item 359 refers), when the Council had approved an update to the Capital Investment Strategy, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) seeking approval of the Capital Investment Strategy.

Taken together with the Treasury Management Strategy report, it provided background information on the scale, objectives, affordability and risks associated with the Council's capital plans. A copy of the Strategy, which all councils were required to prepare, was appended to the report specifying the long-term capital ambitions of the Council and associated resource implications and risks, having been compiled with regard to these requirements, the Prudential Code 2021 and the Treasury Management Code of Practice 2021.

Having clarified that the Strategy adopted a corporate approach to long-term capital planning beyond the span of the Council's current capital plans, taking direction from the Outcome Delivery Plan and other key plans and strategies, the report confirmed that Council-determined objectives within the strategy would be driven forward by the Corporate Management Team working with partner organisations and local communities to ensure investment aligned to strategies, and that performance was measured against expected outcomes. A long-term strategic and financial view was considered essential for resilience in uncertain times and the strategy would be updated as required. A prudent approach to affordability and risk would continue to be taken with delivery of projects being closely monitored at officer and Elected Member level.

Against the background of the Council's significant capital investment ambitions, the strategy, together with the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Plan and Revenue Estimates and financial planning reports, set out how these would be funded and managed.

The Council agreed to approve the Capital Investment Strategy.

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PLAN 2024-25 – 2033-34

767. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 1 March 2023 (Page 428, Item 360 refers) when the Council had approved the General Fund Capital Plan 2023-24 – 2032-33, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) seeking approval of the General Fund Capital Plan covering the 10 years from 2024-25 to 2033-34. A copy of the plan, prepared in line with the approach within the Capital Investment Strategy, accompanied the report.

It was reported that substantial borrowing had been planned over the next three years to support the capital plan and the revenue consequences had been factored in to the Council's revenue budget. The expenditure plan for subsequent years would continue to be subject to review in light of progress on capital receipts and the levels of funding provided by the Scottish Government

The Council approved the programme for 2024-25 and authorised officers to progress the projects contained therein.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – RENT SETTING 2024-25

768. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 1 March 2023 (Page 428, Item 361 refers), when the Council had approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2023-24, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment making recommendations in relation to proposed rent and service charge increases for Council housing in 2024-25.

Having referred to the need to review legislative requirements, local priorities, related costs and what would be sustainable, affordable and acceptable to tenants when determining the level of rent increase required, the report clarified that a key legislative challenge for the Council in recent years had been meeting and maintaining the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), in addition to which sustainability improvements to the energy efficiency rating of its housing stock under the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) had been required. A review of the ESSH started in February 2023, with a view to strengthening and realigning the standard with net zero requirements. An update was published by the Scottish Government in November 2023 and was currently out for consultation until 12 March 2024 seeking views on a new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) in Scotland which had created uncertainty around planning major improvement works as the review could change the direction of works required to meet new and proposed energy efficiency standards. These challenges were in addition to addressing routine requirements such as "Right to Repair" commitments; planned maintenance; managing the housing waiting list; and enforcing tenancy conditions in relation to estate management and anti-social behaviour.

The report explained that assessments should be made to determine if the proposed increase was affordable and it was confirmed that approval of the proposed rent increase of 5.9% for 2024-25 effective from April 2024 did not breach available guidance limits. The report commented on related matters further, including in relation to sheltered housing service charges, contribution from reserves, and HRA Business Plan. It was reported that pressures on the business plan for 2024-25 could require the service to draw up to £775k from reserves, although a payment into the reserves of approximately £450k was planned during 2024-25 and 2025-26 from the Strathclyde fund pension windfall which would mitigate the planned drawdown.

In response to questions, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) confirmed that the level of rent increase proposed was the lowest affordable increase required to meet service needs and the Scottish housing standard, adding that the authority remained the most affordable housing provider in the area.

The Council agreed that:-

- (a) a 5.9% increase be applied from April 2024;
- (b) a 5.9% increased be applied to the sheltered housing warden charge;
- (c) a 5.9% increase be applied to communal heating and laundry charges; and

- (d) up to £775k from HRA reserves be available to support 2024-25 revenues.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

769. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 1 March 2023 (Page 429, Item 362 refers), when the Council had approved the Housing Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2032-33, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval of Housing Capital Projects for 2024-25 and to note the proposed 10-year Housing Capital Programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34.

The report clarified the position on various matters, including how the programme had been focused on the need to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH).

The majority of expenditure for the housing capital programme during 2024-25 and beyond related to the need for housing to continue to meet SHQS, deliver energy efficiency measures and net zero standards, and to provide homes that meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants and prospective tenants.

Planned improvements which were being implemented included investment in central heating, electrical re-wiring, replacement of fire alarm detectors and external structure projects and the commitment to provide an additional 171 new Council homes by 2028.

In response to questions, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) advised that issues which arose within sheltered housing complexes were often technically complicated and more expensive to resolve due to the addition of communal areas. He advised that there would be a review of Sheltered Housing Complexes over the next 12 months and warden services would be changed from analogue to digital to improve the service provided.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the proposed Housing Capital Programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34; and
- (b) to authorise the Director of Environment to progress the projects listed for 2024-25.

CHIEF OFFICER RECRUITMENT

770. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking to homologate recruitment arrangements for the Head of Housing & Property; and to put arrangements in place to ensure continuity and stability within the Chief Executive's Office and seek approval for an Appointments Committee for the Head of Finance post.

It was reported that the Head of Housing, Property & Climate Change had intimated that he intended to resign with effect from 5 April 2024, and that the Head of Accountancy had intimated that she would retire with effect from September 2024.

In order to minimise the impact to services, there had been a requirement to proceed with advertising the Head of Housing & Property post as soon as possible and an Appointments Committee had been set up. The post title had been changed to be more reflective of the current role, and interim arrangements would be put in place by the Director of Environment until a successor was appointed.

As the Head of Accountancy had intimated her intention to retire, a review of roles and responsibilities within the Chief Executive's Office had taken place with responsibility for procurement moved into the Head of Service role which would be renamed Head of Finance, and an Appointments Committee would be established to shortlist and interview candidates.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the resignation of the Head of Housing, Property & Climate Change with effect from 5 April 2024 and the retirement of the Head of Accountancy from September 2024;
- (b) to homologate the recruitment procedure for the Head of Housing & Property as detailed;
- (c) to approve the changes to the Head of service remit for the Head of Finance;
- (d) to bring an external advisor in to support officers with the assessment centre for the Head of Finance post;
- (e) to confirm the appointments of Councillor Anderson, Councillor Buchanan, Councillor O'Donnell, and Councillor Pragnell to the Appointments Committee for the Head of Finance;
- (f) to note that the Conservative group would also nominate a member to the Appointments Committee for the Head of Finance;
- (g) to delegate to the Head of HR and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Director of Environment and Chief Executive to make the necessary arrangements for both recruitments;
- (h) to authorise the Director of Environment to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Department; and
- (i) to authorise the Chief Executive to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Chief Executive's Office if required.

