

THE FIFE COUNCIL - POLICY AND CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING

16th September, 2021.

10.00 a.m. – 12.55 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), David Alexander, David Barratt, John Beare, Tim Brett, Altany Craik, Dave Dempsey, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen (substituting for Craig Walker), David Graham, Judy Hamilton, Andy Heer, Linda Holt, Helen Law, Donald Lothian, Mino Manekshaw, Karen Marjoram, Alice McGarry (substituting for Carol Lindsay), Tony Miklinski, David Ross, Fay Sinclair and Ross Vettrano.

ATTENDING: Steve Grimmond, Chief Executive; Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Les Robertson, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services, Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; John Mills, Head of Housing Services; Diarmuid Cotter, Head of Customer and Online Services and Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service; and Alan Paul, Senior Manager (Property Services), Assets, Transportation and Environment.

Prior to the start of business, the Convener intimated the intention to vary the sequence of items from that on the agenda with Item 5 - Updated Financial Plan and Revenue Monitoring 2021-22 - being taken prior to Item 4 - General Fund Revenue Budget 2022-25.

314. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 7.1.

315. MINUTES

(i) **Policy and Co-ordination Committee of 5th August, 2021.**

Decision

The Committee approved the minute.

(ii) The following minutes were submitted for noting:-

- Assets and Corporate Services of 19th August, 2021.
- Community and Housing Services of 26th August, 2021.

Decision

The minutes were noted.

316./

316. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2022-25

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) outlining the significant financial challenge the Council faced in both the short and medium-term.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the terms of the report;
- (2) agreed to use the information contained within the report as the basis for the development of initial budget strategy for 2022-23 and beyond; and
- (3) noted that the figures were subject to change following the UK Spending Review and the Scottish Government budget.

The following item was dealt with following para. 315 above.

317. UPDATED FINANCIAL PLAN AND REVENUE MONITORING 2021-22

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided members with a strategic overview of Fife Council's finances and an updated financial plan for the current financial year. Funding solutions were also outlined to deal with the continued financial implications of Covid-19 as well as reform and recovery from the pandemic in the current financial year, 2021-22.

Motion

Councillor David Ross, seconded by Councillor Alexander, moved an additional recommendation as follows:-

"It is recommended that members: -

- v) approve the short-term investment detailed in the attached schedule using unallocated COVID funding". (The schedule is attached as an Appendix to the minute.)

Amendment

Councillor Tim Brett, seconded by Councillor Donald Lothian, moved a further recommendation, in addition to that proposed by Councillor Ross, that the report also be submitted to the Environment, Finance and Communities Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny.

Councillor Dempsey requested that it be recorded that his amendment to add the following words at the end of the joint Administration motion "and assign to Area Committees the task of working up the detail of how this investment will be made", be withdrawn following an assurance from the Convener that, where appropriate, Area Committees would be involved in working up proposals contained within the motion.

Roll/

Roll Call

For the motion – 15 votes

Councillors David Alexander, David Barratt, John Beare, Altany Craik, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, David Graham, Judy Hamilton, Linda Holt, Helen Law, Karen Marjoram, Alice McGarry, David Ross, Fay Sinclair and Ross Vettraino.

For the Amendment – 2 votes

Councillors Tim Brett and Donald Lothian.

Abstained – 4

Councillors Dave Dempsey, Andy Heer, Mino Manekshaw and Tony Miklinski.

The motion was accordingly carried.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the high level financial position as detailed in the report;
- (2) supported the updated financial plan for 2021/22 in response to the financial pressures as detailed in section 2 of the report;
- (3) instructed all Services to continue to mitigate additional costs, continue to deliver approved savings and to contain expenditure within the approved budget provision wherever possible;
- (4) noted that detailed provisional outturn reports would be submitted to the relevant Sub-Committees when it was practical to do so; and
- (5) approved the short-term investment detailed in the attached schedule using unallocated COVID funding.

318. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing a strategic financial overview of the Capital Investment Plan and advised on the projected outturn for the 2021-22 financial year.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) approved the proposed Capital Investment Plan re-profiling contained within Appendix 1 of the report to deal with carry forward budgets from 2020-21 into later years of the Plan and noted the following:-
 - the projected outturn position, the risks and mitigating actions for the major projects within the Capital Investment Plan;
 - the projected outturn position for the 2021-22 Capital Investment Plan;
 - that/

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- that more detailed capital outturn reports for 2021-22 would be submitted to relevant Sub-Committees of the Council, in accordance with agreed financial reporting arrangements; and
- that budget variances would be managed by the appropriate Directorate in conjunction with the Investment Strategy Group.

319. **BAD DEBTS 2020-21**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services and the Head of Housing Services summarising the irrecoverable bad debts that had been written off during 2020-21 by the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate and Housing Services.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 a.m. and re-convened at 11.45 a.m.

320. **PAYMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Customer and Online Services and the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services updating members on the approach taken to payments being made in the Council.

Decision

The Committee approved the approach in relation to payments being taken in the Council.

321. **TAY CITIES - CITY OF CULTURE**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service providing information on the bid for Tay Cities to be UK City of Culture 2025.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) approved the joint expression of interest to be City of Culture in 2025 made by the Tay Cities Region; and
- (2) agreed that further reports be brought forward if the Tay Cities expression of interest was successful in being included on the longlist.

322. **VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT (VER)**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources providing an update on the implementation of the revised VER (Voluntary Early Retirement) policy and seeking agreement on the Council's revised Discretion Policy Statement.

