

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2022

Policy & Resources Committee

Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 3pm

Present: Councillors Armstrong, Curley, Law, McCabe, McCluskey, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Robertson and Wilson.

Chair: Councillor McCabe presided.

In attendance: Chief Executive, Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Interim Director Environment & Regeneration, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, Head of Finance, Planning & Resources, Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership, Ms A Edmiston and Mr M Thomson (Finance Services) Mr C MacDonald, Ms D Sweeney, Ms Carol Craig-McDonald and Mr M Hughes (Legal & Democratic Services), Service Manager Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships, Revenues and Benefits Manager, ICT & Customer Service Manager and Service Manager Communications, Tourism and Health & Safety.

This meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors McCormick, McGuire and Moran attending by video-conference.

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

528 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest 528

No apologies for absence were intimated.

No declarations of interest were intimated, but certain connections were intimated for the purposes of transparency as follows:

Agenda Item 4 (Finance Services Update) – Councillor McCluskey and Councillor Robertson.

529 2022/23 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 30 September 2022 529

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and the Chief Executive advising the Committee of (1) the 2022/23 Committee Revenue Budget projected position at 30 September 2022, (2) the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection as at 30 September 2022, and (3) the position of the General Fund Reserve.

Decided:

- (1) that the current projected overspend for 2022/23 of £2,592,000 as at 30 September 2022 within the Committee's Budget be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and Heads of Service will review areas where non-essential spend can be reduced in order to bring the corporate service element of the budget back on track;
- (3) that the projected 2022/23 surplus of £19,440 for the Common Good Budget be noted;

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2022

(4) that the following be noted, (a) the projected overspend of £2,026,000 for the General Fund; and (b) that action will need to be taken as part of the 2023/26 Revenue Budget to bring the unallocated Reserves back to the minimum recommend level of £4.0million to address the underlying budget shortfall; and

(5) that (a) the early implementation of the £10.90 Living Wage rate from 10 November 2022 be approved; and (b) it be noted that the estimated cost of £25,000 will be contained within the 2022/23 service budgets.

530 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and 2022/25 Capital Programme

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme budget and the 2022/25 Capital Programme.

Decided:

(1) that the following be noted, (a) the current position of the 2022/25 Policy & Resources Capital Budget; and (b) the current position of the 2022/25 Capital Programme;

(2) that the ongoing pressure being experienced with regards to the cost/availability of materials and the impact this continues to have on the delivery of the 2022/25 Capital Programme be noted;

(3) that it be noted that officers have commenced compiling the draft 2023/26 Capital Program which will be considered as part of the overall Budget in February 2023; and

(4) that the use of emergency powers delegated to the Chief Executive to issue an acceptance for the general building work contract associated with the installation of the new cremator units at the Greenock Crematorium be noted.

531 Finance Services Update

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing (1) the annual updates in respect of Governance of External Organisations and the Insurance Fund, and (2) the regular updates covering Revenues & Benefits and ICT/Digital Strategies.

Councillors McCluskey and Robertson declared connections in this item of business. Councillors McCluskey declared a connection as a Trustee of the Greenock Arts Guild Limited and due to a family relation having been cared for in a care home referenced in the report. Councillor Robertson declared a connection as a Trustee of the Greenock Arts Guild Limited and due to a former financial relationship with Stepwell. They also formed the view that the nature of their connections and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision making process and were declaring for transparency.

Decided:

(1) that the annual update on compliance with the Governance of External Organisations Framework, as detailed in appendix 1, of the report be noted;

(2) that approval be given to (a) the amended External Organisations selection criteria as detailed in appendix 2 of the report; and (b) the list of organisations to be subject to the governance process, as detailed in appendix 3, of the report;

(3) that the annual Insurance Fund update be noted; and

(4) that the contents of the report be noted.

532 Treasury Management – Mid-Year Report 2022/23

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2022

(a) advising of the operation of the treasury function and its activities for the first six months of 2022/23 as required under the terms of Treasury Management Practise 6 on “Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements”; and (b) requesting that Committee remits the report to the Full Council for approval.

Decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Mid-Year Report on Treasury Management for 2022/23 and the ongoing work to seek to ensure the delivery of financial benefits for the Council during the current uncertainty and beyond be noted; and
- (2) that the report be remitted to the Full Council for approval.

533 Corporate Policy and Performance Update Report**533**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing the Committee with an update on a number of performance and policy matters relating to (1) developments in relation to the Council’s Strategic Planning and Performance Management Framework, (2) self-evaluation within Inverclyde Council and the assessment programme for 2023/24, (3) new life expectancy data published by National Records of Scotland (4) equalities, and (5) use of emergency powers to grant a public holiday for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s state funeral on Monday 19 September 2022 and payment to school children who qualify for free school meals.

Decided:

- (1) that the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance be noted; and
- (2) that the submission of a modified Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for final approval by 23 November 2022 be approved.

534 Inverclyde Council Annual Performance Report 2021/22**534**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval for the publication of the Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report 2021/22.

Decided: that the publication of the Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report 2021/22 be approved.

