

Minute of Meeting Council

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 02 March 2023	09:30	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jennifer Adam, Councillor Fiona Airlie-Nicolson, Councillor Alison Ann-Dowling, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Graeme Clark, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Andy Doig, Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Chris Gilmour, Councillor Edward Grady, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor John Gray, Councillor Anne Hannigan, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor Bruce MacFarlane, Councillor James MacLaren, Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor Colin McCulloch, Councillor Janis McDonald, Councillor Cathy McEwan, Councillor David McGonigle, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Kevin Montgomery, Councillor Sam Mullin, Councillor Will Mylet, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Councillor John Shaw, Councillor Ben Smith, Councillor Andy Steel

Chair

Provost Cameron, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

A Russell, Chief Executive; M Crearie, Director of Communities & Housing Services; G McNeil, Director of Environment & Infrastructure; A MacArthur, Director of Finance & Resources; L Mahon, Head of Marketing & Communications, A Morrison, Head of Economy & Development Services, B Walker, Programme Director (City Deal & Infrastructure) and L Adamson, Communications & Public Affairs Manager (all Chief Executive's); G Hutton, Head of Operations & Infrastructure (Environment & Infrastructure); M Conaghan, Head of Corporate Governance, C McCourt, Head of Finance & Business Services, J Lynch, Head of Property Services, N Young, Assistant Managing Solicitor (Litigation & Advice), L Belshaw and D Low, both Democratic Services Managers, G Dickie, Partnering & Commissioning Manager, R Devine and E Gray, both Senior Committee Services Officers and J Barron, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources); C Lavery, Chief Officer (Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership); and V Hollows, Chief Executive and F Naylor, Finance, Governance and Business Improvement Director (both OneRen).

Webcasting of Council Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Provost Cameron intimated that this meeting would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site.

Apologies

Councillors Devine and Hood.

Transparency Statements

Councillor Leishman indicated that he had a connection to item 8 by reason of being a volunteer for a Housing Association. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

Councillor Mags MacLaren indicated that she had a connection to item 6 by reason that she was the wife of the Chair of Shopmobility Paisley & District and to item 8 by reason of her membership of the Board of Linstone Housing Association. However, she indicated that she had applied the objective test and did not consider she had an interest to declare

Councillor Paterson indicated that he had a connection to item 14 by reason of him being the Council's representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT). However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

Councillor Steel indicated that he had a connection to item 8 by reason of his membership of the Board of Linstone Housing Association and to item 14 by reason of him being the Council's substitute representative on Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT). However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Andy Doig declared an interest in item 10 for the reason that he was an employee of RCA Trust. Councillor Andy Doig indicated that as he had declared an interest, he would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Audrey Doig declared an interest in item 10 for the reason that she was the wife of an employee of RCA Trust. Councillor Audrey Doig indicated that as she had declared an interest, she would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor McCulloch declared an interest in item 8 for the reason that he was an employee of a Housing Association. Councillor McCulloch indicated that as he had declared an interest, he would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor K MacLaren declared an interest in item 6 for the reason that he was Chair of Shopmobility Paisley & District. Councillor K MacLaren indicated that as he had declared an interest, he would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

Obituary

Provost Cameron acknowledged the death of Tommy Williams, former Renfrewshire Councillor, made reference to the various roles as Convener and Depute-Convener he had undertaken within the Council, and advised that she had issued a letter extending sympathy and condolences to his family on behalf of Renfrewshire Council. Individual members of the Council paid personal tributes endorsing the sentiments expressed.

Additional Items

Provost Cameron, in terms of Standing Order 14(b) ruled that the appeal by the Disasters Emergencies Committee (DEC) in relation to the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, which had not been included on the agenda calling the meeting, would be considered by the Council as a matter of urgency, given the situation in these countries.

Provost Cameron, seconded by Councillor McMillan moved that, as the Council was not authorised to provide direct relief to communities abroad, a donation of £10,000 be made to the DEC to fund its member charities' UK-based activities in recognition of the considerable strain the situation in Turkey and Syria had placed on the resources of these charities. This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: That, as the Council was not authorised to provide direct relief to communities abroad, a donation of £10,000 be made to the DEC to fund its member charities' UK-based activities in recognition of the considerable strain the situation in Turkey and Syria had placed on the resources of these charities

Provost Cameron also intimated that she had received notice of an emergency motion by Councillors McMillan and Mullin relating to changes to McGill's bus services which had not been included in the Notice calling the meeting. Provost Cameron ruled that in terms of Standing Order 14(b), the emergency motion be considered by the Council as a matter of urgency and be considered as item 14 of the agenda.

