

FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 16 November 2022

Chair:

Councillor Lesley McDonald

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor Walter Brogan (Depute), Councillor Mathew Buchanan, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Andrea Cowan, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Gladys Ferguson-Miller, Councillor Celine Handibode (Depute), Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Gavin Keatt (*substitute for Councillor Maureen Devlin*), Councillor Richard Lockhart (*substitute for Councillor Richard Nelson*), Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Catherine McClymont, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Carol Nugent (*substitute for Councillor John Ross*), Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Dr Ali Salamati (*substitute for Councillor Hugh Macdonald*), Councillor Graham Scott

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Martin Hose, Councillor Hugh Macdonald, Councillor Elaine McDougall, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor John Ross

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; G Cochran, Administration Assistant; C Fergusson, Head of Finance (Transactions); T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; C Lyon, Administration Officer; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); B Teaz, Head of IT Services

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 7 September 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Minutes of Appeals Panel

The minutes of the meetings of the Appeals Panel held on 22 September, 25 October and 1 November 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

4 Minutes of Recruitment Committee

The minutes of the meetings of the Recruitment Committee held on 9 and 20 September and 24 October 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/2023 – Finance and Corporate Resources

A report dated 19 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure for the period 1 April to 7 October 2022 against budgeted expenditure for 2022/2023 for Finance and Corporate Resources.

As at 7 October 2022, there was a breakeven position against the phased budget, detailed in Appendix A to the report.

The forecast to 31 March 2023 was a breakeven position.

Virements were proposed to realign budgets and those movements were detailed in the appendices to the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2023 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 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/2023 – Finance and Corporate Resources

A report dated 19 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted advising of progress on Finance and Corporate Resources' capital programme for 2022/2023 and summarising the expenditure position at 7 October 2022.

The Finance and Corporate Resources' capital programme for 2022/2023 was £3.695 million. Anticipated spend to date was £1.944 million and spend to 7 October 2022 totalled £2.093 million. This represented an overspend of £0.149 million.

The Committee decided: that the Finance and Corporate Resources' capital programme of £3.695 million and expenditure to date of £2.093 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 6)]

7 Finance and Corporate Resources – Workforce Monitoring – July and August 2022

A report dated 5 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Finance and Corporate Resources for the period July and August 2022:-

- ◆ 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 11 June 2022

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 7)]

8 Council-wide Workforce Monitoring – July and August 2022

A report dated 14 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following Council-wide employee information for the period July and August 2022:-

- ◆ 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 11 June 2022

The Head of Personnel Services responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report. Following detailed discussion around recruitment statistics, specifically in respect of BAME Groups and Veterans, it was agreed that further discussion would take place at the Equal Opportunities Forum and that the Head of Personnel Services would bring a report a future meeting of this Committee. It was also agreed that the analysis of leavers' information be presented as a number rather than a percentage, going forward, in the same way as reported for Finance and Corporate Resources' Workforce Monitoring.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 8)]

Councillor Razzaq left the meeting after this item of business

9 Treasury Management Activity 2022/2023 – Second Quarter Review

A report dated 19 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the second quarter review of Treasury Management activity for 2022/2023.

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 |

Officers responded to a member's question on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 9)]

10 Revenue Collection and Approval for Write-Offs 2022/2023

A report dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ collection performance for the financial year 2022/2023 to 30 September 2022 on revenue 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, BID levy, sundry debt, Housing Rent and associated charges, and school meals debt

Details were provided on collection targets and, at this stage, the Council was ahead of target but behind comparable performance from 2021/2022 in respect of Council Tax and non-domestic rates. In respect of sundry debt, the Council was ahead of target and of comparable performance from 2021/2022.

Performance against the BRIS target was closely monitored. As previously advised to Committee, the scheme had been suspended for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 due to the impact of COVID-19. Further guidance was awaited from the Scottish Government.

As agreed by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2022, school meals debt would be taken forward in line with the process for other debt, and that formal write-off of this debt would be made through this Committee.

