

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 21 September 2022

Chair:

Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio)

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor John Bradley (*substitute for Councillor David Shearer*), Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Gerry Convery (Depute), Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Andrea Cowan, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Gladys Ferguson-Miller, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Ross Lambie (*substitute for Councillor Kenny McCreary*), Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Hugh Macdonald, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Catherine McClymont, Councillor Lesley McDonald, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Kirsten Robb, Councillor Dr Ali Salamati (*substitute for Councillor Maureen Chalmers*), Councillor Margaret B Walker

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor John Ross, Councillor David Shearer

Attending:

Chief Executive's Service

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

Community and Enterprise Resources

D Booth, Executive Director; C Park, Head of Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services

Education Resources

T McDaid, Executive Director

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; C Fergusson, Head of Finance (Transactions); T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; P MacRae, Administration Adviser; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services

Housing and Technical Resources

A Finnan, Interim Executive Director

Health and Social Care/Social Work Resources

S Sengupta, Director, Health and Social Care

Death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II

The Chair referred to the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II. As a mark of respect, all present stood and observed a minute's silence

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24 August 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Revenue Budget Monitoring for Period 5 - 1 April to 12 August 2022

A report dated 22 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the overall financial position of the Council's General Fund Revenue Account and Housing Revenue Account for the period 1 April to 12 August 2022.

At 12 August 2022, the position on the General Fund Revenue Account was an underspend of £0.259 million. The underspend was mainly within Social Work Resources (Adults and Older People) due to vacancies relating to Social Workers, day care and residential homes. This formed part of the delegated Integration Joint Board (IJB) budget. The core Council position, without the IJB underspend, was an overspend of £0.050 million.

The Housing Revenue Account showed a breakeven position at 12 August 2022, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the underspend of £0.259 million on the General Fund Revenue Account at 12 August 2022, relating to the delegated Integration Joint Board (IJB) budget, as detailed in section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the breakeven position on the Housing Revenue Account at 12 August 2022, as detailed in section 5 and Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 24 August 2022 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Capital Programme 2022/2023 Update and Monitoring for Period 5 – 1 April 2022 to 12 August 2022

A report dated 31 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on progress of the General Fund Capital Programme and the Housing Capital Programme for the period 1 April to 12 August 2022.

At its meeting on 24 August 2022, the Committee had approved a General Fund Capital Programme for 2022/2023 totalling £98.093 million. A revised programme of £97.057 million was now anticipated which included proposed adjustments to the programme totalling a net decrease of £1.036 million. Those were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. The main reason for this reduction was the profiling adjustment, proposed by Education Resources, reflecting a review of the anticipated timing of spend on the Clyde Terrace Nursery project. The site start had been delayed from mid-May to early August, however, the project was still scheduled to complete in July 2023.

The programme included a budget allocation for the following 3 significant projects where the level of spend in year had still to be confirmed:-

- ◆ Clyde Bridge
- ◆ Larkhall Leisure Centre
- ◆ Levelling Up Fund match funding

At 12 August 2022, £14.420 million had been spent on the General Fund Capital Programme, an overspend of £0.146 million, and actual funding received to 12 August 2022 totalled £72.796 million. The programme spend and funding for the General Fund for the period was detailed in appendices 2 and 3 of the report.

The Housing Capital Programme 2022/2023, approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 24 August 2022, totalled £66.361 million. Details of the position of the programme at 12 August 2022 were provided in Appendix 4 of the report.

At 12 August 2022, expenditure on the Housing Capital Programme amounted to £16.150 million and actual funding received to 12 August 2022 totalled £16.150 million.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the position, at 12 August 2022, of the General Fund Capital Programme, as detailed in appendices 1 to 3 of the report, and the Housing Capital Programme, detailed at Appendix 4 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the adjustments to the General Fund programme, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) that the revised programmes be monitored by the Financial Resources Scrutiny Forum.

[Reference: Minutes of 24 August 2022 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Additional Funding from Scottish Government and Other External Sources

A report dated 25 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on additional funding, totalling £0.347 million, which had been made available to the Council by the Scottish Government and other external sources.

The funding had been allocated as follows:-

Revenue Funding

Resource	2022/2023 (£m)
Community and Enterprise	0.347
Total	0.347

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 24 August 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Recommendations Referred by Finance and Corporate Resources Committee - Treasury Management Activity Report 2021/2022, Prudential Code Indicators and Annual Investment Report

A report dated 7 September 2022 by the Chief Executive was submitted on recommendations which had been referred to this Committee by the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee of 7 September 2022.

