

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

**Minute of virtual meeting held at 7.00pm on 27 October 2021.**

**Present:**

Provost Jim Fletcher	Councillor Annette Ireland
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Councillor David Macdonald
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Councillor Stewart Miller
Councillor Barbara Grant	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Fletcher in the Chair

**Attending:**

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Julie Murray, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership; Kate Rocks, Chief Social Work Officer; Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services); Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services; Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Colin Hutton, Senior Communications Officer; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Deputy Provost Betty Cunningham and Councillors Paul Aitken, Danny Devlin, Jim McLean, Paul O’Kane and Jim Swift.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1784.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1785.** The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 8 September 2021.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

**1786.** The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Cabinet –9 September 2021;
- (b) Cabinet (Police & Fire) – 16 September 2021;
- (c) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 23 September 2021;
- (d) Planning Applications Committee – 29 September 2021;
- (e) Education Committee –30 September 2021;
- (f) Cabinet – 7 October 2021;
- (g) Appointments Committee –14 October 2021; and
- (h) Cabinet – 21 October 2021.

## NOTICE OF MOTION – CLIMATE EMERGENCY

**1787.** In accordance with Standing Order 25, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Bamforth.

*East Renfrewshire Council recognises the immediacy of the current climate emergency which needs urgent political action on a global scale to save the planet, and it is therefore imperative that East Renfrewshire Council declares a climate emergency.*

*The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, published on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021, starkly highlights the gravity and urgency of the situation. Urgent action to minimise a global temperature increase and avert a catastrophic tipping point for the planet is needed by individuals, companies, local and national government. As a local authority, both as a result of our direct activities and as a consequence of our enabling and leadership role for our residents, we can play a hugely significant role.*

*We recognise and applaud the actions already taken by East Renfrewshire Council. We note that a draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, originally suggested by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, will soon be brought to Council for consideration. We note that this is just one of a raft of measures underway, with others including undertaking a baseline assessment of the council's carbon emissions, and a review of the actions needed to ensure the council's office buildings will move towards being carbon neutral. Our council performance in areas such as recycling is to be applauded. As such we recognise and support the actions that we as a council are already taking.*

*This motion reaffirms the council's commitment to these actions and to protecting our environment and is seeking to accelerate its plans to reduce carbon emissions to zero as soon as practicable. We ask Senior Officers of the Council to*

- *assess its resource requirements for tackling climate change as part of the Budget Strategy process for 2021/22 and to investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment in order that the necessary actions can be undertaken*
- *consider the development of climate change impact assessments to ensure that all proposed policies and actions taken by the council assist towards reaching the goal of zero emissions*

- *emphasise the importance of our biodiversity and natural environment and encourage and support practices to enhance and sustain the farmed and natural world;*
- *embed throughout our entire organisational culture the pursuit of measures to tackle climate change.*
- *review all policy and practice across our council directorates to identify ways in which we can move further and faster on carbon reduction measures;*
- *consider how we communicate with, encourage and assist local residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and to help achieve this we will set up a Climate Change Partnership Group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, businesses and other relevant parties.*

*Finally this motion acknowledges that climate change impacts are already being felt within the local area. Due to past decades of carbon emissions, more frequent extreme weather events are inevitable. The Council must plan for resilience and continue to work with partners across the City Region to ensure that we can flourish in our future climate.*

Councillor Wallace, seconded by Councillor Grant, moved an amendment in the following terms:-

That the full wording of the Motion be deleted and the following be inserted instead:-

*In the face of the challenging circumstances of a pandemic, this Council recognises and supports the efforts made by council officers to ensure East Renfrewshire Council plays its part in the global fight against climate change.*

Provost Fletcher invited Councillor Ireland to speak to the terms of the Motion.

