

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2020

Policy & Resources Committee

Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 3pm

Present: Councillors Ahlfeld, Clocherty, Crowther, Curley, McCabe, McCormick, McVey, Moran, Rebecchi, Robertson and Wilson.

Chair: Councillor McCabe presided.

In attendance: Chief Executive, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources, Corporate Director (Chief Officer), Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership, Head of Legal & Property Services, Ms C Craig-McDonald, Ms R McGhee and Ms D Sweeney (Legal & Property Services), Chief Financial Officer, Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, Shared Services Manager, Corporate Policy, Performance & Partnership, Head of Regeneration, Planning & Public Protection, Interim Head of Service, Public Protection & Covid Recovery and Mr P J Coulter (Corporate Communications).

The meeting was held by video-conference.

The following paragraphs are submitted for information only, having been dealt with under the powers delegated to the Committee.

490 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest 490

No apologies for absence were intimated.

Councillor Robertson declared an interest in Agenda Item 12 (Governance of External Organisations – Annual Update).

491 COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Scrutiny Report 491

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive providing an update on relevant actions taken by officers in order to address and mitigate the risks arising from the COVID-19 emergency.

Decided:

- (1) that the actions taken to date to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 emergency in Inverclyde be noted;
- (2) that the new model of Day Centre delivery be noted;
- (3) that approval be given to the resumption of on-street limited-stay parking and associated enforcement on 7 December 2020 following appropriate publicity and that any resumption of pay and display parking be reviewed in early 2021;
- (4) that approval be given to the negotiated settlement of £13,500 to Bridgewater Housing Association for 2020 COVID related losses against the small repairs service element of the aids and adaptations contract; and
- (5) that an update on the progress of the Partnership and Corporate Operational Recovery Plans be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

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- 492 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2020 492**
- There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer (1) on the position of the General Fund Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2020 and (2) providing an update in respect of the position of the General Fund Reserves and Earmarked Reserves.
- Decided:**
- (1) that the latest position of the 2020/21 Revenue Budget and General Fund Reserves be noted; and
- (2) that the latest costs in relation to COVID-19 be noted.
- 493 2020/23 Capital Programme 493**
- There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer on the latest position of the 2020/23 Capital Programme.
- Decided:** that the current position of the 2020/23 Capital Programme be noted.
- 494 Policy & Resources Committee 2020/21 Revenue and Capital Budgets – Period 6 to 30 September 2020 494**
- There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources, the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and the Chief Financial Officer on the 2020/21 Revenue and Capital position as at Period 6 to 30 September 2020.
- Decided:**
- (1) that the 2020/21 Revenue Budget projected underspend of £424,000 as at Period 6 to 30 September 2020 be noted;
- (2) that the projected 2020/21 surplus of £95,980 for the Common Good Fund be noted;
- (3) that approval be given to the utilisation of £70,000 from the Digital Strategy earmarked reserve to expand the use of Electronic Document Management into more Council Services; and
- (4) that the current projected Capital position be noted.
- 495 Welfare Reform Update 495**
- There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an update on recent developments regarding Welfare Reform.
- Decided:**
- (1) that the updates contained in the report be noted; and
- (2) that, if possible, future reports include information on Universal Credit sanctions.
- 496 Insurance Fund Position as at 30 September 2020 496**
- There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer (1) on the position of the Council's Insurance Fund as at 30 September 2020 and (2) highlighting any relevant issues.
- Decided:** that the contents of the report and the Insurance Fund position as at 30 September 2020 be noted.

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497 Treasury Management – Mid-Year Report 2020/21 497

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer on the operation of the Treasury function and its activities for the first six months of 2020/21 as required under the terms of Treasury Management Practice 6 (“TMP6”) on “Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements”.

Decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Mid-Year Report on Treasury Management for 2020/21 and the ongoing work to ensure the delivery of financial benefits for the Council be noted; and
- (2) that the Mid-Year Report be remitted to the Inverclyde Council for approval.

498 Contract Awards – 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 498

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources advising the Committee of contracts awarded for the supply of goods or materials, provision of services and execution of works during the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

Decided:

- (1) that the contracts awarded by the Council during the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 be noted;
- (2) that an update on the Council’s Procurement Strategy be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) that any impact on Council contracts arising from the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union be included in the next update report on withdrawal from the European Union.

