

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 6 FEBRUARY 2024**

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**Policy & Resources Committee**

**Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 3pm**

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

**Chair:** Councillor McCabe presided.

**In attendance:**

Louise Long	Chief Executive
Alan Puckrin	Chief Financial Officer
Stuart Jamieson	Director Environment & Regeneration
Ruth Binks	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Iain Strachan	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services
Morna Rae	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications
Craig Given	Head of Finance, Planning & Resources (Inverclyde HSCP)
Angela Edmiston	Finance Manager (Corporate Services & Strategic Finance)
Tracy Bunton	Revenues and Benefits Manager
David Aitken	Procurement Manager
Arlene Mailey	Service Manager – Quality and Development Service (Inverclyde HSCP)
Karen MacVey	Members' & Committee Services Team Leader
Colin MacDonald	Senior Committee Officer
Diane Sweeney	Senior Committee Officer
PJ Coulter	Corporate Communications Officer (Media Relations)

This meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Law, McCormick and McGuire attending remotely.

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

**50 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest 50**

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

No declarations of interest were intimated.

**51 2023/24 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 30 November 2023 51**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive advising the Committee of (1) the 2023/24 Revenue Budget position as at 30 November 2023, (2) the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection, and (3) the position of the General Fund Reserve at the same date.

Councillor McCormick left the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

**Decided:**

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- (1) that the current projected Committee underspend for 2023/24 of £379,000 as at 30 November 2023 be noted;
- (2) that the projected overspend of £140,000 for the General Fund and the projected surplus reserves of £3.96 million as at 30 November 2023 be noted; and
- (3) that the projected 2023/24 surplus of £4,830 for the Common Good Budget, as detailed in appendix 6 of the report, be noted.

**52 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2023/26 Capital Programme 52**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an update on (1) the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme, (2) the 2023/26 Capital Programme, and (3) the impact of the draft 2024/25 Capital Grant settlement announced by the Scottish Government.

Councillor McCormick rejoined the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

**Decided:**

- (1) that (a) the current position of the 2023/26 Policy & Resources Capital Budget, and (b) the current position of the 2023/26 Capital Programme, be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that the 2023/26 programme overcommitment is now over the 5% tolerance and will need to be addressed through the budget process.

**53 Finance Services Update 53**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an update on various matters being progressed by the Finance Service relating to (1) Council Tax collection, (2) migration to Universal Credit, and (3) Treasury activity.

**Decided:** that the update be noted.

**54 Corporate Policy and Performance Update: November 2023 – February 2024 54**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on Corporate Policy and Performance matters relating to (1) Public Service Improvement Framework, (2) Equalities, (3) Best Value, and (4) Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/23 update.

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

**55 Workforce Information and Activity Report (WIAR) 2022/2023 55**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications advising of key workforce information and activity for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

**Decided:** that the content of the Workforce Information and Activity Report for 2022/2023, as outlined in appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

**56 Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy 56**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the outcome of the results from the public consultation on proposed amendments to the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy (NDR EPR) including views on economic development support to encourage businesses to occupy empty premises.

**Decided:**

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- (1) that the results of the public consultation on proposed amendments to the NDR EPR Policy, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report, be noted;
- (2) that the potential estimated financial implications of the proposed amendments to the updated NDR EPR Policy and the intention that the EPR Budget is ringfenced to smooth out demand and provide support for empty properties to be occupied be noted;
- (3) that it be noted that the Director Environment & Regeneration will present a report to the Environment & Regeneration Committee on the type of support to be provided to bring empty properties back into use; and
- (4) that the amended policy, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

**57 Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy 57**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer (1) providing the outcome of the results from the public consultation on proposed amendments to the Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy, and (2) seeking approval for a new Policy to come into effect from 1 April 2024.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the results of the public consultation on Council Tax on second homes, summarised in section 4 and detailed in appendix 1 of the report be noted;
- (2) that the potential estimated additional income to be raised from the proposed amendments to the updated Policy, and that the extra income will be factored into the 2024/26 Budget, be noted;
- (3) that the amended Policy, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, be approved; and
- (4) that the amendment to the Policy regarding the restriction on the power to vary council tax on unoccupied dwellings undergoing repairs or renovations, where certain conditions are met, be noted.

