

HAMILTON AREA COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 8 September 2021

Chair:

Councillor Mary Donnelly

Councillors Present:

Councillor Jackie Burns, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Peter Craig (Depute), Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Martin Grant Hose, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor John Ross (ex officio), Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Stephanie Callaghan, Councillor Joe Lowe, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Bert Thomson

Attending:

Community and Enterprise Resources

A McKinnon, Head of Facilities, Waste and Grounds Services; G Newbigging, Area Manager

Education Resources

L Mitchell, Quality Improvement Officer/Lead Officer (Equity)

Finance and Corporate Resources

E A McGonigle, Administration Officer; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; J Taylor, Head of Finance (Strategy); L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Hamilton Area Committee held on 9 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Common Good Update Report

A report dated 18 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing background information and an update on the Hamilton Common Good Fund.

The Common Good was a fund of money or assets, or both, and was administered by a Scottish local authority in respect of each former burgh within the area of the local authority. Common Good property was owned by the local authority and administered separately from other local authority assets for accounting purposes. Ownership was absolute in the strict sense that the authority held legal title to it. However, what the authority could do with the asset was subject to a system of statutory control which had the potential to limit the extent to which the authority could dispose of or deal with the asset and in what terms.

The Common Good funds held in South Lanarkshire were Biggar, Hamilton, Lanark and Rutherglen. The Common Good fund in Hamilton held a number of properties and a proactive approach to maintenance supported the viability of those assets and reduced the Council's risk to greater liability in the future. On 2 October 2013, the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee approved an annual cyclical maintenance plan of £15,000 for Hamilton Common Good properties and the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) had delegated authority to approve maintenance expenditure up to that amount for all funds.

Finance Services administered the Common Good accounts, which included revenue monitoring, preparation of annual accounts and, when required, to seek approval from the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee for expenditure to be incurred on various projects. Reports on the management of the Common Good funds would be provided annually to appropriate Area Committees.

The unaudited annual accounts for 2020/2021 were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. The balance invested in the Council's Loans Fund for Hamilton was £0.348 million and details of those assets were provided in Appendix 2 to the report.

It was noted that:-

- ♦ there were currently no commitments for repairs and planned maintenance for 2021/2022 and work was ongoing to identify potential expenditure
- ♦ there was 1 committed project in relation to the Hamilton Town Centre Action Plan which was for the renewal and maintenance of Hamilton's Town Square
- ♦ although there had been no consultations on new lease arrangements for Common Good properties, consultation would be required under Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in relation to a proposal to dispose of part of the Gateway Site, Palace Grounds Road for a substation site to facilitate the Fastned charging site at the same location
- ♦ no responses had been received in respect of the consultation on the proposed change of use at 11 Keith Street, Hamilton (old Vogue cinema) for a development of 23 one and two bedroom flats to include retention of the building façade
- ♦ the Council had identified a number of sites for designation and use as local nature reserves and 2 of those were held in the Hamilton Common Good Account. Consultation under Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 would be required

The Head of Finance (Strategy) responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the background information and update on the Hamilton Common Good fund be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of Finance and Corporate Resources Committee of 2 October 2013 (Paragraph 11)]

4 Participatory Budgeting - Community and Enterprise Resources - Footpaths and Roads

A report dated 20 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on:-

- ♦ the outcome and level of engagement for the Participatory Budgeting (PB) consultation exercise to identify £2 million footway/footpath and road projects
- ♦ initial/potential learning points to develop future exercises
- ♦ next steps, locations, and forthcoming communications

As part of an agreed budget, an additional £2 million had been allocated to support footway/footpath and road improvements. This investment would continue the Council's commitment to prioritise investment in roads infrastructure and footways/footpaths, including those within parks.

The predominant focus of the investment had been to target footpath improvement together with further investment to improve road conditions in South Lanarkshire. This additional sum was to be allocated across the 4 localities based on network length and would be subject to an online PB exercise which would allow communities to prioritise, on a thematic basis, where the further expenditure in their area could be targeted. The resulting programme of works would be informed by the road condition index and footway/footpath conditions information.

