

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

**Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 23 March 2017.**

**Present:**

Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)  
Councillor Elaine Green  
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Ian McAlpine  
Councillor Vincent Waters

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Louise Pringle, Head of Business Change and Revenues; Andy Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Sharon Beattie, Head of HR, Customer and Communications; Candy Millard, Head of Strategic Services; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Jackie Martin, Corporate Business Manager; Shona Fraser, Environmental Services Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Tony Buchanan (Deputy Leader), Danny Devlin, and Mary Montague.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**2433.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER)**

**2434.** The Cabinet considered and noted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 19 January 2017, which forms Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute.

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE: UPDATE REPORT**

**2435.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on a review of the Vision for the Future Organisational Development Plan and details of the progress made in the first year. A copy of the plan was appended to the report.

The report provided background details about the new approach to organisational development that had been approved by the Council in May 2013 which included the introduction of 5 capabilities that the Council needed to excel at in order to deliver outcomes for local communities. These were noted as Prevention; Modernisation; Data; Digital; and Community Engagement.

Whilst noting that in 2015 the Council first Organisational Development (OD) Plan had set out the Council's vision to be "A modern ambitious council creating a fairer future with all", the report indicated that this was to help the Council deliver its strategy of 5 outcomes, 5 capabilities and 5 values, the report explained that the Modern Ambitious Programme change programme had also been launched at that time as a successor to Public Service Excellence. The 5 year plan 'Vision for the Future' was subsequently published and communicated to staff in the autumn of 2015.

The report also provided details of the review highlights and indicated that the update report on the 'Vision for the Future' demonstrated the very significant progress the Council had made in a short space of time and set out a clear understanding of the actions that the Council needed to take to continue on the journey, focussed at all times on making life better for Council residents. Furthermore, the review suggested that the Council was on track to achieve its vision of a modern, ambitious Council creating a fairer future with all.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

#### **DRAFT OUTCOME DELIVERY PLAN 2017/20**

**2436.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing details of the Council's draft Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) 2017/20. A copy of the ODP was appended to the report.

The report explained that the ODP was the Council's 3-year plan which was updated annually and was an important document as it set out the Council's key planned priorities for delivering better outcomes for all of East Renfrewshire's residents and communities, within its overall aim of making people's lives better. Furthermore, it had been developed to become a visual, streamlined plan through the use of a set of diagrams which showed 'at a glance' the key things the Council was planning to do to achieve its outcomes and some high level performance measures. It was noted that progress against the plan would continue to be reported on a 6-monthly basis.

The report concluded by indicating that the ODP set out the Council's strategic intent. Council services had refined their input to the driver diagrams for the new ODP and checked that performance measures were robust and that they demonstrated the Council's ultimate aim of making people's lives better in East Renfrewshire. The changing nature of the new community plan arrangements coupled with the incoming political administration following the local government elections in May 2017 might result in some changes to the ODP post-election.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the content of the draft Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/20 and noted that the plan might be subject to minor amendments prior to the consideration at a future meeting of the new Council following the local government elections in May 2017;
- (b) noted the Outcome Delivery Plan might be subject to change following the new administration in May 2017;

- (c) agreed to **recommend to the new Council** that the draft Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/20 be approved; and
- (d) noted that the East Renfrewshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) was required to be in place by 1 October 2017.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK: 2015/16 PERFORMANCE**

**2437.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on the national Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) together with an overview of the Council's performance against the LGBF indicators from 2013/14 to 2015/16. A copy of the performance report was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that the LGBF had been recorded and publicly reported by all Scottish councils as a statutory requirement since 2010/11, the report highlighted that the framework provided comparative analysis for a total of 68 indicators at a Council level although only 66 were relevant to the Council. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of LGBF indicators from a total of 56 for 2014/15 with the main additions being to the indicator sets for education, economic development and planning.