499 Statutory and Key Performance Indicators Annual Report 2019/20 499

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications appending the Statutory and Key Performance Indicators Annual Report 2019/20 which details the progress made in the last year towards the achievement of the Council’s performance targets.

Decided:

- (1) that the Statutory and Key Performance Indicator data for financial year 2019/20 be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that a separate report on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators will be submitted to the Committee, setting out details of the Council’s performance relative to other Scottish local authorities, once this data is published.

500 Inverclyde Council Annual Complaint Handling Report 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020 500

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Property Services advising the Committee of the annual performance of all complaints received and handled by Inverclyde Council, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership and both Arm’s Length Organisations, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde, between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.

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Decided: that the annual performance of Inverclyde Council's complaint procedure be noted.

501 Governance of External Organisations – Annual Update

501

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the annual update in respect of the governance of external organisations.

Councillor Robertson declared a financial interest in this item as a consultant to Stepwell and left the meeting prior to its consideration.

Decided:

(1) that the update on the last 12 months' governance of external organisations as shown in Appendix 1 to the report and the impact that the COVID pandemic has had on the usual governance process be noted; and

(2) that approval be given to the list of external organisations which will form part of the framework for the period November 2020 – September 2021 as shown in Appendix 3.

Councillor Robertson rejoined the meeting and Councillor McVey left at this juncture.

502 Delivering Differently in Inverclyde - Update

502

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive providing the annual update on the Delivering Differently programme.

Decided:

(1) that the progress made to date on the Delivering Differently programme and the impact which the COVID pandemic is having on some delivery timescales be noted;

(2) that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to conduct Voluntary Early Release Trawls where required for those projects in Appendix 2 but on the proviso that no decisions are taken without a report to the relevant Committee; and

(3) that approval be given to change the scope of the Terms and Conditions review and that the projects listed in Appendix 2 be added to the Delivering Differently programme.

503 2021/23 Budget Update

503

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer (1) providing an update on the current status of the 2020/23 Revenue Budget and (2) seeking decisions to guide the development of a 2021/23 budget report to be presented to the 3 December 2020 meeting of the Inverclyde Council.

Decided:

(1) that the contents of the report and the latest position of the 2021/23 Revenue Budget be noted;

(2) that agreement be given to the proposals set out in Appendix 1 to the report and that the impact on the 2021/23 funding gap be noted;

(3) that it be agreed that the Chief Financial Officer prepare a report to the 3 December 2020 Inverclyde Council meeting setting out how reserves could be used in delivering a balanced 2021/23 budget.

Councillor McVey rejoined the meeting at this juncture.

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504 Anti-Poverty Fund - Update**504**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer (1) providing an update on the latest position of the anti-poverty related initiatives and funding and (2) seeking decisions on future initiatives for the period to 31 March 2021.

Decided:

- (1) that the proposals set out in section 6 of the report be approved and that it be remitted to officers to implement the distribution of funding prior to 31 March 2021;
- (2) that it be agreed that any underspend on the recurring Anti-Poverty Revenue Budget be added to the Anti-Poverty Earmarked Reserve at the year end and carried forward into 2021/22; and
- (3) that, subject to demand, authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources to vary the financial support to iHeat by up to a maximum of £20,000.

505 Accounts Commission “Local Government in Scotland Overview 2020” Report**505**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications (1) on the publication of the Annual Accounts Commission Local Government Overview report, (2) highlighting relevant matters and (3) seeking approval for improvement actions arising.

Decided:

- (1) that the publication of the Accounts Commission “Local Government in Scotland Overview 2020” report and the self-assessment activity carried out in relation to the Council position on each of the Commission’s key messages be noted; and
- (2) that agreement be given to the suggested improvement areas for alignment to the relevant Corporate Directorate Improvement Plans and corporate planning and performance arrangements.

506 National Records of Scotland “Life Expectancy in Scotland 2017-19”**506**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications (1) providing details of the National Records of Scotland recent publication “Life Expectancy in Scotland 2017-19” and (2) highlighting the data relating to Inverclyde.

During discussion, it was noted that the meeting of the Inverclyde Alliance Board scheduled to be held on 7 December 2020 had been rearranged and would now take place in January 2021.

