

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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 3 June 2021.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth  
Councillor Danny Devlin

Councillor Colm Merrick  
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer - Legal and Procurement; Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues & Change; Candy Millard, Head of Strategic Services; Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Jaime Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Morag Brown, Policy and Improvement Manager; Robert Spencer, Principal Accountant (Revenue); Ricky Taylor, Business Relationship Manager; Kathryn McCormack, HR Manager; Colin Hutton, Senior Communications Officer; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillor Paul O’Kane.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1649.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) 2019/20 PERFORMANCE**

**1650.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive providing an overview of the Council’s performance against the national Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators for the period of 2019/20. It was noted that the report provided a pre-Covid position and therefore the effects and impact of COVID on service performance would become apparent in future LGBF reporting for 2020/21 and beyond.

The report provided a summary of performance with further information included within the Annex. It was noted that the Council was performing well in educational attainment,

recycling, satisfaction with parks and open spaces, minimising delayed discharge from hospitals and residential costs per week for residents aged over 65. Areas for improvement were noted as invoice processing and some of the cost indicators.

In response to a question from Councillor Bamforth on the increase in the cost per attendance at sports facilities from £4.24 in 2018/19 to £5.60 in 2019/20, above the Scottish average of £2.71, the Policy and Improvement Manager, Principal Accountant (Revenue) and Chief Executive advised that the Trust was performing well, and the difference in these figures could be a result of this figure being calculated differently in comparison to other local authorities. The use of outdoor facilities was also a factor to be taken into account. However it was noted that further investigation would be undertaken regarding the calculation of the indicator.

Councillor Buchanan having noted an error in the annex to the report in that the dark grey line on the graph for 'Culture and Leisure: Spotlights' should represent the percentage for Scotland and not East Renfrewshire, he then noted the efficiency value for voids in housing. In reply, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) outlined that this was a result of an increase in turnover from current council house tenants moving into new council house properties and existing council house properties then being prepared for use again.

In response to Councillor Buchanan's comments on the decrease in invoice payments processing performance, the Head of Communities, Revenues & Change advised that current unaudited figures for 20/21 indicated a 6% improvement in this area following implementation of the new finance system and processes which had caused this initial decrease in performance. The Council was also twelfth in Scotland for processing payments to local firms within 10 days.

Noting the 9.6% of procurement spent on local small/medium enterprises, Councillor Bamforth suggested that improvement was required in this area. The Chief Executive advised that the Economic Development team was focusing on maximising opportunities to encourage local businesses to work with the Council although as East Renfrewshire was predominantly residential in nature with a low business base it would be difficult to improve this indicator significantly.

Councillor Buchanan commended the position of the Council as the top recycling council in Scotland whilst referring to the increasing costs in this area which had resulted in changes to the management of waste including garden waste.

Having welcomed the findings outlined in the report and having heard from the Policy and Improvement Manager, the Cabinet noted the Council's performance against the LGBF indicators and the action being taken by departments to address any performance issues.

## **UPDATE ON MODERN, AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME (MAP) & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY**

**1651.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, which provided an update on the Modern, Ambitious Programme; reviewed the last Digital Strategy and set out the digital priorities for the next 3 years.

Having provided a summary of the work that had already taken place across the Council, the report outlined the Council's 3 priority areas for digital transformation across the next few years. These were noted as: customer experience; business systems and processes; and workforce productivity, particularly through Microsoft 365. These areas would be underpinned by use of service design and user engagement techniques; progress on the

Council's data and insight strategy; a focus on new ways of working beyond the pandemic; and a drive through the Council's workforce plan to develop the Digital, Data and Technology skills of the workforce.

These priorities aligned well with the recommendations of Audit Scotland's recent report on digital progress in local government, as well as the themes of the new national digital strategy. An update on this would be provided to Audit and Scrutiny Committee later in June.

Having heard from the Head of Communities, Revenues & Change, and welcomed the report and significant work in this area, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the good progress across the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) including the core systems, digital and departmental programmes.
- (b) commended the achievements of the Digital Strategy 2016-20 (Annex 1) and noted the impact of the pandemic in accelerating key aspects of our digital delivery to enable our services to keep operating effectively over this challenging period.
- (c) agreed the 3 priority areas of the Council's digital transformation strategy for 2021-24: customer experience; business systems and processes and workforce productivity and that these would be underpinned by a more detailed roadmap for change which would be developed on completion of project prioritisation and resourcing work.

## **COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT FUNDING 2021/2022**

**1652.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, which outlined a proposed 4-tier approach to use over £700K available for use in 2021/22 under the Scottish Government humanitarian support funding to support local people and address the financial hardship caused by the pandemic.

The Head of Communities, Revenues & Change outlined how the funding had been used to date, in consultation with services and Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, to support local communities.

