

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 1 September 2016.

Present:

Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)	Councillor Elaine Green
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Ian McAlpine

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

Also Present:

Councillor Gordon Wallace (Chair of Audit and Scrutiny Committee) – for Item 2158 only.

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Business Change and Revenues; Alan Hook, Principal Officer, Technical Services; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Mary Montague and Vincent Waters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2156. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

AUDIT OF BEST VALUE – A NEW APPROACH

2157. The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, providing an update on Audit Scotland's new approach to auditing Best Value and advising that the Council would be in the first tranche of the new arrangements with a Best Value Assurance report due for the Council at some point during 2017/18.

The report explained that the Council had been selected as one of the first six councils to undergo the new audit process and this was the first time that the Council had been externally audited in this manner since the Council's very positive report in 2005, which was held up as one of the best reports in Scotland. Since that time, the Council had various types of annual assurance, most recently through the Local Scrutiny Plan which was considered at the meeting of the Cabinet on 16 June 2016.

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Whilst noting that the Scottish Government was in early talks about reviewing and updating the statutory guidance which supported Best Value legislation to reflect various changes in the local government and public sector environment, the report indicated that the new guidance would not be in place for councils in the first tranche of the new approach to auditing Best Value.

The report also highlighted the 10 key Best Value characteristics in the statutory guidance and emphasised that the Council was in a strong position to demonstrate continuous improvement through its outcome-based approach to planning and performance management; sound management of resources; change and transformation work; and strong approach to partnership working.

The Cabinet noted the Council's position in the first tranche of the new national approach to auditing Best Value, with a Best Value Assurance report on the Council due in 2017/18.

EASTWOOD NURSERY ALLOTMENTS BOUNDARY WALL

2158. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 16 June 2016 (Page 1968, Item 2104 refers), when the Cabinet agreed to fund and oversee the reinstatement of the boundary wall to a brick wall specification at a height of up to 2.4 metres or an appropriate height at an estimated cost of £60,000, subject to tender (i.e. Option (ii)), the Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, reporting on the outcome of the deliberations at the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 4 August 2016 on the Cabinet's decision relating to the boundary wall at the site leased from the Council by the Eastwood Nursery Allotments Association (ENAA).

Councillor Fletcher invited Councillor Wallace as Chair of the Audit Scrutiny Committee to present the report to the Cabinet.

Councillor Wallace thanked both Councillor Fletcher and officers for attending the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to consider the matter further. He advised that having given consideration to the Cabinet's original decision, the view of the committee was that the existing wall be allowed to remain. Whilst acknowledging the views expressed by local residents about the visual impact the wall/fence was having on the amenity of the area, and having expressed sympathy for the residents in this regard, he stated that given that there were areas in East Renfrewshire which were listed in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones, Best Value would not be achieved by reinstating the original wall at an estimated cost of £60,000.

In reply, Councillor Fletcher acknowledged the solid consensus of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee that the wall/fence should remain in the course of which he emphasised that the existing structure had not met the expectations of the local residents. Whilst he did not oppose the committee's recommendation, he indicated that it was proposed that officers would meet with the ENAA with a view to improving the appearance of the wall/fence.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee did not support the Cabinet's original decision to construct a replacement wall as set out as Option (ii) of the original report considered at the meeting of the Cabinet on 16 June 2016; and
- (b) approved the recommendation by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee that the existing wall be allowed to remain.

ESTIMATED REVENUE BUDGET OUT-TURN 2016/17

2159. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer, detailing the estimated projected revenue out-turn for 2016/17 and providing details of the expected variances together with summary cost information for each of the undernoted services as at 24 June 2016:-

- (i) Objective and Subjective Summaries;
- (ii) Education Department;
- (iii) Health and Social Care Partnership;
- (iv) Environment Department;
- (v) Environment Department – Support;
- (vi) Corporate and Community Services Department – Community Resources;
- (vii) Corporate and Community Services Department – Support;
- (viii) Chief Executive’s Office;
- (ix) Other Expenditure and Income and Other Housing; and
- (x) Housing Revenue Account.

Whilst noting that the estimated projected revenue out-turn position was reported as an operational underspend of £242,200 and that for General Services an underspend of £258,900 was projected, the report highlighted that a number of operational variances required management action to ensure that expenditure would be in line with budget at the end of the financial year. It was noted that it was expected that management action would lead to all overspends being recovered, that all underspends were consolidated wherever possible and that spending up to budget levels did not take place.

The report also explained that the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 placed a statutory requirement on significant trading operations to achieve a break even position over a rolling three year period. However, it was noted that none of the Council’s services fell within the definition of a significant trading operation.

The Cabinet, having noted the reported probable out-turn position of the Revenue Budget 2016/17, agreed that:-

- (a) all departments currently on target to remain within budget be required to monitor and maintain this position to the year-end;
- (b) those departments currently forecasting a year-end overspend position be required to take action to bring net expenditure back within budget; and
- (c) all service departments ensure that effective control and measurement of agreed operational efficiencies are undertaken on a continuous basis.

URGENT WORKS AT GILMOUR STREET AND STRATHAVEN ROAD, EAGLESHAM

2160. The Cabinet considered and noted a report by the Director of Environment homologating the action taken by officers under Clause 15(i) of the Council’s Standing Orders Relating to Contracts in relation to works required in connection with properties at Gilmour Street and Strathaven Road, Eaglesham.

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