1 Minutes of Meetings of Council, Boards and Panels (attached separately)

There were submitted the Minutes of the following meetings of the Council, Boards and Panels on the dates specified:

Council, 15 December 2022

Communities and Housing Policy Board, 17 January 2023

Regulatory Functions Board, 18 January 2023

Education and Children's Services Policy Board 19 January 2023

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, 23 January 2023

Economy and Regeneration Policy Board, 24 January 2023
Planning and Climate Change Policy Board, 24 January 2023
Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board, 25 January 2023
Personnel Appeals and Applied Conditions of Service Appeals Panel, 26 January 2023
Local Review Body, 31 January 2023
Regulatory Functions Board, 2 February 2023
Special Personnel Appeals and Applied Conditions of Service Appeals Panel, 8 February 2023
Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board, 9 February 2023
Appointment Board, 15 February 2023
Personnel Appeals and Applied Conditions of Service Appeals Panel, 20 February 2023
Leadership Board, 22 February 2023

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services highlighted that an amended version of the Minute of the meeting of the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board, held on 25 January 2023, had been circulated prior to the meeting.

DECIDED: That the Minutes, as amended, be approved.

2 **Provost's Update**

The Provost provided an update report in relation to duties she had undertaken since the previous meeting of the Council, held on 15 December 2022.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

Prior to consideration of the following items of business the Provost drew Members' attention to the provisions of Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which restricted the voting rights of Members on certain issues if they were in arrears with Council Tax payments.

Copies of the procedures to be followed in respect of consideration of the Revenue Estimates and Council Tax (item 3 of the agenda); and the Housing Revenue Account Budgets, Rent Levels and Capital Investment Plans (item 5 of the agenda) were appended to the relevant reports.

3 **Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2023/24**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24, together with appendices detailing revenue estimates for 2023/24; estimates of expenditure and income for the year ended 31 March 2024; and the General Fund probable outturn for 2023/24.

The report provided an overview of the Council's anticipated financial position on the General Fund revenue budget and set out information required for the Council to set its budget and Council Tax for 2023/24. The report referred to the extremely high levels of inflation and cost growth the Council was experiencing as a consequence of the COVID19 pandemic. It was recognised that moving into 2023/24 and beyond, the financial environment that local government in Scotland faced would remain heavily constrained, with substantial risks in the short term in relation to both cost growth and

income loss. Longer lasting legacy impacts on service costs, service demands and income streams were anticipated, as well as a lasting impact on transformation plans.

The report requested that these circumstances be taken into account when setting the 2023/24 budget, and also to recognise that the Council's immediate and medium-term challenges had shifted significantly. As outlined within the report, the Council's medium-term outlook remained subject to considerable risk. Additionally, as reported throughout the year and subject to decisions taken by Council, there would be a need for the budget position in 2023/24 to rely heavily on the use of ringfenced reserves to address the forecasted budget deficit. This solution required to be viewed as temporary, and it was highlighted that the Council required to act in the near term to contain spend within available resource on a recurring basis.

The report highlighted key elements of the Council's revenue settlement, which included confirmation of revenue grant funding for the Council in 2023/24 of £389.764 million. After adjustment for new responsibilities, areas of growing responsibility and other conditional aspects of the settlement, this provided a like for like comparison to 2022/23 where the Council's underlying core grant had increased by £0.239 million (0.1%) which was broadly in line with the flat-cash position the Council had assumed. Additional funding to support the agreement of the local government pay offer for 2023/24 and in relation to the teachers' pay offer for 2022/23 and 2023/24 had been announced over the course of the Parliamentary approval process for the Scottish Government Budget, however the distribution of this funding had not yet been agreed. It was noted that this additional funding was not reflected in the position outlined within the report, however, neither was the corresponding expenditure. On that basis, the underlying financial position outlined within the report remained valid.

In addition, the report intimated that the Scottish Government had opted not to announce a Public Sector Pay Policy for 2023/24 given the ongoing negotiation of the 2022/23 pay award in a number of areas across the public sector. The report indicated that while there were now permanent cost and service impacts from the pandemic, pay and revenue grant would continue to be the two biggest determinants to the Council's financial outlook. Members were advised that the Scottish Government block grant was likely to incorporate only very moderate increases over the remainder of the spending review period to 2025/26 and that this provided no confidence that the local government settlement in future years would reflect a sufficient degree of increase to address core budget pressures. The report highlighted that transformation and efficiency saving activity alone would not address the scale of financial pressures the Council was facing over the medium term.

