

MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of virtual meeting held at 7.00pm on 16 December 2020.

Present:

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Annette Ireland
Councillor Paul Aitken	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Paul O’Kane
Councillor Barbara Grant	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Ian Harper, Stallan-Brand.

Apology:

Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

1471. Provost Fletcher reported that this year’s recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award was Alison McGown of Thornliebank Together for her work in tackling food poverty during the pandemic as well as other community work. He reminded Members that the winner was normally invited to attend this meeting to receive their award but this was not possible in the current circumstances. Arrangements had been made for him to meet Ms McGown informally on Friday 18 December but arrangements would be made for Ms McGown to attend a future meeting where she would be formally presented with her award.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1472. Provost Fletcher and Councillors Grant, Merrick and O'Kane declared a non-financial interest in items 1487 and 1488 below on the grounds that they were members of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board.

Councillors McLean and Miller declared a non-financial interest in item 1490 below on the grounds that they were friends of the landowner.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1473. The Council considered the Minutes of the meetings held on 28 October and 26 November 2020.

Councillor Macdonald referred to the discussions at the meeting on 28 October in relation to COVID-19 recovery actions, (Page 1308 Item 1412 refers). He stated that the Minute did not record comments he had made, questions he had asked of, and answers given by, the former Director of Education in relation to the use of floodlit outdoor pitches by Busby Amateur Football Club. In particular he highlighted that the club had made it clear they were prepared to use the pitches without access to buildings for toilet facilities and also to the possibility of portable facilities being made available similar to those used by construction workers at Busby Nursery. In this regard he directed Members to the video recording of the meeting.

In response the Democratic Services Manager reminded Members that Minutes were not a verbatim record of meetings, that members of the public were able to view Councillor Macdonald's contributions and the responses given in the video recording already available online, and that his comments about the omission of the matters outlined above would be recorded in this Minute.

Councillor Wallace having confirmed that he had received the information on Huntly Park, the Council:-

- (a) approved the Minutes; and
- (b) noted Councillor Macdonald's comments and the response by the Democratic Services Manager.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

1474. The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted, except as otherwise referred to in Items 1475 to 1479 below:-

- (a) Local Review Body – 4 November 2020;
- (b) Cabinet – 5 November 2020;
- (c) Education Committee – 12 November 2020;
- (d) Cabinet (Police & Fire) – 19 November 2020;
- (e) Cabinet – 26 November 2020;
- (f) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 26 November 2020;
- (g) Appointments Committee – 1 December 2020;
- (h) Planning Applications Committee – 2 December 2020;
- (i) Local Review Body – 2 December 2020;
- (j) Cabinet – 3 December 2020;

- (k) Licensing Committee – 8 December 2020; and
- (l) Appeals Committee – 9 December 2020.

CABINET – 26 NOVEMBER – GARDEN WASTE CHARGING PROPOSAL

1475. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 November (Page 1326, Item 1432 refers), when it had been agreed that the decision on whether or not to implement the scheme would be taken at a future meeting in conjunction with overall budget proposals when the Council's financial position was clearer, Councillor Miller welcomed the deferral of the decision. He referred to Council Tax increases in recent times and the impact of any additional charging on local residents, and requested that these matters be taken into account when the 2021/22 budget was being finalised.

The Council noted the comments.

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER - EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2019/20

1476. Under reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 26 November 2020 (Page 1332, Item 1440 refers), when it had been agreed to remit the Annual Accounts and draft Audit Report to the Council later that day for consideration, Councillor Wallace referred to questions he had asked at the Council meeting in relation to the internal audit service. He expressed concerns at the slow progress in taking forward audits as set out in the internal audit plan with the number of available audit hours being reduced and a number of audits being carried forward to 2021/22. He referred also to comments made by John Cornett, Audit Scotland, in relation to the Corporate Management Team's response to the questions set out in the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* published by Audit Scotland. He further referred in particular to the question on internal audit support and that it did appear that the service was not being sufficiently supported in order for it to undertake its role.

Councillor Miller, Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, having commented on some of the challenges facing the service and having shared some of Councillor Wallace's concerns, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that the reduction in routine audit work by the service had been as a result of COVID-19, and had not been a decision to move staff away from scheduled audit work. She clarified that due to a focus on COVID issues across departments the Chief Internal Auditor was unable to deliver her normal programme of work. In light of this, staff had been moved on other non-audit duties to support other services.