Decision/

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted that the updated position in terms of the UK's exit payment cap did not affect the Council's revised policy position;
- (2) noted the revisions to Council policy following Policy and Co-ordination Committee's agreement to change discretionary elements of exit packages;
- (3) noted the minor administrative changes to the Council's Employer Discretion Statement;
- (4) noted the arrangements for transition and implementation of the new Policy;
- (5) noted the review of the Council's payback periods and agreed to the implementation of the proposed payback period of two years with increased scrutiny of exits with a payback between two and three years;
- (6) agreed to the implementation of the payback period on an individual basis in the first instance with increased scrutiny applied to any payback period made on a group basis;
- (7) noted the intention of Trusts and ALEOs to adopt the Council's new Policy;
- (8) noted the costs associated with exits during 2020/21;
- (9) noted the changes to the workforce profile during 2021/21; and
- (10) agreed to the proposed change to the panel within the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure.

323. FUTURE WORKSTYLES

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Human Resources and the Head of ICT providing an update on the progress of the Future Workstyles project specifically in relation to introducing blended workstyles.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the update on the delivery plan which detailed the numbers in scope and the proposed approach for the move management plan;
- (2) noted the principles of providing technology and deploying devices;
- (3) noted that the lessons learned from the pilot were at an early stage of development and that further updates would be provided in due course;
- (4) agreed the revised interim principles (terms and conditions) for those covered by the blended workstyle pilot (detailed in Appendix 1);
- (5)/

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- (5) approved funding of £1.250m from reserves as outlined in the resource implications section of the report; and
 - (6) noted the range of benefits linked to this programme of work.
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FIFE COUNCIL

**GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021-23
ONE-OFF INVESTMENT**

One-Off Investment

In recognition of the need to continue to provide Services and support communities we propose to make the following short-term investments:

Environmental Vandalism - £0.050m

Joint project with safer communities to improve the public realm.

Planned Patching - £2.000m

Inspections and surveys have highlighted an immediate need for additional programmed patching works which will be delivered in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This will be achieved using existing staff resources and awarding work to external Contractors.

Bringing forward this work will greatly enhance the routes to the Open Golf in 2022 and improve Fife's economy and road transport links.

Reactive Pothole Patching - £1.000m

Many urban isolated potholes have developed due to the limited ability to react to repairs of this nature during the pandemic.

Whilst the Risk Based approach to pothole patching and maintenance will prove effective in the longer term, funding will be used to reduce and mostly eliminate the backlog of urgent repairs.

Work to improve road drainage and at flood locations - £0.800m

Desk top studies and investigations are now well underway and have identified road drainage and flooding hotspots.

Additional funding will advance solutions at these locations.

Some of this additional funding will allow work to be carried out to re-cut off lets and clear roadside rural ditches, improving drainage

Extend Seasonal worker contracts to address weeds legacy - £0.100m

Seasonal workers are employed each year between April and October, this year contracts will be extended until December to facilitate weed removal in all areas.

Demolition of a small number of unoccupied/derelict buildings - £0.300m

There are a number of unoccupied/derelict buildings that require demolition which in turn will open up the land for development promoting recovery. Financial benefits may also be generated in future years with potential for moderate savings.

Tourism - £0.100m

An additional post for a period of 2 years to support local tourist associations through COVID recovery and build the capacity in the sector.

FIFE COUNCIL

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021-23
ONE-OFF INVESTMENT

Employability - £0.300m

The following will be brought forward this year to address skilled worker vacancies in key sectors:

- Match funding for the Interreg RIGHT programme for the development of skilled training in welding techniques to support the decommissioning sector;
- Partnership working with Capital City Partnership for delivery of a Care at Home recruitment campaign to address staff shortages, targeted at adult unemployed (matched to Kickstart and Young Person's Guarantee for 16-24 year old recruitment incentive payments
- Delivery of a road haulage academy for driver training and recruitment (21 year old plus)
- Design and delivery of a hospitality recruitment campaign delivered with DYW Fife and Fife College, linked to YPG sector pledges

Private Sector Adaptations - £0.400m

As a result of COVID-19 there is a back log of adaptation cases. Funding will facilitate clearing of this back log and allow the service to maintain the level of adaptations required in year.

Contact Centre/Welfare Fund - £0.300m

Processing of crisis and community care grants to deal with current demand levels and additional aspects such as isolation support will be enhanced by providing additional funding.

Parks maintenance - £0.360m

Approval of the Play Spaces strategy has identified immediate improvements required to playparks across Fife. The level of investment is being complemented by funding received from Scottish Government.

Sports Pavilion and Parks immediate dilapidation works - £0.500m

An increase in outdoor sport activity and the recent approval of the Active Fife sports strategy requires a number of existing sports pavilions across Fife to be renewed or refurbished in order to provide fit for purpose outdoor facilities for Community Groups.

FIFE COUNCIL
GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021-23
ONE-OFF INVESTMENT

	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m
Enterprise & Environment		
Assets, Transportation & Environment		
Environment & Building Services		
Environmental Vandalism	0.050	0.000
Environment & Building Services		
Planned Patching	1.000	1.000
Reactive Pothole Patching	0.500	0.500
Environment & Building Services		
Work to improve road drainage and at flood locations	0.400	0.400
Environment & Building Services		
Extend Seasonal worker contracts to address weeds legacy	0.100	0.000
Environment & Building Services		
Demolition of a small number of unoccupied/derelict buildings	0.300	0.000
Business & Employability		
Tourism	0.050	0.050
Employability	0.300	0.000
Total Enterprise & Environment	2.700	1.950
Communities		
GFH - Housing & Neighbourhood Services		
Private Sector Adaptations	0.400	0.000
Customer Service Improvement		
Contact Centre/Welfare Fund	0.300	0.000
Community & Corporate Development		
Parks maintenance	0.360	0.000
Sports Pavillion and Parks immediate dilapidation works	0.500	0.000
Total Communities	1.560	0.000
Total Budget Investment (One-Off)	4.260	1.950