

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

14th April, 2022

10.00 a.m. – 2.15 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors David Alexander (Convener), David Barratt, John Beare, Altany Craik, Dave Dempsey, Linda Erskine, David Graham, Judy Hamilton, Andy Heer, Linda Holt, Helen Law, Carol Lindsay, Donald Lothian, David Ross, Fay Sinclair, Ross Vettraino and Jonny Tepp (substitute for Councillor Tim Brett).

ATTENDING: Steve Grimmond, Chief Executive; Gordon Mole, Head of Business & Employability, Kevin Treadwell, Service Manager, Strategic Development & Infrastructure; Hilary Roberts, Lead Officer Tourism, Economy, Planning and Employability Services; Michael Enston, Executive Director, Communities; Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Corporate Development, Communities; Sinead O'Donnell, Improvement Consultant, Communities; Eileen Rowand, Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services; Les Robertson, Head of Revenue & Commercial Services; Elaine Muir, Head of Finance; Laura C Robertson, Finance Operations Manager, Finance; June Barrie, Legal Services Manager; Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services; John Mills, Head of Housing Services; Vania Kennedy, Service Manager, Housing Services; Louise Playford, Service Manager, Asset Management and Development; Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services (Early Years and Directorate Support); Alan Paul, Senior Manager, Property Services; and John Mitchell, Senior Manager, Roads & Transportation Services.

ALSO Paul Wilson, Associate Director, Link Group (for Para. 363.)

ATTENDING:

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mino Manekshaw, Karen Marjoram and Tony Miklinski.

Prior to commencement of formal business, Steve Grimmond, Chief Executive, gave a brief update on developments relating to resettlement activity and preparations for welcoming to Fife, Ukrainian residents fleeing their homes, including: hosting arrangements; visa approval; financial assistance; data sharing agreement; property checks; enhanced disclosure checks; safeguarding hosts and their families; and an additional welcome hub in West Fife, due to open at the end of April/beginning of May, 2022.

The Chief Executive also provided an update on COVID-19, including: changes to the remaining legal restrictions; the need for a Strategic Framework for Fife Council workplaces with the aim of a return to a 'new normal'; absence levels, which had recently plateaued and were now falling; and the impact, on service delivery in some areas which was improving. Arising from a query relating to air filtration, exchange, refresh rates, etc, across the Council estate, members would receive a response from officers in due course.

352. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

353. MINUTES

(i) Policy and Co-ordination Committee of 3rd March, 2022.

Decision

The Committee approved the minute.

(ii) The following Committee minutes were submitted:-

- Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee of 1st March, 2022 – for noting;
- Economy, Tourism, Strategic Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee of 17th March, 2022 – for noting;
- East Fife Education Trust Committee of 28th March, 2022 – for approval; and
- West Fife Education Trust Committee of 28th March, 2022 – for approval.

Decision

The Sub-Committee minutes were noted; and the East and West Fife Education Trust Committee minutes were approved.

354. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME FUNDING - FIFE'S PROPOSED PROJECTS 2022/23

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services seeking agreement for an approach to disbursing Fife's allocation of the Scottish Government's Placed Based Investment Programme Funding, for financial year 2022/23.

Details of the award to local authorities had recently been released by the Scottish Government with Fife Council receiving £2.748m.

As with previous rounds of funding, the Scottish Government had again set rigid timescales and conditions to which Fife Council would require to adhere, including that monies were to be legally committed and/or spent or projects commenced within financial year 2022/23, with an expectation that projects would be completed by the end of September 2023.

A brief update on the projects funded via the Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund was also provided.

Decision

The Committee:-

(1)/

2022 PC 115

- (1) noted the background to the fund, including likely conditions and timescales involved in delivering projects;
- (2) agreed the list of projects in Table 1 as those to receive investment from the fund during the financial year 2022/23, with the reserve list of projects in Table 2 also agreed as a contingency. The reserve projects may be rolled forward to be delivered from the 2023/24, or later, funding allocation;
- (3) agreed that the Executive Director (Enterprise and Environment) be granted delegated authority to disburse funds to the agreed projects; and
- (4) agreed that there was some flexibility to allow movement of funds from one project to another as necessary with the agreement of the Executive Director (Enterprise and Environment) for changes above £100,000 and that below this sum movement was at the discretion of the Head of Business and Employability Services.