The report advised that a scenario-based approach, varying the major influencing elements of the projections under a range of scenarios for the three-year period beyond 2023/24, had been applied and derived a forecast budget deficit range of broadly £40 - £45 million over the period, before any decisions on the level of Council Tax or other mitigating action. This forecast outlook was based on relatively tight grant and pay assumptions, informed by the current financial settlement and the Government's Medium Term Financial Strategy, as well as likely affordability constraints in relation to future pay awards. Factoring in an assumption of 5% increase each year in Council Tax levels reduced this range to £25 - £30 million, essentially meaning the Council would need to target cost reductions and savings averaging at a minimum of £10 million each year to remain in financial balance. For 2023/24, budget assumptions had been updated as appropriate, including most notably the confirmed grant available to the Council and associated conditions, the impact of new statutory obligations, the likely impact of increasing demographic and

demand pressures and expected Council Tax yield levels for 2023/24. Taking account of the cumulative impact of each of these issues, there was a recurring budget deficit for 2023/24 of £7.573 million, after the application of up to £11 million of ringfenced balances and subject to any further decisions taken by Members.

Given the scale and unprecedented nature of the financial sustainability challenge that lay ahead for the Council, in setting the 2023/24 budget, it was recommended that any proposed commitments from Members that would result in additional recurring expenditure increasing the projected medium-term deficit in future years should be supported by offsetting sustainable savings or increased resources arising from an increase in Council Tax. In addition, Members were encouraged to take a holistic view of the Council's total resources, covering both capital and revenue and were reminded of unallocated capital resources available to the Council of £0.300 million, as detailed at Item 3 of the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Shaw, seconded by Councillor Nicolson, moved:

1. "That this Administration's first budget will deliver on its commitments set out in the Council Plan to create a fairer Renfrewshire built on innovation, wellbeing and opportunity; where improving outcomes for children and families underpins all that we do.

2. That as recommended by the Director, these budget proposals take a holistic view of resources available and include the use of the £0.300 million of available resources outlined in Agenda item 4 and direct them as follows: -

- Commit £0.450 million (being £0.300 million capital funding and £0.150 million revenue) to support the delivery of roads improvements and traffic reduction measures which follows the previously funded pilot scheme of Houston, Howwood, Kilbarchan and Bridge of Weir as Gateway Villages. This funding will be used in conjunction with capital contributions from our Cycling, Walking & Safer Routes funding over the next 3 years to deliver a total £1.5 million investment which will improve the safety and natural environment in these villages. This Administration further commits £0.150 million of revenue funding to allow similar analysis to be undertaken to inform future investment in Bishopton, Lochwinnoch and Elderslie.

- Council also recognises the continuing significant investment in our roads infrastructure as outlined in the Capital Plan at Item 4 on the agenda, with £3 million from capital grant funds to bring this years' roads investment to £6.7 million.

3. Many communities, households and families across Renfrewshire have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. Through our Fairer Renfrewshire programme, tackling inequality and poverty will continue to be key priorities for this Administration as we support communities to recover and thrive following the pandemic. Building on the funding commitments of the previous SNP Administration, and the successes of the programme over the course of 2022/23, this Administration will continue to prioritise resource for the programme; and consolidate ringfenced funding currently held in separate Tackling Poverty and Social Renewal reserve funds into a single resource estimated at £5 million to support a cohesive programme of Fairer Renfrewshire support activity. Initial priorities for allocation of this funding will include:

- £0.068 million over 2 years to support the recently agreed 10% increase in the delivery of proactive advice services provided by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau, recognising the increased need for advice in the ongoing cost of living crisis.

- £0.300 million to support a £50 winter school clothing payment to each child eligible for school clothing grant, building on the support provided in 2022 which assisted over 5,000 children

- £0.100 million to provide programme of summer activities for children and

young people from low income families, encouraging them to access a wide range of activities and healthy food. It is anticipated that this fund will be supplemented by Scottish Government resource as was the case in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

4. In support of the Fairer Renfrewshire aims above, Council agrees to allocate top-up funding of £0.200 million to the Scottish Welfare Fund, to be drawn from the Welfare Reform ringfenced reserve.