Noting the comments made, Councillor Wallace referred to the ability of Audit Scotland to conduct their audit of the Council's accounts during the pandemic. He suggested that the levels of support provided to Audit Scotland to enable them to conduct their audit must have been significant and it was important that similar supports were provided to the Council's own audit service.

The Council noted the comments.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER

1477. Councillor Miller thanked planning officers for arranging the recent informative meeting that had taken place between members of the committee and Scott Ferrie, Acting Chief Reporter from the Scottish Government Reporter's Unit prior to the meeting of the committee on 2 December.

CABINET – 3 DECEMBER – EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (EXPANSION 2020)

1478. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 3 December 2020 (Page 1356 Item 1461 refers) when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council the approval of additional capital expenditure in relation to the expansion of the Council's early learning and childcare estate, Councillor Wallace referred to the Council's already difficult financial position, to the recommendation that additional funding be given to contractors and how this would be perceived by residents suffering financial hardship.

He also referred to the challenges for councillors in obtaining information quickly in general in light of current remote working arrangements and asked that some thought be given to how this could be addressed.

In reply, Provost Fletcher reminded Councillor Wallace in respect of the matter of the additional expenditure that the matter had been remitted to the Council to give all Members the opportunity to discuss it in detail and it would be considered later in the meeting.

He also reminded Members of the existing call-in procedure and encouraged Members to contact relevant Conveners and officers in advance of Cabinet meetings if they had questions about any of the matters being considered.

The Council noted the comments made.

APPEALS COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER

1479. Having heard Councillor Convery, Chair of the committee, the Council agreed that the Minute be approved subject to the following amendment:-

That at the end of the last sentence there be added the words "and support".

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21

1480. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 November 2020 2019 (Page 1328, Item 1435 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/2120 be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), recommending adjustments to the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The Council approved the movements within the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20

1481. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 November 2020 (Page 1329, Item 1436 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that

the proposed adjustments to the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved, the Council considered a joint report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Director of Environment, recommending adjustments to the 2020/21 Housing Capital Programme in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The Council approved the movements within the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21.

INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21

1482. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 26 November 2020 (Page 1334, Item 1441 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) providing details of the Council's treasury management activities for the period 1 April to 30 September 2020, and seeking approval of the organisations specified in the report for the investment of surplus funds.

The report explained that in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee was responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of treasury management activities. The submission of the report to the committee had been in accordance with that requirement.

Councillor Wallace referred to the table appended to the report setting out the long-term debt maturity profile. He highlighted the relatively high number of loans not maturing until 2065 to 2070 and sought details of these.

In reply the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that the loans had been taken in support of the Council's capital programme. She explained that the Council had made significant investment in long-term assets including in the education estate. She also referred to the exceptionally low borrowing rates at present which the Council had taken advantage of, whilst still operating within the Council's existing treasury management policies.

Noting the information Councillor Wallace reminded Members that there would be an ongoing commitment to repay these loans which would impact on future Council Tax payers.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) note the Interim Treasury Management Report for 2020/21; and
- (b) approve those organisations specified in the report for investment of surplus funds.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (EXPANSION 2020)

1483. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 3 December 2020 (Page 1356, Item 1461 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that additional capital costs and a contractual compensation payment in relation to coronavirus issues be made, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update in relation to the progress of the project to deliver the expansion of Early Years provision in East Renfrewshire to meet Scottish Government requirements.

The report explained that building contractors were appointed for the six Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) projects; that completion was originally expected by July 2020; and that the projects had since been delayed due to COVID-19 and Scottish Water issues. Negotiations

had taken place with both the contractors and Scottish Water in order to resolve matters as quickly as possible. The building contractors had been working under a restrictive regime since June 2020 as a result of Government guidance, and in order to prevent any costly legal claims in future, it was proposed that the Council would share the additional COVID-19 related costs with the contractors. In addition, due to a tightening of regulations by Scottish Water, costs which had not previously been identified would now be incurred for surface water drainage. Given the urgency of the projects and the advanced stage of construction, approval had already been given for the works to go ahead as without these connections the centres could not open. Further information was also provided on other additional costs which had been incurred including an allowance for the sum of post-contract changes; additional contingency allowance; and additional equipment and services.