FIREWORK CONTROL ZONES

771. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships providing a briefing on new legislation regarding fireworks, the duty this placed upon the Council and setting out an approach for managing "Community Requests" for Firework Control Zones.

The report referred to national guidance to support local authorities to consider and designate firework control zones in their areas including in relation to consulting with communities, publishing additional information and exemptions. It was proposed that the process would be overseen by the Safe East Ren sub-group which would include consideration of community requests.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the new local authority powers to set up “Firework Control Zones” under the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022; and
- (b) to delegate to the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, via the Safe East Ren group, to work with local partner agencies to put in place suitable arrangements for Firework Control Zones in line with national guidance.

NOTICE OF MOTION – DISPOSABLE VAPES

772. In accordance with Standing Order 27, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor Macdonald, seconded by Councillor Lunday:

East Renfrewshire Council recognises and appreciates the collaborative work undertaken by the Conservative led UK government, the Labour led Welsh government and the SNP led Scottish government in bringing about a collective ban on disposable, single use vapes as part of wider legislative changes to tackle nicotine addiction.

As no amendment had been submitted, the motion was declared carried.

PROVOST

MINUTE
of
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 9.30am in the Committee Room, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 4 March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Provost Mary Montague

Councillor Kate Campbell

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

Attending:

Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services and Caitriona McAuley Director of Environment

Apology:

Apologies were given by Councillor Betty Cunningham.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

773. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

HEAD OF HOUSING & PLACE

774. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 February 2024 (Page 781, Item 769 refers), the committee took up consideration of applications for the post of Head of Housing and Property.

Following full consideration the committee agreed that 6 candidates be shortlisted for assessment.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 7 March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader) Councillor Danny Devlin
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair) Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Scott Simpson, Head Of Libraries & Information Services; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Paul Parsons, Principal Accountant; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies:

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

775. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

776. The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) providing monitoring information on both income and expenditure as at 31 December 2023 against the approved General Fund Capital Programme, recommending adjustments were possible.

The report projected total expenditure of £45.192m and resources of £44.989m, predicting a budget shortfall of £0.203m. This was largely due to rising construction costs due to shortages of materials and labour and also bidders factoring in additional risk when pricing. The shortfall would be managed and reported within the final accounts for the year.

In discussing the report, the Principal Accountant agreed to provide further information to Councillor Devlin regarding the drop in expenditure related to the St Mark's Car Park.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) **recommended that Council** approve the movements within the 2023/2024 programme;
- (b) **recommended that Council** note the shortfall of £0.203m and that this would be managed and reported within the final accounts for the year; and
- (c) noted that the Principal Accountant would provide Councillor Devlin with further information regarding the drop in expenditure in relation to St Mark's Car Park.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

777. The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) providing monitoring information on both income and expenditure as at 31 December 2023 against the approved Housing Capital Programme, recommending adjustments where required.

The report projected total expenditure of £5.609m and resources of £5.509m, predicting a budget shortfall of £0.100m. This was largely due to rising construction costs due to shortages of materials and labour and also bidders factoring in additional risk when pricing. The shortfall would be managed and reported within the final accounts for the year.

In discussing the report, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) provided clarification on the current status of renewal of heating systems.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) **recommended that Council** approve the movements within the 2023/2024 programme; and
- (b) **recommended that Council** note the shortfall of £0.100m and that this would be managed and reported within the final accounts for the year.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGY 2024-2029

778. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the draft Public Library Strategy 2024-2029.

The Council's previous Public Library Strategy had ran from 2019 to 2022. The report presented a draft strategy to cover the period 2024-2029 which set out the vision and strategic direction for public libraries, aligning closely with the aims of the "Forward Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025".

The draft Strategy was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and its contents were summarised in the report.

In discussing the report, Councillors were broadly supportive of both the Strategy and the operation of the Council's libraries and the job they did in communities. There was some discussion around the review of operating hours and consultation that would take place around that. It was also pointed out that a report on the Cultural Strategy would come to Cabinet in April/May of 2024.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the draft Public Library Strategy 2024-2029; and
- (b) noted that a report on the Cultural Strategy would come to Cabinet in April/May 2024.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 12 March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Paul Edlin (Chair)
Provost Mary Montague*

Councillor David Macdonald*

Councillor Edlin in the Chair

(* indicates remote attendance)

Attending:

Nicola McEleny, Solicitor; Jillian McGrain, Senior Officer (Private Sector); Michelle McCarroll, Lead Officer (Tenant and Customer); Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; Jennifer Graham, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Inspector Graeme Gallie and Sergeant Lisa Brown, Police Scotland.

Apology:

Councillor Andrew Morrison.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

779. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the Committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SHORT TERM LET APPLICATION

780. The committee considered a report by the Director of Environment regarding an application for a Short Term Let Licence under the terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) act 1982 (Licensing of Short-term Lets) Order 2022 (agenda item 3 refers).

The applicant was present.

The objectors, having been invited to the meeting, were not present.

The applicant was heard in respect of the application and in response to questions.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the Committee, having taken account of the objections received and the information provided by the applicant, agreed that the application for a Short Term Let licence be granted.

PRIVATE HIRE CAR OPERATOR'S LICENCE (APPLICATION FOR GRANT) AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE (APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL)

781. Under reference to the minute of the Meeting of 13 February 2024 (Page 749, item 731 refers), when the committee agreed to continue consideration of the application to allow for a person appearance, the Committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement) in relation to an application for the grant of a Private Hire Car Operator's Licence and the renewal of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (agenda item 4 refers).

The applicant, have been invited to the meeting, was not present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Sergeant Brown, representing the Chief Constable, who had made an out of time objection to the application, were present.

In the applicant's absence, the committee agreed to hear the out of time objection by the Chief Constable.

Sergeant Brown was heard in respect of the objection submitted by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from members.

The Committee, having taken account of the objection by the Chief Constable, agreed that the applications be refused on the grounds that the applicant was not a fit and proper person to be the holder of such licences.

PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S AND OPERATOR'S LICENCES – REQUEST FOR SUSPENSION

782. The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal & Procurement in relation to a request for suspension of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence and a Private Hire Car Operator's Licence under Paragraph 11(1) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Agenda Item 5 refers).

The applicant was present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Sergeant Brown representing the Chief Constable, who had requested the suspension, were present. It was reported that the Chief Constable had requested the suspension on the grounds that the licence holder was no longer a fit and proper person to be the holder of these licences, and requested suspension of the licences in terms of Paragraphs 11(2)(a) and 11(2)(c) of the Schedule on the grounds that the carrying on of the activity to which the licences related was likely to cause a threat to public safety.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the committee to decide what weight it wished to attach to the request by the Chief Constable and its relevance to the types of licence held.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

Following discussion, the committee agreed not to suspend the licences.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 14th March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Betty Cunningham

Councillor Paul Edlin

Councillor McLean in the Chair

Attending:

Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision)(*); Julie Nicol, Planning and Building Standards Manager; Alan Pepler, Principal Planner (Development Management); Karen Barrie, Principal Strategy Officer; Derek Scott, Planner; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer; Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance

Apologies:

Councillor Andrew Morrison

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

783. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

784. Under reference to its meeting on 14 February 2024 (page 751, item 734 refers), the Committee considered a report by the Director of Environment on an application for planning permission requiring consideration by the Committee.

