

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors BETH WHITESIDE, KENNY BRAES, CHRIS BEATTIE, JULIE BELL, DAVID CHEAPE, SERENA COWDY, BILL DUFF, BRENDA DURNO, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, IAIN GALL, ROSS GREIG, IAN MCLAREN, GAVIN NICOL, MARTIN SHEPHERD, LOIS SPEED and DEREK WANN.

Councillor WHITESIDE, Convener, in the Chair.

The Convener advised that members had been provided with a revised copy of Report No 416/22 which referenced that an options appraisal had been completed and included within Appendix 2 to Report No 416/22. The amended paper and newly completed options appraisal had not been published within the required "3 clear days" by reason of special circumstance however, she had determined that in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 11(1)(vii) the item could be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency as the options appraisal provided further detailed information to members which required to be considered.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

There were no declarations of interest or statements of transparency made.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 October 2022 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. REVENUE MONITORING 2022/23 AND RENEWAL & REPAIR FUND POSITION 2022/23

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 October 2022, there was submitted Report No 404/22 by the Director of Finance providing revenue performance information for the Committee to consider.

The Report detailed the latest projected year-end position for each main Council service area, gave a brief explanation of significant variances and provided 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 as at 31 October 2022.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report, in particular the comment on the Financial Implications section regarding the projected year end position;
- (ii) to note that significant progress had been made in assessing the financial effect of the 2022/23 staff pay deal proposals on the Council's budget;
- (iii) to note the intention to bring a separate report on the implications of the pay deal proposals and how they would be funded to Angus Council in December. The report would also seek approval to de-commit resources currently set aside in the Council's General Fund Reserve for specific projects in order to free up funds to help address the projected overspend in the 2022/23 revenue budget; and
- (iv) to note the Renewal and Repair fund position.

5. CAPITAL MONITORING – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME – 2022/23

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 October 2022, there was submitted Report No 405/22 by the Director of Finance apprising members of the capital expenditure incurred for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 October 2022 and measuring projected capital expenditure for the year against budgeted provision.

The Report indicated that with seven months (58.33 per cent) of the financial year gone the actual spend levels presented in Tables 1 and 2 in the Report were low, at 24.8 per cent on a gross basis and 30.8 per cent on a net basis respectively. Up to 10 per cent of annual capital spend could come through as accruals at the year end. The value of work completed up to 31 March 2023 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 2021/22 actual spend outturn was 74.5 per cent (gross) and 71.7 per cent (net). The projected net expenditure of £24.235 million (reflected in Table 2 in the Report) would be indicatively funded from the sources detailed in Table 3 in the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) 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 (Appendix 1 to the Report); and
- (ii) to approve the correction of an error within the 2021/2026 Final Capital Budget Volume as described in Section 7 of the Report, noting that consideration of these and all other existing capital projects would, as normal, be subject to review as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

6. REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - UPDATE ON PLANS, BUDGET PREPARATION AND PROGRESS

There was submitted Report No 406/22 by the Director of Finance providing members with a high level update on plans, budget preparation and progress in relation to the 2023/24 Revenue Budget preparation process.

Overall, the budget preparation process and timetable was on track to allow the Council to set its budget in late February or early March 2023. However, the task of identifying savings on the scale required remained a significant concern and challenge as was outlined in the recent report on the Council's Medium Term Budget Strategy (Report 361/22 refers).

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the progress being made on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget preparation as set out in Section 4 of the Report; and
- (ii) to note the updated budget timeline as set out in Appendix A to the Report.

7. COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

There was submitted Report No 407/22 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth presenting and seeking approval for the new Angus Council Communication, Engagement and Consultation Policy.

The Policy had been developed to detail Angus Council's position, role and commitments to ensure community engagement was integrated into Council activities to support decision making, build relationships and strengthen communities. The Policy sought to improve engagement processes and outcomes by encouraging a consistent approach and continual learning through evaluation and expanding the range of engagement methods used.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the Communication, Engagement and Consultation Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the Report; and

- (ii) to note the Framework approach for delivery of the Communication, Engagement and Consultation Policy detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the Report.

8. CHANGE PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee of 27 October 2022, there was submitted Report No 408/22 by the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform providing a progress update in relation to the Council's Change Programme, relating to the 3-year planning period (2022/23 to 2024/25).

The Report indicated that during the reporting period, there had been some adjustments and re-profiling of savings resulting in an updated target position of £6.678m for 2022/23 (a decrease of £0.233m), while the 3-year period total had decreased to £21.282m (a slight decrease of £0.190m).

This amended position was mainly due to a full assessment of each project being undertaken to measure the deliverability of the full savings target. Details of these variances were explained in section 5.2 of the Report.

