

North Ayrshire Council
26 June 2024

At a Meeting of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m. involving a combination of participation by remote electronic means and physical attendance within the Council Chambers, Irvine

Present (Physical Participation)

Timothy Billings, Marie Burns, Eleanor Collier, Joe Cullinane, Scott Davidson, Anthea Dickson, Stewart Ferguson, Robert Foster, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Mary Hume, Cameron Inglis, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen, Shaun Macaulay, Tom Marshall, Jean McClung, Nairn McDonald, Matthew McLean, Louise McPhater, Davina McTiernan, Ian Murdoch, Donald Reid, Donald L. Reid, Chloé Robertson, Angela Stephen and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Electronic Participation)

John Bell, Todd Ferguson, Jim Montgomerie

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive; C. Cameron, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director (Place); D. Hammond, Executive Director (Communities and Housing); S. Anson, Executive Director (Education), M. Boyd, Head of Service and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance); A. Craig, Head of Service (Democratic), R. Lynch, Senior Manager (Legal Services); M. McColm, Senior Manager (Communications), C. Stewart and S. Wilson, Committee Services Officers, and H. Clancy, Senior Committee Services Officer (Democratic) (Corporate Services).

Chair

Provost Dickson in the Chair.

Apologies

Scott Gallacher, Amanda Kerr and Ronnie Stalker

1. Provost's Remarks

The Provost welcomed those present to the meeting and dealt with preliminary matters, including intimation that the meeting, which was taking place on a hybrid basis, was being recorded.

2. Apologies

The Provost invited intimation of apologies for absence, which were recorded.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

There were no declarations of the Party Whip.

4. Previous Minutes

The accuracy of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15 May 2024 was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

5. Provost's Report

Submitted report by the Provost for the period from 6 May 2024 - 16 June 2024.

Noted.

6. Leader's Report

Submitted report by the Leader of the Council for the period for 6 May 2024 - 16 June 2024.

Noted.

7. Council Minute Volume

Submitted for noting the Minutes of meetings of committees of the Council held in the period 8 May 2024 - 18 June 2024.

Noted.

8. Appointments

The Council agreed to note that (a) Councillors Inglis and McLean are the Leader and Deputy Leader respectively of the Conservative and Unionist Group; and (b) in accordance with Standing Order 8.5, (i) Councillor Inglis, being the Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Group, was now appointed to the Ayrshire Shared Services Committee and COSLA Convention and (ii) Councillor Marshall was now the named substitute on the Staffing & Recruitment Committee for the Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Group.

Noted.

9. Working Group on Governance Structure

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on the outcome of the short life working group on the governance structure of the Council.

Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Gurney, moved the approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report.

Thereafter, Councillor Inglis, seconded by Councillor McLean, moved the following amendment:

That council agrees to the report subject to the following amendment:

1. That two new committees are introduced under the current governance structure namely:
 - The Climate Change and Net Zero Committee, comprising 10 Members of Council - 3 Members from each of the political groups, including the relevant portfolio holder and one independent Member.
 - The Education Committee, comprising 10 Members of Council and three lay Members, the Members of Council being 3 Members from each of the political groups including the relevant portfolio holder and one independent Member.
2. That officers are instructed to present the amended governance structure to a future meeting of Council as part of the regular review of the Scheme of Administration and Standing Orders for more detailed consideration by Members on the terms of reference and delegation of each committee with necessary adjustments to the remit of Cabinet.
3. That Council notes additional cost will be incurred in the operation of the additional committees and that those costs are expected to be in the region of £176,000 which will include additional staff to support the operation of the committees.
4. That Council agrees that the costs of operating the new committees will be met from the additional revenue grant as detailed in the report at item 13 of the agenda (the balance of the additional revenue grant, not covered by this amendment being considered and agreed during consideration of the report at agenda item 13).

There followed debate and summing up.

