

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 26 April 2018.

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; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Jamie Reid, Partnership and Community Services Manager; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

394. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

BEST VALUE ASSURANCE REPORT – ACTION PLAN UPDATE

395. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council of 13 December 2018 (Page 243, Item 271 refers), when it was agreed amongst other things to approve the action plan arising from the recommendations of the Council’s Best Value Assurance Report published in November 2017 following an audit of Best Value carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on the delivery of the action plan. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that overall the East Renfrewshire BVAR was very positive and provided assurance to residents, communities and the Accounts Commission that the Council was continuing to achieve Best Value, the BVAR concluded by identifying 5 recommendations for the Council to take forward as part of its ongoing approach to continuous improvement. An action plan had been prepared to address the BVAR’s main recommendations.

The report explained that in the short time since the publication of the BVAR, the Council had made good progress on delivering the action plan with delivery on all areas of the plan although some remained ongoing as part of a longer-term continuous improvement journey. Furthermore, the Council’s progress would be considered by the external audit team in May/June 2018 as part of their annual audit reporting process.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) Action Plan update; and
- (b) noted the good progress made to date in addressing the Best Value Assurance Report recommendations.

CABINET WORK PLAN 2017/18 PROGRESS AND CABINET WORK PLAN 2018/19

396. Under reference to the Minute of meeting of the Cabinet of 31 August 2017 (Page 103, Item 112 refers), when the Cabinet agreed amongst other things to note that progress against the interim Cabinet Work Plan be reviewed in April 2018 and updated on an annual basis thereafter, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on the progress made against the 2017/18 Cabinet Work Plan and submitting for consideration the draft work plan for 2018/19. Details of the progress made against the 2017/18 Plan together with a copy of the draft Plan for 2018/19 were appended to the report.

Whilst noting that the Plan set out a forward programme of strategy and policy work along with key routine areas of business covering budget and performance monitoring, the report provided details of the progress made against the 2017/18 Plan, and highlighted the items of business included in the draft Cabinet Plan 2018/19. Overall very good progress had been made against the Plan with almost 85% of business being considered by the Cabinet earlier than planned, within the stated timescales or the following month.

The report concluded by indicating that the Cabinet Work Plan was a forward planning exercise which would ensure the strategic focus of the Council was maintained, and would also ensure cross-cutting strategy issues were identified. Furthermore, it also ensured that the Cabinet made the most efficient and effective use of the time available to discuss and approve strategies, monitor performance and oversee the use of resources.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the performance against the Cabinet Work Plan for 2017/18;
- (b) approved the content of the draft Cabinet Work Plan for 2018/19; and
- (c) agreed that progress against the Cabinet Work Plan be reviewed in April 2019 and updated on an annual basis thereafter.

COMMUNITY CHOICES BUDGETING FRAMEWORK

397. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing details of the national 'Community Choices Budgeting Framework' and seeking approval of the next steps to ensure that the Council was working towards community choices budgeting. A copy of the framework was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that Community Choices Budgeting was the Scottish Government's preferred name for participatory budgeting, and having noted that it was a decision making process in which residents decided how to allocate part of a public budget, the report explained that the process allowed local people to identify, discuss, and prioritise public spending projects, and gave them the power to make decisions about how money was spent. The Scottish Government's programme for Scotland for 2017/18 included a commitment on having at least 1% of council budgets subject to community choices budgeting.

The report provided details of the Council's learning from previous participatory budgeting projects to date including £600,000 of Roads repair funding which had been distributed by public vote and a £100,000 Community Choices project delivered in the Locality Plan areas of Auchenback and ADD2Barrhead (Arthurlie, Dunterlie and Dovecothall). Details of the proposals for implementing Community Choices Budgeting in East Renfrewshire over the next 3 years were also outlined in the report.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the national 'Community Choices Budgeting: Framework for the Operation of the 1% target for Local Authorities', and learning from previous participatory budgeting exercises in East Renfrewshire; and
- (b) approved the next steps as outlined in the report.

KIRKSTYLE LANE, NEILSTON

398. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to retain Kirkstyle Lane, Neilston, within the ownership of the Council and to acquire from Barrhead Housing Association ownership of various site investigations and studies commissioned by them in relation to the site which would allow the Council to consider future options.

The report provided background information about the site highlighting that at the meeting of the Cabinet on 10 November 2016, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 had been approved. It was noted that Kirkstyle Lane (locally known as "Pig Square") had been identified as being suitable for the delivery of socially rented housing (up to 24 units) and that Barrhead Housing Association as a Registered Social Landlord ("RSL") had been identified to take the site forward for this purpose.

Whilst noting the measures that had been taken by Barrhead Housing Association to deliver such a development including the submission of a planning application, the report explained that since the original decision had been made in 2016 circumstances had changed and that the Council was now giving consideration to using the site for another purpose, details of which were outlined in the report. It was noted that provision of £85,000 had been made in the General Fund Capital Plan for 2017/18 for the alternative project.

Given the change of circumstances, the report proposed that the site at Kirkstyle Lane be retained within the Council's ownership; and that it be no longer (at least in the meantime) progressed for residential development. However, as Barrhead Housing Association had in good faith already commissioned various site investigations and studies in relation to the site, it was proposed that the Council acquire the ownership of these studies from the Association at a cost of around £87,000 which was the basic cost that the Association had incurred in commissioning them, subject to the production of detailed receipts prior to any payment being made.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the proposal to retain ownership of Kirkstyle Lane, Neilston; and
- (b) authorised the Director of Environment to acquire from Barrhead Housing Association various site investigations and studies commissioned by them in relation to Kirkstyle Lane, Neilston at a cost of £87,000.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Leader, the Cabinet 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 Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

PROPOSED SALE OF FORMER AUCHENBACK PRIMARY SCHOOLHOUSE

399. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to sell the former Auchenback Primary schoolhouse to the current occupant.

The report explained that the proposal would allow the Council to dispose of a surplus property asset, generate a capital receipt and avoid future maintenance responsibilities.

The Cabinet:

- (a) approved the sale of the former Auchenback Primary schoolhouse to the current tenant for the sum as detailed in the report; and
- (b) agreed that delegated powers be granted to the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement, to finalise negotiations and conclude the disposal.

CHAIR