

**MINUTE VOLUME**

**15 DECEMBER 2021**

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**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 7.00pm on 27 October 2021.**

**Present:**

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Annette Ireland
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Barbara Grant	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership; Kate Rocks, Chief Social Work Officer; Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Colin Hutton, Senior Communications Officer; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham and Councillors Paul Aitken, Danny Devlin, Jim McLean, Paul O’Kane and Jim Swift.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1784.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1785.** The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 8 September 2021.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

**1786.** The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Cabinet –9 September 2021;
- (b) Cabinet (Police & Fire) – 16 September 2021;
- (c) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 23 September 2021;
- (d) Planning Applications Committee – 29 September 2021;
- (e) Education Committee –30 September 2021;
- (f) Cabinet – 7 October 2021;
- (g) Appointments Committee –14 October 2021; and
- (h) Cabinet – 21 October 2021.

## NOTICE OF MOTION – CLIMATE EMERGENCY

**1787.** In accordance with Standing Order 25, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Bamforth.

*East Renfrewshire Council recognises the immediacy of the current climate emergency which needs urgent political action on a global scale to save the planet, and it is therefore imperative that East Renfrewshire Council declares a climate emergency.*

*The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, published on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021, starkly highlights the gravity and urgency of the situation. Urgent action to minimise a global temperature increase and avert a catastrophic tipping point for the planet is needed by individuals, companies, local and national government. As a local authority, both as a result of our direct activities and as a consequence of our enabling and leadership role for our residents, we can play a hugely significant role.*

*We recognise and applaud the actions already taken by East Renfrewshire Council. We note that a draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, originally suggested by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, will soon be brought to Council for consideration. We note that this is just one of a raft of measures underway, with others including undertaking a baseline assessment of the council's carbon emissions, and a review of the actions needed to ensure the council's office buildings will move towards being carbon neutral. Our council performance in areas such as recycling is to be applauded. As such we recognise and support the actions that we as a council are already taking.*

*This motion reaffirms the council's commitment to these actions and to protecting our environment and is seeking to accelerate its plans to reduce carbon emissions to zero as soon as practicable. We ask Senior Officers of the Council to*

- *assess its resource requirements for tackling climate change as part of the Budget Strategy process for 2021/22 and to investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment in order that the necessary actions can be undertaken*
- *consider the development of climate change impact assessments to ensure that all proposed policies and actions taken by the council assist towards reaching the goal of zero emissions*

- *emphasise the importance of our biodiversity and natural environment and encourage and support practices to enhance and sustain the farmed and natural world;*
- *embed throughout our entire organisational culture the pursuit of measures to tackle climate change.*
- *review all policy and practice across our council directorates to identify ways in which we can move further and faster on carbon reduction measures;*
- *consider how we communicate with, encourage and assist local residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and to help achieve this we will set up a Climate Change Partnership Group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, businesses and other relevant parties.*

*Finally this motion acknowledges that climate change impacts are already being felt within the local area. Due to past decades of carbon emissions, more frequent extreme weather events are inevitable. The Council must plan for resilience and continue to work with partners across the City Region to ensure that we can flourish in our future climate.*

Councillor Wallace, seconded by Councillor Grant, moved an amendment in the following terms:-

That the full wording of the Motion be deleted and the following be inserted instead:-

*In the face of the challenging circumstances of a pandemic, this Council recognises and supports the efforts made by council officers to ensure East Renfrewshire Council plays its part in the global fight against climate change.*

Provost Fletcher invited Councillor Ireland to speak to the terms of the Motion.

Councillor Ireland referred to the UN COP 26 Summit, taking place in Glasgow over the next two weeks, where world leaders and their representatives would meet to discuss the global climate emergency and strategies to slow down and reverse this trend. She reported that every citizen had a part to play in dealing with the climate emergency, including in Scotland where temperatures and rainfall had increased steadily in recent decades. She added that the Council had a key role to play and it was extremely important that immediate action was taken to combat climate change at a local level. Referring to responses from a local survey on climate change which had been commissioned, she advised that the majority of respondents had considered climate change to be an immediate problem and that the Council should lead by example to support a sustainable economy. As a member of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee she had approved reports supporting the renewal of East Renfrewshire's climate change strategy, adding that it was important for local people and organisations to get involved to make East Renfrewshire a healthier and fairer area in which to live and work.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Bamforth reported that although the Council's recent focus had rightly been in response to the pandemic, urgent consideration now required to be given to tackling climate change at a local level. She referred to rising greenhouse gas emission levels which were expected to increase global temperatures by 4-5 degrees by the end of the century, leading to melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and more violent storms around the world. She added that Scotland had a long way to go to reach the expected Net Zero target by 2045 and councils had an important role to play in ensuring this target was met. She acknowledged the work which had already been done by the Council in tackling

climate change, adding that the establishment of a climate change partnership group would be essential to gather local information and ensure that we could provide a sustainable future for all.

Councillor Wallace was heard in support of his amendment during which he reported that it was too late for the Council to declare a climate emergency when world leaders and their representatives were due to arrive in Glasgow in the next two weeks. He advised that the Council had done a good job in the area of recycling, but more thought should have been given to how larger projects would affect the local environment, including a replacement for Eastwood Leisure Centre which had been poorly maintained in the past, and straightening the road at Barrhead Dams, which had destroyed much of the natural habitat. Referring to Risk 6.23 of the Strategic Risk Register, which recognised the potential risk of employees experiencing increased stress and poor wellbeing due to the pandemic, and which had been designated as a “red” risk, he believed that this motion would increase the workload and possible stress levels of employees, and that it was unnecessary.

Councillor Grant intimated her support of the amendment.

Councillor Miller expressed his disappointment in the motion as a great amount of work had already been undertaken by the Council, employees, and local residents to tackle this serious and challenging issue, and referred to the report which had been approved previously by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on climate change and the Council’s commitment to plant one tree for every resident. He added that he would support extra resources to tackle the climate emergency, which should come from central government, but that he could not support the motion or the amendment.

Councillor Macdonald advised that tangible change was required as a matter of urgency to tackle climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He added that this should not be a political issue as everyone should come together to save the planet for future generations. He advised that the Council should have a policy in place to tackle climate change and supported the motion presented.

Councillor Merrick was also heard in support of the motion and expressed his disappointment at some of the comments made earlier. He added that the Council had already made a number of improvements in service delivery to tackle climate change but more required to be done, and quickly, in order to move closer to the Net Zero goal.

Councillor Buchanan expressed his surprise at some of the comments which had been made earlier as he had expected most Members to agree with the vast majority of the motion. He emphasised the need to tackle global warming and the wording of the motion would reaffirm the Council’s commitment to tackling this crisis. The motion referred to what the Council could do and the fantastic work which had already been done. He agreed with the sentiment of Councillor Wallace’s amendment as an addition to the motion, but could not support it as a replacement.

At this stage, Provost Fletcher invited Councillor Ireland to sum up.

Councillor Ireland advised that she had hoped to receive cross party support for this very important motion as it affected everyone. She added that establishing a climate change group was an opportunity not to be missed and all Elected Members would have an opportunity to feed into the plan which would be created as a result of these discussions. She added that the purpose of the motion was to accelerate plans that had already been put forward and to include additional measures to enable targets to be met.

The Democratic Services Manager clarified that in light of current circumstances voting would be by roll call vote.

On the roll being called, Provost Fletcher, and Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lafferty, Macdonald, and Merrick, voted for the motion. Councillors Gilbert, Grant and Wallace voted for the amendment. Councillor Miller abstained.

There being 8 votes for the motion, 3 for the amendment and 1 abstention, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

## **STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS/REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS/ COMMITTEES**

**1788.** The following statements were made:-

(a) **Councillor Bamforth – Integration Joint Board**

Councillor Bamforth referred to business considered at the most recent meeting of the East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) at which the fifth Annual Performance Report and the Clinical and Care Governance Annual report had been presented.

The Annual Performance Report had set out how the HSCP had delivered on its vision and commitments whilst recognising the challenges and impact of the pandemic.

The Clinical and Care Governance Annual report highlighted key areas of work in 2020/21 including collaboration with local care homes; establishment of new testing regimes and regular meetings to support care homes. Additional responsibility for the HSCP included additional flu cohorts and COVID vaccination programmes in care homes. There had been an increased demand for services due to increased poverty; health inequalities; mental health and wellbeing; and frailty and deconditioning as a result of the pandemic, and discussions had taken place on the impact of this on staff wellbeing.

Children and families colleagues had provided an overview of emotional and mental wellbeing services for children, and in particular the healthier minds hub which had been established during the pandemic to respond to rapidly emerging demands. The report demonstrated strong partnership working, which had continued throughout the pandemic, and which would be developed further in the future.

Councillor Bamforth reported that updates were also provided on the Our Care at Home service; HSCP Recovery and Resources Programme; NHSGGC Unscheduled Care Programme; Community Change Fund; and the revenue budget.

(b) **Councillor Merrick – Convener of Community Services & Community Safety**

Councillor Merrick commented on the ongoing recovery of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT), confirming that activities were delivered in the summer school holidays under the national Get Into Summer scheme, which had funded 40 places at each camp for vulnerable

children and young people, and delivery of activity camps in the October school holidays at Eastwood and Barrhead High Schools. One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic had been the strengthened partnership working between ERCLT, the Education Department and the HSCP.

He explained that Bookbug sessions had resumed; Busby Library had reopened following refurbishment; and tickets for the Christmas pantomime at Eastwood Theatre, Peter Pan, were now on sale.

The Council noted the statements.

## **PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**1789.** The Council considered and noted a report by the Deputy Chief Executive providing details of civic engagements attended by Provost Fletcher since the last meeting.

## **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT**

**1790.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer, providing details of her Annual Report for 2020/21 and seeking approval of the report for submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government. A copy of the Annual Report was appended to the report.

The Annual Report provided an overview of the professional activity for social work within East Renfrewshire for 2020-21 through the delivery of statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer. The impact of COVID-19 on the production of the annual report was highlighted and it was explained that the report provided a narrative of social work and social care activity across 5 broad headings, these being Governance and Accountability arrangements; Service Quality and Performance; Resources; Workforce; and COVID-19.

