

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 22 November 2023

### Chair:

Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio)

### Councillors Present:

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

### Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Gerry Convery (Depute), Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Kirsten Robb

### Attending:

#### Chief Executive's Service

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

#### Community and Enterprise Resources

D Booth, Executive Director

#### Education Resources

C McKenzie, Executive Director

#### Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; C Fergusson, Head of Finance (Transactions); M Gordon, Administration Assistant; J Kerr, Community Engagement Manager; T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; P MacRae, Administration Adviser; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; M Milne, Head of Personnel Services

#### Housing and Technical Resources

S Gibson, Executive Director; S Egan, Head of Housing Services

#### Health and Social Care/Social Work Resources

S Sengupta, Director, Health and Social Care

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### Chair's Remarks

The Chair advised of an item of urgent business in relation to the reduction in the number of specialist palliative care beds at Kilbryde Hospice which would be considered at the appropriate point in the meeting.

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### 1 Declaration of Interests

The following interest was declared:-

Councillor(s)	Item(s)	Nature of Interest(s)
Logan	Item of Urgent Business – Reduction in Number of Specialist Palliative Care Beds at Kilbryde Hospice	Member of the Board of NHS Lanarkshire

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## **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11 October 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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## **3 Revenue Budget Monitoring for Period 1 April 2023 to 6 October 2023**

A report dated 23 October 2023 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 6 October 2023.

At 6 October 2023, the position on the General Fund Revenue Account was breakeven. Details were given on:-

- ◆ budget pressures within Children and Families Services
- ◆ the position within the Adult and Older People Service following the outcome of the job evaluation exercise for home carers
- ◆ maintenance of teacher and pupil support numbers

The Housing Revenue Account showed a breakeven position at 6 October 2023, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the break-even position on the General Fund Revenue Account at 6 October 2023, as detailed in section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the break-even position on the Housing Revenue Account at 6 October 2023, as detailed in section 5 and Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 11 October 2023 (Paragraph 3)]*

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## **4 Capital Budget 2023/2024 and Monitoring for Period 7 - 1 April 2023 to 6 October 2023**

A report dated 1 November 2023 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 6 October 2023.

At its meeting on 11 October 2023, the Committee had approved a General Fund Capital Programme for 2023/2024 totalling £80.356 million. A revised programme of £78.901 million was now anticipated which included proposed adjustments to the programme totalling a net decrease of £1.455 million. Those were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

At 6 October 2023, £24.057 million had been spent on the General Fund Capital Programme, against a budget for the period of £24.144 million, resulting in spending being slightly behind programme in the sum of £0.087 million. Actual funding received to 6 October 2023 totalled £48.992 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 2023/2024, approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2023, totalled £69.596 million. As a result of utility delays in respect of the project for 50 units at Brackenhill Farm, Hamilton, it was proposed that £2.153 million be slipped into the

2024/2025 capital programme to better reflect the anticipated timing of spend. A revised Housing Capital Programme of £67.443 million was now anticipated. Programmed funding for the year also totalled £67.443 million and details of the position of the programme at 6 October 2023 were provided in Appendix 4 of the report.

At 6 October 2023, the budget for the Housing Capital Programme amounted to £23.016 million. Expenditure for the period totalled £23.513 million and actual funding received to 6 October 2023 also amounted to £23.513 million.

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

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the adjustments to the General Fund programme, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, and the Housing Programme, as detailed in section 5.2 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that the period 7 position at 6 October 2023 of the General Fund Capital Programme, as detailed in appendices 2 and 3 of the report and the Housing Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the revised programmes be monitored by the Financial Resources Scrutiny Forum.

*[Reference: Minutes of 11 October 2023 (Paragraph 4)]*

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## **5 Additional Funding from Scottish Government and Other External Sources**

A report dated 23 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on additional funding, totalling £0.579 million, which had been made available to the Council by the Scottish Government and other external sources.

