

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 20 SEPTEMBER 2022

Policy & Resources Committee

Tuesday 20 September 2022 at 3pm

Present: Councillors Brennan (for McGuire), Curley, Daisley (for Armstrong), Law, McCabe, McCormick, McCluskey, McVey, Moran, Robertson and Wilson.

Chair: Councillor McCabe presided.

In attendance: Chief Executive, Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Interim Director Environment & Regeneration, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, Service Manager Community Learning and Development, Community Safety and Resilience & Sport, Mr C MacDonald, Ms D Sweeney, Mr P MacDonald and Mr M Hughes (Legal & Democratic Services), Service Manager Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships, Revenues and Benefits Manager, ICT & Customer Service Manager and Service Manager Communications, Tourism and Health & Safety.

This meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Daisley and McCormick attending by video-conference.

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

405 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

405

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Armstrong, with Councillor Daisley substituting, and Councillor McGuire, with Councillor Brennan substituting.

No declarations of interest were intimated, but certain connections were intimated for the purposes of transparency as follows:

Agenda Item 10 (Progress and Development for Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-23) – Councillor Robertson

Agenda Item 12 (Warm Hand of Friendship) – Councillor Robertson

Agenda Item 16 (Meliora Events, Community Fund and Platinum Jubilee) – Councillor Robertson

406 2022/23 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 31 July, 2022

406

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and the Chief Executive advising the Committee of (1) the 2021/22 Policy & Resources Revenue Budget final out turn, (2) the 2022/23 Committee Revenue Budget projected position at 31 July 2022, (3) the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection after the first cycle of 2022/23 Budget reports, and (4) the position of the General Fund Reserve.

Decided:

(1) that the final out turn for 2021/22 and the current projected overspend for 2022/23 of £2,796,000 as at 31 July 2022 within the Committee's Budget be noted;

(2) that it be noted that the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and

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Heads of Service will review areas where non-essential spend can be reduced in order to bring the corporate service element of the budget back on track;

(3) that the projected 2022/23 surplus of £18,040 for the Common Good Budget be noted;

(4) that the following be noted, (a) the projected overspend of £2,940,000 for the General Fund; and (b) that action will need to be taken as part of the 2023/26 Revenue Budget to bring the unallocated Reserves back to the minimum recommend level of £4.0million to address the underlying budget shortfall; and

(5) that (a) it be agreed to allocated £278,000 from the Covid Recovery Contingency to increase the sum paid to Inverclyde Leisure in 2022/23 due to the significant increase in utility costs; and (b) it be noted that this matter will form part of the review of Inverclyde Leisure funding due to be considered as part of the 2023/26 Budget.

407 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and 2022/25 Capital Programme

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme budget and the 2022/25 Capital Programme.

Decided:

(1) that the current position of the 2022/25 Policy & Resources Capital Budget be noted;

(2) that the current position of the 2022/25 Capital Programme be noted; and

(3) that the ongoing pressure being experienced with regards to the cost/availability of materials and the impact this continues to have on the delivery of the 2022/25 Capital Programme be noted.

408 Finance Services Update

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing an update on the progress on a number of matters within the Finance Service and seeking a decision regarding the permanent transfer of part of the Accountancy team to the HSCP.

Decided:

(1) that the strong performance by the Debt Recovery Team and Debt Recovery Partner over the last 12 months, and the progress in respect of other initiatives delivered by the Revenues & Benefits team, be noted;

(2) that the latest position in respect of the migration to the Cloud/Office 365 be noted; and

(3) that (a) the transfer of the employees which support the HSCP from Finance to Social Care be approved, and (b) the virement as detailed in paragraph 5.2 of the report be approved.

409 Corporate Policy and Performance Update Report

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There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development providing the Committee with an update on a number of performance and policy matters relating to (1) developments in relation to the Council's Strategic Planning and Performance Management Framework, (2) national developments relating to Best Value, (3) self-evaluation within Inverclyde Council, and (4) the results from the Citizens' Panel Winter 2021/22 Survey.

Decided: that the latest update in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance be noted.