A number of areas of strong performance and success were highlighted. These included introduction of an innovative multi-disciplinary Healthier Minds team for children and young people; a multi-agency approach to Signs of Safety; continued improvement of direct participation and establishment of a Self-Directed Support Steering Group; enhanced collaboration with individuals and family carers in the design, evaluation and recruitment of staff/managers within adult services; significant improvements in Care at Home services and the multi-agency approach to Large Scale Investigations; participation in the pilot to facilitate joint investigate interviews under the new Scottish Child Interview Model; and the overall strength of multi-agency and partnership working throughout the pandemic across children's, adult and justice service areas.

The report also highlighted a continuing number of significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care in East Renfrewshire. These included increased demand for social work support across both children's and adult services and care at home for adults both in terms of number and complexity of need; increased referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); growing complexity of significant domestic abuse; and implementation of learning from the Care Review (The Promise) in all aspects of work with looked after children and young people. The continued impact of COVID-19 and the challenge of recovery were also highlighted, particularly as there had been a rise in poor mental health, emotional distress and, for older people, increased physical frailty and dependency alongside capacity challenges within social care services.



The Chief Social Work Officer was heard in detail on the report, referring to key successes despite the unprecedented level of demand and the stronger partnerships which had been developed, particularly with the Education Department, as a number of children's services could not have been provided without their input. She added that the partnership arrangements had enabled the most vulnerable children and families to remain safe, and Looked After Children to feel less isolated. Referring to the recent Scottish Social Services Awards she reported that East Renfrewshire HSCP had received an award for their partnership working with the Large Scale Investigation Team, in recognition of their work with vulnerable adults, and one employee had received the Social Worker of the Year Award.

In conclusion, she commended the way in which the HSCP workforce had dealt with the many challenges they had faced and the way in which they had worked above and beyond their statutory duties.

Members congratulated HSCP staff for their hard work and dedication during the pandemic and for a very positive annual report. It was recognised that strong work had been undertaken, including to enable and support vulnerable individuals, and to tackle the ongoing mental health crisis.

In response to Members, the Chief Social Work Officer reported that there was a need for more partnership and whole system working to build on and improve local services and that this could be better achieved if Government funding was not ring fenced but given to local areas to set their own key priorities.

Having heard Provost Fletcher thank the Chief Social Work Officer for a comprehensive and informative report, the Council approved the content of the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

## **NATIONAL CARE SERVICE - PROPOSED CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

**1791.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 8 September 2021 (Page 1630, Item 1749 refers), when amongst other things it was noted that Elected Members would have the opportunity to review and discuss the final consultation submission at this meeting, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive seeing approval for the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the creation of a new national care service.

It was reported that a cross-party working group had been convened to discuss the draft response to the consultation, a copy of which was attached to the report. The Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager referred to the response, highlighting that a few minor changes had been made, including in relation to an additional paragraph regarding the role of the Chief Social Work Officer.

Members referred to discussions that had taken place at the working group, and highlighted that local accountability was vital to the provision of care services.

The Council:-

- (a) noted that the response had been drafted in line with an Elected Member session on 23 September and discussions within a cross-party working group of Councillors Buchanan, Lafferty and Wallace on Monday 18 October; and

- (b) approved the response, including the amendments referred to at the meeting, for submission to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 2 November.

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 (LDP2)**

**1792.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 24 June 2020 (Page 1193, Item 1282 refers), when it was agreed to submit the Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), supporting documents, and the finalised “Schedule 4 Forms” to Scottish Ministers for examination, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on the LDP2 Examination Report and the modifications promoted by Reporters from the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA); and seeking approval to proceed to adopt the Modified Plan.

The report explained that the examination was conducted with very few requests for additional/further information and there was no requirement for a hearing session on any of the 36 issues under examination. The Reporters had agreed with the approach taken by the Council in the majority of issues and only minor modifications were made to the plan mainly involving changes to text, graphics and policies to assist with clarity and understanding. It was further reported that no new housing sites had been identified and the Reporters had accepted the Council’s approach to meeting educational needs. Close collaboration would continue between the Education and Environment Departments to address in full future education needs and residential requirements. A summary of the main recommendations was provided and it was reported that the full examination report and a schedule of modifications was available to view on the Council’s website.

Having heard Members congratulate staff for their efforts in producing the LDP2, and following discussion, the Council agreed:-

- (a) the summary of Reporters’ recommendations to the Local Development Plan 2;
- (b) to approve the East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2 in the form intended for Adoption and the accompanying revised Strategic and Environmental Assessment;
- (c) to authorise the Director of Environment to undertake the required statutory requirements including notifications and advertisements and submission to Scottish Ministers; and
- (d) to delegate to the Director of Environment to approve any minor inconsequential changes to the Local Development Plan 2, in line with Council policy, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers.

### **ANNUAL STATEMENT ON ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS**

**1793.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 23 September 2021 (Page 1652, Item 1767 refers), when it had been agreed to approve the Annual Statement on the Adequacy of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control Systems and submit it to the Council for noting, the Council considered a report by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee regarding the statement. A copy of the statement was appended to the report.

The report confirmed that the 2020/21 audit year had been challenging for Internal Audit as the audit plan had been substantially reduced due to a reduction in staffing levels, as a result of an internal secondment and long term illness, and COVID-19 restrictions. Despite this, sufficient audits had been completed to allow an opinion to be given. The report also clarified that External Audit continued to place reliance on the work of the service and that a reasonable level of performance had been achieved against indicator targets given restrictions largely outwith the control of the internal audit service.

The report highlighted that it was the opinion of the Chief Auditor that reasonable assurance could be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The Council noted the internal audit Annual Statement on the Adequacy and Effectiveness of the Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control Systems of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2021.

## **REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND POLICY STATEMENT**

**1794.** The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) advising of a review of the Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement.

The report explained that a review of Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement took place periodically and, following the most recent review, minor changes had been made to the document relating to the Council's structures, processes and risk.

It was reported that in addition to some minor changes to the documents, 3 new sections had been added to Treasury Management Practices in relation to the listing of financial arrangements with organisations that the Council worked in partnership with; implementation of the MIFID II requirements which the Council adhered to; and Management Practices for non-treasury investments.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the content of the revised Treasury Management Practices and Treasury Management Policy Statement; and
- (b) approved the revised Treasury Management Practices and Treasury Management Policy Statement.

## **COVID-19 RECOVERY UPDATE**

**1795.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 8 September 2021 (Page 1628, Item 1747 refers), the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive providing Elected Members with a further update on response, recovery and renewal work taking place across the Council and the Trust.

The report included updates on Mass Vaccination Clinics; Covid-19 testing; annual leave requirements; and provided additional information on response, recovery and renewal plans by department/service.

In response to Councillor Macdonald, the Democratic Services Manager advised that equipment to enable hybrid meetings to take place in the Council Chamber had been

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ordered and was expected to be installed by early 2022. He further advised that in-person public access to meetings would be limited and numbers would be agreed in consultation with Health and Safety/Environmental Health colleagues.

The Council noted the ongoing work on response, recovery and renewal.

PROVOST

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 3 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Convery  
Provost Jim Fletcher

Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Jim McLean  
Councillor Jim Swift

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Julie Nicol, Planning and Building Standards Manager; Alan Pepler, Principal Planner (Development Management); Ian Walker, Senior Planning Officer; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Betty Cunningham.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1796.** No declarations of interest were intimated.

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

**1797.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Environment on the following application for planning permission requiring consideration by the committee.

2021/0305/TP - Erection of 32 detached dwellings (Amendment to 2016/0712/TP) and amendments to roads and parking (Major) at Site D, Maidenhill, Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the application required to be determined by the committee as due to its site area it constituted a Major Development under the terms of the Town and Country (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. He outlined that the proposed development was for changes to the 32 houses in Pod D as approved under the 2016 planning permission with the principal amendments proposed being to the house types, site layout, road design and parking.

It was noted that the number of houses was not changing and that conditions relating to the proposed application included amenity spaces, topographic and level information, and surface water management and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) proposals. No representations had been received in relation to the proposal.

1686

The Senior Planning Officer displayed the proposed layout plan of Pod D for the 2021 application and outlined the main differences to the approved 2016 application. The changes included increasing the articulation space at the corners of the plan to allow for larger vehicles such as refuse collection vehicles to turn, and the inclusion of additional parking spaces.

Councillor Swift having questioned the changes to the house type style, the Senior Planning Officer advised that changes related to the materials and that the house types proposed were of a similar scale.

Elected Members discussed the current report format and requested that future committee reports include a layout plan in addition to a location plan when considered appropriate. This was noted by Planning Officers present who would make the appropriate amendments to future reports.

The Senior Planning Officer then displayed the road layout plan of Pod D as approved under the 2016 planning permission and again outlined the main differences to the proposed 2021 application.

Having heard from the Senior Planning Officer, the committee agreed that the application for planning permission be approved subject to the conditions listed in the report.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**LOCAL REVIEW BODY**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.30pm on 3 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Convery

Provost Jim Fletcher  
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Andrew Bennie, Planning Adviser; Siobhan Wilson, Solicitor (Legal Adviser); Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer (Clerk) and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Betty Cunningham, Jim McLean and Jim Swift.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1798.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

The Chair advised that an unaccompanied site visit had been held prior to the meeting.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2021/10 – ERECTION OF ONE AND A HALF STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSION; INSTALLATION OF 3 DORMER WINDOWS TO FRONT AND 1 TO REAR AT 7 GILMOURTON CRESCENT, NEWTON MEARNES, (Ref No: 2021/0286/TP)**

**1799.** The Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr Waqas Sumdani against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the erection of one and a half storey side and rear extension; installation of 3 dormer windows to front and 1 to rear, at 7 Gilmourton Crescent, Newton Mearns.

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.

1688

The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as outlined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice. The Planning Adviser further outlined that should Elected Members be minded to grant planning permission a suggested additional condition would be that:-

*'No development shall commence until samples of the external finishing materials to be used on the proposed development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.'*

In considering the review, Elected Members discussed the current Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance and requested the opportunity to provide comment on and to be involved in discussions on the finalisation of the forthcoming Local Development Plan 2 Supplementary Guidance.

