

MINUTE VOLUME

26 June 2024

PAGES

Council	24 April 2024.....	831 - 840
Cabinet	25 April 2024.....	841 - 844
Appointments Committee	29 April 2024.....	845 - 846
Audit & Scrutiny Committee	9 May 2024.....	847 – 852
Licensing Committee	14 May 2024	853 – 856
Cabinet	30 May 2024	857 – 862
Appointments Committee	30 May 2024	863 – 864
Local Review Body	5 June 2024	865 – 868
Education Committee	6 June 2024	869 – 872
Licensing Committee	11 June 2024	873 – 874
Cabinet (Police & Fire)	13 June 2024	875 – 878

BLANK PAGE

MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 24 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson	Councillor Chris Lunday*
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor David Macdonald*
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Councillor Colm Merrick
Deputy Provost Kate Campbell	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Angela Convery*	Councillor Andrew Morrison*
Councillor Betty Cunningham*	Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Gordon Wallace*
Councillor Annette Ireland	

Provost Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Julie Murray, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP); Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement); Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Julie Nicol, Planning and Building Standards Manager; Barry Tudhope, Democratic Services Manager; Linda Hutchison, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

Apology:

Councillor Jim McLean.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS – ARTHURLIE JUNIORS

818. Provost Montague congratulated Arthurlie Juniors on reaching the Scottish Junior Cup Final, following their semi-final victory over Johnstone Burgh. Having commented that the team would face Darvel Juniors in the final on 2 June, she highlighted that 26 years had elapsed since the team had last been in the final. She expressed hope that they would bring the Cup back to Barrhead in 2024 and, on behalf of the Council, wished the team every success.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

819. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2024

820. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 28 February 2024, subject to the amendment that the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership be added to the list of officers attending.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

821. The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Appointments Committee – 4 March 2024;
- (b) Cabinet – 7 March 2024;
- (c) Licensing Committee – 12 March 2024;
- (d) Planning Applications Committee (Special Meeting) – 14 March 2024;
- (e) Appointments Committee – 26 March 2024;
- (f) Cabinet – 28 March 2024;
- (g) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 28 March 2024;
- (h) Planning Applications Committee – 3 April 2024;
- (i) Local Review Body – 3 April 2024;
- (j) Licensing Committee – 9 April 2024;
- (k) Appointments Committee – 15 April 2024; and
- (l) Education Committee – 18 April 2024.

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 MARCH 2024 – INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2023/24 – QUARTER 4

822. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 28 March 2024 (Page 808, Item 796 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) reporting on Treasury Management activities for the quarter ending 31 March 2024.

The Council, having heard Councillor Morrison comment that the position had changed very little since quarter 3, agreed that the organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report.

CABINET – 7 MARCH 2024 – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

823. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 7 March 2024 (Page 787, Item 776 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) monitoring income and expenditure as at 31 December 2023 against the approved Programme and recommending adjustments to it where possible.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Director of Education reported that it was unknown if further grant funding for the Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces Programme would become available in future but, should that be the case, an application for it would be submitted.

Councillor Morrison asked if the cost cited for the Neilston Learning Campus project of £30m was final or if it would be delivered under budget. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that the school had been built, but additional work was still required on clearing the site and creating a playground and sports area which was likely to be completed by the end of 2024 on which discussions would take place with the contractor. It remained the case that, if contingency for the project did not require to be used, it could be reallocated instead to the Neilston Leisure project.

Also in response to Councillor Morrison who sought clarification regarding the £2.8m allocated for the Country Park Visitor Centre and Infrastructure project, the Director of Environment clarified that the detailed use of that funding would be considered during the development of the Outline Business Case for the project, and that discussions on the Centre and related infrastructure costs were progressing. She reported that it was intended to submit an update on Glasgow City Deal projects to the Cabinet prior to the summer recess.

The Council:-

- (a) approved and noted the movements within the 2023/24 Programme; and
- (b) noted the shortfall of £0.203m and that this would be managed and reported within the final Accounts for the year.

CABINET – 7 MARCH 2024 – HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

824. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 7 March 2024 (Page 788, Item 777 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that proposed adjustments to the Housing Capital Programme be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) recommending adjustments to the Programme as at 31 December 2023 where required.

In response to Councillor Ireland who sought clarification on the Communal Doors project including if it was being scaled back, the Director of Environment reported on progress, clarified that discussions with residents were ongoing, and explained that there was no indication at this stage that the project would be scaled back.

The Council:-

- (a) approved and noted the movements within the Programme; and
- (b) noted the shortfall of £0.100m and that this would be managed and reported within the final Accounts for the year.

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BODIES AND COMMITTEES

825. The following statements were made:-

- (a) **Councillor Anderson – Convener for Education, Culture and Leisure**

Councillor Anderson reported that Matthew Wynne, a football coach with East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure, had captained Scotland which had been crowned world champions at the 2024 International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football World Championships in Spain. Having expressed great pride in the Team's and his performance and congratulated them on their

achievement, he highlighted that Mr Wynne had also been joint top scorer and awarded the accolade of Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

Councillor Anderson had also welcomed the opportunity to attend the 2024 East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Dance Championships in March, which included events for primary and secondary schools, including pupils from Isobel Mair School and Family Centre. He highlighted that over 570 dancers had participated in front of an audience of 550 parents and family members, emphasised the high standard of the competition, and congratulated all those involved either as competitors or in supporting the organisational arrangements.

Furthermore, Councillor Anderson indicated that he had attended the opening of Barrhead Foundry's new functional training suite *The Grid*, a work-out area transformed from an under-utilised space into a versatile, modern facility focussing on training sessions for small groups and individual gym sessions. Alliance Leisure had been appointed by the Council to transform the space, working in partnership with the Trust, with funding of almost a quarter of a million pounds having been secured from developer contributions and the facility having been delivered in only four weeks and under budget. It was confirmed that there had been an overwhelmingly positive public response to the facility.

Finally it was reported that a new Equalities Forum was to be launched on 1 May at The Edge, further information on which was available on social media.

(b) Councillor Pragnell – Convener for Social Work and Health

Councillor Pragnell reported that on 27 March the East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) had approved its 2024/25 budget, recognising the pressures from 2023/24 and the difficult and challenging year ahead such as in terms of new costs. Although the report considered had contained no surprises, given the impact on public services and staff, the IJB had reluctantly acknowledged the need for difficult decisions to be made to set a balanced budget. It was confirmed that the IJB had agreed various savings proposals to close the funding gap of £9.8m, £5.9m of which related to the Council's funding contribution. These included a continued focus on care package reviews, service redesign, reductions to grant funding and a second targeted voluntary redundancy scheme for council employed staff. Further options of £2.1m were being developed to allow the gap regarding the NHS budget to be closed.

It was clarified that the Chief Officer, HSCP had reassured the IJB that the management team and operational leads were working hard to deliver savings and close the funding gap, and that despite challenges reviews of care packages under the Supporting People Framework continued to be a priority.

Regarding the 2023/24 budget, the Chief Financial Officer of the IJB had confirmed that the projected overspend was £4.7m after taking into account the use of all reserves and in-year COVID funding from Council. The IJB had recognised and appreciated support provided by its partners during 2023/24.

Councillor Pragnell reported that the IJB had also approved both the Suicide Prevention Strategy and Alcohol and Drugs Strategy (ADS). The former had been developed in consultation with a range of partners and focused on how services and organisations across East Renfrewshire supported wellbeing on a day to day basis. The latter had been developed collaboratively with people with lived experience, a key priority being the development of plans for a

recovery hub. The IJB had recognised the amount of work done on both strategies. There had also been discussion on gambling addiction and its impact on lives, which did not fall within the scope of the ADP but was considered within other HSCP strategies.

The Council noted the statements.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

826. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting on 28 February 2024.

The Council noted the report, subject to the amendment that the Deputy Provost had attended a Citizenship Ceremony.

DRAFT OUTCOME DELIVERY PLAN AND FAIRER EAST REN PLAN FOR 2024-25

827. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 April 2023 (Page 486, Item 425 refers), when it had been agreed to approve the Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) and Fairer East Ren Plan (FERP) 2023-24, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive requesting consideration of the one-year Draft ODP and FERP 2024-25. These Plans included key planned activities for meeting the Council's outcomes, indicators to measure success and contributions from the HSCP and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT).

The report clarified that the Community Plan set out the Community Planning Partnership's (CPP's) vision for all East Renfrewshire's communities and incorporated FERP (the Local Outcome Improvement Plan) required under the Community Empowerment Act, which focused on tackling inequalities and closing the gap between communities. Reference was also made to the ODP which was the Council's contribution, in partnership with the HSCP and ERCLT, to the shared outcomes in the Community Plan with the additional organisational outcomes of Customer, Efficiency and People; and Vision for the Future, the over-arching long-term strategic vision and plan for the Council and CPP which was currently being refreshed and on which it was intended to submit a report to the full Council in June. It was clarified that 2024/25 would witness a cementing of the 15-year Vision for the Future and inform associated plans, including the ODP and FERP going forward.

Whilst commenting on the proposed updates to the Plans, the report clarified that the shared outcomes and associated intermediate outcomes across the ODP and FERP remained unchanged; referred to proposed changes to the critical activities required to achieve the outcomes (mainly in the ODP); and itemised changes to indicators in various outcomes, including the People outcome.

Having referred to related performance monitoring arrangements, the report concluded that the Council continued to face ongoing challenges, including unprecedented ones regarding the budget. However, it was considered vital to commit to a long-term strategy with ambitious aims for East Renfrewshire communities and the area, shaped through Vision for the Future. The one-year operational ODP and FERP would ensure that critical work of the Council and the CPP was driven forward.

