

Cabinet
25 January 2022

At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2:30 p.m. involving participation by remote electronic means.

Present

John Bell, Robert Foster, Alex Gallagher and Jim Montgomerie.

In Attendance

R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Physical Environment), J. Cameron, Senior Manager (Housing Strategy and Development), L. Cree, Senior Manager (Property Management and Investment) and L. Kirk, Senior Manager (Regeneration) (Place); C. Amos, Interim Executive Director and R. Arthur, Head of Service (Connected Communities) (Communities and Education); A. Sutherland, Head of Service (Children, Families and Justice Services) and P. Doak, Head of Service (Finance & Transformation) (Health and Social Care Partnership); K. Yeomans, Director (Growth and Investment); M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance) and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance Management) (Chief Executive's Service); A. Craig, Head of Service, I. Hardy, Corporate Policy & Performance Officer; M. Sugden, Communications Officer, C. Stewart and A. Little, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Apologies

Joe Cullinane.

Chair

John Bell in the Chair.

1. 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.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 30 November 2021 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Council Plan Mid-Year Progress Report 2021-22

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on progress of the Council Plan priorities. The Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update (Mid-Year 2021-22) was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the report as set out at Appendix 1 to the report; (b) refer the report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration; and (c) note, with satisfaction, the status of the Council's performance indicators and actions at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

4. Revenue Budget 2021/22: Financial Performance to 30 November 2021

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the financial performance for the Council at 30 November 2021. Detailed explanations of the significant variances in service expenditure compared to the approved budgets, together with information on funding to be carried forward to support expenditure during 2021/22 were provided in Appendices 1-5 of the report. Information in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was set out in Appendices 6 and 6a. Information on Virement/Budget Adjustment Requests was provided in Appendix 7 to the report and information on the HSCP financial performance report as at the end of October 2021 was set out in Appendix 8 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on the position in relation to Council Tax collection and recovery costs.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note (i) the information and financial projections outlined in the report and its associated appendices, (ii) the latest financial projection for the Health and Social Care Partnership at section 2.6 of the report and (iii) the current projected deficit position of KA Leisure; and (b) to approve (i) the earmarking of £1.055m identified at section 2.5 of the report to meet future year commitments and (ii) the virements detailed in Appendix 7 to the report.

5. Capital Programme Performance to 31 March 2022

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme for 2021/22. Information on the progress of General Services and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projects was set out at Appendices 1 and 2, respectively, to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on supply issues affecting Capital Programme projects, including increased prices in material and construction costs.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the revisions to budgets outlined in the report; and (b) note (i) the General Services and HRA revised budgets at 30 November 2021 and (ii) the forecast expenditure to 31 March 2022.

6. Proposals for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure

Submitted a report by the Interim Executive Director (Communities and Education) on applications by Locality Partnerships to allocate CIF funding to proposed projects. Applications were submitted from the Kilwinning Locality Partnership (Appendix 1 to the report), the Three Towns Locality Partnership (Appendices 2, 3 and 4 to the report) and the North Coast and Cumbrae Locality Partnership (Appendix 5 to the report).

The Cabinet agreed to (a) review the applications from the Kilwinning Locality Partnership, the Three Towns Locality Partnership and the North Coast and Cumbrae Locality Partnership in line with CIF criteria; (b) approve the CIF funding applications in respect of (i) Corsehill Primary Parent Council in the amount of £50,000 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, (ii) the Saltcoats Active Lifestyle Team in the amount of £48,288 as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, (iii) the Ardrossan Community Development Trust in the amount of £53,100 as detailed at Appendix 3 to the report; (c) approve the request to increase the previously agreed CIF award in relation to a multi-purpose hub – Raise Your Voice with Ardeer in the amount of £130,000 for the reasons stated in the report and as detailed at Appendix 4; and (d) approve the request to release the final £25,000 of previously agreed CIF funding in relation to the Millport Town Hall project as detailed at Appendix 5 to the report.

7. Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (EESH2)

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on a summary of progress to date against EESH standards, and a plan to achieve EESH2 compliance in the Council's housing stock, where possible, by the 2032 deadline.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the progress to date against EESH standards; and (b) approve the proposed plan to achieve EESH2 within the Council's housing stock, or make properties as energy efficient as practically possible, by the 2032 deadline.

8. Electrical Safety Testing/Smoke Detection Compliance (Housing)

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the current position regarding statutory electrical testing and smoke detection compliance in our housing property portfolio.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the progress to date; and (b) approve the proposal to progress with extending the existing Access and Refusal policy to include electrical testing and smoke detection installations.

9. Levelling Up Fund - B714 Upgrade

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the award of funding under the Levelling Up Fund and seeking approval for the delivery of the B714 Upgrade.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note and approve the acceptance of the grant award of £23.7m for the B714 Upgrade under the Levelling Up Fund; (b) approve the delivery of the B714 Upgrade, subject to securing the necessary consents and permissions; and (c) note the progress made to date.

10. Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in North Ayrshire

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the local and national position regarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and seeking approval for the support arrangements proposed within North Ayrshire for accommodating UASC as part of the national humanitarian response. A number of accommodation and support models which could be offered to assist in the UASC crisis was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on the potential support models in relation to supporting UASC in North Ayrshire, dependent on the specific needs of each individual.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note and endorse the significant work undertaken in recent years to support a number of UASC and families resettling in North Ayrshire, and the escalating humanitarian crisis in Kent; (b) note and endorse the accommodation of one UASC in January 2022 placed with a supported carer and approve the accommodating of a further UASC when an appropriate supported carer became available; (c) note and approve participation in the recently announced mandated rota set by the UK Government as part of the revised National Transfer Scheme (NTS), which would potentially see up to a further 6 UASC being accommodated within North Ayrshire in the first year; (d) note the support models which would be considered by the established officer task group to identify the most appropriate support for each individual UASC within North Ayrshire based on their specific needs; (e) note the funding outlined within paragraph 4.1 of the report which would be received to assist the delivery of appropriate UASC support; and (f) receive further updates as the humanitarian response continued.

11. North Ayrshire Blue Economy

Submitted a report by the Director (Growth & Investment) on progress in developing a strategic proposition for North Ayrshire's Blue Economy, encompassing Ayrshire Growth Deal Investment at Hunterston and Ardrossan (International Marine Science and Environment Centre).

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on how this strategic proposition would interface and complement other strategic projects in North Ayrshire, such as Hunterston.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (i) the strategic direction of development for the blue economy, (ii) the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Council and University of Stirling to develop related project activity and (iii) the expansion of the existing Hunterston MOU between the Council, Peel Ports and Scottish Enterprise to also include Crown Estate Scotland.

The meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.