5. Council recognises the success of the Council's employability programme over many years, supported through both European and Scottish Government funding and that unemployment has reached a historically low figure. Acknowledging that the resource set aside in previous budgets may be partially released to support other priorities without impacting on current plans for employability support, Council will therefore re-direct £1.5 million of ringfenced funding to better support wider economic, social and wellbeing activity, with allocations being prioritised as follows:

(i) Commit £0.210 million to allow an increase in foster and kinship carer allowances by 10% as an interim measure while a substantive review of the levels of allowances is undertaken over the course of 2023/24 with recurring financial implications being incorporated into future financial plans

(ii) In recognition of the critical role quality outdoor time has played in supporting our young people and wider communities during the challenging periods of lockdown, invest an additional £0.450 million in play areas, being £0.350 million for play parks renewals and £0.100 million for play park maintenance, adding significantly to the resource provided by the Scottish Government of £0.307 million for this purpose in 2023/24, and continuing our programme of parks improvement.

(iii) Delivering on our manifesto commitment to expand our very successful concessionary swim programme for parents accompanying a child under the age of 1 year old, commit £0.050 million as an initial allocation for 2023/24 to enable operation for an expanded programme which will allow free swimming to be offered to pre-school children. This allocation to be reviewed over the course of 2023/24 based on take up of this incentive.

(iv) Commit £0.200 million as an initial contribution to enable the resurfacing of the running track at OnX, while continuing to seek match funding from other stakeholders which will allow the track to continue to be used for the benefit of local athletes and schools

(v) Commit £0.200 million to replenish the successful Villages Investment Fund

(vi) Building on the huge success of our Team Up to Clean Up programme over the previous administrative term and outlining our commitment to cleaner streets, commit £0.090 million to the first year of a replacement public litter bin programme.

6. Recognising the huge popularity and success of the Culture, Heritage and Events Fund (CHEF) and in order to support our local culture and heritage organisations, agree to replenish the CHEF with £0.200 million from currently unallocated balances within the Culture Bid Legacy ringfenced reserve.

7. Agree to a new Sustainable Communities Fund which will consolidate the current Community Empowerment Fund and the Climate Change Fund into a single fund estimated to exceed £0.500 million moving in to 2023/24, which when added to the estimated balance of capital funding available for community empowerment objectives will result in total funding exceeding £1 million. Council also commits to a review of the current application criteria and guidance in order to better support future applications to this fund which will support Renfrewshire's Net Zero aspirations.

8. Council also recognises the need to maintain a prudent level of unallocated reserves given the very high level of risk over the medium term as outlined in the Director's report; and as previously agreed by Council, commits to maintain the Council's level of unallocated reserve at a minimum of £10.000 million moving into 2023/24. Council further agrees the proposals for consolidation of reserve balances and the indicative draw on ringfenced reserves as outlined at section 12 of the

Director's report. Council also agrees a further draw of £0.605 million from the ringfenced financial sustainability reserve in order to achieve the statutory breakeven budget position; and commits that action will be taken over the near term to bring the Council's expenditure in line with available resource on a recurring basis; thereby ensuring the Council's ongoing financial sustainability.

9. To protect services to the most vulnerable in Renfrewshire, and in line with the conditions set out in the 2023/24 financial settlement, agree to the recommendation outlined in the Director's report to make available £(0.388) million of recurring resources to manage the net impact of new service and cost pressures within Adult Social Care Services, and agrees a further estimated £3.3 million will follow in relation to the payment of the Living Wage once the distribution of the £100 million of resource for this purpose is formally confirmed. In addition, Council agrees to provide £1.054 million to Renfrewshire HSCP in support of the ongoing costs of the 2022/23 pay award.

10. To agree the base budget assessment for all services for 2023/24 as recommended by the Director of Finance and Resources and agree a 2023/24 base budget of £483.228 million.

11. To agree to make provision in 2023/24 for pay inflation as detailed in section 5.6 of the Director's report and make no provision for general non-pay inflation, as recommended by the Director.

12. To agree to a general 5% inflationary increase in charges for services as recommended in the Director's report, subject to the note at paragraph 18 below. In addition, a garden waste permit scheme will be introduced during 2023/24 at a rate of £40 per property, with the operational policy supporting the introduction of this scheme being the subject of a future report to the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board.

13. To agree the resource allocations for 2023/24 for all services, as amended by these proposals.

14. To agree the detailed Revenue Estimates for all services be amended to reflect these proposals and the necessary allocation of central support costs, central repairs costs, capital charges, specific grants and loan charges provision with Directors authorised to take any action necessary to implement these decisions.

15. Subject to agreement of the above, to agree that the council tax for 2023/24 be set at £1,436.17 for Band D subjects, representing a 6.0% increase in the 2022/23 level, and for all bandings to be set at:

Band	2022/23	2023/24
A	903.26	957.45
B	1,053.79	1,117.02
C	1,204.34	1,276.60
D	1,354.88	1,436.17
E	1,780.17	1,886.97
F	2,201.69	2,333.78
G	2,653.31	2,812.50
H	3,319.46	3,518.62

Note that the increase of 6% supports a financially responsible objective of minimising the use of ringfenced reserve balances, thereby underpinning the Council's financial sustainability over the medium term and demonstrating the sound financial management this Administration is committed to.