Councillor Campbell voiced her serious concerns regarding reductions in care packages for older people, referring to the impact and citing an example. She highlighted that care packages were said to be regarded as a priority, and commented that intermediate outcome 5.2 of the ODP referred to older people and people with long term conditions staying as healthy as possible. Councillor Edlin commented in similar terms, referring to a Self-Directed Support (SDS) seminar he had attended. Whilst acknowledging that the situation was not the fault of the HSCP, he stressed the importance of addressing the needs of local residents requiring support. In response, the Chief Officer, HSCP acknowledged the challenges faced when support was reduced, explained why eligibility criteria had to be reviewed, clarified that the same criteria was applied as in neighbouring authorities, provided assurance that experienced care managers were undertaking assessments, and referred to some support secured from the third sector.

Councillor Wallace expressed the opinion that some targets were becoming redundant, such as the one cited by Cllr Campbell. He acknowledged that reassessing needs was delivering savings, but stressed that the root cause of the problem was a lack of Scottish Government funding which was having a consequential and unacceptable impact on local government, such as the Council having to contribute additional funds to support the IJB. In response to these and other comments, Councillor O'Donnell stated that he considered COSLA's approach and response on IJB funding cuts disappointing, adding that he continued to raise concerns regarding the focus placed on the National Care Service Bill but not improved outcomes, and pressing for more to be done. He highlighted how raising public awareness could be helpful in generating further public discussion, expressing the view that COSLA was not sufficiently engaged on the issue.

Having heard Councillor Ireland confirm that appreciation for the work of the SDS Forum had been expressed when it had met and that discussions at the Forum had been beneficial, Councillor Morrison highlighted the soaring demand for care at home and related costs, including for agency staff required to cover sickness absence, some of which was COVID related. He sought clarification if COVID reserve funding, which had been repaid to the Scottish Government at one stage and redirected to the NHS, was providing the indirect benefit to the social work service which it had been argued would be the case. The Chief Officer, HSCP undertook to provide further clarification to him following the meeting on the reallocated funds.

Councillor Pragnell commented that some issues associated with the Supporting People Framework required to be fully resolved, but that every effort was being made to put residents at the centre of what was being done. She highlighted demographics regarding the elderly population locally, reporting that these were unique to East Renfrewshire. She thanked the Chief Officer, HSCP, the Chief Financial Officer of the IJB and all officers concerned for their work, commented on a briefing to be made available to all Elected Members, and confirmed that a valuable dialogue was on-going on support the third sector could provide.

Councillor O'Donnell welcomed the debate on this important issue, stressed the need to identify solutions to problems encountered, and referred to the importance of including a range of officers in discussions who were critical to service delivery. More generally he welcomed various positive developments reported. In response to further issues raised by him, the Director of Education confirmed that a spotlight continued to be placed on children and young people's wellbeing and readiness to learn, this having been the subject of a report to the Education Committee on 1 February 2024 for example. Also in response to him, the Director of Environment confirmed the current position on work that was continuing to develop the Local Transport Strategy.

Councillor Wallace proposed that the Convener for Social Work and Health write to the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care regarding the lack of adequate financial provision for HSCP Services, which Councillor Pragnell indicated she was happy to do if that was the Council's decision.

Having highlighted the importance of context, Councillor Macdonald quantified the extent of the real term Capital funding cuts faced by the Scottish Government from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to approve the content of the Outcome Delivery Plan 2024-25 and Fairer East Ren Plan 2024-25;
- (b) to note that these were both one-year operational plans while the Council undertook a more focused period of longer-term strategic planning;
- (c) that the Convener for Social Work and Health would write to the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care regarding the lack of adequate financial provision for Health and Social Care Partnership Services; and
- (d) to note that the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership would provide further clarification to Councillor Morrison following the meeting on COVID related funds reallocated to the NHS.

CLYDEPLAN AND REGIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

828. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval to withdraw formally from the Clydeplan Joint Committee, and agreement to transfer responsibility for the development of a Regional Spatial Strategy to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet.

The report referred to the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) approved by the Scottish Government in 2023 which replaced the statutory requirement to produce a Strategic Development Plan with a duty to prepare a non-statutory Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Since 1996 the 8 Glasgow City Region local authorities had worked together to develop various regional spatial plans, most recently the Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan (SDP) approved by Scottish Ministers in July 2017 which set out a Vision and Spatial Development Strategy until 2036, suggested where new development should be located, and provided a policy framework to help deliver sustainable economic growth through high quality development. It was clarified that the SDP also set the strategy and policy context for individual local authority Local Development Plans (LDPs), and that there was no longer an up-to-date expression of policy since its replacement by an RSS under NPF4.

Having commented on related governance arrangements in place, the report explained that, unlike the current SDP, the RSS would not form part of the SDP which would comprise the National Planning Framework and LDP. Given these changes, the role and remit for which the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority Joint Committee was originally established would change significantly requiring the future role of the Committee to be reviewed. The Joint Committee itself had recommended to its members that the functions transfer to the Glasgow City Region (GCR), with its Cabinet overseeing the development of the RSS. In February 2024, the GCR Cabinet had agreed to establish a Regional Planning Sub-Committee to discharge this function, subject to approval by the 8 local authorities on which an update was provided. The recommendations of the report, a copy of which was provided (Appendix 1 refers) also reflected a recommendation of the Clydeplan Joint Committee that member authorities nominate two members to join the new Sub-Committee, which reflected the current Joint Committee numbers.

Having itemised three fundamental principles under the proposed approach to future collaboration, it was clarified that the new Sub-Committee would not have decision-making powers, and explained how the Council would remain accountable and responsible for all

planning decisions within the area. Having confirmed the related financial implications, the report clarified that the proposed arrangements would have no impact on East Renfrewshire Council employees.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the recommendation of the Clydeplan Joint Committee to transfer responsibility for the development of a Regional Spatial Strategy to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet;
- (b) to note Glasgow City Region Cabinet's approval of the establishment of a new Regional Spatial Planning Sub-Committee to oversee the development of a Regional Spatial Strategy and agree to the Council's participation;
- (c) to note that approval of participation in any future Regional Spatial Strategy would remain a decision for East Renfrewshire Council;
- (d) to formally withdraw from the Clydeplan Joint Committee;
- (e) to transfer requisition funding to Glasgow City Council as lead authority for the Glasgow City Region; and
- (f) that Councillors Edlin and Merrick be nominated as the Council's representatives on the new Regional Spatial Planning Sub-Committee.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 3 (DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME)

829. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval to publish and submit the revised Development Plan Scheme to Scottish Ministers under the requirements of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

The report clarified that the proposed Development Plan Scheme (DPS) was an important communication and project management tool and formed a statutory part of the process for developing Local Development Plan (LDP) 3. It was required to be prepared and maintained at least annually, its purpose being to set out the Authority's proposals for preparing and reviewing its LDP and what was likely to be involved at each stage. It required to include a Participation Statement explaining when, how and with whom consultation on the Plan would take place, further requirements being that it contain a timetable, specifying proposed timings for publication of the Evidence Report, publication of the Proposed Plan, submission of the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers and the expected adoption of the LDP. A copy of the Scheme was attached to the report (Appendix 1 refers). Once approved, the revised DPS would, in accordance with statutory requirements, be published, including electronically on the Council's website, and copies would be submitted to Scottish Ministers.

The report also clarified that a cross party Member Officer Working Group was in the process of being established to keep Members abreast of progress and enable input at key stages of the preparation of the LDP.

The Planning and Building Standards Manager highlighted key aspects of the report, including key dates for producing the LDP. Thereafter, in response to Councillor Ireland, she clarified how people could easily sign up to receive updates and announcements at key stages of the preparation of the Development Plan, confirming that proactive action would also be taken to reach out to interested parties in various ways.

In response to Councillor O'Donnell who commended the work done by officers thus far, the Director of Environment explained that the Corporate Management Team would start to

consider reports on the preparation of LDP3 from May, that when the membership of the Member Officer Working Group was finalised shortly its membership would be confirmed to Councillor Devlin who had requested this, that dates for the Group to meet would be scheduled, and that various reports on progress would be submitted to the full Council over time. Having referred to the development of LDP1 and 2 which had gone well despite related challenges, Councillor Buchanan expressed confidence on the way forward and that any comments residents would have would be managed well and taken forward in an appropriate manner.

The Council agreed to:

- (a) approve the revised Development Plan Scheme for publication and submission to Scottish Ministers;
- (b) delegate to the Director of Environment authority to approve any minor inconsequential changes to the documents, in line with Council policy, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers; and
- (c) note that the Director of Environment would confirm the position on the membership of the Member Officer working Group to Councillor Devlin.

SECOND REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BOUNDARIES

830. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 June 2023 (Page 581, Item 513 refers), when the Council had agreed the terms of its initial submission to Boundaries Scotland in response to the consultation on the review of Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive providing an update on the ongoing review, and summarising issues raised by the Council initially and at a related local enquiry in East Renfrewshire in December 2023. Regarding consultation on the current proposals that would close on 15 May 2024, approval was sought to submit a response to Boundaries Scotland supporting the revised proposals for East Renfrewshire, details of which were provided.

Councillor O'Donnell, supported by other Elected Members, thanked the political Group Leaders and other Elected Members for taking a unified approach to challenge the original proposals, and commended the Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement) and Head of Communities and Transformation for presenting a strong case at the Local Enquiry in December, all of which had contributed to a positive outcome in terms of the current proposals. Councillor Anderson also commended input from Community Councils regarding the issue.

The Council agreed to submit a response to Boundaries Scotland supporting the revised proposals for East Renfrewshire for the reasons set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the report.

CROOKFUR, GREENFARM, MEARNS VILLAGE AND WESTACRES COMMUNITY COUNCIL – PROPOSED CHANGE OF NAME

831. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking approval to change the name of Crookfur, Greenfarm, Mearns Village and Westacres Community Council to Mearns West Community Council, as unanimously supported by the Community Council. It was confirmed that the proposal required to be approved by the Council and that the change of name did not affect the efficacy of the Scheme for the Establishment for Community Councils or its related documents.

