

Cabinet
9 December 2014

Irvine, 9 December 2014 - At a Meeting of Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 10.00 a.m.

Present

Willie Gibson, Marie Burns, Anthea Dickson, Ruth Maguire, Alan Hill and John Bruce; Ms Elizabeth H. Higton (Church Representative) (Agenda Item 1 - 3) and Mr Gordon Smith (Teaching Representative) (Agenda Item 1 - 3).

Also Present

John Ferguson, Alex Gallagher, Grace McLean, Catherine McMillan, Peter McNamara, Donald Reid, Joan Sturgeon (Items 1 - 7); Robert Barr and John Hunter (Items 1 - 5); and Ian Clarkson, Jean Highgate and Tom Marshall (Items 5 - 7)

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive, L. Friel, Executive Director and L. Aird, Interim Head of Finance (Finance and Corporate Support); J. Butcher, Executive Director, S. Quinn, Head of Service (Schools) and F. Rodman, Senior Manager (Early Years) (Education and Youth Employment); C. Hatton, Executive Director (Place); I. Colvin, Director North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership; A. Fraser, Head of Service (Democratic Services) and A. Little, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's).

Also In Attendance

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Tony Gurney.

1. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 16, Councillor Dickson, as a Director of North Ayrshire Citizen's Advice Service (NACAS), declared an interest in the budget deliberation as they related to that organisation.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2014 were confirmed and signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. 600 Hours and Provision for 2 Year Olds

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Education & Youth Employment) on (a) the progress made with the increased entitlement for 3-4 year olds and the provision of places for entitled 2 year olds in response to The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (CYPA); (b) the progress made with provision for entitled 2 year olds; (c) medium and longer term proposals to meet the projected increase in eligibility.

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

- the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy 2013/17 and the Early Years Collaborative that will consider measuring of the success of intervention;
- a report that will be presented to Cabinet early in 2015 on revised approaches to quality management;
- consultation that takes place with parents and children; and
- the provision of sufficient places for entitled children and that parent are not entitled to their first choice of placement.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) the progress made so far; (b) the plans in place for January 2015 till June 2015; and (c) the Education and Youth Employment work with Property Management & Investment to put in place appropriate provision to meet the projected need for August 2015 and beyond.

4. Promoting the STEM agenda in North Ayrshire Schools

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Education & Youth Employment) on (a) the continued emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in all schools; and (b) the focus on improving attainment in numeracy as a key outcome of the Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) collaborative.

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

- work to support the sustainability of STEM and ensure that the successful roll-out of the programme in North Ayrshire schools;
- work to promote careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to girls to close the gender gap in these industries; and
- an invitation from the Provost that will be extended to one of the schools involved in the "Number Talks" pilot programme, to attend a future meeting of the Council to provide a presentation on the pilot programme.

Noted.

The meeting adjourned for a short period and reconvened at 11.00 a.m.

5. Irvine Bay Regeneration Company - Transition of Activity and Transformation of Irvine Bay

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economies & Communities) on proposals to deliver further transformation of the Irvine Bay area alongside a changing mechanism for the delivery of regeneration activity within North Ayrshire.

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

- the strategic importance of the key land assets and the proposal to pursue the purchase of these assets as part of the 10 Year Capital Plan;
- the ownership of the land assets by Irvine Development Corporation;
- complexities around the winding up of Irvine Bay Regeneration Company, including the completion of its accounts, final transactions and discharge of residual liabilities;
- the significant achievements of Irvine Bay Regeneration Company (IBRC), including the creation of 777 jobs (to March 2014), that are reported in IBRC's annual report to the Scottish Government

The Cabinet agreed to (a) support the Irvine Bay Regeneration Company to ensure a managed wind down of the Company by the end of March 2017; (b) the provision of finance to support the delivery of an ambitious 'legacy' Business Plan by Irvine Bay Regeneration Company prior to March 2017; (c) to pursue the purchase of key strategic land assets held by Irvine Bay Regeneration Company by North Ayrshire Council; and (d) put in place mechanisms to continue the transformation of North Ayrshire through regeneration activity led by North Ayrshire Council.

6. General Services Revenue Estimates 2015/16 to 2017/18 and Capital Investment Programme 2015/16 to 2022/23

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the Council's revenue spending requirements and anticipated funding for the years 2015/16 to 2017/18, the level of reserves and fund balances held by the Council, options to address the funding gap, and the draft Capital Investment Programme to 2022/23.

The expenditure requirements identified for 2015/16 to 2017/18 were summarised at Appendix 1 to the report, with further details of service pressures given at Appendix 2. Proposed efficiencies and savings were outlined at Appendix 3. Appendix 4 contained a list of the charges which are proposed to be increased on 1 April 2015 in line with inflation. All those charges where it is proposed to increase by a factor other than the October 2014 C.P.I. on 1 April 2015 were detailed in Appendix 5. The revised Capital Investment Programme 2015/16 to 2022/23 was attached as Appendix 6 and new projects added to the programme were outlined in Appendix 7. Appendix 8 provided information on the assessments undertaken where there has been an equality impact.

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

- a reduction over 3 years of 217 full time equivalent Council staff through effective management of vacancies, redeployment, voluntary early retirement and voluntary redundancy; and
- a future provision of education in the Three Towns area that will be examined as part of the strategic review of Educational Services that is currently underway and will report to Cabinet in 2015.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the revenue funding gap from 2015/16 to 2017/18; (b) support proposals to address the funding shortfall; (c) support the draft capital investment programme to 2022/23; (d) support the increases to Council fees and charges, as outlined in the report, with effect from April 2014; and (e) refer the report to Council for determination.

7. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Investment Programme, Revenue Budget and Rent Levels for 2015/16

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the HRA capital investment programme and revenue budget for 2015/16 and the consequential rent levels.

The proposed 2015/16 HRA capital programme was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. Appendix 2 outlined the proposed 2015/16 HRA revenue budget, with planned expenditure of £45.699m mainly funded by rental income and charges for services. The report proposed to increase housing rents by 2.1% for 2015/15 and noted an anticipated rent increase of 2.5% for 2016/17 and 2017/18. Appendix 3 and 4 to the report outlined the consultation undertaken with tenants on the proposed rent increase and the feedback received.

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

- consideration of the provision of the HRA programme over a 3 year period, that would continue to set the rents on an annual basis, but examine the budget pressures over a 3 year period; and
- availability of land within the North Coast for Council house building and the potential for provision to become available subject to progression of the proposed Largs Campus.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) support the proposals set out in Section 3 of the report and its appendices; and (b) refer the report to the Council for approval.

The meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.