

Cabinet
7 November 2023

IRVINE, 7 November 2023 - At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Marie Burns, Alan Hill, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen and Shaun Macaulay; and Elizabeth Turbet, Andrew Bruce and Jacqui McKenzie (Teaching Representative).

Also Present

Davina McTiernan and Eleanor Collier.

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive, M. Boyd, Head of Service and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance) (Chief Executive's Service); A. Sutton, Executive Director, A. McClelland, Head of Service (Education); R. Leith, Head of Service (Communities) and C. Hope, Senior Manager (Communities) (Communities & Education); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, T. Reaney, Head of Service (Neighbourhood Services), Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Housing & Public Protect), L. Kirk, Interim Head of Service (Economic Development & Regeneration) and J. Barrett, Senior Manager (Homeless & Community Safety), (Place); C. Cameron, Director and P. McArthur, Senior Manager (Health and Social Care Partnership); and A. Craig, Head of Service, I. Hardy, Team Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance & Elections), M. Sugden, Communications Officer (Communications) and S. Wilson, Committee Services Officer (Democratic Services).

Apologies

Tony Gurney.

Chair

Marie Burns in the Chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 August 2023 and the Special Meetings of the Cabinet held on 19 September 2023 and 3 October 2023 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Annual Participation Measure 2023

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) updating Cabinet on the Annual Participation Measure (APM) for 2023. Further statistical analysis was attached at Appendices 1-3 to the report.

Noted.

4. Annual Report – School and Early Learning and Childcare Inspections 2022-23

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education)-on the performance of North Ayrshire schools and early learning and childcare settings in external inspections, with a focus on those published during session 2022-23. The Inspection Outcome Report from Education Scotland was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet commended the performance of schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings inspected by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate and thanked all staff involved for their continued commitment.

Noted.

5. Education Authority Annual Plan 2023-24

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) seeking approval for the publication of the Education Authority Annual Plan for 2023-24. The Education Authority Annual Plan for 2023-24 was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) the draft Education Authority annual plan for 2023-24 as aligned to the Council Plan priorities and the National Improvement Framework priorities; and (b) the publication of the plan.

6. Proposals for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on applications by Locality Partnerships to allocate CIF funding to proposed projects. Applications from Irvine Locality Partnership and CHAP (Community Housing Advocacy Project) were attached at Appendices 1 and 2, respectively, to the report.

The Cabinet (a) reviewed the application from the Irvine Locality Partnership; in line with CIF criteria; and (b) agreed to approve the CIF application in relation to CHAP in the amount of £91,534, subject to the conditions approved by Irvine Locality Partnership, as detailed at section 2.6.4 of the report.

7. Cost of Living Crisis

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) providing a third progress report in relation to the North Ayrshire Council responses to the current cost of living crisis and associated investments and funds. The Cost of Living Themes & Updates (November 2023) report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet commended the team and Partners for the extensive amount of work undertaken.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) discontinue reporting on those areas for which the funding had been fully expended; (b) accept future progress reports on the investments, funds and activity associated with the cost-of-living crisis; and (c) note the progress made in developing support in relation to the cost of living crisis.

8. Performance Information – Drug and Alcohol Services – April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Submitted a report by the Director (Health and Social Care Partnership) providing an update on the national and local drug and alcohol related targets and standards and performance in North Ayrshire; and providing assurance to Members of the performance, actions and service developments being progressed to address the significant challenges for our communities. The North Ayrshire HSCP and ADP Performance Management Report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to the support available locally and the uptake in detoxification support as the preferred method of treatment.

Noted.

9. Capital Programme Performance to 31 August 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 31 August 2023.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to the monitored risks across projects and whether the current earmarked funds could adequately mitigate these.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the virement proposals noted within the HRA Programme and set out at Appendix 2 to the report; and (b) note (i) the revisions to budgets outlined in the report, (ii) the General Services and HRA revised budgets at 31 August 2023 and (iii) the forecast expenditure to 31 March 2024.

10. Revenue Budget 2023/24: Financial Performance to 31 August 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) advising Cabinet of the financial performance for the Council at 31 August 2023. Supporting information was attached at Appendices 1-8 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the under-recovery of rental income resulting from long-term voids and the factors contributing to this;
- recent industrial strike action and whether this contributed to an underspend position; and
- an update in regard to potential recharges for delayed discharge of patients.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the virements detailed at Appendix 7 to the report and; (b) note (i) the information and financial projections outlined in the report and (ii) the latest financial projection for the Health and Social Care Partnership highlighted at section 2.6 of the report.

