

**MINUTE VOLUME**

**28 OCTOBER 2020**

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**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 7.00pm on 9 September 2020.**

**Present:**

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Depute Provost Betty Cunningham	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Paul Aitken	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Paul O’Kane
Councillor Barbara Grant	Councillor Jim Swift
Councillor Annette Ireland	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Candy Millard, Head of Strategic Services, HSCP; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Linda Hutchison, Senior Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Angela Convery and Danny Devlin.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1345.** There were no declarations of Interest intimated.

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1346.** The Council considered the Minute of the meeting held on 24 June 2020.

Under reference to Item 1282 (Page 1194 refers), Councillor Wallace highlighted comments he had made regarding Braidbar Quarry being part of the Proposed Local Development Plan 2, and specifically about ambiguity he felt existed regarding the area defined as Huntly Park. He reported he had not yet received the clarification the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) had undertaken to provide confirming the area designated as the Park.

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The Council:-

- (a) approved the Minute of the meeting held on 24 June 2020; and
- (b) otherwise, noted the comment made by Councillor Wallace on the information he was awaiting on Huntly Park.

### **MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

**1347.** The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted, except as otherwise referred to in Items 1348 to 1350 below:-

- (a) Planning Applications Committee – 25 June 2020;
- (b) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 25 June 2020;
- (c) Planning Applications Committee – 5 August 2020;
- (d) Local Review Body – 5 August 2020;
- (e) Cabinet – 13 August 2020;
- (f) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 13 August 2020;
- (g) Licensing Committee – 18 August 2020;
- (h) Education Committee – 20 August 2020;
- (i) Appointments Committee – 24 August 2020;
- (j) Cabinet – 27 August 2020;
- (k) Local Review Body – 2 September 2020; and
- (l) Appointments Committee – 7 September 2020;

### **APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2020 – APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**1348.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Appointments Committee of 7 September 2020 (Page 1253, Item 1344 refers), Councillor O’Kane congratulated Dr Mark Ratter on his appointment as Director of Education, which he considered an excellent appointment. He expressed confidence that Dr Ratter would drive forward the excellence and equity agenda in the Education Department.

Having thanked the Appointments Committee for their diligence, Councillor O’Kane thanked Mrs Shaw for her service as Director, stating that she would now be able to engage in a detailed handover to Dr Ratter. He indicated that there would be an opportunity for Members to pay tribute to Mrs Shaw at the Council meeting in October.

The Council noted the position.

### **AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2020 - UNAUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019/20**

**1349.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 25 June 2020 (Page 1200, Item 1291 refers), when the unaudited Annual Accounts 2019/20 had been considered and it had been reported that the financial position of the Council continued to be satisfactory, Councillor Wallace asked when an update on the financial position for the current financial year could be provided given the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on the Council, and as almost three months had elapsed since the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) commented that at the Council meeting in June an update had been provided on the financial position, based on information available at the end of April, at which point a very large funding gap had existed. As reported to the Cabinet on 27 August, based on information available as of the end of June and assumptions made about the share of additional funding the Council would receive based on announcements made by the UK and Scottish Governments thus far, she explained that the anticipated funding gap had reduced from approximately £8m to just under £3m. She clarified that several avenues were being pursued with both Governments to reduce the gap further, pending which the suspension of all non-essential expenditure was continuing. She explained that the use of reserves to bridge the gap remained an option, but highlighted that once used they would be unavailable to use in relation to future budget planning.

The Council noted the position.

#### **AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2020 - EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST – BEST VALUE REVIEW**

**1350.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 25 June 2020 (Page 1201, Item 1292 refers), in relation to comments made on the Best Value Review of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, Councillor Wallace highlighted that reference had been included to some opportunities for further improvement, seeking further details regarding these.

The Director of Education confirmed that a full and independent review of the Trust had been undertaken, leading to a very positive report being produced. She clarified that she and the Chief Executive of the Trust and Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) had met in recent weeks to consider the recommendations, most of which were positive and some of which related to service level agreements between the Council and the Trust. It had been agreed to submit a further report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in February 2021 on specific actions to be taken. She confirmed that the Chief Executive of the Trust had also undertaken to prepare a related action plan for submission to the Trust Board.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) commented that some items on the action plan would be subject to the full roll-out of the new financial core systems project which was currently in phase 3 of implementation.

The Council:-

- (a) agreed that further details of the opportunities for improvement referred to in the Minute be sent to Councillor Wallace; and
- (b) otherwise, noted the comments made.

#### **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2019/20**

**1351.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 13 August 2020 (Page 1126, Item 1318 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) providing details of the Council's treasury management activities for the year ending 31 March 2020, and seeking approval of the organisations specified in the report for the investment of surplus funds.

The report explained that in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee was responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of treasury management activities. The submission of the report to the committee had been in accordance with that requirement.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2019/20; and
- (b) approve those organisations specified in the report for the investment of surplus funds.

### **GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21**

**1352.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 27 August 2020 (Page 1248, Item 1339 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved, the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), recommending adjustments to the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

Councillor Ireland acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted on some projects, seeking confirmation on when some would proceed. The Director of Environment confirmed that the window renewal projects at Carolside Primary School together with an element of the school toilet improvements, the Overlee House extension, and some roadworks in Newton Mearns had been deferred to 2021/22.

Councillor Wallace referred to the state of both the local and national economy, highlighting that almost £4.5m of capital project work had been deferred to 2021/22. He asked if any management resources could be deployed to help bring the work forward to promote employment and in the interests of the economy, rather than the funds remaining unspent for longer than planned originally. In reply, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that the Corporate Asset Management Group (CAMG) had been assessing how much work it was possible to support and was making every effort to do so, taking account of both internal and external capacity. She undertook to raise Councillor Wallace's comments at the forthcoming meeting of the Group.

Councillor Buchanan stated that whilst he shared the concerns raised, sometimes difficulties existed reinstating projects to their original timetable, referring to a range of ongoing work and issues relating to construction companies operating at reduced levels for example. Councillor Wallace encouraged the Council to guard against complacency, and make every effort to progress projects where possible.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the movements within the General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21;
- (b) noted that the shortfall of £425,000 would be managed and reported on a regular basis; and
- (c) otherwise, noted the comments made, including that the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) would reiterate the concerns raised at the forthcoming meeting of the Corporate Asset Management Group.

## HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21

**1353.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of Cabinet of 27 August 2020 (Page 1249, Item 1340 refers), when it had been agreed to recommend to the Council that the proposed adjustments to the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 be approved, the Council considered a joint report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Director of Environment, recommending adjustments to the 2020/21 Housing Capital Programme in light of issues that had arisen since the programme had been approved.

Councillor Wallace stated that his previous comments on the General Fund Capital Programme applied equally to the Housing Capital Programme, requesting that everything possible was done to progress projects in the interests of the economy.

The Council:-

- (a) approved the movements within the Housing Capital Programme 2020/21; and
- (b) noted the shortfall of £135,000 and that income and expenditure on the programme would be managed and reported on a regular basis.

## STATEMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS/COMMITTEES

**1354.** The following statements were made:-

- (a) **Councillor Merrick – East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust**

Councillor Merrick referred to the closure of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust buildings to the public and the suspension of its programmes on 18 March, highlighting that 90% of Trust staff had been placed on furlough. It was explained that, despite membership payments remaining frozen until November, the Trust had made efforts to keep the public fit and healthy during lockdown such as by running free online fitness classes. The Board and its committee meetings had also continued.

Councillor Merrick explained that in line with Part 3 of the Scottish Government's Route Map, permission had been given to reopen libraries and leisure centres. He referred to the launch of outdoor fitness classes, the availability of some click and collect library services from July, and the reopening of the Trust's two biggest leisure centres in the current week and gym facilities and fitness classes to be provided there, with enhanced cleaning, safety and social distancing measures in place, clarifying that they would be operating at 31% of pre-COVID capacity. Having confirmed that swimming pools at these venues would open on 14 September, he referred in more detail to plans published by the Trust to reopen various other facilities as part of a phased approach, confirming the position on libraries, a pilot programme of outdoor sports classes, and a limited Holiday Camp programme during the October school holiday week.