Thereafter, on a division and roll call vote, there voted for the amendment, Councillors Billings, S. Ferguson, T. Ferguson, Inglis, Marshall, McLean, Stephen (7) and for the motion, Councillors Bell, Burns, Collier, Cullinane, Davidson, Dickson, Foster, Gurney, Hill, Hume, Johnson, Larsen, Macaulay, McClung, McDonald, McPhater, McTiernan, Montgomerie, Murdoch, D. Reid, D.L. Reid, Robertson, Sweeney (23) and the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed to note (a) the outcome of the discussions of the short life working group and that in the absence of a unanimous conclusion to the contrary agreed that no substantial changes to the current governance structure as detailed in the Scheme of Administration were required; and (b) that the standard periodic review of Standing Orders including the Scheme of Administration will be brought to the next meeting of Council for consideration.

10. North Ayrshire Council Unaudited Annual Accounts 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the unaudited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2024.

A Member asked a question of clarification in respect of the Health and Social Care Partnership which reported an in-year breakeven position after the utilisation of earmarked and unearmarked reserves.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor McTiernan, moved the approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report. There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed to (a) approve the Annual Accounts for 2023/24, subject to audit; (b) note that Audit Scotland plan to complete their audit of the Accounts by mid-September 2024 and will present their annual audit report to the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2024; and (c) authorise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to consider, and approve for signature, the audited annual accounts within the required timeframe.

11. North Ayrshire Charitable Trusts: Unaudited Trustees' Annual Report 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the unaudited Trustees' Annual Report for the year to 31 March 2024, for approval by the Council as trustees. The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for all of North Ayrshire Council's charitable trusts was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor McTiernan, moved the approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report. There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed, as trustees of the North Ayrshire Council Charitable Trusts, to approve the annual report for 2023/24, subject to audit.

12. Treasury Management and Investment Annual Report 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Treasury Management and Investment Annual Report and Prudential Indicators for 2023/24. The Treasury Management and Investment Annual Report 2023/24 for North Ayrshire Council was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor McTiernan moved the approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report. There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed to note (a) the Treasury Management and Investment Annual Report for 2023/24 set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) the Prudential and Treasury Indicators contained therein.

13. Additional Scottish Government Funding for 2024/25 and proposed strategic investment

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the additional Scottish Government General Revenue Grant funding for 2024/25.

A Member asked a question of clarification in respect of the 15% community benefits investment drawn from the annual revenue source as per the North Ayrshire Council policy position.

Councillor Gurney, seconded by Councillor Larsen moved the approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report.

Thereafter, Councillor Inglis, seconded by Councillor McLean, moved the following amendment:

That Council:

- Does not approve investment of up to £1.328m contribution towards renewable energy development at i3;
- Instead approves investment of up to £1.000m on a non-recurring basis for 2024/25 towards the Roads infrastructure;
- Approves investment of up to £0.328m on a non-recurring basis for 2024/25 towards Streetscene operations; and
- This level of investment will be conditional on no additional funding being required to support the 2024/25 pay negotiations. If further funding is required to support the 2024/25 pay negotiations, then the additional funding required will be taken firstly from the funding earmarked to support Streetscene operations, followed by the funding to support investment in the Roads infrastructure.

Members asked questions of clarification of the movers of the motion and amendment.

There followed debate and summing up.

On a point of order, Councillor Billings clarified that the figure which Councillor Gurney was referring to in summing up was gross income as the net income was unknown at this point.

Thereafter, on a division and roll call vote, there voted for the amendment, Councillors Billings, S. Ferguson, T. Ferguson, Inglis, Marshall, McLean, Stephen (7) and for the motion, Councillors Bell, Burns, Collier, Cullinane, Davidson, Dickson, Foster, Gurney, Hill, Hume, Johnson, Larsen, Macaulay, McClung, McDonald, McPhater, McTiernan, Montgomerie, Murdoch, Donald Reid, Donald L. Reid, Robertson, Sweeney (23) and the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed to (a) note the additional General Revenue Grant funding confirmed for 2024/25; (b) approve the investment proposals set out in sections 2.7 to 2.10 of the report for a contribution of up to £1.328million towards the capital cost of a renewable energy development at i3 (the level of contribution being subject to the outcome of the 2024/25 pay negotiations); and (c) note the balance of capital investment anticipated and that this be considered as part of the 2025/26 Budget process.

14. Questions

In terms of Standing Order 14, submitted:

(1) a question by Councillor Hume to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"To ask the Cabinet Member if the administration have plans to cut nurture provision in schools from August 2024?"

