

Cabinet
23 February 2021

At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m. involving participation by remote electronic means.

Present

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

Also Present

Alan Hill, Ian Murdoch and Donald Reid.

In Attendance

C. Hatton (Chief Executive), M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance), and T. Reaney, Head of Service (Recovery and Renewal) (Chief Executives); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Physical Environment), C. McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration), M. Strachan, Senior Manager (Business Support and Development) and E. Anderson, Team Manager (Private Sector Housing) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director and R. Arthur, Head of Service (Connected Communities) (Communities and Education); C. Cameron, Director (HSCP); J. Hutcheson, Senior Communications Officer, E. Gray and H. Clancy, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Also In Attendance

G. Higgon, Chair of KA Leisure Board, A. Pringle, Vice-Chair of KA Board, L Barrie, Business Manager - KA Leisure, and C. Glencourse, Business Manager - KA Leisure.

Apologies

Louise McPhater.

Chair

Joe Cullinane 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 accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 January 2021 was confirmed and the Minutes authorised to be signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) Recovery and Renewal Plan, Incorporating Potential 2021-22 Budget Scenarios

The Cabinet received a presentation from representatives of North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) and considered a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the on the proposed recovery and renewal plan. The KA Leisure Annual Report was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The presentation contained details of the challenges faced by NALL due to the COVID-19 pandemic along with the steps which would be taken to recover and ensure that they continued to operate as a going concern. A number of areas were highlighted including the need to strike a balance between income generation and wider social objectives to reduce health inequalities and the importance of being able to adapt to the cultural shift in people's approach to health and fitness.

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

- the importance of non-sporting facilities to local communities and the ~~need to~~ use of these venues as we emerge from the pandemic; and
- how people who may be resistant to reinstate their membership could be persuaded to do so through the development of online activity and the challenge of ensuring these activities could generate income.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) note and support the North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) Recovery and Renewal Plan; (b) note (i) the projected deficit position in 2020/21 and (ii) the Recovery and Renewal progress; and (c) agree to receive regular reports to monitor (i) the financial impact of COVID on NALL in 2021-22, (ii) developments in Renewal plans and (iii) resultant additional financial support to NALL in 2021-22 as part of the Council's financial monitoring arrangements.

4. Strategic Risk Register 2021/22

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Recovery and Renewal) on the Strategic Risk Register for 2021/22 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the risk around IT security and what contingencies were in place in the event of a complete server outage.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to approve the Council's Strategic Risk Register for 2021/22 set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

5. Local Authority Discretionary Business Support Fund

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on a new COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund for local businesses. A summary of COVID-19 Business Support National Funds was set out at Appendix 1 to the report and guidelines for the proposed fund at Appendix 2.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed (a) to note the approach taken to develop the North Ayrshire Local Authority Discretionary Fund for businesses; (b) to approve the proposed criteria for delivery of the Local Authority Discretionary Fund as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and (c) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Service (EDR) to approve exceptions to the criteria in special circumstances that would directly result in local jobs being safeguarded.

6. Green Jobs Fund

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on a new Green Jobs Fund to support North Ayrshire's Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach. The Business Green Route Map was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed (a) to approve the proposal for a new £500,000 Green Jobs Fund; (b) that financial intervention be capped at £10k for each business seeking support; (c) that in exceptional circumstances (outlined in section 2.7 of the report) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Service (EDR) in consultation with the appropriate portfolio holder to increase the financial cap to £30k; and (d) to note the allocation of £250k towards this project from the Council's £8.8million Investment Fund and the award by North Ayrshire's Ventures Trust (NAVT) of £250k to deliver the £500,000 Green Jobs Fund.

7. Demolition Order – 2 Montgomerie Road, Saltcoats

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the demolition of a residential property in Saltcoats confirmed as being below the Tolerable Standard.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed (a) to approve the serving of a Demolition Order at 2 Montgomerie Road, Saltcoats; (b) that Council officers arrange for the demolition of the property in the event of the owner failing to arrange demolition within the set timescale; and (c) that, should the Council arrange for the demolition to be undertaken, a Compulsory Purchase Order be sought for the property to recoup some of the demolition costs through sale of the land.

8. Proposals for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the Millport Town Hall CIF Project which sought permission to draw down previously agreed Community Investment Fund funding in respect of the project.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) note the update on the Millport Town Hall project; and (b) approve the early release of a further £70,000 from the £200k CIF funding previously allocated by North Ayrshire Council for the Millport Town Hall project.

9. Hunterston Strategic Development Area

Submitted a report by the Director (Growth and Investment) on the approach to secure appropriate economic development at Hunterston recognising the strategic importance of the area. The proposed Memorandum of Understanding which would support the collaboration between partners was set out at Appendix 1 to the report and a site plan at Appendix 2.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to trade union representation on the proposed strategic group which would help determine the best way to realise the ambitions for the Hunterston Strategic Development Area.

Councillors Hill and Murdoch, who had requested permission from the Chair to attend the meeting, were invited to comment on the proposal. They welcomed the call for trade union representation on the strategic group but noted the lack of representation from the local community or Elected Members. They also queried whether an Environmental Impact Assessment should be undertaken and the definition of 'confidential material' as set out in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. Finally, they stated their belief that any decision on the development of the site should be taken by full Council.

The Chief Executive sought to provide clarity on a number of points which were raised. In terms of local representation, he confirmed that the initial aims of the group was to baseline the area, activities and opportunities to help inform the strategic direction but in the future a stakeholder group would be formed and this would involve representatives from the local community. He also confirmed that compliance with all environmental controls in place was a pre-requisite and that any development proposals that may come forward would take cognisance of the local environment. Finally, he noted that decisions on the use of the site would be a regulatory matter and therefore would be for the Planning Committee to determine.

Following discussion, the Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) note (i) the establishment of the strategic group comprising key regional and national agencies and organisations to determine the best way to realise the ambitions for the Hunterston Strategic Development Area, (ii) the preliminary actions of the group and (iii) the intention to write to the Minister to establish the Task Force once actions had been established; and (b) create a tri-partite partnership to facilitate early action at Hunterston Parc and which would be underpinned by the Memorandum of Understanding.

10. HSCP Budget Monitoring Report

Submitted a report by the Director (Health and Social Care Partnership) on the projected financial outturn for the financial year as at December 2020. The Month 9 Financial Performance report which was presented to the IJB on 11 February 2021 was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the 2020/21 underspend, how much of this attributable to services not being provided, and if it was realistic to expect similar savings in 2021/22.

Noted.

The Meeting ended at 3.55 p.m.