It was agreed that the applications be determined as indicated at Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute, particular reference being made to the following:-

- (i) 2022/0719/TP –Erection of residential development of 39 detached dwellings (to include retention of existing listed farmhouse) with associated access roads, landscaping, open space and other required infrastructure at Former Lyoncross Farm, Aurs Road, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire.

The Planning and Building Standards Manager was heard in relation to the report, which had been continued at the previous meeting of the Committee to allow for a site visit.

She outlined further information on the relevant planning policies and assessments and stated that the proposal was considered to not comply with the terms of the development plan, including NPF4 and LDP2.

Concerns were also expressed around the effect the development would have on the Dams to Darnley Country Park.

It was clarified that a site visit had taken place with the members present in attendance on 29 February 2024, at which members had viewed the site and the view from Dams to Darnley Country Park.

There was discussion among members around the levels of required housing in the Barrhead area, as well as some of the specific information provided about the site, including information on potential effects on education catchments, and developer contributions to social housing and affordable housing provision.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to approve planning permission, subject to the conditions identified in the report and the completion of a Section 75 agreement respect of developer contributions to social housing.

CHAIR

APPENDIX

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Draft index of applications under the above acts to be considered by Planning Applications Committee
on 14th March 2024.

Reference No: 2022/0719/TP

Ward: 1

Applicant:

Briar Homes
205 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
Scotland
G2 5QD

Agent:

Scott Graham
16 Robertson Street
Glasgow
Scotland
G2 8DS

Site: Former Lyoncross Farm Aurs Road Barrhead East Renfrewshire

Description: Erection of residential development of 39 detached dwellings (to include retention of existing listed farmhouse) with associated access roads, landscaping, open space and other required infrastructure.

Please click [here](#) for further information on this application

MINUTE
of
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 9.00am in the Council Chambers, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 26 March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Councillor Cunningham

Councillor Kate Campbell
Provost Mary Montague

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

Attending:

Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services and Caitriona McAuley Director of Environment.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

785. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

HEAD OF HOUSING & PROPERTY

786. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 February 2024 (Page 781, Item 769 refers), the committee proceeded to interview 1 of the shortlisted candidates who had been selected for interview following the assessment centre exercise that had taken place.

Having conducted the interviews the committee, after discussion, agreed to offer the post to M Rodgers.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 28 March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader) Councillor Danny Devlin
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair) Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Andrew Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Michaela Sullivan, Head of Place(*); John Marley, Principal Traffic Officer; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Paul Parsons, Principal Accountant; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Democratic Services Assistant.

(*) indicates remote attendance

Apologies:

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

787. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2023/24

788. The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) detailing the estimated projected revenue budget out-turn for 2023/24 and providing details of the expected year-end variances together with summary cost information for each of the undernoted services as at 31 December 2023 and subsequent assessment of pressures arising.

- (i) Education Department;
- (ii) Contribution to Integration Joint Board;
- (iii) Environment Department;
- (iv) Environment Department – Support;
- (v) Chief Executive's Office;
- (vi) Chief Executive's Office – Support;
- (vii) Business Operations and Partnerships Department;
- (viii) Business Operations and Partnerships Department – Support;

- (ix) Other Expenditure and Income;
- (x) Joint Boards;
- (xi) Corporate Contingency;
- (xii) Health and Social Care Partnership; and
- (xiii) Housing Revenue Account.

The Principal Accountant advised that on the basis of the information, and taking account of forecast Council Tax collection, a year end operational underspend of £2,617k was forecast on General Fund services and an overspend of £172k on the Housing Revenue Account. The reasons for departmental variances were set out in the report. He outlined that any such operational underspend at this year-end would assist the Council in meeting future years' budget challenges

It was noted that the above figures reflected that £7,067k of forecast COVID-related pressures would be covered by drawing on the Council's COVID grant resources and as a result did not impact on the operational budget position.

It was noted that the forecast outturn position could still be subject to significant change, for example if COVID pressures increased again. Conversely, it was hoped that management action to avoid any non-essential expenditure could increase the underspend at year end.

In addition, the report sought approval for a number of service virements and operational budget adjustments, details of which were outlined.

Following a brief discussion, the Cabinet agreed:-

- (a) to note the forecast underlying General Fund operational underspend of £2,617k together with the HRA operational overspend of £172k;
- (b) to note the continued financial pressures on operational services arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and that it was expected to cover those from the COVID grant reserve; and
- (c) to approve service virements and operational adjustments as set out in the notes to the tables on pages 15 to 32 of the report and note the reported probable out-turn position.

TRADING UNDER BEST VALUE

789. Under reference to the minute of the meeting of 23 March 2023 (Page 449, Item 382 refers) when the Cabinet approved that there were no trading services operated by the Council that should be classified as "significant", the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) which outlined that under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council was required to consider its trading operations and on an annual basis determine those which should be regarded as significant.

The Chief Accountant outlined that the report reviewed the activities for the financial year 2023/24. She advised that to be classed as significant, the trading operation could only apply to external trading and to those activities that were not statutory. In addition the service had to be provided in a competitive environment and the recharge had to be on a basis other than a straight forward recharge of cost. In reviewing an operation's classification, further tests of significance required to be taken into account, using financial and non-financial criteria. Having considered these conditions the result of the review was that, in line with last year, the Council had no significant trading operations in the current year.

Having heard from the Chief Accountant, the Cabinet approved that there were no trading services operated by the Council that should be classified as “significant”.

AMENDMENT TO CHARGING FOR SERVICES 2024/25

790. Under reference to the minute of the meeting of 14 December 2023 (page 715, item 692 refers), the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment advising of an administrative error in relation to the charging for services review process 2024/25 in relation to Burial Ground Services and seeking approval for the amended fees and charges for the service.

The Director of Environment explained that the 4.4% increase set out in the previous report had been applied to an incorrect version of the 2023/24 fees and charges. To rectify this, a secondary exercise had been carried out using the correct figures and the outcome of this was noted within Appendix 1 to the report.

After clarifying that the incorrect charges had not been applied to any members of the public as they did not come into force until 1 April 2024, the Cabinet approved the amended list of 2024/25 fees and charges relating to Burial Ground Services attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

791. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the preparation of a Parking Management Strategy that would include the introduction of parking charges in appropriate locations. The Strategy would be informed by feasibility studies and stakeholder engagement to assist with policies and decisions with the aim of supporting economic activity and placemaking in the area.

The Director of Environment set out the proposed programme of work required to prepare the Strategy and indicated that, following the feasibility study, it was expected that this would come back to Cabinet in March 2025.