16. Subject to agreement of the points above, agree that the Council's budget is supported by appropriate decisions and makes appropriate provision to meet the specified commitments in the package of conditions linked to the Council's grant

settlement.

17. To agree to increase other charges for services by 5% (as detailed in paragraph 9 above) or where appropriate by the rate set in national legislation or guidance, or where charges are based on full cost recovery by the appropriate increase to maintain this position, subject to Directors being authorised

(a) to round the charge up or down to a figure deemed by them appropriate, and

(b) not to impose any increase, if having reviewed the implications of the increase, he or she determines it would be inappropriate to do so, having regard to any material factor applicable to the goods or services to which the charge relates.

To note the requirement of financial code 13 that Directors review the amounts their departments charge for goods or services and if they think any charge needs to be increased, they will recommend this to the appropriate Board. The Council therefore agrees that when a Director carries out such a review and believes a charge for goods or services should be levied which reflects an increase greater than the increase of 5% or the rate set in national legislation or guidance, he or she will be entitled to recommend the same to the appropriate Board for approval”.

Declarations of Interest

Having read the terms of the motion, Councillor Ann-Dowling declared an interest for the reason that she was Chair of the Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau. Councillor Ann-Dowling indicated that as she had declared an interest, she would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

Having read the terms of the motion, Councillor Montgomery declared an interest in item 2 for the reason that he was an employee of the Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau. Councillor Montgomery indicated that as he had declared an interest, he would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

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Having declared an interest Councillors Ann-Dowling and Montgomery left the meeting.

Councillor McMillan, seconded by Councillor Clark, moved as an amendment that:

“Renfrewshire Labour is concerned with addressing the impact, mitigation, and prevention of socio-economic inequality for the benefit of the citizens of Renfrewshire. We are committed to making life better by supporting economic growth and public transport initiatives, tackling climate change and the causes of poverty, poor housing and road standards, mental health care, welfare, and education. Renfrewshire Labour also recognises the importance of community spirit and the local infrastructure that supports wellbeing and social cohesion. This budget has been set within unprecedented financial constraints. Renfrewshire Labour recognises that over six billion pounds has been cut from Scottish local government budgets since 2013/14. Local government budgets have been cut by 12% while the Scottish Government budget has increased by 8%. At the same time, the Scottish Government has increasingly centralised control of services and has ringfenced most of this council's grant settlement, undermining local, democratic accountability. Renfrewshire Labour will prioritise available resources on local priorities. Renfrewshire Labour's budget is an aspirational, ambitious programme for change and renewal for the people of

Renfrewshire.

1. That as recommended by the Director, these budget proposals take a holistic view of resources available and include the use of the £0.300 million of available capital resources held in the Strategic Asset Management Fund outlined in Agenda item 4.

2. Council agrees the following capital commitments:

(a) £0.170 million to purchase an additional 'Roadmender' purpose built mobile asphalt batch plant to facilitate Pothole Repair and Utility Reinstatements in all Weather Conditions, to be funded from unallocated revenue balances, to assist in speedier, longer lasting pothole repairs.

(b) £0.300 million of unallocated capital resources held in the Strategic Asset Management Fund to upgrade works on existing council-controlled community centres, with specific upgrade proposals to be the subject of a future report to the Leadership Board. Well-used, well maintained community centres serve as warm, social meeting places and are often the heart of local community activities.

3. Renfrewshire Labour prioritises the needs of children and young people by seeking to break down the barriers to opportunity and by recognising the importance of providing material support for both post-covid recovery and the cost-of-living crisis. Council agrees the following recurring revenue commitments, to be funded in 2023/24 from the ringfenced financial sustainability reserve and Fairer Renfrewshire reserve, and thereafter to be incorporated into the Council's base budget plans:

(a) £0.300 million in additional ASN support within mainstream primary and secondary school settings through the provision of increased support staff and enhanced staff training. We acknowledge the additional educational challenges faced by children with additional support needs.

(b) £1.700 million in delivering universal free school breakfast clubs for all Renfrewshire primary and secondary school pupils, to ensure no child starts the school day hungry and in recognition of the failure of Scottish Government to deliver on its manifesto commitment of universal free school dinners for all primary school children.

(c) £0.100 million for the appointment of additional wardens to enhance community safety and combat destructive and disruptive social behaviour.

