

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2014**

Present: Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Alistair MacDougall	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Roderick McCuish	Councillor James Robb
Councillor Aileen Morton	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Ellen Morton	Councillor Sandy Taylor

Also Present: Councillor Rory Colville Councillor Donald MacMillan
Councillor Elaine Robertson

Attending: Sally Loudon, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director – Customer Services
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR
Judy Orr, Head of Customer and Support Services
Audrey Martin, Projects and Renewables Manager
Mike Casey, Schools Development Project Manager
Kirsty Flannagan, Finance Manager
Martin Gorringer, Marine Operations Manager

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to hold a Special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 November 2014 to consider the outcome of the Economic Summit held on 29 October 2014 and the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement; and also to consider a suite of financial papers in respect of the budget.

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to consider an additional item, Temporary Suspension Of Off Street Parking Charges During The Christmas Period And During The Helensburgh Christmas Festival And The Oban Christmas Festival, as a matter of urgency by reason that a decision needed to be taken at this Committee due to the dates of the Winter Festivals as outlined in the report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services. This item is dealt with at item 16 of these Minutes.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Currie, Kelly, D MacIntyre, and Strong.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Aileen Morton, Ellen Morton and Gary Mulvaney declared a non-financial interest in item 15 of the agenda (Helensburgh Pier Car Park - Winter Festival Fireworks Display) due to their membership on the

Winter Festival Committee.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 21 August 2014 were approved as a correct record.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT MONITORING PACK AS AT AUGUST 2014

The Committee considered the financial reports monitoring pack as at 31 August 2014. The financial reports monitoring pack consisted of seven reports including; revenue budget monitoring report, Monitoring of 1% efficiency savings for 2014/15 and 2015/16, update to 2015/16 budget, monitoring of financial risks, reserves and balances, capital plan monitoring report and treasury monitoring report.

Decision

The Committee noted the –

1. Revenue budget monitoring report as at 31 August 2014.
2. Progress towards the 1% efficiency savings target for 2014-15 and 2015-16.
3. Updates to the 2015-16 budget as at 31 August 2014.
4. Current assessment of the Council's financial risks.
5. Overall level of reserves and balances and note the monitoring of the earmarked reserves.
6. Capital plan monitoring report as at 31 August 2014.
7. Treasury monitoring report as at 31 August 2014.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated 1 October 2014, submitted)

5. AREA COMMITTEE GRANTS

(a) CARRY FORWARD OF AREA COMMITTEE GRANTS

A report was considered which set out a proposal to allow area committees to carry forward a proportion of their area grant budget from year to year in order to manage commitments, applications and budget availability.

Decision

The Committee agreed to permit Area Committees to carry forward a portion of their grant budget, up to a total limit of 10%, as set out within the report by the Head of Strategic Finance.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated October 2014, submitted)

(b) **THIRD SECTOR GRANTS (CONTINUED APPLICATIONS)**

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee held on 9 September 2014 requesting authority to carry forward the third sector funding residue of £1006 to the next financial year.

Decision

The Committee approved the request from Helensburgh and Lomond Committee to carry forward the third sector funding residue of £1006 to the next financial year.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 6 October 2014 and extract from minute of Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee held on 9 September 2014, submitted)

Councillor James Robb declared a financial interest in the following item of business due to the reason that he has a family member who works for Morrison Construction. He left the room and took no part in the consideration of this item.

6. NEW SCHOOLS PROJECT - CAMPBELTOWN, OBAN AND KIRN

A report providing an update on the schools redevelopment project to build new secondary schools in Campbeltown and Oban; and a new primary school in Kirn, was considered.

Decision

The Committee –

1. Noted the project programme key dates for Campbeltown Grammar and Oban High school, detailed at paragraph 4.1 of the report, and the requirement for the P&R committee to meet to approve the Stage 1 submission report.
2. Accepted the recommendation of hubNorth that Morrison Construction is appointed as the Tier 1 building contractor for the Council's Scotland's Schools for the Future (SSF) schools' projects in Campbeltown, Oban and Kirn.
3. Accepted the recommendation of hubNorth that Argyll & Bute Council agree to an amendment to the TPA Payment Provision at Stage 1 & 2 as per the Scottish Futures Trust Guidance Note 4/14. This allows for Stage Payments of Development Fees to be paid after Stage 1 and during Stage 2 as outlined in paragraph 4.4 of the report.
4. Agreed for Campbeltown Grammar:
 - the site layout;
 - building floor plans and adjacencies; and
 - accommodation scheduleas contained in Appendices 1-3 which are expected to be submitted as part of the Stage 1 submission from hubNorth.

