

MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 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 Andrew Kain	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	Councillor Alastair Redman

Attending: Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Shona Barton, Governance Manager
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Audrey Forrest and Gary Mulvaney.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dougie Philand declared a non-financial interest in item 12 of the agenda (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Project: 3-17 Colchester Square, Lochgilphead) as a family member had submitted a tender for the contract. He advised that he would leave the room during the consideration of this item of business.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 October 2022 were approved as a correct record.

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

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

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the revenue budget monitoring report as at 31 October 2022;
2. noted the financial risks for 2022-23;

3. noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 31 October 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 October 2022;
5. noted the reserves and balances report as at 31 October 2022;
6. agreed to recommend to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during September and October 2022 were approved; and
7. agreed that £0.490m Revenue funding and £0.422m Capital funding relating to the pay award should be passed to the HSCP in 2022-23.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 4 November 2022, submitted)

Councillors Amanda Hampsey and Andrew Kain joined the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business.

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, last reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 October 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 29 November 2022, submitted)

6. ISLANDS COST CRISIS EMERGENCY FUND

The Committee gave consideration to a report in relation to the allocation of Scottish Government Island Cost of Crisis Emergency Funding which aims to help island authorities take urgent action to support households through the cost of living crisis. The report recommended that the Committee delegate the arrangements for Argyll and Bute's allocation of this funding to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader, Leader of the Largest Opposition Group and the Policy Lead for Islands.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the funding announced by the Scottish Government as part of its Emergency Budget Review for 2022/23 financial year for Local Authorities with responsibility for islands; and
2. agreed that arrangements for the fund be delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Leader,

Depute Leader, Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Policy Lead for Islands to ensure that the support reached communities as quickly as possible.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 1 December 2022, submitted)

7. LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUND UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update with detail of options agreed and progress made in relation to the Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery (LACER) Fund.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the progress to date with the suite of previously agreed options for the LACER funding;
2. approved the refocus of £35k of funding from sector support to provide additional regional support to businesses in the hardest hit areas - Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Isle of Bute and Dunoon; and
3. agreed that the overspend of up to £36,713 in relation to the issue of Scotland Loves Local Cards was met from the Recovery and Renewal Fund.

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

*** 8. 2023/2024 ANNUAL REVIEW - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022/25 AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2022/25**

The Committee gave consideration to a report seeking approval for the 2023/2024 Annual Review of the 2022/2025 Procurement Strategy and 2022/2025 Sustainable Procurement Policy. The report outlined the annual updates and the key changes that had been made to both the Procurement Strategy and the Sustainable Procurement Policy.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the minor changes to the Procurement Strategy 2022/2025 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/2025; and
2. approved the final revised Procurement Strategy 2022/25 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25, to go on to the Full Council in February 2023; subject to the following amendment to paragraph 1.3 of the Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25 as follows –

Amended paragraph 1.3 - Argyll & Bute Council is one of the region's major public money spenders with £158.8 million spent in 2021/22 and resolves to embed progressive procurement practices by developing local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment and keep wealth within communities. Further Argyll

& Bute Council will make its financial power work for local places, working collaboratively to increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing and recirculating the wealth that exists.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 7 November 2022, submitted)

9. CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD UPDATE & DE-CARBONISATION TRACKER

The Committee gave consideration to a report highlighting recent activity of the Climate Change Board.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the updates contained at Section 5 of the report and the full De-carbonisation Tracker update contained within Appendix A.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 13 November 2022, submitted)

10. RURAL GROWTH DEAL - UPDATE PAPER

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Rural Growth Deal (RGD) Programme and the progress towards the signing of the Full Deal Agreement which represented the next key milestone in the Rural Growth Deal process.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. approved a further drawdown of funding from the Inward Investment Fund (up to £150k);
2. noted that similar to previous arrangements, funds would only be drawn down subject to the Chief Executive and two Executive Directors of the Council being satisfied that the monies were for the purpose of delivering the Rural Growth Deal. Any further funding required in excess of the approved value would require further approval from the Policy and Resources Committee; and
3. noted the process and anticipated timescales for signing the Full Deal Agreement with the Scottish and UK Governments.

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

11. LORN ARC TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCE PROGRAMME - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the wider Lorn Arc Programme and the current live Lorn Arc projects at Dunbeg and Oban Airport.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the progress with the Lorn Arc Project, particularly –

1. ongoing discussions with Scottish Government to amend the TIF agreement;
2. anticipated submissions of full planning applications for Dunbeg Corridor in early 2023; and
3. ongoing work to prepare a Business Case for investment in a Headquarters building at Oban Airport.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 2 November 2022, submitted)

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

12. CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS) PROJECT: 3-17 COLCHESTER SQUARE, LOCHGILPHEAD

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining the gap funding that existed in the second priority building of the Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). The Scheme was jointly funded by Historic Environment Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council. The report requested utilisation of an additional £40,642.24 grant funding from the Private Sector Housing Grant to cover that gap and facilitate the key project.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the utilisation of the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) to award an additional £40,642.24 grant to the 3-17 Colchester Square, Lochgilphead CARS project, thus providing essential gap funding to facilitate the restoration of the building.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 24 November 2022, submitted)

Councillor Dougie Philand re-joined the meeting at this point.

13. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT GAELIC AND SCOTS AND A SCOTTISH LANGUAGES BILL: CONSULTATION

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing a response to the consultation on the Scottish Government Commitment to Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish Languages Bill.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed the proposed response to the Scottish Government Commitment to Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish Languages Bill consultation and mandated the Head of Customer Support Services to submit it on behalf of the Council to Scottish Government.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 17 November 2022, submitted)

14. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

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

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the content of the submitted work plan.

(Reference: Policy and Resources Committee Work Plan dated 8 December 2022, submitted)

The Chair advised that in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Appendix 1 relating to the following item of business would require the exclusion of the press and public should any Member wish to discuss the content of this appendix on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

15. OUR MODERN WORKSPACE (OMW) - PLACE DEMONSTRATOR FUNDING FOR ROTHESAY

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an overview of the funding application submitted to the Scottish Government Place Demonstrator Fund in respect of redesign proposals in the Victoria Street and Union Street offices in Rothesay.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the opportunity to access substantial Scottish Government capital funding as noted in Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
2. agreed that the Place Demonstrator Funding would only be used to complete the Our Modern Workspace programme in Rothesay to demonstrate the context of Place as a direct outcome of the Place Based Review;
3. agreed that the Council should accept the opportunity to work with the Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust to accelerate the Rothesay Phase of the Our Modern Workspace through the Place demonstrator Funding by committing to the following requests:-
 - demonstrate the place context, in discussion with other key partners
 - note the additionality this funding can provide – what this funding can unlock in the context of the wider Place Narrative, and
 - Confirm the project and Council commitment by 31 March 2023.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 8 December 2022, 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 Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

16. PROGRESS REPORT: DANGEROUS BUILDING: 5-7 EAST CLYDE STREET, HELENSBURGH

The Committee gave consideration to a report in respect of a dangerous building at 5-7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the content of the report and the ongoing works to secure a permanent solution; and
2. agreed to option (B) as detailed within the submitted report.

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