4. Council agrees the following non-recurring investments, to be funded from the financial sustainability reserve:

(a) Climate change is impacting our lives in Renfrewshire and on a global scale. Renfrewshire Labour recognises the urgency of the climate crisis. We are committed to Renfrewshire Council's stated aim to reach Net Zero and support a Carbon Neutral 2025 plan. To set an accurate base line underpinning council's Net Zero strategy council will invest £0.012 million in a basic emission calculation report (scope 1, 2 and 3)

(b) Council commits to re-skilling/up-skilling women to maximise career potential and broaden employment choices away from entrapment in low-paid jobs. To maximise women's awareness about the existing training support available council commits to invest £0.075 million for additional, targeted promotion and marketing utilising Renfrewshire Council corporate promotional channels.

(c) Renfrewshire Labour is seeking to build sustained growth across the Renfrewshire economy. Economic growth generates employment opportunities and tax revenue. Businesses are struggling to cope with the energy crisis and are being faced with greater levels of expenditure due to inflationary pressures. This is impacting existing businesses and deterring entrepreneurs from establishing new business ventures in Renfrewshire. Council will establish a Town Centre Task Force with an £0.500 million incentive programme to support retail / business start-up in town centres with high vacancy rates.

(d) Renfrewshire Labour is aware of the deep sense of isolation many people feel across Renfrewshire and the increasing number of people struggling with mental

health issues. Council will establish a loneliness and social isolation initiatives fund £0.075 million to support the social infrastructure that enables community cohesion and development.

(e) Violence and sexual harassment against women and girls are at epidemic levels across Scotland. Council will invest in awareness-raising programmes to decrease violence against women and girls and additional investment in support services £0.075 million.

(f) Renfrewshire Labour is committed to equality of opportunity and the well-being of our ex-services personnel and recognises their unique contribution in defence of our country's interests. Council will invest in Glasgow's Helping Heroes to expand services in Renfrewshire to offer additional, targeted support to ex-services personnel in Renfrewshire £0.075 million.

(g) Council approves additional top-up funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) of £0.150 million

5. Council further agrees the following:

(a) to invest £0.500 million in a tree planting programme to replace lost biodiversity from tree disease and housing development, subject to securing external funding via The Forestry Commission Tree Scapes Fund, Clyde Climate Forrest, Tree for Cities and all other available external funding streams. The Council instructs officers to investigate funding options and bring back a report to the Leadership Board by September 2023

(b) Council will maintain the current base budget provision of school-based art, music lessons and sports to ensure mental health and well-being benefits are maintained for pupils.

(c) Council instructs officers to investigate funding options to enable a new Johnstone High School to be progressed and bring back a report to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board by September 2023.

(d) Council instructs officers to investigate funding options to enable the extension of Gryffe High School to be progressed, and bring back a report to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board by September 2023

(e) Renfrewshire Labour campaigns for better buses in the awareness that there has been a steep decline in much needed bus services, potentially damaging our local economy and retail businesses and disadvantaging citizens who rely on public transport. Council instructs officers to investigate funding options from external funders such as SPT to enable the development of a Better Buses initiative, where it will cost members of the public not entitled to free bus travel £1 to travel to the centres of Renfrewshire Towns and Villages on one designated Saturday a month, and to bring back a report to the Leadership Board by September 2023.

(f) Council agrees to establish a Community Event Liaison Partnership led by council officers to formally coordinate the delivery and planning of festive events between council staff, local communities, OneRen and other relevant external parties. Progress tracking of Partnership activities to be the subject of future reports to the Leadership Board.

(g) Council commits to take back halls and community centres from OneRen to full Council control, of particular benefit of Villages who rely on local facilities. Council instructs officers to investigate the process and bring back a report including financial implications to the Leadership Board by September 2023.

6. As recommended in the Director's report; commits to maintain the Council's level of unallocated reserve at a minimum of £10.000 million moving into 2023/24. Council further agrees the proposals for consolidation of reserve balances and the indicative draw on ringfenced reserves as outlined at section 12 of the Director's report. Council agrees the investments above be funded in 2023/24 from a £0.600 million draw from the Fairer Renfrewshire reserve, £0.170 million from unallocated balances, £4.919 million from the financial sustainability reserve, and £0.300 million from the Strategic

Asset Management Fund.

7. In line with the conditions set out in the 2023/24 financial settlement, agree to the recommendation outlined in the Director's report to make available £0.388 million of recurring resources to manage the net impact of new service and cost pressures within Adult Social Care Services, and agrees a further estimated £3.3 million will follow in relation to the payment of the Living Wage once the distribution of the £100 million of resource for this purpose is formally confirmed. In addition, Council agrees to provide £1.054 million to Renfrewshire HSCP on a recurring basis, being a proportionate share of the funding provided in relation to the settlement of the 2022/23 local government pay award.