The recommendations of the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee were as follows:-

- ◆ that the Treasury Management Activity Report for 2021/2022 and the 2021/2022 Treasury Management and Prudential Code Indicators be noted
- ◆ that the Council's Annual Investment Report for 2021/2022 be endorsed and referred to the Council for formal approval

The Committee decided: that the recommendation referred by the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee in relation to Treasury Management Activity Report for 2021/2022 and the 2021/2022 Treasury Management and Prudential Code Indicators be noted.

The Committee recommended to the Council: that the Annual Investment Report 2021/2022 be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of Finance and Corporate Resources Committee of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 10)]

7 Secondary School Estate - Future Capacity Issues

A report dated 2 September 2022 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on current secondary school pupil forecast numbers and the implications on accommodation requirements for the secondary school estate.

Secondary school pupil numbers were predicted to rise in South Lanarkshire, reflecting both the level of pupils transferring from the primary sector and the significant housing expansion within the area as a whole, but primarily within the Community Growth Areas. Projections indicated that it would be necessary to take action to increase pupil capacity in the following 4 secondary schools, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report:-

- ◆ Calderside Academy, Blantyre
- ◆ Holy Cross High School, Hamilton
- ◆ St Andrew's and St Bride's High School, East Kilbride
- ◆ Uddingston Grammar School

Details of the physical requirements for those secondary schools were provided in the report.

A review of procurement options had concluded that the Best Value option was to construct the expansions of the 4 secondary schools through a partnership approach using the existing PPP contract. The Scottish Government had called on local authorities to prepare bids for the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) (Phase 3) and secondary school expansion met the LEIP funding criteria. The Council's bid for LEIP funding would include only 2 of the 4 projects, Holy Cross and St Andrew's and St Bride's High Schools. A report proposing construction of a new social, emotional and behavioural needs (SEBN) building for Kear School, to be funded partly through LEIP, would also be considered by the Committee at this meeting.

The total high level budget estimate for the 4 secondary schools' expansion amounted to £22.8 million. The funding package was made up of a number of funding streams including, in addition to the LEIP funding, City Deal grant and developer contributions. In the event that the LEIP and City Deal funding bids were unsuccessful, there would be a requirement to review the financial position in the wider context of the capital programme in January 2023.

Details of the profile of spend/income and the cost of borrowing were provided in the report, together with estimated revenue costs.

There followed a discussion during which officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the building works programme for the 4 secondary schools, required to manage pupil growth, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that it be noted that the priority of the 2 Learning Estate Investment Project funding bids was, firstly, the secondary schools' expansion programme and, secondly, the new SEBN Kear school; and
- (3) that the need to review the financial position in the wider context of the capital programme in January 2023, should the LEIP funding bid and City Deal Change Control procedures be unsuccessful, be noted.

8 Proposal for a New Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Secondary School Building (Kear School)

A report dated 31 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a proposal for a new social, emotional and behavioural needs (SEBN) secondary school building (Kear School).

The Kear school building had initially been constructed as a temporary decant facility for primary school pupils during the Schools' Modernisation Programme. The school currently delivered specialist educational provision for children and young people with SEBN. The learners attending Kear campus had complex additional support needs which required a more flexible and individualised response to be delivered to meet their needs.

The current Kear secondary school building did not provide a satisfactory environment for the delivery of education for SEBN secondary pupils. Details were given on the challenges presented by the building in terms of:-

- ◆ soundproofing
- ◆ multi storey nature
- ◆ fabric of the building
- ◆ outdoor space
- ◆ internal accommodation

An options appraisal exercise, undertaken in relation to the provision, had considered the following options:-

- ◆ maintaining the status quo
- ◆ improving the fabric of the existing building
- ◆ acquiring another building
- ◆ designing and building a new Kear secondary school

It was proposed to design and build a new provision on a more suitable site. A number of sites had been considered, as detailed in the report, and the site at Union Street, Stonehouse, had been identified as the most appropriate for the development of a new SEBN school. Any transfer to this potential site would require statutory public consultation.

Details were given on a feasibility study commissioned to identify the unique requirements of SEBN secondary education. A high priority for the new school would be to encourage wider community use and participation, both during and outwith school hours. The new provision would be able to accommodate 60 learners in a safer, nurturing and inclusive environment to suit learner needs.

Construction costs for the new facility were estimated at £14 million. It was proposed that the costs would be met from a mixture of developer contributions and the submission of a bid to the Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). The secondary school expansion project would take precedence over the new Kear provision in terms of the LEIP funding bid. Details were given on the estimated costs and funding sources for the project.