He also made reference to the inevitable impact of COVID-19 on the need to make additional space for or place restrictions on activities; reduce occupancy levels and the number of sessions offered; and introduce additional cleaning and track and trace protocols. Reference was made to the sensitivities around school sites which meant that activities and programmes could not resume as before, seeking patience and understanding as the Trust dealt with these restrictions.

Having highlighted that evidence from the recovery of sports throughout the UK had been that leisure centres had been opened extremely safely, Councillor Merrick referred to the need to maintain rigorous standards and protocols, stressing that the Trust would continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary.

In conclusion, he reported that, thus far, customer feedback had been overwhelmingly positive, and joined with customer comments to compliment the staff on the efficient, safe and orderly operations at both leisure centres, and on the creativity and care that had gone into the recovery of leisure and cultural services in East Renfrewshire to date.

**(b) Councillor Bamforth - Integration Joint Board**

Councillor Bamforth reported on a presentation made at the most recent meeting of the Integration Joint Board by Children's 1<sup>st</sup> on the Family Wellbeing Service, and related discussions on progress made, how the impact of the service would be monitored, and its links to the CAMHS service and the Mental Health 5-year strategy.

She also referred to a presentation at the same meeting on the Care at Home service and related developments. She reported that the IJB had been pleased about how the service was working, improvements made to it, the successful recruitment of staff to the service and a new manager, and how working from a single base had helped the service respond to residents during the pandemic. The IJB had been particularly pleased to hear of positive feedback from service users.

Councillor Bamforth explained that the IJB had been happy to support the Child Poverty Action Plan, and that an easy read version would be made available. Time had also been spent discussing the recovery progress the HSCP was making, and welcoming a useful and informative report detailing progress by service. The IJB had recognised the scale of work and challenges the HSCP faced, and acknowledged how much had been achieved in recent months.

Councillor Bamforth reported that the IJB had welcomed 2 new Board members, Amina Khan and Jacqueline Forbes, replacing Susan Brimelow and John Matthews as 2 of the 4 Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board representatives, and acknowledged the contribution of and expressed thanks to Mrs Brimelow and Mr Matthews.

The Council noted the statements.

**ANNUAL STATEMENT ON ADEQUACY OF GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS**

**1355.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 13 August 2020 (Page 1230, Item 1324 refers), when it had been agreed to approve the Annual Statement on the Adequacy of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control Systems and submit it to the Council for noting, the Council considered a report by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee regarding the statement. A copy of the statement was appended to the report.



The report confirmed that the 2019/20 audit year had been satisfactory for Internal Audit as the audit plan had been substantially completed despite a reduction in staffing levels due to an internal secondment and COVID-19 restrictions in the final quarter which had prevented 5 audits, which had commenced, being completed and issued. It also clarified that External Audit continued to place reliance on the work of the service and that a reasonable level of performance had been achieved against indicator targets given restrictions largely outwith the control of the internal audit service.

The report highlighted that it was the opinion of the Chief Auditor that reasonable assurance could be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Councillor Wallace asked if the Chief Auditor reporting directly to the Chief Executive presented any conflict of interest, and if this had been discussed by the committee. He also sought clarification on learning and development opportunities on scrutiny available to senior managers.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) clarified that it was considered best practice by CIPFA for the Chief Auditor to report directly to the Chief Executive, following which the Chief Executive confirmed that the Chief Auditor also reported directly to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Chief Executive further confirmed that the Chief Auditor was able to raise any issue directly with the committee without reference to her.

Having heard the Chief Executive refer to the emphasis placed relatively recently on providing scrutiny training to elected Members, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that a range of leadership training for various levels of management containing elements of training on good governance and sound financial management was in place.

The Council, having heard Councillor Buchanan thank the Chair and members of the committee and the Chief Auditor for their work, noted the internal audit Annual Statement on the Adequacy and Effectiveness of the Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control Systems of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2020.

PROVOST



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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 10 September 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth  
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; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; 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); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Danny Devlin.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1356.** Councillors Merrick and O’Kane declared non-financial interests in relation to Item 1357 - East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure – End-Year Performance Report 2019/20 on the grounds that they were members of the Board of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

**END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2019/20 - CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST**

**1357.** The Cabinet considered reports by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Education in relation to the End-Year Performance Reports 2019/20 in respect of the Corporate and Community Services Department and the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, details of which were outlined in the appendices to the reports.

The Cabinet approved the reports as summaries of the Corporate and Community Services Department and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust End-Year Performance for 2019/20.

**'BEAT THE STREET' EAST RENFREWSHIRE 2020/21**

**1358.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval to operate the 'Beat the Street' East Renfrewshire 2020/21 scheme; and requesting approval to appoint Intelligent Health Ltd. as the service provider for this scheme directly. Details of Beat the Street as well as both end of game reports were appended to the report.

The report explained that 'Beat the Street' was a highly successful and popular scheme that aimed to encourage active travel and increase physical activity through a game-based intervention. The report explained that following the successful operation of the scheme for a six-week period for Barrhead and Newton Mearns in 2018/19, this had been rolled out across other selected areas in East Renfrewshire in 2019/20.

With details of the levels of engagement in the 2 previous years having been outlined it was explained that £130,000 of funding had been secured from the Smarter Choices Smarter Places fund from Paths for All to enable the scheme to run again in 2020/21 across the whole of East Renfrewshire. It was noted that this was a fantastic opportunity to encourage active travel and increase physical activity whilst potentially boosting footfall in the local town centres.

As the Beat the Street scheme was a bespoke proprietary service that could only be delivered by Intelligent Health Ltd, authority was sought for an exemption from the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts to appoint them directly as the service provider for this scheme.

The Cabinet

- (a) approved an exemption from competition under paragraph 15(iii) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, namely that the contract related to proprietary goods, works or services to enable East Renfrewshire Council to appoint Intelligent Health Ltd directly; and
- (b) agreed that delegated powers be granted to the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) to approve and sign the Service Level Agreement between East Renfrewshire Council and Intelligent Health Ltd in line with Council policy.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**  
**(POLICE AND FIRE)**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 17 September 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillor Colm Merrick (Chair)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth  
Councillor Tony Buchanan

Councillor Barbara Grant  
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Merrick in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Claire Reid, Community Safety Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland, Chief Inspector Bryan McGeogh, Police Scotland; and Local Senior Officer Jim McNeill, and Group Manager Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Danny Devlin and Paul O'Kane.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1359.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**OPENING REMARKS**

**1360.** Councillor Merrick welcomed Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland to his first meeting of the Cabinet (Police and Fire) as the new Divisional Commander of the Greater Glasgow Division of Police Scotland following the recent retirement of Chief Superintendent Hazel Hendren. He also welcomed Local Senior Officer Jim McNeill and Group Manager Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, to their first meeting.

**POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT OVER THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2019/20**

**1361.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the first quarter of 2020/21. The report also provided statistical information in relation to various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period together with comparative statistics for the corresponding period in 2019/20.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland commented briefly on how Police Scotland had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic over the course of the last few months. He highlighted that the police had been directly impacted by COVID-19 in the course of which he indicated that at the outset, incidents of crime had reduced but were now increasing. At this stage, he invited Chief Inspector McGeogh to comment on the performance report.

Chief Inspector McGeogh reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2017/20, details of which were outlined in the report. He began by highlighting that in terms of drug dealing and seizures the police had made several arrests and seized a quantity of controlled drugs with the number of detections having increased from 6 to 7 when compared to the corresponding period the previous year. He also reported that the number of crimes of violence and serious assaults had both reduced compared to the previous year. Another positive statistic was that the number of domestic abuse crimes had reduced from 88 to 83 compared to the corresponding period for the previous year. However, it was noted that the number of domestic incidents attended by the police had increased from 125 to 151 when compared to the corresponding period the previous year. The number of reported sexual crimes and acquisitive crimes had both seen a reduction compared to the previous year.

Concluding his remarks, Chief Inspector McGeogh reported that the police recorded an increase of 603 calls from the public in relation to anti-social behaviour over the reported period due largely in part to the fact that individuals were holding parties or there were large gatherings in parks and open spaces.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent Sutherland and Chief Inspector McGeogh responded to a number of questions and provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the crime statistics recorded in the report.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

**SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2020/201**

**1362** The Cabinet considered a report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the first quarter of 2020/21. An analysis of the incidents identified in the six areas for demand reduction that had taken place in each of the Council's five wards during the reported period was outlined in the report.

