

Cabinet
15 June 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; Ian Haining (Church Representative) and Jackie MacKenzie (Teaching Representative) (Agenda Items 1-3).

In Attendance

C. Hatton (Chief Executive); M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance) and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance Management) (Finance and Customer Service); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, C. McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration), Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Physical Environment), D. Hammond, Head of Service (Commercial), G. Robson, Senior Manager (Employability) and J. Cameron, Senior Manager (Housing Strategy and Development) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director, R. Arthur, Head of Service (Connected Communities) and A. McClelland, Head of Service (Education) (Communities and Education); C. Cameron, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); and M. Sugden, Communications Officer, C. Stewart, A. Little and D. Mccaw, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Apologies

Andrew Bruce (Church Representative).

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 Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Cabinet held on 25 May 2021 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Revised Education Transport Policy

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the proposed changes to the Education Transport Policy. The policy in question was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the revised Education Transport Policy; and (b) the Transport arrangements for pupils attending St Matthew's Academy and the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) at Bun-sgoil Pàirc Whitehirst, as proposed within the revised Education Transport Policy set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

4. North Ayrshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2019/20, Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21 and update to Children's Services Plan 2020-23

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the North Ayrshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 and the Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21. The documents in question were attached at Appendices 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 set out at Appendix 1 to the report; (b) to approve the Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21 at Appendix 2; (c) to note the content of the updated Children's Services Plan 2020-23 at Appendix 3; and (d) that the reports be submitted to the Scottish Government and published online as required.

5. Proposal for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on two applications by the Kilwinning Locality Partnership to allocate CIF funding to proposed projects and seeking permission to draw down previously agreed CIF funding in respect of the Millport Town Hall project. The Kilwinning proposals were set out at Appendices in 1 and 2 to the report and Appendix 3 provided information in respect of the Millport project.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) review the applications from the Kilwinning Locality Partnership in line with CIF criteria; (b) approve the CIF application in relation to Kilwinning Community Events in the amount of £45,000; (c) approve the CIF application in relation to Kilwinning Community Football Academy in the amount of £45,000; and (d) approve the early release of a further £75,000 from the £200k CIF funding previously allocated by North Ayrshire Council for the Millport Town Hall project.

6. Health and Safety Annual Report 2020/21

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Health and Safety performance within Council Services during 2020/21. The 2020/21 Annual Report and 3-Year Statistical Comparison was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to note the good progress made in Health and Safety in 2020/21 particularly in relation to the pandemic response.

7. North Ayrshire Council Recovery and Renewal Funding and Investment Proposals

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Recovery and Renewal Investment proposals.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the investment proposals to be met from North Ayrshire Council's Recovery and Renewal resources; and (b) noted the phased approach in allocating financial resources, subject to achieving a balanced outturn position in 2021-22.

8. UK Government Community Renewal Fund Application Proposal

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the applications to the UK Government Community Renewal Fund. Details of the scoring and evaluation process and the assessment framework were contained in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report. Appendix 3 set out the Lead Authority Bid Submission summary.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information on the anticipated timescales that were being worked to in relation to applications to the Fund and any pertinent issues that might arise in this respect given the relatively short window between now and the end of the current financial year.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note the application process; and (b) approve the Lead Authority Bid Submission summary included in Appendix 3 to the report, for submission to the UK Government by the 18 June 2021 deadline in respect of the Community Renewal Fund.

9. Revenue Budget 2020/21: Financial Performance to 31 March 2021

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the financial performance for the Council for 2020/21. Detailed explanations of the significant variances in service expenditure compared to the approved budgets, together with information on funding to be carried forward to support expenditure during 2021/22 were provided in Appendices 1-5 of the report. Information in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was set out in Appendices 6 and 7.

Councillor Cullinane, Chair, requested that the Cabinet consider approving a feasibility study into Wind Power, which had previously been considered under the Community Renewal Fund, and that £60,000 be earmarked for this purpose.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note (i) the information and financial performance outlined in the report and its appendices, (ii) the revised General Fund Unearmarked Balance of £11.315m, (iii) the financial performance of the Health and Social Care Partnership at section 2.6 of the report and (iv) the IJB cumulative deficit position of £3.807m at 31 March 2021; (b) to approve the earmarking of £32.774m identified at section 2.5 and 2.6 of the report to meet future year commitments; and (c) that £60,000 be earmarked, from the £1.025M contained in the Investment Fund, to allow for a feasibility study to be carried out into Wind Power, which had been unsuccessful as a bid in the Community Renewal Fund.