5. Agree for Oban High School:

- the site layout;
- building floor plans and adjacencies; and
- accommodation schedule

as contained in Appendices 4-6 which are expected to be submitted as part of the Stage 1 submission from hubNorth.

6. Noted the update on the tenancies at Kintyre Park, Campbeltown and Dalintart Farm, Oban.

7. Noted the detail of the project communications strategy as in Appendix 7.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 14 October 2014, submitted)

Councillor James Robb re-joined the meeting.

7. EXPLORING THE PROVISION OF TOWN WI-FI HOTSPOTS ACROSS ARGYLL AND BUTE

A report was considered which provided information in respect of the possible options available regarding the provision of town Wi-Fi within Argyll and Bute towns.

Decision

The Committee agreed that a pilot project, funded from existing departmental resources, be delivered for Helensburgh (on the basis that CHORD works have included infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of town Wi-Fi) and that, subject to the outcome of the pilot, an options appraisal looking at delivery across the other main town centres should be progressed at a later date.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 30 October 2014, tabled)

8. EMPLOYEE SURVEY REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report which advised of current employee engagement and survey activity which was underway. The report advised that the findings of which would be reported, with an action plan, to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

Decision

The Committee –

1. Noted the current employee engagement and survey activity which was underway.
2. Noted that employee engagement was an important contributor to organisational performance.

3. Noted that an integrated report with the findings of these surveys and the associated focus groups would be brought, with an action plan, to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated October 2014, submitted)

9. REPLACEMENT/UPGRADE OF CUSTOMER CONTACT SYSTEMS

A part of the Leader's report to Council on 25 September 2014 it had been reported that the Council had been researching alternative customer relation management system suppliers and advised of a possibility of doing this with Highland Council. A report was considered which provided and update and which sought approval of the Council as a participant in a collaborative procurement, led by Highland Council, for a replacement or upgrade of the Council's customer contact systems.

Decision

The Committee approved the Council being named as a participant in a collaborative procurement, led by Highland Council, for a replacement or upgrade of the Council's customer contact systems.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 1 October 2014, submitted)

*** 10. DO WE DO DIGITAL**

The Committee considered a report requesting them to review an assessment of the Council's digital capability and commitment and an associated action plan; and to support the adoption of 3 principles designed to increase digital uptake.

Decision

The Committee -

1. Endorsed the following 3 principles for adoption by the Council:
 - Services will be delivered as "digital first" and customers who can will be enabled and encouraged to self-serve;
 - Customers who are unable to self-serve will be assisted to access services so they are not disadvantaged;
 - Service access, delivery and associated business processes will be re-designed to improve performance and productivity and to reflect the above two principles.
2. Agreed the supporting draft action plans at appendices 1 and 2 to the report and agreed that these are put to Council for approval.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 30 September 2014, submitted)

11. CAMPBELTOWN OFFICE RATIONALISATION

A report which provided an update on the outline business case for the

Campbeltown Rationalisation Project was considered. The report provided a review of the options that have been explored and made recommendations for the way forward.

Decision

The Committee –

1. Noted that the preferred option which fully addresses the Council's Strategic Objectives, regarding Organisational Development, Process for Change and Workforce Deployment and the identified condition and suitability deficiencies at Witchburn Road Office, is the purchase and refurbishment of Kintyre House, Kintyre Business Park, Campbeltown and subsequent relocation of staff to both Kintyre House and one ward within Campbeltown Hospital.
2. Noted that Witchburn Road Office is a Red Risk Asset and there is an immediate need to invest £804k to address identified condition deficiencies. Additional investment would also be required to address known suitability issues.
3. Agreed prudential borrowing of £97k underpinned by revenue savings delivered through the preferred option.
4. Approved further capital investment of £382k to be used in conjunction with the £89k that was previously allocated for roof repairs at Witchburn Road Office which will no longer be required for this in view of the preferred option.
5. Recommended that any capital receipts from the disposal of properties made surplus following this exercise are ring fenced to offset the cost of the project.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 24 September 2014, submitted)

12. COUNCIL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA - UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Council's use of social media as part of work to broaden and improve engagement with communities.

Decision

The Committee noted the progress of the Council's use of social media platforms as customer service and communication channels.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated October 2014, submitted)

13. THE SMITH COMMISSION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND

The Committee considered a report providing information on the Smith Commission, which had been set up following the Scottish Independence

Referendum; and inviting Members to agree a submission to the Smith Commission.

Decision

The Committee –

1. Instructed Council officers to make a submission to the Smith Commission.
2. Agreed that a final response, taking into account the comments made by Members, be developed by the Executive Director – Customer Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council, circulated to Members of the Committee for information and be submitted to the Smith Commission by Friday 31 October 2014.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 29 October 2014, submitted)

14. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT DAY AND WORK PLAN

The Committee considered a report updating members on key considerations arising from the Policy and Resources Committee Development Day on 7 August 2014 and which reviewed the Committee Work Plan and forward agenda.