The funding had been allocated as follows:-

**Capital Funding**

Resource	2023/2024 (£m)
Community and Enterprise	0.579
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.579</b>

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 11 October 2023 (Paragraph 5)]*

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## **6 Employee Workforce Monitoring Information April to September 2023 Summary**

A report dated 25 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on workforce monitoring information relating to the Council for the period April to September 2023 as follows:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ employee development
- ◆ labour turnover/analysis of leavers and exit interviews

- ◆ recruitment monitoring
- ◆ staffing watch as at 9 September 2023

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report and undertook to provide information on the cost of absence, in monetary terms, to the Council.

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 1 December 2021 (Paragraph 6)]*

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## **7 Community Plan Quarter 4 Progress Report 2022-2023 and Annual Outcomes Improvement Report**

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A report dated 1 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on progress against the outcomes within the Community Plan 2022/2023 as at 31 March 2023.

The South Lanarkshire Community Plan, approved in October 2017, set out the priorities and outcomes for the Community Planning Partnership over a 10-year period from 2017 to 2027. Subsequently, a revised Community Plan had been approved by the Partnership Board on 22 June 2022 which covered the period 2022 to 2032. In order to meet the requirement to publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, as required by the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) Act 2015, it had been agreed that an Annual Outcomes Improvement report would be published alongside the Community Plan Progress Report.

The Quarter 4 progress report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, summarised progress against the Community Plan to March 2023. The Annual Outcome Improvement Report, which detailed the progress of the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership during 2022/2023, was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

The report provided a summary of progress against the outcomes of the Community Plan using a traffic light system of red/amber/green. A blue status had also been included which indicated that the action to achieve change had been completed. Of the 32 measures contained within the Plan, none had been completed, 26 were judged to be on course to achieve the targets set (green), 1 was judged to be considerably off target (red) and 3 were judged to be slightly off target (amber). There were 2 measures which would be reported later.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ the 3 amber and 1 red measures, together with explanatory commentary
- ◆ key achievements for 2022/2023, in relation to priority themes

There followed a full discussion during which officers responded to members' questions, particularly in relation to issues arising from the indicator in respect of homelessness.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the progress made to date against the outcomes within the Community Plan 2022/2032, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the content of the Annual Outcomes Improvement Report, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 2 November 2022 (Paragraph 6)]*

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## 8 Land and Property Transfers and Disposals

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A report dated 31 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on proposed actions in respect of land and property transactions.

The recommendations had been made in terms of agreed procedures for dealing with surplus land and property.

**The Committee decided:** that the land and property, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be declared surplus to requirements.

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## 9 Cost of Living – Support

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A report dated 4 July 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an overview of the support provided to households in South Lanarkshire in response to the cost of living crisis and seeking agreement for the direction of funds to support further activity.

While inflationary pressures were easing, nevertheless, the financial pressure on household incomes remained significant. There were signs that energy costs were starting to ease, however, they remained significantly higher than pre February 2022 costs.

In the period 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, the Money Matters Advice Service (MMAS) would continue to support residents of South Lanarkshire experiencing food and fuel poverty by distributing cash vouchers through the Financial Wellbeing Support Fund in addition to continuing to provide referrals to food and fuel bank providers.

MMAS was working with the following organisations to provide residents with energy top up vouchers:-

- ◆ The Fuel Bank Foundation
- ◆ the MEGA Fund
- ◆ Scottish Power Hardship Fund
- ◆ Clydesdale Food Bank

MMAS also referred residents to Advice Direct Scotland in relation to grants available to residents who did not pay for their energy through pre-payment meters and to Home Energy Scotland in relation to energy advice through their mentoring schemes.

Details were given on support offered by the Benefits and Revenues Service including:-

- ◆ support for households which had fallen into arrears with or were experiencing difficulty paying council tax
- ◆ grants from the Scottish Welfare Fund
- ◆ support for low income households to pay their rent
- ◆ payment to low income households of School Clothing Grants and Free School Meals' (FSM) payments for school holidays and school strike days
- ◆ National Energy Support Schemes, administered by the Service

Details were also given on support for tenants provided by Housing Services and the write off of school meal debt.

In view of the rise in referrals to foodbanks, it was proposed to allocate £28,000 from the cash payments made by MMAS to support foodbanks. This would allow the 7 foodbanks in South Lanarkshire to benefit from a cash payment of £4,000 to support their operational costs such as utility costs, volunteer expenses and insurance.

