

HAMILTON AREA COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Teams and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 9 November 2022

Chair:

Councillor Allan Falconer

Councillors Present:

Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Gavin Keatt, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Lesley McDonald, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Mo Razzaq (Depute), Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor Helen Toner

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Celine Handibode, Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Martin Hose, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor John Ross

Attending:

Education Resources

L Mitchell, Quality Improvement Officer

Finance and Corporate Resources

G Cochran, Administration Assistant; J McCafferty, Development Officer; E A McGonigle, Administration Officer; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy)

1 Declaration of Interests

The following interests were declared:-

Councillor(s)	Item(s)	Nature of Interest(s)
Devlin and McCreary	Community Grant Applications:- ♦ Bothwell Futures (HA/24/22)	Members of Group

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 2.06pm for a 5 minute period

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Hamilton Area Committee held on 31 August 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Common Good Update

A report dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Hamilton Common Good fund.

Common Good was a fund of money or assets, or both, which was administered by a Scottish local authority in respect of each former burgh within the local authority area. Common Good property was owned by the local authority and administered separately from other local authority assets for accounting purposes.

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 2021/2022 were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. The balance invested in the Council's Loans Fund for Hamilton was £412,000 and details of those assets were provided in Appendix 2 to the report.

Details were provided on repairs and maintenance incurred during 2021/2022 and the commitments for repairs and planned maintenance in 2022/2023. There had been no consultations on Common Good properties since the previous update to the Committee on 8 September 2021.

There followed a full discussion on the report during which the Finance Manager (Strategy) responded to members' questions and undertook to:-

- ◆ provide information on administration costs of the Common Good Fund and whether this could be reviewed or increased
- ◆ provide a member with further details on the £3,000 for repair and redecoration works in Hamilton Town Centre, as detailed in section 8.3 of the report
- ◆ provide a member with details on the sale of the former Vogue Bingo Hall/Cinema which had still to be concluded. It was expected that this would be removed from the asset register during 2022/2023
- ◆ take a request to the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee for the Davie Cooper Monument at the Hamilton Palace Grounds to be cleaned

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 8 September 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Participatory Budgeting – Place Based Programme

A report dated 25 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Participatory Budgeting (PB) in relation to the Place Based Programme.

An update was given on Hillhouse/Udston/Burnbank where the stakeholder group had been actively involved in designing the PB process. The consultation process opened on 14 September 2022 and had closed on 25 October 2022. Although proposals were welcomed on the 10 priority themes within the plan, the stakeholder group had decided that, in 2022/2023, the emphasis would be placed on projects and activities that:-

- ◆ promoted financial wellbeing
- ◆ reduced the impact of the cost-of-living crisis
- ◆ promoted health improvement

The stakeholder group met on 27 October 2022 to assess the proposals received. Details were provided on the voting process which concluded on 8 November 2022.

The stakeholder group in Strutherhill and Birkenshaw was actively involved in the PB process. Discussions were underway and a series of meetings and contacts had been made with relevant partners so that the following 3 elements of activity for investment could be enabled:-

- ◆ play and park development
- ◆ physical environment improvements
- ◆ a bike initiative

The stakeholder group was proactively promoting neighbourhood planning and the benefits that this had brought to the area. Planned community events, hosted by local schools and community groups, would be used to raise awareness and promote wider community involvement in the neighbourhood planning process.

An update was provided on the PB activity in Blantyre. The funding for 2021/2022 had been carried over so that local priorities could be re-established. A public survey had been carried out which ended in June 2022 and this had received 743 votes and identified 3 themes as follows:-

- ◆ youth activities
- ◆ community safety
- ◆ community activities

A total of £11,200 had been allocated to 6 groups and those were detailed in the report. A breakdown of those voting by age, gender, ethnic background and disability was provided in the report. Consideration would be given to involving more men and young people in this year's process which was currently being planned by the stakeholder group.