535 Corporate Services Corporate Directorate Improvement Plan Progress Report 2022/23**535**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the status of the Corporate Services improvement actions with the Environment, Regeneration and Resources and Education, Communities and Organisational Development Corporate Directorate Improvement Plans 2022/23.

Decided: that the progress made to date in delivering the Corporate Services CDIP improvement actions in year four be noted.

536 Annual Update – Delivering Differently Programme**536**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance (1) providing the annual update on the Council’s change programme, Delivering Differently, and (2) seeking approval for the removal of projects listed on the programme.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2022

Decided:

- (1) that (a) the status of the current Delivering Differently Programme be noted; and (b) it be agreed that the five projects marked as complete are now removed from the programme;
- (2) that the following be noted, (a) the New Ways of Working Project Update; (b) the proposal to mothball the James Watt Building from early 2023/24; and (c) that project updates will continue to be presented to the Committee; and
- (3) that the continued inclusion of relevant HSCP projects within the Delivering Differently Programme be approved.

537 2023/25 Budget Update**537**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance (1) providing an update on the position of the 2023/25 Revenue Budget, (2) seeking agreement of the identified Budget Pressures including inflation, (3) seeking approval for a further group of savings, and (4) providing an update in relation to the estimated funding gap and an anticipated timeline for the announcement for the Draft Local Government Budget Settlement, together with addendum report providing updated information from Procurement Scotland and the Scottish Government received by the Council since the 2023/25 Budget Update report was issued.

Decided:

- (1) that (a) approval be given to the Budget Pressures totalling £2.06million as detailed in appendix 2 of the report; and (b) it be noted that Inverclyde Leisure are finalising savings options to significantly reduce their Budget pressure;
- (2) that the requirement to increase the non-pay inflation allowance by £1.3million largely due to the impact of utility, waste disposal and PPP contract cost increases be noted;
- (3) that (a) the savings as detailed in appendix 3 of the report, totalling £635,000, be approved; and (b) it be noted that these savings will count towards the £4.0million pre-Christmas savings target;
- (4) that (a) the proposed date of 15 December for both the Scottish Draft Budget and a Special Council meeting to consider savings and other proposals relating to the 2023/25 Budget be noted; and (b) it be noted that officers will liaise with the Provost to finalise arrangements;
- (5) that the requirement to increase the 2023/24 non-pay inflation allowance by a further £1.1million to £2.4million as details in appendix 1 of the addendum be noted;
- (6) that the overall revised estimated remaining 2023/25 funding gap of £16.3million as detailed in appendix 2 of the addendum be noted; and
- (7) that (a) the contents of the letters dated 1 November 2022 from the Deputy First Minister be noted; and (b) that it be noted that the Members Budget Working Group will consider what opportunities to reduce expenditure in previously ring fenced/directed spend areas this presents to the Council.

538 Update on Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-23**538**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development fulfilling a remit from the meeting of the Committee held on 20 September 2022 to provide a report on plans for the utilisation of the Anti-Poverty Fund linked to cost-of-living pressures.

Decided:

- (1) that the identified underspend from the current Anti-Poverty initiatives be noted;
- (2) that the proposals from the Anti-Poverty Strategy Group, as detailed in

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2022

paragraph 5.2 of the report, to utilise the identified underspend to support individuals and families be approved;

(3) that delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development to allocate £100,000 of funding to projects linked to food insecurity;

(4) that it be noted that officers will develop further proposals after the UK and Scottish Budget announcements in order to utilise the remaining balance in the Anti-Poverty earmarked reserve prior to 31 March 2023; and

(5) that it be remitted to officers to bring a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the activity of Credit Unions within Inverclyde, including consideration of what policies the Council can implement to encourage their use.

539 Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy 539

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services seeking approval for an updated version of the Council's Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy.

Decided: that the updated Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy for the Council be approved.

540 Complaint Handling Annual Report 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 540

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing a routine monitoring report on the annual performance of all complaints received and handled by Inverclyde Council, Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Decided:

(1) that the annual performance of the Council's complaint handling procedure be noted; and

(2) that the publication of the Annual Complaint Handling Report on the Council's website be approved.

541 Freedom of Information Annual Report 2021 541

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing a routine monitoring report on Freedom of Information requests received by the Council during the period 1 January – 31 December 2021

Decided:

(1) that the information provided in relation to Freedom of Information requests received by the Council during 2021 be noted; and

(2) that the publication of the annual performance report on the Council's website be approved.

542 Workforce Information and Activity Report (WIAR) 2021/22 542

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications advising of key workforce information and activity for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Decided: that the contents of the Workforce Information and Activity Report for 2021/22, as detailed in appendix 1, of the report, be noted.

543 Procurement Strategy 2022/25 – Social Value Policy – Remit from Environment & Regeneration Committee 543

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services requesting the Committee consider a remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee of 27 October 2022 in relation to the Procurement Strategy 2022/25 – Social Value Policy
Decided: that the Procurement Strategy 2022/25 – Social Value Policy be approved.