

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 21 August 2014.

Present:

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

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Customer and Business Change Services; Ken McKinlay, Head of Education Services (Culture, Sport and Continuing Education); Iain MacLean, Head of Environment (Planning, Property and Regeneration); David Miller, Head of Revenue Services; Phil Daws, Housing Services Manager; Gillian McNamara, Principal Projects and Programmes Officer; Jackie Martin, Business Manager; Barry Cook, Senior Active Schools Co-ordinator; David McLeish, Senior Sports Development Co-ordinator; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1155. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2013/14 AND UPDATE ON PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE (PSE)

1156. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, submitting for approval the Annual Efficiency Statement for 2013/14 and providing an update on the transformation and change programme – Public Service Excellence (PSE). A copy of the efficiency statement for 2013/14 accompanied the report.

The report explained that councils were required to provide an annual efficiency statement for submission to COSLA each year and that thereafter an aggregate statement was developed for the Scottish Government.

The report further explained that the Council's Public Service Excellence (PSE) programme had been established in 2009 to modernise the way in which the Council worked and helped it secure efficiencies for the future. Since 2009, the Council had delivered total recurring financial savings of at least £4,103,000 contributed to a workforce reduction of at least 231 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). Furthermore, the Council's rates of customer satisfaction with its services had also remained broadly stable during that time, despite significant budget reductions.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the Annual Efficiency Statement 2013/14 for submission to COSLA; and
- (b) noted the progress being made to develop the Council's Public Service Excellence programme and deliver efficiencies for 2014/15 and beyond.

END-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2013/14

1157. The Cabinet considered reports by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Directors of Education and Environment in relation to the end-year performance 2013/14 based on performance indicators and activities in the Outcome Delivery Plan 2013/16 and Single Outcome Agreement 2013/14. Detailed performance information on each of the departments for the period 2013/14 was appended to the reports.

The reports summarised a high level overview of each department's performance at end-year 2013/14. The information presented showed a positive picture of services responding well to a range of challenges with departments still continuing to deliver services that impacted positively on the lives of local residents, as well as supporting the efficient operation of the Council.

The Cabinet approved the reports as summaries of the Chief Executive's Office, former Chief Executive's and Finance Department, Education and Environment Departments end-year performance for 2013/14.

LOCAL 2014 COMMONWEALTH GAMES SPORTS ACTIVITIES

1158. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education, providing details of a range of local sports activities that were successfully delivered as part of the Council's contribution to the 2014 Commonwealth Games and viewed a short presentation given by Barry Cook, Senior Active Schools Co-ordinator; and David McLeish, Senior Sports Development Co-ordinator, on the activities undertaken by the Council.

The report explained that the Education Department planned and delivered a range of events, taster sessions and sports pathway programmes to help celebrate the Commonwealth Games coming to Glasgow and to inspire young people to get involved in local activities at opportunities aligned with the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy objectives. Full details of the activities were outlined in the report.

The Cabinet agreed to the continuing focus of activity on increasing participation in sports and physical activity by young people in East Renfrewshire.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

1159. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, advising of the financial results for 2013/14, comparing the out-turn with the final budgetary control statement for that year which had been submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet on 27 March 2014, and seeking approval for the accounting policies which underpinned the Annual Accounts.

The report demonstrated the continuing excellent financial performance of the Council and that subject to audit, the financial results contained within the accounts were satisfactory. Whilst noting that the Council's financial affairs had again been managed within its operational budget, the report highlighted that an overall surplus for the financial year of £1,435,000 had been recorded in the accounts. The report also highlighted that after transfers to earmarked reserves a sum of £39,000 had been added to the Council's non-earmarked General Fund Reserve resulting in a balance of £8.558 million as at 31 March 2014, representing 4% of the annual budgeted net revenue expenditure which equated to the Council's policy aim.

The report also highlighted details of transfers totalling £5.3 million that had been made from the General Fund balance to the Capital Reserve, Modernisation Fund and Insurance Fund and that £21.54 million had been invested in capital expenditure. Furthermore, an operational deficit of £415,000 had been made on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which reduced accumulated surpluses brought forward on that account.

The report concluded by advising that the Council's Annual Accounts also included a statement on corporate governance highlighting that the statement was a demonstration of the Council's sound control arrangements; and that public money was being safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the out-turn position compared to the previous Budgetary Control Report;
- (b) approved the transfers made from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve, Modernisation Fund and Insurance Fund;
- (c) noted that once the audit had been completed the Final Accounts would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council along with the External Auditor's report;
- (d) approved the accounting policies as stated in the Annual Accounts for 2013/14, an extract of which was attached to the report; and
- (e) noted the explanatory foreword and annual governance statement attached to the report.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

1160. The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing details of the position in respect of the undernoted revenue budgets for the period to 20 June 2014 and making recommendations in respect of the variances which had been identified during this period:-

- (i) Objective and Subjective Summaries;

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

The report highlighted that some adjustments had been made to the budgets since they had been approved earlier in the year and in terms of the overall budget performance, the current operational underspend of £2,033,500 was largely due to timing issues with the underlying real underspend of £218,300 or (0.5%) of the profiled budget for the period. It was noted that much of the underspend lay within the Education Department and would therefore be available for virement under Devolved School Management arrangements.

Whilst noting that as previously reported, the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 placed that statutory requirement on significant trading operations to achieve a break even position over a rolling three year period, the report indicated that none of the Council’s services fell within the definition of a Significant Trading Operation. Given the tight nature of the Council’s finances in the current economic climate, it was noted the Cabinet would actively monitor and receive regular reports on the financial performance throughout the course of the year.

The Cabinet, having noted the current financial position at this time, agreed that all service departments ensure that effective control and measurement of agreed operational efficiencies were undertaken on a continuous basis.