Having heard the Planning Adviser and following discussion, the Local Review Body agreed that the Appointed Officer's decision as set out in the decision notice of 30 August 2021 be overturned and planning permission approved subject to the standard delegated conditions and the following additional condition:-

*'No development shall commence until samples of the external finishing materials to be used on the proposed development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.'*

CHAIR



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

**Minute of meeting held at 8.45am in Eastwood House, Eastwood Park, Giffnock on 9 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Barbara Grant

Councillor Colm Merrick  
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Buchanan in the Chair

**Apologies:**

Councillor Gordon Wallace.

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; and Jo Loudon, HR Business Partner.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1800.** 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.

**DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

**1801.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 14 October 2021 (Page 1669, Item 1779 refers), the committee proceeded to interview 5 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 Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues and Change, East Renfrewshire Council.

CHAIR



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 11 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Alan Lafferty (Chair)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth  
Provost Jim Fletcher  
Councillor Charlie Gilbert  
Councillor Jim McLean

Councillor Colm Merrick (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Gordon Wallace  
Dr Frank Angell  
Mrs Mary McIntyre  
Mr Des Morris

Councillor Lafferty in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); Leanne Knox, Business Support Supervisor; Colin Hutton, Senior Communications Officer; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader) and Ms Dorothy Graham.

**CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

**1802.** Councillor Lafferty informed the committee that should the meeting run to 11am, a minute's silence would be observed to commemorate Armistice Day.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1803.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**EDUCATION REFORM CONSULTATION**

**1804.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the proposed approach and timescales for responding to the Scottish Government's Education Reform Consultation.

The Director of Education noted that the OECD had published two reports on Scottish Education. *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future* was published in June 2021 and gave an update on the impact of Curriculum for Excellence on quality and equity in Scottish schools and highlighted areas for change and development. The Scottish Government had accepted the recommendations of the report and decided that the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) would be replaced and the functions of Education Scotland would be reviewed with the removal of inspections from its remit.

Subsequently, *Upper-Secondary Education Student Assessment in Scotland: A Comparative Perspective* was published in August 2021 and outlined improvements that could be made to align the curriculum and assessment in the senior phase of education.

Professor Ken Muir had been tasked with taking forward the reform of SQA and Education Scotland and, as part of that work, a consultation had been designed to seek the views of stakeholders in helping to shape the future of Scotland's national education agencies. The consultation had been published on 30 September 2021 and responses were due by 26 November 2021.

A number of forums were being organised with stakeholders within East Renfrewshire in order to gather views ahead of the official response to the consultation, with details of the stakeholder groups being listed. Additionally, as the next meeting of the committee was not until after the consultation's end date, it was proposed that a short-term working group be established to consider the responses gained from those stakeholders and finalise the Council's response. Thereafter, the response would be submitted to the next meeting of the committee for homologation.

Councillor Wallace asked how the Council could have input on how the SQA and Education Scotland would be organised when it wasn't clear what they would be set up to do, and if this would mean that the working group would have to make a number of assumptions in making recommendations. The Director of Education acknowledged this to be the case and it was a challenge to look at the role of any new organisation without looking at the recommendations within the OECD report. An implementation plan was being published by the Scottish Government, but it could have been beneficial to look at the vision more widely before agreeing to any changes to those organisations.

Provost Fletcher stated that this consultation was very important for East Renfrewshire given the strong emphasis placed on education within the area and the importance of education to both residents and those looking to move into East Renfrewshire. He noted that the OECD reports had been delayed until after the election and the recommendations suggested that Curriculum for Excellence hadn't worked as intended. He remarked that the SQA being replaced felt politically motivated following the exam results problems that had occurred in 2020. He expressed hope that the response to the consultation would be robust and not shy away from confronting the issues necessary.

Thereafter the committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the report;
- (b) to note that changes to Scotland's national education agencies would likely have significant implications for education in East Renfrewshire;
- (c) to approve the establishment of a short life working group comprising of Councillors Lafferty, Buchanan and Wallace to agree the East Renfrewshire response to the consultation; and

- (d) that the final consultation submission be presented to the committee for homologation at its meeting of 3 February 2022.

## **SQA RESULTS 2020-2021**

**1805.** Councillor Lafferty invited the Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) to give a presentation on the results achieved by pupils attending schools in East Renfrewshire for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) indicated that the results presented would also include information from primary establishments as well as senior phase data relating to SQA awards.

As had been expected, the 2020-2021 school year had proved challenging for pupils and education staff, with the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic still being felt throughout the year. Unsurprisingly, the greatest impact of the pandemic had been on those within targeted equity groups and in the most deprived areas of East Renfrewshire.

There had been a decrease in the proportion of children attaining expected levels of achievement in the Broad General Education standards, although there were still high levels of attainment. 90.3% of Primary 1, 4 and 7 pupils were achieving expected levels or better of reading, 87.4% for writing, 94.1% in talking and listening, 86.2 in literacy (children attaining expected levels in all three literacy areas of reading, writing and talking & listening) and 89.9% in maths. It was highlighted that while the figures had decreased slightly on those recorded in 2018-2019, they were still up on the baseline figures from 2015-2016. However, it was highlighted that the largest impact had been recorded among children resident in SIMD 1 and 2 areas with 6% decrease in reading achievement as compared to the overall figure of a 1% decrease, from 2018-19 (last year recorded) to 2020-21. Similarly, SIMD 1 and 2 children achieving the expected level in numeracy had decreased by 5% since 2018-19, as opposed to the overall decrease of 1%.

It was noted that in the 2020-21 academic year an alternative certification model was once again employed as a consequence of COVID-19, and that this was the third different assessment model used in each of the last three years (2018-19 through 2020-21); the last traditional diet of examinations having taken place in 2018-19. In S4, the number of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at SQA level 5 or better was 79%, down from 81% in 2020, but higher than the 78% achieved in 2019. The figure was also significantly higher than the "virtual comparator" figure of 59%, which is a comparator average based on a national sample of 10 times the number of S4 pupils, with similar characteristics to the S4 pupils in East Renfrewshire. A breakdown of those figures by school was also provided to the committee.

In S5, the number of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at SQA Level 6 or better was consistent at 50%, the same as the previous year and up from 44% in 2019. Again, it was significantly higher than the virtual comparator figure of 29%. S6 also showed excellent achievement, with 65% achieving 5 or more SQA Level 6 or better awards, up from 61% in 2020 and 58% in 2019. The virtual comparator figure for this measure was 46%, which was comfortably exceeded, showing strong performance against the expected average across the board.

More information was given on the quality of awards achieved, with the figures for National 5 mathematics showing that 81% of children in East Renfrewshire had been presented for examination at that level, far higher than the national average of 44%. Furthermore, 92% of pupils presented had achieved an A-C grade, which was consistent with attainment in 2018-19 and 2019-20; this was significantly higher than national performance where 80% of those S4 pupils presented attained National 5 mathematics.

Overall at S4, 92.7% of pupils submitted for awards at National 5 achieved A-C grades. This was down from the 96% achieved in 2020, but up from the 90.5% achieved in 2019. Additionally, the numbers of pupils achieving 8 National 5 awards at A grade and A-C grade had increased steadily since 2007 and the trend of improvement was continuing. S5 pupils achieving 5 Highers and 5 A grades at Higher had also increased steadily over the same period.

Information was provided on interventions that took place with selected pupils relating to study and assessment skills. S4 pupils in the lowest performing 20% were targeted with the aim of increasing their attainment. A number of case studies showed the impact of this intervention, with pupils significantly outperforming their expected achievement.

Information was then provided on attainment refined by groups of learners on the basis of SIMD groups as a measure of affluence. Those in the most deprived areas were consistently performing lower than their peers in less deprived areas. On average, there was a 51 point increase per child with each SIMD group from 1 to 10. However, it was noted that in East Renfrewshire, even those children in SIMD 1 to 3 areas had achieved on average 207 insight points more than the national average, the equivalent of a Higher A award more per child. It was noted that the department's ambition was for all children to attain highly and equally despite differing characteristics relating to affluence, with the objective of eradicating the poverty related attainment gap.

Finally, information was provided on vocational qualifications and leaver outcomes. 15.8% of leavers in 2019/2020 (latest data available at this time) had gained 1 or more vocational qualifications at SCQF Level 6 or better, making East Renfrewshire the highest performing local authority in this regard, and far outperforming the national average of 8.4%. It was also recorded that 96.2% of school leavers were in positive destinations, down on 97.5% from the previous year, but higher than the virtual comparator figure of 95.6%. East Renfrewshire was the highest ranking local authority in relation to the proportion of children in education, training or employment as measured by the national Participation Measure in August 2021. It was noted that there had been an increase in the proportion of 16 to 19 year olds in education, employment and training in East Renfrewshire over the three year period.

Provost Fletcher congratulated the pupils and staff on an excellent set of results, considering the significant challenges faced due to the pandemic. He noted the huge dedication and hard work by all in making those achievements possible. He did question the fact that pass rates at Higher appeared to have doubled since 2007. The Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) indicated that these figures were over a significant period of time and increases were only in line with the national average over the past 3 years rather than more broadly since that period. The information provided showed that East Renfrewshire Council's performance was atypical in terms of their increase in attainment when looking at virtual comparators, often significantly above the expectation level. He added that the significant programme of moderation of assessments gave confidence that evaluations provided by teacher assessment were robust and accurate in terms of pupil ability and performance.

Councillor Wallace said that it was remarkable that the pupils and staff in East Renfrewshire had produced such results given what they had been through over the pandemic. He added that it was important that comparison be made globally as children were entering a global marketplace and would be competing with children from around the world. He remarked on political pressure being brought to bear on awarding bodies to paint a picture of success regardless of the true situation. While he stressed that his comments were no reflection on the hard work and efforts of children and staff over the period, he stated that any suggestion that attainment locally or nationally had increased was in his view absurd. If this were the case, the suggestion should surely be that all education going forward take place in the same manner as it had over the pandemic. He referred to the review of the SQA and Education Scotland and said that he looked forward to preparing a solid, robust response.