Having heard the Head of Communities, Revenues & Change further on the proposed 4-tier approach, including short-term spending proposals as set out in Annex 1 accompanying the report, Councillor Devlin sought details of the arrangements currently in place to provide support to third sector organisations. In reply, the Head of Communities, Revenues & Change reported that she would provide Councillor Devlin with an update on the ongoing support and support which has already been provided to the third sector in response to the pandemic.

Elected Members having praised the efforts of Council staff, HSCP and voluntary sector during the pandemic, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the availability of COVID-related Scottish Government funding in 2021/22 for Flexible Support and Financial Insecurity;
- (b) approved the proposed 4-tier approach and proposed budget allocations for use of this funding including:
  - meeting appropriate COVID support needs arising as part of ongoing response in communities;

- progressing a range of internal projects in line with the funding criteria;
  - conducting research and engagement to inform our recovery and renewal strategies and culminating in a community-bid process in the autumn; and
- (c) approved the recommended short-term spending proposals outlined at Annex 1.

### **EXEMPTION FROM TENDERING – PENTANA PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**1653.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking an exemption from tendering in accordance with Contract Standing Order 15 (ii) in relation to the procurement of the Pentana performance management system from Ideagen Plc. to cover the period August 2021 to August 2022.

The report outlined that this would allow a managed transition from the web hosted platform to a Council managed database that had scope for further automation in future years, supporting the Council to continue on its journey of improving efficiency. Granting an exemption from tendering would allow the project to provide a higher level of assurance that there would be no break in continuity of statutory performance reporting. The total cost would be no more than £12,000 and would be met within existing revenue budgets.

Having heard from the Head of Digital and Community Safety the Cabinet, in accordance with Contract Standing Order 15 (ii), approved an exemption from tendering to allow the procurement of the Pentana performance management system from August 2021 until August 2022.

### **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000 - COVERT SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITY 2020-21**

**1654.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Officer - Legal and Procurement, which updated Cabinet on the surveillance activity undertaken and authorised by the Council during 2020/21.

The report outlined that during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 the Council had authorised directed surveillance of 3 overarching authorisations and 6 separate targets.

Two involved the sale of counterfeit goods and copyright/trademark infringement and surveillance was undertaken by officers of Trading Standards Scotland acting as part of national initiatives. The third authorisation permitted investigation by Council Trading Standards officers into the suspected sale of dangerous substances contrary to health regulations. All authorisations related to online investigations.

These figures reflected a decline in the use of surveillance from 2019/20 during which period 14 targets were investigated under 3 authorisations.

The report advised that as a result of remote working due to COVID restrictions online training resources have been provided during this period.

Having heard further from the Chief Officer - Legal and Procurement, the Cabinet noted the use of directed surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources during the period 2020/21.

## DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY TRANSFORMATION

**1655.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Digital and Community Safety informing of the proposed digital connectivity transformation of the Council area and seeking approval of the use of the Scottish Government Capita SWAN framework to procure the additional bandwidth for the Council.

The report explained that the current East Renfrewshire Council Wide Area Network (WAN) was reaching its original design limits and required investment to be fit for the future. There were growing network performance issues throughout the Council, most notably the Education estate, which consumed around 80% of the bandwidth and required continual incremental increases reactively to meet internet demands.

The report further explained that the proposal outlined would create an authority-wide high speed fibre network infrastructure to replace the current Corporate and Education WAN and provide the essential foundations for economic growth, social inclusion and prosperity throughout East Renfrewshire. An added benefit would be the investment by CityFibre of up to £27 million in a full fibre network for residents and businesses following on from the investment in the Council network. This investment could give 85% of homes and businesses access to a full fibre network with Barrhead and Neilston included in the plans. In addition to this, further discussions were ongoing with Capita to move towards 100% coverage across the East Renfrewshire area. It was noted that capital costs associated with the proposal had already been approved at the Council meeting on 15 March 2021 with approval now being sought to proceed to project implementation.

In response to questions on the project timeline, the Head of Digital and Community Safety advised that this was expected to be between 18 and 24 months.

Members having welcomed the benefits of improved digital connectivity as an essential service for residents of East Renfrewshire, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted that on 15 March 2021 Council had approved an investment of £2.7m in the Council's wide area network which would improve internet connection speeds across the Council's estate;
- (b) noted that further work had been undertaken to build the details of the business case including an independent assessment of the case;
- (c) approved the use of the Scottish Government Capita SWAN framework to procure the additional bandwidth through which Capita would work in partnership with City Fibre to provide a "Full fibre network";
- (d) noted that CityFibre intended to invest up to £27M in a full fibre network for residents and businesses on the back of the investment in the Council network;
- (e) noted that the City Fibre investment could give 85% of homes and businesses access to a full fibre network with Barrhead and Neilston included in the plans; and
- (f) noted that further discussions were ongoing with Capita to move towards 100% coverage across the East Renfrewshire area.

## GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL UPDATE

**1656.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on the progress with the Glasgow City Region City Deal projects in East Renfrewshire. The report also detailed proposals for revising the programme in terms of scope, cost and timescale given that all City Deal projects had to be delivered by 2025 in terms of the current funding arrangements.

The Director of Environment provided the background to the City Deal investment, outlining that this was a programme of ambitious projects approved by the Council in 2015 to stimulate economic growth, improve transport links, increase leisure opportunities, support business development, unlock residential land and generate economic benefits measured as additional Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment. At that time it was entitled the M77 Strategic Corridor Programme, with paragraph 8 of the report outlining the key objectives of the project set in 2015.

The report noted that the Glasgow City Region Project Management Office had asked City Region Member Authorities (MA's) to revise their programmes taking into account deliverability and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on costs and timescales.

The Director of Environment having provided an overview of the completed projects as outlined in the report, he then provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the programme for the remaining projects. He proposed that the new rail station at Barrhead South, Dams to Darnley Country Park Visitor Facilities, and Aurs Road Improvement projects proceed but that none of the remaining City Deal resources be allocated to the delivery of the Levern Valley Link/Newton Mearns to Barrhead new road connection and that delivery of this project be postponed.

The Chief Executive highlighted that as the proposals meant a change to the projects within the capital plan, Council approval would be required.

Following discussion and questions in relation to the remaining project delivery, and Councillors having welcomed the significant improvements of the revised proposals, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the progress made on the development and implementation of East Renfrewshire's £44 million City Deal programme.
- (b) **agreed to recommend to the Council** approval of the revised projects and budgets to be delivered within the remaining resources available; and
- (c) noted that the revised projects and budgets would require to be submitted to the Glasgow City Region Project Management Office for approval through the appropriate City Region governance channels.

## ADOPTION OF GLASGOW CITY REGION CLIMATE ADAPTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

**1657.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of the likely forthcoming adoption of the Glasgow City Region's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet (subject to individual City Region Member Authority approval) and seeking an indication of early support by the Council. The report also provided an overview on the way in which the Council could play its part in the implementation of the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan throughout 2021/22.

Commenting on the report, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) referred to the Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy 2020-2030 produced by Climate Ready Clyde and to the implications outlined in that strategy document should collective adaptation to Climate Change not be taken on.

It was noted that subject to support from the constituent authorities, the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan would be formally launched on 29 June 2021.

In the course of discussion it was noted that arrangements were to be made to involve young people in the delivery of the Clyde Climate Forest through tree planting, and in response to questions from Councillor Lafferty the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) indicated that he would clarify if the tree planting of the Clyde Climate Forest was included in the national target of planting 22 million trees outlined by the Strategic Development Plan Joint Committee.

Having heard further from the Head of Environment (Strategic Services), the Cabinet:-

- (a) indicated early approval of and support for the proposed Glasgow City Region Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan;
- (b) noted that there would be a formal launch for the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan on 29 June 2021, coordinated by Climate Ready Clyde, which would be supported by East Renfrewshire Council at a local level; and
- (c) noted that the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan necessarily implied a greater allocation of resources to planning, financing and implementation in the years ahead, as well as additional policy and regulation.

## **COVID 19 – ALLOCATIONS UPDATE AND POLICY REVIEW**

**1658.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment advising of the steps taken by Housing Services to deliver the housing allocations service during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the proposed policy review.

The report outlined the restrictions placed on services due to the pandemic resulting in a backlog of both homeless and waiting list applicants' access to accommodation. A full consultation exercise would be undertaken on the existing policy to address the housing concerns of those most in need.

Having heard from the Head of Environment (Strategic Services), the Cabinet noted the:-

- (a) impact of COVID 19 to East Renfrewshire Council's Allocation Policy that were required to address homelessness; and
- (b) proposed review of East Renfrewshire Council's Allocation Policy which would be presented to Cabinet for approval in autumn 2021.

## **THE EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL (A727 EAST KILBRIDE ROAD, BUSBY) (50MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2021**

**1659.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval for the making and confirmation of 'The East Renfrewshire Council (A727 East Kilbride Road, Busby) (50mph Speed Limit) Order 2021'.

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The report outlined that the making and confirmation of 'The East Renfrewshire Council (A727 East Kilbride Road, Busby) (50mph Speed Limit) Order 2021' would implement a reduced speed limit applicable to all road vehicle users in order to address speeding and safety concerns particularly on the approach to an urban area.

Having heard from the Director of Environment, the Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the making and confirmation of the 'The East Renfrewshire Council (A727 East Kilbride Road, Busby) (50mph Speed Limit) Order 2021'; and
- (b) delegated to the Director of Environment the implementation of the Order in accordance with the associated statutory procedures.

CHAIR