Group Manager Coughtrie provided an overview of the activity during the reported period. He highlighted that during the course of 2020/21 there had been 14 accidental dwelling fires with 2 casualties arising from these fires. Similarly, in terms of unintentional harm and injury 2 non-fire casualties had been recorded. He reported that there had been 68 incidents of deliberate fire setting and 3 non-domestic fires.

Reporting that there had been 37 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during the course of 2020/21, Group Manager Coughtrie highlighted that the cost to the service of attending these incidents was £72,890. It was noted that there had been a significant decrease in the number of UFAS incidents due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that almost half of the incidents reported were within care homes and sheltered housing. Group Manager Coughtrie also reported that in terms of accidental dwelling fires SFRS were only carrying out Home Fire Safety Visits to those individuals and properties considered as high risk. He also commented on the number of deliberate fire setting incidents by reference to each of the Council's wards and the increase in vehicle fires during the reported period.

Local Senior Officer McNeill stated that during the summer a typical deliberate fire would be individuals setting grass on fire. He also explained that SFRS were working in partnership with Police Scotland to tackle the problem of vehicle fires.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Local Senior Officer McNeill and Group Manager Coughtrie provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire. In particular, details were provided of how SFRS proposed to continue community engagement activities especially in schools around 5 November each year, and that the weather would normally determine the number of deliberate fires that SFRS had to respond to during the course of each year.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

CHAIR





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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 24 September 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; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Gill Darbyshire, Chief Executive’s Business Manager; Craig Geddes, Senior Information and Improvement Officer; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1363.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20 – CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S OFFICE**

**1364.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive in relation to the End-Year Performance Report 2019/20 in respect of the Chief Executive’s Office, details of which were outlined in the appended to the report.

The Cabinet approved the report as a summary of the Chief Executive’s Office End-Year Performance for 2019/20.

**REDESIGN OF HOMELESS SERVICES IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE**

**1365.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing details of the need to review the approach to addressing homelessness in East Renfrewshire and to reinforce the importance of a corporate approach to tackling the issue in accordance with Scottish Government guidance issued in November 2019.

Whilst homelessness and rough sleeping in East Renfrewshire is lower than some of the Council’s neighbouring authorities, it still presented a significant challenge for the Council and the local community. By taking a corporate and Scottish Government Service Design approach there was an opportunity to deliver services differently and based on the need of

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the household. There was also a significant opportunity to break the cycle of homelessness that some households find themselves in.

The Cabinet noted the need to review the approach to addressing homelessness in East Renfrewshire and the importance of a corporate approach to tackling the issue.

## **RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION ON INCOME GENERATION AND COMMERCIALISATION**

**1366.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing a response for Cabinet consideration to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's Investigation on Income Generation and Commercialisation Opportunities.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) considered and approved the response to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's report of 21 November 2019 on its Investigation on Income Generation and Commercialisation opportunities within East Renfrewshire Council; and
- (b) noted the progress made to date by Departments in relation to implementing the recommendations (where accepted).

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

**1367.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing the latest biannual update of the Council's Strategic Risk Register and a summary of risk management progress. The previous update of the Strategic Risk Register was considered by the Cabinet on 6 June 2019. This report was due to be considered by Cabinet in May 2020 but was delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Cabinet noted the development of the Council's Strategic Risk Register noting that this was considered a "live" document and would be updated and amended by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) as appropriate.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 24 September 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillor Stewart Miller (Chair)  
Councillor Barbara Grant (Vice Chair)

Councillor Charlie Gilbert  
Councillor Annette Ireland

Councillor Miller in the Chair

**Attending:**

Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Michelle Blair, Chief Auditor; Alison Ballingall, Senior Revenues Manager; Gill Darbyshire, Chief Executive's Business Manager; Kath McCormack, HR Manager; Linda Hutchison, Clerk to the Committee; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Pauline Gillen and Morven Fraser, Audit Scotland.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Angela Convery, Jim McLean and Jim Swift.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1368.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**1369.** The following matters were raised during the Chair's report:-

Change of Date of Next Meeting

- (i) Further to consultation, the Chair proposed rescheduling the next meeting of the committee, which was due to take place on 19 November, to 26 November with a view to the Annual Accounts and all other items due to be considered that month being discussed at a single meeting.

Audit Scotland COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees

- (ii) The Chair reported that Audit Scotland had recently published a *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* which referred to the crucial role such committees play in providing effective scrutiny and challenge, and how this had become even more important due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He clarified that it had been prepared to assist such committees focus on short-term challenges faced in the response phase of the pandemic, and posed a series of questions designed to assist them effectively scrutinise key areas requiring additional focus, namely internal control and assurance; financial management and reporting; governance; and risk management. He proposed that a report on the issues raised be prepared and submitted to the next meeting.

The committee agreed that:-

- (a) the date of the next meeting be rescheduled to 26 November 2020; and
- (b) a report on the issues raised in the *COVID-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees* be prepared and submitted to the next meeting.

## **MANAGING ABSENCE - ANNUAL REPORT**

**1370.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 September 2019 (Page 970, Item 1047 refers), when absence management during 2018/19 had been discussed, the committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive providing an update on the Council's sickness absence levels and its approach to managing absence.

Whilst commenting on absence data for 2019/20, the report explained that there had been an increase in local government employee absence and a decrease in teacher absence, itemising the top attributable reasons. Having highlighted various issues on absence benchmarking, including a range of data within the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Annual Survey Report 2020 on Health and Well-being at Work for private, public and non-profit sectors, the report provided statistical information on absence trends since 2012/13 and made reference to related issues. The report commented that it was recognised at a national level that a number of factors influenced absence figures, including whether or not manual services remained in-house as in East Renfrewshire, as such services tended to have higher absence rates associated with them.

Further information was provided on the focus being placed on absence improvement and related matters during which it was highlighted that mental health would continue to be an area of focus in the coming year. Reference was made to an increase in the number of employees working from home due to COVID-19, and ways in which the Council had continued to support the well-being of staff, including by sending weekly email briefings at the height of lockdown with useful information and links on relevant health and well-being topics.

Statistics were provided on dismissals on grounds of capability and the number of ill-health retirements. It was explained that there was potential for absence levels to continue to be of concern over the next few years associated with planned service reviews, but emphasised that improving absence levels through a more robust approach remained a priority for the Corporate Management Team and departments.

It was concluded that the Council's overall absence performance had remained unchanged since 2018/19. A strong focus continued to be placed on absence improvement, benchmarking

and implementing related training and improvement actions. Reference was made to the focus to be placed on mental health, including encouraging managers to be proactive and supportive when an employee showed signs of a stress related illness; and to encourage employees to attend related training that could be helpful to them.

Whilst commenting further on various aspects of the report, in response to questions, the HR Manager confirmed that the Local Government Benchmark Framework data issued by the Improvement Service for 2019/20 was not yet available but could be made available to members of the committee in due course. She also confirmed that the authority was mindful of stress amongst staff in relation to COVID-19, was considering how best to record that, and that reference to this could be included in the 2020/21 managing absence annual report.

The committee:-

- (a) noted the content of the report and trend in absence ratings;
- (b) noted that the HR Manager would send the Local Government Benchmark Framework data for 2019/20, when available, to the Clerk for circulation to members of the committee;
- (c) noted that reference to stress issues associated with COVID-19 could be included in the next Managing Absence Annual Report for 2020/21; and
- (d) agreed to support the range of approaches being taken to reduce absence levels across the Council.

## **SUMMARY OF EARLY RETIREMENT/REDUNDANCY COSTS TO 31 MARCH 2020**

**1371.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 September 2019 (Page 971, Item 1048 refers), when early retirements/redundancies to 31 March 2019 had been discussed, the committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive summarising the position on early retirement/redundancy costs from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and related issues. Information on the total costs incurred and projected savings was provided.

Whilst commenting on the report, the HR Manager confirmed that redundancies continued to be assessed using a process based on a financial business case, referred to associated legal requirements, and clarified that related costs depended on the individual circumstances of each employee involved, with each case considered on its own merits.

In response to Councillor Ireland, the HR Manager clarified that the information provided on financial business cases for early retirements or voluntary redundancies required to demonstrate that the costs could be recovered within acceptable timescales with ongoing tangible savings being achieved thereafter. She also undertook to provide further information on the exception to this, namely where a temporary contract was ended and the employee had over 2 years continuous service either gained within the Council or another public sector body.

