

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2023

Policy & Resources Committee

Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 3pm

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

Chair: Councillor McCabe presided.

In attendance:

Louise Long	Chief Executive
Alan Puckrin	Chief Financial Officer
Stuart Jamieson	Director Environment & Regeneration
Ruth Binks	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Iain Strachan	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services
Steven McNab	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications
Vicky Pollock	Legal Services Manager (Procurement, Conveyancing & Information Governance)
Angela Edmiston	Finance Manager (Corporate Services & Strategic Finance)
Barbara McQuarrie	Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager
Tracy Bunton	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Morna Rae	Interim Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications
Angela Rainey	Service Manager – People and Change Management
Carol	Information Governance & Complaints Officer
Craig-McDonald	
Karen MacVey	Members' & Committee Services Team Leader
Colin MacDonald	Senior Committee Officer
Lindsay Carrick	Senior Committee Officer
George Barbour	Service Manager Communications, Tourism and Health & Safety

This meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Daisley, Law and McGuire attending remotely.

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

301 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest 301

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Armstrong, with Councillor Daisley substituting.

No declarations of interest were intimated.

302 2022/23 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Position as at 28 February 2023 302

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and the Chief Executive advising the Committee of (1) the 2022/23 Committee Revenue Budget projected

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2023

position as at 28 February 2023, (2) the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection and (3) the position of the General Fund Reserve.

Decided:

- (1) that the current projected overspend for 2022/23 of £683,000 as at 28 February 2023 within the Committee's Budget be noted;
- (2) that the projected 2022/23 surplus of £18,340 for the Common Good Budget be noted; and
- (3) that the (a) projected underspend of £1,098,000 for the General Fund; and (b) projected surplus reserves of £1.264million as at 31 March 2023, be noted.

303 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and overall 2022/26 Capital Programme 303

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme budget and the 2022/26 Capital Programme.

Decided: that the following be noted (a) the current position of the 2022/26 Policy & Resources Capital Budget; and (b) the current position of the 2022/26 Capital Programme.

304 Finance Services Update 304

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer (1) providing an update on a number of matters being progressed by the Finance Service relating to (a) Discretionary Payments, (b) Energy Support Payments, (c) Non-Domestic Rates matter, (d) War Pensions discretion, (e) Revenues & Benefits Performance, (f) Treasury Management, (g) 2024/25 Budget development and (h) Insurance & Claims Handling Tender, and (2) seeking delegated authority for the award of the Council's Insurance and Claims Handling Service tender prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Councillor McCormick joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

Decided:

- (1) that the updates contained in the report and the continued efforts by officers to improve uptake of the UK Government Energy Support Payments be noted;
- (2) that the continuation of the application of a 100% disregard to war disablement and bereavement pensions when assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims be approved;
- (3) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital, & Customer Services to approve the award for the Insurance and Claims Handling tender in accordance with Contract Standing Order 20.3 (ii);
- (4) that it be noted that an initial report on the 2024/25 Budget will be presented to the August Policy & Resources Committee; and
- (5) that it be agreed that the Convenor write to the relevant UK Government minister on behalf of the Committee regarding actions that can be taken to improve take up of UK Government energy support schemes.

305 Corporate Policy Update 305

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on a number of performance and policy matters relating to (1) New Council Plan, Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans and performance management arrangements, (2) Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23, (3) corporate awards, and (4) mid-year population data releases.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2023

Decided:

- (1) that the Committee notes (a) the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance and (b) that the Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23 will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as per the Bòrd's instruction; and
- (2) that it be remitted to the Chief Executive to write to the National Records of Scotland and any other relevant organisations requesting that the mid-year population estimates for 2022 be published before winter 2023/24.

306 Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 306

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval for the Policy & Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report.

Decided:

- (1) that the Policy & Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 be approved;
- (2) that it be noted that progress reports on the delivery of this Plan and its key performance indicators will be brought to this Committee, as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report; and
- (3) that it be noted that as this is the first iteration of the Committee Plans, there may be further refinement of all three plans going forward.

307 Reserves Policy – Triennial Review 307

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer seeking approval for the revised Reserves Policy last reviewed in September 2019.

Decided:

- (1) that the Reserves Policy, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
- (2) that the movement in the Council's Reserves over 2013/22, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

308 Children in Poverty Data and Anti-Poverty Budget Update 308

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) seeking agreement for spend in relation to the anti-poverty recurring funding and (2) providing information on the latest Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) data on Children in Low Income Families in Inverclyde.

Decided:

- (1) that the proposals as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of the report be agreed;
- (2) that it be noted that an evaluation report on anti-poverty initiatives will be submitted to the Committee in September 2023; and
- (3) that the latest DWP data on children living in low-income families in Inverclyde and the potential impact upon future Council funding levels be noted.

309 Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention 309

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications providing an update on recent initiatives to support employee recruitment and retention and seeking agreement to progress a number of related projects and proposals.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2023

Decided:

- (1) that the work being progressed to support employee recruitment and retention across the Council be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that the view of the Corporate Management Team that the pilot hybrid working strategy has been successful and should be formally incorporated into the Council's wider Flexible Working Policy which is being revised and will be brought to the September Policy & Resources Committee for approval;
- (3) that the following be noted, (a) the creation of a working group to explore the reduction in the working week from 37 to 35 hours as detailed in paragraphs 4.2 – 4.4 of the report, and (b) that any proposals and implications will be subject of a report later in 2023; and
- (4) that the allocation of £100,000 via a one-off increase to the 2023/24 non-HSCP turnover target for the recruitment of university students and retention and development of existing employees be approved.

310 Mr Steven McNab 310

The Convenor referred to the imminent retirement of Mr Steven McNab, Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications. The Convenor thanked Mr McNab for his dedicated service to Inverclyde Council and on behalf of the Committee wished him a long and happy retirement.

311 Data Protection Policy Review 311

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services (1) providing an overview of the Council's reviewed and updated Data Protection Policy and (2) seeking approval for the updated policy.

Decided: that the updated Data Protection Policy, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

312 Review of Committee Report Format 312

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services seeking approval to update the Council's corporate committee report template, following a recent review.

Decided:

- (1) that the use of the updated committee report template, as detailed in appendix 1 of this report, be approved; and
- (2) that it be noted that the updated annotated version of the template, and associated guidance, will be rolled out to officers with training, ready for use from the start of the 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023.

313 Freedom of Information Annual Report 2022 313

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services providing details of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the Council during the period 1 January – 31 December 2022.

Decided:

- (1) that the information provided in relation to FOI requests received by the Council during 2022 be noted;
- (2) that the publication of the annual performance report on the Council's website be approved; and

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2023

(3) that it be noted that going forward officers will cease the collection of information on the time spent on, and estimated costs of dealing with, FOI and EIR requests across the Council, which will no longer be reported annually to Committee.

It was agreed in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

314 Voluntary Severance Scheme Releases**314**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications providing an update on the position of releases that have been agreed under the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme since the previous report to the Committee on 21 June 2022.

Decided:

- (1) that the agreement to release 37 employees and 8 Inverclyde Leisure employees under the Council's Voluntary Severance scheme be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that future reports will be submitted to update Members on the release of employees by the Chief Executive under delegated authority on an annual basis.