Referring to the report the Director of Environment clarified that it contained a typographical error at Paragraph 23 in relation to the additional Scottish Water related costs and that the correct figure was £576,000 and not £526,000. This had a corresponding impact on the additional cost of the capital works, increasing it from £910,000 to £960,000.

Responding to Councillor Wallace the Director of Environment then gave a detailed explanation of the reasons why the additional capital expenditure was being proposed. In particular he highlighted the importance of having the works finished as quickly as possible, potential lengthy and costly legal proceedings, and that the sum proposed to be paid to the contractor was a 50% share of the additional contract costs that had been incurred. He explained that the contractors had worked constructively with the Council during the pandemic with the aim of completing the nurseries as quickly as possible.

Thanking the director for the clarification, Councillor Wallace suggested that the Council appeared to have no option but to agree the additional costs and requested that when the overall cost to the Council of the pandemic was being calculated costs such as these were included. The financial implications for the Council were significant and it was important in ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government about additional funding that these costs were included.

Noting the comments from the director, Councillor Miller referred to the contract conditions that would be in place and questioned why the additional costs were not being borne in full by the contractor. The comments from both Councillors Wallace and Miller were echoed by Councillor Macdonald. He suggested that a review of contract conditions should be carried out to put the Council in a stronger position to deal with requests for additional contract payments in future. He also sought clarification from the director on the comparative time differences from ground breaking to completion for Busby Nursery and Crookfur Family Centre.

Councillor Aitken having questioned how the additional contract costs had been determined and whether or not these related to a single or multiple contractor, Councillor Buchanan suggested that the report clearly explained the reasons why the additional costs had been incurred with local authorities across the country being faced with similar circumstances. He confirmed that costs associated with the pandemic were raised regularly with the Scottish Government who in turn raised the matter with the UK Government.

Councillor McLean also commented on the additional contract costs. He questioned why the Council was paying these additional costs when the site restrictions and the inability of the contractor to operate at full capacity were down to Scottish Government guidance.

The Chief Executive was then heard on the report in the course of which she clarified that the additional costs in relation to Scottish Water were not payments to the organisation, but were for works needed to comply with Scottish Water requirements. In response to earlier questions from Councillor Aitken she clarified that the additional costs had been negotiated

with Heron Brothers by the Council's consultants and were considered by them to be reasonable. A similar exercise had been undertaken in respect of the contractors for Cross Arthurlie Nursery and other works packages with £803,000 being the total figure across all works.

Councillor Macdonald reiterated earlier comments about the need for a review of contract conditions and in general to learn lessons to ensure the Council was better protected contractually in future.

Responding to the comments and questions raised, the Director of Environment confirmed that without having agreed to the additional works requested by Scottish Water none of the nurseries would have been able to open. As this was considered to be a Council priority the decision was taken to proceed with the works. He emphasised the role of the Council's consultants in negotiating the additional costs associated with the contractor, and in relation to comments regarding operating levels on site stated that whilst the contractor would have liked to increase operating capacity they were prevented from doing so by Scottish Government guidance. He explained he would obtain the information on timescales for Busby Nursery and Crookfur Family Centre and share these with Councillor Macdonald. Finally he confirmed that a review of contract conditions in light of lessons learned would be undertaken.

Thereafter in response to a further question from Councillor McLean on whether or not the contractors received any government grants in relation to their inability to operate at full capacity due to social distancing, the director explained that the Council's consultants had carefully examined the claim from the contractors and stripped out any costs for which government funding had been obtained directly by the contractors.

The Council approved:-

- (a) the additional capital expenditure of £960,000 to cover the additional committed works; and
- (b) a compensation payment of £803,000 to contractors in relation to coronavirus issues as outlined in the report.

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS/REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS/ COMMITTEES

1484. The following statement was made:-

Councillor Bamforth – Integration Joint Board

Councillor Bamforth reported on the most recent meetings of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and its Performance and Audit Committee both held on was on 25 November 2020.

She explained that the IJB had received a presentation on Care at Home and heard about a number of areas of progress within the service including an update on recent recruitment success and how well the embedded Hospital Discharge team and Pharmacy support was working.

Results from the September user survey had seen an 84% positive response from the 206 returns received.

She explained that service demand was almost back to pre-COVID levels with an increasing number of people with complex needs.

A detailed overview of a number of operational and governance measures was provided and the hard work of all staff in the service over a very challenging time was also recognised.

