

MINUTE
of
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 7 September 2022.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson	Councillor David Macdonald (*)
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor Jim McLean
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Kate Campbell	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Betty Cunningham (*)	Councillor Andrew Morrison
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Annette Ireland	Councillor Gordon Wallace
Councillor Chris Lunday	

Provost Montague in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance.

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships(*); Mark Ratter, Director of Education (*); Andy Cahill, Director of Environment(*); Julie Murray, Chief Officer - Health and Social Care Partnership(*); Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Gillian McCarney, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer)(*); Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services)(*); Graeme Smith, Communications Manager(*); Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

Apology:

Councillor Angela Convery.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

104. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COUNCIL – 29 JUNE 2022

105. The Council considered and approved the Minute of the meeting held on 29 June 2022.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

106. The Council considered the Minutes of meetings of the undernoted.

- (a) Planning Applications Committee – 10 August 2022
- (b) Local Review Body – 10 August 2022
- (c) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 11 August 2022
- (d) Licensing Committee – 16 August 2022
- (e) Cabinet – 18 August 2022
- (f) Planning Applications Committee – 24 August 2022
- (g) Education Committee – 25 August 2022
- (h) Cabinet – 1 September 2022
- (i) Appointments Committee – 5 September 2022

The Democratic Services Manager advised that the Minute Volume noted the incorrect date of 18 August 2022 on the 1 September 2022 Cabinet minute and that this had since been corrected.

Councillor Ireland referred to the meeting of the extended Planning Applications Committee on 24 August 2022 and sought confirmation on the presentation of this Minute. The Democratic Services Manager advised that there would be a separate Minute presented following the reconvened meeting of the committee.

The Council approved the Minutes.

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2021-22

107. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny of 11 August 2022 (Page 96, Item 68 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy seeking approval for the investment of surplus funds to the organisations listed in Appendix 7.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) outlined that the list was reviewed on a regular basis and advised that an update was required to Appendix 7 to increase the Council approval for the investment in the Standard Chartered Bank from a £5m limit to a £10m limit.

The Council: -

- (a) noted the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22; and
- (b) approved the list of organisations at Appendix 7 for investment of surplus funds, inclusive of the increase from a £5m limit to £10m limit for the Standard Chartered Bank.

NOMINATION OF CO-OPTED AND SUBSTITUTE CO-OPTED MEMBER ON THE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD PERFORMANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

108. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 11 August 2022 (Page 99, Item 72 refers), the Council approved the appointments of Councillors Macdonald and Wallace as the co-opted and substitute co-opted members respectively on the Integration Joint Board Performance and Audit Committee.

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-23

109. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 1 September 2022 (Page 133, Item 98 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy seeking approval for adjustments to the 2022/23 General Fund Capital Programme, approved on 3 March 2022, resulting from finalisation of the previous year's programme and in light of subsequent information.

Councillor Morrison sought confirmation of whether a breakdown was available for the £55m designated for the Eastwood Park Leisure Centre to ensure that best value was being delivered for this project. He referred to a local private project which was recently completed and the extensive refurbishment of the Tollcross Leisure Centre which took place for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, both at lower cost. In addition, he enquired about the £2m project costs allocated for 2022/23 as construction would not have started to date.

Councillor O'Donnell reminded Members that the £55m allocated for the project was the amount agreed by the previous administration, noted the impact of inflation and advised that this would be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Responding to Councillor Morrison, the Director of Environment advised that the £2m was a result of fees incurred from external consultants. He outlined that a full options appraisal and report was planned to be submitted to Council in October.

Councillor Bamforth enquired about the deferral of the Kirkhill Primary School rewire project seeking confirmation that this project not essential for safety and that it would be completed in due course.

The Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) explained that in light of current pressures education and property colleagues had reviewed all projects and prioritised these based on need. This would be kept under review moving into next year although she confirmed that the project would not be taken forward in this financial year. She also clarified that the total cost for the project had not changed.

Councillor Ireland noted that for the Learning & Leisure in Neilston project, the revised phasing across the project had resulted in a reduction in 2022/23 expenditure of £1.242m and further movement across future years and sought clarification of this. Additionally for the Eastwood Park Leisure project, she noted that it was likely further rephasing would be required as costs and timings became clearer and sought confirmation on the rephasing and when this would take place.

In reply, the Director of Environment confirmed that as referred to earlier in the meeting a report on Eastwood Park Leisure Centre project would be presented to the October Council meeting. This would include information on rising inflation, rising material costs, the implication to the Council and proposals for rephasing expenditure, all subject to approval by the Council.

In response to the question regarding the Learning & Leisure in Neilston project, the Head of Environment (Strategic Services) advised that the tender process had taken slightly longer than anticipated. This had delayed the project start and meant that the expenditure for the project had been delayed slightly although the overall outcome would not be impacted.

The Council:-

- (a) noted and approved the movements in project phasing across the 10 year capital programme;
- (b) noted and approved the movements within the 2022/23 programme; and

- (c) noted the shortfall of £0.443m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-23

110. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet of 1 September 2022 (Page 135, Item 99 refers), the Council considered a joint report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Director of Environment, recommending adjustments to the 2022/23 Housing Capital Programme resulting from finalisation of the previous year's programme and in light of subsequent information.

