

Cabinet
21 March 2023

IRVINE, 21 March 2023 - At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Marie Burns, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen and Shaun Macaulay; Andrew Bruce and Rev Mark Goodman (Church Representatives); and Jacqui MacKenzie (Teaching Representative) (Agenda Items 3 and 4).

Also Present

Cameron Inglis.

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive, M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance), F. Walker, Head of Service (People & ICT) (Chief Executive's Service); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, D. Hammond, Head of Service (Sustainability, Corporate Property & Transport), L. Kirk, Interim Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration); Y. Baulk, Head of Service and J. Barrett, Senior Manager (Housing & Public Protection), T. Reaney, Head of Service and S. Macfadyen, Network Manager (Neighbourhood Services) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director, R. Leith, Head of Service (Connected Communities) and S. Campbell, Senior Manager (Financial Inclusion) (Communities & Education); C. Cameron, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Financial Management) and L. Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Risk) (Finance); R. Lynch, Senior Manager (Legal Services), J. Hutcheson, Senior Communications Officer, C. Stewart and S. Wilson, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Apologies

Elizabeth Turbet.

Chair

Marie Burns in the Chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

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

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 21 February 2023 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Proposal to close Kilwinning Early Years Centre and incorporate the provision as a new early years' class at Pennyburn Primary School

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) providing feedback on the outcome of the statutory public consultation and seeking approval to close Kilwinning Early Years Centre and incorporate the provision as a new early years' class at Pennyburn Primary School. The Consultation Report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to close Kilwinning Early Years Centre and incorporate the provision as a new early years' class at Pennyburn Primary School with effect from August 2023 and (b) otherwise to note the content of the Consultation Report set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

4. Future Holiday Meals Provision

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the future provision of the school holiday meals and the use of the Scottish Government funding.

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

- the anticipated uptake and demand from the service users of programmed activities over the Easter and October holiday period; and
- the support and resourcing of the activity programme from a Council perspective, particularly in respect of working in partnership with the voluntary sector.

The Head of Service (Connected Communities) undertook to request that the Locality team liaise with Church representative Andrew Bruce in response to his suggestion around partnership working with churches in terms of use of premises and/or personnel.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) the approach to the future use of the Scottish Government holiday meals funding as proposed in the report; (b) a summer programme of activities and food in localities to be designed with community partners; and (c) the replacement of shopping vouchers with a cash first approach for families with an assessed entitlement to free school meals.

5. Access to Information rights in Scotland: a Consultation

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) seeking approval for the proposed North Ayrshire Council submission to the Scottish Government's Consultation on access to information rights in Scotland. The Consultation paper was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The proposed consultation response was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the submission of the proposed consultation response set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

6. Revenue Budget 2022/23: Financial Performance to 31 January 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the financial performance for the Council at 31 January 2023. 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 2022/23 were provided in Appendices 1-4 of the report. A full list of the proposed carry forward of earmarked funds was set out at Appendix 5 to the report. Information in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was contained in Appendices 6 and 6a and information on virements/budget adjustment requests was provided at Appendix 7 to the report. Information on the IJB financial performance was presented in Appendix 8 to the report.

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

- the timescale for reporting of projected underspends to Cabinet; and
- the earmarking of underspends to Roads and Energy Smart in accordance with an earlier budget decision.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note (i) the information and financial projections outlined in the report and its associated appendices, (ii) the latest financial projection for the Health and Social Care Partnership highlighted at section 2.6 of the report and (iii) the current projected deficit position of KA Leisure; and (b) approve (i) the earmarking of £1.361m identified at section 2.5 of the report to meet future year commitments and (ii) the virements detailed at Appendix 7 to the report.

7. Capital Programme Performance to 31 March 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme for 2022/23.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the anticipated levels of income from the Shewalton and Nethermaines Solar PV projects.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the proposed revision to the General Services Capital Programme in respect of the additional borrowing requirement to support the Shewalton and Nethermaines Solar PV projects and (b) note (i) the revisions to budgets outlined in the report, (ii) the General Services and HRA revised budgets at 31 January 2023, and (ii) the forecast expenditure to 31 March 2023.