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for her question and referred to the implementation of the Strategic Equity funding to replace the Scottish Attainment challenge funding resulted in the North Ayrshire budget going from £5.8 million to £1.4 million on a phased basis. With the total cost of the nurture provision for North Ayrshire being £2.2 million, therefore the funding was no longer in place to continue nurture provision on an ongoing basis and instead move to a whole school approach to nurture.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hume asked if risk assessments on children placed back into classrooms, the impact on other children and on staff trying to manage a challenging situation in class had been carried out and whether the increase in paperwork for staff and the outcome for pupils who display distressed behaviours had been considered.

Councillor Macaulay responded by advising that there would be an impact on provision as the budget had been reduced and he noted that at the budget meeting in February 2024, there had been no proposal to increase budget provision. He outlined that a briefing paper had been issued in May 2022 detailing the need to change the nurture provision in the light of the funding reduction. Councillor Macaulay referred to the expertise of the teaching staff to embed further nurture provision in schools and highlighted that Pupil Equity Funding of up to £4.2 million was still available to schools across North Ayrshire for use at their discretion which may be used to enhance nurture provision in schools if needed.

(2) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"The recent Education report to Cabinet stated that "North Ayrshire Council Education Directorate Data Team sends all 9 Secondary schools their Insight Analytical Data set each year which empowers schools to inspect their leavers' data at a learner level Tariff score".

Given that very few parents (and even less Members) understand the terms "Insight" and "Tariff" and that the latter is not used as a measure of performance for pupils that enter higher education, whereas the number of Highers achieved is a recognisable measure of performance.

"Can the Member report the percentage of pupils achieving 5 Higher passes in each of our Secondary Schools in the last Academic year."

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

"The percentage of North Ayrshire school leavers in session 2022-23 who achieved 5 or more Highers was 23%.

This data is broken down by individual schools as follows:

SCHOOL	PERCENTAGE OF LEAVERS ACHIEVING 5+ HIGHERS (A-C)
Ardrossan Academy	21%
Arran High School	36%
Auchenharvie Academy	11%
Garnock Community Campus	23%
Greenwood Academy	19%
Irvine Royal Academy	9%
Kilwinning Academy	25%
Largs Academy	35%
St Matthew's Academy	28%

It should be noted that this is only one measure of attainment, and that Highers are also not the only SCQF Level 6 qualification. As such, we are expanding our range of qualifications at all levels to ensure they cater for a broad range of skills and aspirations. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) reports overall qualifications achieved at SCQF Level 6. Using this indicator, 35% of North Ayrshire’s pupils gained 5+ Awards, which is higher than the LGBF Family Group average of 32%.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Marshall asked why the figures are not reported in Cabinet papers.

Councillor Macaulay responded and advised that he does not believe league tables are a fair way to assess children’s educational attainment, the Insight data shows in the past 10 years there has been over a 10% increase in the number of pupils gaining 5 plus awards at Level 6 from 23% to 35%, which although not yet at the Scottish average is above the family group average of 32% (a benchmarking term that allows as close a like for like comparison as possible by grouping local authorities based on similarities such as comparable demographics, levels of deprivation and affluence or rurality).

(3) a question by Councillor Reid to the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and Economy in the following terms:

"Can the Cabinet Member provide a breakdown of missed brown bin collections in 2023/24 by ward?"

Councillor Gurney thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“The Council collects around 5,400,000 bins per annum, of which around 1,740,000 are brown bins.

A breakdown of the missed brown bin collections, on a ward by ward basis for 2023/24 is provided. For context, the number of missed brown bins equates to less than 0.2% of brown bin collections.

Ward Number and Name	No
Ward 1 - North Coast	276
Ward 2 - Garnock Valley	504
Ward 3 - Ardrossan	302
Ward 5 - Saltcoats and Stevenston	439
Ward 6 - Kilwinning	388
Ward 7 - Irvine West	309
Ward 8 - Irvine East	370
Ward 9 - Irvine South	365
Total Missed Brown Bin Cases	2,953

Ward 4 Arran does not have a brown bin collection service due to an island exemption.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Reid asked if this was the number of runs that have had missed bins or the number of bins where the service wasn't provided?

Councillor Gurney responded and advised the figures are for the number of complaints received for non-collection of brown bins.