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410 2023/26 Budget Update

410

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing an update on the latest position of the 2023/26 Budget and seeking decisions regarding (1) initial savings; (2) the Council's role within the IJB Budget setting process; and (3) the next steps including the approach to voluntary severance trawls.

Decided:

- (1) that the following be noted (a) the latest position of the 2023/26 Budget; (b) the savings options developed by the Corporate Management Team as detailed in appendix 2 of the report; and (c) those savings recommended to be considered as part of the December savings exercise;
- (2) that it be agreed that having considered the potential impact of the savings options, the Members Budget Working Group meet with local MSPs and the MP to highlight the unavoidable impacts on local services unless there is a significant increase in grant funding announced by the Scottish Government as part of the 2023/26 Local Government Grant Settlement in December;
- (3) that the savings, as detailed in appendix 3 of the report, which will count towards the £4.0million target to be addressed prior to the Christmas Break, be approved;
- (4) that (a) the proposed approach for determining the Council contribution to the IJB from 2023/24 onwards be approved; and (b) it be noted that Members will be able to provide input into the IJB Budget process as detailed in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.15 of the report; and
- (5) that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to undertaken Voluntary Early Release (VER) trawls as required to inform the delivery of savings ultimately approved and note the potential need for an increase in the VER Earmarked Reserve.

411 2023/26 Budget Consultation

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications proposing a suggested approach to a budget consultation in order to support the current year budget setting process expected to cover the periods 2023 to 2026.

Decided: that the approach and timing of the budget consultation as detailed in the report be agreed.

412 People and Organisational Development Strategy 2020-2023 Action Plan 2022/23

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications seeking agreement on the key actions and initiatives being progressed for 2022/23 to support the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy 2020-2023.

The Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications provided a verbal update, advising the Committee that officers had undertaken an investigation into the extent to which HR policies which apply to Council employees could also be considered for Elected Members and that the findings of this work had been reported to Elected Members during their induction in May and June 2022.

Decided:

- (1) that the key actions and initiatives for 2022/23 as detailed in appendix 1 of the report be agreed; and
- (2) that the intention to redirect resources, as detailed in paragraph 5.7 of the report, which will support the Council to manage the workforce implications required to address

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budget savings and also to support employees through the next period of significant change be noted.

413 NRS Mid-2021 Population Estimates, Scotland and Census 2022 413

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an overview of (1) the latest mid-2021 population estimates published by the National Records of Scotland; and (2) the 2022 National Census and the work undertaken locally to maximise the response rate.

Decided:

- (1) that the latest official mid-year population estimates which show a further decrease in the population of Inverclyde, predominately due to natural change, be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that officers will raise concerns around the local response rate to the 2022 Census with the National Records of Scotland due to the potential impact on the Council's future government funding.

414 Progress and Development for Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-2023 414

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development advising of the progress and development of the initiatives that are being funded from the £1.08million Anti-Poverty Budget, including additional Scottish Government policy initiatives for Holiday Meal Payments and Child Payment Bridging Payments.

Councillor Robertson declared a connection as a member of the Board of Financial Fitness. She also formed the view that the nature of her connection and of the item of business did not preclude her continued presence in the meeting or her participation in the decision making process and she was declaring for transparency.

The Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development provided a verbal update, advising the Committee that the Emergency Powers, as detailed in in paragraph 4.13 of the report, were not used as the planned strike action of 6, 7 and 8 September 2022 did not proceed.

Decided:

- (1) that the continued progress of the anti-poverty initiatives as detailed in the report be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that officers are identifying any potential underspends and will report on this and plans for utilisation linked to cost of living pressures to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (3) that the successful distribution of funding in relation to the Winter Support Fund be noted;
- (4) that the use of emergency powers to authorise the initial payment of free school meals to entitled school pupils following notification of the planned strike action of 6, 7 and 8 September 2022 be noted; and
- (5) that it be agreed that should there be strike action that payments will be made to school pupils who are entitled to free school meals for the days that they are not in school.

415 Progress Report on Participatory Budgeting in Inverclyde 415

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development providing an update on the progress the Council is making in relation to participatory budgeting (PB) and its progress in achieving the framework

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agreement of 1% of its budget being subject to PB each year.

