

Cabinet (Education)  
30 June 2020

**Virtual Meeting, 30 June 2020** - At a Special Meeting of the Cabinet (Education) of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

**Present**

Joe Cullinane, John Bell, Robert Foster, Alex Gallagher, Louise McPhater and Jim Montgomerie; and Jackie MacKenzie (Teaching Representative) and Babs Mowat and Ian Haining (Church Representatives) (Agenda Items 1-4).

**In Attendance**

C. Hatton, Chief Executive; M. Boyd, Head of Service (Financial & Customer Services); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, C. McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration), and J. McLachlan, Senior Manager (Economic Policy) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director (Interim), C. Amos (Head of Service (Education) and R. Arthur, Head of Service (Connected Communities) (Communities); T. Reaney, Head of Service (Recovery and Renewal); and A. Fraser, Head of Service, J. Hutcheson, Senior Communications Officer, M. Anderson, Senior Manager (Committee and Member Services) and H. Clancy, E. Gray, A. Little and D. McCaw, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

**Also In Attendance**

C. McGill, Team Manager Customer Experience and A. Lindsay, Senior Technical Officer (People, Information Communication and Technology)

**Apologies for Absence**

Elizabeth Higton (Church Representative) and Aaran McDonald (Youth Representative).

**Chair**

Joe Cullinane in the Chair.

**1. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair agreed to adjourn the meeting prior to Agenda Item 1 being considered to allow an opportunity for technical difficulties to be resolved.

The meeting reconvened at 3.00 p.m. with the same Elected Members, Education Representatives and officers in attendance, with the exception of Ian Haining.

The Chair advised that, unfortunately, due to technical difficulties it would not be possible to record the meeting as set out in the Council's Protocol for Microsoft Teams Remote Committee Meetings.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

## **3. Minutes**

The accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17 March 2020 was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

## **4. Local Education Phasing Delivery Plan**

Submitted a report by the Interim Executive Director (Communities) on the proposed North Ayrshire Local Education Phasing Delivery Plan. A statement by the First Minister on the plans for the reopening of schools was set out at Appendix 1 to the report, the Council's Education Delivery Board structure at Appendix 2 and the proposed Local Delivery Plan at Appendix 3.

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

- the possibility of schools returning using a blended model rather than reopening as normal and when a decision is likely to be taken on this; and
- whether non-teaching days will be used prior to the schools reopening and, if so, how many.

The Cabinet formally recorded its appreciation of the significant work undertaken by officers, both in terms of the preparation of the report and ensuring the delivery of services to the community in response to Covid-19.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) note the Scottish Government statement on Covid 19: Update on Educational Recovery of 23rd June 2020; (b) approve the North Ayrshire Local Education Phasing Delivery Plan; (c) note the additional budgetary requirements to implement full-time curriculum delivery from August 2020 post Covid-19 or alternatively, the Local Education Phasing Delivery Plan; and (d) agreed that representations continue to be made through COSLA to Scottish Government for the requisite additional funding.

## **5. Naming of the new ASN Campus in Stevenston**

Submitted a report by the Interim Executive Director (Communities) on the naming of the new ASN Campus which will amalgamate the four existing ASN schools in North Ayrshire.

The Executive Director (Communities) (Interim) highlighted to the Cabinet that the consultation exercise saw two variations of the same name suggested and that the wrong spelling had been included in the report. It was confirmed that the proposed name of 'Lockheart' should read 'Lockhart'.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to name the new ASN campus 'Lockhart Campus'.

## **6. Emergency Governance (COVID-19): Decisions Under Emergency Delegated Powers**

Submitted a report by the Head of Democratic Services on the decisions taken by the Chief Executive in terms of the Emergency Governance (COVID-19) arrangements. The log of the decisions taken during the COVID-19 Outbreak – March 2020 to date was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Head of Democratic Services clarified that in terms of the Ardrossan Hub decision Councillors Barr, McNicol and Murdoch had requested that their dissent to the decision be recorded. It was confirmed the relevant decision note had been updated accordingly.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to note (a) the information on Emergency Governance decisions, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report subject to the update previously highlighted by the Head of Democratic Services; and (b) that information on any further decisions taken under emergency powers would be reported to the first available meeting of the Cabinet following the summer recess.

