

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2014**

Present: Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Donald Kelly	Councillor James Robb
Councillor Roderick McCuish	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Aileen Morton	Councillor Sandy Taylor
Councillor Ellen Morton	

Attending: Sally Loudon, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director, Customer Services
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director, Community Services
Pippa Milne, Executive Director, Development & Infrastructure Services
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement & HR
Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development & Strategic Transportaion
Michael Casey, Schools Development Project Manager
Aileen McNicol, Communication Officer
Councillor Michael Breslin
Councillor Bruce Marshall

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors Duncan Macintyre and Strong.

The Chair indicated that there were Members in attendance, who were not members of the Committee, but had notified him that they wish , in terms of Standing Order 22.1, to speak and vote in relation to items on the agenda. He exercised his discretion to allow them to speak and ask questions, but that they were not permitted to vote on any item unless they met the test set out in terms of standing order 22.1.

The Chair further intimated therefore that Councillor Breslin, who was not a member of the Policy and Resources Committee, had notified him that he wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1, to speak and vote on item 6 of the agenda. He confirmed that as the matter was a particular issue affecting the Members' ward, he exercised his discretion as Chairman to allow him to speak and vote on item 6 of this minute.

The Chair advised that consideration of item 7 on the agenda would take place at the next Policy and Resources Committee on 18 December 2014, as a report was not available for this meeting due to the need to

obtain further information on particular matters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. ECONOMIC SUMMIT - ADDRESSING OUR POPULATION CHALLENGE

The Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership hosted an Economic Summit in Dunoon on 29 October 2014. A report summarising the main points that arose from this Summit and identifying the next steps and key actions arising out of the Summit was before Members for consideration.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report, including the key messages of the Summit; and
2. Agreed to move forward with the next steps and key actions identified in table 1.2 of the Executive Director's report to address the Summit's key messages identified in paragraph 4.1 including the implementation of the Argyll and Bute Sustainable Economic Forum.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 27 November 2014, submitted)

4. DELIVERING ON THE SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

Consideration was given to a report setting out key challenges facing the Council, summarising the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) commitment and setting out the longer term budgetary outlook.

Decision

1. Noted the background information in relation to key challenges, SOA commitment and budget outlook;
2. Noted the options and different approaches to addressing the key challenges, SOA commitment and budget outlook;
3. Agreed to request Officers to bring reports back to the December meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee that provide further information on the different approaches and set out an options appraisal in relation to the options; and
4. Noted that Officers are preparing plans to ensure Members of the public and staff are able to express their views so these can be considered as the Council develops its approach to delivering on the SOA. Initially this is likely to involve providing information to raise awareness of the challenges and issues and seeking some high level

feedback.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 20 November 2014, submitted)

5. EMPLOYEE SURVEYS 2014

A report providing the Committee with the findings of various employee engagement activities undertaken throughout 2014 including surveys, focus groups and roadshows was considered.

Decision

1. Noted the importance of addressing employee engagement issues to ensure organisational resilience and success for the future;
2. Noted the content and findings of the report;
3. Agreed the development of a Corporate Employee Survey Action Plan;
4. Agreed that further analysis of detailed service and location information, including free text should be carried out; and
5. Noted that a new Employee Engagement Strategy will be brought to Committee in March 2015.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services, submitted)

6. FURTHER POTENTIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE COUNCIL'S SCHOOL ESTATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with information on an announcement by the Scottish Government of a further £100m of revenue based NPD investment in school infrastructure through the Scotland's Schools for Future (SSF) programme to continue to remove schools out of poor (Category C) or bad (Category D) condition to satisfactory (Category B) or good (Category A) condition, either through refurbishment or replacement. The funding is targeted towards local authorities that have existing projects in any of the first three rounds of the SSF programme and which have not reached financial close. Argyll and Bute Council has a project in each round of that programme, each of which are still in the process to reach financial close. The Council currently has only one school property in Category C or D condition (Dunoon Primary School – Category D).

Discussion took place in relation to the financial implications of committing further capital monies and the significant risks associated with the cost estimates of the building options. It was established that it would be necessary to consider the future revenue costs to maintain the building as it currently is and balance that against any additional funding support required from the Scottish Government. Members noted the information in relation to the extended timeline for applications for the additional

funding support from the Scottish Government.

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to adjourn for ten minutes to allow Members time to read the report, which had been tabled at the meeting and the Motion put forward by Councillor Aileen Morton.

Decision:

Due to the real risk that this school will not be deliverable, the Policy and Resources Committee:

1. Notes the detail provided in the paper regarding the Scottish Government's offer for further investment in school infrastructure; the financial implications of committing further capital monies as per paragraphs 4.4.6 and 4.4.9; and the significant risks associated with the cost estimates as contained within this report;
2. Notes the new information provided by officers advising;
 - (a) the extended timeline now available to the Council, and we record our appreciation of the Scottish Government's approach to this matter;
 - (b) Historic Scotland's willingness to meet with us to discuss further the best way of ensuring a positive future for the Dunoon Primary School pupils in a building fit for purpose.
3. Agrees that this Council wishes to see all children educated in good condition schools, and that all actions necessary should be taken to find a deliverable solution for Dunoon Primary. This requires concerted effort on the part of several public bodies and we request officers to convene urgent meetings with all relevant parties including the Scottish Government, Scottish Futures Trust, HubNorth and Historic Scotland to make every effort to identify an affordable and suitable design for Dunoon Primary School; and
4. Agreed a delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Council Leader, the Policy Lead and the Leader of the Opposition to determine the matter if a response is required before 18 December 2014.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 11 November 2014, submitted)

7. CASTLE TOWARD

Members had already noted that this agenda item would be brought to the scheduled Policy and Resources Committee on 18 December 2014.