There was discussion among members around previous times this issue had been considered, particularly in 2017 with a review of car parks. It was noted that this review would take a more extensive view of car parking, including on-street parking. It was also stressed that consultation on any proposed changes would be critical, with the Director of Environment agreeing to provide further details to the Leader on how elected members would be consulted as the programme was developed.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:

- (a) approved the undertaking of a programme of work to inform and develop a new Parking Management Strategy, related to policies and plans
- (b) confirmed support in principle for the introduction of parking charges in appropriate locations;
- (c) noted that a Parking Management Strategy and associated recommendations would be brought for Cabinet consideration by March 2025; and
- (d) noted that the Director of Environment would provide further details to the Leader of the Council on how elected members would be consulted as the programme of work was developed.

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL RESURFACING WORKS PROGRAMME 2024/25

792. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the Roads Resurfacing Works Programme for 2024/25, funded by an additional capital allocation as detailed in Appendix B to the report.

The proposed programme of works in relation to the general capital funding was attached as Appendix A to the report. The report detailed the method of prioritisation for resurfacing works and the factors taken into consideration.

In discussion, members noted that there was still some confusion among residents as to which works would be carried out and how they were reported. It was suggested that a quarterly update could be provided to the yearly schedule and this would be looked at by the department.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:

- (a) approved the Roads Resurfacing Works Programme for 2024/25 funded by the additional capital allocation as detailed in Appendix B of the report; and
- (b) noted that the Head of Environment (Operations) would investigate the possibility of sending a quarterly update on the yearly schedule out to residents.

CLARKSTON ACTIVE TRAVEL BRIDGE

793. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment on the Clarkston Active Travel Bridge, seeking approval to directly appoint Network Rail to design a new Active Travel Bridge across the railway at Clarkston adjacent to the existing B767 road bridge and install the Active Travel Bridge on site.

The report explained that the Clarkston to Muirend Active Corridor was currently under development, aiming to improve active travel infrastructure on the B767. The existing crossings of the railway at Clarkston had been identified as a key constraint to this process.

In response, the Council had worked with Network Rail to prepare a Development Services Agreement which would see Network Rail lead a project to develop an Active Travel Bridge, and the report asked for approval for an exemption to standard procurement procedures to allow the contract to be awarded directly.

The justification for the exemption was fully detailed in the report.

There followed discussion among members, where the timescales of delivery, expected for completion in late 2025, and the accessibility of the bridge was clarified.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:

- (a) approved in terms of Clause 23.6 of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, an exemption from Contract Standing Orders on the grounds of special circumstances to enable East Renfrewshire Council to appoint Network Rail; and
- (b) authorised the Head of Place to approve and sign the Service Level Agreement between East Renfrewshire Council and Network Rail.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 28 March 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Morrison (Chair)
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Vice Chair) *

Provost Mary Montague *
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Councillor Morrison in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Michelle Blair, Chief Auditor; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Anthony Jenkins, Resilience Coordinator; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Grace Scanlin, Ernst and Young.

Apologies:

Councillors Paul Edlin and Annette Ireland.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

794. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CHAIR'S REPORT

795. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 22 February 2024 (Page 765, Item 750 refers), when reference had been made to an absence management related meeting to be held between representatives of the Committee and the Head of HR and Corporate Services and HR Manager, Councillor Morrison confirmed that Councillors Wallace, Ireland and himself had attended the meeting on 25 March at which measures that management were taking to redress the current absence situation had been discussed. He confirmed that in addition to measures referred to in the absence management report the Committee had considered in January 2024, such as the appointment of the Health and Wellbeing Officer, a

revised and easier to follow staff sickness management policy and additional training for managers, other relevant matters had been discussed.

The Committee noted that, further to the discussions on 25 March, it was now intended that the 2023/24 Absence Management Annual Report would be submitted to the Committee earlier than usual to allow it to consider absence management issues again.

INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2023/24 – QUARTER 4

796. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 18 January 2024 (Page 726, Item 705 refers), when it had been agreed to note the Interim Treasury Management Report for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 and recommend to the Council that the organisations specified in the report for investment of surplus funds be approved, the Committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) on treasury management activities for the fourth Quarter of 2023/24.

The report explained that, in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Committee was responsible for ensuring effective inspection of the Council's treasury management activities in accordance with which the interim Treasury Management Report for Quarter 4 of 2023/24 was provided for consideration.

Whilst highlighting key aspects of the report, the Chief Accountant confirmed that long term borrowing had reduced slightly due to a small repayment, with none having been taken due to the high levels of rates currently offered. The Council continued to adopt a prudent approach to treasury management and, in particular, the percentage of loans with variable interest rates held in the first eleven months of the financial year was just over 7% and well below the Council's approved upper limit for this of 15%.

Having commented on short term investments which had decreased due to cash flows in both capital and revenue, the Chief Accountant highlighted the prudential indicators referred to in the report which helped confirm that capital investment plans and treasury management decisions remained affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that the Council was operating well within its limits.

Finally, she commented on the Council's list of counterparties which had not changed from the one for Quarter 3, and clarified that all investments were restricted to UK bodies with high credit ratings, with the maximum period of investment, in general, restricted to 6 months.

The Committee agreed:-

- (a) to **recommend to the Council** that the organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the report and related comments made.

STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS – BIENNIAL REPORT

797. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 September 2023 (Page 645, Item 600 refers), when the position on the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) and progress with risk management across the Council had been noted, the Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive regarding the most recent biennial update of the register and outlining the review conducted to rationalise risks within it.

The report referred to the Council's approach to risk management, and confirmed that the SRR appended to the report itemised key strategic risks considered and actions identified to manage these. Since a report on the SRR had last been considered by the Committee, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had led a significant review, further details of which were provided. It had included benchmarking the Council's approach with that of other local authorities, and considering the volume of risks and relationship between Council risk registers. The outcome was that there were now 15 risks on the SRR, 9 being recognised as high risk and 6 as medium risk. A summary of the changes made to the SRR, which included rewording these and their controls to ensure they were succinct and easy to understand, was also appended to the report.

It was clarified further that a number of risks previously documented on the SRR had been placed in appropriate departmental or project risk registers, and that as part of the regular CMT review of the SRR, Directors and the Chief Executive would discuss emerging and priority risks and changes required to the document. Departments and key projects were still expected to maintain appropriate risk registers capturing day-to-day or project specific risks, documentation of which would support the CMT's regular consideration of the SRR when potential escalations to the SRR would be considered as would emerging risks or concerns and opportunities or threats they presented. Other issues commented on included the Council's risk appetite, and progress on risk more generally, including an ongoing review of related training to identify opportunities to help ensure employees had sufficient knowledge and skills to carry out their roles under the Council's Risk Management Framework and Risk Management Strategy.