There followed a discussion during which:-

- ♦ officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report
- ♦ members expressed the view that, in the event that the LEIP funding bid for the project was unsuccessful, the Committee give further consideration to the proposal

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the proposal to establish a new SEBN secondary school building to replace Kear School be approved;
- (2) that the proposed site preference of Stonehouse be approved;
- (3) that the requirement to undertake a statutory public consultation be noted;
- (4) that the intention to fund 50% of the project via a bid into the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) with the remaining funding via developer contributions be noted; and
- (5) that, should the LEIP funding bid be unsuccessful, the project be considered further by the Committee.

9 Outcome of the Consultation to Realign the Catchment of Newton Farm and Hallside Primary Schools and to Alter the Secondary School Pupils in the Rezoned Area Would Attend from Uddingston Grammar School to Cathkin High School

A report dated 31 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the consultation undertaken to realign the catchment of Newton Farm and Hallside Primary Schools and to alter the secondary school which pupils in the rezoned area would attend from Uddingston Grammar School to Cathkin High School.

A statutory consultation exercise had been carried out on the proposal to realign the catchment of Newton Farm and Hallside Primary Schools and to alter the secondary school which pupils in the rezoned area would attend from Uddingston Grammar School to Cathkin High School. A total of 950 letters had been delivered to affected residents and notification given to the parent/carers and pupils of the affected schools. In addition, all associated primary schools and local nurseries were given notification of the consultation, as well as other statutory consultees.

225 responses had been received through the online survey and by email as follows:-

- ♦ 89 in favour of the proposal
- ♦ 114 not in favour of the proposal
- ♦ 22 undecided

Education Resources had acknowledged that any change to school catchment could be unsettling for families and had built in provision, for a period of time, for younger siblings to continue to enrol at Newton Farm Primary School and for current pupils at Newton Farm Primary School to continue to transition to Uddingston Grammar School. Education Scotland, while recognising that the response rate from parents/carers was low, concluded that the proposal had potential educational benefits.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the proposed catchment realignment of Newton Farm and Hallside Primary Schools, including altering the secondary school those pupils in the rezoned area would attend from Uddingston Grammar School to Cathkin High School, be approved;
- (2) that any current catchment child attending Newton Farm Primary School during school session 2022/2023 and living in the proposed rezoned area for Hallside Primary School be entitled to remain at Newton Farm Primary School;
- (3) that those pupils be offered the option of attending either Uddingston Grammar School or Cathkin High School regardless of any catchment change; and
- (4) that, thereafter, any further younger siblings enrolling in Primary 1 in respect of school sessions August 2023 through to August 2028, be given the option to enrol at Newton Farm Primary School and have the right to attend Uddingston Grammar School.

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11.20am for a 10 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 11.30am

10 New Deal for Employees

A report dated 7 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted in relation to proposed changes to conditions of service for employees to provide additional support.

Following a request from the Council's Administration, the Head of Personnel Services had reviewed a number of areas across the Council's conditions of service applicable to the workforce with a view to seeking an improvement for employees. This centred around improving support for difficult personal circumstances and improving employee wellbeing in general.

It was proposed that changes be made in the following areas to offer better support to families and individuals:-

- ◆ paternity leave
- ◆ support for pregnancy and loss

To ensure that parents/carers could maximise support time available, it was proposed to increase paid paternity leave, for those eligible, to 4 weeks, to be taken consecutively. It was also proposed that the Council sign up to the Pregnancy Loss Pledge. This was a campaign whereby employers could show commitment in supporting staff through the distress of miscarriage and centred around the provision of meaningful time off and support in relation to pregnancy loss. Additionally, to further improve current provisions related to pregnancy loss, it was proposed to introduce a section within the council's Maternity Leave policy specifically on neonatal loss.

Details were also given on:-

- ◆ the pregnancy loss pledge process
- ◆ additional pregnancy related improvements whereby certain provisions would be extended to the partner
- ◆ support for fertility treatment
- ◆ a proposal to include neonatal leave in the Council's Maternity Scheme

It was also proposed that the Council support employees in maintaining a healthy work life balance through:-

- ◆ a one off wellbeing thank you recognition day, although this could be impacted by the outcome of the pay offer for local government employees
- ◆ provision of a Right to Disconnect to allow employees to feel able to switch off from work, as detailed in the policy attached as Appendix 1 to the report
- ◆ consideration of a 4 day working week

There followed a discussion during which officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the changes in terms and conditions to support families and individuals, identified at Section 4 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that the Council approve the Right to Disconnect Policy for employees, attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- (3) that the Council agree to sign up to the Pregnancy Loss Pledge;
- (4) that, subject to no additional annual leave day being granted in 2022 through pay negotiations, a wellbeing day be allocated to employees in recognition of the difficult years experienced; and
- (5) that Services, together with the workforce, explore the options to benefit from a 4 day working week.