The report explained that published LGBF data was for financial year 2015/16, and therefore the data was not new and that much of the information had been publicly reported to the Council as part of the Council's performance management arrangements. However, it was noted that several new indicators had been added to the 2015/16 LGBF and final cost figures were being presented for the first time. Furthermore, this was only the first time that the Council's 2015/16 results had been presented in comparison with councils' performance across Scotland. Detailed information on the LGBF (including data issues) was outlined in Annex 2 to the report.

The report highlighted that the Council's performance against the LGBF data set showed a very positive picture of performance, with 59% of indicators in the top two quartiles (for published indicators). Furthermore, in 2015/16 the Council was ranked as one of the top three best performing councils for a quarter (i.e. 25%) of LGBF indicators. The 2015/16 data showed particularly strong performance in key outcome areas where the Council was making differences to people's lives including education, recycling and housing. In addition the Council had been reducing costs for support services and democratic court, and it was reducing absence rates following targeted action.

The report also explained that the LGBF indicator set was only one means of recording and measuring the Council's performance. To achieve a balanced picture, the outcomes the Council was delivering through the Single Outcome Agreement, Outcome Delivery Plan and through various audits, inspections and self-assessments should be noted. There was a wide range of performance information scrutinised and reported by the Council which was not statutory and provided detailed information on performance.

The Cabinet noted the Council's performance against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators and the actions being taken by departments to address any performance issues.

## **REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS**

**2438.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet on 24 March 2016 (Page 1853, Item 1976 refers), when the Cabinet noted the previous update of the register, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing the annual update of the Council's Strategic Risk Register and a summary of risk management progress.

The report explained that the Strategic Risk Register set out the key risks to be considered by the Council and detailed the action that management had put in place to manage these risks. It was noted that each Council service had an Operational Risk Register to record day to day and service specific risks.

The report also highlighted that as well as deletions from the register, several risks had been amended to include additional control measures and the risks had been re-scored for significance. A further review of all risks on the register had been undertaken by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and risks were now grouped in the register by outcome from the Single Outcome Agreement. It was noted that there were now 25 risks of which 8 were evaluated as high, 13 medium and 4 low.

The Cabinet approved the updated Council's Strategic Risk Register.

## **THE FAIR WORK FRAMEWORK**

**2439.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing an update on the Fair Work Framework produced by the Fair Work Convention and outlining a proposal to assess the Council's practice against the principles of fair work.

The report explained that the Council had fair working practices in place ensuring there was priority given to employee wellbeing, resilience and engagement. Furthermore the Fair Work Framework provided an opportunity to have a dialog with trade union representatives on fair work. This would focus on what would make a positive difference to employees within the work place to enhance capacity and strengthen the Council's ability to deliver the best possible services to the residents of East Renfrewshire.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) supported the Fair Work Framework and the Fair Work Principles; and
- (b) agreed that delegated powers be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive to work with the trade unions to assess the Council's people practices against the Fair Work principles.

## **GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

**2440.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, monitoring the expenditure as at 1 March 2017 against the approved Capital Programme for 2016/17 and recommending adjustments where necessary in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The report highlighted the latest developments relating to the programme, including the latest income and expenditure movements and cash flow management issues and indicated that the projected shortfall of £248,000 representing 0.7% of the resources available was within manageable limits.

The Cabinet agreed to:-

- (a) **recommend to the Council** that the movements within the General Fund Capital Programme 2016/17 be approved; and
- (b) note that the shortfall of £248,000 would be managed and reported within the final accounts for the year.

### **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17**

**2441.** The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Environment, monitoring expenditure as at 1 March 2017 against the approved Housing Capital Programme 2016/17 and recommending adjustments where necessary in light of the issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

The report highlighted the latest developments relating to the programme, including the latest income and expenditure movements and cash flow management issues and indicated that the projected shortfall of £26,000 representing 0.5% of the resources available was within manageable limits.