Councillor Merrick echoed the remarks of the previous speakers in terms of the effort and dedication of pupils and staff. He stated that this was a time that everyone would remember and there may never be another term like it. The Council had done its best to mitigate the impact on children and young people. He particularly thanked the Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) for the case studies which helped to cut through the broader figures and show the impact of interventions like the study and assessment skills courses outlined. He summarised his comments by saying that it was a far better year than it would have been if not for the efforts of those in the Education Department.

Referring to Councillor Wallace's comments, Councillor Bamforth stated that she felt that it was disingenuous to insinuate that grades were being artificially inflated for political reasons. She stated that children in East Renfrewshire were very capable of competing with compatriots from the rest of the UK and worldwide, and she felt that education in East Renfrewshire was more than adequate to compete. She concluded by adding her thanks to all involved in achieving the results outlined.

Mrs McIntyre offered assurances that children in East Renfrewshire schools were not facing "dumbed down" levels of work. She cited examples of parents who were surprised at the difficulty of work children were bringing home compared to their own personal memories of school.

The Director of Education acknowledged the comments of all those present. He stated that he would take the opportunity after the meeting to write to staff and pass on the thanks of the committee for their outstanding work. The comments reflected the professionalism of staff throughout the past year and he paid tribute to them. He noted the lengths that teachers had gone to during the pandemic to not only educate but also to engage children and care for them, and that focus on wellbeing was key.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the presentation.

CHAIR





**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 18 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Graham Smith, Communications Manager; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Betty Cunningham and Danny Devlin.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1806.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER) – MINUTE OF MEETING OF 16 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**1807.** The Cabinet considered the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 16 September 2021.

Councillor Buchanan commented on the Minute, noting that the Education Department Health and Safety Report for 2020-21 had since been circulated and that a further pay offer had been made by the SJC (Scottish Joint Committee) to the Trades Unions and was currently under consideration. UNITE and GMB had accepted the offer and the UNISON ballot was due to close on the 29 November 2021. A further update could be provided in due course.

The Cabinet noted the Minute.

## UPDATE ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

**1808.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) providing an update on the revenue budget position for the current year and the financial outlook for 2022-23 and beyond.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), outlined that COVID continued to impact across the Council. A small overspend of £0.175m was forecast for 2021-22, consisting of £1.464m of COVID pressures offset by £1.289m of operational underspends.

In setting the 2021-22 budget, the forecast General Reserve balance at 31 March 2022 was £5.615m (2.2% of budget). However as a result of close control of expenditure in 2020-21, an improved year-end position was delivered and the forecast General Reserve balance at 31 March 2022 had been revised to £7.857m (3% of budget).

It was highlighted that the Modernisation Fund balance at 31 March 2021 was £5.771 million and it would require to be carefully monitored due to the heightened need for increased digital services across the Council as a result of the pandemic. Funding would also require to be allocated to the Get To Zero initiatives.

It was reported that the UK budget and Spending Review announced on 27 October 2021 was more favourable than expected. The London School of Economics outlined that this could be a possible 2.5% real terms increase for Scotland, however this settlement required to cover COVID and new initiatives, and not solely core spending pressures.

The Scottish Government's budget was scheduled to be announced on 9 December, with detailed Council figures expected to be made public shortly before Christmas. The Scottish settlement would address 2022-23 only and a Scottish Government Spending Review covering subsequent years would take place in the spring, in view of which it was recommended that the Council set a single year budget until this long-term information became available. Indicative figures for departmental planning purposes would continue to be produced as part of the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan and 6-year projections would continue to be incorporated into the annual refresh of the Council's long-term Financial Planning document.

Assuming a flat cash grant settlement, together with a 3% Council Tax increase, typical non-pay spending pressures, and the HSCP and Trust also managing their 2022-23 budgets on a flat cash basis, an initial forecast shortfall of £7.337m had been estimated to remain for the service budgets controlled by the Council. This estimate did not include COVID pressures as it was expected that these would be covered by COVID grants and/or fiscal flexibilities next year.

Given the level of uncertainty around the 2022-23 financial position and any ongoing financial support for COVID related pressures, it was expected that a flexible approach to addressing the shortfall would again be needed. This would require to take cognisance of the emerging picture on pay and other spending pressures, the new NI levy, COVID funding support and fiscal flexibilities, and consider a range of possible options. Options could include use of reserves, application of fiscal flexibilities, consideration of a Council Tax increase above the modelled 3% level (should this be permitted in the settlement) and the application of departmental savings.

From 2022-23 the outlook continued to be challenging. The Council had already been made aware of the significant rise in loan charge repayments in the coming years due to the ambitious Capital Plan.

Councillor Buchanan noted that the UK budget and Spending Review was based on pre-COVID figures and it was understood to represent an eight percent reduction in revenue and a ten percent reduction in capital expenditure for the Scottish Government when these were taken into account.

Councillor Bamforth enquired about the possible use of fiscal flexibilities, and the Council's plans should these not be available. In response the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) advised that the COVID fiscal flexibilities were available for two years ending March 2022 and advised that the Council had not used these yet. The options available to local authorities were to take a loan charge payment holiday, annex capital receipts or recalculate the debt on PPP (Public-Private Partnerships) and PFI (Private Finance Initiative) schemes. Advice was sought by local authorities although discussions were ongoing with Scottish Government regarding the technical complexities of these options and the calculation of debt. In the meantime, the Council was therefore making enquiries with COSLA if capital receipts of £2 million could be rolled forward for another year. If not this would be put into the capital reserve.

Councillor Buchanan noted the recent COSLA campaign for fair settlements for local authorities to enable them to continue to effectively serve their communities.

Having heard from the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the financial position for 2021-22;
- (b) noted that the existing COVID grants and fiscal flexibilities currently appeared to be sufficient to cover 2021-22 forecast COVID pressures;
- (c) noted the challenging financial position for 2022-23 and that the position will be clarified as more information becomes available; and
- (d) agreed that the Council should prepare a detailed budget for the single year 2022-23 only in the coming months.

CHAIR

1700

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 25 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth  
Councillor Danny Devlin

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues & Change; Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Andrew Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Lesley Bairden, Head of Finance and Resources (Chief Financial Officer) HSCP; Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Alison Ballingall, Senior Revenues Manager; Morag Brown, Policy and Improvement Manager; Susan Craynor, Community Learning and Development Manager; Mary Docherty, Education Resources Senior Manager; Brian Dunigan, Money Advice and Rights Team Manager; Sarah Jayne Hayes, Customer Service Manager; Michael McKernan, Economic Development Manager; Jaimie Reid, Strategic Insight & Communities Senior Manager; Graham Smith, Communications Manager; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Betty Cunningham.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1809.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**STRATEGIC MID-YEAR COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-22**

**1810.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing a summary of Council performance at mid-year 2021-22 based on performance indicators in the Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) 2021-24. A mid-year complaints report was also included. Details of the performance results, together with information on mid-year complaints appeared as appendices to the report.

The Strategic Insight & Communities Senior Manager advised that the Council continued to achieve excellent performance results across many areas including educational attainment, supporting local businesses and reducing the recurrence of reports of anti-social behaviour.

Two indicators around child protection were currently off target, where the safety scores had decreased, however appropriate measures had been put in place to ensure the children's safety. It was advised that due to the small number of children involved in child protection procedures the percentages could fluctuate from quarter to quarter. The ongoing impact of the pandemic had also made it more challenging to engage with children and young people regarding advocacy services.

The volume of complaints received had increased from the corresponding period in 2020-21 from 498 to 1,027. Looking to the four years prior to 2020/21 the average complaints received during this period was 719, meaning the number of complaints received in the first half of 2021-22 represented a 43% increase from this average. It was advised that an increase was expected given last year's figures were lower as a result of the pandemic, along with improved customer access to a new real time complaints system. The distribution of complaints across services was similar to previous years, and it was noted that the average response time was an average of 19.5 days against a target of 20 days. The percentage of complaints upheld at the front line stage was 19.3%.

It was noted that the overall absence for mid-point 2021-22 was 4.34 days lost per FTE (full-time equivalent). It was explained that when reviewing the absence data for 2021-22 thus far the trend was on the rise in comparison to 2020-21. However, this was not a true comparison due to the pandemic. A proportion of employees were working in a more flexible manner throughout this period and therefore absence levels were not as high in comparison to previous years. To compare absence performance more accurately 2021-22 was considered against the 2019-20 absence statistics, which showed that the Council's absence performance had improved slightly, however, the overall absence was marginally above the 2021-22 target.

The report concluded by stating that the information presented showed the Council was performing well across the majority of the ODP indicators. However COVID-19 would continue to have an impact on future performance and delivery of services. The Council continued to work towards the aim of making people's lives better and achieving positive outcomes for all communities in East Renfrewshire.

Councillor Bamforth welcomed the improved attainment gap figure given the extremely challenging circumstances of the pandemic, the reports made to the HSCP Performance and Audit Committee, and the figure reported for sickness absence days per employee.

The Head of HR and Corporate Services confirmed that flexible working had contributed positively to the figure reported for sickness absence days per employee and that there had been a reduction in the number of colds/flu and gastro illnesses reported, however this figure was now increasing in addition to issues around mental health. COVID-19 related sickness figures were also now accounted for within reporting.

Having heard further from the Strategic Insight & Communities Senior Manager, the Cabinet noted the summary of the Council's performance at mid-year 2021-22 at Annex 1 and the mid-year complaints report attached at Annex 2.

## **GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-22**

**1811.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), monitoring expenditure against the approved General Fund Capital Programme as at 30 September 2021 and recommending adjustments where necessary in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), advised that the report indicated a shortfall in resource of £443,000 representing 1.06% of the resources available which was within manageable limits.

The report advised of a number of movements in the current year's Capital Programme. These related mainly to the timing of projects, and reflected shortages of materials and labour as well as backlogs in tendering and site starts as restrictions had started to be lifted. These factors were also impacting on construction costs and officers would continue to monitor the position and provide updates.

The report outlined significant additional grant income for works in relation to watercourses, play parks, electric vehicle charging, CO2 monitors, bridge maintenance and tree planting.

In response to questions from Councillor Bamforth, the Director of Environment advised that the £0.046m to support installation of electric vehicle charger points would be prioritised for Council fleet; the £0.152m for installation of fixed or handheld CO2 monitors would be prioritised in schools prior to moving to other buildings; and the £0.084m Nature Restoration Fund was used for the "Wee Woods" project.

