

Minute of Meeting Communities and Housing Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 16 January 2024	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor John Hood, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor Colin McCulloch, Councillor Janis McDonald, Councillor Cathy McEwan, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Emma Rodden

Chair

Councillor McGurk, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

G McNeil, Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Partnerships, S Inrig, Assistant Manager (Employability) and M Kirk, Assistant Planning & Policy Development Officer (all Chief Executive's); J Trainer, Head of Child Care & Criminal Justice (Children's Services); L Feeley, Head of Housing Services, G Hannah, Head of Climate, Public Protection & Roads, N Drummond, Lead Officer (Environmental Co-ordination), G Heaney, Climate & Public Protection Manager, T Irvine, Homeless & Housing Support Services Manager, P McLean, Housing Lead Officer (Participation, Performance & Policy), M MacRury, Housing Newbuild Programme Manager, A Miller, Development Officer (Housing Regeneration & Service Improvement), D Murray, Area Housing Manager, C Robertson, Warden Services Manager, R Walkinshaw, Housing Regeneration & Development Manager and F Wilson, Serious Organised Crime & Trading Standards Manager (all Environment, Housing & Infrastructure); and J Kilpatrick, Finance Business Partner, R Devine Senior Committee Services Officer and D Cunningham, Committee Services & Licensing Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast on the Council's internet site.

Welcome

The Convener welcomed Councillors Hood and K MacLaren to the first meeting of the Policy Board since their appointment.

Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Police and Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Sub-committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Sub-committee held on 31 October 2023, a copy of which forms the Appendix to this Minute.

Councillor McMillan proposed that the Minute be amended by the replacement of the first sentence of item 3 - Local Issues - with 'In response to a request, made by Councillor McMillan, in relation to deliberate fire raising in the Johnstone South & Elderslie ward area Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) agreed to provide more detail'. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved subject to the above amendment.

2 General Services Revenue, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget Monitoring

There was submitted a General Services Revenue, Housing Revenue Account and capital budget monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the period 1 April to 10 November 2023.

The report stated that the projected outturn, as at 31 March 2024, for all services reporting to this Policy Board was a breakeven position and that the projected capital outturn for projects was a breakeven position against the revised budget for the year. Summaries were provided over the relevant services in tables within the report, together with further analysis contained within appendices to the report. In addition, the report indicated that revenue expenditure budget adjustments totalling £0.534 million, had been processed since approval of the budget in March 2023. Details of the adjustments were outlined within the report. It was highlighted that there had been no capital budget adjustments during the period.

DECIDED:

(a) That the projected revenue outturn position, detailed in table 1 of the report, be noted;

(b) That the projected capital outturn position, detailed in table 2 of the report, be noted; and

(c) That the budget adjustments, detailed in section 4 of the report, be approved.

3 Community Funding applications

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to various community funding applications.

At the meeting of this Policy Board held on 31 October it had been noted that in order to strengthen the oversight of funding applications a consolidated community funding report would be submitted each meeting cycle providing updated information and setting out recommendations for approval, as required, in relation to the Greenspaces, Villages Investment and Sustainable Communities Funds.

The report provided specific information relating to recent applications to and funding awarded from the Greenspaces, Parks and Play Areas Fund, Villages Investment Fund and Sustainable Communities Fund.

DECIDED:

(a) That the funding recommendations in relation to the proposed allocation of Sustainable Communities Funding detailed in section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report be approved;

(b) That the Greenspaces/Villages Investment funding awards made in terms of the authority delegated to the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure, to approve applications under the value of £5,000, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be noted;

(c) That the funding recommendations in relation to the Villages Investment Fund outlined in section 6 and Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and

(d) That it be agreed that £20,000 be allocated from the Villages Investment Fund to allow for staffing resource to be deployed to support the ongoing continuation of the Villages Investment Funding through 2024.

4 Service Update Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to key service activities and providing an operational performance update on services and key projects and changes to service areas covered within the remit of this Policy Board.

