

Cabinet
26 January 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, Louise McPhater and Jim Montgomerie.

In Attendance

C. Hatton (Chief Executive), M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance) and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Financial Management) (Chief Executives); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Physical Environment), D. Hammond, Head of Service (Commercial), C. McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration), J. Cameron, Senior Manager (Housing Strategy and Development) and A. Piatek-Bednarek, Senior Manager (Energy & Sustainability) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director and R. Arthur, Head of Service (Connected Communities) (Communities); C. Cameron, Director (HSCP); A. Fraser, Head of Service, A. Beveridge, Communications Officer, E. Gray and H. Clancy, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

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 8 December 2020 and the special meeting on 22 December 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. Revenue Budget 2020/21 : Financial Performance to 30 November 2020

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the financial performance for the Council at 30 November 2020. Budget reports for each service and the Housing Revenue Account were set out at Appendices 1-6 of the report, a summary of virement/budget adjustment requests at Appendix 7 and an overview of the IJB's financial performance as at Period 7 at Appendix 8.

Members requested and were given confirmation that the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic would continue to be assessed and reported to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to note (i) the overall integrated financial performance report for the financial year 2020-21 and the overall projected year-end underspend of £0.807m at period 7; (ii) the updated estimated costs of the Covid mobilisation plan of £8.5m, including savings delays, and the associated funding received to date; and (iii) the financial risks for 2020-21, including the impact of Covid 19, and the fact that there was currently no recommendation to implement a formal Financial Recovery Plan for the IJB.

4. Capital Programme Performance to 31 March 2021

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report. The HRA Capital Statement was set out at Appendix 2.

The Cabinet unanimously 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 2020; and (ii) the forecast expenditure to 31 March 2021.

5. Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and Progress Report (Council Plan Progress Update – Quarter Two 2020-21)

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on the response so far to the Covid-19 pandemic and performance against the Council Plan 2019-24 as at Quarter Two 2020-21. The report on the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic was set out at Appendix 1 to the report, the Council Plan Performance Indicators at Appendix 2 and the Council Plan Performance Indicators Exceptions at Appendix 3.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to (a) approve the performance of the Council Plan as at 30 September 2020 (b) note the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic to date; and (c) submit the report and appendices to Audit and Scrutiny Committee for consideration at the next available meeting.

6. Land at Dalry Road, Kilwinning

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the disposal of undeveloped land at Dalry Road, Kilwinning to Ayrshire College. A location plan detailing the land to be sold was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to approve the disposal of the undeveloped land at Dalry Road, Kilwinning, detailed within Appendix 1 to the report, to Ayrshire College for a nominal consideration of £1 to support the development of the Ayrshire College Future Skills Hub.

7. Solar PV Farm Proposal

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the outcome of investigations into the potential and viability of developing a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm as part of the environmental road map to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030.

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

- the Council's post-pandemic energy needs and whether this had formed part of the discussion around the proposal;
- grid capacity in the area and the progress made in terms of negotiating access;
- the impact of the Ayrshire Growth Deal projects would have on the demand for grid use in the area; and
- the benefits around using a sleeving agreement.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to:

- (a) note the investigations into the viability of constructing ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farms on Council owned land at two former landfill sites at Nethermains and Shewalton;
- (b) approve the development of a solar PV farm installation at Nethermains former landfill site;
- (c) note the Nethermains solar PV farm proposal would require an estimated total initial investment of £6.768m which would be part funded utilising £4.5m of capital funding from the Council's approved £8.8m Investment Fund;
- (d) that the remaining required funding of £2.268m would be included in the proposed refreshed Capital Investment Plan to be considered by Council in March 2021 as part of the budget setting process;
- (e) note the options available for revenue generation from the energy created from the proposed Nethermains solar PV farm and authorise the Executive Director of Place together with the Head of Finance to further investigate and conclude final contractual arrangements;
- (f) note the associated community benefits funding that the project would create for disbursement under existing policy and mechanisms; and
- (g) note that the potential for a Shewalton solar PV farm and other renewable energy opportunities would continue to be investigated and would be reported to a future Cabinet.

8. Estate Based Regeneration Programme: Demolition of low demand housing stock in the Garnock Valley

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the progress with the proposal to demolish 48 flatted properties across four streets in Beith, Dalry and Kilbirnie.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to note (i) the progress to date on the proposal and the ongoing tenant engagement and rehousing exercise in place for the affected tenants; and (ii) the projects identified which would replace the 48 units within the Garnock Valley.

9. North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland: A Tree Planting Strategy

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the proposed 'North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland: A Tree Planting Strategy' set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

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

- the potential to support local businesses by using them for planting works and how this linked with the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy;
- the importance of choosing the appropriate trees in relation to their surroundings and identifying suitable areas to plant; and
- the feasibility of using strategic planting to provide areas with wind and flood relief.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to approve to the proposed 'North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland: A Tree Planting Strategy'.

10. North Ayrshire Food Growing Strategy

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) and the Executive Director (Communities) on the proposed food growing strategy for North Ayrshire as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to approve the proposed Food Growing Strategy and action plan.

11. Proposals for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities) on an application by the Three Towns Locality Partnership to allocate CIF funding to proposed.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to approve the CIF application in relation to Ardrossan Community Sports Hub in the sum of £43,320.

The Meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.