Councillor Ireland referred to the UN COP 26 Summit, taking place in Glasgow over the next two weeks, where world leaders and their representatives would meet to discuss the global climate emergency and strategies to slow down and reverse this trend. She reported that every citizen had a part to play in dealing with the climate emergency, including in Scotland where temperatures and rainfall had increased steadily in recent decades. She added that the Council had a key role to play and it was extremely important that immediate action was taken to combat climate change at a local level. Referring to responses from a local survey on climate change which had been commissioned, she advised that the majority of respondents had considered climate change to be an immediate problem and that the Council should lead by example to support a sustainable economy. As a member of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee she had approved reports supporting the renewal of East Renfrewshire's climate change strategy, adding that it was important for local people and organisations to get involved to make East Renfrewshire a healthier and fairer area in which to live and work.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Bamforth reported that although the Council's recent focus had rightly been in response to the pandemic, urgent consideration now required to be given to tackling climate change at a local level. She referred to rising greenhouse gas emission levels which were expected to increase global temperatures by 4-5 degrees by the end of the century, leading to melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and more violent storms around the world. She added that Scotland had a long way to go to reach the expected Net Zero target by 2045 and councils had an important role to play in ensuring this target was met. She acknowledged the work which had already been done by the Council in tackling

climate change, adding that the establishment of a climate change partnership group would be essential to gather local information and ensure that we could provide a sustainable future for all.

Councillor Wallace was heard in support of his amendment during which he reported that it was too late for the Council to declare a climate emergency when world leaders and their representatives were due to arrive in Glasgow in the next two weeks. He advised that the Council had done a good job in the area of recycling, but more thought should have been given to how larger projects would affect the local environment, including a replacement for Eastwood Leisure Centre which had been poorly maintained in the past, and straightening the road at Barrhead Dams, which had destroyed much of the natural habitat. Referring to Risk 6.23 of the Strategic Risk Register, which recognised the potential risk of employees experiencing increased stress and poor wellbeing due to the pandemic, and which had been designated as a “red” risk, he believed that this motion would increase the workload and possible stress levels of employees, and that it was unnecessary.

Councillor Grant intimated her support of the amendment.

Councillor Miller expressed his disappointment in the motion as a great amount of work had already been undertaken by the Council, employees, and local residents to tackle this serious and challenging issue, and referred to the report which had been approved previously by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on climate change and the Council’s commitment to plant one tree for every resident. He added that he would support extra resources to tackle the climate emergency, which should come from central government, but that he could not support the motion or the amendment.

Councillor Macdonald advised that tangible change was required as a matter of urgency to tackle climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He added that this should not be a political issue as everyone should come together to save the planet for future generations. He advised that the Council should have a policy in place to tackle climate change and supported the motion presented.

Councillor Merrick was also heard in support of the motion and expressed his disappointment at some of the comments made earlier. He added that the Council had already made a number of improvements in service delivery to tackle climate change but more required to be done, and quickly, in order to move closer to the Net Zero goal.

Councillor Buchanan expressed his surprise at some of the comments which had been made earlier as he had expected most Members to agree with the vast majority of the motion. He emphasised the need to tackle global warming and the wording of the motion would reaffirm the Council’s commitment to tackling this crisis. The motion referred to what the Council could do and the fantastic work which had already been done. He agreed with the sentiment of Councillor Wallace’s amendment as an addition to the motion, but could not support it as a replacement.

At this stage, Provost Fletcher invited Councillor Ireland to sum up.

Councillor Ireland advised that she had hoped to receive cross party support for this very important motion as it affected everyone. She added that establishing a climate change group was an opportunity not to be missed and all Elected Members would have an opportunity to feed into the plan which would be created as a result of these discussions. She added that the purpose of the motion was to accelerate plans that had already been put forward and to include additional measures to enable targets to be met.

The Democratic Services Manager clarified that in light of current circumstances voting would be by roll call vote.

On the roll being called, Provost Fletcher, and Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Ireland, Lafferty, Macdonald, and Merrick, voted for the motion. Councillors Gilbert, Grant and Wallace voted for the amendment. Councillor Miller abstained.

There being 8 votes for the motion, 3 for the amendment and 1 abstention, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

## **STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS/REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS/ COMMITTEES**

**1788.** The following statements were made:-

(a) **Councillor Bamforth – Integration Joint Board**

Councillor Bamforth referred to business considered at the most recent meeting of the East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) at which the fifth Annual Performance Report and the Clinical and Care Governance Annual report had been presented.

The Annual Performance Report had set out how the HSCP had delivered on its vision and commitments whilst recognising the challenges and impact of the pandemic.

The Clinical and Care Governance Annual report highlighted key areas of work in 2020/21 including collaboration with local care homes; establishment of new testing regimes and regular meetings to support care homes. Additional responsibility for the HSCP included additional flu cohorts and COVID vaccination programmes in care homes. There had been an increased demand for services due to increased poverty; health inequalities; mental health and wellbeing; and frailty and deconditioning as a result of the pandemic, and discussions had taken place on the impact of this on staff wellbeing.