The Resilience Coordinator highlighted key aspects of the report, including on the approach taken to the review of the SRR, and how it was intended that the Register would act as the vehicle to highlight the greatest risks facing the Council. He confirmed that the most recent new risk added to the SRR in March 2024 reflected that a UK General Election could be called at short notice, and that the review of risk management training available and offered to employees would be coordinated through the CMT.

In response to questions, the Resilience Coordinator clarified that medium risks with a score below eight were considered to be better reflected on department, service or project risk registers. He added that risks that had been unchanged or were considered unlikely to change within twelve months would be considered in depth regularly, that there would be clear justification for risks remaining on the SRR, and that those included on any other public facing registers such as the one for the Integration Joint Board had been removed to reduce duplication and strengthen version control. The Chief Executive emphasised that the CMT and others has spent significant time on the in-depth review to ensure that the most appropriate approach to various risks was taken, confirming that departments would be asked to highlight their top risks moving forward which would be escalated to the SRR if appropriate. In response to further questions, he clarified that further description could be added to future reports on why risks were added to or removed from the SRR. Councillor Morrison commented that it would also be useful to review the format in which the change log was presented.

Having heard Councillor Buchanan welcome the outcome of the review and approach taken, the Chief Executive emphasised the importance of providing appropriate risk management training for officers, acknowledged the importance of a line of sight between different risk registers, and expressed confidence that the review had strengthened the approach taken to risk management. Councillor Wallace, supported by Councillor Morrison, welcomed the emphasis being placed on this and suggested it would be valuable for the Committee to receive a presentation at a future meeting on how the SRR was used in practice, such as by managers, which the Chief Executive stated he would be happy to arrange. It was noted that this could be included in the Committee's Work Plan for the year ahead.

Responding to Councillor Morrison, the Chief Executive confirmed that the need for the ongoing review of social care eligibility thresholds under the Supporting People Framework Action Plan to mitigate various risks had been discussed. He referred to forthcoming discussions arranged on resourcing care plans, the significant level of need for such plans, and the importance of reviewing them timeously not only to make further improvements to the approach taken but also because care needs could change over time.

The Committee agreed:-

- (a) that further description be added to future reports on why risks were being added to or removed from the Strategic Risk Register to complement the information already provided on this and that the format of the presentation of the change log to the Committee be reviewed;
- (b) that a presentation be made to a future meeting on how the Strategic Risk Register was used in practice, such as by managers, reference to which would be included in the Committee's proposed Work Plan for the year ahead;
- (c) that feedback be provided to appropriate senior officers on comments made at the meeting on the Strategic Risk Register for consideration; and
- (d) otherwise, to note the development of the Strategic Risk Register; that it was considered to be a live document; and that it would be updated and amended by the Corporate Management Team.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL – PROVISIONAL ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

798. The Committee considered a report by the External Auditor regarding the provisional Annual Audit Plan for the year ended 31 March 2024, which referred to the purpose of the Plan, the scope of and responsibilities associated with it, and related issues.

Whilst commenting on the financial statements audit, the report made reference to issues on which an opinion would be offered, such as if the statements gave a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2023/24 Code of Accounting Practice. It was clarified that the audit would include a review on the consistency of the other information prepared and published along with the financial statements; and determine with reasonable confidence whether the financial statements were free from material misstatement. With regard to the latter, reference was made to performance and planning materiality levels set, and the reporting threshold level established above which the External Auditor would report misstatements to the Committee. It was clarified that Best Value considerations would be integrated with wider scope annual audit work.

A summary was provided regarding three significant risks impacting on the audit of the financial statements, these being the risks of fraud in revenue and expenditure; of misstatement due to fraud and error; and in relation to the valuation of property, plant and equipment. Information was also provided on three inherent risks impacting on the audit of these statements which related to the valuation of pension assets and liabilities, the valuation of Private Finance Initiative (PFI)/Public Private Partnership (PPP) liabilities, and the implementation of International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16.

Amongst other things, the report highlighted areas of audit focus in relation to Best Value and the wider scope audit dimensions, making reference to financial sustainability in terms of the development of sustainable and achievable medium term financial plans; and a Best Value Thematic Review that would focus on workforce innovation.

Other issues commented on were key developments in the sector within which local authorities operated to inform the audit approach taken, which included the position on local government finances, the Scottish budget and Verity House Agreement. Further details were provided on the approach to be taken and assessment of risks regarding the financial statements, and the Best Value and Wider Scope audit work to be progressed. Required communications and the related timescales for these, and the 2023/24 audit fees and related issues, were amongst other issues commented on.

Ms Scanlin commented on key aspects of the Plan in advance of the approval of the financial statements later in the year, referring to the executive summary and more detailed information provided. Amongst other things, she highlighted the position on materiality assessment, including the reporting threshold set for reporting misstatements to the Committee which was now set at 5% of planning materiality. Other issues commented on included the new arrangements being made, in light of the publication of Audit Scotland guidance, to appoint external trustees to the Council's charitable trusts to remove the previous audit requirement; the inherent risk relating to the valuation of PFI/PPP liabilities representing significant balances in the Council's financial statements; the implementation of IFRS 16 through which assets being used by the authority under operating leases were likely to be capitalised along with an associated lease liability; and the focus to be placed on workforce innovation in terms of Best Value. Finally, Ms Scanlin referred to efforts to be made to minimise audit fees, and confirmed that audit work would include follow up work on the implementation of prior year audit recommendations.

In response to questions, Ms Scanlin confirmed, regarding the threshold above which the External Auditor would report misstatements to the Committee, that some issues may be reported below that level if a legitimate interest was expressed in an issue by the Committee or another. She also clarified that the sector cap for fees would be confirmed in the final Audit Plan and the position on related issues, commented that some developments under the Verity House Agreement, such as regarding multi-year budget setting, had not been implemented as expected, and clarified that the Best Value related work on workforce planning would focus on the deployment of digital technology and related transformation. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) clarified how audit work on the Council's charitable trusts would be carried out in future with assistance from Internal Audit. The Chief Auditor clarified that provision made for contingency work in the Internal Strategic Plan would be used to carry out the work involved.

The Committee noted the provisional Annual Audit Plan for year ending 31 March 2023 and timetable for the publication of related documents, including the Annual Audit Report for 2023/24.

INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024/25 – 2028/29

799. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Auditor on the Internal Audit Strategic Plan for 2024/25 to 2028/20, which included the proposed Annual Audit Plan for 2024/25 and reference to the indicative number of days to be spent in the following four years based on the risk assessed audit universe which lists all potential audits.

Having summarised the role of Internal Audit and clarified that the function operated in accordance with the revised Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and within the context of the Internal Audit Charter, the report explained that the Plan had been prepared following consultation with key partners, referred to risk related issues, and clarified, amongst other things, that the consultation process and risk assessment used to prepare the Plan sometimes resulted in new audits being added to the audit universe or being rescheduled for review in a different year, such as the contract and supplier management audit. Similarly,

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some audits had been deleted from the universe, such as if they were no longer applicable, had low risk assessments or had been merged with other audits, such as in relation to parks and other outdoor income.