Updates were provided in respect of local public protection, housing, community development and criminal justice activities and detailed specific projects and recent changes within each service area. It was highlighted that the Council had successfully applied for funding from the Scottish Government's Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund in respect of a project to deliver energy efficiency measures and low emission heating in eight terraced houses at Houston Place, Elderslie and been awarded £254,015. The project would enable the Council to assess whether similar works

could be rolled out to the wider housing stock.

Following discussion in connection with the application for above benchmark grant finance in respect of the Phase 1 of the newbuild housing at Howwood Road area, it was proposed and agreed that arrangements would be made to provide members of the Policy Board with an update of the outcome of the review undertaken by the Scottish Government prior to the next meeting.

The report stated that the Scottish Government had announced that with effect from from 1 January 2024 the Fixed Penalty Notice fine for fly-tipping offences, under the Environmental Protection Act, would increase from £200 to £500 and that this update to legislation had been made response to the Litter & Fly-tipping consultation responses submitted earlier in the year.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Head of Housing Services be authorised to accept grant funding of £254,015 awarded from the Scottish Government's Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) as detailed in section 3.8 of the report;

(b) That arrangements be made to provide members of the Policy Board, prior to the next meeting, with an update of the outcome of the review undertaken by the Scottish Government in respect of the application for above benchmark grant finance for Phase 1 of the newbuild housing at Howwood Road area;

(c) That it be noted that the Fixed Penalty Notice penalty for fly-tipping had increased from £200 to £500 in accordance with a Scottish Government amendment to the Environmental Protection Act; and

(d) That otherwise the report be noted.

5 Social Housing Charter Performance: 2023/24 Half Year Update

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance 2023/24 half-year update.

The report intimated that Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords were required to submit an Annual Return relating to their performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) by the end of May each year. The half-year update report, a copy of which formed Appendix 1 to the report, provided a performance update for the first six months of 2023/24, detailed Renfrewshire's performance in terms of 18 of the 32 Charter indicators reported within the Annual Report and outlined specific areas where performance in terms of the indicators had improved, remained stable and/or dipped.

The SHR had issued, during October 2023, a consultation paper on the Single Regulatory Framework with the deadline for responses being 15 December 2023. The key elements and proposed actions affecting local authorities were outlined and a copy of the response submitted on behalf of the Council was attached as Appendix 2 of the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Social Housing Charter Performance 2023/24 half-year update report, attached as Appendix 1 of the report, be noted; and

(b) That the response, submitted on behalf of the Council, to the Scottish Housing Regulator on the consultation on the Single Regulatory Framework, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

6 Homelessness in Renfrewshire - Update

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the nature and scale of homelessness both nationally and in Renfrewshire, current and emerging pressures, and actions taken to address the situation.

Reference was made within the report to the volume, trends and perceived reasons for the increase in homelessness both locally and nationally, resettlement programmes, asylum dispersal, the support for displaced persons and responses to emerging homeless/housing support and financial pressures.

Following discussion, in connection with the use of the Watermill Hotel, Paisley, to house asylum seekers the Head of Policy & Partnerships, intimated that arrangements would be made to provide members of the Policy Board with information regarding the number of asylum seekers who were required to share bedrooms at that property.

DECIDED:

(a) That the current and emerging local and national pressures that had resulted in an increase in homeless applications and demand for housing support and the potential impacts of these increases be noted; and

(b) That the progress made to date to meet the needs of those who were homeless be noted and that it also be noted that a further progress report would be submitted to the meeting of this Policy Board scheduled to be held on 21 May 2024.

7 Creating a smoke free generation and tackling youth vaping - a consultation by the Department of Health & Social Care

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the consultation exercise launched by the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) on creating a smoke free generation and tackling youth vaping.

The report intimated that the consultation on the proposed actions the UK Government and devolved administrations were considering to tackle smoking and youth vaping had closed on 6 December 2023. The key elements, aims and proposed actions were outlined within the report and a copy of the response submitted on behalf of the Council was appended to the report for homologation.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the consultation proposals be noted and the response submitted, a copy of which was appended to the report, be homologated; and
- (b) That a further report, providing an update on the implications for the Service and residents be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board when the relevant legislation had been finalised.