The Council agreed to approve the decision of Crookfur, Greenfarm Mearns Village and Westacres Community Council to change its name to Mearns West Community Council.

CHIEF OFFICER RECRUITMENT

832. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking approval to convene an Appointments Committee for the Head of Environment Operations post.

It was reported that the Head of Environment Operations had intimated that he would retire by 18 October and proposed that an Appointments Committee be established to progress the related recruitment arrangements. Membership of the Committee had been proposed, together with a timetable for the appointment to the post.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the notice of retirement of the Head of Environment Operations by 18 October 2024;
- (b) that Councillors O'Donnell, Cunningham and Pragnell be appointed to serve on the Appointments Committee to fill the resulting vacancy;
- (c) that the Conservative and Unionist Group and SNP Group would each confirm one nomination to serve on the Appointments Committee;
- (d) to delegate authority to the Head of HR & Corporate Services, in consultation with the Director of Environment, to make the necessary arrangements for this recruitment; and
- (e) to authorise the Director of Environment to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Department if required.

SCHEME FOR MEMBERS' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES 2024/25

833. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships explaining that the Scheme of Members' Remuneration and Expenses had been updated for 2024/25. A copy of the Scheme was appended to the report.

The report explained that the Scheme provided details of the levels of basic salary payable to all councillors, and the increased salaries paid to the Leader and Civic Head (Provost), these amounts being prescribed in legislation. The Scheme also provided details of Senior Councillor positions identified within the Council for the purpose of the regulations, and the levels of salary to be paid to each post holder. In addition, the Scheme provided details of those other categories in respect of which Elected Members were entitled to claim expenses, such as the performance of approved duties, travelling expenses and subsistence allowances.

The Council agreed to note that the Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses had been updated for 2024/25 in terms of Councillors' pay.

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 25 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader) Councillor Danny Devlin
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair) Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer)(*); Jamie Reid, Head of Communities and Transformation; Julie Breslin, Strategy and Partnership Manager; Michael McKernan, Economic Development and Inclusive Growth Manager; John Marley, Principal Traffic Officer; Alastair Ross, Corporate Landlord Manager; and John Burke, Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance

Apologies:

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

834. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN 2024-2030

835. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking approval for the East Renfrewshire British Sign Language Plan for 2024-2030.

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 made provision for the preparation and publication of national plans in relation to British Sign Language (BSL) and by requiring certain authorities to prepare and publish their own BSL Plans. The Scottish Government had published their second BSL National Plan 2023-2029 on 6 November 2023, which required listed authorities to publish their authority plans within 6 months (6 May 2024). This included East Renfrewshire Council.

842

The proposed East Renfrewshire British Sign Language Plan for 2024 to 2030 was attached as an appendix to the report and had been prepared in consultation with a steering group of BSL users resident in East Renfrewshire, as well as a representative group of children and young people.

A small budget of £5000 was attached to the delivery of the Plan, and the report outlined some of the awareness raising activities that would be undertaken using that funding.

In discussing the report, members highlighted the importance of the Plan in improving accessibility for residents using BSL. In particular, the possibility of BSL interpretation on the Council's Committees was discussed. It was noted that members of the deaf community in East Renfrewshire were invited to the Equality Forum and BSL interpreters were booked for those meetings to facilitate.

Following a brief discussion, the Cabinet approved the British Sign Language Plan for East Renfrewshire 2024-2030 prior to publication in May 2024.

PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024-2026

836. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the updated Property Asset Management Plan 2024-2026.

The Council's Property Asset Management Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, had been updated to fit into the hierarchy of the Corporate Asset Management Plan. It outlined the approach being taken by the Council on the management of its non-domestic built assets.

The report provided details on the amendments that had been made, as well as the overall structure of the Plan and the key challenges identified to property management in it.

Following a brief discussion regarding how the Plan could inform work on the Council's housing stock and the fact that there were no properties in East Renfrewshire currently marked as "at risk", the Cabinet approved the Property Asset Management Plan 2024-2026.

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 2022-2025

837. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking homologation of previous verbal approval for additional funding to the Netherlee to Stamperland Walkway project, utilising an underspend in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) award from the UK Government for the period 2023-2025.

Cabinet had approved the East Renfrewshire SPF Local Investment Plan at its meeting on 10 November 2022 (Item 225, Page 290 refers) and, subsequently, approve a transfer of £65,000 of underspent monies from the Multiply programme to the SPF at its meeting of 25 January 2024 (Item 712, Page 732 refers).

The Netherlee to Stamperland Walkway project had been approved at Cabinet on 24 August 2023 (Item 550, Page 602 refers). Funding of £28,000 was required to make up a shortfall in the budget, and it had been identified that part of the underspent monies within the SPF could be utilised to make this up, recognising the value of this project to the community.

As the increased costs were required to be met urgently to ensure that the main works contracts could be signed by the end of March 2024, verbal approval had been sought and received by Councillors O'Donnell, Devlin and Pragnell on 8 February 2024, this matter was now being brought before Cabinet for formal homologation.

Following a brief discussion, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the underspend in SPF Communities and Place intervention;
- (b) homologated the decision to provide additional funding for the Netherlee to Stamperland Walkway project; and
- (c) noted that the Economic Development and Inclusive Growth Manager would come back to the Committee with information on the proposed start date of works on the project.

THE EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL (DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING PLACES)(ON-STREET) ORDER 2020 (AMENDMENT NO. 2)

838. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the making and confirmation of the East Renfrewshire Council (Disabled Persons' Parking Places)(On-Street) Order 2020 (Amendment No. 2).

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the content of the report and approved the making of the East Renfrewshire Council (Disabled Persons' Parking Places)(On-Street) Order 2020 (Amendment No. 2); and
- (b) delegated to the Director of Environment the implementation of the Order in accordance with associated statutory procedures.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 9.00am in the Committee Room, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 29 April 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson
Councillor Kate Campbell

Councillor Tony Buchanan
Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

Attending:

Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services and Steven Quinn Chief Executive.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

839. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

HEAD OF FINANCE

840. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 February 2024 (Page 781, Item 769 refers), the committee proceeded to interview 3 of the shortlisted candidates who had been selected for interview following the assessment centre exercise that had taken place.

Having conducted the interviews the committee, after discussion, agreed to offer the post to K Stanners.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 9 May 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Morrison (Chair)	Councillor David Macdonald *
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Vice Chair)	Provost Mary Montague *
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Gordon Wallace
Councillor Annette Ireland *	

Councillor Morrison in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Michelle Blair, Chief Auditor; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; Victoria Harkness, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Grace Scanlin, Ernst and Young *.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

841. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CHAIR'S REPORT – EXTERNAL AUDIT ISSUES

842. Councillor Morrison explained that Rob Jones of the External Audit Team had written to him, in his capacity as Chair, regarding Auditing Standards which required External Audit to formally update their understanding of the Committee's arrangements for oversight of management processes and arrangements annually. Having cited examples of the questions posed and referred to the value of this, he confirmed he was preparing a formal, written response.

Councillor Morrison also reported that, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee, he was due to have a further, routine meeting with Rob Jones in August on which he would report back in more detail in due course.

The Committee noted the position.

MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE LAND – CLARIFICATION

843. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 22 February 2024 (Page 767, Item 752 refers), when it had been agreed that further feedback be sought from the Environment Department on the recommendation made on the maintenance of private land referred to in the Environment Department Follow-up Audit report, the Committee considered a report by the Clerk summarising the clarification received and circulated. Issues referred to had included former contracts which ceased in 2005; the number of small pieces of land identified with mixed ownership, details of some of which were held on the Sasine Register; related work on checking the Register underway by Legal Services on which a report would be submitted to a future Corporate Management Team (CMT) meeting; and the actual saving if maintenance work on private land ceased.

In response to Councillor Wallace and Councillor Ireland, the Clerk confirmed that the Sasine Register was being checked by Legal Services to determine the ownership of some pieces of land with a view to reporting on this to the CMT. The Chief Executive explained that there was currently no timetable for completing this work which was not always straightforward. He also commented on various other issues, including that a range of maintenance arrangements and responsibilities existed for land of various sizes in the area, and wider maintenance and reputational issues that would be created if the current number of maintenance operatives was reduced by one. Having referred to a land related query issue raised by a Community Council, Councillor Edlin expressed the view that private land should not be maintained by the Council.

Having heard Councillor Morrison comment on the marginal saving that would accrue if the maintenance of the private land ceased and acknowledge that unmaintained land could attract fly-tipping, Councillor Wallace highlighted the importance of all land in Council ownership being included in the Council's asset register, which had not been the case at one stage regarding a piece of land on which he had raised a query. He welcomed that a report was to be submitted to the CMT on the conclusion of the work by Legal Services. Councillor Buchanan referred to various issues that had arisen previously regarding land ownership and related responsibilities, commented on the value of determining where responsibility for land lay, but also highlighted that it could be onerous and problematic to do so.

The Committee noted the current position and that a further report on this issue would be considered by the Corporate Management Team in due course.

NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND – FINANCIAL BULLETIN 2022-23

844. The Committee considered a report by the Clerk on the publication in January 2024 of a report by Audit Scotland entitled *Local Government in Scotland – Financial Bulletin 2022-23* regarding which, under the Committee's specialisation arrangements, Councillor Buchanan was leading the review of this report. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) had been asked to provide comments and a copy of her feedback was appended to the report.