It had been considered appropriate to allocate 75% of the funding towards footway/footpath and 25% towards carriageways, with work to be implemented in 2021/2022. Details of how the funding had been allocated were highlighted in the report.

The consultation took place between 27 April and 11 May 2021 and had been promoted via the Council's website, social media channels and third sector networks. Separate votes were held for each of the 4 areas, with separate provision within each area vote for roads and footways/footpaths. A full breakdown of participant engagement in the process and the representation levels was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Locations had been identified in line with the funding and specific locations where works would be undertaken were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

Operating the first mainstream PB across the Council had identified several learning points to be considered as the process developed further and those were detailed in the report.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the outcome and level of engagement for the PB consultation exercise to identify £2 million footway/footpath and road projects, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the learning points to develop future consultation exercises and forthcoming communications be noted.

Councillor Burns entered the meeting during this item of business

5 Participatory Budgeting - Community and Enterprise Resources - Renewable Energy Fund

A report dated 24 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on Participatory Budgeting in relation to the Renewable Energy Fund.

The Executive Committee, on 21 November 2018, agreed that a series of amendments be made to the Renewable Energy Fund. One amendment was the introduction of a micro grant fund in 2019/2020 of up to £5,000 per annum available to Community Councils or equivalent community organisations to award and administer small grants of up to £500 locally.

This was established for an initial 2 year period and the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee, held on 16 February 2021, agreed to continue the micro grants after 2020/2021. At the start of August 2021, 3 Community Councils within the Hamilton Area had been awarded micro grants in 2021/2022 totalling £12,895 and those were detailed in the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 21 November 2018 (Paragraph 10) and Minutes of the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee of 16 February 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Participatory Budgeting - Education Resources - Pupil Equity Funding

A report dated 25 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Participatory Budgeting in relation to Pupil Equity Funding.

The public had been asked about how 5% of their school's Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) would be spent. The funding was targeted at supporting pupils affected by poverty. 146 out of 148 schools within South Lanarkshire received PEF. Each school would set aside a minimum of 5% of its PEF allocation, which equated to £0.495 million, and members of the public had been asked to indicate how this should be spent. Schools would confirm the percentage that they would set aside to Education Resources by 30 August 2021 and final figures would be reported to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

Head Teachers had been briefed on the Participatory Budgeting (PB) process and were now identifying a staff member to lead/facilitate the process within their school. An initial training session for PB leads was delivered on 6 May 2021.

Schools were now beginning to set-up a PB group, consisting of pupils and parents/carers. This group would lead PB activity in schools, consulting with stakeholders to generate ideas and facilitate the voting. Details of the stakeholders were provided in the report. All schools would have completed the PB process, with voting and spend agreed, by 8 October 2021. This information would be collated and shared at future meetings of this Committee.

Schools would then progress with the spend, ensuring that the funding was fully spent by 31 March 2021.

The Quality Improvement Officer/Lead Officer (Equity) responded to a member's question in relation to the measures, outcomes and reporting of the PEF spent through PB and that spent by Head Teachers.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

7 Community Grant Applications

A report dated 23 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on applications for community grant.

As previously reported, the 2020/2021 year-end report considered by the Executive Committee on 23 June 2021 included a recommendation to carry forward the unspent monies from the 2020/2021 community grants budget. This recommendation had been approved and, in relation to this Area Committee, the unspent monies amounted to £12,272.05, which resulted in a revised total allocation for community grants for 2021/2022 of £38,022.05.

The Committee decided:- that community grants be awarded as follows:-

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| (a) | Applicant: | Hillhouse Community Council, Hamilton (HA/3/21) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Equipment |
| | Amount Awarded: | £700 |
| | | |
| (b) | Applicant: | Westcraigs at Heart Group, Blantyre (HA/6/21) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Start-up costs – equipment, administration and publicity costs |
| | Amount Awarded: | £250 |

[Reference: Minutes of 9 June 2021 (Paragraph 5)] and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 23 June 2021 (Paragraph 3]

8 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.