11 Budget Strategy – 2023/2024 Update and Longer Term Financial Outlook

A report dated 6 September 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on the budget position for 2023/2024 and the longer term financial outlook.

A report on the estimates in relation to the budget gap for 2023/2024 was submitted to the meeting of the Council held on 15 June 2022. That report showed a budget gap of £32.477 million.

Since then:-

- ◆ the 2021/2022 financial year end had concluded
- ◆ information had been received on the Scottish Government's Spending Review and the ability to change the accounting for Service Concessions
- ◆ information had been received in relation to the 2022/2023 Pay Award

The potential impact of each of those was detailed in the report. As a result, the budget gap in 2023/2024 had reduced from £32.477 million to £24.726 million. This sum did not include any impact of a Council Tax increase or the potential benefit from the Service Concession implementation.

In respect of the longer term financial outlook, Appendix 1 of the report showed an estimate of the budget gaps across the coming years, to 2027/2028. It:-

- ◆ reflected current assumptions on a number of areas including price increases and grant levels as well as the impact of the use of reserves generated by the previously agreed Loan Funds Review
- ◆ included the potential benefit from the Spending Review

The outlook did not include the use of any benefit from the change to accounting for Service Concessions and would be updated as information around Service Concessions was confirmed.

It was proposed that options to meet the £24.726 million budget gap would be developed for members' consideration and submitted to a future meeting.

Officers responded to members' questions on the report. In response to a member's question, the Chair confirmed that there would be a session for elected members on the 2023/2024 budget towards the end of the year.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the update to the Budget Strategy reflecting updated grant assumptions following the Spending Review publication, additional underspend from 2021/2022 and projected pay award impact, resulting in a revised budget gap of £24.726 million, as detailed in section 5 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that the longer term financial outlook, as detailed in section 6 of the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the summary and next steps, as detailed in section 7 of the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council of 15 June 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

12 Cost of Living Supports

A report dated 6 September 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the support offered across the Council to households in South Lanarkshire significantly impacted by the cost of living crisis.

The cost of living crisis was expected to result in many households experiencing poverty. While it was recognised that the Council could not fully remove the financial pressure on households, it was taking a range of actions to provide vital support.

Those actions included:-

- ◆ operation of a new fund designed specifically to support households experiencing financial hardship
- ◆ provision of energy support in the form of voucher payments of £49 per household for households on prepaid meters
- ◆ operation of a Capped Meter Fund to prevent households from having no gas supply as a result of the meter being capped
- ◆ provision of an Education Advice Project where Family Wellbeing Assistants, based in 2 schools, worked with school staff to support families in accessing help

- ◆ funding from the Digital Inclusion group to improve Wi-Fi in community facilities to help residents access services digitally
- ◆ provision of lived experience funding to focus on tackling poverty issues
- ◆ recruitment of an Employability Adviser by the Money Matters Advice Centre

Details were also given on existing Council support for households including:-

- ◆ the Money Matters Advice Service
- ◆ the Scottish Welfare Fund
- ◆ support for tenants
- ◆ provision of benefits

It was proposed that school meals debt, as detailed in the report, be taken forward for write-off. In line with the process for other debts, formal write-off of this debt would be made through a report for consideration by the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee.

The package of support which the Council had in place amounted to £92 million, with almost £3 million from new measures in 2022/2023 and £89 million from existing budgets. If further funding was provided by the Scottish Government, more support would be offered by the Council.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the range of support provided by the Council to households in response to the impact of the cost of living crisis be noted;
- (2) that the approach to the proposed write-off of school meals debt, as detailed in section 6 of the report, be approved and the write-off be referred to the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee for consideration; and
- (3) that it be noted that the Council would be prepared to provide further assistance to households should additional resources be provided by the Scottish Government.

13 Council Complaints Report: SPSO Annual Overview 2021/2022

A report dated 24 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing details on:-

- ◆ the Council's performance in handling complaints received during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 against the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) national indicators
- ◆ improvement activity to be undertaken as a result of the analysis of complaints
- ◆ customer feedback on complaints handling

Performance against the 8 SPSO indicators was detailed in the report.

In compliance with the requirements of Indicator 8, customer satisfaction feedback had been gathered from customers who had been through the complaints process. The feedback for 2021/2022 was summarised in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Committee decided: that the Council's complaints handling performance for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and areas highlighted for improvement be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 22 September 2021 (Paragraph 10)]

14 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.