

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**

**Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 25 April 2019.**

**Present:**

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

Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Business Change and Revenues; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Alison Findlay, Policy and Employment Law Adviser; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Paul O'Kane (Deputy Leader).

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**860.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER)**

**861.** The Cabinet considered and noted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 14 February 2019, which forms Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute.

**BEST VALUE ASSURANCE REPORT – ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

**862.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 26 April 2018 (Page 369, Item 395 refers), when it was agreed amongst other things to approve the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) action plan update, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on the delivery of the action plan arising from the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) that had been published in November 2017, following an audit of Best Value carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission. A copy of the action plan update as at April 2019 was appended to the report.

The report explained that in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, councils had a statutory duty to secure Best Value and that the Council had been subject to its second audit of Best Value in 2017 which had covered a range of issues. Arising from that audit, 5 recommendations were made in the areas of member scrutiny; strategic planning; spending against revenue budgets; community engagement and empowerment; and option appraisal.

Whilst noting that evidence had been listed against each of the recommendations as detailed in the appendix to the report, the report indicated that this demonstrated how the Council had completed the actions specified in the action plan. The evidence included supporting elected member scrutiny via training and the recruitment of an additional temporary officer to further enhance the work of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee; clarifying the Council's longer term approach to financial planning and demonstrating the integration of the Council's strategic plans.

Furthermore, specific actions against longer term areas such as reviewing service planning, implementing budgeting, progress on City Deal projects and demonstrating the use of option appraisals had also been progressed and would be taken forward as part of day to day business.

The report concluded by highlighting that the Council had shown its ongoing commitment to achieving Best Value for East Renfrewshire's residents and communities and that a robust monitoring process was in place. The action plan demonstrated the Council's progress and strong culture of continuous improvement and modernisation. It was noted that there would be ongoing annual scrutiny of the Council's arrangements for Best Value as part of the yearly external audit process.

The Cabinet:

- (a) approved the Best Value action plan update as at April 2019; and
- (b) otherwise noted the completion of the actions in the action plan.

### **UPDATE ON MODERN, AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME (MAP)**

**863.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 21 June 2018 (Page 445, Item 472 refers), when the Cabinet agreed amongst other things to note that work was underway to develop and enhance the Council's approach to reporting on the modern, ambitious programme, the Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing a high level update on the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) including Core Systems and delivery of the Digital Strategy.

The report explained that the Council's Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) sought to modernise the way in which the Council worked; addressed the pressures of increasing demands and financial constraints; and concentrated on three of the Council's five capabilities which were noted as modernising, digital and data. Given the financial situation of the Council, MAP projects had tended to focus on financial savings whilst still protecting or improving outcomes for the Council's citizens.

Details of the six major programmes of change were outlined in the report and were noted as Core Systems; Digital; Environmental change programme; HSCP change programme (Fit for the Future); Education change programme; and Corporate and Community Services change programme. Whilst noting the progress that had been made to develop strategic programme reporting for the Council's change programmes, the report provided an update on the Core

Systems programme and indicated that the Council had awarded a 5-year contract for a new Finance/Procurement system with scope for five 12 month extensions should this be required and the award of a 4-year contract for a new HR/Payroll system.

In terms of the Council's Digital Strategy which had been approved at the meeting of the Cabinet on 21 June 2018, the report advised that the Council had now established a Digital Board; and provided a detailed overview of all the digital projects ongoing across the Council together with a scored evaluation of how digital the Council's processes were. Furthermore, the Local Government Digital Office had carried out a Digital Maturity assessment earlier this year which had resulted in a positive outcome. Details of the key departmental change projects being carried out in the Council were also outlined in the report together with confirmation that the 2019/20 savings targets were on track to be delivered.

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the progress to develop strategic programme reporting for the Council's change programmes;
- (b) noted the award of a 5-year contract for a new Finance/Procurement system, with scope with five 12-month extensions if required;
- (c) noted the award of a 4-year contract for a new HR/Payroll system;
- (d) commented the significant progress to develop a Digital Board and digital programme, including analysis of digital skills and scoring of digital processes;
- (e) acknowledged the positive outcomes of the Local Government Digital Offices Digital Maturity Assessment of the Council;
- (f) noted the overview of the key departmental change projects; and
- (g) noted the departmental confirmation that 2019/20 savings targets were on track to be delivered.

#### **PROGRESS ON THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING AND OUTCOMES PROGRAMME: 2017-21**

**864.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing an update on the Council's programme to fulfil its equality and human rights duties in accordance with the report published in April 2017 entitled "Review of the Council's Equality and Human Rights Requirements and Plans for Equality Outcomes 2017-2021". A copy of the document was appended to the report.

The report outlined the Council's equality duties as required by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties)(Scotland) Regulations 2012 and explained that every two years the Council was required by law to publish a report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes it had set, no later than 30 April. In addition, the Council was required to publish a report on progress towards making the general equality duty integral to the exercise of its functions, so as to better perform that duty. The information that should be included in these follow-up reports was also outlined in the report.

Whilst noting the engagement and consultation that had taken place which had employed a number of methods used to track progress in fulfilling the Council's equality commitments. Feedback from discussion workshops from the 'Bridges to Change' conference was also outlined in the report.