The Cabinet agreed to:-

- (a) **recommend to the Council** that the movements within the Housing Capital Programme 2016/17 be approved; and
- (b) note that the shortfall of £26,000 would be managed and reported within the final accounts for the year.

### **COLLABORATION AGREEMENT WITH GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL FOR PARKING PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE PROCESSING**

**2442.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 28 January 2016 (Page 1760, Item 1882 refers) when it was agreed to approve the continuation of the current contract with Glasgow City Council as the preferred supplier of the services for parking penalty charge notice processing, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to enter into a public-public collaboration agreement with Glasgow City Council for parking penalty charge notice processing.

Whilst noting that since the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement within the Council area in 2013, Glasgow City Council had provided the back office support for penalty charge notice processing, the report indicated that the Scottish Government, Audit Scotland and the Improvement Service had actively been encouraging councils to collaborate on shared service opportunities.

The report proposed a public-public collaboration by way of a signed Public Service Agreement which would allow the Council to continue with its successful partnership with Glasgow City Council. By doing so this would avoid having to undertake a procurement exercise on the open market. It was noted that Glasgow City Council had agreed to enter into this collaboration subject to the signing of the Public Service Agreement

The Cabinet agreed that:-

- (a) the Council enter into a public-public collaborative Agreement with Glasgow City Council for penalty charge notice processing; and

- (b) delegated powers be granted to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement to finalise and sign off that agreement.

## **EAST RENFREWSHIRE HOUSING REGISTER**

**2443.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to terminate the current East Renfrewshire Housing Register (ERHR) and review the approach to joint working between the Council and local housing associations.

The report explained that the East Renfrewshire Housing Register was developed in 2008 to ensure that socially rented housing applicants had full access to socially rented housing in East Renfrewshire. However, given the low number of Housing Associations operating in East Renfrewshire and their low housing stock numbers this had meant that many of the potential benefits had not fully materialised and the current ERHR model caused some issues for all partners.

A new approach to joint working was being developed to ensure that access to socially rented housing across the Council area was easily available it being noted that landlords had flexibility to allocate their own housing stock based on their own particular requirements.

The Cabinet approved the termination of the current East Renfrewshire Housing Register with a view to implementing alternative arrangements for those making applications to be included on local housing lists.

## **EAST RENFREWSHIRE RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND PANEL ADMINISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS**

**2444.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 7 April 2016 (Page 1889, Item 2000 refers), when it was agreed to approve the establishment of the East Renfrewshire Renewable Energy Fund (ERREF) as the successor to the Whitelee Windfarm Fund, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to clarify the administration arrangements in relation to the East Renfrewshire Renewable Energy Fund (ERREF) Panel.

The report explained that in establishing the new ERREF as the successor to the Whitelee Windfarm Fund a number of changes had been made to the Council managed community benefit fund including a change to the decision making body. However, at that time the quorum for the Panel had not been clarified or that the Panel had delegated decision making powers.

Given the increased elected Member representation on the new Panel, it was considered appropriate to devolve decision making powers to the Panel without the need for recommendations being made by the Panel being approved by the Director of Environment. It was noted that this arrangement would be subject to the quorum for the Panel being two elected Members, and that as was the case with the former Whitelee Windfarm Fund Panel in the event of a split decision, the Director of Environment would decide whether or not a proposal should be supported. The report proposed that the quorum of the Panel should be two elected Members.

It was noted that the first meeting of the ERREF Panel had taken place on 8 February 2017 and that only two elected Members were present. A copy of the Panel's recommendations was appended to the report.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) agreed that the quorum for the East Renfrewshire Renewable Energy Fund (ERREF) Panel be two elected Members;
- (b) agreed to delegate decision making to the ERREF Panel, subject to any applications where there was a split decision being referred to the Director of Environment for a decision on whether or not the application should be supported; and
- (c) homologated the decisions taken at the first meeting of the ERREF Panel on 8 February 2017 in the absence of any previously established quorum requirements.