The Bulletin provided a high level summary of the main financial issues facing Scottish Councils in 2022/23 and beyond. Whilst East Renfrewshire was not specifically mentioned in the report, it was commented that the issues raised were almost all relevant to the Council and that it was clear that it would continue to face substantial and increasing financial challenges in future. A summary was provided regarding the Council's finances in 2022/23, including the position on grant funding, savings, capital expenditure and Council Tax. The Council's financial outlook was also commented on, including the position on reserves,

borrowing, loan costs and that problems balancing budgets were becoming increasingly acute. The position on various actions being taken in response to the report was summarised.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) outlined key aspects of the report, during which she referred to the forthcoming publication of a further report by Audit Scotland on *Local Government Budgets 2024/25*.

Highlighting reference in the report to the reduction in local government's share of the Scottish budget from 30% to 23% between 2013/14 and 2022/23, whilst the total Scottish budget had increased by 37% in real terms, Councillor Morrison commented that this underlined the pressures facing the Council. In response to Councillor Wallace who sought clarification on the affordability of the loan charges and maintenance costs associated with the new Leisure Centre to be built in Eastwood Park, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) commented on various issues, including reports submitted to the Council on its long-term financial plans and the Committee on Treasury Management for example which helped demonstrate that the Council's capital investment plans and treasury management decisions remained affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that the Council was operating well within its limits.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) clarified why the Council's loan charges were forecast to rise from around £9m in 2023/24 to £20m by 2029/30. In response to related issues raised by Councillor Morrison, she referred to predicted interest rates for future borrowing on which advice was received from the Council's treasury advisors, the intention to defer new long-term borrowing as long as possible pending interest rates becoming more favourable, and capital profiling issues and assumptions. In response to Councillor Wallace, Ms Scanlin confirmed that the Council's financial management arrangements and financial sustainability issues were matters on which External Audit work focussed annually.

The Committee agreed to note the report and related comments made.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24 – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS – JANUARY TO MARCH 2024 (QUARTER 4)

845. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 22 February 2024 (Page 767, Item 752 refers), when the Internal Audit Strategic Plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28 had been approved, the Committee considered a report by the Chief Auditor regarding progress made on the implementation of the Plan from 1 January to 31 March 2024. It was confirmed that seven reports relating to planned 2023/24 audit work had been issued since the last progress report had been considered, and that a further seven were still to be issued. Details of reports which were issued as part of the 2023-24 Plan, on which responses had been received since the previous progress report had been submitted, were also provided. Reference was also made to the quarterly performance indicators (PIs) for the section.

The Chief Auditor referred to key aspects of the report during which she confirmed that, since the Agenda had been circulated, a further report had been issued, with the remaining ones to be issued shortly. Regarding the Payroll Audit Report which had been circulated previously to members of the Committee, she confirmed that 2 of the 3 recommendations that had not been accepted initially by management now had been, and that the HR Manager had confirmed that a permanent solution had been put in place in April 2024 to address the issue that had occurred with iTrent that had affected employees on multiple week patterns.

In response to Councillor Morrison, the Chief Executive indicated his intention to seek clarification from Legal Services regarding options, if any, for seeking recourse from the

software supplier regarding the issue identified. In response to Councillor Wallace who sought clarification on the quantification of under and over payments since the iTrent system had first been implemented, the Chief Auditor clarified that the HR Manager had confirmed recently that a way had been found to calculate this manually, which had not been considered possible before.

Councillor Ireland welcomed the acceptance of the two further Internal Audit recommendations and sought feedback on follow up audit work to be done, the monetary value of the errors, and the extent to which employees affected were aware of these. The Chief Auditor clarified that the audit sampling done had focussed on employees with multiple week work patterns where the highest proportion of problems were considered to exist, that follow up audit work would be done in due course, that the manual exercise being progressed by Payroll would identify the extent of over and underpayments, and that some affected employees would not yet be aware of the impact on them of the problem found with iTrent.

Referring to discussions he had held with Payroll, the Chief Executive emphasised that the majority of the system based errors were under and overpayments between approximately £25 and £40 prior to deductions including tax. Councillor Morrison considered this reassuring, but raised related concerns. Ms Scanlin confirmed that External Audit had been aware in 2023 of the issue raised by Internal Audit, had not replicated the findings possibly due to the threshold they had adopted for their sampling, and that she did not think any additional External Audit work would be required on the issues found over and above the work done by Internal Audit.

In response to Councillor Edlin, the Chief Auditor confirmed that the problem identified with iTrent had occurred since it was implemented, but did not impact on all employees but rather a small group of those on multiple work patterns. Supported by Councillor Morrison, Councillor Edlin indicated he wished to know the total number of people affected. The Chief Auditor confirmed that these figures would become available from HR from which she would receive them in due course, expressed confidence that overall the errors would not be material to the Council's year end Accounts, and commented that some errors could relate to employees who were no longer with the Council. In response to Councillor Morrison who asked if the iTrent system issue had impacted on anyone on furlough, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) clarified that furlough arrangements had only applied to East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust employees therefore only potentially impacting on those of them with multiple week patterns.

Whilst expressing his concerns regarding the system anomalies identified, Councillor Macdonald suggested that underpayments were easier to address than overpayments, referred to the scale of some of the overpayments listed in the Internal Audit report, and sought confirmation on the mechanisms to be put in place to recoup funds. He expressed the opinion that this could be a protracted and costly process in some cases and unviable in others, especially in the case of former employees. More specifically he proposed that an appropriate senior officer responsible for Payroll attend a future meeting of the Committee to address issues such as these. The Chief Auditor, supported by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), clarified that the Internal Audit report had referred to two different types of overpayments, many of the smaller ones being iTrent system related but others being generally attributable to management failures to advise Payroll timeously of issues they needed to be aware of.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) referred to the Council's debt recovery policy and role of the debtors team in pursuing the recovery of overpayments. The Chief Executive stressed why Payroll could only provide further clarification on the issues concerning the iTrent system they were responsible for, not the management failures due to human error referred to in the audit report or debt recovery policy and procedures. In response

to Councillor Morrison, the Chief Executive and Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that a copy of the Council's Debt Recovery Policy as approved by Cabinet could be circulated to members of the Committee.

Councillor Ireland referred to the overall scale of the overpayments identified, and sought clarification on when the draft policy on the Treatment of Over and Under Payments, dated March 2023, would be formally adopted. The Chief Auditor confirmed that the figures in the audit report related to the sample taken and that clarification on the draft policy, which had not been finalised at the time of the audit, would need to be sought from the HR Manager. Whilst providing reassurance on issues regarding overpayments, the Chief Executive emphasised the importance of learning from mistakes attributable to human error, and explained that he had asked for reports to be submitted to the CMT on an ongoing basis from each department not only on overpayments made but also the reasons for them. Responding to issues raised by Councillor Edlin, he clarified that the Council could take a different, more personalised approach to recovering salary overpayments from current employees with whom an ongoing working relationship existed, which differed to the approach possible regarding former employees. Speaking in more general terms, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that the Debt Recovery Policy covered most debt issues, but that slightly different arrangements were in place for recovering benefit overpayments.

Councillor Wallace referred to potential challenges with recovering salary overpayments including in terms of tax, and the importance of ensuring that procedures for leavers were fully adhered to, stressing that his focus on the latter was the impact of any failures to follow them rather than apportioning blame. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) acknowledged that this issue had been raised in various audits, and highlighted action being taken throughout the Council to address and reinforce the importance of adherence to the procedures. The Chief Auditor commented that this recurring theme could be the subject of comments in the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24.

In response to Councillor Macdonald, the Chief Executive explained that there could be issues associated with data protection that could prevent the Council approaching an employee's new employer about recovering overpayments, such as in cases where this was another local authority. The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) added that approaches to other local authorities were made to the extent possible. In response to a further general issue raised by Councillor Macdonald regarding officer competency and related records, the Chief Executive stressed that if the Council wished to be considered an employer of choice, it was incumbent upon it to support employees to work to the best of their ability, such as through the provision of training and other support. He emphasised his assumption that the vast majority of employees came to work to do the best they could.

The Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note that follow-up audit work would be undertaken by the Chief Auditor in due course on the implementation of accepted recommendations within the Internal Audit report on Payroll, the outcome of which would be referred to in a future Internal Audit Progress report;
- (b) that the Clerk would source a copy of the Council's current *Debt Recovery Policy* and circulate it to members of the Committee;
- (c) that the Clerk would seek clarification from the Head of HR and Corporate Services on the current position regarding the draft Policy on the *Treatment of Over and Under Payments* and confirm the position to members of the Committee;

- (d) in the context of the Internal Audit Report on Payroll, that an appropriate senior officer responsible for Payroll would attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide further clarification on how the Payroll Section was addressing various issues that fall within its responsibility to control and address in relation to the payroll system; and
- (e) otherwise, to note the report and related comments made.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 14 May 2024.

Present:

Councillor Paul Edlin (Chair)	Councillor David Macdonald*
Councillor Angela Convery (Vice Chair)	Councillor Andrew Morrison*
Provost Mary Montague	

Councillor Edlin in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement); Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer and Victoria Harkness, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Inspector Graeme Gallie and Inspector Gareth Griffiths, Police Scotland.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

846. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE POLICY

The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement) in relation to proposed changes to the Council's Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy (agenda item 3 refers).

Having heard the Chief Officer on the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the proposals made; and
- (b) that a special meeting of the committee be arranged by the Clerk to which relevant stakeholders would be invited to discuss said proposals.

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR OPERATOR'S LICENCE

847. The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement) in relation to a request for immediate suspension of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence and a Private Hire Car Operator's Licence under Paragraph 11(1) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Agenda Item 4 refers).

The licensee was present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Inspector Griffiths representing the Chief Superintendent were also present. It was reported that the Chief Superintendent had requested the suspensions on the grounds that the licence holder was not a fit and proper person to be the holder of these licences, and that the carrying on of the activity to which the licences related was likely to cause a serious threat to public order or public safety. It was noted that the circumstances giving rise to this request were currently the subject of criminal proceedings. It was also noted that the licence holder had physically surrendered his licences pending conclusion of criminal proceedings.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the Committee agreed to suspend both licences in terms of Paragraph 11(1) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

PRIVATE HIRE CAR OPERATOR'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL

848. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement) in relation to an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Car Operator's Licence (Agenda Item 5 refers).