It was clarified that 20 audit days had been included in the Plan for providing an internal audit service to the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, with the scope of audits to be carried out using these days to be agreed with the management of the Trust and members of its Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Resulting audit reports would be issued directly to the Trust's Chief Executive.

Referring to audit needs compared to resources available, the report explained that over the 5-year period of the Plan there was a projected shortfall of only 7 audit days, which was considered manageable but would be kept under review. The current staffing levels of the Internal Audit section were considered adequate at the time of writing the report, subject to one vacant post being filled in the first quarter of 2024/25, which had been assumed when calculating the number of audit days available, but would be kept under review.

In line with good practice, the Plan would be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year and could be adjusted in response to changes in audit resources or the Council's business, risks, systems and controls. Any such changes would be drawn to the Committee's attention as part of the quarterly reporting mechanism already in place.

The Chief Auditor provided further clarification on how the Plan was formulated from the audit universe, during which she confirmed that on the basis of consultation and known changes, one topic had been added and several topics had been removed because they were now considered low risk.

In response to questions, the Chief Auditor confirmed that the three Council Tax related audits to be progressed during the lifetime of the five year plan would cover changes approved by the Cabinet, such as relating to second home discounts, and clarified what the main focus of the housing allocation and homeless person accommodation audit would be.

The Committee agreed to approve the Internal Audit Strategic Plan for 2024/25 to 2028/29.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 3rd April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Jim McLean (Chair)	Councillor Chris Lunday(*)
Councillor Paul Edlin	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Annette Ireland	Councillor Andrew Morrison

Councillor McLean in the Chair

Attending:

Gillian McCarney, Head of Place; Julie Nicol, Head of Place; Alan Pepler, Principal Planner (Development Management); John Marley, Principal Traffic Officer; Ian Walker, Planner; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer; Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillor Betty Cunningham.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

800. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

801. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Environment on an application for planning permission requiring consideration by the Committee.

It was agreed that the applications be determined as indicated at Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute, particular reference being made to the following:-

- (i) 2022/0578/TP –Erection of 66.90 metre high (to hub height) wind turbine with formation of access track and siting of sub-station building at site 370m south of Nether Carswell Cottage, Kingston Road, Neilston, East Renfrewshire.

The Principal Planner (Development Management) was heard further on the report, in the course of which he summarised the 20 representations that had been received.

He provided further information on the relevant planning policies and assessments and stated that the proposal was considered to not comply with the terms of the development plan, including NPF4 and LDP2.

There was discussion among members around the amount of power generated by the proposed turbine and concerns over the size of the turbine.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to refuse planning permission, for the reasons set out in the report.

- (ii) 2023/0656/TP – Proposed residential development and neighbourhood centre with associated access, landscaping, open space and drainage infrastructure. (Amended/updated plans and information) at land at Balgraystone Road, Springfield Road and Aurs Road, Barrhead, G77 6PQ.

The Principal Planner (Development Management) was heard further on the report, in the course of which he explained that there had been 16 representations had been received for the application, and those were summarised.

He provided further information on the relevant planning policies and assessments and stated that the proposal was considered to be an acceptable departure from the terms of the development plan for the reasons set out.

In discussion, members were broadly supportive of the application.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to approve planning permission, subject to the conditions identified in the report, as well as the following additional condition:

Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved and unless otherwise agree in writing with the Planning Authority, no development shall take place until a scheme to provide for continuous active travel infrastructure along/adjacent to the full frontage of the development site on Springfield Road, and direct active travel connectivity from the approved housing areas to Springfield Road/Aurs Road/Balgraystone Road, is submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details of phasing to ensure that the approved works are implemented in association with the completion of adjacent housing.

Reason: To ensure that adequate and safe active travel and pedestrian connectivity is provided from the site to surrounding routes.

SECTION 33A NOTICE – 29 EAST KILBRIDE ROAD, BUSBY, G76 8JY – UPDATE

802. Under reference to its meeting of 14 February 2024 (page 753, item 736 refers), where this item had been deferred, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Environment on potential enforcement action to be taken in relation to the service of a notice under Section 33A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 in respect of unauthorised development at 29 East Kilbride Road, Busby, G76 8JY.

The Planning and Building Standards Manager set out the current position and presented the Committee with a range of options that could be taken in terms of enforcement action under Section 128 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

The members discussed the options, which were fully detailed in the report.

Following that discussion, Councillor McLean, seconded by Councillor Edlin moved that Option 1a be selected for action by the Council's Planning Department.

Provost Montague, who had moved that Option 1c be selected but did not receive a seconder for the motion, asked that her dissent be recorded.

Therefore, the Committee agreed that Option 1a be undertaken: to serve an enforcement notice seeking removal of both unauthorised outbuildings and fence from the site.

CHAIR

APPENDIX

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Draft index of applications under the above acts to be considered by Planning Applications Committee
on 3rd April 2024.

Reference No: 2020/0578/TP

Ward: 2

Applicant:

Mr Andy Brand
Nene Lodge
Funthams Lane
Whittlesey
United Kingdom
PE7 2PB

Agent:

Site: Site 370M South of Nether Carswell Cottage, Kingston Road, Neilston, East Renfrewshire

Description: Erection of 66.90 metre high (to hub height) wind turbine with formation of access track and siting of sub station building

Please click [here](#) for further information on this application

Reference No: 2023/0656/TP

Ward: 1

Applicant:

Cala Management Ltd
McLellan Works
274 Sauchiehall Street
Glasgow
Scotland
G2 3EH

Agent:

Andrew Woodrow
5th Floor
9 George Square
Glasgow
Scotland
G2 1DY

Site: Land at Balgraystone Road, Springfield Road & Aurs Road, Barrhead, G77 6PQ

Description: Proposed residential development and neighbourhood centre with associated access, landscaping, open space and drainage infrastructure. (Amended/updated plans and information).

Please click [here](#) for further information on this application

MINUTE
of
LOCAL REVIEW BODY

Minute of meeting held at 3,00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 3 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Paul Edlin
Councillor Annette Ireland

Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Andrew Morrison

Councillor McLean in the Chair

Attending:

Mark Brand, Planning Adviser; Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement); John Burke, Committee Services Officer; Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Betty Cunningham and Chris Lunday.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

803. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

The Chair advised that site visits had been held prior to the meeting.

NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2024/01 – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLINGHOUSE AND GARAGE AND ERECTION OF NEW DETACHED DWELLING AT 30 AYR ROAD, GIFFNOCK, G46 6RY (REF NO:- 2023/0310/TP).

804. The Local Review Body considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships relative to a ‘Notice of Review’ submitted by Mr Rehan Tahir against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the demolition of an existing dwellinghouse and garage and erection of a new detached dwelling at 30 Ayr Road, Giffnock, G46 6RY.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council’s Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

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The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as determined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice and the grounds for review.

