

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 11 MAY 2023**

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

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

Also Present: Councillor Jan Brown Councillor Peter Wallace

Attending: Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director / Section 95 Officer
Anne Blue, Head of Financial Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Shona Barton, Governance Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Fiona Howard declared a non-financial interest in item 8 of the agenda (Strategic Events and Festivals Fund – Round 5.2 2023/2024) due to her appointment as a trustee to the Helensburgh Winter Festival. She advised that she would leave the meeting during the consideration of this item of Business.

Councillor Dougie Philand noted a connection in relation to item 11 of the agenda (Kilmartin Museum – Request for Funding) due to him being one of the local members for that Ward and advised that he would leave the meeting during the consideration of this item of business.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 16 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

4. BUDGET OUTLOOK 2024-25 TO 2028-29

The Committee gave consideration to a report summarising the budget outlook covering the period 2024-25 to 2028-29, taking into consideration the decisions made at the Council Budget Meeting on 23 February 2023. This was the first outlook of the financial

year which rolled forward previous estimates as well as updating some estimates, and also extending the budget outlook to 2028-29. The assumptions would continue to be updated as the year progressed.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the current estimated budget outlook position for the period 2024-25 to 2028-29.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 21 April 2023, submitted)

5. BUDGET APPROACH

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the budget approach for 2024-25 and providing a high level draft budget timetable.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed –

1. the 2024-25 budget approach as set out in the submitted report; and
2. the creation of a Budget Working Group as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 21 April 2023, submitted)

6. PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an overview of the emerging public sector reform and associated legislation that was likely to result in fundamental changes to how public services were delivered and, equally important, how decisions around public services were made.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed that –

1. there be further exploration of the option for a Single Authority Model for Argyll and Bute; and
2. exploratory discussions with the Scottish Government be commenced and that the Chief Executive seek inclusion in the Single Island Authority meetings already in train.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 6 April 2023, submitted)

7. ARGYLL AND BUTE EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2023 AND EQUAL PAY AUDIT

As part of the equalities duties set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Council, Education Authority and Licensing Board are required to report on their equalities mainstreaming activities every 2 years. The Committee gave consideration to the Equality Mainstreaming Report for the period 2021-2023.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. approved the Equality Mainstreaming Report; and
2. noted the findings of the Equal Pay Audit, which had been carried out as part of duties under equality legislation.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 6 April 2023, submitted)

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

8. STRATEGIC EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUND - ROUND 5.2 2023/2024

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the further call for applications in respect of Round 5 – 2023/24 (referred to as Round 5.2) of the Council's Strategic Events and Festivals Fund (SEF). The report provided details of the applications submitted and recommendations regarding all eligible applications put forward to receive grant funding.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. agreed to the award of eligible SEF Round 5.2 grants amounting to £48,371 as detailed in Table 1 of the submitted report;
2. agreed that any SEF grant offer only be formally issued upon confirmation from the individual event organisation that the event is formally confirmed and is definitely going ahead and still meets the SEF Round 5 criteria. These grants were detailed in Appendix 1, Table 1 of the submitted report;
3. agreed to continue delegation of powers to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to allow any subsequent amendment to existing grant requests to be made brought about as a consequence of changes to the event/event budget. Any amendment to a current grant request/offer would only be considered if the amendment related to either the same level or a reduction in the request from and constitute up to 75% of legitimate and eligible expenditure; and
4. noted that £14,204 would be left to be earmarked towards a future SEF round as previously agreed by Committee in February 2022.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 25 April 2023, submitted)

Councillor Fiona Howard re-joined the meeting at this point.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD

(a) **DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME (DRS) IMPLICATIONS FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE INCLUDING COUNCIL SERVICES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

The Committee gave consideration to a report raising awareness of, and outlining the implications for Argyll and Bute as a result of the implementation of the Deposit Return Scheme which had been due to come into effect on 16 August 2023, but had been delayed for 7 months to March 2024. The deposit return scheme would require everyone who purchased a glass or plastic bottle, or drinks can to pay a 20p deposit which would be redeemable at a point of purchase when they returned their empty bottle or can.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the content of the report and endorsed the work of officers across the Council to implement the Deposit Return Scheme;
2. agreed that officers should continue to highlight the concerns of businesses and the potential negative impacts on matters such as Free School Meals to the Scottish Government seeking greater clarity and response on operational matters;
3. agreed that the Policy Lead for Climate Change and Environment Services be authorised to make representations to the Scottish Government on behalf of the Council; and
4. noted that the Scottish First Minister announced on 18th April 2023 that the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) would no longer launch this August, with a seven month delay and new implementation date of March 2024 to allow de-risking and operational issues to be addressed.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 4 April 2023, submitted)

(b) **COUNCIL CARBON EMISSIONS AND CARBON LITERATE ORGANISATION (CLO) BRONZE AWARD**

The Committee gave consideration to a report highlighting the Council's overall emissions for the most recent period 2021/22 and confirming that the Council's emissions were 28% down since records began. The report also advised that the Council had achieved the nationally recognised Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation Award.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the publication of the Council's 2021/22 carbon emissions report that confirmed a small 6% increase in emissions reported for the year, but that carbon dioxide emissions had still reduced by 28.4% in the past 7 years; and

2. commended and agreed to promote the Council achievement of the Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) accolade noting that further training will be rolled out for staff, Councillors and Communities via ACT and Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 5 April 2023, submitted)

(c) **COUNCIL DECARBONISATION PLAN TRACKER**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing the latest update to the Council's Decarbonisation Plan Tracker.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the updated Decarbonisation Plan Tracker.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 5 April 2023, submitted)

(d) **UPDATE ON LOCAL HEAT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY STRATEGY (LHEES) AND ENERGY EFFICIENT SCOTLAND: AREA BASED SCHEME (EES: ABS)**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to two important projects being undertaken by the Climate Change Board to help to get domestic properties to be more heat efficient and also setting out a wider heat and energy efficiency strategy.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the emerging requirements to develop a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES); and
2. commended and agreed to promote the successful installation of over £3.4m worth of property upgrades in the region to make homes more heat efficient through working in partnership with Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS) and other partners.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 5 April 2023, submitted)

(e) **NON-DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY FRAMEWORK (NDEEF) PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a brief summary of the progress with Argyll and Bute Council's Scottish Government Non-Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework project (NDEEF1) which was delivering a range of energy efficient projects at 12 Council properties. The delivery of the project had been instrumental in reducing energy costs and had made a significant contribution to the Council meeting Climate Change Carbon Reduction Targets.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the progress made to date on the NDEEF project completing 47no. out of 50no projects so far; and
2. noted the climate change projects outlined at Section 4 of the submitted report that would be developed in 2023 onwards and would form NDEEF Project 2 that would commit a further £1.5m into projects relating to energy efficiency, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and increasing efficiency.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 5 April 2023, submitted)

10. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Policy and Resources Committee work plan was before the committee for noting.

Decision

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

(Reference: Policy and Resources Committee work plan as at May 2023, submitted)

Councillor Dougie Philand, having noted a connection with the following item of business, left the meeting and took no part in the consideration of this item.

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.

11. KILMARTIN MUSEUM - REQUEST FOR FUNDING

The Committee gave consideration to a report that sought the approval of a request from Kilmartin House Museum Limited for grant funding support from the Council.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed the recommendations within the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 4 May 2023, submitted)