### **ROAD CONDITION INDICATOR FOR 2015 AND 2016 AND CURRENT MAINTENANCE BACKLOG FIGURE**

**2445.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing an update on the condition of the Council's roads, the Road Condition Indicator, the current maintenance backlog figure and developments to date with regard to a review of the Roads service.

Whilst noted that there was currently a £26.6 million backlog which was the cost to immediately clear all of the red and amber rated defects from the Council's carriageways, the report indicated that this figure had remained fairly static over the past few years. Furthermore, the Road Condition Indicator had also remained relatively static over the past three years. The Council currently had the highest (i.e. best) rated A Class roads in Scotland. It was noted that overall, the Council's road network was considered to be at position 25 out of 32 local authorities and that the considerable achievements on the classified network were clearly diminished by the figures on the unclassified network.

In view of the foregoing results, the Council had been agreed that on top of an additional £500K from the Repairs and Renewals Fund, to commit a further £1.6 million in 2017/18 to roads investment, and that this funding would be spent in residential/unclassified roads.

Details of a service review that was currently underway within the Roads and Transportation service was outlined in the report. It was noted that extensive and detailed data and information were currently being analysed and reviewed and that a full option appraisal would be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet with recommendations as to how the service might be delivered and/or funded in the future.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the details of the 2016 Road Condition Indicator and the considerable improvements achieved by the Roads service in recent years;
- (b) noted the current maintenance backlog figure; and
- (c) agreed that the Environment Department continue to explore alternative delivery models for the Roads service through the Environment Department Change Programme.

**ROADS REVENUE WORKS PROGRAMME 2017/18**

**2446.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval for the Roads Revenue Works Programme 2017/18 and for a “participatory budgeting” exercise being carried out giving local communities a stronger role in planning, service delivery and improving outcomes. A copy of the programme was appended to the report.

The report explained that the Roads Revenue Works programme covered routine maintenance, winter maintenance and carriageway and footway resurfacing and patching. It was noted that the total allocation for 2017/18 was £5,664,600 and importantly this reflected the Council’s decision to give priority to roads and footpaths particularly in view of Audit Scotland’s report of August 2016 entitled ‘*Maintaining Scotland’s Roads*’.

It was further noted that the Council had for 2017/18 made an additional £1.6 million available for roads and footpaths in residential areas and a contribution of £500,000 from the Repairs and Renewals Fund for road repairs generally. An additional £50,000 for winter maintenance had also been added to the core winter maintenance budget for 2017/18 and future years.

Details of the prioritisation of the proposed resurfacing schemes together with information on the factors that had been taken into consideration were outlined in the report. It was noted that the Winter Maintenance budget for 2017/18 had been increased from £850,000 to £900,000.

The report concluded by highlighting that the 2017/18 Roads Revenue Works Programme was designed to provide the best available spend within the available resources. There was also an opportunity to undertake a participative budgeting exercise regarding the £600,000 of additional funding allocated for 2017/18.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the Roads Revenue Works Programme of £5,064.600 for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix A to the report; and
- (b) approved the proposal to carry out a participatory budgeting exercise with regard to £600,000 of the total Revenue Works Programme allocation.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**

of

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER)**

**Minute of Meeting held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 19 January 2017.**

**Present:**

Councillor Jim Fletcher  
Councillor Ian McAlpine

Councillor Gordon McCaskill  
Councillor Ralph Robertson

**Union Representatives:**

Mr Martin Doran (GMB)  
Mr John Guidi (SSTA)  
Mr Mark Kirkland (UNISON)  
Mr Steven Larkin (UNISON)

Mr Gordon Lees (UNISON)  
Mr Des Morris (EIS)  
Mr James O'Connell (UNITE)  
Mr John Rodgers (EIS)

Mr Morris in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Housing and Property Services); Frank White, Head of Health and Community Care; Sharon Beattie, Head of HR, Customer and Communications; Hugh Friel, Senior HR Officer; and Linda Hutchison, Senior Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Mr Joe Lynch (UNISON).

