

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 6 February 2020.

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Councillor Danny Devlin

Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues and Change; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Andy Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); John Buchanan, Operations Manager; Fiona Caldwell, Operations Manager; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1173. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

DEBT MANAGEMENT FOR COUNCIL TAX; NON-DOMESTIC RATES; SUNDRY DEBT INCOME AND HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

1174. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval to write-off as irrecoverable funds associated with Council Tax and water and sewerage charges; non-domestic rates; sundry debt income and Housing Benefit overpayments.

Whilst noting that the Council’s debt recovery policy listed situations where write-off of debts would be considered when all viable means of collection had been exhausted, the report highlighted that there was accountancy provision for such write-offs and as such they did not affect the Council’s overall position.

The report also highlighted that in relation to irrecoverable non-domestic rates a complete review of all historical arrears would take place and a further report would be submitted to the Cabinet when this exercise was completed. It was noted that this activity would take place during the course of 2020/21.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the write-off of the following sums, without prejudice to subsequent recovery, as part of the annual write-off procedure:-
 - (i) Council Tax arrears totalling up to £242,629.97;
 - (ii) Non-domestic rates arrears totalling up to £159,163.35;
 - (iii) Sundry Debt Income totalling up to £69,268.86; and
 - (iv) Housing Benefit overpayments totalling up to £91,821.72.
- (b) noted that the write-off of the sums would have no net impact on the Council's accounts as provision had been made for the debt, in full, in previous years;
- (c) noted that water and sewerage charges totalling up to £80,230.94 were also being written off in discussion with Scottish Water; and
- (d) noted that in relation to non-domestic rates a report would be submitted to a future meeting during the course of 2020/21.

EXTENDED USE OF THE SOCIAL WORK CASE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

1175. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval for an exemption from the Council's tendering procedures to allow for the planned extension of the use of the current social work case management solution for a suitable period to allow the appropriate procurement of a replacement solution.

The report explained that the Social Work Case Management Solution was the key solution within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) which allowed for the recording and management of Client Information and Case Recording within all aspects of Social Work. However, the version being used was coming to the end of its planned life span and the vendor was looking to cease development and support of the version in the next 2 years.

It was noted that a two year procurement process by Scotland Excel was intended to result in the publication of a framework for Social Care solutions, with an award in early January 2020. However, on 16 January 2020, Scotland Excel had formally confirmed that the award of the framework had been rescinded and the tender process would be restarted due to the issues with the previous tender process.

The report concluded by indicating that the approval of the exemption from tendering procedures to allow for the planned extension of the use of the current social work case management solution for a suitable period was being sought to support the planned replacement of the social work case management solution to ensure suitable provisions were in place to support the transitional period.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved an exemption from tendering procedures in accordance with Standing Order 15(ii) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts to enable the award of a contract to OLM for Carefirst to the value of £180,000 for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2021; and
- (b) noted that this would provide sufficient time for the national framework to conclude and to then integrate any system changes.

GREENLAW BUSINESS CENTRE, NEWTON MEARNS – OPERATIONAL UPDATE AND LETTING POLICY APPROVAL

1176. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing an update on the progress with the Glasgow City Region City Deal funded Greenlaw Business Centre and seeking approval for a letting policy which was focussed on start-up and small to medium sized businesses which would have the potential to create economic growth measured by additional Gross Value Added (GVA) in accordance with the City Deal infrastructure fund criteria. Photographs of the business centre were appended to the report.

Whilst noting background information about the creation of the Greenlaw Business Centre which was principally funded from East Renfrewshire's £44million investment package from the Glasgow City Region City Deal, the report highlighted that the aim of the ambitious project was to stimulate economic growth and create opportunities for small and medium sized businesses to grow in East Renfrewshire and in the wider city region area. The investment would generate inclusive economic growth benefits, additional GVA and employment.

The report also advised that the Greenlaw Business Centre would be branded as the 'greenlaw works', and that having considered a number of operational models it was decided that the Council would be best placed to operate the centre directly with the day to management being controlled by CBRE, an experienced property management company. However, the report emphasised that responsibility for the management strategy of the facility will lie ultimately with the Environment Department.