Decided:

- (1) that the Council's progress in achieving the 1% framework agreement in 2021/22 be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted officers will continue to look for opportunities to use PB to support its decision making in 2022/23.

416 Warm Hand of Friendship

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There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development identifying the additional activities that will be launched during Anti-Poverty Week (3-9 October 2022) to support the Inverclyde Community with the cost of living over winter 2022/23, in particular in relation to keeping warm and extending the "Warm Hand of Friendship".

Councillor Robertson declared a connection as a Trustee of the Inverclyde Community Fund. She also formed the view that the nature of her connection and of the item of business did not preclude her continued presence in the meeting or her participation in the decision making process and she was declaring for transparency.

Decided:

- (1) that (a) the contents of the report be noted; and (b) it be agreed to allocate £100,000 to CVS to administer a small grants scheme made available to voluntary sectors who wish to offer warm spaces through additional activities this winter, funded from the unallocated balance in the Anti-Poverty earmarked reserve; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development to work with CVS to develop and deliver the grant scheme with an update on progress being included in a report to the next meeting of the Committee.

417 Community Council Update

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (1) providing an update on the actions and proposed actions of officers in relation to Community Councils, having regard to the impact on them of the Covid-19 pandemic, and (2) seeking approval of the application of a transitional period in relation to requirements for the holding of meetings and membership numbers.

Councillor Cassidy was present as a Member with a specific interest in the item as the Community Council Champion and, with the consent of the Convenor, participated in the debate.

Decided:

- (1) that the update and proposals as detailed in the report be noted;
- (2) that approval be given to the application of a transitional period in relation to requirements of the Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report, and that until the next regular Community Council elections in 2023; and
- (3) that it be remitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to bring a report to a special meeting of the Inverclyde Council recommending commencement of a formal review of the Council's Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils.

418 Co-operative Councils Innovation Network

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services providing a recommendation as to whether or not the Council should join the Co-operative Councils'

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Innovation Network, further to the report considered by the Committee on 9 August 2022.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed to join the Co-operative Council's Innovation Network for an initial trial period of 3 years, to be funded from the Project Capacity Earmarked Reserve; and
- (2) that it be remitted to officers to bring back annual reports to the Committee highlighting the benefits which have arisen during the initial membership period.

419 Pakistan Floods Appeal – Request by Councillor McCabe on behalf of the Disasters Emergency Committee 419

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance and Corporate Governance advising of a request received from the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) in relation to the Pakistan Floods appeal and seeking a decision as to whether or not to make a donation to the appeal.

Decided: that it be agreed to make a payment of £20,000 towards the Disasters Emergency Committee Pakistan Floods appeal from the General Fund Reserve in order to support DEC activities in the UK.

420 Meliora Events, Community Fund and Platinum Jubilee 420

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development outlining a range of activity delivered as part of the 'Meliora Festival' to support community Covid recovery particularly over the 'festival' period in May and June 2022.

Councillor Robertson declared a connection as a member of the Board of the Greenock Arts Guild Ltd. She also formed the view that the nature of her connection and of the item of business did not preclude her continued presence in the meeting or her participation in the decision making process and she was declaring for transparency.

Decided: that the contents of the report and the success of the range of community events funded by the Council's Covid recovery funding and delivered by the Council and a range of partners including Inverclyde Leisure, The Beacon Arts Centre, local community groups and organisations be noted.

421 Annual Update on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 421

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services providing an update on the use of surveillance powers by the Council under the Regulation of Investigatory Power (Scotland) Act 2000 (RIPSA) and to advise that it is expected that the next inspection of the Council's use of these powers will be carried out in 2023 by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO).

Decided:

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) that the previous Council RIPSA authorisations that were carried out in 2020 and 2021 be noted; and
- (3) that the work being taken forward by officers to prepare for the next IPCO inspection be noted.

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 paragraphs 6, 8 and 9 of Part

I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.**422 Waste Collection Contracts Update****422**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Environment & Regeneration providing an update with regards to the Council's waste disposal contract.

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