

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 15 August 2019.

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Colm Merrick

Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues and Change; Mark Ratter, Head Of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Craig Geddes, Senior Information and Improvement Officer; Kim Gear, Corporate Policy Officer; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Caroline Bamforth, Danny Devlin, and Alan Lafferty.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

963. Councillors Merrick and O’Kane declared non-financial interests in relation to Item 968 - East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure – End-Year Performance Report 2018/19 on the grounds that they were members of the Board of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

At this stage, the Leader proposed that the report be continued to the next meeting of the Cabinet on 29 August 2019 to allow Councillors Devlin, Bamforth and Lafferty who were not members of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust Board the opportunity to give consideration to the report. This was agreed.

REMIT FROM EDUCATION COMMITTEE – GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN FOR EAST RENFREWSHIRE

964. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Education Committee of 13 June 2019 (Page 854, Item 909 refers) when it was agreed amongst other things to remit the plan to the Cabinet for approval, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education, providing an update on progress with the Gaelic Language Plan for East Renfrewshire.

The report explained that the draft East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan 2015-19 had been developed following consultation with colleagues across the Council and with support from the nominated officer from the Bord na Gaidhlig. The updated Gaelic Language Plan 2017-22, a copy of which accompanied the report, had been prepared following feedback from Bord na Gaidhlig with timescales amended accordingly.

Referring to one of the actions in the plan concerning proposals for signage that was due to be replaced that these should be in Gaelic and English demonstrating equal respect for both languages, Councillor O’Kane suggested that further discussions should take place before prior to implementing the action.

The Cabinet agreed:-

- (a) that the Director of Education submit a report to a future meeting of the Cabinet regarding proposals to replace signage in both Gaelic and English; and
- (b) noted the updated content and timescales of the Gaelic Language Plan for East Renfrewshire.

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2018/19

965. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of the Council’s annual efficiency statement for 2018/19. A copy of the statement was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that councils were required to provide annual efficiency statements to COSLA each year and having noted that a summary statement, for local government as a whole, was then developed for the Scottish Government, and that the Council’s statement was also placed on the Council website for public access, the report highlighted the ways in which efficiencies could arise within the Council.

Details of a number of improvement and change programmes that were underway in the Council were outlined in the report. It was noted that the main focus over the preceding year had been the core systems programme which was concerned with the significant change to replace the Council’s ICT systems for finance/procurement and HR/payroll and establishing the digital programme. The annual efficiency statement appended to the report gave some further detail on how this work had delivered efficiencies and savings over 2018/19 it being noted that the Council had made cash-releasing savings of £3,374,983.00.

The Cabinet approved the annual efficiency statement 2018/19 for submission to COSLA.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – COUNCIL PERFORMANCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2018 TO MARCH 2019

966. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing details of the annual report on the Council’s performance in dealing with Freedom of Information requests.

The report explained that Freedom of Information provided a statutory right of access to information held by Scottish public authorities and that statistical reports on how the Council had dealt with information requests had been produced on an annual basis since the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act came into force in 2005.

The report explained that to bring the report into line with other reporting mechanisms, the reporting period was being changed from the calendar year to the financial year and therefore covered requests received in the 15 month period from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The Council had received a total of 1,840 requests during the 15 month period whereas 1,463 requests were received for the calendar year 2018 and 1,507 for the financial year 2018/19. Details of Council, departmental and sectional performance in responding to Freedom of Information requests were outlined together with a summary of the use of exemptions, reviews and appeals.

The Cabinet noted the report.

END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2018/19

967. The Cabinet considered reports by the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive in relation to the End-Year Performance Reports 2018/19 for their respective departments, details of which were outlined in the appendices to the reports.

The Cabinet approved the reports as summaries of the Chief Executive's Office and Corporate and Community Services Department End-Year Performance for 2018/19.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE – END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19

968. The Cabinet agreed that consideration of the report be continued to the next meeting on 29 August 2019.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

969. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, providing details of the financial results for 2018/19 and comparing the out-turn with the final budgetary control statement for that year which was submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet on 4 April 2019.

The report demonstrated the continuing excellent financial performance of the Council and indicated that subject to audit, the financial results contained within the accounts were satisfactory. Whilst noting that the Council's financial affairs had again been managed within its operational budget, the report highlighted that an overall surplus for the financial year of £4,089,000 had been recorded in the accounts.

The report highlighted that after transfers to earmarked reserves, the Council's non-earmarked General Fund reserve had increased by £384,000 resulting in a balance of £10,517,000 as at 31 March 2019. This represented 4.3% of the annual budgetary net revenue expenditure and was slightly above the Council's most prudent target level of 4%. However, the balance would significantly reduce over the current year as the Council had budgeted to use £4,312,000 of this reserve during 2019/20.

The report also provided details of transfers totalling £2,734,000 that had been made from the General Fund balance to the non-earmarked General Fund; Modernisation Fund; Equalisation Reserve; Feasibility Fund; Capital Reserve; and Repairs and Renewals Fund. Furthermore, the Housing Revenue Account recorded an operational surplus of £89,000 thus increasing the accumulated surplus balance to carry forward to £1,718,000.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the out-turn position compared to the previous budgetary control report;
- (b) approved the transfers being made from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve, Modernisation Fund, Repairs and Renewals Fund, Equalisation Reserve and the new Feasibility Fund; and
- (c) noted that once the audit had been completed the Final Accounts would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council along with the External Auditor's report.

CHAIR