Education Resources would continue to work with schools to review all remaining amounts owed for school meals. This exercise would be carried out with the utmost sensitivity and would identify further cases where the write-off of debt was deemed appropriate. Those amounts would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee for approval to write-off.

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

- ◆ irrecoverable Council Tax accounts from 1993/1994 to 2022/2023 to the value of £278,833.94 relating primarily to prescribed debt, sequestrations and estates of the deceased
- ◆ irrecoverable non-domestic rates from 2020/2021 to 2022/2023 to the value of £260,624.83 relating primarily to debtors in liquidation, had ceased trading or had been sequestrated
- ◆ write-off of Business Improvement District (BID) levies totalling £2,309.50 administered by the Council on behalf of Hamilton, Carluke and Lanark BID companies
- ◆ sundry debts to a value of £11,343.86
- ◆ former tenant rent arrears totalling £100,267.62, factoring arrears of £19.60 and Housing Benefit overpayments totalling £20,945.71
- ◆ School Meals Debt totalling £67,803.78

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council's performance in the collection of revenues be noted;
- (2) that the Council's performance against the Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme target be noted; and
- (3) that the write-off of the following irrecoverable debts be approved:-
 - ◆ Council Tax debt from 1993/1994 to 2022/2023 to the value of £278,833.94
 - ◆ Non Domestic Rates from 2020/2021 totalling £260,624.83
 - ◆ BID levies totalling £2,309.50

- ◆ sundry debts to a value of £11,343.86
- ◆ house rent and associated charges totalling £121,232.93
- ◆ School Meals Debt totalling £67,803.78

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 12) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 21 September 2022 (Paragraph 12)]

11 24-Hour Control Centre – Additional Staffing

A report dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on additional staffing for the 24-hour control centre at Pollock Avenue, Hamilton.

The Council's 24-hour control centre provided 2 key services to residents, the Alarm Receiving Service and the Out of Hours Emergency Service.

The Alarm Receiving Service received calls or activations from Social Work service users in need of assistance through the community alarm system. The Out of Hours Emergency Service dealt with calls in relation to any Council service outwith normal office hours.

The current establishment comprised of 2 Team Leaders, 21 Call Services Assistants, 1 Administration Assistant and 9 sessional/casual Call Services Assistants. The Team Leaders and administration employees worked normal office hours and the remaining employees covered a pattern of 3 shifts.

The Council also had a contract with Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Limited for the provision of staffing to support the Alarm Receiving Service in the event of staff shortages. This service was necessary as it was not always possible to obtain cover from the existing employee pool. In September 2021, Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Limited provided notice to the Council that they would be withdrawing this service from 1 January 2022 due to difficulties experienced with recruitment and retention.

As a direct result of this, 2 additional full-time employees were recruited in November 2021 within the Alarm Receiving Service, for a temporary period of 12 months, covering the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. The additional staffing provided a more consistent level of cover and offset the impact of the withdrawal of the support from Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Limited.

The appointment of the 2 additional temporary employees had reduced the need for overtime and also meant that the Council no longer had to pay for external support. It was proposed that the 2 existing full-time equivalent (FTE) temporary Call Services Assistant posts on Grade 2, Level 1 plus 4 (£25,822 to £26,150) be made permanent and added to the establishment of the 24-hour control centre within Finance and Corporate Resources.

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

The Committee decided: that the 2 existing FTE temporary Call Services Assistant posts, as detailed in Section 5 of the report, be made permanent and added to the establishment of the 24-hour control centre within Finance and Corporate Resources.

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 2.58pm and reconvened at 3.10pm. Councillor Cooper was not present when the meeting reconvened

12 Early Retirement, Voluntary Severance and Switch 2

A report dated 18 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on early retirements, voluntary severances, and the Switch 2 programme for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

Officers responded to a member's questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 22)]

13 Update of the Finance and Corporate Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control Plan

A report dated 18 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Risk Register and Risk Control actions for Finance and Corporate Resources.