The Cabinet agreed **to recommend to the Council** that the movements within the programme be approved; and noted the shortfall of £0.443m, and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

## **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-22**

**1812.** The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Director of Environment, monitoring expenditure as at 30 September 2021 against the approved Housing Capital Programme 2021/22.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) advised that there was a shortfall in the programme of £0.160m representing 1.04% of available resources but this was within manageable limits. There had been a number of movements in the programme. These related mainly to timing delays due to the significant impact of COVID-19 on both existing and new housing projects. Due to increased cost pressures in the construction sector, officers would continue to monitor this position and provide updates in future reports.

Having heard from the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), the Cabinet agreed **to recommend to the Council** that the current movements within the programme be approved; and noted the shortfall of £0.160m and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

## **COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT COMMUNITY FUNDING**

**1813.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 3 June 2021 (Page 1535, Item 1649 refers), when the Cabinet approved the approach and approximate budget allocations for the Scottish Government funding for Flexible Support and Financial Insecurity, the Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive providing an update on the distribution of one-off Scottish Government humanitarian support funding within East Renfrewshire.

The Head of Communities, Revenues & Change provided an update on the progress of the Humanitarian community engagement and research and gave further detail on how the £150,000 would be allocated to support local residents in need, using a participatory budgeting approach. Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER) had agreed to support the

Council in the delivery of the participatory budgeting process and disbursement of the funds. It was noted that a further c£50,000 would be allocated for community capacity building and support, inclusive of a bid from East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for a total of £23,000 to meet a shortfall in resources for their Helping East Renfrewshire Online (HERO) project over the next 2 years. This project tied in closely with digital inclusion and the Connecting Scotland programme. Two further funding sources were noted, these being the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund, which was to be directly routed through Third Sector Interfaces (i.e. VAER locally) by March 2022 and a new Scottish Government Winter Support Fund to be administered by councils.

In light of the verbal update provided by Head of Communities, Revenues & Change, Councillor Bamforth declared a non-financial interest as a founding member and trustee of Back to School Bank. Councillor Bamforth advised she was aware of receipt of humanitarian funding to Back to School Bank although confirmed no involvement in the funding process, both in terms of the application process or allocation of funds. Councillor Bamforth took no further part in the item.

Having heard from the Head of Communities, Revenues & Change the Cabinet: -

- (a) noted the progress of the Humanitarian community engagement and research;
- (b) approved the distribution of the humanitarian funding against the proposed themes in paragraph 7 of the report;
- (c) agreed that the Humanitarian Group will allocate any underspends across the themes to support local communities; and
- (d) delegated to the Director of Corporate & Community Services & Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), in consultation with the CRMT/CMT, to make appropriate arrangements for use of the Winter Support Fund in line with government guidance.

## **WELFARE CONTINGENCY FUND UPDATE**

**1814.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval to use resources from the Welfare Reform contingency provision in order to support local residents through the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF); the Money Advice and Rights Team's (MART's) Financial Wellbeing Project and to support the Council's partners in the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Head of Communities, Revenues & Change outlined the background to the recommendations in the report, advising of the previously agreed use of the Welfare Contingency Fund by the Cabinet in June 2018 and January 2020. The report detailed that as a consequence of the pandemic and changes to the welfare system, SWF and MART had become an increasingly important source of support for vulnerable individuals. It was expected the demand for all services would continue to increase and it was important that there was appropriate resource within SWF to deliver timely financial support and a robust referral mechanism and MART presence for socio-economic referrals to be diverted to the team.

Councillor Devlin sought clarification that there would not be an underspend on any of the humanitarian support community funding, in response to which the Head of Communities, Revenues & Change advised that there was a time limit associated with these funds therefore the Council was working proactively with communities and organisations with regard to the use of this funding. The Head of Communities, Revenues & Change and the



Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) advised that the Welfare Contingency Fund was a Council reserve and therefore there was not a time limit on these funds. Any funds unused would be returned to the Council budget.

The Cabinet: -

- (a) approved the Scottish Welfare Fund team bid for a total of £121,055 over the next 2 years, to fund 2 Grade 5 posts to support increased demand in applications for the SWF;
- (b) approved that increased resiliency within the Revenues and Benefits Team is managed through an external contract up to a limit of £50,000 over 2 years, where processing resource can be called off and paid for as required;
- (c) approved the Money Advice and Rights Team (MART)'s bid for £79,000 of welfare contingency provision to continue the Financial Wellbeing Project to build community capacity and resilience in the area of financial inclusion, and establish a welfare rights presence in GP practices and schools for a further 2 years;
- (d) approved the East Renfrewshire Citizen Advice Bureau (ERCAB) bid for £80,000 to continue to fund one full time member of staff to undertake all aspects of benefit support work for a further 2 years; and
- (e) noted that all bids for welfare contingency resources were being requested in principle and were subject to budgetary provision being confirmed when the Council set the 2022-23 and 2023-24 budgets early in 2022 and 2023.

## **PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2021-22**

**1815.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, to advise of the new Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) award from the Scottish Government and seeking approval for schemes for 2021-22.

The Director of Environment outlined that the the aim of the PBIP was to ensure that all place based investments were shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities and accelerated Scottish Government ambitions for place, 20-minute neighbourhoods, town centre action, community led regeneration and community wealth building. The Scottish Government had also indicated the overall amount of funding across Scotland for the 5-year programme. The Council had been awarded £635,000 of capital grant funding for the financial year 2021-22 and based on a pro rata calculation for subsequent years, the Council was likely to receive capital grant funding of approximately £551,100 in financial year 2022-23 and £384,100 in each of the remaining 3 years of the programme.

The Council's Economic Development team issued a call for proposals in June 2021 to various stakeholders including community councils, local community groups, the third sector and relevant Council departments.

It was explained that the Economic Development team had worked with partners to identify suitable projects. In prioritising the proposals, particular consideration had been given to the deliverability of the project within the tight timescale with contracts to be signed by 31 March 2022 at the latest; the geographical spread of grant across the Council area; and the economic benefits and outcomes of each project.

Councillor Devlin enquired as to whether the funding could be used for road improvements, and it was noted that the Economic Development Manager would seek to clarify the position.

Councillor Bamforth sought clarification on community involvement in accessing this funding, in response to which the Economic Development Manager advised that wider stakeholder engagement was scheduled with a view to developing local action plans to then identify projects which would be accessible to the PBIP.

The Cabinet: -

- (a) approved the projects outlined in appendix 1 for 2021/22;
- (b) delegated to the Director of Environment to make adjustments to the proposals depending upon the detailed costs of projects becoming available; and
- (c) noted that further reports would be submitted to the Cabinet in due course seeking approval for projects in future years.

## **A RISK-BASED APPROACH TO ROAD ASSET SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

**1816.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for a proposed new risk-based strategic approach to roads inspections.

The report outlined that this new approach would enable a more appropriate categorisation of defects and responses based on the risk to road users as opposed to the current method, which was based upon reactive specified intervention levels. The proposed Strategy was based upon guidance provided for use nationally by the Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS). A copy of the new Road Asset Safety Inspection Strategy accompanied the report as appendix 1.

Clarification of the new approach in comparison to the current approach was discussed. It was noted that this approach should minimise the exposure of danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community; mitigate the Council's exposure to risk and enable a robust defence to claims of loss; and ensure compliance with statutory requirements and increase best value by reducing the number of defects allocated to the incorrect category/priority and increase the number of permanent repairs.

Having heard from the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer), the Cabinet approved the adoption of the revised Road Asset Safety Inspection Strategy to implement a risk-based approach to the maintenance and management of the road network.

## **GET TO ZERO AMBITION STATEMENT & ACTION PLANNING APPROACH**

**1817.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the proposed approach for 'Get to Zero' in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, including a new ambition statement and how the Council intended to move from a high level action plan to a detailed route-map to 'net zero' for East Renfrewshire.

The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) outlined that the report advised that reducing emissions was a legal requirement and summarised the obligations introduced by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 with all councils having a role in assisting the Scottish Government meet these national targets.

He explained that emissions come from the Council and also from its residents and businesses and reminded Members that in March 2021, a report was brought to Cabinet that recognised that the Council's existing policy framework and activities would not achieve the Scottish Government's target. At that time a decision was taken to focus on Council emissions initially. It was then noted that on 25 October 2021 the Council formally declared a 'climate emergency', this resulting in a number of further requirements and commitments which were outlined in the report.

Having heard from the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) and following discussion, the Cabinet approved the proposed Get to Zero Ambition Statement and high level action plan; and the proposed next steps to move from a high-level action plan to detailed actions and to develop a route map to 'net zero' for East Renfrewshire.

### **CHARGING FOR SERVICES 2022-23**

**1818.** The Cabinet considered the undernoted reports by the appropriate Directors regarding the outcome of the charging for services exercises carried out in each of the departments and recommended proposed fees and charges for 2022-23.

The reports referred to the range of services reviewed within each department, the outcome of the reviews, proposed changes and associated resource implications:-

- (i) Corporate and Community Services Department;
- (ii) Health and Social Care Partnership;
- (iii) Education Department and
- (iv) Environment Department.

Following discussion, the Cabinet agreed the following for each department:

#### **(i) CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

The Cabinet: -

- (a) increased all non-statutory fees and charges by 3.7% for 2022/23 in line with the forecasted rate of inflation;
- (b) noted that the statutory fees were set by National Records of Scotland (NRS) in November each year; and
- (c) introduced a charge to provide all administrative duties in order for young people to register for, participate in and complete the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme (DofE), including award verification and certification to take effect in the academic year 2021/22.

#### **(ii) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP**

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted this update on charging within the HSCP; and
- (b) agreed the proposed increase to existing charges.

