

MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS AND IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2022

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Fiona Howard	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Willie Hume	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Andrew Kain	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	

Attending: Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Shona Barton, Governance Manager
Anne Blue, Head of Financial Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
Catherine Ronald, Senior Local Tax Assistant (Debt Recovery)/NDR
David Allan, Estates and Property Development Manager
David Rennie, Social Enterprise Development Manager
Jane Jarvie, Communications Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Audrey Forrest.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

(a) Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 August 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 August 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 August 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 August 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Willie Hume joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

* **4. FINANCIAL REPORTS MONITORING PACK - 31 AUGUST 2022**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of the financial monitoring reports as at the end of August 2022. There were five detailed reports, setting out the position as at 31 August 2022.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the revenue budget monitoring report as at 31 August 2022;
2. noted the financial risks for 2022-23;
3. noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 31 August 2022 and approved the proposed changes to the capital plan outlined in Appendix 4 of that report;
4. noted the treasury monitoring report as at 31 August 2022;
5. noted the reserves and balances report as at 31 August 2022; and
6. agreed to recommend to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during July and August 2022 were approved.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 9 September 2022, submitted)

5. BUDGET OUTLOOK 2023-24 TO 2027-28

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to the budget outlook 2023-24 to 2027-28, reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 11 August 2022.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the current estimated budget outlook position for the period 2023-24 to 2027-28.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 15 September 2022, submitted)

6. BUDGET APPROACH

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the budget approach already commenced by officers to assist in identifying options to help close the gap and provide a high level draft budget timetable for 2023-24.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the 2023-24 budget approach.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 15 September 2022, submitted)

7. POLICY FOR EMPTY PROPERTY RELIEF IN NON-DOMESTIC RATES FROM 1 APRIL 2023

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing that the Council's policy for the application of Empty Property Relief for properties on the Non-Domestic Rates valuation roll from 1 April 2023 would mirror the current arrangements as set by the Scottish Government. This would allow time for an Empty Property Review to be conducted, and consultation to be undertaken both within the Council and with external stakeholders such as local businesses. It was proposed that a report be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in October 2023 with recommendations for the relief scheme from April 2024 onwards.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the Empty Property Relief Scheme for Argyll and Bute whereby;

1. from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 the scheme will be identical to the current arrangements for Empty Property Relief; and
2. a paper would be presented to Policy and Resources Committee in October 2023 on changes to the policy following consultation with stakeholders internal and external to the Council.

(Reference: Report by Head of Financial Services dated 27 September 2022, submitted)

8. CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS) PROJECT - 104-110 ARGYLL STREET, DUNOON

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining the gap funding that existed in the final priority building of the Dunoon Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). The CARS was jointly funded by Historic Environment Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council. The report requested utilisation of an additional £75,000 grant funding from the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) to cover that gap and facilitate the key project.

The Head of Development and Economic Growth advised of an error within paragraph 1.3 of the submitted report where it should have read three ground floor commercial units and two first floor flats and not two ground floor commercial units and two first floor flats.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the utilisation of the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) to award an additional £75,000 grant to the 104-110 Argyll Street Dunoon CARS project, thus providing essential gap funding to facilitate the restoration of these buildings.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 29 September 2022, submitted)

9. PLACE BASED INVESTMENT AND CROWN ESTATE FUND 2022/23

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the expenditure agreed in relation to Place Based Investment and the Crown Estate Fund, following the decision taken at the Committee on 11 August 2022 that officers seek suggestions from all elected members for potential projects that would fit with both funds criteria and timeline.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the projects agreed to be taken forward and the funding allocated to each as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the submitted report;
2. agreed that should additional Crown Estate funding be advised over and above the original estimate, that it be allocated to a cemetery maintenance and roads access fund for each administrative area (£75,000 to each area) and to complete the project agreed in February 2020 to install charging mechanisms in 16 high footfall public conveniences at a cost of £200,000; and
3. agreed that any remaining allocation within Crown Estates is held to be used in the event of any contract increases. If not required, this would be added to next year's allocation.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 5 October 2022, submitted)

10. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015 - UPDATE - EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST / ASSET TRANSFER REQUESTS / REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Committee gave consideration to a report that had been on the agenda as an item for noting at the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 11 August 2022, where it had been unanimously agreed to refer it to this meeting of the Committee as a substantive item in terms of Standing Order 10.9.

The report advised the Committee on the operation of the processes in regard to formal Asset Transfer Requests (ATR) and Participation Requests in terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; current live informal Expressions of Interest (EOI's) which could become subject to a formal asset transfer request or be dealt with outwith the formal asset transfer request process; current live ongoing or agreed Participation Requests received by the Council; and the annual reporting requirements in respect of Asset Transfer Requests and Participation Requests set out in Section 95 and 32 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 respectively.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the information provided; and
2. agreed that an elected Member Seminar would be put in place in the new year to

consider the implications of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in the first instance.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 13 October 2022 and Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 27 June 2022, submitted)

11. TARBERT AND LOCHGILPHEAD REGENERATION FUND - PROJECTS UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a recommendation from the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee held on 7 September 2022 in relation to projects funded by the Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund. The recommendation sought approval for the allocation of any unspent funding from the Lochgilphead Front Green Project to support the delivery of the Ardrishaig North Public Realm Project.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed the recommendation to transfer any unspent funding from the Lochgilphead Front Green project to support the ongoing delivery of the Ardrishaig North Public Realm project.

(Reference: Recommendation from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee held on 7 September 2022 and report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 16 August 2022, submitted)

12. ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL EMPLOYABILITY FINANCIAL AND SERVICE PROVISION UPDATE

A report providing an update on the current financial position of Argyll and Bute Council's Employability Team aligned to current and proposed service provision across the region was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the content of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 13 October 2022, submitted)

13. 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 submitted workplan.

(Reference: Policy and Resources Committee Workplan dated 13 October 2022, submitted)