**Urgent Item of Business**

**Mr Morris gave notice that he had accepted an additional item of business regarding the sale of Bonnyton House as urgent on the grounds of information on this that had just come to light.**

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. The committee considered and approved as a correct record the Minute of the meeting held on 22 September 2016, subject to the amendment of the typographical error in the last line of the third last paragraph of the item on the Potential Sale of Bonnyton House.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

2. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 22 September 2016 (Item 5 refers) when it had been noted that the Head of Environment (Housing and Property Services) would provide further clarification to Councillor McCaskill following the meeting on levels of violence towards staff in the Education Department compared to other departments, Councillor McCaskill thanked the Head of Environment for providing this promptly. It was reported that further clarification had been provided to the Trade Unions also and that such issues were being raised at further meetings as required.

The committee noted the position.

## **SALE OF BONNYTON HOUSE**

3. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 22 September 2016 (Item 4 refers) when the current position and comments made on the potential sale of Bonnyton House had been noted, Mr Larkin sought clarification on the sale, the way forward now and the position on savings in light of the bid by the preferred bidder having just been withdrawn.

Having referred to the Integration Joint Board's (IJB's) role and its decision on the future of the facility, Councillor Fletcher commented on the decision the Council had required to take on the sale of the property in light of this and the appropriate way forward now which was under discussion. He referred to a range of related issues, including contact with a further bidder, tender arrangements, and liaison required with the IJB such as if the second bidder no longer wished to pursue a bid for the property. He also referred to the need to discuss, think through and determine how best to proceed depending on circumstances on which clarification was being sought.

In reply to Mr Larkin and Mr O'Connell who commented on the second bidder for the property and, more generally, on due diligence issues raised by the Trade Unions, the Chief Executive and Head of Health and Community Care referred to the evaluation and suitability of both the preferred and second bidders, appropriate information on which had been passed to the Trade Unions. It was clarified that a detailed explanation on why the preferred bid had been withdrawn had not been received thus far and that it was felt that such an explanation should be provided. Having reiterated that it continued to be the case that the Council wished to ensure that service quality at the facility remained high and professional and that the terms and conditions of staff transferring, including pension arrangements, were as good as possible under the new provider, Mr O'Connell highlighted that the Trade Unions continued to support the service being provided by the public sector.

Having heard Councillor McCaskill express concern regarding the lack of clarity on the withdrawal of the bid, comment that an alternative bidder might not now be found and refer to the savings the IJB still required to make, Mr O'Connell referred to the Trade Unions' wish to continue to engage fully in the process to secure a bidder whilst not supporting the sale of the property; and to meet with any new preferred bidder and the Head of Health and Community Care on the way forward. He added that, irrespective of whether or not the second bidder submitted a bid or retendering was required, it was hoped that the Council would reflect on lessons learned thus far, clarifying that the Trade Unions' view was that some questions remained unanswered.

Whilst acknowledging the Trade Unions' position, Councillor Fletcher referred to the pressures faced by the authority, the need to set a legal budget and the pursuit of due diligence by the Council on the sale of Bonnyton House. He also referred to the expectation that any preferred bidder, once identified, would engage with the Trade Unions, those at the facility and others as appropriate to discuss and resolve various issues.

Councillor McAlpine expressed hope that lessons had been learned and disappointment regarding the delay now in moving things forward, referring to the possible need for the IJB, rather than the Council, to discuss issues further in the current circumstances.