8. Strategic Risk Register 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) seeking approval of the Strategic Risk Register for 2023/24. The Strategic Risk Register was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information in relation to the risk outlined in the report with regard to the implementation of the National Care Service, and the potential impact on the Council's resources.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the Council's Strategic Risk Register for 2023/24 set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

9. Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-28

Submitted a report by the Director (Health & Social Care Partnership) providing an update on progress with the Financial Inclusion Project and the development of a Strategy for North Ayrshire. The Financial Inclusion Strategy for 2023-28 was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

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

- the joined-up 'no wrong door' approach that would provide valuable assistance in terms of allowing people to access the appropriate services;
- the effective sharing of technology/data; and
- use of the third sector to deliver the best possible service to those impacted by the current cost of living crisis.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the Financial Inclusion Strategy for 2023-28 set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) otherwise to note the positive progress through the review of Financial Inclusion Advice Services.

10. Islands Emergency Cost Crisis Fund

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) seeking approval for the allocation of the Scottish Government Islands Emergency Cost Crisis Fund.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the proposed distribution of the Islands Emergency Cost Crisis Fund.

11. Community Asset Transfer of the Toilet Block and adjacent land at Ardrossan South Beach

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) providing an update on progress relating to the Community Asset Transfer of the toilet block and adjacent land at Ardrossan South Beach and seeking approval for the revised rent for the asset being transferred to Ardrossan Community Development Trust. The Ardrossan Community Development Trust (ACDT) Business Plan was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) a revised of £600 per annum (10% of the current valuation of £6,000 pa); and (b) to note the ongoing progress of the Community Asset Transfer assessment process.

12. Home Office Asylum Dispersal

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Home Office's plans for asylum dispersal across the United Kingdom and highlighting the potential impact for North Ayrshire, taking into consideration the humanitarian resettlement schemes already being supported.

On behalf of Members, Councillor Burns, Chair, thanked officers, and indeed the people of North Ayrshire, for the considerable work and effort that had been put in to settling people in North Ayrshire through the humanitarian resettlement schemes while ensuring a smooth and orderly transition into the community.

The Cabinet agreed (a) that the Council was not in a position to offer social rented housing as part of the wider dispersal programme; (b) to approve the approach taken by Council officers to support Mears with the asylum dispersal programme by working in partnership through the North Ayrshire Refugee Task Force; (c) to note (i) the support being provided within North Ayrshire across the various humanitarian resettlement schemes, (ii) the current pressure on Housing and wider services and (iii) the Home Office rollout of a 'full dispersal' model for asylum seekers across the UK and the implications this has for North Ayrshire.

13. Roads Structures & Street Lighting Maintenance Programme 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval of the proposed Roads, Structures and Street Lighting Maintenance Programme for 2023/24. The proposed Roads, Structures and Street Lighting Maintenance Programme 2022/23 was attached at Appendix 1a and 1b to the report. Details of additional works were set out at Appendix 1c. Details of how condition assessments are carried out and how roads, structures and lighting locations are prioritised, for inclusion in the maintenance programme, were set out at Appendix 2 to the report. The assessment matrix used for scoring and ranking structures for inclusion in the Structures Maintenance Programme was set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve (i) the maintenance programme for 2023/24, as shown at Appendix 1a and 1b to the report and (ii) the additional works up to the value of £1m, identified for 2023/24 at Appendix 1c to the report should the Council realise an underspend of £1m or more for 2022/23; and (b) to note (i) the approach taken to determining the asset maintenance programme for roads, structures and street lighting and (ii) that the programme would be issued to the Locality Planning Partnerships for information.

14. Consultation on Scottish Government draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the proposed response to the consultation on the Scottish Government's draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan. The proposed consultation response from the Council was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the importance and sustainable nature of the proposals, and the significant focus on areas such as this in terms of measures designed to address the climate crisis.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the response attached as Appendix 1 to the report as the Council's response to the Scottish Government consultation in relation to the draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan.

15. Advertising and Sponsorship Framework

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval of the proposed Advertising and Sponsorship Framework for council assets. The proposed Advertising and Sponsorship Framework was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the proposed Advertising and Sponsorship Framework attached at Appendix 1 to the report; (b) that officers would investigate and introduce further advertising opportunities as appropriate and in line with the principles of the proposed Framework; (c) that delegated authority be provided to the Executive Director (Place) to exercise any necessary functions in relation to implementation of the Advertising and Sponsorship Framework; and (d) to note advertising opportunities would be progressed on Council assets in line with the principles of the Framework, including the expansion of the existing roundabout advertising scheme and the progression of advertising on the Council's refuse collection vehicles and wider vehicle fleet.

16. Exclusion of the Public

Cabinet resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

17. Montgomerie Park – Proposed Sale of Phase One Retail Site

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) advising of the Heads of Terms which had been negotiated for the sale of the Phase 1 Retail Site prior to entering missives for the sale of the site.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the recommendation as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.