Councillor Ireland enquired about the increase in cost for the Internal Element Renewals project from £1.392m to £1.878m and whether this was a result of a single contractor or multiple contactors. The Head of Environment (Strategic Services) advised that to ensure the correct information was provided to Councillor Ireland he would confirm with officers and provide an update after the meeting.

The Council:-

- (a) noted and approved the current movements within the 2022/23 programme;
- (b) noted the shortfall of £0.159m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

NOTICE OF MOTION – COST OF LIVING CRISIS

111. In accordance with Standing Order 25, the following notice of motion had been submitted by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Merrick.

That East Renfrewshire and its residents are suffering due to the cost-of-living crisis. The Conservative cost of living crisis is spiralling out of control due to continuing damaging decisions imposed by Westminster, including Conservative austerity cuts, tax hikes and Brexit. At a time when East Renfrewshire families are going to be thousands of pounds worse off, it is disgraceful that the Conservatives are hitting people's incomes further by raising regressive taxes like National Insurance and VAT, slashing Universal Credit by £1040, and scrapping the triple lock on pensions.

On 6 April 2022, the Government increased National Insurance by 1.25 percentage points, which is projected to cost the some East Renfrewshire families hundreds of pounds additionally per year.

Council also notes

- *Recent figures provided by the Trussell Trust recording that 197,037 food parcels were distributed to Scottish residents between April 2021 and April 2022 – with 70,040 being distributed to children.*
- *On Ofgem has increased the energy price cap by 80 per cent. The price cap is expected to reach £3,576 in October, rising to £4,799 in January, finally hitting £6,089 in April.*

- *In the light of the increased energy price cap, the average standard tariff energy bill will increase by £693 per year. The average pre-pay meter energy bill will increase by £708 per year (Ofgem, 2022).*
- *Inflation could soar to 18.6 per cent by the start of 2023.*
- *The Conservative government has suspended the pensions “triple lock” for 2022/3, meaning that East Renfrewshire’s pensioners will see a below inflation increase. Further, they have removed the relied on £20 Universal Credit uplift.*

Council believes:

Under this Government people are seeing tax hikes, energy bills soaring and petrol and food prices rising drastically.

The Conservative Government has failed to tackle the cost-of-living crisis. Therefore, this council declares a “Cost of Living Emergency”

Council resolves:

to declare a “Cost of Living Emergency”

As part of this Council calls on ERC’s Council Leader to contact the UK government and request that they:

- *Scrap the rise in the energy price cap,*
- *Double the energy grant to £800, and bring forward payments to the beginning of October,*
- *Introduce as a matter of urgency an energy price cap for small and medium sized businesses,*
- *Bring in a further windfall tax and extend this to include all large businesses who made significant profits during the pandemic.*

Council instructs the Council Leader to write to the UK Government to express the Council’s concerns.

Furthermore, Council calls for a cross party internal review into what the Council can offer East Renfrewshire families struggling with the Cost-of-Living Emergency – with the input of stakeholders including Citizens Advice, Food Banks, local Trade Unions and Chambers of Commerce.

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

That East Renfrewshire Council, in recognising the unprecedented support for both business and families provided by the Westminster Government during lockdown, welcome the anticipated measures that will be put in place by our new Prime Minister to help mitigate the effects of the Global cost-of-living crisis on its residents.

Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, moved a further amendment in the following terms:-

That East Renfrewshire and its residents are suffering due to the global cost-of-living crisis and the after effects of the Covid pandemic on economic recovery. Council notes that only the UK and the Scottish Governments have the financial firepower and fiscal tools to significantly alleviate these burdens for the residents of East Renfrewshire. However, this Council will not stand by and ignore the hardships faced by its residents.

To that end, Council calls for the creation of a cross party group to review the plans that are currently being developed to help East Renfrewshire families struggling with Covid recovery and the Cost-of-Living Crisis – with the input of the stakeholders across the voluntary sector including Citizens Advice, VAER, Food Banks, faith groups and local Trade Unions and Chambers of Commerce and notes that the first cross party meeting has been scheduled for 27 September in advance of detailed proposals to be reviewed and approved by Cabinet on 13 October.

Provost Montague then invited Councillor Buchanan to speak in terms of the motion.

