

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2021**

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Bobby Good	Councillor Aileen Morton
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
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
Laurence Slavin, Interim Head of Financial Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
David Gibson, Head of Children, Families and Justice
Peter Leckie, Project Manager
Patricia O'Neill, Governance Manager
John Cornett, Audit Scotland
Kyle McAulay, Audit Scotland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gary Mulvaney and Mary Jean Devon.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared at this point.

Councillor Jim Findlay joined the meeting during consideration of item 5 (Budget Outlook 2022-23 to 2026-27) and declared a non-financial interest in item 18 of the agenda (Rothesay Pavilion Update) by virtue of his appointment to the Rothesay Pavilion Board. As this was a Council appointment he advised he would be claiming the benefit of the specific exclusion as per Standards Commission's Guidance to allow him to speak and vote on this item of business.

Councillor Audrey Forrest, during consideration of item 6 of the agenda (Budget Savings Options 2022/23), declared a non-financial interest in this item 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 specific exclusion as per the Standards Commission's Guidance 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 14 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.

*

4. FINANCIAL REPORTS MONITORING PACK - 31 OCTOBER 2021

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of the financial monitoring reports as at the end of October 2021. There were six detailed reports setting out the position as at 31 October 2021.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the revenue budget monitoring report as at 31 October 2021.
2. Noted the progress with the policy savings options as at 31 October 2021.
3. Noted the financial risks for 2021-22.
4. Noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 31 October 2021 and approved the proposed changes to the capital plan outlined in Appendix 4 of that report.
5. Noted the treasury monitoring report as at 31 October 2021.
6. Noted the reserves and balances report as at 31 October 2021.
7. Agreed to recommend to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during September and October 2021 were approved.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 5 November 2021, submitted)

Councillor Jim Findlay joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business. He advised that he would be declaring an interest in item 18 of the agenda (Rothesay Pavilion Update) by virtue of his Council appointment to the Rothesay Pavilion Board. As this was a Council appointment he advised he would be claiming the benefit of the specific exclusion as per Standards Commission's Guidance to allow him to speak and vote on this item of business.

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 reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 14 October 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 29 November 2021, submitted)

Councillor Audrey Forrest, during consideration of the following item of business, declared a non-financial interest in this item of business 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 specific exclusion as per the Standards Commission's Guidance to allow her to speak and vote on this item of business.

6. BUDGET SAVING OPTIONS 2022/23

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing information on savings options identified by officers for consideration for financial year 2022/23 and beyond.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the savings options identified by Officers and agreed by the Budget Working Group to be moved forward to the 2022/23 budget process.
2. Noted that officers would continue to identify further savings over the coming months to further bridge the estimated budget gap.
3. Noted that the Head of Customer Support Services would take forward a statutory consultation process with the Trade Unions for those savings options that could have a direct impact on jobs.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 29 November 2021, submitted)

John Cornett and Kyle McAulay of Audit Scotland joined the meeting at this point.

7. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL - 2020/21 ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

The Argyll and Bute Council – 2020/21 Annual Audit Report was before the Committee for consideration.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the 2020/21 Annual Audit Report as presented by Audit Scotland.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 2 December 2021, submitted)

8. 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 Budget in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and the available Covid funding.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the submitted report and, in particular that -

1. Since the report taken to Policy and Resources Committee on 14 October 2021, there had been a decrease to the overall estimated 2021-22 Covid revenue cost pressure of £0.051m and a decrease to the overall estimated 2022-23 Covid cost pressure of £0.048m.
2. There was currently £7.067m of available Covid funding.
3. There remained Scottish Government Covid Funding of £1.667m and £5.400m from the Loans Fund Principal Repayment Holiday (if required) which would be ringfenced for Covid purposes as outlined in paragraph 3.9 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 29 November 2021, submitted)

9. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FQ2 2021/22

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the FQ2 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators for Financial Services, Commercial Services, Legal and Regulatory Support and Customer Support Services in a simplified format commensurate with the Covid-19 situation.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the FQ2 2021/22 Key Performance Indicator Reports as presented.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 9 November 2021, submitted)

10. QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing the addition of a public holiday on 3 June 2022 to allow staff to participate in celebrations to mark Her Majesty The Queens' 70 years on the throne.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed to authorise an additional public holiday on 3 June 2022 to allow staff to participate in celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 23 November 2021, submitted)

11. RESTART, RECOVER AND RENEW: DELIVERING OUR RECOVERY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on delivering the Argyll and Bute Covid Recovery Strategy and requesting funding from the Recovery and Renewal Fund to support specific priorities of the Recovery Working Group.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the progress made in delivering the Covid Recovery Strategy.
2. Approved the sum of £110,000 from the Recovery and Renewal Fund to aid the delivery of critical areas of the Recovery Strategy and Action Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 17 November 2021, submitted)