(4) a question by Councillor Inglis to the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and Economy the following terms:

"Following the review of North Ayrshire Council's Irvine Estate and the fact that we cannot afford to maintain/retain so many properties in need of investment has been recognised, will the towns of Saltcoats and Stevenston have this review and if so, at what stage in the process will communities via their respective Community Councils be invited to discuss the impact on, and for, their community?"

Councillor Gurney thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

"Our property estate is constantly under review and further locality reviews will follow. Depending on the context, properties will be considered either in relation to their, use, location, condition, suitability for service delivery, regeneration potential, etc., or a combination of these. Appropriate engagement will be considered and undertaken on a case by case basis."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Inglis asked what the engagement and consultation may look like in the future?

Councillor Gurney responded and advised that consultation with the local community and local Councillors would be undertaken.

(5) a question by Councillor McPhater to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Housing and the Islands in the following terms:

"How many wheelchair accessible properties does North Ayrshire Council hold in the Irvine locality?"

Councillor Hill thanked the Member for her question and responded in the following terms:

"North Ayrshire Council currently holds a total of 114 wheelchair accessible properties in the Irvine locality:

- Amenity wheelchair (12 properties)
- General wheelchair (34 properties)

- Sheltered properties which are wheelchair accessible by design (68 properties):
- Alfred Nobel House (28 properties)
- Dalrymple Gardens (24 properties)
- Vennel Gardens (16 properties)

The Council is fully committed to meeting the current and future housing needs of our tenants. A total of 148 (16.8%) of the 885 new Council homes completed across North Ayrshire between April 2013 to March 2024 are suitable for wheelchair users, including 70 in the Irvine locality.

Our Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028 includes an all-tenure target of 10% of new build homes being suitable for wheelchair users – an increase from 7% in the previous LHS - and the approved Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-29 reflects this priority.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor McPhater referred to a constituent who had been waiting for 3 years for suitable wheelchair accessible accommodation and asked if this was a normal waiting time?

Councillor Hill responded and advised that both he and Housing staff would be happy to talk to Councillor McPhater regarding this particular case.

Councillor Montgomerie left the meeting at this point.

(6) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"Is it not the case that the alleged reduction in poverty attainment gap claimed in the Education Report to Cabinet, is achieved by a reduction in the tariff score by those in SIMD 10 and demonstrates a reduction in excellence at the expense of equity?"

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“The Education Service echoes the national ambitions for education of excellence and equity. This means supporting the attainment of all learners across North Ayrshire while also reducing the poverty related attainment gap.

In response to this particular question, out of the total of 1468 leavers in North Ayrshire in 2023, there were only 17 school leavers living in SIMD Decile 10. With such a small group, the variations in outcomes of individual learners can have a disproportionate impact on the average total tariff score. Therefore, caution needs to be applied to how we respond to such variations. For example, this year the average total tariff score was 1150 for SIMD Decile 10 learners, but we know that there were a small number of pupils within the group whose individual circumstances affected the overall average score.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Marshall asked why North Ayrshire are 20% below the national average.

Councillor Macaulay responded and advised that the ambition is always to raise the bar for all pupils in North Ayrshire however he highlighted the barrier of poverty which impacts on children being able to reach their full potential and that a whole government approach is needed to tackle poverty and in particular child poverty.

(7) a question by Councillor McDonald to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Housing and the Islands in the following terms:

"With Council funding which supports community Christmas lights being cut, can the Cabinet Member outline what, if any, support the Council will now provide to groups who organise Christmas light displays in their community?"

Councillor Hill thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

"A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is being finalised to assist groups in the planning of Festive Switch On's and this will be issued to groups week commencing 8 July 2024.

I can confirm Streetscene will continue to store the lights for groups and that Roads Lighting can assist with any technical advice required.

Communities staff will continue to provide capacity building support to the groups and support through the events process will continue as normal."

As a supplementary question, Councillor McDonald asked if assurances can be given that towns who had Christmas Lights previously will not be without them due to the cuts.

Councillor Hill responded and advised that he is unable to provide that commitment although Council staff will do their best to ensure that is the case.

(8) a question by Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

After the last meeting, the Cabinet Member for Education told the local press that the re-modelling of the school library service, and I quote, "came to my attention recently because I got a lot of correspondence through from the campaign to save our school libraries, and from parent councils, and from parents, to say they weren't happy with the current situation."