Councillor Buchanan outlined that the first warning sign was late last October when the UK Government accepted that the winter of 2021/22 would be very difficult. Since then bills had increased astronomically, the Bank of England was warning that inflation could reach 11% within the next few weeks, and almost half of UK households stated that their financial situation was worse than at the start of the pandemic. Councillor Buchanan stated that people were in a cost-of-living crisis, there was a high risk of collapse in the resilience of communities; millions could be pushed into poverty, businesses were struggling to remain viable; and the economy was being pushed into recession. Action on a scale at least similar to the Covid response was required urgently, and should have happened before now. Councillor Buchanan stated that the terms of the motion were self-explanatory and that it highlighted what required to be done. Despite the Conservative amendment there were still no major announcements on what additional finance, funding or support would be put in place in order to alleviate the many items that have just been raised in terms of the cost-of-living crisis.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Merrick noted that these were not only the concerns of the Council but were the concerns of the real people and families who lived in East Renfrewshire. He referred to the large amount of correspondence received by SNP colleagues, and no doubt by other councillors, from worried residents concerned about the future. He emphasised it was not some abstract worry and deserved a lot more than the new Prime Minister's statement of 'we will weather this storm'. These were real concerns that people were feeling now. He outlined that those who have control of all the fiscal levers should be asked put in place mitigation measures to help people. He referred to the challenge of weathering the storm without running up debts for hard working people for generations to come, how to protect jobs, asking how people were going to pay mortgages in this climate and how other countries did not appear to be in as bad a position as the United Kingdom.

Provost Montague invited Councillor Wallace to speak in terms of the first amendment.

Councillor Wallace stated that he considered the motion to be similar to a sixth form debating society and was the politics of division when what was needed was collaborative working to find solutions. He acknowledged the levels of correspondence being received from concerned residents although he outlined that he had received an email from the Prime Minister advising that work would begin immediately to deliver a bold Conservative plan for Britain with three key early priorities of rapid action on energy bills to help people through the

months ahead while tackling the root cause of the energy crisis, reducing taxes and putting the NHS on a firm footing. He acknowledged the last two points were devolved priorities.

In seconding the first amendment, Councillor Morrison outlined that this was a very serious issue and would be of great concern to many constituents across East Renfrewshire and whilst the spirit of the Scottish National Party (SNP) motion was that this should be a cross party working relationship; the other streams of this were not cross party and were anti-Conservative output from the SNP, and not a serious attempt to address the problems of people. He noted the absence of any reference to the Scottish Government in the motion also noting the SNP's vast powers over Scotland in the last 15 years including powers over energy, oil and gas. He advised that new nuclear power stations would be a solution. Furthermore, he noted that the cost-of-living crisis was actually a cost of energy crisis. He advised that the SNP had focused on Scottish independence and now the country was in a situation of energy dependence, reliant on hostile foreign powers as tough decisions had not been made in the past regarding Scotland's energy supply, when the vast national resources could have been used. He noted no congratulations had been made to the new Prime Minister and highlighted that there was the intention to reverse the new National Insurance increase. He noted that 1% made a huge difference to people and highlighted the increase from 20% to 21% on income tax using newly devolved powers for those earning the medium income in Scotland of £26k. He noted there was no requirement for the Scottish Government to action anything in the motion and that he therefore did not believe that the motion was entering into cross-party discussions in good faith and as a result he would be supporting the amendment.

Provost Montague invited Councillor O'Donnell to speak in terms of the second amendment.

Councillor O'Donnell stated that in his first speech to the Council on 25 May he had outlined that both the Scottish and UK Governments were struggling to solve the cost-of-living crisis and that this remained the case. He welcomed any support through emergency budgets from either government as long as they were significant and would improve people's lives. He also noted at his first meeting that the administration was determined to support the people of East Renfrewshire through these difficult times and this was a core manifesto commitment. He confirmed that this determination had not changed and that since being elected they had been working with officials to support COVID recovery and the cost-of-living crisis. He advised that this was announced in the flexible Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery Fund (LACER) proposals agreed by Cabinet in August which would provide a boost of £1.5m to local residents and businesses. He thanked all members for support in approving this package. He advised that the next stage would involve consultation with stakeholders across the voluntary sector to deliver plans that were effective with the resources available. He advised that there was a cross-party meeting scheduled for input into these plans and constructive suggestions were welcomed as part of the process at the meeting on 27 September 2022, well in advance of plans to be presented to Cabinet on 13 October 2022. He asked members to support these important initiatives to help support residents clearly in need and to therefore support this amendment.

In seconding the second amendment, Councillor Devlin indicated his support for the comments made by Councillor O'Donnell.

Councillor Bamforth advised that in her view the first amendment was either deluded or disingenuous; that the Conservatives had been in power for the past 12 years and the country was seeing austerity like never before. She noted that the Conservatives talked of division although the biggest division in the UK that had occurred was Brexit, which had caused a lot of these problems. She acknowledged the global issues although noted that the cost-of-living crisis was not solely the result of these with Brexit causing huge problems. She responded to Councillor Morrison and noted the relationship of Mr Putin with the previous Prime Minister Boris Johnston.

Councillor Bamforth continued and advised of the connections of the UK Conservative Government and Russia. She then referred to the second amendment and highlighted that the Scottish Government had limited powers of borrowing which it had used to the maximum. The government continued to use these powers, providing the example of the increase in child payment to £25 when the UK Government removed the child payment. She outlined that the Scottish Government had also brought in rent control increases. She highlighted that the highest level and levers of power were with the UK Government and not the Scottish Government. She advised that she was therefore supportive of the motion and not the amendments as they were not reflective of the accurate position for Scotland.