The licensee was present, accompanied by a friend who acted as an interpreter.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Inspector Griffiths representing the Chief Constable, who had made an out of time objection to the application, were also present.

The report explained that in determining the application it would be for the Committee to decide if it wished to consider the out of time objection submitted by the Chief Constable and, if so, what weight it wished to attach to the objection and its relevance to the type of licence being applied for.

Having heard the applicant agree that the out of time objection could be considered, the Committee agreed to consider the out of time objection and copies were circulated.

Chief Inspector Gallie was heard in respect of the objection submitted by the Chief Superintendent.

The applicant (via his interpreter) was then heard in respect of the application for renewal.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the Committee, having taken account of the submission made by the licensee, his previous conviction, its seriousness and relevance to the licence being applied for, and also having taken account of the objection by the Chief Constable, agreed that the application for renewal be refused on the grounds that the licensee was no longer a fit and proper person to be the holder of such a licence by virtue of his previous conviction.

PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL

849. The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement) in relation to an application for the grant of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence (Agenda Item 6 refers).

The applicant, having been invited to attend, was not present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Inspector Griffiths representing the Chief Constable, who had made an out of time objection to the application, were also present.

The committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to the next meeting to allow the applicant to make a personal appearance.

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 30 May 2024.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader) Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Danny Devlin

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Lesley Bairden, Head of Finance and Resources, Health and Social Care Partnership; Andy Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Jamie Reid, Head of Communities and Transformation; Michaela Sullivan, Head of Place; Morag Brown, Strategic Services Lead Officer; Julie Breslin, Strategy and Partnership Manager; Suzanne Conlin, Senior Housing Manager; Michael McKernan, Economic Development and Inclusive Growth Manager; John Marley, Principal Traffic Officer; and John Burke, Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance

Apologies:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Depute Chair)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

850. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE RESERVE – INITIAL UTILISATION PROPOSALS

851. The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) on the criteria for utilisation of the Council's Investment in the Future reserve and proposing the first tranche of projects to be allocated financial support.

The temporary reductions in employers' contributions to the Strathclyde Pension Fund were estimated to save the council £6.3m each year in 2024/25 and 2025/26. This provided a £12.6m one-off resource which could be utilised to benefit the Council in the future.

858

East Renfrewshire Council had established a new Investment in the Future reserve to hold those funds, with officers working with the Budget Strategy Group to bring forward proposals to Cabinet for utilisation. Details of those proposals were attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The report outlined the proposed criteria for projects submitted and highlighted those projects in the list which met the criteria and were proposed for immediate focus.

Further reports would be submitted to Cabinet as new spending proposals were identified and the areas for consideration were detailed in the report.

Following a brief discussion, the Cabinet:-

- (a) agreed the utilisation criteria to be adopted for draws from the reserve;
- (b) noted the potential applications identified to date for the reserve;
- (c) agreed the initial projects to be supported; and
- (d) noted that further reports on proposed utilisation of the reserve would be brought back to Cabinet in due course.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK – 2022/23 PERFORMANCE

852. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive updating Cabinet on the national Local Government Benchmarking Framework and presenting a high level comparative overview of the Council's performance against the LGBF indicators for 2022/23.

The LGBF had been established and publicly reported by all Scottish councils as a statutory requirement since 2010/11. Three new measures had been included in the data set for 2022/23 and these were outlined in the report. It was also highlighted that data from some indicators had not been included at the time of reporting due to the lack of availability of that data.

A total of 95 measures were included in the full data set and the breakdown of those was provided. The data was collated by the Improvement Service and added to the National Benchmarking Report 2022/23.

A comprehensive breakdown of the performance information for each service area was listed in annex 1 to the report, and these were summarised within the report.

There followed a discussion where members scrutinised the data provided. In particular, comparisons to the results of the Scottish Household Survey were queried as well as details on the gender pay gap, poverty attainment gap and the measure where roads were costed per kilometre.

The Cabinet scrutinised and noted the Council's performance against the comparative information provided in the report.

COVID RESERVE – PROGRESS AND IMPACT OF FUND

853. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships providing an update on the progress of humanitarian projects that were allocated COVID reserve funding for the 2023/2024 financial year.

The Scottish Government had released various streams of COVID-19 funding to local authorities to react to the emerging needs and challenges faced by residents, businesses and service provision.

A series of funding proposals had been agreed by Cabinet on 13 October 2022 (Item 172, Page 229 refers) totalling nearly £1.7m over the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24 to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Proposals for the allocation for the 2023/24 funding had been agreed by Cabinet on 11 May 2023 (Item 442, Page 507 refers) with further proposals approved on 2 November 2023 (Item 654, Page 666 refers).

All of the humanitarian projects, the spend against their allocation and the progress made by each was detailed in Annex 1 to the report and these were summarised in the report. Several of the projects would continue into 2024/25, and those were also detailed in Annex 1.

There followed a brief discussion, where members expressed their support for the projects detailed, in particular, one to one support for children and young people, and the work on income generation and debt consolidation.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the impact made by humanitarian projects in 2023/2024 from funding through the COVID Reserve, highlighted in Annex 1 to the report;
- (b) noted the outstanding projects that would continue into the 2024/2025 financial year; and
- (c) approved the uncommitted balance of £131,672 that would be transferred to HSCP to assist with 2023/24 in-year budget pressures and COVID related impact.

DOMESTIC ABUSE COUNCIL HOUSING POLICY

854. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for a new Domestic Abuse Housing Policy to ensure a sensitive, consistent and equitable approach to finding suitable housing solutions for Council tenants that are victims of domestic abuse.

The Council had always supported those fleeing domestic abuse by using the duties set out in the Housing Scotland Act 1987. However, the introduction of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 made it appropriate to introduce a policy to complement that legislation and ensure the Council had robust measures in place to support those affected. This was of utmost importance as it was explained that Domestic Abuse was the main reason for women having presented as homeless.

The proposed Domestic Abuse Housing Policy, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report, reflected the guidance contained in “Domestic Abuse: A Good Practice Guide for Social Landlords”.

The policy was summarised in the report as well as the proposed next steps in its implementation, should it be approved.

860

There followed a discussion where members expressed some concerns around the availability of homeless accommodation and that appropriate training be given to elected members regarding Domestic Abuse.

Thereafter, Cabinet approved the Domestic Abuse Housing Policy.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE – GLASGOW CITY REGION

855. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for a collaborative approach to expanding the public electric vehicle charging infrastructure, requiring the approval of eight Glasgow City Region (GCR) authorities to undertake the next steps to progress towards a shared commercial delivery agreement.

The report outlined work that had taken place among the eight authorities of the GCR in developing the proposed approach, which was termed a “concessionary-type commercial model”. A full timeline for the implementation of the model was detailed in the report.

Following a brief discussion, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the report into collaboration within the Glasgow City Region with respect to Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI); and
- (b) approved the recommendations set out in the Programme Management Office’s report, included as Appendix 1 to the report, in their entirety, allowing the Glasgow City Region authorities to collaborate within the aim of introducing a shared commercial arrangement for EVCI.

NEIGHBOURHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ZONES

856. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment updating Cabinet on the progress of the Neighbourhood Traffic Management Zones programme.

Neighbourhood Traffic Management Zones (NTMZs) aimed to provide a network of safe, attractive, accessible and connected neighbourhoods. This approach intended to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling and reducing emphasis on the use of cars while reducing the impact of vehicular traffic diverting through residential areas on the way to other locations. Cabinet had approved the rationale and methodology for consultation at its meeting on 24 August 2023 (Item 549, Page 601 refers).

74 NTMZs had been identified across East Renfrewshire with consultation to take place on a phased basis at a rate of approximately 15 zones per year over 5 years. The first 15 zones were detailed in Appendix B to the report.

The report detailed progress to date on a number of key areas of work, in particular the strategic framework, which was attached as Appendix A to the report, and the consultation process.

Following a brief discussion, in particular around the potential to look at the area of Netherlee Primary School, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted progress on Neighbourhood Traffic Management Zones; and

- (b) noted the additional external funding application to Sustrans to support the development of a future strategy, arising from what was learned from the first phase of the programme, and approved acceptance of the funding, if it was awarded.

MINUTE OF JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER) HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2024

857. The minute of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 15 February 2024 was submitted for noting.

The Cabinet noted the minute.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chambers, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 30 May 2024.

Present:

Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor Kate Campbell

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

Attending:

Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services and Caitriona McAuley Director of Environment.

Apology:

Apologies were given from Councillor Betty Cunningham.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

858. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT (OPERATIONS)

859. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 24 April 2024 (Page 840, Item 832 refers), the committee took up consideration of applications for the post of Head of Environment.

Following full consideration the committee agreed that 5 candidates be shortlisted for assessment.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
LOCAL REVIEW BODY

Minute of meeting held at 2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 5 June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Paul Edlin

Councillor Annette Ireland

Councillor McLean in the Chair

Attending:

Mark Brand, Planning Adviser; Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement); and John Burke, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Betty Cunningham, Chris Lunday. Andrew Morrison and Provost Mary Montague.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

860. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

The Chair advised that site visits had been held prior to the meeting.

NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2024/03 – INSTALLATION OF DRIVEWAY, RETAINING WALL, FENCING AND ACCESS STEPS AT 10 CROMARTY GARDENS, CLARKSTON, G76 8PA (REF NO:- 2023/0670/TP).

861. The Local Review Body considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr Fergus Brown against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of the installation of a driveway, retaining wall, fencing and access steps at 10 Cromarty Gardens, Clarkston, G76 8PA.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

866

The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as determined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice and the grounds for review.