It was also proposed to provide a further £100 payment to each looked after young person currently supported. An additional £40,000 one off payment would be made to the Council's partner, Who Cares Scotland, to ensure support for care experienced young people over the festive period. The cost of this initiative amounted to £0.135 million, funded from an allocation from the cash payments made by MMAS.

The Tackling Poverty Partnership Group in the Community Planning Partnership had produced an online resource and printed booklet entitled "Money is Not the Only Problem". Following the success of this resource, it was proposed that an allocation of £10,000 be made from funds allocated from cash payments made by MMAS to cover the cost of a further production run of 20,000 copies of the booklet.

The Council would continue to provide support from a range of services and budgets available, however, the challenges councils were facing constituted a limiting factor in the level of support available to households in South Lanarkshire.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the range of support being provided by the Council to households in response to the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis be noted; and
- (2) that the allocation of £0.173 million from the cash payments being delivered by Money Matters Advice Service to support foodbanks, looked after children and the production of 'Money is Not the Only Problem' booklets be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of 16 August 2023 (Paragraph 6)]*

*In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting following this item of business at 11.15am. The meeting reconvened at 11.25am*

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## **10 2024/2025 Revenue Budget Update and Savings Proposals**

A report dated 10 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the budget position for 2024/2025, including an update to the budget strategy and the savings proposals.

At its meeting on 21 June 2023, the Committee was advised of an expected budget gap for 2024/2025 of £29.207 million. Options to address the budget gap had been developed and savings options, presented to members at a Seminar held on 9 November 2023, were provided at section 6 of the report.

Since the budget strategy had been approved in June 2023, there had been developments in relation to external factors which could influence the Council's budget position. Officers were working to identify means of assisting in managing budget pressures.

Information was provided on :-

- ♦ the budget strategy in relation to external factors which could offset the budget gap. Those related to the 2023/2024 pay award offer which would result in a recurring financial burden in 2024/2025, for which the Scottish Government had indicated that it would provide £94 million of funding nationally, as well as the recent valuation of Strathclyde Pension Fund which had resulted in the reduction of employer pension contributions from the current 19.3% to 6.5% for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026, rising to 17.5% on 2026/2027. The use of the benefit of pay award funding, together with the pension contribution benefit, would see a reduction in the budget gap from £29.2 million to £22.7 million as detailed in Appendix 1 of

the report. Potential savings that required to be achieved over the 4 year period 2024/2025 to 2027/2028 were estimated at £96 million as detailed in Appendix 1

- ◆ the 2023/2024 Probable Outturn and Potential Contribution towards the 2024/2025 budget strategy which showed a number of budget areas where previously unanticipated variances were emerging. Those related to Empty Property Relief (EPR), where current estimates showed an overspend of £0.700 million, and loan charges, where deposit interest and underspend from deposit interest and Transformation Fund borrowing, allowing for a contribution to costs associated with achieving the 2024/2025 savings, amounted to £6 million over 2023/2024 to 2025/2026. The use of the probable outturn monies over 3 years would result in a £2 million benefit in 2024/2025, reducing the budget gap further to £20.7 million
- ◆ savings proposals, as detailed in Appendix 2, currently totalling £18.589 million. The Scottish Government had announced implementation of a Council Tax freeze for 2024/2025 which, it stated, would be fully funded, however, detail on the funding to made available in relation to the freeze had yet to be received
- ◆ Mainstream School Transportation, in particular, details of proposals to consult on changing the criteria for provision of school transport to match statutory limits, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, thereby increasing the distance qualification for free mainstream transport

It was anticipated that the Council would receive its 2024/2025 Local Government Settlement in December, following which an update would be provided to members in January 2024.

Having heard Councillor Fagan, the Committee agreed that recommendation 5 of the report be amended to exclude primary schools from the consultation on the Distance Qualification Criteria for Mainstream School Transport.