Councillor Ireland advised that in response to the first amendment, Scottish Government had not ducked the tough decisions as suggested by Councillor Morrison. She advised that the Scottish Government through their budget in 2023 had allocated £3b to arrange support to mitigate the impact of the increased cost-of-living on households, which included work to tackle child poverty due to inequalities and support financial well-being alongside social security payments not available elsewhere in the UK. She noted the Scottish Government's resource spending review prioritised £22.9b for social security assistance, and the decision to uprate 8 Scottish benefits by 6% and to invest a further £10m in the fuel insecurity fund to support households' at risk of severely rationing their energy use or self-discontinuing. She noted Councillor Bamforth's comments on rent control and the £25 child payment. She also highlighted that free school meals were available for school children in Primary 6 and 7 and that rail fares had been frozen. She also highlighted that each year £700m required to be spent mitigating Westminster policies that Scotland did not vote for such as bedroom tax, the rate clause and the removal of Universal Credit.

In relation to the second amendment she welcomed the second paragraph, regarding a cross party group. She advised that she was disappointed that all reference to the issues in the country right now were removed and she highlighted that the Council should note that the energy crisis and the cost-of-living crisis were a result of more than a decade of austerity. Wage stagnation and the impact of Covid-19 required to be recognised and this was why this was included in the SNP motion even though this had been accused of representing sixth form debating. She advised of her disgust on viewing Prime Ministers Questions that an enhanced windfall tax would not be levied on large corporations who made significant profits resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that energy firms were set to make £170b in extra profits over the next two years and refused to confirm how costs to consumers would not be passed on. She advised that the Prime Minister was therefore keeping taxes low for the rich.

Councillor Lunday advised that this was an important motion as it was clear that not enough was being done to tackle the cost-of-living crisis by the UK Government. He acknowledged the appointment of the new Prime Minister and hoped that the government would now be able to take action after shirking their responsibilities during a national crisis during the summer. He also welcomed the fact that the new Prime Minister said that she was going to help although highlighted the motion touched on how the Council should go about helping people. He advised that the UK Government must bring in a windfall tax for energy companies and other large companies who had made what he considered to be obscene profits. He stated that energy support must not come at the expense of consumers. People were struggling, businesses were struggling and the UK Government needed to take action now. He noted the laughter from Conservative councillors when Councillor Buchanan had referred to the cost-of-living crisis as a Conservative crisis. He accepted there was a global crisis but that the UK was suffering much more than comparative countries across the world. He outlined that the support was too little too late as far as residents were concerned, that the future was looking bleak and he believed it was important that the Council conveyed their concerns to the UK Government.

Councillor Edlin, commended Councillor Lunday for referring to the UK as a country, Councillor Edlin stating his view that Scotland was a region of the UK.

He noted that in her remarks Councillor Ireland did not mention anything about oil or gas and highlighted that the Scottish Government had not mentioned anything about increasing the production of oil and gas in Scotland during this current crisis, which he considered was the only long term way to deal with the energy problem. He advised that unless this can be done the UK would be in fuel poverty for many years. He also referred to the “union dividend” of £2,184 per person.

Councillor Anderson expressed disappointment at the tone of the debate. He advised that the second amendment outlined what was needed and that both the UK and Scottish Governments had the firepower and fiscal powers to alleviate the burdens facing people.

He stated that the second paragraph of the second amendment outlined that cross party working was needed and it was clear that this was going to be a challenge given the discussions. He advised that the people of East Renfrewshire listening would be disappointed at the tone of the debate and that Elected Members should try to rise above party politics.

Councillor Pragnell advised that she would be supporting the second amendment, and that all parties should be getting round the table to address the crisis. She noted that both governments need to take responsibility for the crisis and she would be supporting the amendment to put the people of East Renfrewshire first instead of bickering over party politics.

Councillor Cunningham advised that an announcement was anticipated the following day to address the energy crisis. It was understood that this was based on borrowing, leading to more debt, when there were other options available. Failure to use these meant that future generations would therefore be paying for this.

At this stage, Provost Montague invited Councillor Buchanan to sum up.

Councillor Buchanan noted that there have been some interesting comments made including that from Councillor Edlin who believed Scotland to be a region of the UK.

He advised that in terms of bickering and the tone of the debate, he noted that he did not see this as bickering but that residents in East Renfrewshire and across the UK had been suffering and have been for some considerable time where the only bickering has been within the Conservative party. He advised that this was a disgraceful way to be behaving as this crisis was getting worse on a daily basis. He advised in terms of the comments made that he had some sympathy with the second amendment although the difficulty was that it did not recognise that the Scottish Government has used all of its fiscal powers and even within these fiscal powers, they have a limited budget. He advised that the funding available to the Scottish Government had been impacted by the current interest rates therefore the current budget settlement that Scotland received was £1.7b worse than it would have been should interest rates and the level of inflation have stayed at around 2%. The £1.7b was therefore money taken out of the recent talks in pay negotiations, in addition to which it could be supporting people now to a far greater extent than had been possible.