DELIVERING IMPROVEMENTS TO EAST RENFREWSHIRE HOUSING

1161. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing details of the progress the Council had made in meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the delivery of the Housing Capital Programme. The report also provided an update on the Council’s policy in relation to the award of Private Sector Housing Grant and the recent successful initiatives in relation to combating fuel poverty through energy efficiency measures.

Whilst noting that the SHQS was introduced in February 2004, and that social landlords had until April 2015 to bring their houses up to the standard, and thereafter maintain them to that standard, the report explained that the SHQS had significantly shaped the way the Council’s capital programme was prioritised. Details of the key areas which would receive investment during the current financial year were outlined in the report.

The report also explained that undertaking repairs to mixed tenure properties was often challenging as some owner occupiers lacked the financial means to permit them to afford to pay for the repairs. It was noted that to assist with this the Council offered a grant that was called Private Sector Housing Grant. During 2014/15, it was proposed that the grant offered to the majority of resident owner occupiers participating in the Housing Capital Programme be set at 40%. The report also provided details of the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland – Area Based Schemes which was a grant from the Scottish Government that had been made available to encourage private owners to agree to costly external insulation where their homes were not suitable for cavity wall insulation to reduce carbon emissions

and fuel costs. Furthermore, the report also highlighted the measures taken by the Council to tackle fuel poverty and that as a result Council residents had saved, collectively, nearly £250,000 due to insulation works managed by the Council.

The Cabinet noted the:-

- (a) good progress in relation to the implementation of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard;
- (b) Council's policy in relation to the award of Private Sector Housing Grant; and
- (c) recent successful initiatives in relation to combating fuel poverty through energy efficiency measures.

LEASING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

1162. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 8 December 2011 (Page 2160, Item 1723 refers), when it was agreed to approve the establishment of a private sector leasing scheme to make greater use of the private rented sector to help meet some of the accommodation needs of homeless households, the Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, providing details of the progress made to date with leasing accommodation from the private rented sector for use as temporary accommodation. The report also sought approval to revise the policy in relation to the use of Council short stay homeless flats and to provide an update in relation to the elimination of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

The report explained that the Council was required to provide temporary accommodation to households who presented themselves as homeless, and provided details of how the Council met this duty. Details of the current private sector leasing arrangements which the Council had in place were outlined in the report which included the leasing of 10 flats for use as temporary accommodation. It was noted that the rationale for the introduction of private sector leasing was to permit Council short stay flats to be returned to the mainstream letting pool and to assist with the elimination of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

However, the report highlighted that since the introduction of the under occupancy charge for Housing Benefit claimants, the usage of bed and breakfast had unfortunately increased. This was partially due to an increased demand for temporary accommodation with more homeless households presenting as homeless. The main factor was a lack of suitable permanent accommodation with a significant number of applicants waiting for one bedroom properties. In view of this, the report sought approval to expand the scheme from 10 to 20 properties as this would ensure that more temporary accommodation as opposed to bed and breakfast accommodation would be available to Council residents who unfortunately found themselves homeless.

The report also provided details of the steps taken by the Council to identify a site within Council ownership that would be suitable for the development of a supported accommodation unit although to date a suitable site had not been identified. Whilst investigations would continue it was noted there did not appear to be an immediate prospect of such a unit becoming available in the near future. The continued absence of such a supported accommodation unit left the Council with insufficient accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable households with high support needs.

1116

Whilst noting that the Council currently had a policy of keeping Council owned homeless short stay flats for a period of 5 years, the report explained that due to concerns expressed by residents regarding the sharing of communal facilities with occupants of homeless accommodation, the report sought approval to revise the Council's policy of keeping Council owned homeless flats for a period of 5 years by reducing this period to 3 years.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the good progress made in relation to leasing private rented properties for use as temporary accommodation;
- (b) authorised the Director of Environment to increase the number of properties leased through the scheme from 10 to 20;
- (c) agreed to revise the Council's policy of keeping Council owned homeless flats for a period of five years and to reduce this to a period of three years; and
- (d) note the difficulties in obtaining a suitable site to develop a supported accommodation unit.

VARIATION TO CONTRACT – GLASGOW ROAD ROUNDABOUT, BARRHEAD

1163. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of a variation to the contract in respect of the Glasgow Road Roundabout, Barrhead in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Cabinet noted:-

- (a) the variation to the contract sum with Mac Asphalt of £66,235 from the approval contract sum; and
- (b) that the increase in scheme costs would be funded from within the current planning, property and regeneration budget.

VARIATION TO CONTRACT – MAIN STREET, BARRHEAD – PARKING BAYS

1164. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, advising of a variation to the contract in respect of the Main Street, Barrhead – Parking Bays in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Cabinet noted:-

- (a) the variation to the contract with Mac Asphalt of £39,400 from the approved contract sum; and
- (b) that the increase in scheme costs would be funded from within the current Environment Department budget.

REQUEST FOR VARIATION OF CONTRACT VALUE FOR BARRHEAD SKATE PARK

1165. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval of a variation to the contract value for the Barrhead Skate Park in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations to allow for additional work identified during the public consultation phase.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) approved the variation in the contract for the Barrhead Skate Park increasing its value by £14,595; and
- (b) noted that the additional costs would be met from within existing contingencies.

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

At this point in the meeting, on the motion of the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet unanimously resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

PROPOSED SALE OF LAND AT 16 HARTFIELD CRESCENT, NEILSTON

1166. The Cabinet considered and approved a report by the Director of Environment, to sell 64 sq metres of Council owned ground at Hartfield Crescent, Neilston for the sum detailed in the report.

CHAIR