The Planning Adviser further outlined proposed additional conditions to be attached to any consent in the event the Local Review Body overturned the decision of the Appointed Officer and granted planning permission.

Discussion took place, particularly around the conservation area, the effect of the deteriorating condition of the property on the area, and the sorts of properties that sat around the proposed site.

Following the discussion, and having heard from the Planning Adviser, Councillor McLean, seconded by Councillor Edlin, moved to overturn the Appointed Officer's decision and grant planning permission, subject to the conditions outlined by the Independent Planning Adviser. Provost Montague, seconded by Councillor Ireland, moved as an amendment that the Appointed Officer's decision be upheld and planning permission refused.

On a vote being taken by a show of hands, 3 members voted for the motion and 2 for the amendment. The motion was, therefore, declared carried.

Therefore, the Local Review Body agreed to overturn the Appointed Officer's decision and grant planning permission, subject to the standard conditions.

NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2024/02 – CHANGE OF USE FROM OPEN SPACE TO RESIDENTIAL GARDEN GROUND WITH DECKING ASSOCIATED WITH 38 WOODBANK CRESCENT, CLARKSTON, G76 7DR(REF NO:- 2023/0373/TP).

805. The Local Review Body considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr Craig and Mrs Alison Coyle against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the change of use from open space to residential garden ground with decking associated with 38 Woodbank Crescent, Clarkston, G76 7DR.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as determined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice and the grounds for review.

The Planning Adviser further outlined proposed additional conditions to be attached to any consent in the event the Local Review Body overturned the decision of the Appointed Officer and granted planning permission.

Discussion took place, particularly around the differences between open space and greenspace, and concerns around the views of neighbouring properties from the site.

Following the discussion, and having heard from the Planning Adviser, the Local Review Body agreed that the Appointed Officer's decision be upheld and planning permission refused.

CHAIR

819

MINUTE
of
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 9 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Paul Edlin (Chair)
Provost Mary Montague*

Councillor David Macdonald*
Councillor Andrew Morrison*

Councillor Edlin in the Chair

(* indicates remote attendance)

Attending:

Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement); Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; and Jennifer Graham, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Inspector Graeme Gallie and Sergeant Lisa Brown, Police Scotland.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

806. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CHANGES TO DRIVER'S KNOWLEDGE TEST

807. The committee considered a report by the Clerk to the Licensing Committee seeking approval to amend the current Knowledge Test by limiting it to a written test and to adopt the new process for all outstanding tests and those referable to new applications for driver licences for both private hire and taxis. (Item 3 refers).

The report explained that the committee had previously agreed that a process of testing be introduced to improve customer services standards which would be known as the "Knowledge Test" and would consist of a written and practical element. However, periods of long term staff absence, allied to the labour intensive nature of the practical process, had resulted in a backlog of tests.

In order to clear the backlog, maintain services standards of drivers, and to minimise future delays it was proposed that the process be limited to a written examination. This change would also allow the Licensing Enforcement Officer to devote more time to enforcement duties.

Following discussion, the committee agreed to authorise the Clerk to:

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- (a) revise the current Knowledge Test process and adopt a new written test format; and
- (b) utilise the new written process for all outstanding tests and test for new applications received in the future.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the Committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL

808. The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 4 refers).

The licensee was present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Sergeant Brown, representing the Chief Constable, who had made an out of time objection in respect of the application, were present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the Committee to decide if it wished to consider the out of time objection submitted by the Chief Constable and, if so, what weight it wished to attach to the objection and its relevance to the type of licence being applied for.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to consider the out of time objection and copies were circulated.

Sergeant Brown was heard in respect of the objection submitted by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from members.

The licensee was heard in respect of the objection and in response to questions from members.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the Committee, having taken account of the objection by the Chief Constable, agreed that the application for renewal be continued for six months.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 1.00pm in the Committee Room, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 15 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson
Councillor Kate Campbell

Councillor Tony Buchanan
Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

Attending:

Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services and Steven Quinn Chief Executive.

Apology:

No apologies were given.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

809. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

HEAD OF FINANCE

810. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 February 2024 (Page 781, Item 769 refers), the committee took up consideration of applications for the post of Head of Finance.

Following full consideration the committee agreed that 7 candidates be shortlisted for assessment.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting, held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on Thursday 18 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)
Councillor Tony Buchanan
Councillor Kate Campbell*
Councillor Danny Devlin
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)
Councillor Gordon Wallace
Ms Fiona Gilchrist
Ms Dorothy Graham

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Performance & Quality Improvement); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Graeme Hay, Senior Manager Leading Change (Education); and Jennifer Graham, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Kathleen McGuire, Quality Improvement Manager; Jo McGregor, QIA and Acting Head Teacher, Hillview Primary School; Margaret Allaway, Principal Teacher for Learning, Teaching and Assessment (3-18); Jacqueline Dunn, Head Teacher, Calderwood Lodge Primary School; Liz Matthews, Head Teacher, Kirkhill Primary School; and Christine Downie, Head Teacher, St. Luke's High School.

Apologies:

Mr Des Morris and Ms Evelyn Yedd.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

811. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

SEF WORKSTREAM 2 – LEARNING AND TEACHING SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION

812. The Head of Education Services (Performance and Quality Improvement) reported that the presentation would shine a light on aspects of work currently being supported by the Department's Strategic Equity Fund taking place across all educational establishments in order to improve outcomes for all learners. Three key themes had been identified to tackle the poverty related attainment gap, including learning and teaching, and she introduced Kathleen McGuire, Jo McGregor, Margaret Allaway and Jacqueline Dunn to provide further information on the input and impact of this workstream.

Ms McGuire gave a short overview of the workstream, advising that it was aligned to the wider improvement work within East Renfrewshire. She reported that a curriculum learning and teaching assessment reference group had been established in 2021 and one of the aims of the group had been to create and implement a curriculum for excellence vision for 2025. A 3-tiered approach had been introduced based on analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to align schools to the appropriate tier of support for their establishment. This approach was flexible and regularly reviewed to ensure establishments received the appropriate level of support. Improvement plans were put in place following collaboration with establishments, and all settings and staff were provided with access to up to date research and professional learning opportunities to bring about improvement.

Thereafter Ms Allaway and Ms McGregor provided further information on their role as team leads for the workstream. They advised that a digital platform had been developed for use by senior and middle leaders within schools, and provided further information on the wide variety of materials and self-evaluation tools which were available for use. Training had been provided on the platform and how it could be used within establishments, and support would continue to be provided for individual establishments as required, with drop in sessions being arranged as part of that process.

Referring to use of the platform within Calderwood Lodge Primary School, Ms Dunn advised that it had provided staff with the opportunity to clarify their current self-evaluation processes in order to continue to improve outcomes for learners. The toolkit had been amended slightly to fit the process for their school and a persona for learners had been developed to allow staff to get to know each child's individual needs better. She added that the platform had helped to support and guide staff and had improved the pace of change within the school.