Decided:

- (1) that the publication of the new National Records of Scotland statistics on life expectancy be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that a further report on life expectancy split by deprivation quintile and healthy life expectancy will be submitted to the Committee following publication of these statistics in December 2020;
- (3) that it be agreed that the report be submitted for the consideration of the Inverclyde Alliance Board at its meeting in January 2021; and
- (4) that it be remitted to the Population Partnership to consider and agree any additional actions arising from the new data.

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507 Programme for Government 2020-21**507**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources on (1) the publication of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2020-21 'Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland' on 1 September 2020 and (2) the potential implications and opportunities for Inverclyde.

Decided:

- (1) that officers be mandated to engage with the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Community Planning Partners and Glasgow City Region and establish opportunities for Inverclyde in respect of the Programme for Government 2020-21 and that a report on progress be submitted to the March 2021 meeting of the Committee;
- (2) that a report on opportunities for locating national agencies in Inverclyde be submitted to the Committee; and
- (3) that a report on Clyde Mission be submitted to the Environment & Regeneration Committee.

508 Freeports**508**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources providing an update on a letter received from the Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation on the Scottish Government approach to Freeports and the imminent commencement of the bidding process for Freeports in England.

After discussion, Councillor Robertson moved:

- (1) that it be noted that the application process for Freeports will shortly open in England;
- (2) that it be noted that a process for applications in Scotland has yet to be agreed between the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments;
- (3) that the Committee notes the concerns of the TUC in terms of Freeports being a "Race to the bottom" on workers terms, conditions, rights, and working practices. The Committee also notes concerns regarding the Tax status of Freeports which could result in a reduction of tax revenues that fund public services such as the NHS. The Committee does not support the principle of the establishment of Freeports; and
- (4) that the Committee notes that a Freeport may still be established on the Clyde. The Committee therefore requests that officers bring back a report setting out the full implications to Inverclyde of the establishment of a Freeport on the Clyde.

As an amendment, Councillor McCabe moved:

- (1) that it be noted that the application process for Freeports will shortly open in England;
- (2) that it be noted that a process for applications in Scotland has yet to be agreed between the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments;
- (3) that authority be granted to the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources to reaffirm to the Scottish and UK Governments the desire that the Clyde should be considered as a potential Freeport; and
- (4) that a report be submitted to Committee as and when the process for application is clear.

Following a roll call vote, 3 Members, Councillors Crowther, Curley and Robertson, voted in favour of the motion and 8 Members, Councillors Ahlfeld, Clocherty, McCabe, McCormick, McVey, Moran, Rebecchi and Wilson, voted in favour of the amendment which was declared carried.

Decided:

- (1) that it be noted that the application process for Freeports will shortly open in England;
- (2) that it be noted that a process for applications in Scotland has yet to be agreed between the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments;
- (3) that authority be granted to the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources to reaffirm to the Scottish and UK Governments the desire that the Clyde should be considered as a potential Freeport; and
- (4) that a report be submitted to Committee as and when the process for application is clear.

Councillor McVey left the meeting at this juncture.

509 Employability Interventions – Inverclyde Jobs Recovery Plan**509**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources (1) on the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, (2) providing an update on the recent UK and Scottish Government announcements on employment support in response to the impact on the labour market from COVID-19 and (3) proposing a range of additional employability interventions for Inverclyde in response to COVID-19.

The Head of Regeneration, Planning & Public Protection requested that, in the interests of facilitating early implementation of the Refresh Programme, the Committee authorise officers to commence the trawl in advance of any decision which may be made by the Council at its meeting on 3 December 2020 to allocate funds.

(Councillor Wilson left the meeting during consideration of this item of business).

Decided:

- (1) that the impact of COVID-19 on the economy be noted;
- (2) that the UK and Scottish Government labour market interventions be recognised;
- (3) that the range of measures identified in the report to support the labour market in Inverclyde be noted;
- (4) that it be agreed that one-off funding to support the initiatives be incorporated in the 2021/23 Budget Strategy;
- (5) that regular monitoring reports be submitted to the Environment & Regeneration Committee in the event of the budget being approved; and
- (6) that, in the interests of facilitating early implementation of the Refresh Programme, officers be authorised to commence the trawl in advance of any decision which may be made by the Council at its meeting on 3 December 2020 to allocate funds.