"Can the Deputy Leader of the Council clarify what he meant by that statement – did he not read the budget papers, or did he just not understand them?"

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and referred to the comment being in relation to parents and pupils communicating their disappointment with the communication of this decision. This was acknowledged by the Administration and an additional £100k funding was agreed by Council to allow more time for the communication and engagement to happen, including a recent meeting with parent councils and council officers. He highlighted the budget process which is undertaken each year and the opportunity available to all Councillors to scrutinise budget proposals and suggest changes.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bell asked what changes are expected for the plan and will there still be a reduction in staff.

Councillor Macaulay responded and advised that he will not prejudge the engagement process and what will be included in the report which will be brought to a future meeting of Council for full discussion.

(9) a question by Councillor Foster to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

"With Local Government staff having rejected the COSLA pay offer, is the Council Leader confident that a pay deal will be achieved or are we heading for further industrial action over pay?"

Councillor Burns thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

"Councillor Foster knows very well that I won't be answering it. We've been here before and as I said the last time I was asked this question by the Labour group; it would be completely irresponsible for a council leader to comment on the potential outcome of national pay negotiations which are currently underway."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Foster asked if the Leader is concerned that cuts to services will be required to fill the pay award gap in the future.

Councillor Burns responded and advised that discussions are currently taking place collectively by all Council Leaders at COSLA and all matters will be taken into consideration. She therefore declined to comment further on them.

- (10) a question by Councillor Kerr to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:
"To ask for an update on the Ardrossan Harbour project following the recent Ministerial taskforce meeting?"

Councillor Burns thanked the Member for her question and responded in the following terms:

"The Ardrossan Harbour Taskforce met on 16 May and the Minutes of the Meeting were published on 19 June. A link to the minute is attached for information."

[Meeting papers - 16 May 2024 - Ardrossan Harbour Taskforce \(transport.gov.scot\)](#)

- (11) a question by Councillor Hume to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"Can the Cabinet Member advise if the re-establishment of after school care provision which was outlined at the last Council meeting will be in place in the Kilwinning Locality for the new school year starting in August?"

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for her question and responded in the following terms:

"Officers are continuing to work with the provider to support them while they progress with the steps required for the proposed new after school care provision in Kilwinning, including registration with the Care Inspectorate. The introduction of the new Childcare Development Officer post is also providing additional capacity to support this provider and to identify any other proposals that can be developed. The support to progress commencement of the new provision is a priority, however, the timescales are dependent on external factors not within the Council's control."

Councillor Montgomerie rejoined the meeting.

14. Motions

In terms of Standing Order 15, submitted:

- (1) a motion by Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor S. Ferguson, in the following terms:

"That Council does not permit any bonfires on land owned by the Council without the Council's express permission. Permission would be subject to the applicant agreeing to comply with any conditions set by the Council. The Council would raise awareness of this restriction via the Council website, event organisers information page and social media accounts. Anyone wishing to arrange a bonfire on Council-owned land would require to complete an Event Notification Form to apply for permission. In assessing whether and on what terms to grant permission, officers would have regard to the event

type, public liability insurance requirements, first aid provision, litter management and clean up, any licensing requirements, stewarding, policing and toilet provision.

Event Notification Forms must be submitted to the Council a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the anticipated use of the site. If permission was granted, services would circulate the approval of site to all interested parties.

In the absence of permission, anyone depositing materials for burning on Council-owned property would be liable to a Fixed Penalty notice for fly-tipping and a fee for the removal of fly-tipped items."

Members asked questions of clarification of the mover of the motion in respect of the following:

- identification of bonfire organisers and mechanism for imposing penalties;
- the difference between a public entertainment licence and the process for granting permission to occupy and use land; and
- enforcement and monitoring of the policy.

At the invitation of the Provost, the Monitoring Officer provided further clarification and confirmed that the motion was to emphasize that setting of bonfires on Council land without permission is not acceptable and that Council permission should be sought before setting a bonfire on Council land.

Councillor Billings intimated he wished to bring forward an amendment.

In terms of Standing Order 6.8, the Provost agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 4.00 p.m. for a short comfort break to consider the motion, reconvening at 4.20 p.m. with the same Members and officers present and in attendance, with the exception of Councillor McPhater.