Having heard members thank everyone who attended the meeting for an interesting and informative presentation, the Committee noted the SEF Workstream 2 – Learning and Teaching Spotlight Presentation.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT ON KIRKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

813. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the report produced by Education Scotland following its inspection of Kirkhill Primary School. A copy of the inspection report accompanied the report.

The inspection had been carried out in December 2023 and Education Scotland had evaluated two quality indicators and provided a short report which detailed the strengths and areas for improvement.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) provided further information in relation to the inspection process, reporting that an action plan had been developed to address the agreed areas for improvement, and introduced Ms Matthews who provided further information on the inspection.

Ms Matthews reported that pupils were highly motivated and enjoyed learning, and all teaching and support staff worked extremely hard to encourage an inclusive ethos within the school which had been recognised during the inspection process. It was further highlighted during the inspection that Senior pupils had been involved in the Young Leaders Learning Programme, and she was proud of work which had been undertaken within the school to encourage interest in STEM subjects. She added that children and families played a pivotal role in supporting the school ethos, and staff were well placed to take forward the action points referred to within the report. She concluded by thanking all teaching and support staff within Kirkhill Primary School for their efforts in ensuring that the school had received such a positive report, and also thanked pupils and families; the Education Department and QIO team; and Janice Collins and Kathleen McGuire for their ongoing support.

Having heard members commend the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the content of the Education Scotland report on Kirkhill Primary School; and
- (b) to approve the action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT ON ST. LUKE'S HIGH SCHOOL

814. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the report produced by Education Scotland following its inspection of St. Luke's High School. A copy of the inspection report accompanied the report.

The inspection had been carried out in December 2023 and Education Scotland had evaluated two quality indicators and provided a short report which detailed the strengths and areas for improvement.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) provided further information in relation to the inspection process, reporting that an action plan had been developed to address the agreed areas for improvement, and introduced Ms Downie who provided further information on the inspection.

Referring to the short model inspection which had taken place, Ms Downie expressed disappointment that the full model had not been used but was confident that the Quality Indicators which had not been evaluated during this inspection contained sector leading practice. She emphasised the school's strong focus on upskilling staff to ensure consistency across the school and referred to a project which had been introduced to encourage staff to further develop their skills make additional improvements. Although this was a very good report, she added that there would always be room for improvement and staff worked hard to consistently improve the outcomes for all pupils and to ensure that they felt valued and empowered. She referred to the school's collegiate approach to learning and the outstanding contribution which young people made to the school and wider community as part of their strong catholic ethos. In conclusion, Ms Downie thanked the Director of Education and Leadership Team; the QIO team; the Convener of Education and the Education Committee; and Janice Collins for their ongoing support. She also thanked all young people and staff within the school for their hard work, adding that everyone involved with the school would continue to be strategic, creative and innovative to ensure improved outcomes for all learners.

Having heard members commend the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the content of the Education Scotland report on St. Luke's High School; and
- (b) to approve the action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement.

DIGITAL LEARNING AND TEACHING PROGRESS

815. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 9 November 2023 (Page 674, Item 662 refers), when it was agreed, amongst other things, that a report on the impact of implementation of the digital learning and teaching strategy 2024-27, be submitted to the committee in due course, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing an update on the impact of, and links between, the digital learning and teaching strategy and the wider work of the department.

The report provided information on how the use of digital technology had impacted on the wider work of the department, categorised under the themes of Digital Equity; The use of inclusive digital technologies to raise attainment for learners with additional support needs; Impact on experiences and outcomes; and Parental engagement and involvement. Schools and early learning centres were able to make judgements and decisions around extending learning beyond the classroom by encouraging children to borrow devices for use at home, and significant departmental investment had enabled a device to be purchased for every child living in SIMD 1, 2 and 3. A Principal Teacher of Equity (Digital Inclusion) had been recruited to play a key role in supporting key equity groups to access a full curriculum and East Renfrewshire had been at the forefront of a project, in conjunction with Education Scotland, to develop accessibility features of devices in classrooms. In addition, all schools had either achieved or were working towards Digital Schools Awards, an externally recognised 3 step programme which assessed and recognised excellence in the use of digital technology in Schools and parental engagement had included providing informative sessions on online safety and introduction of the Safer Schools app for all establishments.

In conclusion, the report highlighted that work in this area was ongoing, particularly in relation to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and ensuring that the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy remained ambitious and forward-thinking to ensure that East Renfrewshire was at the forefront of digital education.

During discussion elected members advised that they would welcome a further presentation in the future, possibly separate from the main Education Committee, on the use of AI within schools.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) that the Director of Education, in liaison with the Chair, would arrange a further presentation on the use of AI within schools; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the continued progress of the delivery of Digital Learning and Teaching.

REVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE RATE FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE FUNDED PROVISION

816. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 17 August 2023 (Page 590, Item 537 refers) when the committee approved an increase in the sustainable hourly rate paid to Funded Providers, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing an update on a further review of the sustainable rate paid to Funded Providers for the provision of the Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) statutory entitlement and seeking approval for the payment of the new rate from 1 April 2024.

The report explained that, in 2023 CoSLA and The Scottish Government undertook a joint review of the sustainable rate setting process and a report was published in December 2023. In addition, The Scottish Government's Programme for Government had set out a commitment to deliver funding to enable childcare workers delivering the statutory entitlement in Funded Providers to be paid at least £12 per hour and this position was confirmed in The Scottish Government's budget set out in late 2023. It was therefore proposed that funding for this would be provided through an increase to the sustainable rate backdated to 1 April 2024.

The Committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the position of CoSLA and The Scottish Government with regards to the sustainable rate paid to Funded Providers;
- (b) approve an increase in the sustainable hourly rate to £6.32; and
- (c) request the Director of Education to arrange for the backdating of the new rate to Monday 1 April 2024.

WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE – UPDATE FOR 2024-25 AND BEYOND

817. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of plans for the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) following the national review of RICs undertaken by The Scottish Government and the associated reduction in funding for 2024-25 onwards.

The report explained that RICs were established in 2017 as a national initiative to bring about improvement for all schools in Scotland and a rapid review of the impact that RICs had had on supporting pupils and practitioners was announced in June 2023. The outcome of the review was published in January 2024, setting out six key themes, and a decision had been taken to taper funding for RICs and repurpose the funding to better support teachers in classrooms and to establish of a Centre for Teaching and Excellence. In 2024-25, RICs would receive 50% of the 2023-24 funding and discussions were ongoing within the West Partnership RIC to develop more detailed plans setting out the themes on which collaboration would continue and how to support these strategically and operationally in 2024-25 and beyond.

Having heard that CoSLA continued to raise concerns about cuts to funding for regional improvement collaboratives despite positive improvements having been made by these groups, and in particular the West Partnership, members advised that they wished to express their disappointment in this decision directly to the Scottish Government.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) that a letter be sent by the Chair, on behalf of the committee, to The Scottish Government expressing disappointment that funding for regional improvement collaboratives had been cut; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the report and comments made.

CHAIR