The Development Officer responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report. In relation to ensuring more young people and elderly people were involved in the PB process, assurance was provided that the team would continue publicise the process to as many local groups as possible.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

5 Education Resources - Participatory Budgeting - Pupil Equity Funding

A report dated 14 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Participatory Budgeting (PB) in relation to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

An update was given on PB activity within Education Resources in 2021/2022 which highlighted that:-

- ◆ a video showing the work of PB within Education Resources in 2021/2022 had been shared locally and nationally
- ◆ lead officers had presented the Council's PB journey at PB Scotland's National Conference on 28 September 2022
- ◆ Education Resources had submitted an award application to the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy for the Best Practice Award for Citizen Participation. The application highlighted the success of PB in schools during 2021/2022. The evaluation phase for the award was currently underway
- ◆ a PB section had been developed within a new Equity Hub, an online site to provide schools with support and resources to assist in tackling the poverty related attainment gap

PB activity in 2022/2023 was also detailed in the report which highlighted that:-

- ◆ prior to the summer holiday period, Head Teachers had been asked to allocate a minimum of 5% of their 2022/2023 PEF allocation and identify a staff member to lead/facilitate this activity in their school
- ◆ refreshed PB training had been developed and delivered to Head Teachers and PB Leads
- ◆ Head Teachers had subsequently identified the percentage of their 2022/2023 PEF allocation they wished to allocate to PB in 2022/2023

Schools within the Hamilton area had allocated £196,007.25 of their £3,656,910 million PEF allocation for PB. A breakdown of the allocation for each learning community was provided in Appendix 1 to the report. Appendix 2 of the report summarised the percentage of PEF which schools had allocated for PB. A further school-by-school breakdown was outlined in Appendix 3 of the report.

PB Stakeholder groups, comprising pupils, parents and staff, were currently leading the PB process in their schools. The outcome for each school would be reported to Education Resources by 7 October 2022. Information on the outcome of the process would be shared at future Area Committee meetings.

Education Resources would provide Area Committees with:-

- ◆ a summary report of each school's PB outcome
- ◆ case studies of school activity, which had particular impact/success
- ◆ a detailed financial report of how PEF money allocated for PB had been spent

Education Resources would support schools and monitor and track the impact of this activity. Findings would inform any future PB activity within the Resource.

The Committee acknowledged the good work that had been undertaken in relation to the PEF and thanked everyone involved, particularly the young people, whose voices were so important.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 16 February 2022 (Paragraph 3)]

6 Community Grant Applications

A report dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on applications for community grants.

There followed a discussion on the recommended grant awards to community groups which were presented to the Area Committee. The amount of grant proposed took account of the eligibility criteria for grants and, as a general rule, was based on a 'standard' level of grant dependent on the type of organisation/activity etc. This aimed to provide consistency across the 4 Area Committee areas.

The following 2 proposals were put forward by the Committee and, following lengthy debate, it was agreed that the Chairs of the other Area Committees be consulted in order that a consistent approach could be adopted:-

- ◆ a copy of each grant application should be circulated to the Area Committee to help inform the amount awarded by the Committee
- ◆ each grant application should be considered on its individual merit and that the current criteria, particularly for the variable categories of spend, was not the best approach

Following discussion on the proposal to award Bothwell Futures a community grant of £456, Councillor Johnston-Dempsey, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, moved that the level of grant be increased to £760 which was unanimously agreed.

The Committee decided:

(1) that community grants be awarded as follows:-

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| (a) | Applicant: | Larkhall Avondale Amateur Swimming Club (HA/18/22) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Equipment |
| | Amount Awarded: | £600 |
| (b) | Applicant: | 78 th Lanarkshire (3 rd Blantyre) Scout Group (HA/21/22) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Entrance fees |
| | Amount Awarded: | £350 |
| (c) | Applicant: | Hamilton Ramblers Club (HA/23/22) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Outing |
| | Amount Awarded: | £300 |
| (d) | Applicant: | Bothwell Futures (HA/24/22) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Equipment, administration and publicity costs |
| | Amount Awarded: | £760 |

Councillors Devlin and McCreary, having declared an interest in the above application, withdrew from the meeting during its consideration

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| (e) | Applicant: | Blantyre Bonnie Tots (HA/25/22) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Start-up costs - equipment |
| | Amount Awarded: | £300 |
| (f) | Applicant: | 1 st Larkhall Girls' Brigade (HA/26/22) |
| | Purpose of Grant: | Outing, administration and publicity costs |
| | Amount Awarded: | £350 |

- (2) that the Chairs of the other Area Committees be consulted on the proposals outlined by the Committee in relation to the allocation of community grants in order that a consistent approach be agreed across all 4 areas.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 August 2022 (Paragraph 7)]

7 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.