8. To agree the base budget assessment for all services for 2023/24 as recommended by the Director of Finance and Resources and agree a 2023/24 base budget of £483.228 million.

9. To agree to make provision for pay inflation as detailed in section 5.6 of the Director's report and make no general provision for general non-pay inflation as recommended by the Director.

10. To agree to a general 5% inflationary increase in charges for services as recommended by the Director and subject to the note at paragraph 15 below.

11. To agree the resource allocations for 2023/24 for all services, as amended by these proposals.

12. To agree the detailed Revenue Estimates for all services be amended to reflect these proposals and the necessary allocation of central support costs, central repairs costs, capital charges, specific grants and loan charges provision with Directors authorised to take any action necessary to implement these decisions.

13. Subject to agreement of the above, to agree that the council tax for 2023/24 be increased by 5% and therefore set Band D subjects at £1,422.62 and for all bandings to be set at:

Band	2022/23	2023/24
A	903.26	948.41
B	1,053.79	1,106.48
C	1,204.34	1,264.55
D	1,354.88	1,422.62
E	1,780.17	1,869.16
F	2,201.69	2,311.76
G	2,653.31	2,785.96
H	3,319.46	3,485.42

14. Subject to agreement of the points above, agree that the Council's budget is underpinned by appropriate decisions and makes appropriate provision to meet the specified commitments in the package of conditions linked to the Council's grant settlement.

15. To agree to increase other charges for services by 5% (as detailed in paragraph 10 above) or where appropriate by the rate set in national legislation or guidance, or where charges are based on full cost recovery by the appropriate increase to maintain this position, subject to Directors being authorised

(a) to round the charge up or down to a figure deemed by them appropriate, and

(b) not to impose any increase, if having reviewed the implications of the increase, he or she determines it would be inappropriate to do so, having regard to any material factor applicable to the goods or services to which the charge relates.

To note the requirement of financial code 13 that Directors review the amounts their departments charge for goods or services and if they think any charge needs to be increased, they will recommend this to the appropriate Board. The Council therefore agrees that when a director carries out such a review and believes a charge for goods

or services should be levied which reflects an increase greater than the increase of 5% or the rate set in national legislation or guidance, he or she will be entitled to recommend the same to the appropriate Board for approval”.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10.20 am to allow members to consider the motion and amendment. The meeting reconvened at 10.45 am.

On the roll being called, the following members voted for the amendment: Councillors Clark, Davidson, Gilmour, Grady, G Graham, N Graham, Gray, Leishman, J MacLaren, McCulloch, McDonald, McGonigle, McGuire, McMillan, Mullin and Smith.

The following members voted for the motion: Councillors Adam, Airlie-Nicolson, Burns, J Cameron, Provost L Cameron, Councillors Campbell, Andy Doig, Audrey Doig, Hannigan, Hughes, Innes, MacFarlane, K MacLaren, M MacLaren, McEwan, McGurk, McNaughtan, Mylet, Nicolson, Paterson, Rodden, Shaw and Steel.

16 members having voted for the amendment and 23 members having voted for the motion, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

DECIDED:

(a) That this Administration’s first budget would deliver on its commitments set out in the Council Plan to create a fairer Renfrewshire built on innovation, wellbeing and opportunity; where improving outcomes for children and families underpins all that we do;

(b) That as recommended by the Director, these budget proposals took a holistic view of resources available and included the use of the £0.300 million of available resources outlined in Agenda item 4 and directed them as follows: -

- Committed £0.450 million (being £0.300 million capital funding and £0.150 million revenue) to support the delivery of roads improvements and traffic reduction measures which followed the previously funded pilot scheme of Houston, Howwood, Kilbarchan and Bridge of Weir as Gateway Villages. This funding would be used in conjunction with capital contributions from our Cycling, Walking & Safer Routes funding over the next three years to deliver a total £1.5 investment which would improve the safety and natural environment in these villages. This Administration further commits £0.150 million of revenue funding to allow similar analysis to be undertaken to inform future investment in Bishopton, Lochwinnoch and Elderslie;
- Council also recognised the continuing significant investment in our roads infrastructure as outlined in the Capital Plan at Item 4 on the agenda, with £3 million from capital grant funds to bring this years’ roads investment to £6.7 million;