**(iii) EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

The Cabinet approved the following:

- (a) Service Area 1 - Catering Service – School and Early Years Meals
- i. To retain charges at their current levels for primary meals pending the full rollout of universal free school meals to all stages by August 2022.
  - ii. To increase charges within the secondary sector by 4%.
  - iii. To introduce the option to purchase a lunch within the early years sector when accessing childcare provision outwith the statutory 1,140 hours of free early learning and childcare.
- (b) Service Area 2 – Add On Sessions (Early Learning and Childcare)  
To increase charges from August 2022 to the following hourly rate equivalent cost:-
- |               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| 3-5 year olds | £3.00 |
| 2 year olds   | £3.75 |
| 0-2 year olds | £4.50 |
- (c) Service Area 3 – Instrumental Music Service  
In line with Scottish Government policy commitments, extend the removal of charges for instrumental music tuition in schools for session 2022/23 and retain charges for other services provided at current levels.
- (d) Service Area 4 – Provision for Pupils with Additional Support Needs who reside out with the Authority  
Revised charge to be set for 2022/23 following consideration of 2021/22 outturn.
- (e) Service area 5 - School Transport – Privilege Place  
To retain charges at their current level.
- (f) Service Area 6 – Easter Schools  
In line with Scottish Government policy commitments, extend the removal of charges for Easter school provision in 2022.
- (g) Service Area 7 – Isobel Mair Extended Day  
To retain charges at current level pending wider review of service provision.

**(iv) ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

The Cabinet agreed:-

- (a) an increase of 3.7% is applied to the following services:
- Service 1 – Approval to Erect Temporary Direction Signs
  - Service 2 – Removal of Unauthorised Signs
  - Service 3 – Removal of Dead Animals from Private Properties
  - Service 5 – Supply of Bins for New Housing Developments
  - Service 6 – High Hedges Application Fee
  - Service 7 – Recharge of legal fees to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties
  - Service 8 – Miscellaneous Recharges (Roads Staff Time)

- Service 9 – Supply of Ordnance Survey Extracts
- Service 10 – Providing Variety of Planning and Building Standards Information
- Service 11 – Planning and Building Standards Section 50 Certificates
- Service 12 – Provision of bar markings on carriageway
- Service 13 – Section 109 approvals
- Service 14 – Temporary traffic signal permits
- Service 15 – Road occupation permits
- Service 16 – Road opening permit
- Service 17 – Road closure notice
- Service 18 – Provision of dropped kerbs
- Service 19 – Skip permits
- Service 20 – Inspection charges for roads in new developments
- Service 21 – Special uplifts
- Service 22 – Outdoor Sports Pitches
- Service 23 – Trading Standards
- Service 24 – Prevention Services
- Service 25 – Letters of comfort and building warrant extensions
- Service 26 – Building Standards – Section 89 Certificates
- Service 27 – Copies of building warrants etc documentation
- Service 28 – Copies of Planning etc consents
- Service 29 – Property enquiry report
- Service 30 – HMO licensing
- Service 31 – Private Sector Grants registration
- Service 32 – Burial Grounds
- Service 33 – ‘No Parking’ cones
- Service 34 – Trade waste collections
- Service 36 – Hire of Rouken Glen Pavilion
- Service 40 – Caravan Site Licensing
- Service 41 – Export Health Certificate

(b) No change to charges

- Service 4 – Hire of Events Litter Squad
- Service 35 – Dangerous building admin fee
- Service 37 – Housing Management Fee
- Service 38 – Rouken Glen Event
- Service 39 – Filming in Parks etc
- Service 42 – Garden Waste Permit

(c) The nationally prescribed charges set by the Scottish Government and Vehicle & Operator Services Agency for the following services:

- Service 43 – Planning Applications
- Service 44 – Certificates of lawful use or development
- Service 45 – Building warrant applications
- Service 46 – Application for private landlord registration
- Service 47 – MOT testing

**ANIMAL WELFARE (LICENSING OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2021**

**1819.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, which advised of the Council's new statutory duties under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 (hereinafter referred to as "the 2021 Regulations") and sought agreement of the set of fees applicable to the activities as set out in Appendix A to the report to be applicable with immediate effect.

The Director of Environment outlined that the new 2021 Regulations would have licencing implications for existing licenced animal establishments and introduce new licensing requirements for cat and rabbit breeders, animal welfare establishments (such as animal sanctuaries and rehoming centres) and other pet rehoming activities, subject to operators meeting the licensing threshold for each activity.

Having heard from the Director of Environment, the Cabinet noted East Renfrewshire Council's new statutory duties under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 and agreed the fees as set out in Appendix A and that these were applicable immediately.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 25 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Stewart Miller (Chair)	Councillor Annette Ireland
Councillor Barbara Grant (Vice Chair)	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Jim Swift
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Fiona Muir, Senior Auditor; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

John Cornett, Louisa Yule and Emma-Rose Drummond, Audit Scotland.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1820.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**1821.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 12 August 2021 (Page 1596, Item 1712 refers), when it had been noted that the Clerk would ask members of the committee to confirm if there were any issues, by exception, that had been raised in the *Audit Scotland COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* on which they wished to seek further feedback or assurances at present, taking account of feedback on various matters already provided, the Chair confirmed that the Clerk had not been requested to pursue any further feedback thus far. He reminded the committee that it remained an option to do so at any point, highlighting that various COVID-19 recovery updates had been, and continued to be, submitted to the Council.

The committee noted that if any member of the committee wished to pursue any specific matters, they should advise the Chair or the Clerk.

**2020-21 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT (INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ON AUDITING 260) REPORT**

**1822.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 23 September 2021 (Page 1645, Item 1759 refers), when the committee had noted that the final Annual Accounts for the Council's charitable trusts and related documents would be submitted to this meeting, the committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explaining that the audit of the 2020-21 Annual Accounts for the seven charitable trusts for which the Council acted as Trustee had been completed, and submitting a copy of these for consideration. The External Auditor's report on the trusts, completed in compliance with ISA 260, was also submitted for consideration.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) welcomed that the audit had been completed by the end of November within the statutory timescale for doing so, especially given the associated challenges faced. Having referred to the positive nature of the External Auditor's report, she confirmed that a way forward had been agreed to address issues specified in the findings, and thanked the Chief Accountant and her team for their contribution to this achievement.

Ms Yule commented on the 2020-21 Accounts and related issues. Having referred to the ISA 260 report, the proposed independent auditor's report and ISA 580 letter of representation which had been provided, she confirmed that the Accounts were unqualified, and had been prepared in accordance with related legislative requirements. Ms Yule confirmed that in keeping with normal practice, some comments on the audit of the charitable trusts had been included in the main Annual Audit Report relating to the Council. Whilst commenting further, she highlighted that the charitable trusts for the Lieutenants Duff Memorial Institute and Endowment for Talented Children and Young People had shown a lack of activity for a number of years which could result in them being considered dormant, and that related actions were being taken. Progress on these would be reviewed as part of the 2021/22 audit. She thanked the officers involved in preparing the financial statements throughout the audit process.

Having heard Councillor Miller refer to the contribution being considered from the Lieutenants Duff Memorial Institute fund towards the refurbishment of Duff Memorial Hall, Councillor Ireland enquired if the scale of the contribution had been confirmed. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) reported that accountants were currently in discussion with the property team to determine what contribution could be made. Regarding the Netherlee Fund, in response to a query from Councillor Ireland, it was confirmed that a fund required to be unused for several years for it to be considered dormant.

The committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the External Auditor's report on matters arising from the audits of the registered charities for 2020-21 under requirements of ISA 260;
- (b) note the amalgamated Annual Accounts for 2020-21 for the seven charitable trusts for which the Council acted as Trustee; and
- (c) remit the report to the Council for consideration.

**2020-21 EAST REFRESHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS, DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT AND RELATED ISA 260 REPORT**

**1823.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 23 September 2021 (Page 1645, Item 1759 refers), when the committee had noted that a report on the final Accounts and associated draft Annual Audit Report to the Council and the Controller of Audit would be submitted to this



meeting, the committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) regarding the Annual Accounts for 2020-21; the associated draft Annual Audit Report prepared by the External Auditor which would be issued in final form after the financial statements had been certified; and a further report by the External Auditor on matters arising from the audit of the Council's financial statements for 2020-21 reported under ISA 260 requirements. The draft Audit report provided an overview of the main issues arising from the 2020-21 audit.

The Council had received an audit certificate which was unqualified. As it had operated comfortably within budget, it had not required to draw down £3,500k from reserves as planned, but rather made a contribution of £2,027k to the Council's Non-Earmarked General Fund reserve, resulting in a balance of £11,670k as at 31 March 2021, representing an improvement of £5,527k. This equated to 4.5% of the annual budgeted net revenue expenditure, which was slightly above the Council's most prudent target of 4%. However, it was anticipated that the balance would reduce by £3,750k during the current year as a result of budget decisions.

The Council's General Fund reserve balances as at 31 March 2021 totalled £47,264k. This was an increase of £15,803k from the previous year and was mainly due to unspent COVID-19 related grants, largely received towards the end of the financial year. These grants would be used in the current 2021/22 financial year and possibly beyond to meet COVID-19 pressures.

Capital expenditure of £35,084k had been invested, in addition to which there had been an operating deficit of £95k on the Housing Revenue Account, thus decreasing the accumulated surpluses carried forward to that account to £2,221k.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) commented that the remarks she had made on the Trust Accounts applied also to the Council's main Accounts.

Mr Cornett referred to the documents provided which included a covering letter, the draft audit opinion, the draft ISA 580 letter of representation, and the draft Annual Audit Report, indicating that his comments would focus on the key messages specified in the report.

Whilst referring to the 2020-21 Accounts and related issues, Mr Cornett confirmed that the related audit work was nearing completion, that some usual administrative issues remained to be concluded, and that it was proposed to issue an unqualified auditor's certificate on the Accounts. He made reference to adjustments made to the Accounts, highlighting that some were quite significant in value and over the materiality levels being used. However, he emphasised that what was important was that the adjustments had been agreed with officers and made to the Accounts, that they were not considered unusual, and that they related to one-off issues rather than any systematic or underlying issues of concern. He highlighted that a few of the adjustments were as a result of the very late receipt of guidance from the Local Authority Scotland Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC) after the draft Accounts had been prepared, such as on accounting for personal protective equipment.

Mr Cornett highlighted the recommendations made to achieve further improvements. In particular, in relation to taking forward issues identified during the audit, he referred to those relating to the work of the Council's valuer and how the valuer worked with the Finance team.