He referred to the restrictions on the Scottish Government relative to borrowing which restricted its ability to respond to the current challenges and the second amendment did not address this.

He outlined that people in Scotland were slightly better off than their counterparts in England referring to free prescriptions or the benefits uplift for families which played a key role in what the Scottish Government was trying to do for the people of Scotland. He expressed disappointment at the lack of support from the UK Government given the current circumstances, and that the country had come from the supposed recovery of one crisis of the pandemic straight into another crisis which may be even greater in terms of the financial

cost. He noted that the time being taken for decisions to be made was appalling and, referring to the comments by Councillor Cunningham, that any financial support was likely to be based on borrowing and through loans which will be required to be paid back, rather than through the imposition of windfall taxes, obscene profits that have been made by companies and in particular energy companies, over the past year.

Councillor Wallace advised that in the spirit of cooperative working he would withdraw the first amendment. The Democratic Services Manager advised that for an amendment to be withdrawn the agreement of both the proposer and seconder as required. Councillor Morrison agreed to the withdrawal of the first amendment.

Thereafter on the roll being called, Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald and Merrick voted for the motion. Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Cunningham, Devlin, Edlin, McLean, Provost Montague, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the amendment.

There being 6 votes for the motion and 11 for the amendment, the amendment was declared carried.

NOTICE OF MOTION – WORKERS’ MEMORIAL DAY

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

That this Council will join workers, trade unions and communities in commemorating Workers’ Memorial Day in East Renfrewshire. This council welcomes that Workers’ Memorial Day is commemorated throughout the world and whilst officially recognised by the UK Government; expresses concern that more people are killed at work than in wars every year; calls on the Government to pursue stricter enforcement of health and safety laws; recognises that a strong trade union movement is vital for workers’ rights in the UK.

This Council will therefore organise a workers memorial commemoration event every year from 28th April 2023. The Council will also investigate an official cairn to recognise the workers lost here in East Renfrewshire.

East Renfrewshire Council recognises the importance of the day, not only to remember lives lost at work, but also as an opportunity to raise awareness of health and safety at work and the key role the Trade Union movement can play in this.”

Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Pragnell, moved an amendment in the following terms:-

That it be remitted to the Civic Hospitality Committee to consider the merits and options for commemorating Workers’ Memorial Day annually on the 28th April and to consider a permanent memorial in East Renfrewshire.

Provost Montague invited Councillor Ireland to speak in terms of the motion.

Councillor Ireland firstly outlined that she did not agree with the amendment as the matter could be fully discussed and decided by the Council without remit to the Civic Hospitality Committee. She welcomed the discussion of options for commemoration although highlighted that options had already been outlined in the motion. She noted that she was saddened that the motion was not supported and that an amendment had been provided.

She explained that her political life had started as a shop steward in the print union and that it meant a lot to bring this motion to the Council. She noted that for 33 years the 28 April had been a day when those around the world paused, remembered and commemorated those who had lost their lives at work through work related injury or disease and renewed their pledge to improve workplace conditions. She outlined it was an incredibly important event worldwide and to commemorate this in East Renfrewshire would not only commemorate any workers who had died or suffered serious injury in work place accidents but would also express our future determination to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the workers in our communities

She highlighted that International Workers' Memorial Day was commemorated throughout the world and was officially recognised by the UK Government. The event started in North America in 1986 on the date the US Occupational Safety and Health Act came into effect and had been supported by UK Unions for many years. It was now a global event recognised by the International Labour Organisation and the International Trade Union movement.

She noted that all of East Renfrewshire's neighbouring councils commemorated this day, providing information regarding Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, South Lanarkshire and Glasgow City Council arrangements and was saddened that there was an amendment to delay this locally.

She noted that in East Renfrewshire Council she wanted to mention and use the platform to discuss the amazing people working for the Council who worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and continued to do so including essential workers in the Health and Social Care partnership, cleaners, refuse workers and all other council employees who ensured that residents had access to services they required. She noted that they put themselves at risk and their commitment was humbling and should be recognised. She referred to the introduction in 1974 of the Health and Safety at Work Act was introduced in 1974 and the formation of the Health and Safety Executive following which many important regulations had been introduced through the European Health and Safety Directives through the 1980's and 1990's. She advised that unfortunately due to Brexit some of the legislation may be affected and that there appeared to be a drift towards an extreme form of self-regulation. Further Health and Safety Executive budget cuts, enforcement and inspection cuts post Brexit meant there was an immediate threat as we raced to the bottom. She highlighted that Health and Safety regulations could not be allowed to fall behind other developed economies and that is why it was important to support the motion.

She stated that that the United Kingdom was supposedly a world leading economy currently engaged negotiating trade deals with the world beyond the European Union although instead we have a very new Prime Minister reportedly currently considering a wider review of workers' rights, with 1500 European Union laws proposed to be removed from the UK statute books by the end of 2023. She referred to plans to crack down on Trade Unions and to make it harder for strikes to take place which had been criticised as a transparent egregious attack on workers.

