

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held  
BY MICROSOFT TEAMS  
on THURSDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2021**

**Present:** Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Mary-Jean Devon	Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Bobby Good	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:** Douglas Hendry, Executive Director  
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director  
Laurence Slavin, Interim Head of Financial Services  
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services  
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services  
Jim Paterson, Senior Economic Growth Officer  
Patricia O'Neill, Governance Manager

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Audrey Forrest noted that references to Live Argyll were made throughout the agenda pack of papers and therefore declared a non-financial interest by virtue of her Council appointment to the Live Argyll Board. She advised that as this was a Council appointment she would be claiming 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 the items of business that made reference to Live Argyll.

Councillor Jim Findlay noted that references to Rothesay Pavilion were made throughout the agenda pack of papers and therefore declared a non-financial interest by virtue of his Council appointment to the Rothesay Pavilion Charity Board. He advised that as this was a Council appointment he would be claiming 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 him to speak and vote on the items of business that made reference to Rothesay Pavilion.

**3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 August 2021 were approved as a correct record.

\* **4. FINANCIAL REPORTS MONITORING PACK – 31 AUGUST 2021**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of the financial monitoring reports as at the end of August 2021. There were six detailed reports setting out the position as at 31 August 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 31 August 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 31 August 2021.
3. Noted the financial risks for 2021-22.
4. Noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 31 August 2021 and approved the budget accelerations outlined in Appendix 4 of that report.
5. Noted the treasury monitoring report as at 31 August 2021.
6. Noted the reserves and balances report as at 31 August 2021.
7. Agreed to recommend to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during July and August 2021 be approved.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 10 September 2021, submitted)

**5. DISCRETIONARY / HARDSHIP FUND UPDATE**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Council's Hardship Fund which was an extension of the Discretionary Fund first reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 10 December 2020, with a further update reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 12 August 2021.

**Decision**

The Policy and Resources Committee approved that £98,000 of funding be made available from the Council's Recovery and Renewal Fund to make Hardship Awards to 27 businesses who met the minimum criteria for an award but were rejected as their applications were received after the fund was fully disbursed.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 7 October 2021, submitted)

## **6. 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 reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 12 August 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 22 September 2021, submitted)

## **7. UPDATE ON COVID-19 FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the projected impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's revenue and capital budgets in the current year (2021/22) and future years, the current position of the Covid funding and an update on the latest discussions in respect of the financial flexibilities made available by the Scottish Government.

### **Decision**

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Approved that the funding uploaded into the 2021/22 budget for Covid related cost pressures that is no longer required (£2.117m) is removed from the 2021/22 budget and transferred into the unallocated Covid funding that is currently held within earmarked reserves.
2. Approved that the cost pressures identified in relation to capital contract increases, £2.646m as noted in paragraph 3.5.2, is agreed to be added to the capital plan and funded from the £2.5m provision in addition to using a further £0.146m from the unallocated Covid funding in earmarked reserves.
3. Noted that the current estimate of the 2022/23 Covid revenue cost pressures is £0.697m.
4. Noted that it is highly likely that there will be further capital contract increases identified that relate to Covid that will require to be funded.
5. Noted that there remains Scottish Government Covid Funding of £1.684m and £5.400m from the Loans Fund Principal Repayment Holiday (if required) which would be ringfenced for Covid purposes as outlined in para 3.8.2 of the submitted report.
6. Agreed to delegate decision in respect of the allocation of Covid Funding for the potential winter opening of 6 additional toilet facilities (Ganavan, Crinan, Ulva, Kilchattan Bay, Glen Morag and Sandy Beach) for one year only, to the Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader and Leader of largest opposition group.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 1 October 2021, submitted)

## **8. CAPITAL STRATEGY - UPDATE**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the development of the Council's Capital Strategy that would be ready for consideration and adoption early in the life of the new Council in 2022.

### **Decision**

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the update report.
2. Agreed the high level principles and timeline of the emerging Capital Strategy as outlined at Paragraph 4.2 of the submitted report for further development and subsequent submission to the Committee, and to the Council for approval.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 23 September 2021, submitted)

Councillor Aileen Morton left the meeting at this point.

## **\* 9. ICT - REVISED ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting a revised ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) which reflected the extended range of technologies now at the disposal of Council users and which ensured the information presented was fully up to date.

### **Decision**

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed the revised ICT AUP as attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report and recommended approval to the Council.
2. Noted that all members and officers of the council would be required to read and confirm their acceptance of the revised policy and to comply with the provisions therein.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 5 October 2021, submitted)

## **10. ADDRESSING OUR POPULATION CHALLENGES**

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting two possible options in relation to responding to population challenges in Argyll and Bute with the preferred option to pursue a themed approach focused on housing.

### **Decision**

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed that a pilot project is taken forward based on taking a thematic approach to addressing our population challenges with a focus on addressing our overall housing needs across Argyll and Bute. This pilot project will be resourced with a settlement officer post for a period of year jointly funded by HIE and Argyll and Bute Council from existing resources identified within the Development and Economic Growth Service.
2. Agreed to advise the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI) that the population zones identified for Argyll and Bute are:
  - Rosneath Peninsula (Helensburgh and Lomond)
  - Kintyre (Tarbert to Southend) (Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands)
  - Tiree and Coll –(Oban, Lorn and the Isles)
  - Bute (Bute and Cowal)
3. Noted that these population zones have been identified for research purposes looking at a full range of factors affecting population levels. No additional funding has been identified as yet by the Scottish Government in relation to these zones but their identification will allow the council to continue to take an active part in developing this area of work working alongside the Western Isles, Highland and North Ayrshire Council who have also identified zones within their own respective Local Authority areas.
4. Highlighted to COHI the urgent population issues across all of Argyll and Bute and not just in the population zones identified and look for more to be done at pace.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 30 September 2021, submitted; and Notice of Motion by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Gary Mulvaney, tabled)

## **11. 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 October 2021.

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