The committee noted:-

- (a) that the HR Manager would send further information to the Clerk for circulation to members of the committee on the position where a temporary contract had ended and the employee concerned had over 2 years continuous service gained within the Council or another public sector body; and

- (b) otherwise, the content of the report, the explanations provided for early retirements/redundancies within the period it covered, and related projected savings.

## **NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – IMPACT OF SEPTEMBER 2017 AUDIT ON EQUAL PAY IN SCOTTISH COUNCILS**

**1372.** The committee considered a report by the Clerk on the publication by the Accounts Commission of a report entitled *Equal Pay in Councils Impact Report* which under the committee's specialisation arrangements had been sent to Councillors McLean and Swift for review. The Head of HR and Corporate Services had been asked to provide comments and a copy of her feedback was attached to the report.

The report summarised the impact of the Accounts Commission's performance audit on Equal Pay in Councils published in September 2017 which had focussed on five themes, including how councils had implemented the Single Status Agreement (SSA), and what lessons could be learned for the future. Information was provided on implementation of the SSA, the costs associated with equal pay claims, and how these had been settled by the Council, all claims having been resolved by March 2017. It was clarified that the Council continued to ensure that pay systems delivered equal pay.

Further information was provided on the gender pay gap and factors which could contribute to this, including occupational segregation; part-time work; women being underrepresented in senior management and leadership roles; and women taking on the majority of care duties. It was reported that Scottish public bodies were required to publish information on the gender pay gap every two years, and that this information was also reported through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. Reference was made to a Scottish Government report *A Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan* published in March 2019 which commented on ways to tackle the gap and ensure Councils took all necessary steps to comply with equalities legislation. It was confirmed that the gender pay gap in East Renfrewshire had improved over the last 3 years, and further information was provided on factors which led to this and ongoing work to tackle issues such as occupational segregation.

The report highlighted that the Council was well positioned against the national report; supported the principles of equal pay; continued to maintain all jobs in line with the Scottish Joint Council third edition job evaluation scheme; and continued to review the gender pay gap and seek opportunities to improve by impact assessing any proposed changes to terms and conditions.

Whilst highlighting key aspects of the report, the Head of HR and Corporate Services commented in more detail on how equal pay claims had been settled and related timescales. Having referred to statistical information pertaining to the gender pay gap, she provided examples of actions being taken by the Council to address occupational segregation which included providing parental leave, promoting flexible working options, and considering career progression opportunities, examples of which were cited. She also confirmed that work was ongoing regarding the consolidation of the Living Wage, as were related negotiations with the Trade Unions.

In response to Councillor Grant, the Head of HR and Corporate Services clarified that the Working Time Directive did not impact on what the Council was trying to achieve regarding the gender pay gap. More generally, Councillor Miller welcomed developments on this issue.

The committee noted the content of the Accounts Commission report and the position as it related to East Renfrewshire.

## **NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE - UPDATE**

**1373.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 26 September 2019 (Page 968, Item 1045 refers) when a report on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) in Scotland had been noted, the committee considered a report by the Head of Communities, Revenues and Change providing an update on the NFI in Scotland and related work carried out in 2019/20.

Having referred to the data sharing and matching exercise undertaken throughout Scotland every two years, the purpose of the NFI counter-fraud exercise and keys to success, the report confirmed that the Council had a single point of contact for NFI and a well-established network of departmental contacts who were responsible for comparing their own data sets, recovery, and follow up action. Reference was made to the number of matches reported in the 2018/19 exercise, with a total potential fraud or error value of £95,360, and how related work was progressed.

It was clarified that a data matching exercise of Council Tax Single Person Discounts (SPD) against financial and banking records held by Experian, planned for 2020, had been postponed due to resourcing issues and the national lock-down associated with COVID-19. It was expected that NFI activity would proceed as expected in 2021, and that the data matching exercise would take place thereafter.

The report also referred to the Audit Scotland paper entitled *National Fraud Initiative 2018/19*, published in June 2020, which recognised the significant challenges facing the public sector as a result of COVID-19; acknowledged that most organisations were strongly committed to countering fraud and the NFI; and referred to a pilot which had been undertaken on Non Domestic Rates to identify businesses inappropriately claiming Small Business Bonus Scheme relief. Further information was provided on various initiatives which the Council was involved with, including the Fraud and Error Investigation Service, and it was reported that the next NFI exercise was scheduled to take place during 2021.

The committee, having heard the Senior Revenues Manager highlight key aspects of the report, noted the report and action taken in respect of the National Fraud Initiative in East Renfrewshire Council for 2019/20.

## **MANAGING THE RISK OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION – FRAUD RESPONSE STATEMENT 2019/20**

**1374.** The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive detailing the Council's Fraud Response Statement 2019/20, overviewing measures in place across the Council to address anti-fraud, bribery and theft; referring to the management of the risk of fraud and corruption; and providing an update on action undertaken during 2019/20 where appropriate.

The report explained that, following a review of the Code of Corporate Governance, it had been identified that the Statement should be prepared, the submission of the report to the committee on this issue having been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Having referred to the authority's commitment to fighting fraud and bribery, the report explained that the Council followed the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Code on "managing the risk of fraud and corruption", referring to its five key principles which included identifying fraud and corruption risks; and developing an appropriate counter fraud and corruption strategy. It was clarified that the Corporate Management Team had approved a revised Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Theft Strategy in August 2019, which aimed to promote an attitude of zero tolerance to fraud regardless of its value or scale, and that in line with the CIPFA Code a Fraud Statement was to be considered annually.

The report also provided an overview of work undertaken during 2019/20, where appropriate, and referred to measures in place to address anti-fraud, bribery and theft. These included independent reviews of the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of internal controls by Internal Audit; putting in place a range of policies and procedures to support the strategy; updating guidance on gifts and hospitality; and the provision of comprehensive training and awareness raising sessions for staff. Other issues referred to included work the Procurement Team was doing with Scotland Excel and Police Scotland to minimise risks to the Council; and specific controls in place across all processes to ensure risk of loss through fraud was minimised.

In relation to reporting on potential fraud, reference was made to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's scrutiny role in relation to the application of the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Theft Strategy, and related updates provided to it by Internal Audit on its investigation of 5 potential fraud incidents during 2019/20. Having referred to the NFI and related reports submitted to the committee, specific reference was made to steps taken to reduce the threat of widespread fraud in relation to the business grants that had been made available associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing work the Economic Development Team was progressing, in liaison with Police Scotland, regarding possible fraudulent applications.

Having highlighted key aspects of the report, in response to Councillor Grant, the Business Manager confirmed that a few cases of suspected fraud were being examined in relation to the business grants made available linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, pending which no payments had been made in relation to these applications.

The committee noted the content of the report and the work being undertaken across the Council in relation to managing the risk of fraud and corruption.

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

**1375.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 12 March 2020 (Page 1156, Item 1247 refers), when the position on the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) and progress with risk management across the Council had been noted, the committee considered a report by the Chief Executive regarding the most recent biannual update of the register and general progress on risk management.

The SRR, a copy of which was appended to the report, itemised key risks that required to be considered and associated actions put in place to manage these. Having referred to related operational risk registers in place, the report confirmed that several strategic risks had been amended to include additional control measures and rescored for significance, clarifying that a thorough review of all the strategic risks had been undertaken by the Corporate Management Team (CMT). In total there were now 33 strategic risks, 15 of which were evaluated as high and 18 as medium. Risks evaluated as low had been removed from the SRR and would be monitored within departmental or operational registers as appropriate. Relevant significant risks which could impact on achieving the Council's outcomes regarding the work of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and the Culture and Leisure Trust had been considered.

In addition to referring to risks added to the SRR, information was provided on risk scores that remained high; amended risk descriptions; and a risk which had been removed. It was confirmed that although reports on the SRR were submitted to the committee every 6 months and the Cabinet annually, the register was considered to be a live document and updated continually, particularly in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with the review of the SRR playing a fundamental role in ensuring that the Council met its objectives as detailed in Fairer East Ren, the Modern Ambitious Programme, and the Outcome Delivery Plan.