Having heard Mr Larkin refer to the importance of any new preferred bidder being fully aware of what they were taking on in terms of the running of the facility and their other responsibilities such as under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection on Employment)(TUPE) Regulations, the Chief Executive referred to the terms of the decision taken by the Council on the sale of Bonnyton House, the pursuit of due diligence and the possibility of retendering if required to identify a new bidder. Reiterating that checks were currently being undertaken on how issues now needed to be taken forward and through the IJB if required, she undertook to clarify the position to the Trade Unions through the Head of Health and Community Care when possible. Having highlighted that no inaccurate information on the preferred bidder had been passed to the Trade Unions previously, the Head of Health and Community Care added that it was possible that some further information might have been appropriate to provide.

The committee noted:-

- (a) that further clarification on the position would be provided to the Trade Unions through the Head of Health and Community Care and otherwise as appropriate, including at the two weekly meetings held between the Head of Health and Community Care and the Trade Unions; and
- (b) otherwise, the position and comments made.

## **REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18**

4. The committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy on developments regarding the 2017/18 revenue budget. In keeping with a longer term approach adopted to managing the current financial difficulties, in February 2015 the Council had approved the 2015/16 revenue budget and indicative budgets for 2016/17 and 2017/18 based on spending pressures forecasts and funding and savings measures for 2015/16 to 2017/18 which had been subject to full consultation. Based on grant assumptions, the 2017/18 savings had fallen short of the total expected to be required by £4.52m, the intention being to keep such forecasts and grant assumptions under review and submit updated budgets to the Council for approval annually as funding was confirmed.

The report explained that when the Council's provisional 2017/18 grant figures were announced in December 2016, it was confirmed that the core grant for 2017/18 would reduce in cash terms by £6.224m. (3.5%), in addition to which new ring-fenced funds of £1.326m. for educational attainment and £0.462m. for criminal justice would be available, giving a total grant of £172.01m. It had also been announced that Councils could retain monies collected from the increased bandings for Band E to H properties which was estimated to be around £4.1m. This left the Council with access to £2.1m less in cash terms than in 2016/17 which was more severe than the original planning estimates, but not as severe as predicted at the previous meeting. Efficiencies had to be found to compensate for pay and price increases and service demand pressures which were not funded.

The settlement terms continued to require Councils to maintain teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers; permitted Councils to increase Council Tax by up to 3% for the first time in 10 years; and limited the amount by which Councils could reduce their budgeted contribution to IJBs, although the exact amount of the restriction remained to be confirmed so budget plans were based on best estimates of this.

It was highlighted that the overall grant figures for Councils remained provisional as some elements of grant still had to be distributed and checks carried out, with confirmation of the final settlement due in February.

Issues referred to on financial impact included that the Council had had to address a budget gap of £23m. from 2015/16 to 2017/18, the 2017/18 shortfall being £9.4m, which after applying savings agreed in February 2015 could be reduced to £5.1m. Reference was also made to consultation with the Trades Unions on further savings options of around £4m. which, if accepted, would still leave a funding gap, and further options to increase Council Tax and/or use reserves. Other issues commented on included the Council's agreed financial policy and multi-year budgets set by the Council over several years to manage the difficult financial circumstances faced and demonstrate the value of a longer term approach to financial planning. The fact that 2017/18 was the last year of the Council's current three year budget; and how it was best practice for the Council to continue to consider the longer term view as economic forecasts for 2018/19 and beyond were even more challenging were also referred to. It was confirmed that the Council would give early consideration to its approach to addressing these continuing difficulties in considering a report on long term financial planning in February 2017, and that long term financial planning and multi-year budget considerations from 2018/19 onwards would continue to involve engagement with the Trade Unions.

Whilst commenting on the Council's 8 year Capital Plan for 2017/18 to 2024/25 for the General Fund, the report referred to the need for investment to reflect economic circumstances, reductions in capital receipts and use of an appropriate level of its Capital Reserve over the coming years. Reference was also made to the Housing Capital Plan and, more generally, related consultation and communication, including with the Trade Unions.