10. Capital Programme Performance to 31 March 2021

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21. Information on the progress of General Services and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projects was set out at Appendices 1 and 2, respectively, to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the revisions to budgets outlined in the report; and (b) note the General Services and HRA expenditure to 31 March 2021.

11. Levelling Up Fund

Submitted a joint report by the Executive Director (Place) and the Head of Service (Finance) on the proposed funding bids to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the overview of the UK Government Levelling Up Fund; and (b) that the proposed bids and associated business cases referred to within the report be submitted to the UK Government.

12. Community Wealth Building: Roundabout Advertising & Floral Bed Sponsorship

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Roundabout Advertising pilot. Details of the locations for roundabout advertising were set out at Appendix 1 to the report. Appendix 2 provided location plans in respect of sponsorship opportunities.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to possible sponsorship opportunities by local businesses of appropriate floral bed displays in other areas of North Ayrshire.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the progress update on the Roundabout Advertising pilot; and (b) approve implementation of the Floral Bed Sponsorship pilot.

13. Employability Services' Response to Unemployment in North Ayrshire

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on Council employability services in response to levels of unemployment.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to local statistical information regarding positive destinations for school leavers, including employment and training opportunities, such as Kickstart.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to note the update provided on the range of service responses to levels of unemployment in North Ayrshire; (b) to a review of the Local Employability Partnership governance arrangements to reflect the ongoing programme of devolvment of national employability resources; and (c) to receive details of the proposed review and a proposed new Employability Services Delivery

Plan and Improvement Plan at a future Cabinet meeting for consideration of approval.

14. Regeneration Capital Grant Fund 2022/23

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on applications to the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund in support of local regeneration projects for 2022/23.

The Cabinet agreed to the submission of the projects set out in the report, in the following order of priority: (i) Ardrossan Promenade, Ardrossan; (ii) Eglinton Country Park, Kilwinning; and (iii) Brisbane Observatory, Largs.

15. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Estate Based Regeneration Programme (EBRP) Update

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on Council employability services in response to levels of unemployment. Progress on, and revisions to, the Estate Based Regeneration Programme (EBRP) to March 2021 was summarised at Appendix 1 to the report. The updated EBRP 2021-29 was noted at Appendix 2.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note progress on, and revisions to, the EBRP to March 2021 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; (b) approve in principle the updated Estate Based Regeneration Programme 2021-2029 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and (c) approve the specific programmes for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

16. Mill Burn, Millport Flood Protection Scheme: Scheme Confirmation

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Mill Burn, Millport Flood Protection Scheme.

The Cabinet approved confirmation of the Scheme and the commencement of the final design for the project.

17. Vacant and Derelict Land Funding 2021/22

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the expenditure of funds allocated by the Scottish Government through the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund in 2021/22.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund award of £1.320M for 2021/22; (b) the submission of a local delivery plan to the Scottish Government for the expenditure of funds in 2021/22, as set out in the report; (c) note the intended future refresh of the Council's Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy; (d) note the submission of an application to the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme to further develop a pilot project for town centre living; and (e) provide delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place) to agree amendments to the Local Delivery Plan in consultation with the Portfolio Lead as required.

18. Housing to 2040

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the 'Housing to 2040' paper, published in March 2021.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to investment in housing energy efficiency standards, including the availability of energy efficient external grant funding opportunities.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note (i) the key areas of focus within the paper, and (ii) the intention to develop a Housing to 2040 Steering Group which would consider the strategic implications for North Ayrshire Council and develop an action plan to achieve appropriate standards/targets within established timescales to be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet; and (b) approve an annual progress reporting cycle thereafter.

19. Place Based Investment Programme 2021/22

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the expenditure of the Council's allocation under the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme for 2021/22. The Appendix to the report set out a proposal for expenditure in terms of the programme.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the proposal outlined in Appendix 1 to the report for the expenditure of the Council's allocation of the Place Based Investment Programme; and (b) provide delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place) to agree changes to the funding allocations in consultation with the Portfolio Lead as required.

The meeting ended at 4.25 p.m.