Having heard the Business Manager highlight key aspects of the report, Councillor Ireland requested further clarification on why Risk 2.5, relating to a potential successful judicial review into the lawfulness of charging for instrumental music leading to additional budget pressures due to loss of income as well as increased service demand, had been removed from the SRR in favour of it being monitored through the Education Risk Register. Having heard the Business Manager comment that further clarification would be sought from Education officers, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) also commented on how the issue was being taken forward at the current time.

In response to Councillor Grant who commented that the Council was limited in what it could do to address Risk 2.6, which related to changes in SQA certification processes in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and them detrimentally impacting upon the 2020/21 exam diet results with a subsequent negative impact on the Council's reputation, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) acknowledged this, but clarified that the Director of Education was able to contribute to related discussions and consultation on the future format of exams through various networks and help bring pressure to bear nationally as required.

Referring to Risk 2.3 on ensuring sufficient catchment places for East Renfrewshire children and young people across all sectors in light of inward migration including through the impact of new residential developments, and which made reference to the Local Development Plan, Councillor Miller expressed the view that the authority had a role to play balancing planning considerations with school capacity.

The committee:-

- (a) agreed that further information be sought and circulated on why Risk 2.5 pertaining to charging for the instrumental music service had been removed from the SRR;
- (b) agreed that feedback be provided to appropriate senior officers on comments made by members of the committee at the meeting on the SRR for consideration; and
- (c) otherwise, noted the development of the SRR; that it was considered to be a live document; and that it would be updated and amended by the CMT.

## **EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2019/20**

**1376.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 13 August 2020 (Page 1128, Item 1320 refers), when it had been noted that the finalisation of the East Renfrewshire Council Management Report had been delayed but would be submitted by the Council's External Auditor in due course, the committee considered a Management Letter by the External Auditor on a review of the Council's internal controls in financial systems for 2019/20 which under the committee's specialisation arrangements fell within the remit of Councillors Miller and Grant for review.

It was clarified that the interim audit work had been interrupted by the outbreak of COVID-19 and related suppression measures put in place by the UK and Scottish Governments. As a result of the delays in audit testing and wider dimension work, the letter provided a summary, which was shorter than the usual report, on key issues identified during the interim audit work completed thus far. This work included testing of key controls within financial systems to gain assurance over the processes and systems used in preparing the Annual Accounts, the results of which would be considered by the External Auditor during the audit of the 2019/20 Accounts.

The letter clarified that testing had not identified any significant control weaknesses, although some less significant issues had been noted and discussed with management to ensure appropriate actions could be taken. These areas were summarised in Appendix 1 and related to payroll reconciliations; system reconciliation; system access; main ledger – feeder reconciliations; and payroll overpayments.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and staff working at home, full controls testing on the payroll system had not be completed, requiring additional testing to be completed during the External Auditor's year end work with a view to reporting back on any issues in the Annual Audit Report. Other issues commented on included the reliance placed by External Audit on a range of Internal Audit work to avoid duplication of resource and effort.

Having reviewed and summarised the key findings and related action to be taken, in response to Councillor Ireland, Ms Gillen confirmed that some additional work and testing on payroll overpayments and related issues was being done, the results of which would be reflected in the Annual Audit. She clarified that further testing would also be done in relation to 2020/21.

The committee agreed to note the Management Letter and related comments made.

#### **NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT – 2017 PROGRESS REPORT – IMPACT REPORT**

**1377.** The committee considered a report by the Clerk on the publication by Audit Scotland of a report entitled *Self Directed Support - 2017 Progress Report – Impact Report* which under the committee's specialisation arrangements had been sent to Councillors Miller and Gilbert for review. The Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) had been asked to provide comments and a copy of her feedback was attached to the report.

The report providing comments, which had also been submitted to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) Performance and Audit Committee on 23 September, referred to the key themes contained within the 2019 Audit Scotland Impact Report; outlined East Renfrewshire HSCP's current Self-Directed Support (SDS) implementation position; and advised of planned self-evaluation activity which would inform the future programme of development.

The key messages and recommendations of the 2017 report were detailed and it was reported that a Thematic Inspection of SDS in 2019, undertaken by the Care Inspectorate, noted similar themes and key recommendations which included concerns about inconsistency across the 32 HSPCs in Scotland. An update on the local actions identified in 2017 was provided and it was reported that overall good progress had been made. However, it was also recognised that further work was required to embed the changes which had already been made; to further refine and analyse data; and review and reflect on the use of SDS during the pandemic in order to inform future development activity.

The committee agreed, in keeping with what had also been agreed by the IJB Performance and Audit Committee: -

- (a) that following local self-evaluation activity, an update on future SDS development activity, should be submitted to the committee; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the report.

## **NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – AFFORDABLE HOUSING – THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY TARGET**

**1378.** The committee considered a report by the Clerk on the publication by Audit Scotland of a report entitled *Affordable Housing – The Scottish Government’s Affordable Housing Supply Target* which under the committee’s specialisation arrangements had been sent to Councillors Miller and Grant for review. The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) had been asked to provide comments and a copy of his feedback was attached to the report.

The report summarised the findings of Audit Scotland’s report; reported on progress towards the Scottish Government’s affordable housing supply target and assessed what impact it had had; compared the Council’s performance in relation to the national picture; and considered what more required to be done to support the continued increase in affordable housing for those in need. Amongst other things, barriers to the ongoing delivery of affordable housing were identified, which included access to suitable land; higher development costs; and uncertainty regarding future funding arrangements. It was clarified that the Scottish Government, councils and their partners were working to address these barriers, but challenges remained. Reference was also made to limited information from the Scottish Government on funding immediately post 2021 and related issues and challenges; the development by the Scottish Government of its Housing to 2040 vision; and the current review of the Council’s Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) on which a report was to be submitted to the Cabinet in due course. It was reported that the two distinct areas of East Renfrewshire had very different requirements in terms of the need for affordable housing.

Councillor Grant highlighted the challenges presented by the cost of land in East Renfrewshire and related implications. Whilst referring to a further report that it was proposed be submitted to the committee on social housing, she suggested that it would be useful if this could include reference to the challenges presented by the lack of land on which to build such properties.

The committee:-

- (a) noted the challenges associated with the delivery of affordable housing locally;
- (b) noted that delivery of the existing programme would depend on the Scottish Government’s recovery plan going forward into 2021 along with that of developers upon whom the Council was reliant for project delivery; and
- (c) agreed that the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) submit a report to a future meeting outlining the challenges involved in delivering social housing in East Renfrewshire.

## **NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – PRIVATELY FINANCED INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT: THE NON-PROFIT DISTRIBUTING (NPD) AND HUB MODELS**

**1379.** The committee considered a report by the Clerk on the publication by Audit Scotland of a report entitled *Privately Financed Infrastructure Investment: The Non-Profit Distributing (NPD) and Hub Models* which under the committee’s specialisation arrangements had been sent to Councillor Miller and Grant for review. The Director of Environment had been asked to provide comments and a copy of his feedback was attached to the report.

Having clarified that the submission of the report had required to be delayed to allow other priorities, principally linked to addressing issues relating to the COVID-19 emergency to be addressed, the report itemised the 5 key messages within the Audit Scotland report. It was

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clarified that the Scottish Government was developing its approach to using private finance under the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) which would replace NPD and hub forms of private financing. A number of the recommendations were aimed at assisting the Scottish Government, the Scottish Futures Trust and the wider public sector, including councils, as new funding models were introduced. Further comments on the recommendations pertaining to councils, in terms of the local position in East Renfrewshire, were appended to the report.

The committee noted the report.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.00pm on 30 September 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillor Annette Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Convery  
Councillor Betty Cunningham

Provost Jim Fletcher  
Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Jim Swift

Councillor Ireland in the Chair

**Attending:**

Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Graham Shankland, Planning and Building Standards Manager; Derek Scott, Planner, Development Management; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**Apology:**

Councillor Jim McLean.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1380.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEALS AND APPEAL DECISIONS**

**1381.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of the intimation by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) of the outcome of two appeals against the committee's decision to refuse planning permission.

The report explained that the appointed Reporter had dismissed one appeal and granted the other. The Reporter allowed the one appeal and had granted planning permission in respect of the erection of a one and a half storey side extension, upper storey rear extension and single storey side and rear extensions at 99 East Kilbride Road, Busby. He was of the view that the proposal was generally well designed and sympathetic to the area and concluded that it accorded overall with the relevant provisions of the development plan and that there were no material considerations which would justify refusing to grant planning permission.