*

12. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022-25 AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2022-25 - DRAFT DOCUMENTS AND CONSULTATION

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought approval of the final revised Procurement Strategy 2022/25 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the key changes, as detailed at Section 4.3, to the Procurement Strategy 2022/25 and Section 4.5 to the Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25 and the outcome of the consultation.
2. Agreed to recommend to the Council agreement of the revised final Procurement Strategy 2022/25 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25 to be published on the Council's website in April 2022.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 1 December 2021, submitted)

13. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN - NATIONAL TRANSFER SCHEME

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the change from a voluntary to mandatory National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, outlining the implications and risks and providing an overview on the proposed model of care and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children transferred to the authority through the National Transfer Scheme.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted that on 23 November 2021 the UK Government served notice on Councils across the UK of their intention to issue a direction requiring local authorities to participate in the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
2. Noted the plans to provide appropriate care for UASCs transferred to the authority in a partnership between the HSCP and the Council.
3. Note the risks outlined in paragraphs 3.14 to 3.21 of the submitted report.
4. Accepted that the costs of UASCs are funded by the NTS funding package from the Home Office. However depending on the level of need, funding may not cover all of the support costs, and any such under funding will introduce a cost pressure.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Resettlement dated 30 November 2021, submitted)

14. CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD UPDATE PAPERS

(a) **Climate Change - Decarbonisation Plan Update 2022**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Council's Decarbonisation Plan for 2022-25. The new decarbonisation plan was a refresh of the previous year's plan and set out a 3 year framework to continue the climate journey and route map to net zero.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed and adopted the Decarbonisation Plan 2022 – 2025.
2. Noted the progress of specific actions from the Decarbonisation Action Plan.
3. Agreed the Decarbonisation Action plan be regularly reported to Policy & Resources Committee.
4. Noted the 27% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Council this year.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 6 November 2021, submitted)

(b) **Council Usage of Single Use Plastic - Methods of Procurement Support**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing recommendations on the methods of procurement support that could be put in place to support service-led decisions on reducing the use of Single Use Plastic (SUP) products and ensure services consider the recyclability of products where appropriate across the Council.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted that the various Services that currently purchase SUP products consider whether these products are essential or if there is a potential alternative that would meet the Service requirements, prior to orders being placed via PECOS or contacting the Procurement, Commercial and Contract Management Team (PCCMT) for a procurement process to be carried out.
2. Noted that the Sustainable Procurement Policy would be updated to reflect the Climate Change Board desire to limit SUP where possible – proposed wording had been included in the current draft version for 2022/23, and would be updated as follows in the final version: “To provide procurement support to any strategic decisions taken by the Council in relation to the usage of Single Use Plastic products and their recyclability”.
3. Noted that the Commodity Sourcing Strategy templates used for Regulated Procurements would be updated to include a question regarding SUP.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 6 November 2021, submitted)

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to adjourn the meeting for a ten minute comfort break at this point.

Councillor Aileen Morton left the meeting at this point.

Members were advised that if they wished to discuss the content of the Appendix at item 15(c) of the agenda, the Committee would be required to resolve in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

15. TARBERT AND LOCHGILPHEAD REGENERATION FUND - ARDRISHAIG NORTH PUBLIC REALM

The Committee gave consideration to a recommendation from the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee of 1 December 2021 in relation to Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund – Ardrishaig North Public Realm Full Business Case.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed the recommendation from the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee that -

1. The draft Full Business Case for Ardrishaig North Public Realm is approved and that Council funding of up to £330,000 is confirmed for the Ardrishaig North Public Realm Project from the Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund.
2. Approval of the final Full Business Case for Ardrishaig North Public Realm is delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure Services, subject to it being demonstrated that this is within the approved budget prior to implementation.
3. Delegated authority be afforded to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure Services for the delivery of the project.

(Reference: Recommendation from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee held on 1 December 2021; and report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 11 November 2021, submitted)

16. COSTS AND SAVINGS FROM EARLY DEPARTURES FROM COUNCIL EMPLOYMENT FOR YEAR 1 JULY 2020 - 30 JUNE 2021

A report outlining the costs and savings associated with early retirements/redundancies that had taken place between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the numbers and costs of severance packages during the period 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021 and the resulting savings.
2. Noted that the report ensured that the Council was compliant with the Audit Scotland recommendation in its report 'Bye Now, Pay Later'.

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

17. 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 December 2021.

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

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and 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 8 and 9 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

18. ROTHESAY PAVILION UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the project's approved budget, anticipated final cost of the works to completion, and the associated programme of activities; and made a recommendation as to the future of the project.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed the terms of a Motion proposed by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 24 November 2021, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, tabled)