

Cabinet
24 November 2015

IRVINE, 24 November 2015 - At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Willie Gibson, John Bruce, Marie Burns, Anthea Dickson, Tony Gurney and Ruth Maguire.

Also Present

Alex Gallagher and Donald Reid (Agenda Items 8-13).

In Attendance

Elma Murray, Chief Executive; L. Friel, Executive Director, M. Hogg, Senior Manager (Financial Management) and M. McTeague, Category Manager/Team Leader - Supplies and Services (Finance and Corporate Support); C. Hatton, Executive Director and L. Cree, Senior Manager, Property Management and Investment (Place); J. Butcher, Executive Director (Education and Youth Employment); I. Colvin, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); C. McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Growth) and J. Miller, Senior Manager (Planning) (Economy and Communities); A. Fraser, Head of Democratic Services, J. Hutchison, Communications Officer and D. McCaw, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Gibson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Alan Hill.

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 held on 10 November 2015 was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Consultation on the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman's Draft Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the consultation on the Strategic Plan of the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) and on a proposed response on behalf of the Council, detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information on proposals for handling of Integration Joint Board complaints and were advised that the response calls for greater clarity on what this will entail.

The Cabinet agreed the consultation response, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, for submission to the SPSO.

4. Sundry Debtor Write off

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) advised of sundry debtor write offs under delegated powers; and (b) requested authority to write off balances which exceed the delegated powers threshold of £1,000.

The Cabinet agreed to authorise the write off of balances over £1,000, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

5. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2015/16

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the Treasury Management update for the period 1 April to 30 September 2015.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information on the revised limit from 20% to 30% in relation to variable rate borrowing.

Noted.

6. Amendments to Codes of Financial Practice

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on amendments to the Codes of Financial Practice.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information on continuing to meet the target timescales for batch processing of invoices.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the proposed amendments to the Codes of Financial Practice, as detailed in the report.

7. Revenue Budget 2015/16 : Budgetary Control Statement to 30 September 2015

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which (a) set out the revenue budgetary control position for the Council at 30 September 2015; (b) provided a brief explanation of Services' major variances at Appendices 1 - 8; (c) detailed the proposed virements at Appendix 9; and (d) detailed the Housing Revenue account budgetary control position at 31 January 2015 at Appendix 10.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on:-

- the £150K contribution from the projected underspend towards the one-off refurbishment costs in association with the creation of the Learning Academy; and
- the actions which will be undertaken to address the overspend in relation to the Health and Social Care Partnership.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the information and financial projections outlined in the report; (b) note the current financial projection for the Health and Social Care Partnership and seek assurance that corrective action will be taken to deliver services within available resources; and (c) approve the virements detailed in Appendix 9.

8. Capital Monitoring to 30 September 2015

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) which provided information on the progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme as at 30 September 2015.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the revisions to budgets outlined at Sections 2.1 and 2.8 of the report; (b) note (i) the actual General Services and HRA expenditure and revised budgets to 30 September 2015; and (ii) the forecast of expenditure to 31 March 2016; and (c) approve the acceptance of £140,000 from Sustrans for access travel improvements.

9. Independent Review of the Scottish Planning System

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on the Independent Review of the Scottish Planning System and a proposed response to the 'Call for Evidence' consultation .

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on:-

- the evidence of stalled sites within less buoyant market areas;
- how the 'processing agreement' approach between the Council and applicant would ensure that commitments are met in relation to development;
- advice given at the pre application stage being 'without prejudice to the formal decision making process'.

The Cabinet agreed that the report be submitted as the Council's response to the 'Call for Evidence' consultation.

10. Review of North Ayrshire Councils Modern Apprenticeship Programme

This item was subject to the call-in procedure per the Council's Scheme of Administration and will be considered at a meeting of the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee on 7 December 2015.

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on the key recommendations made following a review of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Programme, including (i) an increase to the national minimum wage for the under 18 age group to £3.87; and (ii) a three year plan to create 250 Modern Apprenticeships within the Council.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) a 3 year plan to create 250 Modern Apprenticeships within the Council; and (b) to increase the pay rate for the under 18 age group in line with the national minimum wage.

11. Maintenance of Town Clocks in Non-Council Premises

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the maintenance of clocks which are not in Council ownership and where there is no legal obligation or formal agreement in place at (i) High Kirk Church, Stevenston; (ii) former Barony Church, West Kilbride; (iii) St. Columba's Church, Largs; and (iv) St. Margaret's Parish Churchyard, Dalry.

The Cabinet agreed (a) that the Council ceases to maintain clocks which are not within Council owned or operated properties, given that it has no legal obligation in this regard; and (b) that prior to the cessation of maintenance (i) the outstanding repairs to the clock at St. Columba's Church, Largs are completed to return it to good working order (clock repairs are dependent on the completion of fabric repairs to the clock tower which must first be undertaken by the Church); (ii) a funding contribution of £500 is made toward the final service and repair of the Barony Clock, West Kilbride; and (iii) arrangements are made for the clocks at the High Kirk Church, Stevenston and St. Margaret's Church, Dalry to be serviced.

12. Review of Roads

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the outcome of a review of the roads service and seeking agreement to implement a number of strategic changes to the service, as detailed in the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on:-

- efficiencies which this Council has achieved in comparison to the lower efficiencies achieved by the Ayrshire Shared roads service; and
- the review of the hierarchy of road classification.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the improvements within the Roads Service to date; and (b) approve the implementation of the proposals set out at Section 3 of the report.

13. Award of Contract - Supply of Replacement Cashless Catering Solution

Submitted report by Executive Director (Finance and Corporate) on the result of the tender exercise for the supply, replacement and upgrade of cashless catering.

The Cabinet agreed to award the contract to Nationwide Retail Services Ltd.

The meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.