Councillor Miller supported by Councillors Convery and Cunningham expressed their concern about the Reporter's decision to overturn the committee's decision.

At this stage, it was agreed that the:-

- (a) Planning Service be instructed to write to the Scottish Government's Reporters' Unit (DPEA) asking for a meeting to discuss the decision making processes of Reporters; and
- (b) report be otherwise noted.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

**1382.** The committee considered reports by the Director of Environment, on applications for planning permission requiring consideration by the committee.

It was agreed that the applications be determined as indicated at Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute, particular reference being made to the following:-

- (i) 2019/0858/TP – Erection of 4 retail units following demolition of existing dwellinghouse at 37 Busby Road, Clarkston by Ms Sabah Hassan

Having heard the Planning and Building Standards Manager refer to the assessment of the application and that it was being recommended for approval, subject to conditions, Councillor Miller supported by Councillor Cunningham, stated that he was opposed to the application on the grounds that in his opinion the proposal represented an overdevelopment of the site, there was no parking provision at the site and the proposal would offer no economic benefit to Clarkston town centre.

Provost Fletcher suggested a contrary view highlighting that that in his opinion there was nothing in planning terms to suggest that the application be refused. He indicated that the proposal had the potential of creating job opportunities and the committee should be positive about such proposals.

In response to the absence of objections from the Council's Roads service, the Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer) indicated that it was not uncommon for the Roads service not to object to applications in town centre areas in addition to which the Planning and Building Standards Manager referred the committee to conditions 1 and 2 in the report which dealt with roads issues.

Councillor Ireland and Councillor Miller noted that the void rate of shops in Clarkston was 10% which was another reason why the proposal was not needed in the town centre.

Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Miller, moved that the application be refused for the following reasons:-

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy D1 of the adopted East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan due to the scale and massing of the proposal;
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy SG7 of the adopted East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan due to the adverse impact that the proposal would have on the vitality and viability of Clarkston Town Centre;

3. The proposal is contrary to road safety in the area as no on-site parking is being provided; and
4. The proposal is contrary to the built heritage of the area due to the loss of an historic building.

Provost Fletcher moved as an amendment that the application be approved, subject to conditions. In the absence of a seconder his amendment fell.

At this stage, the committee agreed that the application be refused for the following reasons:-

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy D1 of the adopted East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan due to the scale and massing of the proposal;
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy SG7 of the adopted East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan due to the adverse impact that the proposal would have on the vitality and viability of Clarkston Town Centre;
3. The proposal is contrary to road safety in the area as no on-site parking is being provided; and
4. The proposal is contrary to the built heritage of the area due to the loss of an historic building.

CHAIR





**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006  
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Index of applications under the above acts considered by Planning Applications Committee on  
30.09.2020

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**Reference No:** 2019/0858/TP

**Ward:** 4

**Applicant:**

Ms Sabah Hassan  
7 Ferguston Road  
Bearsden  
Glasgow  
Scotland  
G61 2DX

**Agent:**

Maura McCormack  
39 Dunipace Crescent  
Dunfermline  
Scotland  
KY12 7LZ

**Site:** 37 Busby Road Clarkston East Renfrewshire G76 7BN

**Description:** Erection of 4 retail units following demolition of existing dwellinghouse

**Decision:** Refused

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**Reference No:** 2020/0330/TP

**Ward:** 4

**Applicant:**

Mr and Mrs S McAleer  
18 Gordon Road  
Netherlee  
Glasgow  
Scotland  
G44 3TW

**Agent:**

Donna Kennedy  
32 Treebank Crescent  
Ayr  
Scotland  
KA7 3NF

**Site:** 18 Gordon Road Netherlee East Renfrewshire G44 3TW

**Description:** Erection of a one and half storey dwelling following demolition of existing dwellinghouse.

**Decision:** Refused



**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**LOCAL REVIEW BODY**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 2.30pm on 30 September 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillors Betty Cunningham (Vice Chair)	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Jim Swift
Provost Jim Fletcher	

Councillor Cunningham (Vice Chair) in the Chair

**Attending:**

Matt Greenen, Senior Strategy Officer (Planning Adviser); Siobhan Wilson, Solicitor (Legal Adviser); and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer (Clerk).

**Apologies:**

Councillors Annette Ireland (Chair); and Jim McLean.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1383.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NOTICE OF REVIEW – REVIEW 2020/10 – ERECTION OF 18 FLATS FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLINGHOUSE WITH ASSOCIATED FORMATION OF ACCESS OFF MALLETSHEUGH ROAD, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING AT REAR AT TREESIDE COTTAGE, AYR ROAD, NEWTON MEARNES (REF NO: 2019/0606/TP)**

**1384.** Under reference to the Minute of meeting of 2 September 2020 (Page 1251, Item 1342 refers), when it was agreed to continue consideration of the review case to allow the case officer to prepare a review statement and for the applicant to be given an opportunity to submit comments in response, the Local Review Body considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, relative to a 'Notice of Review' submitted by Panacea Property, against the non-determination of an application in respect of the erection of 18 flats following demolition of existing dwellinghouse with associated formation of access off Malletsheugh Road, parking and landscaping at rear at Treeside Cottage, Ayr Road, Newton Mearns.

The report explained that in view of the restrictions associated with COVID-19, it was not possible for the Local Review Body to carry out a site inspection in accordance with the decision it made at its meeting on 10 August 2016. As an alternative, it was intended that the

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Planning Adviser would film the site and for the recording to be made available to the Local Review Body in advance of the meeting. However, the owner of the site had refused permission for the site to be filmed.

The Local Review Body, having considered the information previously circulated, agreed that it had sufficient information to determine the review without further procedure.

Following discussion, in the course of which the Legal Adviser clarified that the owner of the site and the applicant were separate parties, it was agreed that the application for planning permission dated 19 September 2019 be refused for the reasons as set out in the Planning Service Review Statement.

CHAIR

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 1 October 2020.**

**Present:**

Councillor Paul O’Kane (Chair)	Councillor Gordon Wallace
Councillor Colm Merrick (Vice Chair)	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Mr Des Morris
Councillor Alan Lafferty	

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources); Mark Ratter, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1385.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

**1386.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing an update on the department’s progress in implementing priorities associated with the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education. A copy of the evidence report submitted to Education Scotland accompanied the report.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that the NIF had been introduced in January 2016, was intended to drive both excellence and equity in Scottish education, and was reviewed annually. The 2020 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan had been published in December 2019. The priorities set out in the NIF mirrored the department’s own aspirations as set out in its various plans and encapsulated in its vision of ‘*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*’.

The annual Standards and Quality Report provided evidence of the progress the department and schools had made with the activities set out in the Local Improvement Plan and the progress that had been made towards the four national priorities set out in the NIF, these being listed in the report.

It was explained that Education Scotland had been tasked with gathering some of the data used by the Scottish Government to evidence how effectively the activity set out in NIF was bringing about improvement across Scotland. Part of this information included asking local authorities to provide high level, evidence based, evaluative comments for key themes associated with the NIF and National Improvement Plan. Given the context this year, local authorities had also been asked to provide an overview of the initial response to supporting children, families and school communities through the COVID-19 crisis. A copy of the Council's response was attached as an appendix to the report.

Overall, the department had made strong progress in implementing the priorities associated with the NIF. Key highlights included, amongst others, improvements in literacy and numeracy attainment in the Senior Phase and the proportion of leavers attaining vocational qualifications and in positive destinations. The department remained focused on further improvement and details were provided of some of the ways in which it was seeking to do this along with details in relation to the initial response to COVID-19 and the need to address the loss of learning as a result of the extended closure of schools in line with emergency legislation.

In response to Councillor Wallace who sought clarification of the term "new experiences" in relation to addressing gaps in the progress of learners as a result of the extended closure of schools, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that the department was focussing strongly on recovery linked to all areas of the curriculum across all sectors of the school population. The Director, by way of example, explained that pupils had commented positively on the increased use of digital alternatives to traditional methods of learning and teaching which made for a more exciting experience both within the classroom and remotely online, and welcomed the increased focus on health and wellbeing. She explained that the department intended to continue to make use of the additional skills that staff had developed during the period of lockdown to make a difference to teaching within schools with a view to enhancing the overall learning experience.