The Planning Adviser further outlined proposed additional conditions to be attached to any consent in the event the Local Review Body overturned the decision of the Appointed Officer and granted planning permission.

Discussion took place, particularly around the accuracy of submitted drawings and impact to parking on the street.

Following the discussion, and having heard from the Planning Adviser, Councillor McLean, seconded by Councillor Edlin, moved to overturn the Appointed Officer's decision and grant planning permission, subject to the conditions outlined by the Independent Planning Adviser.

Councillor Ireland, having moved as an amendment that the Appointed Officer's decision be upheld and planning permission refused, but not received a seconder, asked that her dissent to the decision be recorded.

Therefore, the Local Review Body agreed to overturn the Appointed Officer's decision and grant planning permission, subject to the standard conditions and one additional condition as follows:-

"Before work commences on the development hereby approved, a scheme of soft landscaping shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority and thereafter implemented on site within 6 months from the date of approval, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority.

Reason: to mitigate the visual impact caused by the replacement of the garden with hardstanding."

NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2024/04 – SIDE UTILITY ONE-STOREY EXTENSION, FORMATION OF PITCHED ROOF OVER EXISTING GARAGE, ROOF ALTERATIONS TO FORM FRONT DORMER AND REAR GABLE, AS PART OF LOFT CONVERSION, EXISTING ROOF TO BE RE-ROOFED AT 29 STEWART DRIVE, CLARKSTON, G76 7EY. (REF NO:- 2023/0354/TP).

862. The Local Review Body considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Mr Scott and Mrs Hayley Graham against the decision taken by officers to refuse planning permission in respect of: a side utility one-storey extension; formation of a pitched roof over an existing garage; roof alterations to form a front ormer and rear gable, as part of a loft conversion; and an existing roof to be re-roofed at 29 Stewart Drive, Clarkston, G76 7EY.

The decision had been made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation made in terms of Section 43A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

The Planning Adviser outlined the planning application and reasons for refusal as determined by the Appointed Officer in the decision notice and the grounds for review.

The Planning Adviser further outlined proposed additional conditions to be attached to any consent in the event the Local Review Body overturned the decision of the Appointed Officer and granted planning permission.

Discussion took place, particularly around concerns about overlooking and the privacy of the neighbours to the rear of the property.

Following the discussion, and having heard from the Planning Adviser, the Local Review Body agreed that the Appointed Officer's decision be upheld and planning permission refused.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting, held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on Thursday 6th June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)
Councillor Tony Buchanan
Councillor Kate Campbell*
Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)

Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)
Ms Fiona Gilchrist
Ms Dorothy Graham
Ms Evelyn Yedd

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Performance & Quality Improvement); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Graeme Hay, Senior Manager Leading Change (Education); Tracey Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); and John Burke, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Rosamund Coyle-Bennett, Quality Improvement Officer; Siobhan Coats, Principal Teacher: Numeracy and Mathematics (3-18); Lucy Cosstick, Principal Teacher of Literacy ; Gillian Gourlay, Principal Teacher of Literacy; June Comrie, Catering Manager, Facilities Management.

Apologies:

Councillors Devlin, Merrick, Wallace and Mr Des Morris

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

863. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

PRESENTATION TO JUNE COMRIE, CATERING MANAGER, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, IN RECOGNITION OF CATERING MANAGER OF THE YEAR PSC AWARD 2024

864. Councillor Anderson welcomed to the meeting June Comrie, Catering Manager, Facilities Management. He reported that Ms Comrie had recently been recognised as Catering Manager of the Year at the Public Sector Catering Awards 2024.

Councillor Anderson, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated Ms Comrie on her award and presented her with a trophy to commemorate her recent achievement.

SEF WORKSTREAM 3 SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION - LITERACY AND NUMERACY

865. The Head of Education Services (Performance and Quality Improvement) introduced a presentation on work being undertaken to support Literacy and Numeracy within East Renfrewshire using the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF).

The presentation was given by Rosamund Coyle-Bennett, Quality Improvement Officer; Siobhan Coats, Principal Teacher: Numeracy and Mathematics (3-18); Lucy Cosstick, Principal Teacher of Literacy; and Gillian Gourlay, Principal Teacher of Literacy and focused on the use of SEF funding to enhance literacy and numeracy learning in the Council's educational establishments.

The presentation highlighted the key activities undertaken, in particular, highlighting early, targeted interventions and the importance of professional learning and capacity building to provide a sustainable resource going forward in East Renfrewshire. Further, it was highlighted the large number of pupils in East Renfrewshire had benefited from Reading and Maths Recovery programmes to date.

Examples of feedback from parents, carers and learners themselves was provided, with the level of confidence gained to participate in further learning highlighted.

The presenters responded to members' questions on their presentation, particularly around parental engagement, the continuation period of SEF funding and their overall support for the excellent work taking place in the Council area, highlighted by the presentation.

Members requested a copy of the slides for the presentation be circulated to them for further information, as well as the links to online resources highlighted.

Having heard members thank everyone who attended the meeting for an interesting and informative presentation, the Committee noted the SEF Workstream 3 – Literacy and Numeracy Spotlight Presentation.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ANNUAL REPORT

866. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising on the approaches taken to develop Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) services. The report outlined the steps taken to improve the quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability of provision and experiences for young children.

The Scottish Government had set a transformational agenda to double the entitlement to free ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all 3 and 4 year olds and

eligible 2 year olds. This provision had been available in East Renfrewshire Council since August 2020, with full provision, which included the provision of food at lunchtime, being available since August 2021.

The report contained a range of detailed information on the provision in East Renfrewshire, with focus on the aspects of Quality; Flexibility; and Accessibility and Affordability.

The information presented in the report indicated that the 1140 hours policy continued to be successfully implemented in East Renfrewshire, and highlighted continuous improvement in all areas. In particular, the increase in entitlement had been a mitigating factor in the impact of COVID-19 and the poverty related attainment gap.

In discussion on the paper, officers responded to members' questions around developmental milestones, nursery place availability, the effect of deferrals from starting Primary 1 education and the potential for an additional budget pressure if more places for Primary 1 were required than would otherwise be available.

Further, the Committee requested a report be brought in future relating to West Partnership research on 1140 hours ELC provision. Councillor O'Donnell also specifically requested further information on children in quintile 3 be provided to him in relation to some of the data in the report.

Thereafter, the committee:-

- (a) noted the content of the report as a summary of the Early Learning and Childcare Department's performance for 2023/24;
- (b) requested a further report on the West Partnership research on 1140 Hours Early Learning and Childcare Provision to be given to the committee in future; and
- (c) noted that Councillor O'Donnell would be provided further information on the statistics relating to children in quintile 3, as presented in the report.

MINUTE
of
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 11 June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Paul Edlin (Chair)	Councillor Andrew Morrison
Councillor Angela Convery (Vice Chair)	Councillor David Macdonald*
Provost Mary Montague	

Councillor Edlin in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement); Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; John Burke, Democratic Services Officer and Victoria Harkness, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Inspector Graeme Gallie, Inspector Gareth Griffiths and Inspector Brian Eaglesham, Police Scotland.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

867. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the Committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE

868. The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement) in relation to a request for immediate suspension of a Private Hire Car Driver's Licence under Paragraph 11(1) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Agenda Item 3 refers).

The licensee and the licensee's solicitor were present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Inspector Griffiths representing the Chief Constable were also present. Inspector Griffiths was heard in respect of the request submitted by the Chief Constable. It was reported that the Chief Constable had requested the suspension on the grounds that the licence holder was not a fit and proper person to be the holder of this licence, and that the carrying on of the activity to which the licence related was likely to cause a serious threat to public order or public safety. It was noted that the circumstances giving rise to this request were currently the subject of criminal proceedings.

The licensee (via his solicitor) was then heard in respect of the matter and in response to questions.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the Committee having taken account of the nature of the charges against the licensee, agreed to the immediate suspension of the private hire car driver's licence on the grounds that the licensee was not a fit and proper person to be the holder of such a licence.

PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVER'S LICENCE – APPLICATION FOR GRANT

869. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement) in relation to an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Car Operator's Licence (Agenda Item 4 refers).

The applicant was present.

Chief Inspector Gallie and Inspector Griffiths representing the Chief Constable, who had made an objection in respect of the application, were also present.

Inspector Griffiths was heard in respect of the objection submitted by the Chief Constable.

The applicant was then heard in respect of the application and in response to questions.

The Committee agreed to a short adjournment to consider the matter.

On reconvening, the Committee, having taken account of the submission made by the applicant, his previous convictions and the seriousness and relevance to the licence being applied for, agreed that the application be refused on the grounds that the applicant was not a fit and proper person to be the holder of such a licence by virtue of his previous convictions.

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE & FIRE)

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 13 June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

Attending:

Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Stephen Bell, Community Safety Manager; and John Burke, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Superintendent Steven Meikle; Chief Inspector Graeme Gallie, (Area Commander); Inspector Michelle Grant; Inspector Brian Eaglesham Police Scotland; Area Commander David McCarrey; and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

870. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4 - 2023-24

871. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the fourth quarter of 2023-24. The report also provided statistical information in relation to various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period together with comparative statistics for the corresponding period in 2022-23.

Superintendent Meikle introduced the report, and referred to the promotion achieved by Inspector Michelle Grant, who would be moving to the Greater Glasgow area. She would be replaced in her role by Inspector Brian Eaglesham who was introduced to the Cabinet.

Superintendent Meikle also thanked Area Commander David McCarrey for his hard work in the area over the years, working in partnership with Police Scotland, and congratulated him on his retirement.

Chief Inspector Gallie then reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2023-26, summarising the information contained within the report.