Whilst making reference to the remainder of the Annual Audit Report which covered wider dimensions, Mr Cornett considered the findings around financial management to be very positive. Regarding financial sustainability, he stressed that in common with every local authority in Scotland and other public sector organisations, the position at the end of the 2020-21 financial year had been somewhat unique. Clarifying further, he explained that the Council had quite inflated level of reserves, but confirmed this was largely due to the late

receipt of COVID-19 funding from the Scottish Government. Consequently, those reserves were largely ring-fenced for that purpose, and masked the ongoing financial challenges faced by the Council which would require some difficult decisions to be taken in future.

Regarding governance and transparency, Mr Cornett considered the report to be a very positive one from an external audit perspective. He commented that the emergency arrangements put in place at the start of the pandemic had been highlighted, and that it had been concluded that these had been appropriate and effective, had worked well, and had supported the continued good governance of the Council. The findings on Best Value were also considered to be positive, not only in terms of the arrangements in place to allow the Council to assure itself on Best Value, but also regarding the response to the Best Value Assurance Report published a number of years ago.

Having referred to the standard letter of management representation to be completed and returned to External Audit, Mr Cornett thanked the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), the Chief Accountant and the rest of the finance team for the help and support they had provided throughout the year and regarding the audit, in what had continued to be an unusual and difficult year. He stressed that the approach adopted had very much been a partnership one, which would allow the Accounts to be signed off ahead of the deadline for doing so. Having also thanked the finance team, Councillor Miller thanked Mr Cornett and his team for the positive comments they had made.

The committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the draft Annual Audit Report to the Council and Controller of Audit 2020-21 and the External Auditor's Report on matters arising from the audit of the Council's 2020-21 Financial Statements prepared under requirements of ISA 260;
- (b) note the content of the Council's Annual Accounts for 2020-21 and related comments made; and
- (c) remit the report to the Council for consideration.

## **INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2021-22**

**1824.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 12 August 2021 (Page 1595 Item, 1711 refers), when the committee had noted the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2020-21, and recommended to the Council that the organisations specified in that 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 first six months of 2021-22.

The report explained that in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2017, the Audit & Scrutiny Committee was responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Council's treasury management activities. In accordance with that requirement, the interim Treasury Management Report for 2021-22 was attached to the report for consideration.

Whilst highlighting key aspects of the report, the Chief Accountant confirmed that it showed the Council's debt position and provided related information on movements, investments and borrowing over the first 6 months of 2021-22. She explained that long-term borrowing had been fairly static, with only a small amount of debt paid off. It was confirmed that anticipated borrowing of £30m from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) had not been taken due to high levels of short-term investments held, therefore the available headroom in balances with counterparties for the investment of funds until used was restricted.

The Chief Accountant clarified that, in accordance with the Council's strategy on variable rate loans not exceeding 30% of the total debt outstanding, this had peaked at just over 7%, but would increase gradually as PWLB loans were paid off or reduce as further ones were taken. Short-term investments had decreased slightly due to cash flows in both capital and revenue, reasons for which were outlined.

The Chief Accountant highlighted that the prudential indicators helped confirm that capital investment plans and treasury management decisions remained affordable, prudent and sustainable. In particular, indicators 3 and 4 demonstrated that the Council was operating well within its limits.

Finally, the Chief Accountant commented on amendments to the Council's list of counterparties, confirming that the list had changed slightly from the one in the 2020-21 year-end report, with an increase in the Bank of England deposit limit from £25m to £30m. It was 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.

Councillor Ireland thanked the Finance team for their hard work compiling the report and the other reports they had been involved in preparing for the meeting, all of which had been positive.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) to **recommend to the Council** that the organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the report and related comments made.

## **INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021-22 – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS – JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 2021**

**1825.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Auditor regarding progress made on the implementation of the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan from 1 June to 30 September 2021. It was confirmed that two audit reports in relation to planned 2021-22 audit work had been completed in quarter 2, information on which was provided. Details of five reports which were carried out as part of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 plans were also provided regarding which responses had been received since the last progress report.

Reference was also made to the quarterly performance indicators (PIs) for the section, some of which were not being met due to COVID-19 restrictions on audit work that could be carried out and delays in departments responding to audit queries. The report confirmed that there had been one new request for assistance dealt with using contingency time, which had not resulted in a financial loss to the Council. It was also confirmed that one audit relating to planned 2020-21 audit work was still in progress, in respect of which it was hoped to issue the report soon, and that one high risk recommendation in the Creditor Payments report had not been accepted, details of which had already been provided in the 2020-21 Internal Audit Annual Report.

The Senior Auditor referred to key aspects of the report, including the extent to which various recommendations made had been considered to be low, medium or high risk, and the extent to which they had been accepted by management. She confirmed that the new request for assistance dealt with using contingency time, which had been in relation to the recently implemented annual permit scheme for garden waste, had not resulted in any loss of cash or assets to the Council, and that initial teething problems regarding the scheme appeared to have been resolved.

1716

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Senior Auditor confirmed that the report that would identify orders over £50k without procurement authorisation had now been made available to procurement for testing and feedback to core systems, and that it was understood that procurement were intending to run the report on a weekly basis. Councillor Ireland welcomed this development.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) not to seek any of the reports issued during the quarter at this stage; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the report and related comments made.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Minute of virtual Meeting held at 4.00pm on 25 November 2021.**

**Present:**

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Annette Ireland
Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Paul Aitken	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Jim Swift
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also attending:**

John Cornett, Louisa Yule and Emma-Rose Drummond, Audit Scotland.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Barbara Grant and Paul O’Kane.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1826.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE COUNCIL’S CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2020-21**

**1827.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held earlier that day (Page 1712, Item 1822 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explaining that the audit of the 2020-21 Annual Accounts for the seven charitable trusts for which the Council acted as trustee had been completed, that the Accounts had been amalgamated into one document, and that a copy was now submitted for consideration. In addition, the External Auditor’s report in respect of the Trusts, in compliance with the International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260, was also submitted for consideration.

Councillor Miller, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, having commented on the accounts and thanked all finance staff and external audit for their input, the Council approved the 2020-21 Annual Accounts for each of the Trusts and the associated External Auditor's report.

## **EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2020-21**

**1828.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held earlier that day (Page 1712, Item 1823 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) regarding the Annual Accounts for 2020-21, the associated draft Annual Audit Report prepared by the External Auditor, and a further report by the External Auditor on matters arising from the audit of the Council's financial statements for 2020-21 reported under ISA 260 requirements. The draft Audit report provided an overview of the main issues arising from the 2020-21 audit.

The Council had received an audit certificate which was unqualified. As the Council had operated comfortably within budget it had not required to draw down £3,500k from reserves as planned. Instead a contribution of £2,027k was made to the non-earmarked General Fund reserve, representing an improvement of £5,527k. As a consequence the Council's non-earmarked General Fund reserve had increased by £2,027K resulting in a balance of £11,670k as at 31 March 2021. At 4.5% of annual budgeted net revenue expenditure this was slightly above the Council's target of 4%. However it was noted that the balance would reduce by a further £3,750k during the current year in line with approved levels.

It was noted that the Council's General Fund reserve balances as at 31 March 2021 totalled £47,264k. This was an increase of £15,803k from last year and was mainly due to unspent COVID-19 related grants, largely received towards the end of the financial year. These grants would be used in the current financial year to meet COVID-19 pressures.

It was further noted that capital expenditure of £35,084k had been invested in addition to which there had been an operating deficit of £95k on the Housing Revenue Account, this decreasing the accumulated surplus balance to carry forward to £2,221k.

Councillor Miller was heard to comment further on the accounts and in response to Councillor Wallace confirmed that there had been no issues of concern raised at the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Wallace referred to the COVID funding received from the Scottish Government and whether there was any likelihood of the unspent funding in reserves needing to be repaid. In reply the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that any COVID related funding was earmarked and could be carried forward with the expectation that it would be used for COVID-related matters in future years. This was not expected to change.

Thereafter Councillor Wallace raised matters in relation to the Council's capital accounting procedures both in respect of normally funded and PPI/PPP projects, to possible technical changes to accounting for capital expenditure being sought by the Scottish Government, and the potential impact any changes may have to the Council's capital programme.

Responding to Councillor Wallace the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) reminded Elected Members of the changes that the Council had introduced in recent years whereby repayment costs for capital projects were spread over the life of the asset and not just over the life of the loan. Similar measures were being proposed in relation to PPI/PPP projects.

In relation to possible technical changes to accounting for capital projects, she explained that Directors of Finance were not supportive of the changes as they would potentially increase loan charges earlier in the life of a project and make it more expensive. The Scottish Government had been advised of these views. At this stage it was not clear on when a final decision would be made on whether the changes would be introduced.

Councillor Wallace questioned whether, in light of the absence of a decision by the Scottish Government, it would be prudent for the Council to go ahead with any capital projects.

In reply the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that even if the decision was made to introduce the changes it would take a long time for the technical guidance associated with the changes to be finalised. Were it decided not to undertake any capital projects in the short-term, the longer-term implications were that by the time agreement to proceed was reached, project costs would have risen. She reminded Members that the Council had a 10-year capital plan and projects could be prioritised based on available funds.

Having heard the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) emphasise that Directors of Finance were opposed to the Scottish Government proposals. Councillor Buchanan explained that the proposals were not having a direct impact the Council's current capital plans with the greatest impact being due to increased costs as a result of Brexit.

Councillor Buchanan then offered thanks to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee for its work in reviewing the accounts and Audit Scotland report, and officers from both Audit Scotland and the Council's own finance and internal audit teams for their work.

Thereafter the Council agreed to:-

- (a) approve the Council's Annual Accounts for 2020-21; and
- (b) note the draft Annual Audit Report to the Council and Controller of Audit 2020-21 and the External Auditor's report on matters arising from the audit of the Council's 2020-21 Financial Statements prepared under requirements of ISA 260.

