

**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