Details of the proposed letting policy that focussed on occupancy of the accommodation by start-up and small to medium sized businesses were outlined in the report.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved a letting policy that focussed on occupancy of the accommodation by start-up and small to medium sized businesses with the aim of maximising economic growth and Gross Value Added (GVA); and
- (b) noted that the Director of Environment would develop a pricing strategy that reflected the quality of the accommodation and the local market for business centre suites as well as complying with European state aid rules where applicable.

MEMORIAL SAFETY INSPECTION – CATHCART CEMETERY

1177. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of an award of contract made as a matter of urgency in terms of Standing Order 15(i) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts to address concerns relative to the existing health and safety risks noted within Cathcart Cemetery.

The report explained that following a risk assessment, a significant number of sections in Cathcart Cemetery had been identified by the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Unit as being of "High Risk" to the public, and that a Health and Safety assessment had concluded that this would remain the case until the headstones/memorials had undergone safety inspection and been made safe where necessary.

In view of the urgency to undertake the works, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 15(i) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts a contract had been awarded to Memsafe Memorial Safety Management who had considerable experience and expertise in this field and had been working on inspections with other councils. It was noted that the work had started in November 2019 and would be completed in the near future. The contract was for a maximum of £150,000 but was expected to cost less.

The Cabinet noted:-

- (a) the reasons for the need to undertake as a matter of urgency the inspection of headstones/memorials within Cathcart Cemetery;
- (b) the use of Standing Order 15(i) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts to enable the award of a contract for such inspections; and
- (c) that the work covered by the contract formed the essential initial stage of a wider process to reduce the level of risk at the cemetery to acceptable levels within the shortest possible timeframe.

COWAN PARK CHANGING AND OTHER FACILITIES

1178. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 25 October 2012 (Page 244, Item 255 refers) when it was agreed amongst other things to provide an area of ground within Cowan Park to Barrhead Youth Football Club (BYFC) and the Johnnie Kelly pavilion at a notional rent to BYFC upon completion of the replacement Barrhead High School, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing details of the options available and proposals to consolidate and improve changing and other facilities within Cowan Park, Barrhead to allow a community based approach within the park while at the same time delivering best value for the Council. A plan of the park and the various facilities was appended to the report.

The report explained that in December 2014, the Council was advised that as a consequence of a Court of Session decision relating to Common Good issues it was unable to progress the proposed replacement Barrhead High School on the site originally proposed. Furthermore, in the view of the foregoing, the Council had been unable to fulfil its commitment to provide BYFC with changing facilities at the old Johnnie Kelly pavilion and that as a result the club had continued to use the changing rooms within the existing 7's pavilion and their own portable cabins as temporary non-refurbished accommodation.

Whilst noting that due to the Council's unfulfilled commitment to provide BYFC with permanent and more suitable changing facilities within Cowan Park an indicative Capital programme provision of £300,000 had been approved by the Council to provide changing facilities since 2017 and this remained available, the report highlighted that since 2017 extensive discussions had been ongoing with the club regarding the provision of suitable changing facilities at Cowan Park. In particular, the Council had been keen to achieve the regeneration of Cowan Park and see the provision of modern fit for purpose changing facilities in Barrhead.

However, the report indicated that whilst a specification had been prepared to meet the objectives of the project the costs associated with the project and an alternative proposal were significantly in excess of the capital programme provision. In view of this, an option appraisal exercise had been carried out by officers.

Details of three Options considered were outlined in the report. These were noted as Option 1 – A new build bespoke modular facility costing around £730,000; Option 2 – A basic budget new build modular facility costing around £520,000; and Option 3 – Reconfiguration and lease of the 7's pavilion and lease of the 4G pitch to Barrhead Youth Football Club at an estimated cost of around £300,000. Having considered each of the options in detail, it was proposed that Option 3 be approved.

The Cabinet approved Option 3 as detailed in the report as the best value solution to fulfilling the Council's outstanding commitment to provide changing facilities for Barrhead Youth Football Club and wider ambition to improve the layout and operation of facilities within Cowan Park, Barrhead.

CHAIR