Children and families colleagues had provided an overview of emotional and mental wellbeing services for children, and in particular the healthier minds hub which had been established during the pandemic to respond to rapidly emerging demands. The report demonstrated strong partnership working, which had continued throughout the pandemic, and which would be developed further in the future.

Councillor Bamforth reported that updates were also provided on the Our Care at Home service; HSCP Recovery and Resources Programme; NHSGGC Unscheduled Care Programme; Community Change Fund; and the revenue budget.

(b) **Councillor Merrick – Convener of Community Services & Community Safety**

Councillor Merrick commented on the ongoing recovery of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT), confirming that activities were delivered in the summer school holidays under the national Get Into Summer scheme, which had funded 40 places at each camp for vulnerable

children and young people, and delivery of activity camps in the October school holidays at Eastwood and Barrhead High Schools. One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic had been the strengthened partnership working between ERCLT, the Education Department and the HSCP.

He explained that Bookbug sessions had resumed; Busby Library had reopened following refurbishment; and tickets for the Christmas pantomime at Eastwood Theatre, Peter Pan, were now on sale.

The Council noted the statements.

## **PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**1789.** The Council considered and noted a report by the Deputy Chief Executive providing details of civic engagements attended by Provost Fletcher since the last meeting.

## **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT**

**1790.** The Council considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer, providing details of her Annual Report for 2020/21 and seeking approval of the report for submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government. A copy of the Annual Report was appended to the report.

The Annual Report provided an overview of the professional activity for social work within East Renfrewshire for 2020-21 through the delivery of statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer. The impact of COVID-19 on the production of the annual report was highlighted and it was explained that the report provided a narrative of social work and social care activity across 5 broad headings, these being Governance and Accountability arrangements; Service Quality and Performance; Resources; Workforce; and COVID-19.

A number of areas of strong performance and success were highlighted. These included introduction of an innovative multi-disciplinary Healthier Minds team for children and young people; a multi-agency approach to Signs of Safety; continued improvement of direct participation and establishment of a Self-Directed Support Steering Group; enhanced collaboration with individuals and family carers in the design, evaluation and recruitment of staff/managers within adult services; significant improvements in Care at Home services and the multi-agency approach to Large Scale Investigations; participation in the pilot to facilitate joint investigate interviews under the new Scottish Child Interview Model; and the overall strength of multi-agency and partnership working throughout the pandemic across children's, adult and justice service areas.

The report also highlighted a continuing number of significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care in East Renfrewshire. These included increased demand for social work support across both children's and adult services and care at home for adults both in terms of number and complexity of need; increased referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); growing complexity of significant domestic abuse; and implementation of learning from the Care Review (The Promise) in all aspects of work with looked after children and young people. The continued impact of COVID-19 and the challenge of recovery were also highlighted, particularly as there had been a rise in poor mental health, emotional distress and, for older people, increased physical frailty and dependency alongside capacity challenges within social care services.

The Chief Social Work Officer was heard in detail on the report, referring to key successes despite the unprecedented level of demand and the stronger partnerships which had been developed, particularly with the Education Department, as a number of children's services could not have been provided without their input. She added that the partnership arrangements had enabled the most vulnerable children and families to remain safe, and Looked After Children to feel less isolated. Referring to the recent Scottish Social Services Awards she reported that East Renfrewshire HSCP had received an award for their partnership working with the Large Scale Investigation Team, in recognition of their work with vulnerable adults, and one employee had received the Social Worker of the Year Award.

In conclusion, she commended the way in which the HSCP workforce had dealt with the many challenges they had faced and the way in which they had worked above and beyond their statutory duties.

Members congratulated HSCP staff for their hard work and dedication during the pandemic and for a very positive annual report. It was recognised that strong work had been undertaken, including to enable and support vulnerable individuals, and to tackle the ongoing mental health crisis.

In response to Members, the Chief Social Work Officer reported that there was a need for more partnership and whole system working to build on and improve local services and that this could be better achieved if Government funding was not ring fenced but given to local areas to set their own key priorities.