The IJB approved its Participation and Engagement Strategy, and agreed to a one year bridging Strategic Plan for 2021/22 with the usual 3 year planning cycle thereafter.

She referred to the different nature of the current year's Winter Plan with much more cross system working given the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce in addition to the usual winter challenges. Also recognised was constant demands on HSCP staff, including the significant challenge of delivering the flu vaccination programme and the IJB acknowledged our appreciation the effort, hard work and resilience of the workforce.

The IJB were also given an overview of the current financial position and the likely challenges in the coming year including likely legacy savings, the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Planning work continued in preparation for the January budget announcement.

The Council noted the statement.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

1485. The Council considered and noted a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of an event attended by Provost Fletcher, highlighting that appropriate social distancing and other safety measures had been adhered to.

COVID-19 RECOVERY ACTIONS - UPDATE

1486. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 (Page 1308, Item 1412 refers) when the Council noted a report on further actions that had been taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive providing a further update on recovery work taking place across the Council.

Prior to the consideration of the report the Provost reminded Members it was important not to lose sight of the effect the pandemic had had on local people not least in respect of those who had sadly died with the associated impact on their families.

Thereafter the Director of Environment gave an update in relation to the newly established COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund established by the Scottish Government. He explained the purpose of the new fund which was to give local authorities more flexibility to support local businesses and that in order to allow local arrangements to be put in place quickly he was seeking delegated authority from the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to put in place local arrangements to disburse payments from the fund.

Echoing Provost Fletcher's earlier comments about the impact of the pandemic on local people, Councillor Buchanan also commented on the new business support scheme. He referred to the arrangements in place for the disbursement of business grant funding

currently available. This had operated well to date allowing support to be provided quickly to eligible local businesses. The new scheme would enable the Council to provide financial support to those businesses ineligible for support from the current schemes.

Thereafter he again referred to the impact of the pandemic on all facets of everyday life and that the report showed what the Council was doing in response. He paid tribute to the hard work of local communities and businesses in dealing with the effects of the pandemic, and in particular mentioned the work of Council staff and the public sector in general. He thanked the local trades unions for their support and assistance in ensuring that the Council was able to maximise its support efforts for local residents.

Councillor Buchanan also explained that at a recent COSLA Council Leaders' meeting he had been happy to support proposals calling for the Scottish Government to recognise the efforts of the entire local government workforce for the work carried out in response to the challenges of the preceding months as well as the efforts of Scottish local government generally in responding to the pandemic.

Supporting Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Miller thanked Council and Trust staff for their efforts over the preceding 9 months which was in some cases at personal cost. He thanked the Corporate Management Team, senior managers and staff for their efforts to keep services operational during the pandemic in addition to those extra services such as humanitarian hubs introduced specifically in response to the pandemic.

Also supporting the earlier comments made, Councillor Wallace suggested that the local responses to the pandemic had clearly demonstrated the value of local government which he hoped would be recognised by the Scottish Government, particularly in relation to the forthcoming financial allocations to local authorities.

Councillor O'Kane intimated his association with the earlier comments in relation to the human cost of the pandemic, paid tribute to the work of education staff in all their efforts to keep schools open and support young people and more generally paid tribute to all Council staff for their work throughout the year. He referred to the cross-party political commitment locally to tackle the pandemic at all costs with similar commitments now needed from the Scottish Government and also to the campaign by trades unions for local government workers to be recognised in the same way health and care workers had been recognised.

The Chief Executive thanked Elected Members for their comments in relation to Council staff. In particular she highlighted the additional challenge of continuing to support recovery whilst at the same time reintroducing day to day services many of which had been temporarily suspended. She also reminded Members that the challenges would continue for the foreseeable future. In response to earlier questions from Councillor Aitken on the request for delegated powers she further explained the background to the new fund and clarified that the delegated powers that were being sought were in relation to the development of a grant scheme, the principles of which would be used thereafter by officers in the economic development service to determine applications for assistance. Neither the director nor the Leader of the Council would be involved in the consideration of individual applications for funding.

In support of the Chief Executive Councillor Buchanan confirmed that robust monitoring arrangements would be in place to make sure all funding was accounted for. He also gave examples of why some businesses had been unable to access funding from existing schemes and that the new discretionary fund would allow the Council to address these issues at a local level.

Councillor O'Kane thanked staff in the economic development service and other officers such as the Licensing Standards Officer for their efforts in supporting local business, following which the Director of Environment and Chief Executive were heard further on arrangements for the scheme.