**58 Proposal – Reduction in the Standard Working Week 58**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications providing an update in relation to the proposal of a reduction in the standard working week with no detriment to pay.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the employee, finance and service impacts of the proposal be noted;
- (2) that the anticipated costs of implementation be noted; and
- (3) that it be agreed that in the context of current financial pressures these costs cannot be resourced and therefore the reduction in the standard working week with no detriment to pay cannot be progressed at this time.

**59 Bereavement Charter Mark 59**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing information on the development of a Bereavement Charter for Inverclyde Council to improve the experience that staff have when they are affected by bereavement.

**Decided:** that it be agreed to support the Bereavement Charter work for Inverclyde Council.

**60 Corporate Health and Safety Report and Plan 60**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval for the Corporate Health and Safety report

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for 2022/23 and the Corporate Health and Safety Plan for 2024/2027 as detailed in appendices 1 and 2 of the report, respectively.

**Decided:** that the Corporate Health and Safety Report for 2022/23 and the Corporate Health and Safety Plan for 2024/2027 be approved.

**61 Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to Appoint SOLACE to assist with a Chief Officer recruitment 61**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development noting the use of Emergency Powers in December 2023 for the Council to appoint SOLACE to assist in the recruitment of a new Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services.

**Decided:** that it be noted that the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to appoint SOLACE to assist in the recruitment of a new Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services.

**62 Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to vote on Member for the Values & Principles Board of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network 62**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services noting the use of Emergency Powers in January 2024 to enable the Council to cast its vote to elect one new member to the Values & Principles Board of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network.

**Decided:**

(1) that it be noted that the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to agree that the Council cast its vote to elect one new member to the Values & Principles Board of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network, which vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Councillor McCabe, in terms of the Network's constitution; and

(2) that delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to cast votes in respect of the future appointment of members to the Committees and Boards of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network, which vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Councillor McCabe, in terms of the Network's constitution.

**63 Corporate Risk Register – Remit from Audit Committee 63**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services requesting consideration of a remit from the Audit Committee relative to the Corporate Risk Register.

**Decided:** that the most significant corporate risks facing the Council and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

**64 Fire Risk Assessment, Fire Safety Policy 64**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval for the adoption of a reviewed Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Policy.

**Decided:** that the Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Policy be approved.

**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**

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consideration of the following items on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the respective paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act as are set opposite each item.

Item	Paragraph(s)
<b>Tender for the Provision of a School Aged Counselling Service</b>	6, 8 & 9
<b>Contract Authorisation Report – External Care at Home</b>	6, 8 & 9
<b>Contract Authorisation Report – Carers Contract</b>	6, 8 & 9
<b>65 Tender for the Provision of a School Aged Counselling Service</b>	<b>65</b>
<p>There was submitted a report by the Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health &amp; Social Care Partnership seeking approval to change the tender weightings for the forthcoming tender process for a School Aged Counselling Service in Inverclyde, as noted in Contract Standing Order 16.3.</p> <p><b>Decided:</b> following consideration, the Committee agreed to the actions recommended, all as detailed in the private appendix.</p>	
<b>66 Contract Authorisation Report – External Care at Home</b>	<b>66</b>
<p>There was submitted a report by the Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health &amp; Social Care Partnership seeking approval to conclude a tender and award of contract for the External Care at Home Services, as per Council Standing Order 20.3(ii).</p> <p><b>Decided:</b> following consideration, the Committee agreed to the actions recommended, all as detailed in the private appendix.</p>	
<b>67 Contract Authorisation Report – Carers Contract</b>	<b>67</b>
<p>There was submitted a report by the Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health &amp; Social Care Partnership seeking approval to conclude the tender and award the contract for the provision of a Carers Information Advice Service in Inverclyde.</p> <p><b>Decided:</b> following consideration, the Committee agreed to the actions recommended, all as detailed in the private appendix.</p>	