Having heard Provost Fletcher thank the Chief Social Work Officer for a comprehensive and informative report, the Council approved the content of the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

## **NATIONAL CARE SERVICE - PROPOSED CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

**1791.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 8 September 2021 (Page 1630, Item 1749 refers), when amongst other things it was noted that Elected Members would have the opportunity to review and discuss the final consultation submission at this meeting, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive seeing approval for the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the creation of a new national care service.

It was reported that a cross-party working group had been convened to discuss the draft response to the consultation, a copy of which was attached to the report. The Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager referred to the response, highlighting that a few minor changes had been made, including in relation to an additional paragraph regarding the role of the Chief Social Work Officer.

Members referred to discussions that had taken place at the working group, and highlighted that local accountability was vital to the provision of care services.

The Council:-

- (a) noted that the response had been drafted in line with an Elected Member session on 23 September and discussions within a cross-party working group of Councillors Buchanan, Lafferty and Wallace on Monday 18 October; and

- (b) approved the response, including the amendments referred to at the meeting, for submission to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 2 November.

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 (LDP2)**

**1792.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 24 June 2020 (Page 1193, Item 1282 refers), when it was agreed to submit the Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), supporting documents, and the finalised “Schedule 4 Forms” to Scottish Ministers for examination, the Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on the LDP2 Examination Report and the modifications promoted by Reporters from the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA); and seeking approval to proceed to adopt the Modified Plan.

The report explained that the examination was conducted with very few requests for additional/further information and there was no requirement for a hearing session on any of the 36 issues under examination. The Reporters had agreed with the approach taken by the Council in the majority of issues and only minor modifications were made to the plan mainly involving changes to text, graphics and policies to assist with clarity and understanding. It was further reported that no new housing sites had been identified and the Reporters had accepted the Council’s approach to meeting educational needs. Close collaboration would continue between the Education and Environment Departments to address in full future education needs and residential requirements. A summary of the main recommendations was provided and it was reported that the full examination report and a schedule of modifications was available to view on the Council’s website.

Having heard Members congratulate staff for their efforts in producing the LDP2, and following discussion, the Council agreed:-

- (a) the summary of Reporters’ recommendations to the Local Development Plan 2;
- (b) to approve the East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2 in the form intended for Adoption and the accompanying revised Strategic and Environmental Assessment;
- (c) to authorise the Director of Environment to undertake the required statutory requirements including notifications and advertisements and submission to Scottish Ministers; and
- (d) to delegate to the Director of Environment to approve any minor inconsequential changes to the Local Development Plan 2, in line with Council policy, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers.

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

**1793.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 23 September 2021 (Page 1652, Item 1767 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 & Scrutiny Committee regarding the statement. A copy of the statement was appended to the report.

The report confirmed that the 2020/21 audit year had been challenging for Internal Audit as the audit plan had been substantially reduced due to a reduction in staffing levels, as a result of an internal secondment and long term illness, and COVID-19 restrictions. Despite this, sufficient audits had been completed to allow an opinion to be given. The report 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 2021.

The Council 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 2021.

## **REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND POLICY STATEMENT**

**1794.** The Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) advising of a review of the Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement.

The report explained that a review of Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement took place periodically and, following the most recent review, minor changes had been made to the document relating to the Council's structures, processes and risk.

It was reported that in addition to some minor changes to the documents, 3 new sections had been added to Treasury Management Practices in relation to the listing of financial arrangements with organisations that the Council worked in partnership with; implementation of the MIFID II requirements which the Council adhered to; and Management Practices for non-treasury investments.

The Council:-

- (a) noted the content of the revised Treasury Management Practices and Treasury Management Policy Statement; and
- (b) approved the revised Treasury Management Practices and Treasury Management Policy Statement.

## **COVID-19 RECOVERY UPDATE**

**1795.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 8 September 2021 (Page 1628, Item 1747 refers), the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive providing Elected Members with a further update on response, recovery and renewal work taking place across the Council and the Trust.

The report included updates on Mass Vaccination Clinics; Covid-19 testing; annual leave requirements; and provided additional information on response, recovery and renewal plans by department/service.

In response to Councillor Macdonald, the Democratic Services Manager advised that equipment to enable hybrid meetings to take place in the Council Chamber had been

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ordered and was expected to be installed by early 2022. He further advised that in-person public access to meetings would be limited and numbers would be agreed in consultation with Health and Safety/Environmental Health colleagues.

The Council noted the ongoing work on response, recovery and renewal.

PROVOST