The Resource had followed Council guidance in developing, monitoring, and updating its Risk Control Register on an ongoing basis. The Register had been developed to ensure that the Resource was fully aware of the main risks that it had, was able to prioritise those risks and had controls in place to eliminate or minimise the impact of risk.

The scoring matrix and definitions for likelihood and impact were outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. This had resulted in risks being scored between 1 to 25 (low to very high). Risks were scored on their inherent risk (risk if nothing was done) and their residual risk (risk after applying controls).

The Risk Register had been developed and was monitored on an ongoing basis to add any new risks and to review the scores of existing risks. The main changes to the Finance and Corporate Resources' risk profile from last year were:-

- ◆ 4 new, very high risks had been added to the risk register:-
 - ◆ 'the Council was unable to support households most significantly impacted by the cost of living crisis, resulting in increasing levels of poverty, debt and damage to health'
 - ◆ 'the Council fails to deliver the objectives of the Community Wealth Building Strategy'
 - ◆ 'the Council was materially affected by the implications arising from the National Care Service Bill'
 - ◆ 'disruption to council services as a result of industrial action'
- ◆ 1 new high risk had been added, 'failure to achieve the outcomes of the Council Plan'
- ◆ the high scored 'EU Exit' risk had been removed
- ◆ the risk score for the 'pandemic' risk changed from very high to high

Risks scored 15 to 25 were considered very high and risks scored 8 to 12 were considered high risks. The top risks identified for the Resource were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

Appendix 3 provided a comparison of risk scores for 2021 and 2022 and also detailed changes in risk descriptions.

There were 4 risk control actions due for delivery between April and September 2022. 3 had been completed on time, with one ongoing.

7 actions were due for completion during 2021/2022 and had been completed.

There were currently 9 risk actions due for completion during the remainder of 2022/2023, with a further 2 actions due to be completed in 2023/2024. Details of those actions were noted at Appendix 4 to the report. Outstanding actions to mitigate the risks would be progressed by relevant officers.

Within Finance and Corporate Resources, 4 partnerships had been identified, of which the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) had been assessed as high risk and the remaining 3 partnerships had been assessed as low risk.

Appropriate risk management arrangements were in place for the CPP, with regular reports on its risk register and action plan presented to the CPP Board.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Finance and Corporate Resources' Risk Register be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that the outstanding risk control actions would be progressed by relevant officers.

[Reference: Minutes of 10 November 2021 (Paragraph 13)]

14 Notification of Contracts Awarded – 1 April to 30 September 2022

A report dated 4 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Finance and Corporate Resources during the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

In terms of Standing Order Nos 21.8 and 22.5 of the Standing Orders on Contracts, Resources were required to notify the relevant Committee of contracts awarded. Details of the contracts awarded by Finance and Corporate Resources were provided in the appendix to the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 21)]

15 Safety at Sports Grounds – Issue of Special Safety Certificate for Fireworks Event - New Douglas Park

A report dated 4 November 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 37(c) in view of the timescales involved, by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to issue a Special Safety Certificate for the North and West Stands, Hamilton Academical Football Club (HAFC) Stadium Limited, New Douglas Park, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton.

An application for a Special Safety Certificate had been received from HAFC Stadium Limited to hold a fireworks event on 4 November 2022. As the certificate was required to be issued prior to the event, the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, approved the issue of the Special Safety Certificate, subject to the completion of a satisfactory site inspection.

A site inspection, attended by representatives of South Lanarkshire Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Group, had subsequently taken place on 4 November 2022. Representatives were satisfied with the event arrangements and the Special Safety Certificate had been issued prior to the admission of spectators.

The Committee decided:

that the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 37(c), by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to issue a Special Safety Certificate for the North and West Stands, HAFC Stadium Limited, New Douglas Park, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 September 2022 (Paragraph 23)]

16 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.