## **7. Revenue Budget 2019/20 : Financial Performance to 31 March 2020**

Submitted a report by the Head of Financial and Customer Services on the financial performance for the Council for 2019/20. Budget reports for each service and the Housing Revenue Account were set out at Appendices 1-7 of the report.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) note the information and financial performance outlined in the report; (b) approve the transfer of £0.500m to the Insurance Fund as noted at Section 2.7 of the report; (c) approve the earmarking of £2.743m identified at Section 2.9 of the report to meet future year commitments; (d) approve additional expenditure to KA Leisure in 2019/20 to meet the income shortfall to 31 March 2020 resulting from the impact of COVID-19, as detailed at Section 2.9 of the report; (e) note the revised General Fund Unearmarked Balance of £9.659m; (f) note the current financial performance of the Health and Social Care Partnership at Section 2.10 of the report; and (g) note the IJB cumulative deficit position of £5.293m at 31 March 2020.

## **8. Capital Programme Performance to 31 March 2020**

Submitted a report by the Head of Financial and Customer Services on the progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme for 2019/20. The detailed Capital Investment Programme was set out at Appendix 1 to the report and the HRA Capital Statement at Appendix 2.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to note (a) the revisions to budgets outlined in the report; and (b) the General Services and HRA expenditure to 31 March 2020.

## **9. COVID-19 Financial Impact 2019/20**

Submitted a report by the Head of Financial and Customer Services on the projected financial impact of COVID-19 in 2020/21. A Cost Impact Projection to 31 March 2021 was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

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

- the level of financial support provided by the Scottish Government;
- whether the Council had made any savings in terms of contracts for work which could not be completed during lockdown; and
- the challenges around forecasting the financial position of the Council at such an uncertain time.

Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Montgomerie, moved that Cabinet:

- (a) note the current projected cost impact of COVID-19 to March 2021 based on current assumptions;
- (b) agree that the Leader of the Council write to both the UK and Scottish Government's setting out the projected cost impact on North Ayrshire Council and to demand additional central government support to address the financial gap;
- (c) agree to continue supporting COSLA's own lobbying of both the UK and Scottish Governments for additional resources to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 upon local government;
- (d) ask officers to bring back a further financial impact report to Cabinet after the summer recess with the latest projected cost impact, including the refined projected cost of education recovery, and to present financial recovery options for consideration, with a focus on financial recovery options that protect jobs and priority services to our communities;
- (e) ask the HSCP to provide a report to Cabinet after the summer recess on the financial risks to the Partnership, and therefore the Council, and how they plan to mitigate those risks; and
- (f) ask officers to bring a further paper to the first meeting of the Cabinet after summer recess on the Council's economic recovery plan, including options for accelerating projects in the capital programme, housing revenue account and the £8.8million investment to support the economic recovery, to be considered within the context of the wider financial impact of Covid on the Council's finances.

There being no amendment the motion was declared carried.

## **10. Food Support to Families in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Submitted a joint report by the Executive Director (Place) and the Interim Executive Director (Communities) on the food-related support provided by the Council to communities to date and to outline the recommended strategy through the summer period and beyond.

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

- families whose circumstances had changed since lockdown began and who now qualified for support, the Council's plan to support them and the estimated date when new applications for free school meals would start to be processed; and
- the fact that each child who qualified for free school meals would receive a weekly £20 food voucher rather than one per household.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) note (i) the success of the Council's response to date in providing essential food supplies to the most vulnerable people in our community; (ii) the current level of finance and resource impact to date; and (b) approve proposals for (i) delivering Free School Meals, effective from the end of June 2020; and (ii) developing a Community Wealth Building community food system in North Ayrshire.

#### **11. Final Report on the Citizens Basic Income Feasibility Study**

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Final Report of the Citizens' Basic Income (CBI) Feasibility Study.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed (a) to note and approve the findings and recommendations of the Final Feasibility Study Report which concluded the Feasibility Study; and (b) that officers participate in the promotion and dissemination of the findings of the Feasibility Study.

#### **12. Regeneration Capital Grant Fund 2021/22**

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the submission of applications to the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund in support of local regeneration projects for 2021/22.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to homologate the decision to submit funding applications for the projects at Millport Town Hall, Stevenston Beach Park and Geilsland, Beith in that order of priority.

#### **13. Urgent Item**

The Chair agreed to receive a verbal update on the outcome of the Best Value Audit of the Council.

##### **13.2 Best Value Audit**

The Chair noted that Audit Scotland's report on the Council's Best Value Audit had been published earlier in the day and asked the Chief Executive to provide a brief summary of the findings.

The Chief Executive advised that the report was a positive one which noted a significant improvement since the previous audit. He highlighted a number of areas including praise received for the Council's clear strategic planning, engagement with communities and innovation on projects such as community wealth building. One area which was raised as a likely challenge for the future was the savings agenda over the next two years.

The Meeting ended at 5.00 p.m.