11. Treasury Management and Investment Mid-Year Report 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) providing a Treasury Management update for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023. The Treasury Management and Investment Mid-Year Report 2023-24 was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to standard Treasury Management Practice in regard to providing loans to other Local Authorities.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) endorse the contents of the Treasury Management and Investment Mid-Year Report for 2023/24 detailed at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) note (i) the Prudential and Treasury Indicators set out in the report and (ii) the changes arising from the review of HRA Loans Fund Advances.

12. Year End Performance Reporting: Council Plan Year End Progress Report 2022-23; Annual Performance Report 2022-23; and Local Government Benchmarking Framework Analysis of 2023 Data Release

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on the progress of the Council Plan priorities. The Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update was attached at Appendix 1, supported by the Council Plan Performance Indicators at Appendix 2, the Council Plan Action Tracker at Appendix 3, North Ayrshire Council Annual Performance Report 2022-23 at Appendix 4 and Local Government Benchmarking Framework Analysis of 2023 Data Release at Appendix 5 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided further information in relation to the three performance indicators which were measured as 'significantly adrift' and the external factors which contributed to this.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve (i) the Council Plan year End Progress Report and supporting performance measures as set out at Appendices 1-3 to the report and (ii) the Council Plan Annual Performance Report as set out in Appendix 4 to the report; (b) refer the report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration; and (c) note the status of the Council's performance indicators within the LGBF Analysis of 2023 Data Release at Appendix 5 to the report.

13. Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24. The Neighbourhood Services 2023/24 Winter Preparation Action Plan was attached at Appendix 1, supported by the Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24 at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24 and (b) note the preparations and actions taken, as set out in the Winter Preparation Action Plan.

14. Scottish Government Consultations on Burials and Cremation

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval of the proposed responses to the Scottish Government consultations on Burials and Cremation. The proposed consultation response was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the consultation responses from North Ayrshire Council included at Appendix 1; and (b) that the consultation responses be submitted to the Scottish Government by 17 November 2023.

15. Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking Cabinet approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 – 2029 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029 for submission to Scottish Government; and (b) give delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and Economy to liaise directly with the Scottish Government in agreeing (i) the North Ayrshire development programme and (ii) the rescheduling of projects as required.

16. Former St Mary's Primary School, Largs – SHIP Social Housing Development Proposal

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the inclusion of the former St Mary's Primary School site, Largs as a 26-unit Council social housing development in the North Ayrshire SHIP 2024-29.

The Cabinet welcomed the provision of more homes within the North Coast and also noted the potential for considering further the housing needs of Ukrainian refugees.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the challenges encountered in delivering the Home Ownership Made Easy (HOME) pathfinder project on the site of the former St Mary's Primary School site, Largs, since its approval by Cabinet in December 2018, and no longer progress this; (b) note the discussions which had taken place with Scottish Government in recent months to identify alternative affordable housing options for the site; and (c) approve (i) the sale of the site by the Council's General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account at the indicative value of £300,000, pending District Valuer valuation and subject to any abnormal costs and (ii) the inclusion of the site as a 26-unit Council social housing development in the North Ayrshire SHIP 2024-29.

17. Council House Buy-back Programme to Accommodate Ukrainian Displaced People

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking Cabinet approval to purchase up to 40 properties to accommodate Ukrainian households for three years using Scottish Government grant being made available.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the purchase of up to 40 properties to be used to accommodate Ukrainian households for three years; and (b) note that the homes would be available for allocation to other housing applicants thereafter.

On behalf of the Cabinet, the Chair congratulated Yvonne Baulk on her success in obtaining the Leadership Award from the Chartered Institute of Housing.

18. National Islands Plan Review Consultation Response

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) providing an update on the Council's engagement in the consultation on the review of the National Islands Plan by the Scottish Government and seeking approval for the proposed consultation response. The proposed consultation response was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to the next steps of the National Islands Plan review process.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the proposed consultation response provided at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) note the submission of separate consultation responses on behalf of the Island Plan Steering Groups on both islands.

19. Exclusion of the Press and the Public

Cabinet resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following items of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

20. Irvine - Montgomerie Park : Marketing and Disposal Strategy for Sites E, F and G – EXEMPT REPORT

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the marketing and disposal of the remaining residential development sites, Sites E, F and G, at Montgomerie Park. The proposed marketing and disposal strategy was set out at Appendix 1 to the report. The marketing brochure and the Development Brief were provided at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the recommendation as detailed in the report.

21. The Portal Café – EXEMPT REPORT

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities & Education) seeking approval to transfer the operation of the Portal Café to North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL).

The Cabinet agreed to approve the recommendation as detailed in the report.

22. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 4.35 p.m.