

FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 4 March 2020

Chair:

Councillor Gladys Miller

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor John Bradley (*substitute for Councillor Grant Ferguson*) Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Peter Craig, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Mary Donnelly (*substitute for Councillor Hugh Macdonald*) Councillor Isobel Dorman, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Graeme Horne (Depute), Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Catherine McClymont, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Collette Stevenson (Depute), Councillor Jim Wardhaugh, Councillor Jared Wark

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Joe Lowe, Councillor Hugh Macdonald, Councillor John Ross

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; C Fergusson, Head of Finance (Transactions); G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; S McLeod, Administration Officer; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services; J Taylor, Head of Finance (Strategy)

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee held on 11 December 2019 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/2020 – Finance and Corporate Resources

A report dated 10 January 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure for the period 1 April 2019 to 3 January 2020 against budgeted expenditure for 2019/2020 for Finance and Corporate Resources.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on Finance and Corporate Resources' revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2020 of a breakeven position be noted; and

- (3) that the budget virements, as detailed in the appendices to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 11 December 2019 (Paragraph 5)]

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/2020 – Finance and Corporate Resources

A report dated 13 February 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted advising of progress on Finance and Corporate Resources' capital programme for 2019/2020 and summarising the expenditure position at 3 January 2020.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that Finance and Corporate Resources' capital programme of £0.993 million, and expenditure to 3 January 2020 of £0.356 million, be noted; and
- (2) that the projected outturn of £0.993 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 11 December 2019 (Paragraph 6)]

5 Finance and Corporate Resources – Workforce Monitoring – October to December 2019

A report dated 24 January 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Finance and Corporate Resources for the period October to December 2019:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ Staffing Watch as at 14 December 2019

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 11 December 2019 (Paragraph 7)]

6 Council-wide Workforce Monitoring – October to December 2019

A report dated 24 January 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following Council-wide employee information for the period October to December 2019:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ recruitment monitoring
- ◆ Staffing Watch as at 14 December 2019

The Head of Personnel Services responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 11 December 2019 (Paragraph 8)]

Councillor Donnelly left the meeting during this item of business

7 Treasury Management Activity – Third Quarter Review

A report dated 31 December 2019 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the third quarter review of Treasury Management activity for 2019/2020.

Details were given on:-

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| ◆ market performance | ◆ management of risk |
| ◆ debt management and borrowing strategy | ◆ next quarter investment plans |
| ◆ investment activity | ◆ treasury management indicators |

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

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

8 Revenue Collection and Approval for Write-Offs

A report dated 12 February 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ collection performance for 2019/2020 on revenues income which comprised Council Tax, non-domestic rates, sundry debts and arrears
- ◆ performance in the Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme (BRIS)
- ◆ the write-off of irrecoverable Council Tax, non-domestic rates, Hamilton and Carlisle Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) levies, sundry debt and Housing Rent and associated charges

It was proposed that the following debts be written off:-

- ◆ irrecoverable Council Tax accounts from 1993/1994 to 2019/2020 to the value of £100,310.91 relating primarily to prescribed debt, sequestrations and estates of the deceased
- ◆ non-domestic rates from 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 totalling £635,990.18 relating to debtors who were in liquidation, had ceased trading or had been sequestrated
- ◆ BID levies totalling £1,861.73
- ◆ sundry debts to a value of £651,930.52
- ◆ former tenant rent arrears totalling £89,529.58, factoring arrears totalling £130.23 and Housing Benefit overpayments totalling £47,902.63

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council's performance in the collection of revenues be noted; and

(2) that the write-off of the following irrecoverable debts be approved:-

- ◆ Council Tax debt from 1993/1994 to 2019/2020 to the value of £100,310.91
- ◆ non-domestic rates from 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 totalling £635,990.18
- ◆ Hamilton and Carluke Town Centre Business Improvement District levies totalling £1,861.73
- ◆ sundry debts to a value of £651,930.52
- ◆ house rent and associated charges totalling £137,562.44

[Reference: Minutes of 11 December 2019 (Paragraph 11)]

9 Scottish Social Security Update

A report dated 12 February 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on progress made by the Scottish Government in implementing its social security programme.

The Scotland Act 2016 devolved 11 social security benefits and gave the Scottish Government the power to create new benefits and top-up existing benefits. Once fully implemented, it was estimated that £3.5 billion of social security assistance payments would be made to 1.4 million people.

At its meeting on 28 November 2018, this Committee had been provided with an update on progress made by the Scottish Government in its phased implementation of the programme. The delivery of the second wave of benefits, including disability benefits, was scheduled to commence in April 2020 and be completed by the end of 2021. A timeline for the delivery of the devolved benefits was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Details of the further progress that had been made in terms of the following had been provided in the report:-

- ◆ the phased approach to transferring operational responsibility for delivering the devolved benefits
- ◆ the location of Social Security Scotland's South Lanarkshire base at the Council Offices, Brandon Gate, Hamilton
- ◆ recruitment activity carried out by Social Security Scotland
- ◆ awareness raising delivered within the relevant Council services

A further report would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee on the delivery of phase 2 of the roll-out of services to be provided by Social Security Scotland and the implications for the Council.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee on the delivery of phase 2 of the roll-out of services to be provided by Social Security Scotland and the implications for the Council.

[Reference: Minutes of 28 November 2018 (Paragraph 13)]

10 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.