

MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 12 AUGUST 2021

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Mary-Jean Devon	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Jim Findlay	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Jim Lynch	Councillor Richard Trail
Councillor David Kinniburgh	

Attending: Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Laurence Slavin, Interim Head of Financial Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
John Gordon, Project Manager
Patricia O'Neill, Governance Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bobby Good and Aileen Morton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Elaine Robertson declared a financial interest in item 11 of the agenda (Place Based Investment Funding – Projects and Allocation) by reason that her husband had an interest in Gibraltar Street, Oban. She left the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

Councillor Audrey Forrest declared a non-financial interest in item 15 of the agenda (Dunoon Queen's Hall – Project Close Out Report) by reason of her Council appointment to the Live Argyll Board. She claimed the benefit of the dispensation contained at Section 5.18(2) of the Standards Commission's Guidance and Dispensations Note dated July 2018 to allow her to speak and vote on this item of business.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

*** 4. FINANCIAL REPORTS MONITORING PACK - 30 JUNE 2021**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of the financial monitoring reports as at the end of June 2021. There were six detailed reports setting out the position as at the end of June 2021 which were summarised in the submitted report and which included the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report,

Monitoring of Policy Savings Options, Monitoring of Financial Risks, Capital Plan Monitoring Report, Treasury Monitoring Report and Reserves and Balances.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the revenue budget monitoring report as at 30 June 2021 and noted the comments in respect of the Health and Social Care Partnership.
2. Noted the progress with the policy savings options as at 30 June 2021.
3. Noted the financial risks for 2021-22.
4. Noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 30 June 2021.
5. Noted the treasury monitoring report as at 30 June 2021.
6. Recommended to Council the approval of the following amendments to the Annual Treasury Management Strategy:
 - i. Increase the investment limit for term deposits with UK banks from £15m to £20m.
 - ii. Increase the investment limit for term deposits with all other banks from £10m to £15m.
7. Noted the reserves and balances report as at 30 June 2021.
8. Recommended to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during April to June 2021 are approved.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 9 July 2021, submitted)

5. BUDGET OUTLOOK 2022-23 TO 2026-27

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to the budget outlook 2022-23 to 2026-27 that had been reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 May 2021.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the current estimated budget outlook position for the period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 20 July 2021, submitted)

6. REVIEW OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Council's medium to long term financial strategy which had been first approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 October 2017.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee endorsed the medium to long term financial strategy for the Council.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 8 July 2021, submitted)

7. COUNCIL TAX ON DEVELOPMENTS MEETING DEFINED HOUSING NEEDS

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing a permanent change to the Council's policy of charging double Council Tax on long term empty dwellings where the development contributes to meeting the Councils' defined housing need and are being supported by public funds.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved that the double charge for Council Tax is not levied on any property where both the following apply –

1. The property has been identified as contributing toward meeting the Council's defined housing need.
2. The applicant is in receipt of public sector or community development funding relating specifically to the property development.

(Reference: Report by Interim Head of Financial Services dated 29 July 2021, submitted)

8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FQ1 2021/22

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the financial quarter 1 2021/22 performance reports for Financial Services, Commercial Services, Legal and Regulatory Support and Customer Support Services.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the FQ1 2021/22 Performance Reports as presented.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services and Legal and Regulatory Support and Executive Director with responsibility for Financial Services and Customer Support Services dated 19 July 2021, submitted)

9. SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS 2020/21

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Service Annual Performance Reviews and Scorecard 2020/21 for Financial Services, Community Planning and Development, Legal and Regulatory Support, Commercial Services and Customer and Support Services.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the Service Annual Performance Reviews and Scorecards 2020/21 as presented prior to publishing on the Council Website.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 25 June 2021, submitted)

10. LORN ARC TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCE PROGRAMME - RECONVENING OF DUNBEG WORKING GROUP

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing the re-establishment of an officer/member working group to take forward proposals in relation to the Lorn Arc Tax Incremental Finance Programme.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed to the reconvening of the Dunbeg Working Group and agreed to the membership and remit as outlined within the submitted report.
2. Noted that an update report would be provided to the Policy and Resources Committee every 6 months to advise on progress of the Lorn Arc TIF programme.

(Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 25 June 2021, submitted)

Councillor Elaine Robertson, having declared an interest in the following item of business, left the meeting and took no part in the consideration of this item of business.