Thereafter the Council:-

- (a) noted the report and comments made; and
- (b) agreed that delegated powers be granted to the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to put in place local arrangements to develop a scheme to disburse payments from the COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund.

EASTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE AND EASTWOOD PARK MASTERPLAN

1487. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 26 June 2019 (Page 875, Item 937 refers) when amongst other things the Council approved Eastwood Park as the preferred site for a new Eastwood Leisure Centre and theatre; noted the progress being made with the Eastwood Park master planning exercise; that the Director of Environment would report back on the wider issues and opportunities/possibilities in due course; and to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 18 December 2019 (Page 1053, Item 1141 refers), when the Council had noted the position at that time and agreed to the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group as part of the arrangements to take the project forward, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on the development of a new leisure centre and theatre and an Eastwood Park Masterplan. Accompanying the report was a copy of the most recent consultant's report as endorsed by the working group. The report demonstrated that with regard to the leisure centre and theatre, it was potentially a high quality, visually attractive, transformational and state-of-the-art facility that was much more than simply a leisure centre development, the focus being on customer appeal, future flexibility and income generating opportunities.

The report set out details of the progress that had been made in challenging circumstances, summarising the key points since December 2019. In particular it was noted that the new leisure centre and theatre could be accommodated within the park as a tandem build allowing all existing uses to remain open during construction.

Thereafter the report outlined the financial position referring to the indicative £26 million allocated by the Council in February 2020. It clarified that whilst a further report to the Council in February 2021 as part of the Council's capital planning process would address total project costs, affordability and future expenditure phasing, the existing provision of £12.85 million for 2021/22 would be sufficient to cover that year's project costs.

Councillor Grant having welcomed the commitment that Shawwood and Broomburn Parks would remain as protected urban green spaces in terms of the Local Development Plan, Councillor Wallace whilst acknowledging the general support for the new centre and the proposed location, suggested that the greatest concern was now the affordability of the project in light of the current and future difficult financial circumstances facing the Council, exacerbated by the costs of tackling the pandemic.

Councillor O'Kane welcomed the report suggesting it was the next stage of the journey to deliver a quality facility in Eastwood Park. He acknowledged that the project was taking place at a challenging time for the Council but that the careful use of capital investment would contribute to local economic recovery.

Councillor Buchanan having echoed the comments from Councillor O’Kane in relation to contributing towards recovery as well as delivering a quality facility, the Director of Environment reminded Members that whilst the report related only to progressing the leisure centre and theatre, the masterplanning of the entire Eastwood Park area was ongoing with plans at a relatively advanced stage.

The Council then heard from Ian Harper of Stallen-Brand who were working with the Council in the overall development of the park. Mr Harper explained that in taking forward proposals one of the key challenges was reinvigorating the park and taking advantage of its location and features, in particular Eastwood House. He then commented on the initial design proposals for the new building which had been strongly informed by the park itself, commenting on some of the proposed building features and associated landscaping. He also highlighted that the proposed location of the building had been carefully selected in order to maximise the available space that could be used as part of the overall park proposals.

Councillor Merrick welcomed the presentation and expressed support for the earlier comments about using the construction of the building as part of the Council’s contribution to local economic recovery. Councillor Macdonald also supported the project which would benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of residents long after the pandemic had passed. He acknowledged the significant costs associated with the proposals and suggested that it was important increasing Council Tax was not seen as the simple solution to covering costs and that the Council should look carefully for more income generating opportunities.

Provost Fletcher having thanked Mr Harper for his presentation the Council:-

- (a) noted the briefing and feasibility study accompanying the report as an ambitious vision for Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre and Eastwood Park more generally;
- (b) approved the proposal that the priority in the short to medium term was to progress the Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre as opposed to the wider masterplanning issues;
- (c) noted that a further report specifically with regard to the Leisure Centre and Theatre options, costs and potential phasing of costs would be submitted to the Council for consideration in February 2021;
- (d) noted that the existing provision of £12.85 million for 2021/22 was sufficient for that year; and
- (e) noted that a further report with regard to the wider masterplanning issues in Eastwood Park would be submitted to the Council at some time in the future.