Councillor Merrick welcomed the improvements in literacy and numeracy and also the further closing of the attainment gap. In relation to the increase in the proportion of leavers attaining vocational qualifications and in positive destinations, he expressed the view that, given the economic impact of COVID-19, maintaining this increase in future may prove to be more difficult to achieve. In response, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that the department held regular meetings with representatives of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to discuss the situation. Referring to the Scottish Government's proposed Youth Guarantee Scheme, he explained that the department would work closely with SDS and the Council's Economic Development Team to maximise the availability and uptake of opportunities such as coaching and life skills and modern apprenticeships.

Councillor Bamforth welcomed the work being done to close the poverty related attainment gap and noted the considerable increase in the number of vulnerable children and young people who had attended the learning hubs. She also commended the use of the "Kitbag" resource designed to improve mental health and wellbeing and encourage young people to reflect on their feelings and emotions. The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that the resource had been developed in conjunction with the Family Wellbeing Service and expressed the view that it had been successful in strengthening relationships within families and between children in schools.

Responding to Councillor Wallace who sought further information on the reading recovery activity referred to, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that initially 2 teachers had been trained to deliver the scheme and that they had gone on to train a number of teachers in every school across the authority. Reading recovery teaching was undertaken across all schools from primary through to the senior sector.

Following further brief discussion, the committee agreed to note the Education Department's progress in implementing priorities associated with the National Improvement Framework.

## **ACCESS TO COUNSELLING IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE SCHOOLS**

**1387.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing an update of the department's interim arrangements for access to counselling in East Renfrewshire schools.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that in July 2019 the Scottish Government had made a commitment to fund local authorities to the sum of £12m to support delivery of the access to school counselling services. The delivery of a Youth Counselling service was designed to support children and young people more efficiently and effectively with issues affecting their mental health and wellbeing and to help school staff to engage children and young people with appropriate support services from within their local communities and at an early stage.

The Scottish Government and local authority leaders had agreed a partnership approach to the delivery of counselling services with clear aims and principles, including access to counselling through primary, secondary and special schools, ensuring consistently high quality services available locally for pupils aged 10 and over. In response to the commitment from the Scottish Government to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, a co-production event was held in November 2019 to explore the design of the new service. Details of the stakeholders and invited guests who had attended the event and the focus of the workshop were outlined in the report and a full record of the workshop was attached as an appendix to the report.

It was explained that unfortunately, COVID-19 had delayed the procurement process and the department was unable to provide the service as designed by the stakeholder group on time. The procurement process had however recently commenced and the department was on schedule to introduce its 'Healthier Minds Service' in early 2021. The service would complement the Healthier Minds Framework described in the report.

In response to this delay, senior officers from the department had met with staff and pupils to discuss alternative interim arrangements for session 2020/21 and details of these arrangements and the introduction of a Recovery Team were outlined in the report. These interim arrangements would be available for the academic session 2020/21, overlapping with the new Healthier Minds Service when it was introduced in 2021.

Councillor Bamforth welcomed the report and in particular the commitment of the department to ensure adequate training for teachers, some of which could take up to 12 months.

Responding to requests from a number of members seeking clarification around the process of referring children and young people to the service, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity), supported by the Director, explained that there were a number of routes through which referrals could be made including from parents, teachers, and through self-referral with the latter being the most frequently used method. The high percentage of self-referrals highlighted the increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing amongst young people and indicated that the stigma around mental health and wellbeing was rapidly reducing.

Councillor O’Kane welcomed the report and the increased focus on mental health and wellbeing and expressed the view that it was vitally important to continue to work towards improving the mental wellbeing of children and young people.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the department’s interim arrangements for access to counselling in schools for session 2020/21.

## **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT YEAR END REPORT 2019/20**

**1388.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the year end performance of the Education Department for 2019/20. The report was based on performance indicators in the Outcome Delivery Plan 2019-2022 which had been approved by the Council in June 2019. Detailed performance results were attached as an appendix to the report.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that the detailed results contained in the appendix to the report were set out under the ODP outcomes along with customer, efficiency and people organisers. Performance indicators for school attainment, attendance, and exclusions reflected academic year 2018/19 and members would be provided with updates in relation to the 2019/20 performance at future meetings of the committee.

The information presented in the report showed a very positive picture overall with key strengths highlighted including, amongst others, very good performance in terms of attainment, exclusions and leaver destinations; very high satisfaction levels with the Council’s schools as expressed in the Citizens’ Panel results and through parental questionnaires; and progress, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with capital projects designed to cater for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to 1140 hours. Areas for further improvement were also noted.

Councillor Wallace sought clarification on the deterioration in the percentage of invoices paid within the agreed 30 day period as this matter had recently been discussed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. In response, the Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources) confirmed that the introduction of the Integra financial management system had initially impacted the timely payment of invoices but that major improvements were now being seen. The situation was also exacerbated by the mismatch between the financial year and the academic year.

Responding to Councillor Wallace who expressed concern at the level of absenteeism amongst local government staff within the department, the Education Senior Manager (Developing People) explained that the figures tended to reflect the demographic profile of that particular workforce in that it was made up of a high proportion of older, mainly female, employees. She went on to explain that the number of long-term health-related absences had since reduced considerably, that those remaining were being fully supported by the Council’s HR team, and that the department was now within the top 10 for teaching staff absence when compared to other local authorities.

Councillor Merrick welcomed the reduction in the attainment gap highlighted in the report. He went on to express the view that, in light of teaching staff being clearly in the “front line” with respect to COVID-19, the absenteeism figures for 2020/21 would require to be carefully monitored. In response to this, and also to a comment from Councillor Bamforth regarding the need to support the mental health and wellbeing of teachers, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity), supported by the Director, explained that the Educational Psychology



team had produced a series of resources, including a video, aimed specifically at teaching staff which was used by all schools on the in-service days in August. Mr Morris explained that the EIS and other trades unions were aware of the issue of mental health and wellbeing and welcomed the support being provided by the department and by HR in this regard.

Councillor Buchanan welcomed an excellent report with particular reference to the improving performance relating to the payment of invoices as it was the aim of the Council to ensure that money due to local suppliers was made available as quickly as possible in order to support local employers and, through them, the wider local economy.

Having heard Councillor O’Kane welcome the report and highlight the challenges facing the Council as an already high-performing authority, the committee approved the report as a summary of the Education Department’s year end performance for 2019/20.

### **WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE - REPORT ON REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019/20**

**1389.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing of the evaluation of work undertaken by the West Partnership of the Glasgow Region Education Improvement Collaborative during 2019/20. A copy of the report on the progress with and impact of the Improvement Plan 2019/20 was included as an appendix to the report.

The Director explained that the report had been brought to the committee to maintain democratic oversight of education at a local authority level and to fulfil the department’s duty to bring about improvement in its schools while working collaboratively where that was beneficial to the partner education authorities and their schools.

She went on to report that progress had been adversely affected by COVID-19 but in spite of this a number of key highlights were set out including, amongst others, almost 3200 participants attending a West Partnership event over the last year; 700 practitioners attending the “Early Learning and Childcare Festival”; more than 700 people subscribing to the quarterly newsletter; and more than 3500 followers on Twitter. Specific COVID-19 related activities included a Remote Learning research paper being viewed by over 11,000 people and more than 700 practitioners participating in a series of seminars on Remote Learning.

She concluded by explaining that the report had been endorsed by the Regional Education Committee on 8 September and would be submitted to both Education Scotland and the Scottish Government in due course.

Councillor Wallace questioned the use of the phrase “blended learning” in the report expressing the view that what had been delivered during lockdown had not been blended learning but simply remote learning. In response the Director explained that blended learning was now regarded by many as a tarnished brand and that high quality remote learning would continue to be developed as a key resource that could be employed in any situation where a school required to close, even for a short period, in order to allow children and young people to continue their education uninterrupted.

Responding to Councillor Bamforth who sought clarification regarding diversity training for teachers and the apparent lowering of a key target relating to the percentage of leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better, the Director explained that it had been recognised that there was a lack of representation from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups throughout the teaching profession and the training referred to was aimed at promoting teaching as a profession to members of that community in order to better reflect the population mix. The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that

many of the targets contained in the report were currently being reviewed to ensure that they remained ambitious but realistic.