At the invitation of the Provost, the Monitoring Officer provided further clarification and confirmed that during the comfort break, the mover and seconder of the motion had the opportunity to speak with Councillor Billings. The outcome of the discussion with parties concerned resulted in agreement being reached and that the mover of the motion would bring forward an amended motion for consideration by Council.

Councillor Reid, with the agreement of his seconder, intimated that he wished to alter his motion to read as follows:

"That Council does not permit any bonfires on land owned and operated by the Council without the Council's express permission. Permission would be subject to the applicant agreeing to comply with any conditions set by the Council. The Council would raise awareness of this restriction via the Council website, event organisers information page and social media accounts.

Application Forms for use of Council owned and operated land for this purpose must be submitted to the Council a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the anticipated use of the site. If permission is granted, services would circulate the approval of site to all interested parties.

In the absence of permission, anyone depositing materials for burning on Council-owned property would be liable to a Fixed Penalty notice for fly-tipping and a fee for the removal of fly-tipped items.

The Council will review the operation of this policy in 2025 by referring it to the Policy Advisory Panel, with a further update being brought to Cabinet thereafter."

There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

15. Urgent Items

The Provost advised that she had received a request that the Council consider a late question and motion in terms of Standing Order 10.8.

15.1 Question

A question by Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"A number of my constituents have been in touch dismayed at the early years placements that they have been allocated which are outside of their chosen centres. One constituent will have to travel past three early years centres to take her child to the one she has been allocated and one will have to travel on two buses to take their child to nursery given that they have been allocated a placement in a whole other town. We know the administration have decided to implement a new model, will the Cabinet Member spend time with officers to review the process that has taken place this year and ensure the process is fair on local families?"

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and referred to the Cabinet report from February 2024 that outlined that due to the £1.5 million budget allocation reduction, the lower than anticipated uptake of children's places and a decline in birth rate, a service redesign would be undertaken. The majority of parents were given their preferred choice although a small number were not and in those cases, Councillor Macaulay confirmed that he could understand the frustration of families. Councillor Macaulay undertook to liaise with the service to ensure the model is aligned as possible with the preferences of families.

15.2 Motion

In terms of Standing Order 23.1, Councillor Marshall, seconded by Councillor Murdoch, intimated that they wished to move a suspension of Standing Orders to allow consideration of a proposal for the planting of summer annual bedding in Largs to be funded from the Largs Car Park fund on a non recurring basis, to augment perennial planting for beds and planters in Largs.

On a point of order, Councillor Hill questioned why spending relating to the Largs Car Park Fund should be a matter for Council.

At the invitation of the Provost, the Chief Executive provided further clarification that the Largs Car Park Fund is governed by the Council's budgetary process. Standing Orders required to be suspended in this instance as the decision to remove summer bedding from Council budgets was taken in February 2024, and could not be reconsidered within the 6 months without suspension of standing orders, regardless of the particular budget source proposed.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that Standing Orders 15.1, 15.4 and 25.1 would require to be suspended to enable a decision taken by Council in the last 6 months to be reconsidered.

Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Foster, moved the direct negative to the motion to suspend Standing Orders.

On a division and roll call vote, there voted "to proceed" with suspension of Standing Orders, Councillors Billings, S. Ferguson, T. Ferguson, Inglis, Marshall, McLean, Murdoch, Stephen (8) and "not proceed", Councillors Bell, Burns, Collier, Cullinane, Davidson, Dickson, Foster, Gurney, Hill, Hume, Johnson, Larsen, Macaulay, McClung, McDonald, McTiernan, Montgomerie, D. Reid, Robertson, Sweeney (20) D.L. Reid abstaining.

Accordingly, the Council agreed not to proceed with suspension of Standing Orders to allow consideration of a proposal for the planting of summer annual bedding in Largs to be funded from the Largs Car Park fund on a non-recurring basis.

On a point of order, Councillor T. Ferguson referred to respect in the Chamber with regard to a comment made by Councillor McDonald which was noted by the Provost.

16. Provost's Closing Remarks

The Provost closed the meeting by wishing Members a good break over the summer recess.

The meeting ended at 4.35 p.m.