355. ADAM SMITH REFURBISHMENT AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods providing an overview of the programme of works being undertaken to refurbish and enhance the Adam Smith Theatre and the increased costs - as a consequence of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and EU-exit - seeking agreement for additional funds to meet the budget shortfall.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the total costs of the programme since starting on site, the funding available to deliver this and the mitigation measures and options to manage the increased costs;
- (2) agreed to the allocation of £1.700m to be funded from the commitment in general fund balances set aside for costs and pressures following the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- (3) noted the time constraints to complete the onsite works by April 2023.

356. COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING - FIFE ANCHOR CHARTER

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services presenting the Community Wealth Building – Fife Anchor Charter - and setting out the delivery approach which would be undertaken to embed community wealth building in Fife.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) considered and approved the adoption of the Fife Anchor Charter for Fife Council as set out in section 2.0 and in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2)/

2022 PC 116

- (2) noted the intention and timeframe for anchor organisations in Fife to adopt the Anchor Charter via their various governance routes;
- (3) remitted to the Head of Business and Employability Services to finalise the Charter subject to any final amendments requested by this Committee and by the Community Wealth Building Support Group;
- (4) remitted to officers to undertake the necessary actions across the Council to embed this anchor charter throughout the organisation as part of the community wealth building delivery approach;
- (5) noted that progress would be reported via the relevant Council Committee and to Fife Partnership Recovery and Renewal Leadership Board; and
- (6) agreed that the relevant Council Committee would review the Charter after a period of two years.

357. TACKLING POVERTY IN FIFE - HOUSEHOLD AND HARDSHIP SUPPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Communities, on how the Council could best support provision of other basic household needs, working in partnership with the voluntary sector and businesses in Fife – whereas previous reports to Committee had focused on funding and Council support around food insecurity, welfare funding and community assistance. The report also proposed to extend provision of very localised hardship funding, building on the experience of using local grant awards during the pandemic.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to a 12-month extension of the Hardship Grant Scheme (previously Fife Food Crisis Fund);
- (2) Council support to the development and distribution of basic household goods through the Cottage Centre “Big Hoose” Initiative;
- (3) to support the continuing development of related initiatives designed to improve local co-ordination and provision of timely support around food, welfare, housing and necessities; and
- (4) that an update report would be submitted for the consideration of the relevant Council Committee in Spring 2023.

358. LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUND (LACER) PROPOSALS

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Communities presenting proposals for the use of Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery Fund (LACER) funding.

Decision/

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to endorse the proposals set out in Appendix 1 of the report on the use of the Local Authority Coronavirus Economic Recovery (LACER) Fund; and
- (2) to remit to the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services, to finalise the sums allocated to each of the proposed projects.

359. LICENSING OF SHORT-TERM LETS

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services inviting the Committee to consider and agree broad proposals for implementing the licensing scheme for short-term lets under The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short-term Lets) Order 2022, which came into force on 1st March, 2022.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) agreed the broad principles in the report for the implementation of the Short-term Lets Licensing Scheme by 1st October, 2022 through Housing Services, supported by Protective Services and Legal Services; and
- (2) noted that a further report on the Short-term Lets Licensing Scheme would be brought back to the relevant Council Committee before commencement of the scheme - seeking authority for the governance arrangements, details of the administration of the scheme, conditions to be applied to licenses, fee rates and publicity for the scheme.

The meeting adjourned at 11.45 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 12 noon.

360. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO): REVIEW OF CHARGING STRUCTURE AND FEES

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Protective Services inviting the Committee to consider and agree proposals for amending the charging structure and fees for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing, aligned to provisions within Scottish legislation and guidance, ensuring full cost recovery of the service going forward.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:-

- (1) proposals to amend the charging structure and revised HMO licensing fees from 1st June, 2022, following a period of notice to HMO owners and agents; and
- (2)/

2022 PC 118

- (2) apply an annual uplift to HMO charges on the 1st June each year - the percentage of which would be subject to an annual review of an appropriate financial formula - said formula to be reported back to the next appropriate Council Committee for its consideration.