Councillor Wallace sought further clarification regarding what the department considered to be the benefits to East Renfrewshire of the Partnership. In response, the Director, supported by the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance), explained that prior to the Partnership there had been a perception within East Renfrewshire schools that there was little they could learn from the experiences of others. However, it was now the view that local schools were more outward looking and that staff at all levels were enthused by wider partnership working and much more willing to put into practice learning developed by other areas.

Councillor Buchanan welcomed the report which highlighted some of the outstanding work being done by the Partnership.

Having heard Councillor O’Kane echo the comments made by Councillor Buchanan and others, commend the input to the work of the Partnership by East Renfrewshire staff, and welcome the opportunity for local democratic scrutiny of the Partnership’s work, the committee noted the report.

### **WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE - IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020 - 2023**

**1390.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the West Partnership’s Improvement Plan 2020 – 2023.

The Director explained that the plan had been streamlined and amendments made in relation to the ongoing pandemic and the Partnership’s collective response and recovery from it. There were now three workstreams which research showed were key to bringing about improvement in schools. These were Collaborative Learning Networks; Curriculum, Learning and Teaching; and Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement.

She concluded by explaining that the plan had been presented to and endorsed by the Regional Education Committee on 8 September and would be presented to the City Region Cabinet on 6 October.

As with the preceding item, this report had been brought to the committee to maintain democratic oversight of the Council’s education functions.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to note the report.

### **VALEDICTORY – MHAIRI SHAW, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**1391.** Councillor O’Kane advised the Committee that this would be the last meeting attended by Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education, who was retiring from the Council.

He briefly outlined her contribution to education within East Renfrewshire over a period of 19 years and expressed his personal thanks to her for the help and support she had always given him in his role as Vice-Convener and, latterly, as Convener for Education.

Mrs Shaw responded in appropriate terms, in the course of which she expressed the view that her 19 years in East Renfrewshire had been some of the most rewarding of her career. She commended the senior management team that had supported her and also the strong

partnership working which existed across the entire Council and she praised Elected Members for their continued prioritisation of education.

She concluded by commending her successor, Dr Ratter, to the committee.

CHAIR



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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 22 October 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; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Debbie Hill, Chief Procurement Officer; and Paul O’Neil, Committee Services Officer.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1392.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FIRST TIER) – MINUTE OF MEETING OF 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**1393.** The Cabinet considered and noted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (First Tier) held on 10 September 2020 and which forms Appendix 1 accompanying this Minute.

**ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT – 2019/20 AND CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2019/22 UPDATE**

**1394.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Procurement Officer, seeking approval of the Annual Procurement Report 2019/20 and providing an update on the implementation of the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019/22. Copies of the documents were appended to the report.

The report explained that the Annual Report 2019/20 and updated Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019-22 provided a review of annual activities whilst ensuring the strategic direction of corporate procurement was set to meet the current and future needs of the Council. Publication of the Annual Report and Strategy also ensured that the Council complied with the duties under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

Members having commended offices for their work, the Cabinet approved the Annual Procurement Report 2019/20 and noted the update on the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2019/22

### **END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20 – ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

**1395.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, in relation to the End-Year Performance Report 2019/20 in respect of the Environment Department details of which were appended to the report.

Having heard the Director further on the report and in response to questions the Cabinet approved the report as a summary of the Environment Department End-Year Performance for 2019/20.

### **ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2020/21**

**1396.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, detailing the projected revenue budget out-turn for 2020/21 and providing details of the expected year-end variances together with summary cost information for each of the undernoted services as at 31 August 2020:-

- (i) Objective and Subjective Summaries;
- (ii) Education Department;
- (iii) Contribution to Integration Joint Board;
- (iv) Environment Department;
- (v) Environment Department – Support;
- (vi) Chief Executive’s Office;
- (vii) Chief Executive’s Office – Support;
- (viii) Corporate and Community Services Department – Community Resources;
- (ix) Corporate and Community Services Department – Support;
- (x) Other Expenditure and Income;
- (xi) Joint Boards;
- (xii) Contingency – Welfare;
- (xiii) Health and Social Care Partnership; and
- (xiv) Housing Revenue Account.

Whilst noting that as at 31 August 2020, the estimated year end position showed a net overspend of £2,082k based on current information and taking account of additional grant funding confirmed and anticipated to date, the report indicated that for General Fund services the projected overspend was £1,788k and together with the projected shortfall in Council Tax collection of £450k the total forecast overspend on General Fund services was £2,238k. This reflected an improved position from that reported to the meeting of the Cabinet on 27 August 2020 and was due to various increases in anticipated grant funding (including assumptions as to Government support for income losses from sales, fees and charges), together with very close expenditure controls across all departments.

Approval was sought for a number service virements and operational budget adjustments, details of which were outlined in the report.

The report concluded by highlighting that the Council’s projected revenue out-turn position was reported as an operational overspend of £2,082k largely as a result of COVID pressures the position having been arrived at after taking account of both confirmed and anticipated additional grant funding in relation to COVID. The report

demonstrated the serious financial implications on operational services arising from the current pandemic and highlighted the remaining budget shortfall still to be closed. Whilst the Council continued to work with COSLA in seeking further grant resources and/or additional fiscal flexibilities, departments must continue to do all they could to avoid non-essential expenditure, to closely monitor and manage the impact of COVID-19 on their operational services and on the probable outturn position and to maintain and increase any operational underspends wherever possible.

The Cabinet, having noted the reported probable out-turn position, agreed:-

- (a) to approve service virements and operational adjustments as set out in the notes to the tables in the report and noted the reported improvement in the probable out-turn position;
- (b) to instruct departments to continue to avoid all non-essential spending;
- (c) that management action be taken to remedy any avoidable forecast overspends; and
- (d) that all departments continue to closely monitor their probable outturn position.

#### **SALE OF HRA LAND AT BARRHEAD SOUTH**

**1397.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, in relation to progress in the sale of land off Springfield Road/Balgraystone Road at Barrhead South Strategic Development Opportunity.

The report explained that the Council had a piece of land at Barrhead South held on the Housing Revenue Account that it was felt appropriate to sell for private housing in order that a capital receipt could be raised, to be used to finance the construction of council housing provision across East Renfrewshire. Details of the proposed process of the sale designed to secure the maximum receipt for the Council were outlined in the report.

Following discussion and having heard the Director in response to questions on the potential location for any council houses to be built, the Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the proposal that the Council disposes of its land holding on the open market for residential development on the basis outlined in this report and that the sale proceeds are used to finance the construction of Council housing provision elsewhere within the Council area;
- (b) noted the progress made in bringing forward the sale of HRA owned land at Barrhead South;
- (c) noted the appointment of Ironside Farrar Limited as consultant planners and engineers to secure Planning Permission in Principle and to investigate and prepare technical information required for marketing purposes in respect of the sale of land at Barrhead South; and
- (d) noted the intention to appoint a residential development agent to assist with the marketing and disposal of the land in order to secure best value to the Council.

## **UPDATE ON CLEANING SERVICES IN PFI SCHOOLS**

**1398.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 28 November 2019, (Page 1031, Item 1114), when it was agreed to approve the option to use the contractual provision within the PFI contract to bring cleaning services in-house at Mearns Primary School and St Ninian's High School, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education, providing an update of the current position of cleaning services at the PFI schools (i.e. St Ninian's High School and Mearns Primary School) provided under the PFI contract and seeking agreement to again consider the cleaning service in PFI schools at the next service review period due in August 2021.

The report explained that unfortunately the actions of the working group established to conclude the next stages of the removal of the cleaning service from the PFI contract were impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown and preparations, and the continued focus to keep all schools and early years' facilities safe and operational following the resumption of full-time education in August.

However, the standards of cleaning at the two PFI schools had improved in 2020 and Bellrock had engaged well with the Council in their response to the impact of COVID-19. These cleaning services would be reviewed in 2021 and in the interim would be closely monitored. The outcome of this review would determine whether cleaning services were ultimately removed from the services provided by ProjectCo. There was a pause on the progress of the original plan to take over this service. It should be noted that there remains the prospect that cleaning be removed from services provided by ProjectCo (Bellrock).

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report and agreed that the cleaning service in PFI Schools is considered at the next review period due in August 2021.

CHAIR