



**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 AUGUST 2021**

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Service Director Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery (1) on the unaudited out turn of Service Committee Budgets for the year ending 31 March 2021 and (2) highlight any significant variances between revised budgets, period 11 reports and out turn as set out in the 2020/21 Unaudited Accounts.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the underspend as set out in the unaudited accounts for 2020/21 of £2,370,000, the reasons for the material variances from budget and the movement 1.29% from period 11 to final out turn be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that due to one off Covid funding and the non-provision of some services it is not possible to draw too many comparisons between 2020/21 and previous years; and
- (3) that it be noted that officers will identify any opportunities for adjustments to be included in the 2022/23 Budget.

**301      2020/21 Capital Programme Out Turn & Impact of Material Shortages on Delivery & Cost of the 2021/24 Capital Programme      301**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Service Director Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery advising of (1) the performance in delivering the 2020/21 Capital Programme; and (2) the issues relating to the availability and supply of materials which will potentially impact upon the 2021/24 Capital Programme.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the 2020/21 Capital Out Turn Position be noted;
- (2) that the pressure being experienced in relation to the availability and cost of materials and the impact this is likely to have on the delivery and cost of the 2021/24 Capital Programme be noted;
- (3) that it be agreed to allocate up to £100,000 currently set aside for the impact of Brexit in the inflation contingency to prudentially borrow up to £1.6 million to meet potential increases in capital project costs in 2021/22 and 2022/23; and
- (4) that authority be delegated to the Interim Service Director Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery to make decisions regarding the allocation of this Capital Contingency, the use of which will be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee.

**302      Treasury Management - Annual Report 2020/21      302**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Service Director Corporates Services & Organisational Recovery on the operation of the treasury function and its activities for 2020/21 as required under the terms of Treasury Management Practice 6 ('TMP 6') on 'Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements'.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the contents of the annual report on Treasury Management for 2020/21 and the ongoing work to seek to ensure the delivery of financial benefits for the Council during the current uncertainty and beyond be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that the Annual Report will be remitted to the Full Council for approval.

**303      Proposed Budget Strategy 2022/23      303**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Service Director Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery seeking approval for the proposed Budget Strategy for 2022/23.

**Decided:**

- (1) that approval be given to the next budget consisting of a single revenue year, i.e

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2022/23;

(2) that approval be given to the Capital Programme being rolled forward for a further year to cover 2022/25;

(3) that approval be given to the Chief Financial Officer to engage with the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Officer of the Inverclyde Integrated Joint Board in order to develop proposals for the approach in agreeing the Council's contribution to the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board in 2022/23;

(4) that approval be given for the development of a savings exercise based on the latest financial projections;

(5) that the need to generate free reserves for use as part of the budgets post 2022/23 is recognised; and

(6) that approval be given to a report being brought back to the Committee from the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development on proposals for a public consultation in relation to the budget which includes the process for progressing Equality Impact Assessments, Fairer Scotland Assessments and meeting the requirements of the UNCRC legislation.

**304 Consultation – Retail Shops Opening on New Year's Day**

**304**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications (1) advising of a Scottish Government consultation which seeks the views of shop workers, retail businesses and others on whether the current law should change so that large retail businesses must close on New Year's Day and (2) seeking a view on the option of Inverclyde Council submitting a response to the consultation.

Following discussions, Councillor McCabe moved that (1) it be agreed to submit a response to the Scottish Government consultation on New Year's Day trading for large retailers by 24 August 2021 (a) outlining the Council's position that the current laws should be changed so that large retailers are required to close on New Year's Day; and (b) that further comments should be submitted to the consultation endorsing USDAW's position that large retailers should be required to close on New Year's Day.

As an amendment, Councillor Wilson moved that (1) it be agreed to submit a response to the Scottish Government consultation on New Year's Day trading for large retailers by 24 August 2021 (a) outlining the Council's position that the current laws should not be changed so that large retailers may continue to open on New Year's Day; and (b) that no further comment be submitted to the consultation.

Following a roll-call vote 1 Member, Councillor Wilson, voted for the amendment and 10 members, Councillors Ahlfeld, Clocherty, Crowther, Curley, McCabe, McCormick, McVey, Moran, Rebecchi and Robertson voted for the motion which was declared carried.

**Decided:**

(1) that it be agreed to submit a response to the Scottish Government consultation on New Year's Day trading for large retailers by 24 August 2021 (a) outlining the Council's position that the current laws should be changed so that large retailers are required to close on New Year's Day; and (b) that further comments should be submitted to the consultation endorsing USDAW's position that large retailers should be required to close on New Year's Day.

**305 Report on Opinion of Counsel Regarding Previous Settlements Reached with Former Clune Park Owners**

**305**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal Services providing an update on (1) the legal advice regarding any potential claim by any former owner of property in the Clune Park Estate who has sold their property to the Council and in respect of whom

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sums were deducted from the purchase price in respect of Long Term Empty (LTE) levy; and (2) the estimated financial implications of the Valuation Appeals Committee decision.

Councillor Curley declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board Member of River Clyde Homes and Councillor McVey declared a non-financial interest in this item as a private landlord. Both Members formed the view that the nature of their interest and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence at the meeting or their participation in the decision making process.

**It was agreed in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 1 to this report on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 6 and 12 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.**

Following consideration of this item the Committee returned to public session.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the contents of the report and private appendix be noted;
- (2) that it be noted there is no legal obligation to make settlement payments in terms of LTE debts recovered from former Clune Park owners who have previously reached settlement agreements with the Council to sell their properties;
- (3) that it be agreed to cancel LTE debts for former owners within the Clune Park estate from whom no LTE recovery was made as part of the missives of sale;
- (4) that the increased financial impact arising from the QC opinion of the period to be covered and discounts to be applied to Council Tax bills in respect of long term empty properties within Clune Park be noted; and
- (5) that it be noted the estimated reduction in Council Tax income for the period 2012-2021 will be reflected in the 2020/21 Annual Accounts and will result in a reduction in the General Fund Free Reserves.
- (6) that it be remitted to officers to submit a further report on potential options and implications of making ex-gratia payments.

**It was agreed in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.**

306

**Voluntary Severance Scheme Releases**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications providing an update on the position of releases that have been agreed under the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme since the previous report to committee on 11 August 2020.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the agreement to release 25 employees under the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that future reports will be submitted to update Members on the release of employees by the Chief Executive under delegated authority on an annual basis.

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