She referred to leaked audio of the Prime Minister negatively commenting on workers in the United Kingdom and noted that Frances O'Grady General Secretary of the TUC, had stated that government ministers were threatening to reduce workers' legal rights, while attacking their ability to defend their working conditions through collective action.

She highlighted future challenges to protect workers' health and safety and asked all to support the motion to acknowledge East Renfrewshire recognised the importance of the day, established the principle tonight that each year everyone take time to reflect; not only to remember lives lost at work, but also as an opportunity to raise awareness to highlight the importance of safety at work and to remind people about the needless loss of life and that

more can be done to reduce the risk so that people are better protected at work in the future; and also to let people know about the role that the Trade Union movement can play in this.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Bamforth noted that she was also saddened that this has not been accepted. She thought the erection of a cairn could have been discussed at the committee although this should have been approved by the Council. She noted she was not surprised given the recent behaviour at COSLA where Labour and Conservatives did not agree to accept a 5% pay rise, although she acknowledged that it could be considered a moot point as it was subsequently turned down, although they had put forward a proposal of only 3.5% for Council staff. She noted that she was only aware of SNP Councillors joining the picket line to listen to workers about pay, terms and conditions and health and safety. She also noted the work of the Health and Social Care Partnership staff, refuse staff and all staff who protected residents during COVID and as disappointed that the Council not commemorate them or recognise the work that they do. She hoped that on reflection some Elected Members would reconsider and accept the motion.

Provost Montague then invited Councillor Anderson to speak in terms of the amendment.

Councillor Anderson outlined that the Labour Party had long had involvement with the Trade Union movement in bringing about benefits for workers in terms of Health and Safety. He noted that consideration of the event should go to the Civic Hospitality Committee.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Pragnell highlighted that Labour were not opposed to this in principle although it should be considered by the Civic Hospitality Committee to discuss the matter in detail.

Councillor Edlin agreed with Councillor Pragnell's sentiments on this although highlighted that he had attended two other similar memorial events delivered by the Council, UK Merchant Navy Day and UK Armed Forces Day, and noted that there was no SNP presence at these events.

Councillor Macdonald outlined that he was deeply disappointed to hear so much partisanship and he advised he was in agreement with Councillor Ireland that there was no need for this matter to go to the Civic Hospitality Committee for consideration, that this could be voted on unanimously tonight, and that he found it staggering to see an amendment that in his view had been submitted with the sole intention of defeating an SNP motion, especially when the need for collaborative politics was clear, and when this was a matter that in his view was worthy of unanimous support. He suggested serious consideration be given to withdrawing the amendment to allow for the motion to be supported fully across the Chamber.

Councillor Morrison stated that in his view the amendment did not alter in any way the original premise of the motion, that it kept the essence of the motion and highlighted using the Civic Hospitality Committee as it was intended. He outlined that the Council commemorated many civic events and the committee should be used properly and this is an event with merit which should be considered as such. As Workers' Memorial Day was already supported by the UK Government he confirmed his support for the amendment. In terms of Health and Safety legislation he advised this was last reviewed in 2010 by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat administration and that the fatality level has halved since then. He noted that one fatality was too many and that this commemorative event would raise awareness of this although it needed to be set in the context that this number is coming down.

Councillor Wallace referred to his membership of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and that he greatly recognised the importance of his Union looking after the benefits and

Health and Safety of workers. He explained that he taught Health and Safety at college and referred to the changes and improvements that had taken place since the Industrial Revolution.

Councillor Wallace advised that he supported the motion although a degree of courtesy to the Civic Hospitality Committee was required. He provided the example that a risk assessment would be required for where the cairn is to be positioned. He advised that if the original motion had included reference to the Civic Hospitality Committee, then it would be more than likely that the motion would have been passed. He therefore advised that he wholly supported the amendment and the reasoning behind it.

Councillor McLean indicated that he was in agreement with his party colleagues. He advised that he had sympathy and empathy with the motion having been involved in two serious accidents at work and therefore recognised the need for the proposals although also noted the role of the Civic Hospitality Committee and it should be given due courtesy.

Councillor O'Donnell stated that generally, he did believe that there was cross party support for this initiative, although he was not convinced that the SNP approach was the best way. He asked for the SNP to speak to colleagues instead of communicating through a motion which may not be the most appropriate way to achieve outcomes. He noted Councillor Bamforth's points in relation to discussions at COSLA and that this was not related to this debate and questioned why the matter had not been raised when the SNP councillors had been part of the Administration. He advised that the best place for dialogue to continue was at the Civic Hospitality Committee and that there would be support within this committee and work could be undertaken with officers to reach a decision that everyone was in agreement with. He therefore confirmed his support for the amendment.

Councillor Buchanan raised concern of some of the points made, in particular Councillor Edlin's claim of non-attendance by SNP councillors. He confirmed that he had attended events on a regular basis and outlined that it was unfortunate that events the week prior took place when he and the Leader were in attendance at a COSLA meeting regarding the pay dispute otherwise he would have been present. He rejected Councillor Edlin's claims and advised that SNP councillors had attended these events over the years. He expressed surprised that the motion had been shortened in the amendment and noted that the Council should be able to pass the motion, with cross party support and then for this to be passed to the Civic Hospitality Committee with the instruction contained within the motion. He suggested that in his view the Civic Hospitality Committee did not have the decision making powers on this item, that he was disillusioned by some of the comments made, and that the motion had been proposed in good faith and that the amendment did a disservice to many who had been injured or killed at work.