The Head of Accountancy highlighted key issues within the report, including the ring-fencing of some funds, the Band E to H property multiplier in relation to Council Tax, the local retention of funds generated in this way, a corresponding reduction in the grant allocated to the authority and related issues. She also referred to recent, further clarification received on the grant settlement on the basis of which the 2017/18 funding shortfall was now considered to be £9.7m., rather than £9.4m. as specified in the report based on information available when it was prepared. The Head of Accountancy also referred to the Council's ambitious Capital plans.

Having heard Mr Larkin support the Council making use of its reserves and powers to increase Council Tax, and its proposed commitment to no compulsory redundancies in 2016/17, Councillor Fletcher encouraged all parties to take on board the Trade Unions' views. He referred to funds available to the authority, the on-going need for savings and related challenges, clarifying that the Administration did not support a Council Tax freeze at the same time as service cuts. He added that not all Councils were taking the same approach and expressed the view that the decision to increase Council Tax and by how much or not should be determined locally rather than the Scottish Government imposing a cap.

Mr Doran asked what pressure was being exerted on the Scottish Government to increase the unacceptable local government financial settlement received. He expressed some concerns about cutting services and increasing Council Tax levels simultaneously, supported the Trade Unions working jointly with local politicians to fight further cuts, and commented on the impact cuts were having on both residents and staff. In reply, Councillor Fletcher referred to options that had been open to the Scottish Government on funding, cuts facing other authorities, efforts made to date by the Council to reduce expenditure and staffing and make efficiencies, and the Council Tax increases facing residents living in properties in Bands E to H introduced by the Scottish Government.

Mr O'Connell referred to various other campaigns in which the Trade Unions were involved such as on a debt amnesty and related objectives, in respect of which he indicated that he would be happy to share with the Council information on East Renfrewshire.

Councillor McAlpine welcomed the announcement about Council Tax raised through Band E to H properties being retained locally, commented it was useful to know and reflect on the Trade Unions' views on Council Tax increases and reserves, and referred to his Party's wish to reduce cuts and increase and develop services. In response to Councillor Robertson who stated that he did not think the Council would gain financially from the Council Tax raised from Band E to H properties, the Head of Accountancy clarified how the overall grant awarded to the Council was calculated and how it had been rebalanced taking account of the revenue raised locally in this way.

Mr Lees asked what advice had been given to the Education Department on the use of the dedicated funds for schools for raising attainment and commented that the Trade Unions should have a role in related discussions. Mr Morris supported this view, referring to the significant funds involved and related accountability issues. The Chief Executive and Head of Accountancy clarified what was known at present and that further details were awaited, following which reference was made to the discretion Head Teachers would have to spend the funds although the Director of Education could provide some appropriate encouragement. Having heard the Chief Executive indicate that she would ask the Director of Education to provide an update to the Trade Unions when possible, Councillor Fletcher added that some Head Teachers did not want the role they had been given on this and that they could be alerted to the Trade Unions' request to be involved in related discussions. He also commented that it was anticipated that the Scottish Government would evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative in due course and suggested that the Trade Unions raise any concerns they had regarding the initiative directly with the appropriate Scottish Government Minister.

Mr Morris reported that maintaining teacher numbers was welcomed, but that other cuts in schools were not supported, such as in support staff.

It was agreed to note:-

- (a) that the Trade Unions were happy to share with the Council information on the debt amnesty campaign in respect of East Renfrewshire;
- (b) that the Chief Executive would ask the Director of Education to provide an update to the Trade Unions on the attainment funding when possible and to alert Head Teachers that the Unions were keen to be involved in discussions on its expenditure; and
- (c) otherwise, the position and comments made.

## **COUNCIL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

4. There was submitted the Minute of the Council's Health and Safety Committee held on 3 November 2016.

In reply to Councillor McCaskill, the Head of Environment commented on attendance at meetings of the Health and Safety Committee, a review of its role and its value in addressing health and safety issues and listening to staff views.

The committee noted the Minute.

2280

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

5. The committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 8 June 2017.