NEILSTON LEARNING AND LEISURE CAMPUS AND WIDER REGENERATION UPDATE

1488. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 27 February 2020 (Page 1128, Item 1218 refers) when amongst other things the Council had made provision of £30.4 million in the capital plan to take forward a learning campus development in Neilston comprising new build replacements for Neilston Primary and St Thomas’ Primary Schools, Madras Family Centre, a new library and improved leisure facilities, the Council considered a joint report by the Director of Environment and Director of Education, providing an update in respect of the learning campus as well as wider regeneration proposals.

Having explained the basis for the allocation of capital costs for the project and set out the cost phasing across the years 2020/21 to 2023/24, it being noted that it had been reported to Cabinet in March 2020 that the £30.4 million in the capital plan was likely to be insufficient for the full extent of the revised development, the report reminded Members that the campus was being developed with a two phase – two site approach. Phase one was the construction of the 2 new schools, family centre and library on the current Neilston Primary/Madras Family Centre site, whilst Phase 2 would be the construction of the new leisure and wellbeing centre on the St Thomas's site, with the development of further regeneration projects.

The report then provided an update in respect of each of the 2 project phases. It was noted that the indicative programme for the learning campus had a scheduled construction start of November 2021 with completion in June 2023. However these dates were dependent on an absence of unforeseen complications and an assumption COVID-19 would not continue to hamper development. The report also explained that further recent advice from Hub West Scotland had resulted in an indicative cost for Phase 1 alone of some £28 million.

It was further noted that Phase 1 was time dependent in relation to Scottish Futures Trust revenue incentives and had to be delivered by 2024 at the latest. Accordingly it was proposed that this element of the project be prioritised within the existing capital provision.

In respect of Phase 2 it was explained that recent feasibility calculations had suggested a cost of around £8.5 million. In addition the report outlined some of the wider potential regeneration plans for the area, noting that initial financial provision of around £3.5 million would allow these to be progressed as well as enabling the Council to try and obtain match funding from a range of external sources. At £40 million, the total indicative cost was £9.6 million above the capital funding already allocated and this would be the subject of a future report to the Council,

Councillor O'Kane was heard in support of the proposals. He highlighted that the meeting had considered major capital projects bringing investment and renewal across the authority. Commenting on the importance of the project to the local community he reminded Members that this had been a long standing project in the Council's capital plan also supported financially through the Scottish Futures Trust which would contribute to the overall regeneration of the village.

Councillor Buchanan also welcomed the report which would present an excellent development opportunity in the village.

The Council:-

- (a) noted that despite working practices being impacted by the Covid pandemic, to date the project team had undertaken much development work to progress the Learning Campus, including design consultation;
- (b) noted the existing provision of £30.4 million within the General Fund Capital Programme;
- (c) approved the proposal that phase one of the project to provide the new Learning Campus (Neilston and St Thomas primary schools, Madras Family Centre and library) at an estimated cost of £28 million is prioritised in terms of the available £30.4 million and is progressed as set out in the report; and

- (d) noted the shortfall of potentially around £9.6 million for the remaining elements of the project relating to improvements in leisure, well-being and wider regeneration and that a further report regarding these remaining elements would be submitted to the Council for consideration in February 2021.

ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000 – STANDARDS COMMISSION HEARING

1489. The Council considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive outlining the terms of the written decision made by the Standards Commission in relation to Councillor Swift.

Following a hearing on 13 November 2020 the Commission had decided that Councillor Swift had breached Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.6 of the Code and suspended him from meetings of the full Council for 1 month.

The Council noted the report.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Provost, the Council unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the item 1414 below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

Sederunt

Having declared a non-financial interest in the following item Councillors McLean and Miller left the meeting at this point.

ADDITIONAL LAND ACQUISITION AT AURS ROAD NEWTON MEARNIS/BARRHEAD

1490. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the increase in land area to be acquired as part of the Aurs Road City Deal Project between Newton Mearns and Barrhead. This was considered necessary to incorporate an enlarged active travel corridor within the scope of the project.

Having heard the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) in further explanation of the report and in response to question from Members in relation to costs, and following full discussion the Council:-

- (a) approved the acquisition of the additional 1.09 acres as outlined in the report;
- (b) noted that the accommodation works formed part of the agreement of the sale and was within the overall project cost envelope; and
- (c) delegated authority to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal & Procurement to progress and complete the acquisitions.

1380

SEASON'S GREETINGS

1491. This being the last meeting of the Council prior to Christmas Provost Fletcher wished all councillors the compliments of the season.

PROVOST