361. MINUTE OF AGREEMENT WITH VISITSCOTLAND

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services seeking approval for a three-year agreement with VisitScotland to deliver pre-arrival visitor information between April 2022 and March 2025.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the results of 2020/21 and 2021/22 activity under the previous Minute of Agreement;
- (2) approved the proposed three-year arrangement with VisitScotland of £80,000 in 2022/23, and remaining flexible for 2023/24 and 2024/25 subject to available budget; and
- (3) remitted to the Head of Business and Employability Services to conclude the necessary contractual arrangements with VisitScotland on terms and conditions to the satisfaction of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

362. COMMON GOOD POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods requesting approval to consult on changes to the Fife Council Common Good Policy.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the proposed changes to the Common Good Policy; and
- (2) agreed that a report on proposed changes to the Common Good Policy be submitted to the relevant Area Committees for their consideration and comment prior to consultation with local communities to inform the final decision at the relevant future Council Committee.

363. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES 2022-25

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services, outlining the revised Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy of the Council.

Decision/

Decision

The Committee approved:-

- (1) the Treasury and Investment Strategies; and
- (2) the Statutory Repayment of Loans Fund Advances Policy.

364. PUBLIC REPORT - BUILDING FIFE'S FUTURE: DUNFERMLINE LEARNING CAMPUS - UPDATE

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services, outlining the current position regarding the replacement of Woodmill and St Columba's RC High School buildings as part of the Dunfermline Learning Campus project.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the report and that there followed later on the agenda, a confidential report providing a detailed update on progress with the Dunfermline Learning Campus.

365. PUBLIC REPORT - TOWN CENTRE HOUSING APPROACH

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Business and Employability Services and the Head of Housing Services seeking agreement to an approach to increase the provision of housing in Fife's Town Centres to stimulate town centre regeneration, economic recovery and to create affordable, mixed tenure town centre living opportunities for households.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

- (1) the approach set out in the report and the associated risks and benefits;
- (2) the recommended option set out in Paragraphs 3.4 and 3.7 of the report;
- (3) the recommendation to remit to the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Business Employability Services to explore funding options to implement the recommended approach; and
- (4) that there followed, later on this agenda, a confidential report detailing an approach to increase the provision of housing in Fife's Town Centres.

The Committee resolved, under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

366./

366. PRIVATE REPORT - NORTHERN LINK ROAD - EAST END

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment and the Head of Planning Services presenting an outline business case for the road and bridge works relating to the east end of the Northern Link Road (NLR) and the acquisition of an associated area of land to allow delivery of the works.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the contents of the outline business case for delivery of the east end of the Northern Link Road;
- (2) noted that an updated final business case would be presented to the relevant Council Committee at a future date, currently forecast to be in early 2023; and
- (3) approved the purchase of the area of land required.

Councillor Graham left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

367. PRIVATE REPORT - BUILDING FIFE'S FUTURE: DUNFERMLINE LEARNING CAMPUS - UPDATE

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services, seeking authorisation for an increase in funding for the Dunfermline Learning Campus project to meet Financial Close.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted and approved the update;
- (2) authorised the additional capital expenditure, supporting officers to vigorously pursue additional funding support from the Scottish Government;
- (3) authorised the instruction of the remaining project work and provided delegated authority to officers to instruct work packages as necessary to progress the project;
- (4) remitted to Officers to prepare a Full Business Case, for consideration by the Investment Strategy Group and School Estate Development Board; and
- (5) remitted to Officers to prepare a report following Financial Close, detailing the agreed cost position at that time, for scrutiny at the relevant future Council Committee.

368. PRIVATE REPORT - TOWN CENTRE HOUSING APPROACH

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Business and Employability Services and the Head of Housing Services recommending an approach to increase the provision of housing in Fife's Town Centres, to stimulate town centre regeneration, economic recovery and to create affordable, mixed tenure town centre living opportunities for households.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) approved the Town Centre housing approach set out in the report, noting the associated risks and benefits;
- (2) approved the recommended option set out in Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.7 of the report; and
- (3) remitted to the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Business and Employability Services to explore funding options to implement the recommended approach.

CONVENER'S VALEDICTORY COMMENTS

As this was the last meeting of the Committee prior to the Local Government Elections in May 2022, the Joint Conveners expressed their appreciation of the contributions of all members and officers in supporting the work of the Committee.