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The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the terms of the report; and
- (b) approved the report for publication on the Council's website by 30 April 2019.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**

of

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER)**

**Minute of Meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 14 February 2019.**

**Present:**

Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Tony Buchanan

**Union Representatives:**

Ms Karen Catlow (UNISON)

Mr Gordon Lees (UNISON)

Ms Sharon Kelly (EIS)

Mr Des Morris (EIS)

Mr Mark Kirkland (UNISON)

Mr James O'Connell (UNITE)

Mr Steven Larkin (UNISON)

Councillor Tony Buchanan in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager; and Linda Hutchison, Senior Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Paul O'Kane and Stewart Miller; and Mr Joe Lynch (UNISON).

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. The committee considered and approved as a correct record the Minute of the meeting held on 15 February 2018.

**REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20**

2. Councillor Buchanan confirmed that the Scottish Government had recently approved the final 2019/20 grant allocation for local authorities, quantifying the level of additional grant allocated to the Council recently over and above the provisional grant announced in December 2018.

The Head of Accountancy reported that the last time discussions with the Trade Unions had taken place, a budgetary shortfall of approximately £14m had been indicated, this having been reduced to approximately £4m, taking account of the 2019/20 savings approved by the Council in March 2018 as part of the indicative future budgets set at that time covering 3

financial years. Having commented on the grant allocation mechanism used by the Scottish Government, she reported that the recent announcement of an additional £1.78m was welcome and helpful.

Whilst referring to various changes and elements of flexibility that had been announced by the Scottish Government, the Head of Accountancy clarified that local authorities were required to limit any Council Tax increase for 2019/20 to a maximum on 4.79% which equated to 3% in real terms. It was explained that, through the settlement, local authorities had also been given discretionary powers to introduce a new tourist tax and a workplace parking levy, both of which would require to be considered further if the Council opted to consider doing so. Whilst referring to flexibility promised regarding Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) in advance of the next property revaluation in 2022, the Head of Accountancy clarified that the settlement offered Councils discretion to vary the level of NDR empty property relief in the future. It also offered local authorities discretion to vary loans fund repayment arrangements for advances made before April 2016. She clarified that detailed guidance and legislation to enable these options to be considered in future remained outstanding, adding that the provision on loan repayments could be helpful in future years but not necessarily in 2019/20.

The Head of Accountancy confirmed that the Scottish Government had also given a further commitment to move to 3 year settlements from 2020/21 which would greatly assist the Council with future financial planning, and also to publish legislation during the term of the current Parliament on options to replace the Council Tax system of funding local government. Further developments and guidance on both issues were awaited.

Whilst referring to the remaining budgetary shortfall of £1.9m for 2019/20 which remained to be identified over and above savings already agreed, the Head of Accountancy commented on the restriction on the level of savings that could be applied to Integration Joint Board (IJB) budgets and related issues. She also explained that the increase in contributions to the teacher superannuation scheme had not been quite as severe as anticipated originally.

In response to Mr Lees, the Head of Accountancy confirmed that the provision to vary loans fund repayment arrangements would apply to historic loans entered into prior to April 2016 rather than future ones. She further clarified that it did not apply to PPP/PFI schemes. Councillor Buchanan referred to the need to await the exact terms of related guidance and legislation to confirm the extent to which related savings could be achieved.

Having welcomed the forthcoming introduction of multi-year budget settlements, Mr O'Connell expressed the view that the workplace parking levy, if introduced locally, would only impact on the Corporate Management Team and Elected Members for whom dedicated parking places were provided. Councillor Buchanan clarified that the Council's position on such provision still required to be determined formally, but that a lot of additional work would be required to introduce this and that the Council had no intention of imposing additional costs on employees. He welcomed devolved powers being given to local authorities, but clarified that they would not all necessarily be utilised in East Renfrewshire at present.

Mr Morris welcomed the opportunity that had been given to the Trade Unions to make representations on the budget, referring to the extent of the concerns that existed on budget savings including those associated with Pupil Support Assistants. Mr Lees also referred to concerns regarding the future of bilingual services and technical services commenting on the extent to which they were used and would be missed if related savings were made. In reply, Councillor Buchanan referred to the need to look at all costs to identify savings, clarified that representations made by the Trade Unions were considered, and commented on the efforts being made to limit the impact of savings on services and to do so as well and as fairly as possible. Having heard Mr Lees welcome the opportunity to contribute to the redesign of

services to contribute to the identification of savings, Councillor Buchanan referred to related benefits of such reviews and the importance of involving those delivering services in them.

In response to Mr Lees, Councillor Buchanan confirmed that some discussion had taken place on the discretionary power being given to local authorities to vary the level of Council Tax empty property relief in future, adding that consideration was always given to what benefits could be accrued from the use of discretionary powers. The Head of Accountancy confirmed that costings associated with such proposals would be considered.

It was agreed to note the position and comments made.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

3. The committee considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Council's Health and Safety Committee held on 24 January, 25 April, 29 August and 12 December 2018.

Mr Morris referred to discussions on communications on the reporting of accidents and incidents at the meeting on 12 December and subsequently, welcoming that a further staff newsletter was to be issued and other action being taken to promote awareness of health and safety issues and procedures. Councillor Buchanan welcomed this also.

The committee noted the Minutes and comments made.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

4. The committee noted that confirmation of the date of the next meeting, which was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9 May 2019, would be circulated.