11. PLACE BASED INVESTMENT FUNDING - PROJECTS AND ALLOCATION

The Committee gave consideration to a report seeking agreement on the allocation of remaining unallocated Place Based Investment Programme Funding for 2021/22.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed to the allocation of the remaining unallocated Place Based Investment funding for 2021/22 to the projects in Table 1, paragraph 4.7 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 30 June 2021, submitted)

Councillor Elaine Robertson re-joined the meeting at this point.

12. SCOTLAND LOVES LOCAL GIFT CARD SCHEME

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought endorsement of an Argyll and Bute Love Local gift card scheme designed to encourage local shopping, drive footfall to local businesses and keep spend local in the local area for longer.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed to the Council taking part in the initiative and signing up to the concordat in regard to the initial fully funded trial period for the Love Local Gift card.
2. Agreed to give further consideration to a future report in early 2022 that looks at the possibility of continuing the scheme beyond the initial year, once sufficient information is available to determine its benefit, given the resource implications.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 3 August 2021, submitted)

13. COVID DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on phase 2 of the Council's Discretionary Fund. The report also set out an approach for how the remainder of the fund could be used to support businesses impacted by Covid in Argyll and Bute.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Note the final position regarding the two phases of the Discretionary Fund.
2. Approve the remaining monies in the Discretionary Fund be used to establish an Argyll and Bute COVID Business Hardship Fund to directly support business affected by COVID with the criteria as noted in paragraph 3.7 and with three levels of grant award as noted in paragraph 3.10.
3. Agree that the fund is advertised at least 14 days prior to applications being accepted and the application period will be for 7 days.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth / Financial Services dated 4 August 2021, submitted)

14. CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD UPDATE PAPERS

(a) Decarbonisation Plan Tracker

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Decarbonisation Action Plan Tracker showing the progress of a number of key actions contained within the De-Carbonisation Plan. The De-carbonisation Plan sets out a number of key actions which contribute towards reducing overall carbon emissions and footprint in Argyll and Bute during 2021.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the Climate Change Board activity Tracker contained within Appendix A to the submitted report.

2. Noted the actions contained within the tracker contribute towards the Council becoming a net zero organization by 2045 as outlined in our De-carbonisation Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 16 July 2021, submitted)

(b) **COP 26 - Update on Training and Event Planning**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to the report provided to the May meeting of the Committee in respect of Elected Member training and also the two COP26 events that were agreed on.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the update on activity in relation to climate change training and the COP26 events.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 16 July 2021, submitted)

(c) **Partnership Planting with Argyll and the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust (ACT) at Kilmory Home Farm**

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining proposals for a planting partnership between Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust for an area of 60 hectares of native woodland planting on Council owned land principally around Kilmory Home Farm.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted that the Climate Change Board, the Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services and the associated Departmental Management Team had agreed the following recommendations:-

1. Agreed to Licence up to 30ha of land at Kilmory Home Farm to ACT to be used as compensatory planting of native woodland and funded by Scottish and Southern Electric Networks (SSEN) thus supporting rural skills, biodiversity creation, and carbon sequestration,
2. Agreed to Licence up to an additional 30ha of land at Kilmory Home Farm to ACT to be used for direct carbon sequestration to offset our Council's Carbon Footprint by using funding from Woodland Grant Schemes and formal Carbon Credit arrangements.
3. Agreed to appoint ACT to develop a woodland management strategy for existing conifer woodland blocks at Kilmory Home Farm (Blocks 7 and 9) including strategy for removal of commercial timber crop, felling licences and replanting scheme with reinvestment from timber income into replanting or climate change related activity on Council Estate; and
4. Agreed that preferred areas for planting will be Blocks 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and

east of 11 with options on the remaining numbered blocks shown on Appendix A following collaboration with Argyll and Bute Council officers to identify planting sites which will complement other development opportunities under consideration.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 16 July 2021, submitted)

15. DUNOON QUEEN'S HALL - PROJECT CLOSE OUT REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a recommendation from the Bute and Cowal Area Committee held on 1 June 2021 with regard to the Dunoon Queen's Hall Project Close Out Report.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the recommendation that the Queen's Hall Refurbishment and Public Realm Improvements Project be formally closed out as detailed at section 1.3 of the appended Project Close Out Report.

(Reference: Recommendation from Bute and Cowal Area Committee held on 1 June 2021 and report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 18 May 2021, submitted)

16. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Policy and Resources Committee Workplan was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the content of the workplan as at August 2021.

(Reference: Policy and Resources Committee Workplan dated August 2021, submitted)