Councillor Merrick advised that as a member of the Trade Union for many years it was extremely disappointing to witness the discussion tonight where people seem to be in agreement but unable to say it.

Councillor Cunningham was then heard in support of proposals for the matter to be dealt with by the Civic Hospitality Committee.

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

Councillor Ireland stated that she was disappointed at the amendment.

She noted Councillor Edlin's comments and gave him the benefit of the doubt as a new councillor and noted over the last five years she had attended numerous events. She explained that her grandfather was in the Merchant Navy and that it gave her great pleasure

to attend these events. She further noted that from the discussion it seemed there as general agreement but that the amendment as simply to prevent an SNP motion being passed. The timing of the motion as down to current circumstances and the attacks on workers' rights and from the time spent with workers on the picket line. She thought that the Labour Party would have already considered the merits of Workers' Memorial Day and be happy to support the motion

She noted the support from Councillor Wallace regarding Health and Safety, Councillor Anderson noting the work for workers' rights that his party had undertaken although this was not evident at the meeting tonight.

Thereafter, on the roll being called, Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald and Merrick voted for the motion. Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Cunningham, Devlin, Edlin, McLean, Provost Montague, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the amendment.

There being 6 votes for the motion, 11 for the amendment, the amendment was declared carried.

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS/REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS/COMMITTEES

113. The following statements were made:-

Councillor O'Donnell – Leader

Councillor O'Donnell confirmed that following the COSLA Leader's meeting on Friday 2 September, a revised pay offer had been made to Unite, Unison and GMB Unions. As a result of this offer the unions collectively agreed to suspend strike action while they consulted with their members with the recommendation to accept. He advised that this was tentatively good news and thanked all members of staff for observing the strikes that did occur with mutual respect.

Councillor Pragnell – Convener for Community Services and Community Safety

Councillor Pragnell advised that the previous week the Board of the Leisure Trust had considered the final accounts for the Trust's financial year ending March 2022. After what was again a very testing year with Covid and the various restrictions on the Trusts' core activities, she noted it was a great tribute to the hard work and skill of the leisure trust staff that they had finished with an operating surplus for the year of over three-quarters of a million pounds.

She outlined that a new four-year Sports and Physical Activity Strategy which the Trust was commissioned to write on behalf of the Council was discussed, and she welcomed bringing this to Council in future for consideration.

She advised that the recovery of culture and leisure continued month on month, with the continued recovery of swimming, gyms and fitness and with the latter continuing to recruit new members, especially amongst younger people who now comprised almost a fifth of the total membership following the Trust's revised membership offer in response to the experiences of young people during lockdown.

She highlighted that libraries continue to increase physical visits now that events had been reinstated, and social bookings were once again being taken for community halls.

Councillor Pragnell also reported that Live Active (GP Referrals) had recovered to higher than pre-Covid Levels, with a positive impact on residents.

In relation to the Summer Holiday Programme, it was reported that 302 individuals participated. Over 200 children living in poverty were supported to participate in the programme at no cost, including 77 participants who were referred onto the programme by Social Work services. In the current economic climate it is worth noting that 84% of parents reported that having a meal provided was helpful for their families, while their children tried something new to them, made new friends, and seemed more eager and confident to try new activities. 100% had fun and enjoyed themselves!

Councillor Pragnell – Convener for Social Work and Health

Councillor Pragnell reported on the recent meeting of the Integration Joint Board on 10 August.

The IJB had been advised were advised that although the Strategic Inspection for Children and Young People at Risk of Harm in East Renfrewshire report was not published at the time of the meeting the expected result as positive. This was confirmed on 16 August when the report had been published and a grade of 'Excellent' for Quality Indicator 2.1 – Impact on Children and Young People had been awarded. No significant areas for improvement had been identified and it was noted that the grading was the top of the quality indicator scale used by the Care Inspectorate and awards this for "Outstanding or Sector Leading" service delivery.

The Chief Financial Officer had presented the revenue monitoring report which provided a comprehensive overview of the current projected overspend for the year of just over half a million pounds and that the full year impact of the increases in complexity and demand were now being seen.

She advised that there was an update on the Health and Social Care Partnership Recovery and Renewal Programme, that the IJB heard from the Clinical Director on the impact of the Primary Care Improvement Programme in East Renfrewshire, considered a number of governance papers and annual reports around Records Management, IJB Complaints and Category 1 responders, and finally considered a presentation by the Chief Officer on the National Care Service.

Councillor Anderson – Convener for Education, Culture and Leisure

SQA Results 2022

Councillor Anderson referred to the oral statement on the 2022 SQA examination results given at the meeting of the Education Committee on 25 August.