Decision

The Committee –

1. Noted the feedback from the Committee Development Day.
2. Reviewed the forward plan and agreed to the addition of text relating to the provision of information about the financial outlook on a regular basis.
3. Agreed that the Work Plan would be a future standing item on the agenda.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 20 October 2014, submitted)

Councillors A Morton, E Morton and Mulvaney, having previously declared an interest in the following item of business, left the room and took no part in the consideration of this item.

15. HELENSBURGH PIER CAR PARK - WINTER FESTIVAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Helensburgh and Lomond Committee meeting held on 14 October 2014; to suspend parking charges on Saturday 29 November 2014 and Sunday 30 November 2014 during the winter festival from 8.00am to 6.00pm for all car parks in central Helensburgh.

Decision

The Committee agreed that parking charges be suspended on Saturday 29 November 2014 and Sunday 30 November 2014 during the winter festival from 8.00am to 6.00pm for all car parks in central Helensburgh.

(Reference: Extract from Minute of Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee held on 14 October 2014 and report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services, submitted)

Councillors A Morton, E Morton and Mulvaney re-joined the meeting.

16. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF OFF STREET PARKING CHARGES DURING THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD AND DURING THE HELENSBURGH CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL AND THE OBAN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

A report was considered which sought approval from the Committee for the suspension of parking charges, across all areas of Argyll and Bute during the 5 day period up to and including Christmas Eve, 20 – 24 December 2012, inclusive. The report also sought approval from the Committee for the suspension of parking charges in Helensburgh car parks for the Helensburgh Winter Festival (21 – 30 November) and in Oban for the Oban Winter Festival (14 November – 23 November).

Decision

The Committee -

1. Noted that a decision regarding the suspension of parking charges during the Helensburgh Winter Festival had already been agreed at item 15 of these Minutes.
2. Instructed the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure to suspend parking charges on off street car parks across all areas of Argyll and Bute during the 5 day period up to and including Christmas Eve (20 – 24 December) and for the Oban Winter Festival (14 – 23 November).

(Reference: Report by Executive Director - Development and Infrastructure Services dated 29 October 2014, tabled)

17. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The Committee considered the following Notice of Motion submitted under Standing Order 13 which was proposed at the meeting by Councillor Sandy Taylor and seconded by Councillor James Robb–

Motion

The Committee notes the arrangements for the flying of flags from Council flag staffs as delegated to the Director of Customer Services within the Council's Flags Policy.

The Committee agrees that in future, the St Andrews flag (Scottish Saltire) be flown on all days of the year, other than those specified occasions noted in the Council's Flags Policy.

Decision

Councillor Sandy Taylor as proposer, with agreement of the seconder Councillor James Robb, withdrew the Motion as an item would be dealt with at the Council meeting on 27 November 2014 as part of a recommendation from the Bute and Cowal Area Committee held on 7 October 2014.

(Reference: Notice of Motion by Councillor Isobel Strong and seconded by Councillor Sandy Taylor, submitted)

18. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The Committee considered the following Notice of Motion submitted under Standing Order 13 which was proposed by Councillor James Robb and seconded at the meeting by Councillor Sandy Taylor.

Motion

This Committee agrees, and recommends to Council if required, to stop pursuing and collecting Poll Tax/Community Charge arrears with immediate effect and to refund all arrears payments made from the period commencing 2 October 2014.

Amendment

That the Committee notes that despite the announcement by the First Minister of an intention to legislate in respect of the issue of community charge debt no legislation has yet been forthcoming.

In light of this and the public commentary by COSLA that there had been no consultation with them on this proposal and the impact it might have on local government finance the Committee should take no action on this matter at this time.

Moved Councillor Dick Walsh, seconded Councillor Mulvaney.

Decision

On a show of hands vote the amendment was carried by 9 votes to 2 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Notice of Motion by Councillor Sandy Taylor and seconded by Councillor Isobel Strong, submitted)

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to adjourn for lunch from 1.10pm to 1.40pm.

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government

(Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Councillor Alistair MacDougall left the meeting prior to determination of the following item of business and did not return.

19. ROTHESAY HARBOUR

A report which informed the Committee of issues which had arisen in respect of the operation of Rothesay Harbour was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed the recommendations as contained within the report by the Executive Directors subject to the amendment agreed in respect of paragraph 3.1 of the report.

(Reference: Joint report by the Executive Director – Customer Services and the Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 29 October 2014, tabled)