

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2023**

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 Dougie Philand
Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	Councillor Alastair Redman

Also Present: Councillor Maurice Corry

Attending: Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
Anne Blue, Head of Financial Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Shona Barton, Governance Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Audrey Forrest and Andrew Kain.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dougie Philand declared a non-financial interest in item 8 of the agenda (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Projects: 2-4 and 6-10 Argyll Street, Lochgilphead) due to him having relatives in the building industry and possible tenderers for the works to be carried out in relation to this project. 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 12 October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

*** 4. FINANCIAL REPORTS MONITORING PACK - 31 OCTOBER 2023**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of the financial monitoring reports as at the end of October 2023. There were five detailed reports setting out the position as at 31 October 2023 which included the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report; 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 October 2023;
2. noted the financial risks for 2023-24;
3. noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 31 October 2023 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 2023;
5. noted the reserves and balances report as at 31 October 2023; and
6. agreed to recommend to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during September and October 2023 are approved.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 3 November 2023, submitted)

* **5. BUDGET OUTLOOK 2024-25 TO 2028-29**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to the budget outlook covering the period 2024-25 to 2028-29, previously reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 12 October 2023.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the current estimated budget outlook position for the period 2024-25 to 2028-29;
2. agreed to recommend to Council that the utilities budgets are right sized by utilising £0.936m of the £1.4m contingency that was set aside for inflationary increases as part of the 2023-24 budget setting process;
3. agreed to recommend to Council that the shortfall in the teachers pay award funding is met by utilising £0.080m of the £1.4m contingency that was set aside for inflationary increases as part of the 2023-24 budget setting process; and
4. noted that Argyll and Bute Council were selected as a Scottish Local Authority for a Levelling Up Partnership (LUP) with the UK Government and will therefore receive up to £20 million to address specific local challenges and opportunities.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 7 November 2023, submitted)

Councillor Amanda Hampsey left the meeting during the consideration of the following item of Business.

6. BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the budget setting process for 2024/25.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the budget update report;
2. noted that the items outlined in the report would feature in the Budget Pack in February 2024; and
3. noted that options in relation to the funding of LEIP would be brought to a future meeting of the Council.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 10 November 2023, submitted)

* **7. 2024/2025 ANNUAL REVIEW - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022/25 AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2022/25**

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought approval of revisions to the Procurement Strategy 2022/25 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25 following the annual review of both documents.

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 2024.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 7 November 2023, 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.

8. CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS) PROJECTS - 2-4 AND 6-10 ARGYLL STREET, LOCHGILPHEAD

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining the funding gap that existed in the final two priority buildings of the Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). The report requested the utilisation of an additional £137,271.46 grant funding from the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) budget to cover the funding gap and facilitate these two key projects.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the utilisation of Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) to award an additional £137,271.46 grant to the 2-4 Argyll Street and 6-10 Argyll Street Lochgilphead CARS projects, thus providing essential gap funding to facilitate the essential repair and conservation of these buildings.

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

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

9. NATURE RESTORATION FUND - SPEND OPTIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report recommending that the Council take forward a number of deliverable projects utilising the Nature Restoration Fund allocated by the Scottish Government.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted the remaining allocation of Nature Restoration Funding;
2. noted the suggestions received by Elected Members in Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and
3. agreed to the recommended projects as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth and Roads and Infrastructure Services; and the Executive Director for Commercial Services dated December 2023, submitted)

10. SINGLE AUTHORITY MODEL UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the progress that has been made in terms of exploring options for a Single Authority Model in Argyll and Bute and the engagement that has taken place with the Scottish Government and other key partners.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. noted that the Scottish Government have formally advised the Council that Ministers welcome their involvement in discussions on Single Authority Models;
2. noted the ongoing engagement and collaboration with key partners to develop suitable options, as set out at paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the submitted report; and
3. noted that a further report will be prepared for the Policy and Resources Committee following the completion of work to articulate the benefits and key objectives associated with each option.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 16 November 2023, submitted)

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 December 2023.

(Reference: Policy and Resources Committee Workplan dated December 2023, submitted)