The Committee agreed to note the progress update in relation to the Council's current Change Programme (2022/23 to 2024/25), along with the summary included in Appendix 1 to the Report.

9. CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

There was submitted Joint Report No 409/22 by the Director of Children, Families and Justice and the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth setting out proposals for investment in the Angus Council children's residential estate to ensure that, where appropriate, children and young people could be cared for in Angus and reducing Council reliance on out of area care placements. This would help deliver improved outcomes for Angus children and young people and meet the Council's statutory duties.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note and approve the Business Case for investment in the Angus Council children's residential estate and agreed the strategic direction (Appendix 1 to the Report);
- (ii) to approve the proposed expansion of the Angus Council children's residential estate by 8 beds across two properties as outlined in Section 5 of the Report;
- (iii) to require the Director of Children, Families and Justice to submit detailed budget bid proposals as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24; and
- (iv) to require that the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth commence arrangements to secure and deliver the necessary properties, on the presumption that the required resources were agreed through the 2023/24 HRA and General Fund Revenue budgets.

10. NON – DOMESTIC RATES EMPTY PROPERTY RELIEF POLICY

There was submitted Report No 410/22 by the Director of Finance advising members of the devolution from the Scottish Government to local authorities of responsibility for non-domestic rates Empty Property Relief (EPR) and seeking authority to adopt a policy for the Angus Council area for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the background to the devolution to the Council of responsibility for the Empty Property Relief policy from 1 April 2023 and the funding arrangements as set out in the Report;
- (ii) to adopt the same Empty Property Relief scheme in Angus as currently applied at a national level for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025 to provide stability for ratepayers and the Council at a time of economic uncertainty; and

- (iii) to note that a further Report would be brought to members prior to expiry of the above period with an evaluation of how the policy had operated and potential options for change.

11. MONTROSE COASTAL EROSION – PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY APPROVAL REQUEST

There was submitted Report No 411/22 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment providing an update on Montrose Coastal Erosion and seeking procurement authority to progress an Environmental Assessment and Options Appraisal as the maximum value exceeds the Chief Officer's procurement delegated authority limits contained in Section 16.8.1 of the Financial Regulations.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the award of Nature Restoration Fund funding of £0.35m along with the terms and conditions of the funding as set out in the award letter attached as Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) to authorise procurement of a consultant to complete an Environmental and Options Appraisal based on the concept design to rebuild the damaged dunes using Scotland Excel Framework; and
- (iii) to note that any works recommended by officers taking consideration of the consultants Environment and Options Appraisal would be subject to a further committee report for approval.

12. PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY REPORT – PROVISION OF SOCIAL PRESCRIBING WITHIN ANGUS GP PRACTICES

There was submitted Report No 412/22 by the Chief Integration Officer outlining the procurement strategy relating to the contract for Social Prescribing within Angus GP Practices in line with the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership's (the Partnership) Strategic Commissioning Plan and seeking authority for its implementation.

A variation to and extension of the term of the existing contract from 1 January 2023 to 30 September 2023, was being proposed. This would allow for consideration to be given to a new tender exercise being undertaken to procure a new Social Prescribing service within Angus GP Practices, with approval for this being sought at a later date.

The Committee agreed to authorise the direct award of a short-term contract (via a 9-month extension and variation of the existing contract) for Social Prescribing within Angus GP Practices from 1 January 2023 to 30 September 2023 as set out in Section 6 of the Report.

13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee agreed, in terms of Standing Order 28(2), that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, paragraphs 6, 8 and 9.

14. PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY REPORT – INDEPENDENT INTERMEDIATE CARE (SOUTH ANGUS)

There was submitted Report No 413/22 by the Chief Integration Officer seeking approval for an extension to the existing Independent Intermediate Care contract in South Angus for a period of 1 year.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendation, as detailed in the Report.

15. PROCUREMENT OF TOWN CENTRE RETAIL BUSINESS SUPPORT

There was submitted Report No 414/22 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth seeking confirmation of the decision to make an appointment in relation to the undertaking of a retail business support programme for town centre businesses in Angus through the LACER funding.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.

16. ANGUS ECO FLEX SYSTEM

There was submitted Report No 415/22 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth providing an overview of the Energy Company Obligation – Flexible Eligibility (Eco Flex 4), introduced by the UK Government to fund energy efficiency measures throughout the UK and setting out the approach to deliver an Eco Flex scheme in Angus.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.

17. UPDATE ON LAND AND PROPERTY SALE, BRENT AVENUE, FORTIES ROAD, MONTROSE

With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 30 August 2022, there was submitted Report No 416/22 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth providing an update on the approved sale of property and land at Forties Road, Montrose.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.