The committee noted that secondary staff had worked tirelessly to ensure that all learners experienced high quality learning and teaching throughout the year despite the ongoing impact and disruption of COVID, ensuring that any learning loss was overtaken and that young people were well prepared for the national

examinations. Secondary staff provided a range of additional support to learners including supported study, Easter school and Saturday classes.

The committee had been pleased to hear about the very strong 2022 which Councillor Anderson summarised.

As Convener, he thanked all pupils, parents and staff for their vital contributions throughout another challenging year for all in education, and congratulated them all on their excellent achievements.

Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in East Renfrewshire

Councillor Anderson acknowledged the recently published report by the Care Inspectorate of services for children and young at risk of harm in East Renfrewshire. The inspection highlighted a number of key strengths including the strong partnership working, enduring and trusting relationships and the way children and young people were well supported to exercise their rights to make real choices in matters that were affecting their lives.

He highlighted the sector leading evaluation with services in East Renfrewshire evaluated as excellent and provided congratulations to all involved.

The Council noted the statements.

APPOINTMENTS

114. Provost Montague sought nominations for the undernoted positions:-

(i) Nomination of Veterans' Champion

Councillor Wallace, seconded by Councillor Morrison, moved that Councillor Campbell be appointed Veterans' Champion. Councillor Macdonald, seconded by Buchanan, moved as an amendment that Councillor Macdonald be appointed Veterans' Champion.

On the roll being called, Councillors Anderson, Campbell, Cunningham, Devlin, Edlin, McLean, Provost Montague, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace voted for the motion. Councillors Bamforth, Buchanan, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald, and Merrick voted for the amendment.

There being 11 votes for Councillor Campbell and 6 votes for Councillor Macdonald, Councillor Campbell was appointed Veterans' Champion.

(ii) Members of COSLA Boards

The Council approved the following appointments:-

Health and Social Care Policy Board – Councillor Pragnell

Children and Young People Policy Board – Councillor Anderson

Environment and Economy Policy Board – Councillor O'Donnell

Community Wellbeing Board – Councillor Devlin

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

115. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting on 29 June 2022.

Provost Montague having thanked Deputy Provost Campbell for attending a meeting in her absence. The Council noted the report.

REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

116. The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive, providing an update on the previous reviews of the governance of the Council, and considering options for conveners' remits and alternative options to the Cabinet system.

Councillor O'Donnell thanked the Chief Executive and the Democratic Services Manager for the report, noted that a review of the governance structure last took place in 2010 and stated that with a new administration it was appropriate for a review.

He outlined the recommendations of the report and advised that the paper outlined the background to the introduction of the Cabinet model in East Renfrewshire. He advised that a review of the Cabinet model took place in 2001 and 2010 where no change was recommended. The report outlined that the size of the Cabinet had not been consistent over the years and had varied depending on circumstances. He noted that there was no uniform approach across Scotland, with 25 local authorities operating a committee model and 7 operating a Cabinet model and highlighted that there were local variations even within these structures.

The report proposed a new division of responsibilities for the Leader and Conveners with new titles for two of the three conveners.

The report also outlined possible changes in governance structure in the event the Council were minded to revert to a traditional committee model, however the report's recommendation was to remain with a Cabinet structure.

The report also suggested that the terms of reference of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee should be reviewed. This was recommended by the committee pre-election as part of the self-evaluation it had carried out, these findings being endorsed by the new committee in June.

Councillor Ireland thanked the team for the report and advised that she would prefer a committee model although understood why there was a recommendation for a Cabinet model given the small size of the Democratic Services team. She noted the Audit and Scrutiny Committee evaluation and the terms of reference review to ensure they remain fit for purpose including their involvement in the call in process. She therefore sought confirmation if there would be a change to the call in process and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's involvement in this process as part of the review as this process currently works well. She raised concerns about the dilution of decision making given the voting taking place at the meeting tonight.

In reply the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that there was not an intention for there to be a change to the call in process and that this would only have been the case if moving to a committee structure. He outlined that the review would look at the terms of reference to ensure these were fit for purpose. He advised that any changes to the terms of reference

would ultimately be a change to the Scheme of Administration and that this would need to come back to the Council for approval.

Councillor Morrison, as the Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, advised that this was not the first time that the SNP had brought into question the validity and effectiveness of a committee of the Council and this did not serve the Council well. He referred to Councillor Ireland's comments previously at the committee and had advised her at the time that any councillor should do what they considered necessary to ensure that the Code of Corporate Governance was being upheld. He noted that should Councillor Ireland wish to write to Audit Scotland then she should do so.

Councillor Edlin noted that the Chair and the Vice Chair were not members of the Administration Group.

The Council: -

- (a) approved the new Conveners' remits;
- (b) agreed that delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to make minor adjustments to the Conveners' remits in the light of operational experience;
- (c) agreed to continue with the operation of a Cabinet model of governance; and
- (d) agreed that the Chief Executive review the terms of reference of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

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

117. The Council considered and noted a report by the Clerk of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee which provided a statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council during 2021/22.

PROVOST