

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 1 FEBRUARY 2022

Policy & Resources Committee

Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 3pm

Present: Councillors Ahlfeld, Brooks (for Wilson) Clocherty, Curley, McCabe, McCormick, J McEleny, McVey, Moran, Rebecchi and Robertson.

Chair: Councillor McCabe presided.

In attendance: Chief Executive, Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Interim Director Environment & Regeneration, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Interim Corporate Director (Chief Officer) Health and Social Care Partnership, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, Interim Head of Public Protection and Covid Recovery, Interim Head of Property Services, Legal Services Manager Licensing, Litigation and Committees, Mr C MacDonald and Ms D Sweeney (Legal & Democratic Services), Procurement & Building Services Manager, Ms A Hunter (Corporate Policy Officer), Ms T Bunton and A Edmiston (Finance Services), ICT Services Manager, and Service Manager Communications, Tourism and Health & Safety.

The meeting was held by video-conference.

The following paragraphs are submitted for information only, having been dealt with under the powers delegated to the Committee.

63 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

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An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Wilson, with Councillor Brooks substituting.

No declarations of interest were intimated, but certain connections were intimated as follows:

Agenda Item 10 (Council Tax – Long Term Empty Levy Policy) – Councillors Curley and Rebecchi;

Agenda Item 12 (Adjudication between Riverside Inverclyde and Noel Regan and Sons Building & Civil Engineering Contractors UK Ltd in relation to the Leperstone Self Build Project) – Councillor Clocherty.

64 COVID-19 Update

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Environment & Regeneration (1) providing an update on actions taken to mitigate the risks around the COVID-19 outbreak; and (2) reporting on items requiring Committee approval or scrutiny under the expedited procedures.

Councillor Rebecchi joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

Decided:

(1) that the actions taken to date to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak in Inverclyde be noted; and

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(2) that the use of £45,000 to continue the humanitarian helpline provision for 2022/23 be approved.

65 2021/22 Revenue Budget Update – Period 8 65

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive, Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) advising of the 2021/22 projected outturn for the Policy & Resources Committee, and (2) detailing the position of the General Fund Revenue Budget.

Decided:

(1) that the update in respect of the Policy & Resources Committee budget including the 2021/22 projected overspend of £54,000 be noted;

(2) that the projected 2021/22 surplus of £43,230 for the Common Good Budget be noted; and

(3) that the overall underspend of £214,000 projected as at Period 8, 30 November for the General Fund, its overall Earmarked Reserves position and the position of the Free Reserves be noted.

66 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and 2021/24 Capital Programme 66

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Budget and the 2021/24 Capital Programme.

Decided:

(1) that the current position of the 2021/24 Policy & Resources Capital Budget be noted; and

(2) that (a) the current position of the 2021/24 Capital Programme be noted; and (b) that it be noted that the deficit in excess of the acceptable over commitment will require to be addressed through the 2022/23 Budget process.

67 Finance Services - Update 67

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance (1) providing an update on various matters within the remit of Finance Services, and (2) seeking decisions as appropriate.

Decided:

(1) that the significant work pressure within the Revenues & Benefits team in relation to Covid related grant payments, which are in addition to the core workload, be noted;

(2) that the revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy to be applied from 1 April 2022, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and

(3) that (a) the current position of various ICT projects be noted; and (b) it be noted that a request for increased capital investment in ICT will be included in the 2022/25 Capital Programme for the Council to consider in February 2022.

68 Procurement Update 68

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Environment & Regeneration providing an update on procurement related activity including the development of a Fair Work First Action Plan.

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Decided:

- (1) that (a) the Fair Work First Action Place as detailed in appendix 1 of the report be noted; and (b) that the current position including on-going actions to embed/apply the revised Fair Work First principles in line with the updated policy and guidance be noted; and
- (2) that the Scotland Excel Annual Value Reports published in November 2021 be noted.

69 Corporate Policy and Performance Update Report 69

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development providing an update on a number of issues relating to corporate policy and performance.

Decided: that the key update areas in relation to corporate policy and performance be noted.

70 2022/23 Budget Update 70

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing an update on the position of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget and 2022/25 Capital Programme following the Local Government Settlement announcement on 20 December 2021 and after taking account of subsequent information and decisions.

Decided:

- (1) that the Council's draft Revenue and Capital Grant settlements for 2022/23 and the correspondence between COSLA and the Scottish Government as detailed in appendices 1 and 2 of the report be noted;
- (2) that (a) approval be given to the Budget adjustments as detailed in appendix 4 of the report; and (b) the latest estimated 2022/23 net Revenue Budget funding shortfall of 2.028million be noted;
- (3) that (a) the current position of the 2022/25 Capital Programme be noted; and (b) that it be noted that the proposals for increased investment will be considered by the Council when approving the budget; and
- (4) that it be agreed that (a) the Council Tax and Budget should be approved on the same day; and (b) this should take place on 24 February 2022, subject to the approval of the Provost.

71 Draft Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 71

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development presenting the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 and to seek approval to submit to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for its approval.

Decided:

- (1) that the proposed actions and timescales within the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 relating to the delivery of the High Level and Corporate Services Aims be noted;
- (2) that (a) the draft Plan be approved; and (b) it be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for its approval; and
- (3) that it be agreed that the annual Gaelic Language Plan monitoring report will be submitted to the Committee in June of each year.

72 Council Tax – Long Term Empty Levy Policy

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance seeking approval for (a) the updated Long Term Empty Council Tax Levy Policy; and (b) for the funding of an Empty Homes Officer post to support owners/landlords with bringing long term empty properties back into productive use.

Councillors Curley and Rebecchi declared connections as private landlords. Councillor Curley formed the view that the nature of his connection and of the item of business did not preclude his continued presence at the meeting or his participation in the decision making process and was declaring for transparency and Councillor Rebecchi formed the view that the nature of his connection and of the item of business did not preclude his continued presence at the meeting and was declaring for transparency.

Decided:

- (1) that the updated Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
- (2) that the funding of an Empty Homes Officer from the Long Term Empty Levy budget with effect from 2022/23 be approved.

73 Winter Support Fund 2021/22

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There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing an update on the £400,000 projects approved by the Council in December 2021 which were funded by the Winter Support Fund grant from the Scottish Government; and (2) seeking approval for the allocation of the additional £112,000 balance.

Decided:

- (1) that the content of this report and the initiatives previously approved by the Council be noted;
- (2) that the proposals as detailed in section 2.3 of the report to support Inverclyde residents in the winter months be approved; and
- (3) that it be noted that a fuller update on progress in delivery of the previously approved initiatives funded by the Anti-Poverty monies will be presented to the March 2022 meeting of the Committee.

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 6 & 8 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

74 Adjudication between Riverside Inverclyde and Noel Regan and Sons Building & Civil Engineering Contractors UK Ltd in relation to the Leperstone Self Build Project

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to consider a remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee relative to the Adjudication outcome arising from the disputed works relating to the Leperstone Self Build Project.

Councillor Clocherty declared a connection as a member of the Board of Riverside Inverclyde. He also formed the view that the nature of his connection and of the item of business did not preclude his continued presence at the meeting or his participation in the decision-making process and was declaring for transparency.

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Following consideration, the Committee agreed to the actions recommended, all as detailed in the Appendix.