PROVOST





**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**  
**(POLICE & FIRE)**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 2 December 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Colm Merrick (Chair)  
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Barbara Grant

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Councillor Merrick in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues & Change; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland (Divisional Commander), Chief Inspector Alan Gray (Area Commander), and Michelle Grant, Communities Inspector, Police Scotland; Area Commander David McCarrey and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Caroline Bamforth, Betty Cunningham and Danny Devlin.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1829.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Councillor Merrick welcomed all attendees to the meeting and noted the attendance of Communities Inspector Michelle Grant who would be observing the meeting.

**VALEDICTORY – CAROLINE INNES, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1830.** Councillor Merrick advised that this would be the last Cabinet (Police and Fire) meeting attended by Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive, who was due to retire in January 2022 after 37 years of public service. On behalf of the Cabinet he thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for her involvement in East Renfrewshire Council over the years and wished her a long and happy retirement. This was echoed by other members of the Cabinet and throughout

the meeting by Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service colleagues who commended the level of partnership working achieved. At the end of the meeting the Deputy Chief Executive responded in suitable terms.

Councillor Merrick welcomed Louise Pringle, current Head of Communities, Revenues & Change to the meeting who would take up the post of Director of Business Operations and Partnerships in February 2022. All meeting attendees welcomed the future Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and looked forward to working with her in due course.

### **Sederunt**

Councillor Gordon Wallace joined the meeting at this point.

## **POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2021-22**

**1831.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the second quarter of 2021-22. The report also provided statistical information in relation to various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period together with comparative statistics for the corresponding period in 2021-22.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland provided an overview of the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23 during quarter two and noted the easing of COVID-19 restrictions during this period. He advised of the successful support Police Scotland provided to the safe delivery of the Playground Festival, TRNSMT Festival and the Annual Boyd Procession out with the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow. He commended the successful partnership working approach of the Safe East Renfrewshire Summer Plan, particularly given the extended period of good weather and large areas of open spaces within the Council area requiring resource.

He outlined that anti-social behaviour and public nuisance calls had reduced and recognised that this reduction was partly a result of the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in addition to the work of partners. He thanked the Council for their support in policing delivery and looked forward to a safe festive period.

Chief Inspector Gray thanked the Chair for allowing the Communities Inspector to join the meeting and for the rescheduling of the Cabinet Police and Fire meeting from the 18 November to 2 December in response to the demands placed on Police Scotland during COP 26. He then reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. He outlined the changing timeline of the wider COVID-19 restrictions during this period being eased and the impact this had on the delivery of local operational policing services and crime profiles.

Chief Inspector Gray advised that acquisitive crimes were lower than for the same period the previous year and 16% lower for the five-year average. The number of homes broken into, inclusive of attempted break-ins, remained unchanged from last year's figure and was down 30% compared to the five-year average.

Online fraud had increased both locally in East Renfrewshire and across the United Kingdom. The Economic Crime Unit continued to support local officers with expert advice to progress investigations and increase awareness of new and emerging scams through local social media and the Police Scotland website. Effective partnership working with the Council's Trading Standards Prevention Team officers and local banks through an agreed

“Banking Protocol” resulted in regular alerts being made to Police Scotland of suspicious activity. This enabled officers to quickly attend and investigate the circumstances, ensure the safety of potential victims and prevent the potential loss of finances.

Chief Inspector Gray advised that in relation to public protection, sexual crimes had decreased in comparison to 2020 and the five-year average data. The detection rate for sexual offences so far this financial year was 68.9%, significantly higher than the 5 year average figure of 45.3%. Work continued with partner agencies to ensure victims had the confidence to report ongoing and historical incidents.

Slightly fewer domestic abuse incidents were attended compared to the same period the previous year, although this was 5% more than the five-year average. The number of domestic abuse incidents where associated crimes had been recorded, remained well below the previous 5 year average figure of 45.1% and was currently 37.4%. With the support of Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit colleagues, positive engagement with potential victims of domestic abuse was encouraged to ensure that advice, support and intervention could be put in place at the earliest opportunity.

In relation to the detection of drug supply offences, it was advised that there had been a decrease of 13.4% compared to the previous year, with 71 crimes recorded in East Renfrewshire. The number of offences recorded relating to the supply of drugs was 22.4% higher than the previous 5 year average. Work continued in line with an ongoing focus on a public health approach to policing.

In relation to violent crime, in the second quarter of the year minor assaults had increased slightly compared to the same period the previous year although remained below the five-year average. Serious assaults also remained low and in line with previous year to date and 5 year average data. Reports of robberies remained low and in a static position compared to the previous year's figures. Assaults on emergency service workers have increased nationally. Consultation on the wider use of body worn video took place earlier this year and safety training was being provided for officers.

Antisocial behaviour and disorder, including youth disorder, saw a significant reduction in comparison to the first quarter and five-year average. Following a restriction on foreign travel through the second quarter as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, it was anticipated there would be an increase in the use of local parks and open spaces within the Council area. The establishment of the Safe East Ren Group to deliver a “Summer Plan” during the second quarter resulted in no significant incidents of disorder throughout the period and a decline in antisocial behaviour.

Chief Inspector Gray then reported on the incidents referred to in the report under the areas of violent crime, crimes of dishonesty, vulnerable road users, domestic abuse, adult protection and child protection and young people.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent Sutherland and Chief Inspector Gray responded to a number of questions and provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the crime statistics recorded in the report.

The terms of the report were noted.

**SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2021-22**

**1832.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the second quarter of 2021-22.

Area Commander David McCarrey referenced the delivery of COP 26 and formally noted his thanks to Police Scotland colleagues. He advised that there had been no attacks on SFRS officers during bonfire night events and updated Cabinet that through partnership working with the Scottish Ambulance Service there was now an ambulance in operation out of Clarkston Fire Station. He thanked Cabinet members and the Council for their consultation response to the unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) consultation and advised that the outcome from the consultation was scheduled for Board review early next year.

Group Commander Coughtrie provided further information on the involvement of the SFRS in the delivery of the "Summer Plan" composed by the Safe East Ren Group during the second quarter and noted formal thanks to Chief Inspector Gray and Rachel Forbes from the Council's communications team.

Group Commander Coughtrie provided an update on the activity of the Community Action Team and the equipment supplied and fitted during the second quarter by SFRS.

An analysis of the incidents identified in the six areas for demand reduction that had taken place in each of the Council's five wards during the reported period was outlined in the report.

Referring to the report, Group Commander Coughtrie provided an overview of the activity during the reported period. No accidental dwelling fire casualties had occurred during quarter two, with a 50% reduction on the three-year average. Operational crews had carried out 79 high risk home fire safety visits.

In terms of unintentional injury and harm, there had been a significant increase on the same period the preceding year. The main contributor was road traffic collisions, which accounted for 57% of non-fire casualties. The number of casualties showed an increase as a result of one road traffic collision with 8 casualties, all with minor injuries. Additionally SFRS assisting partner agencies with entry to premises had contributed to the increase in this figure.

It was noted that during this period crews and the Community Action Team carried out twenty multi-agency engagement activities across East Renfrewshire with a focus on road traffic collisions, unintentional injury and harm within the home. During the extended period of good weather there were no water related incidents or casualties. Familiarisation visits to reservoirs and dams were carried out and response plans implemented to prepare for future periods of good weather. Social media campaigns 'Stay Alive' and 'Get to know the fatal five' continued, these focussing on the dangers of drink and drug driving, speeding, careless and inconsiderate driving and using a hand held mobile phone highlighting the risks of these activities to the lives of others.

He reported that there had been an increase in deliberate fire setting, both on the year on year and three-year average. The predominant cause was secondary fires consisting of grassland and refuse fires occurring within the school holidays and extended period of good weather. Only one primary fire was reported and it was noted there were no vehicle fires. The Community Action Team and Fire Safety Enforcement had continued to engage with partners and the community regarding deliberate fire setting.

It was reported that there had been no increase in non-domestic fires in relation to the previous reporting period, with only two recorded and a significant decrease in this type of incident against the three year indicator. One accidental fire took place at a care home due to the overheating of a light fitting where minimal damage occurred and one deliberate fire at a primary school where combustible materials were lit causing significant damage to the roof. Post fire audits were carried out by fire safety officers after both of these incidents to address any deficiencies found.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals had increased by 31% during the quarter and by 3% over the three-year average. It was noted that the majority of these incidents were avoidable and caused by human error. Education and care premises reported the highest level of these incidents.

There followed further questions in the course of which Group Commander Coughtrie and Area Commander McCarrey provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the statistics recorded in the report.

Group Commander Coughtrie provided an update on the fire alarm regulations due to come into effect in February 2022, advising that all domestic premises would need to have one smoke alarm in the room most frequently used for general living purposes, one in circulation spaces, one heat alarm in every kitchen and a carbon monoxide detector where there was a carbon-fuelled appliance. He advised visiting the SFRS website for further information on the new regulations and to arrange a home fire safety visit. He further advised that SFRS would fit and supply alarms for high risk individuals. Area Commander David McCarrey and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie Scottish Fire and Rescue Service indicated they would contact the Council's Trading Standards team regarding the fire alarm installation regulations due to come into effect in February 2022.

The report was noted.

CHAIR



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 7 December 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Charlie Gilbert  
Councillor Annette Ireland

Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

Jacqui McCusker, Senior Solicitor; Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Chief Inspector Alan Gray and Constable Gavin Walker, Police Scotland.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Angela Convery (Chair) and Betty Cunningham (Vice Chair).

**APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

**1833.** In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair it was agreed that Councillor Miller Chair the meeting.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1834.** 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 Item 1835 below 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.

1728

### **PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL**

**1835.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement in relation to an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 3 refers).

The licence holder was present.

Chief Inspector Gray and Constable Walker representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were also present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the committee to decide what weight it wished to attach to the objection by the Chief Constable.

Constable Walker was heard in respect of the objection by the Chief Constable and in response to questions from Members.

The licence holder was then heard in respect of the application and in response to questions from Members. He confirmed that a hearing date had been set for 9 December 2021.

The committee, having taken account of the objection by the Chief Constable, agreed that the application be renewed for a period of 1 year subject to standard conditions.

**The meeting was opened to the public at this point.**

### **CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982 – TAXI FARES REVIEW**

**1836.** The committee were advised, and noted, that the report would be continued to a future meeting to allow further consultation on the proposals to take place.

CHAIR