Chief Inspector Gallie concluded by giving some examples of the work being done in East Renfrewshire by officers of Police Scotland on all of the areas of focus covered, which were highlighted within the report.

There followed a question and answer session in the course of which Chief Inspector Gallie responded to a number of questions and provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the crime statistics recorded in the report. In particular, on crimes of shoplifting, sextortion and the replacement for Inspector Grant as co-chair of the Violence Against Women Group.

The Cabinet noted the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2023-24

872. The Cabinet considered a report by the Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the fourth quarter of 2023-24 against the key priorities in their local plan.

Introducing the report, Area Commander McCarrey referred to the Fire Skills course which had been a great success for all involved. He also referred to consultation being carried out to shape the future of fire and rescue services and encouraged all members of the Cabinet to participate in the range of consultation opportunities that would be made available going forward.

Group Commander Coughtrie then reported on the performance of SFRS on performance over quarter 3, summarising the information provided in the report. In particular, he highlighted the reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) and the reduction in costs that this reduction resulted in.

There followed a question and answer session in the course of which officers McCarrey and Coughtrie responded to a number of questions and comments on a range of issues recorded in the report. Mainly, the discussion focused on the success of the Fire Skills course, installation of fire detection equipment in properties and the disposal and storage of lithium batteries, particularly used in e-bikes.

Thereafter the Cabinet agreed to note the report.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair, on behalf of the Cabinet, thanked both Inspector Michelle Grant and Area Commander David McCarrey for all of their work in the communities of East Renfrewshire during their time in the Police and Fire services, respectively.

In offering congratulations to Inspector Grant on her promotion and to Area Commander McCarrey on his retirement, he presented gifts to both officers on behalf of the Cabinet.

Inspector Grant and Area Commander McCarrey both responded in appropriate terms, highlighting the partnership work between Police and Fire and Rescue Services in East Renfrewshire.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 20 June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader) Councillor Danny Devlin
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair) Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Moira McFadden, Head of Communities and Arts, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust; Michaela Sullivan, Head of Place; Emma Aepli, Employability Team Leader; John Marley, Principal Traffic Officer; and John Burke, Democratic Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

873. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL CULTURAL STRATEGY 2024-2029

874. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the draft Cultural Strategy 2024-2029.

The East Renfrewshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2029 would replace the East Renfrewshire Council Arts Strategy, building upon the transformative work already undertaken to enhance and embed a strong cultural identity in East Renfrewshire. It aligned closely with the aims of the Scottish Government's Cultural Strategy for Scotland, published in 2020.

The draft Strategy, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report, linked to the key themes of that document, which were detailed in the report. It also reflected the various demographics in East Renfrewshire and outlined the strategy that would be undertaken to meet the needs of those.

Following a brief discussion, around the consultation that had been undertaken and work which had been done to improve accessibility of cultural services, the Cabinet approved the draft Cultural Strategy 2024-2029.

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND EMPLOYABILITY ACTIVITY 2024/25

875. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment on the No One Left Behind (NOLB) grant award from Scottish Government to East Renfrewshire Council, seeking approval for the Annual Investment Plan in 2024/25, as well as to highlight potential funding challenges and associated risks.

NOLB was a partnership approach between Scottish Government and Local Authorities to transform employment support in Scotland. It had been a key strand of employability services in East Renfrewshire since 2020 and had delivered a wide range of programmes.

Details of NOLB outcomes achieved during 2023/2024 were provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

An Annual Investment Plan for NOLB activity in 2024/2025 had been submitted to the Scottish Government. While the first quarter of the funding had been received at the time of writing, it was noted that the additional sum of the funding had been received since then and plans for the allocation of that funding would proceed following agreement of the report.

Officers responded to members' questions, particularly concerning the delay in funding, the 50+ Pilot programme, the Traineeships for Parents programme and a delay in funding for the Parental Employment Support programme.

Thereafter, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the progress of projects funded in 2023/24 in Appendix 1;
- (b) approved the continuation of existing projects outlined in Appendix 2 for 2024/25;
- (c) delegated to the Director of Environment to approve new projects, subject to the remainder of 2024/25 Scottish Government funding being confirmed;
- (d) delegated to the Director of Environment to adjust proposals depending upon the detailed costs of projects becoming available to ensure full spend of the award; and
- (e) noted that further reports would be submitted to the Cabinet in due course to report on the progress of those programmes hereby approved, as well as seeking approval for projects in future years.

THE EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL (A77 AYR ROAD, NEWTON MEARNS/GIFFNOCK) (30MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2024

876. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the making and confirmation of the East Renfrewshire Council (A77 Ayr Road, Newton Mearns/Giffnock) (30mph Speed Limit) Order 2024.

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the content of the report and approved the making of the East Renfrewshire Council (A77 Ayr Road, Newton Mearns/Giffnock) (30mph Speed Limit) Order 2024; and

- (b) delegated to the Director of Environment the implementation of the Order in accordance with associated statutory procedures.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 20 June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Morrison (Chair)
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Vice Chair)
Councillor Paul Edlin

Councillor David Macdonald *
Provost Mary Montague *
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Councillor Morrison in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer)*; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Michelle Blair, Chief Auditor; Kath McCormack, HR Manager; Morag Brown, Strategic Services Senior Lead; Debbie Hill, Chief Procurement Officer; Aidan Holligan, Strategic Services Assistant; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; and Victoria Harkness, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Grace Scanlin, Ernst and Young *.

Apology

Councillor Annette Ireland.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

877. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CHAIR'S REPORT

878. Councillor Morrison reported that, further to discussions he had had with the Chief Executive on the Committee's future Work Plan at his request, he had reviewed what was proposed to include with the Democratic Services Manager and Senior Democratic Services Officer who clerked the Committee. He highlighted that the Committee would consider the 2024/25 Work Plan, to the extent it had been developed thus far, later in the meeting, which included the range of standard items the Committee discussed each year.

Referring to a further item to be considered on the Agenda, on behalf of the Committee, Councillor Morrison thanked the Chief Accountant and her team for the work they had done preparing the draft unaudited Annual Accounts.

The Committee noted the position.

2023/24 UNAUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

879. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 March 2024 (Page 810, Item 798 refers), when the 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan and timetable for publication of related documents had been noted, the Committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) on the unaudited Annual Accounts for 2023/24 which had been submitted for audit to Ernst & Young, and were attached to the report for consideration in line with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

It was reported that the Council's financial affairs had again been managed within its operational budget, returning departmental budget surpluses totalling £6.878m, much of which were of a one-off nature. A total of £6.2m had been allocated to various earmarked reserves to address current pressures faced by the Council, including £1m each to the Repairs and Renewals fund and Capital reserve which both sat out-with the General Fund, £2m to the Modernisation Fund, and £600k to the Employee Wellbeing Fund. The balance of £678k was to be retained in the Non-Earmarked General Reserve. The level of that Reserve equated to 2.3% of the annual budgeted net revenue expenditure, which was within the recommended range of 2-4%.

It was confirmed that the Council's overall General Fund reserve balances, after the allocations referred to above, totalled £41.8m, which represented a decrease of £10.314m from 2022/23, the reasons for which were summarised. £46,485k of Capital expenditure had been invested, and there had been an operating deficit of £97k on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which had decreased the accumulated surplus balance to carry forward to £1,701k.

Whilst commenting on key aspects of the report, the Chief Accountant referred to a typographical error on Page 22 of the Accounts, clarifying that the heading of the third column of the table featured there should have referred to 2023/24 rather than 2022/23. She confirmed the position regarding the operational budget and various budget savings, which were mainly of a one-off nature and related to increased income, including interest earned on temporary investment balances and the recovery of a VAT appeal from HMRC dating back to 2006. There were also savings relating to utilities and the catering service within the Education Department along with staff vacancies. The position on capital expenditure and the HRA was also referred to, as was the management commentary.

In response to Councillor Wallace, the Chief Accountant confirmed that loan charges were reduced when expenditure was not as high as planned, referring to the accrual of funds to help even out loan charges incurred.

Councillor Morrison sought clarification on whether or not the Devolved School Management Reserve would provide sufficient funding to enable the Breakfast Cart service based at Neilston Primary School to continue in future, highlighting that it also served other schools and was being sustained through COVID funding until the end of June 2024. The Chief Accountant undertook to seek and provide further clarification on this following the meeting.

The Committee agreed to note:-

- (a) that the Chief Accountant would seek and provide clarification following the meeting on whether or not the Devolved School Management Reserve would provide sufficient funding to enable the Breakfast Cart service based at Neilston Primary School, which was being sustained through COVID funding until the end of June 2024, to continue; and
- (b) otherwise, the content of the unaudited Annual Accounts for 2023/24 subject to the typographical amendment referred to at the meeting, in respect of which a report on the final Accounts and related documents would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in due course.

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

880. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 22 June 2023 (Page 560, Item 498 refers), when the Code of Corporate Governance actions for 2023/24 had been approved, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships providing an update on progress against improvement actions since then, and seeking approval of a new Code for 2024/25.

The report reiterated the Council's responsibilities for the conduct of its business, defined what the Code of Corporate Governance was, and explained that the proposed updates took account of guidance from CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. The report referred to requirements which the Council should complete under the framework.

The report summarised progress on the 2023/24 actions, highlighting that seven improvement activities listed had been completed and those which had been carried forward into the 2024/25 Plan. The updated Code for 2024/25, setting out arrangements which demonstrated how the Council fulfilled the seven governance principles outlined in national guidance, was appended to the report. Self-assessment against the nationally prescribed criteria had found the Council to be compliant across the principles other than in a very small number of areas where there was partial compliance pending some actions being taken over the forthcoming months. Some further actions were also being taken to enhance compliance with the Code.

Having commented on the Annual Governance Statement to be published in the Annual Report and Accounts later in the year, the report concluded that the Council was governed by sound and effective internal management controls, and continued to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. Progress on planned actions for 2023/24 had been posted on the Council's website, as would the 2024/25 Code, subject to it being approved by the Committee.

