

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors DAVID FAIRWEATHER, ANGUS MacMILLAN DOUGLAS OBE, BRIAN BOYD, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, SHEILA HANDS, ALEX KING, BEN LAWRIE, BOB MYLES, MARK SALMOND, LOIS SPEED, TOMMY STEWART, RON STURROCK, DEREK WANN and BETH WHITESIDE.

Councillor FAIRWEATHER, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor King declared a non-financial interest in Item 8, Report No 382/21 as a Council appointed member on the Arbroath Golf Links Management Committee. He indicated that he would participate in any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillors Duff, Salmond, Stewart and Sturrock all declared an interest in Items 10 and 12, Report No 384/21 and Exempt Appendix to Report No 384/21 as they had met with representatives of Whittaker Engineering regarding their plans. Each member indicated that they would participate in any discussion and voting on the items.

3. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 October 2021 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

(a) Special Sub-Committee

The minute of meeting of the Special Sub-Committee of 17 November 2021, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

4. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

There was submitted Report No 378/21 by the Director of Infrastructure providing information to members with regard to services in the Infrastructure Directorate, in relation to:

- Energy Annual Report 2020/21 (Schedule 1)
- Water Annual Report 2020/21 (Schedule 2)
- Property Maintenance 2020/21 (Schedule 3)

Having heard from a number of members who welcomed the Annual Reports and congratulated the officers for their hard work, and from Councillor Whiteside who encouraged the Council to be ambitious with its targets, the Committee agreed to note contents of the Report.

5. CAPITAL MONITORING – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of this Committee of 26 October 2021, there was submitted Report No 379/21 by the Director of Finance apprising members of the capital expenditure incurred for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2021 and measured projected capital expenditure for the year against budgeted provision.

The Report indicated that with seven months (58.3 per cent) of the financial year gone the actual spend levels presented in Tables 1 and 2 were low, at 37.3 per cent on a gross basis and 44.1 per cent on a net basis respectively.

Furthermore up to 10 per cent of annual capital spend would come through as accruals at the year end. The value of work completed up to 31 March 2022 would be assessed as part of the year end process and expenditure accrued accordingly, hence the reason why spend could increase significantly in the final month of the year. It should also be noted that work was ongoing on a number of significant projects for which no payment had yet been made by virtue of the phasing of such projects. For information purposes, the 2020/21 actual spend outturn was 67.2 per cent (gross) and 56.4 per cent (net), noting that number must be taken within the context of the disruption to the capital programmes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councillor Boyd left the meeting at this stage (2.13pm).

Following questions in relation to the Montrose to A90 link road, the Committee agreed to note the expenditure to date and projected outturn position on the General Fund Capital Programme as per Tables 1 and 2 in the Report and the accompanying capital monitoring statement, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

6. REVENUE MONITORING 2021/22 AND RENEWAL AND REPAIR FUND POSITION 2021/22

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 October 2021, there was submitted Report No 380/21 by the Director of Finance detailing the latest projected year-end position for each main Council service area, giving a brief explanation of significant variances and providing an update on expenditure funded through the Council's Renewal and Repair Funds. The position within the Report was based upon actual spend and income information at 31 October 2021. The Report also sought approval of a funding solution to implement changes in the payroll and staffing team.

The Report indicated that an overall saving compared to budget of £6.583 million was projected at this point in the financial year in respect of the General Fund services net adjusted budget (excluding the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership budget) of £247.222 million, i.e. 2.66%. There were adjustments required to this total to reflect funding within Education and Lifelong Learning and Children, Families & Justice, (paragraphs 4.2 and 4.4 of the Report respectively) which due to accounting treatment would be carried forward into 2022/23, as detailed in Section 7.2 of the Report.

In terms of the Payroll and Staffing review, the volume of the work for the staff had grown substantially particularly over the period of the pandemic and as a result of staff retirement and vacancies, it had become increasingly difficult to maintain day to day operations as well as all the additional requirements brought about by the pandemic. A programme of work to streamline and digitise processes also had to be put on hold to ensure that the team met their priorities around paying and recruiting staff. In addition, a backlog of work had built up associated with legislative requirements that required to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Resilience within the payroll area was a specific risk and of high concern and had been highlighted by the Council's external auditors in their 2020/21 Report to Members (Report 368/21 refers).

Given the associated risks around these work areas it was considered necessary to review the existing structure of these teams. Additional funding was required to take on temporary resource to address the backlog of work and allow the process development to be undertaken. Additional funding was also required for permanent staffing to improve resilience, performance and reduce the current risks. Ordinarily a requirement for additional ongoing funding would be considered through the budget setting process but there was a need to address the issues and risks as a matter of urgency now rather than delay until late February 2022.

Following a number of questions in relation to school meals, housing repairs and the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report, in particular the comments on the Financial Implications section regarding the projected year end position;
- (ii) to note the position on the 2021/22 budget revisions as set out in Section 4.18 of the Report;

- (iii) to approve the approach to funding the outcome of a review of the payroll and staffing teams to address staff shortages and resilience risks, as set out in Section 6 of the Report; and
- (iv) to note the Renewal and Repair fund position.

7. COVID-19 FUNDING – DISCRETIONARY FUNDING PROJECT APPROVALS

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 October 2021, there was submitted Report No 381/21 by the Director of Finance seeking approval to use Scottish Government COVID-19 funding provided to the Council to help support local people and communities where the Council had a degree of discretion over the use of the funding. Appendix 1 provided details of the request from the Angus Upcycling Project.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed use of COVID-19 funding as set out in the Appendix 1 to the Report.

8. COMMON GOOD FUNDS – PROJECT APPROVAL

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 31 August 2021, there was submitted Report No 382/21 by the Director of Infrastructure seeking approval for 2021/22 Common Good funded projects.

The Committee agreed to approve the requested funding of £20,000 towards the flood study for Arbroath Golf Club from Arbroath Common Good Fund 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

9. WATER TESTING AND TREATMENT (LEGIONELLA) IN ANGUS COUNCIL PROPERTIES 2022-2026 – PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY APPROVAL REPORT

There was submitted Report No 383/21 by the Director of Infrastructure seeking procurement authority for the provision of water testing and treatment in Council properties where the maximum value of the contract arrangements was above the Chief Officer's delegated authority limit.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the procurement authority as detailed in the Report, including participation by the Council in the Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges framework arrangement for Water Quality Management Services, including Legionella, in accordance with the process outlined in Sections 16.6 and 16.8 of Financial Regulations; and
- (ii) to note the financial implications detailed in Section 6 of the Report.

10. PROPERTY SALE – FORMER GARAGE AT FERRY STREET/CALEDONIA STREET, MONTROSE

There was submitted Report No 384/21 by the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth relating to the sale of a vacant commercial property at Ferry Street/Caledonia Street, Montrose which comprised an industrial building.

Having heard from Councillors Duff and Sturrock, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the sale of the vacant property at the former garage at Ferry Street/Caledonia Street, Montrose; and
- (ii) to note that the transaction would be conditional upon the following: -
 - (a) detailed legal terms and conditions being agreed by Angus Council; and
 - (b) a detailed legal contract for the sale of the property being negotiated and documented.

At this stage in the meeting, the Convener proposed that there was no requirement to consider the information contained within the exempt Appendix detailed at Item 12 as members had taken that information into account in making their decision in relation to Item 10.

The Committee therefore resolved that there was now no requirement to exclude the public and press at this stage in the meeting as the Committee had considered all the items as detailed on the agenda and the business had been concluded.