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

#### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the update to the budget strategy, as detailed in section 4 of the report, covering anticipated pay award funding, pension contributions benefits and expected outcomes from the probable outturn exercise, as detailed in section 5 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that the remaining budget gap of £20.7 million as detailed in Table 2 of the report, be noted;
- (3) that the savings that required to be achieved over the 4 year period, as detailed at section 5.11 and Appendix 1 of the report, amounting to £96 million, be noted;
- (4) that the savings proposals of £18.589 million, as detailed at section 6 and Appendix 2 of the report, be noted; and
- (5) that the consultation on the Distance Qualification Criteria for Mainstream School Transport, as detailed in section 7.2 of the report, be approved subject to the exclusion of primary schools from the process.

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## **11 Programme for Government 2023**

A report dated 25 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing a summary of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2023/2024 and key items relevant to local government.

The Scottish Government published its Programme for Government (PfG), which set out the Government's key legislative and policy priorities for the year ahead, at the beginning of September each year.

99 of the 230 commitments featured in the PfG could be considered to have implications for local government. Those were itemised at Appendix 1 of the report together with an assessment of implications for the Council. The following issues were of particular significance for local government:-

- ◆ sustainable Scottish public finances
- ◆ public service reform
- ◆ working with local government
- ◆ supporting small business
- ◆ delivering fair work for all
- ◆ thriving local and regional economies
- ◆ national care service
- ◆ independent living fund
- ◆ sport
- ◆ tackling poverty
- ◆ preventing and ending homelessness and supplying affordable, safe homes
- ◆ supporting children and young people
- ◆ reforming our education and skills system
- ◆ investing in our schools
- ◆ circular economy
- ◆ culture and major events

Appendix 1 of the report showed the following for each of the themes identified in the PfG 2022/2023

- ◆ a summary of the relevant element in the Programme
- ◆ the focus from a Council perspective
- ◆ actions identified
- ◆ an indicative timeline and route for reporting to the relevant Committees

Details were also given on the legislative programme for 2023/2024, contained in the PfG

Executive Directors would report on relevant aspects of the PfG in their regular monitoring reports to committee.

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 2 November 2022 (Paragraph 11)]*

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## **12 Item of Urgent Business – Reduction in Number of Specialist Palliative Care Beds at Kilbryde Hospice**

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In terms of Standing Order 4(c) of the Council's Standing Orders on Procedures, the Chair decided that consideration be given to the following item of business as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Fagan referred to an item of urgent business which had been tabled, requesting that the Committee, on a cross party basis, refer the terms of a motion in relation to the Reduction in the Number of Specialist Palliative Care Beds at Kilbryde Hospice, East Kilbride, to the next meeting of the Council:-

- ◆ seeking reassurance from NHS Lanarkshire officials that the full complement of Specialist Palliative Care Beds at Kilbryde Hospice be reinstated at the earliest opportunity
- ◆ urging that senior officers of NHS Lanarkshire work with Kilbryde Hospice to secure a sustainable model of care and skill mix based on learning from other parts of the country



- ◆ requesting agreement to write to Jenni Minto, the Scottish Government Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, requesting that hospices receive fair and competent funding to enable them to continue to provide highly valued exceptional specialist palliative care for those who required it across our communities. This included highlighting the national shortage of palliative care consultant staff available to support the operation of hospices throughout the country

Following discussion and members having stressed the urgent need to address the current situation in respect of Kilbryde Hospice, it was proposed that:-

- ◆ the Chief Executive write to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health and the Chair and Chief Executive of NHS Lanarkshire respectively highlighting the concerns detailed in the terms of the motion circulated to members
- ◆ NHS colleagues be asked to arrange a briefing session for members in relation to the issues raised in respect of Kilbryde Hospice and that consideration be given to inviting the Chief Executive of Kilbryde Hospice to attend the session
- ◆ the matter be considered at the next full Council meeting

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Chief Executive write to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health and the Chair and Chief Executive of NHS Lanarkshire respectively highlighting the concerns detailed in the terms of the motion circulated to members;
- (2) that NHS colleagues be asked to arrange a briefing session for members in relation to the issues raised in respect of Kilbryde Hospice and that consideration be given to inviting the Chief Executive of Kilbryde Hospice to attend the session; and
- (3) that the matter be considered at the next full Council meeting.

*Councillor Logan, having declared an interest in this item, left the meeting prior to its consideration*