The Strategic Services Senior Lead highlighted key issues within the report, during which she confirmed that the CIPFA/SOLACE framework remained unchanged and emphasised the importance of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements. She provided further clarification on the action to be taken to deliver full compliance with the Code, confirming that a review of the Council's Schemes of Administration and Delegated Functions was to be undertaken and that work was also to be progressed to review the Council's strategic and community planning frameworks and governance arrangements following approval of the Council's long term vision in September.

In response to Councillor Wallace who sought clarification on the Council's approach to the Code of Governance relative to that of other local authorities, the Strategic Services Senior Lead referred to the outcome of an extensive review of the Code undertaken in 2023, confirming that the document had been streamlined as a result, and that the main body of the document now comprised high-level evidence associated with requirements, appended to which was a comprehensive list of evidence in a matrix. She added that although no document specified what best practice regarding the Code was considered to be, how issues were assessed against the governance principles demonstrated compliance with them. The Director of Business Operations and Partnerships confirmed that there were no concerns regarding the postponement of the review of the Council's Standing Orders, the delay having been attributable to staffing changes within Democratic Services and the need for that section to prioritise General Election related work.

Councillor Morrison sought clarification on whether or not the Investment for the Future reserve could be used to fund an acceleration of the development of the interface between Housing's Servitor system and the Council's Intergra financial system. In reply, the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships referred to ongoing work on this which was at an early stage, explained that the development of the interface was focused on capacity issues, and stated that there was a need to determine if the interface would realise the intended benefits such as through testing. Having clarified that the timing of that work was under consideration, she stated that there were already key workers who had the skills to carry out the required work, and that the use of the Modernisation Fund could be explored if necessary to assist with this work in the first instance rather than the Investment for the Future reserve.

The Committee:-

- (a) noted progress on the 2023/24 Code of Corporate Governance improvement actions; and
- (b) approved the Code of Corporate Governance updates and actions for 2024/25.

CONSULTANCY EXPENDITURE

881. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 23 May 2023 (Page 514, Item 450 refers), when the Committee had noted a report on the log maintained regarding the appointment of consultants for the 2022/23 financial year and that further such reports would be submitted after the end of each financial year, the Committee considered a report by the Clerk referring to discussions by the Committee thus far on such expenditure, and providing feedback on consultancy expenditure for the 2023/24 financial year. A copy of the most recent log was appended to the report, which had also been published on the Council's website.

Having heard the Clerk highlight key aspects of the report, in response to Councillor Morrison the Chief Procurement Officer summarised reasons for consultancy expenditure on employer agent and quantity surveyor services for Council new build projects, confirming that external engagement of such services was only considered when it had been determined that there was insufficient capacity in-house. Further in response to him and Councillor Edlin, the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships confirmed that the on-going capacity problem regarding such services was one which was to be discussed further during the year in terms of workforce planning, and the Chief Procurement Officer clarified that external fee charges by such consultants under framework documents were considered whenever such consultants were to be appointed to determine that Best Value was being secured. In response to Councillor Wallace, the HR Manager confirmed that, as for all officers, the rates of pay for those providing such services in-house, were determined under the Council's job evaluation

scheme. She added that the same scheme was used by the majority of local authorities in Scotland, and that there was liaison with COSLA in situations where there were problems filling certain posts. Speaking generally, Councillor Buchanan referred to the holistic approach being taken to developing workforce skills across Scotland which included considering apprenticeships as promoted by Skills Development Scotland and the promotion of lifelong learning.

In response to Councillor Wallace who referred to consultancy costs associated with the new Leisure Centre to be built in Eastwood Park, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that these were regarded as capital costs, and that some of the work involved was for designing the facility whilst other aspects of consultancy concerned the overall management of the project and ensuring it remained on track. Also in reply to him, the Chief Procurement Officer outlined, in general terms, the approach taken to determine which consultants to use for various types of work, such as concerning active travel initiatives. Replying to an issue raised by Councillor Morrison, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) commented that there were times when external consultants had to be engaged due to the lack of sufficient internal capacity to progress projects.

In response to Councillor Morrison, the HR Manager confirmed that a policy had been put in place to guard against former employees setting up consultancy firms and seeking to engage with their former authority for work, explaining that under the policy an Inland Revenue 35 checklist had to be completed.

The Committee noted the report and that a further report on such expenditure would be submitted to the Committee after the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON PAYROLL

882. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2024 (Page 514, Item 450 refers), when it had been agreed that an appropriate senior officer responsible for Payroll would attend a future meeting to provide further clarification on how the Payroll Section was addressing various issues that fell within its responsibility to control and address in relation to the payroll system as identified in the Internal Audit Report on Payroll, Councillor Morrison welcomed the HR Manager to the meeting.

Whilst providing clarification on and responding to various issues raised on overpayments at the Committee's meeting in May, the HR Manager assured the Committee that these had been discussed in detail with the Corporate Management Team, that new processes had been implemented, and that work on a small number of cases was ongoing. Having clarified the number of transactions processed by Payroll both monthly and annually and the total value of these, she confirmed that the issue identified by Internal Audit had affected some employees on multi-week patterns, emphasising that this had not been an unimportant issue but that it had not been at a material level. She confirmed it had affected approximately 100 employees on a one-off basis when they had either started or left the Council's employment, that the value of the overpayments and underpayments were £4k and 2k respectively, and that this had not been a recurring issue for the individuals concerned. She added that the Council had worked with the supplier to implement a permanent solution, reporting that the supplier was monitoring the position using the Council's corporate contract and supplier management model, and that the Council was continuing to work closely with the supplier.

Regarding the clarification sought by the Committee on overpayments made to employees and the process for reclaiming these, the HR Manager reported that the rate of overpayments made as a proportion of transactions processed per year was 0.07%, the industry rate being 3% according to the Chartered Institute of Payroll. Having cited various reasons for overpayments which included late or lack of notification of leavers, sickness absences or

888

contractual changes, duplicate timesheets or overtime sheets being submitted and approved and system errors, she stressed that Payroll had always worked to recover overpayments. However it had been recognised that, in order to reduce overpayments further, there was a need to raise awareness of how to address this. Therefore a new Treatment of Payroll Overpayments and Underpayments Policy had been introduced in 2024 to tackle this, prior to which engagement with the Trade Unions and departments on it had taken place.

The HR Manager reported that £62k worth of overpayments were being actively recovered through salary deductions, and that regular overpayment reports were now shared with Heads of Service allowing services to address the root cause of issues and determine if they were attributable to human error or any underlying process or system issues. In respect of an issue raised at the previous meeting on Statutory Sick Pay and whether calculation of this was in line with HMRC guidance, she confirmed that this had been checked, through which it had been determined that the system was calculating this correctly.

In conclusion, she assured the Committee that necessary corrective action had been taken on the issues raised, that her section was continuing to work closely with Internal Audit, and that management had taken the issues identified incredibly seriously.

Councillor Edlin thanked the HR Manager for the clarification provided, which he considered reassuring, and welcomed the contextual information provided on the overpayment rate.

Thereafter, in response to Councillor Morrison, the HR Manager outlined action taken to make improvements to the process for dealing with those leaving the Council, commenting on work done on this with Internal Audit, the electronic leavers form and reports sent to IT regarding such employees which were complemented by direct communications between managers and the IT service to ensure access to systems was removed. She confirmed that regular overpayment reports were now shared with Heads of Service and that related follow up work was done with sections if there were considered to be any related problems. The Director of Business Operations and Partnerships added that, taking account that issues regarding leavers had been raised on various occasions, scoping work had commenced to map out the leavers process, the aim being to determine if any digital solutions could be deployed to make improvements and develop a less disjointed and more integrated approach. She confirmed that work was already done regularly to disable dormant accounts and prevent inappropriate access to systems.

The Committee noted the position and related comments made.

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2023/24 AND 2024/25 WORK PLANS

883. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 11 May 2023 (Page 849, Item 845, refers), when the Committee had noted that a report on performance against the Committee's 2023/24 Work Plan would be submitted to a future meeting, the Committee considered a report by the Clerk providing an update on the 2023/24 Work Plan and related performance, and seeking approval of the 2024/25 Work Plan to the extent it had been developed thus far.

It was confirmed that such Plans helped the Committee schedule and prioritise its work over the course of each year, that development of such Plans continued throughout the year, and that they included reference to recurring reports considered annually, such as on treasury management, Internal Audit work and risk management.

The Committee, following discussion on the importance of it taking an apolitical approach, agreed to:-

- (a) note performance against the Committee's 2023/24 Annual Work Plan;
- (b) approve the 2024/25 Annual Work Plan, to the extent it had been developed thus far;
- (c) note that development of the 2024/25 Work Plan would continue; and
- (d) note that performance on delivering the 2024/25 Work Plan would be reviewed by the Committee in due course, in respect of which a report would be submitted to a future meeting.

CHAIR

MINUTE
of
APPEALS COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 1.00pm in the Collaboration Room, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 21 June 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Katie Pragnell

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

Attending:

Kath McCormack, HR Manager; and Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement).

Apologies:

Councillors Danny Devlin and Gordon Wallace.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

884. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Chair, the committee unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

APPEAL AGAINST DISMISSAL – ENV – 02/2024

885. Lee McLaughlin, Head of Adult Services, Communities and Wellbeing and Jo Loudon, HR Business Partner appeared on behalf of management.

The appellant and a representative appeared in connection with the appeal.

Both parties made their submissions to the committee and were heard in answer to questions on their submissions.

Thereafter both parties withdrew from the meeting.

892

Following consideration, both parties were recalled and advised by the Chair that the grounds of the appeal had not been substantiated and the appeal was not upheld.

CHAIR