(c) That many communities, households and families across Renfrewshire had been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. Through our Fairer Renfrewshire programme, tackling inequality and poverty would continue to be key priorities for this Administration as we support communities to recover and thrive following the pandemic. Building on the funding commitments of the previous SNP Administration, and the successes of the programme over the course of 2022/23, this Administration would continue to prioritise resource for the programme; and consolidate ringfenced funding currently held in separate Tackling Poverty and Social Renewal reserve funds into a single resource estimated at £5 million to support a cohesive programme of Fairer Renfrewshire support activity. Initial

priorities for allocation of this funding would include:

- £0.068 million over two years to support the recently agreed 10% increase in the delivery of proactive advice services provided by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau, recognising the increased need for advice in the ongoing cost of living crisis;
- £0.300 million to support a £50 winter school clothing payment to each child eligible for school clothing grant, building on the support provided in 2022 which assisted over 5,000 children;
- £0.100 million to provide a programme of summer activities for children and young people from low-income families, encouraging them to access a wide range of activities and healthy food. It was anticipated that this fund would be supplemented by Scottish Government resource as was the case in 2021/22 and 2022/23;

(d) That in support of the Fairer Renfrewshire aims above, Council agreed to allocate top-up funding of £0.200 million to the Scottish Welfare Fund, to be drawn from the Welfare Reform ringfenced reserve;

(e) Council recognised the success of the Council's employability programme over many years, supported through both European and Scottish Government funding and that unemployment had reached a historically low figure. Acknowledging that the resource set aside in previous budgets may be partially released to support other priorities without impacting on current plans for employability support, Council would therefore re-direct £1.5 million of ringfenced funding to better support wider economic, social and wellbeing activity, with allocations being prioritised as follows:

(i) Committed £0.210 million to allow an increase in foster and kinship carer allowances by 10% as an interim measure while a substantive review of the levels of allowances was undertaken over the course of 2023/24 with recurring financial implications being incorporated into future financial plans;

(ii) In recognition of the critical role quality outdoor time had played in supporting our young people and wider communities during the challenging periods of lockdown, invested an additional £0.450 million in play areas, being £0.350 million for play parks renewals and £0.100 million for play park maintenance, adding significantly to the resource provided by the Scottish Government of £0.307 million for this purpose in 2023/24, and continuing our programme of parks improvement;

(iii) Delivering on our manifesto commitment to expand our very successful concessionary swim programme for parents accompanying a child under the age of one year old, committed £0.050 million as an initial allocation for 2023/24 to enable operation for an expanded programme which would allow free swimming to be offered to pre-school children, with this allocation being reviewed over the course of 2023/24 based on take up of this incentive;

(iv) Committed £0.200 million as an initial contribution to enable the resurfacing of the running track at OnX, while continuing to seek match funding from other stakeholders which would allow the track to continue to be used for the benefit of local athletes and schools;

(v) Committed £0.200 million to replenish the successful Villages Investment Fund;

(vi) Building on the huge success of our Team Up to Clean Up programme over the previous administrative term and outlining our commitment to cleaner streets, committed £0.090 million to the first year of a replacement public litter bin programme;

(f) That recognising the huge popularity and success of the Culture, Heritage and Events Fund (CHEF) and in order to support our local culture and heritage organisations, agreed to replenish the CHEF with £0.200 million from currently unallocated balances within the Culture Bid Legacy ringfenced reserve;

(g) Agreed to a new Sustainable Communities Fund which would consolidate the

current Community Empowerment Fund and the Climate Change Fund into a single fund estimated to exceed £0.500 million moving in to 2023/24, which when added to the estimated balance of capital funding available for community empowerment objectives would result in total funding exceeding £1 million. Council also committed to a review of the current application criteria and guidance in order to better support future applications to this fund which would support Renfrewshire's Net Zero aspirations;

(h) That Council also recognised the need to maintain a prudent level of unallocated reserves given the very high level of risk over the medium term as outlined in the Director's report; and as previously agreed by Council, committed to maintain the Council's level of unallocated reserve at a minimum of £10.000 million moving into 2023/24. Council further agreed the proposals for consolidation of reserve balances and the indicative draw on ringfenced reserves as outlined at section 12 of the Director's report. Council also agreed a further draw of £0.605 million from the ringfenced financial sustainability reserve in order to achieve the statutory breakeven budget position; and commits that action would be taken over the near-term to bring the Council's expenditure in line with available resource on a recurring basis; thereby ensuring the Council's ongoing financial sustainability;

(i) That to protect services to the most vulnerable in Renfrewshire, and in line with the conditions set out in the 2023/24 financial settlement, agreed to the recommendation outlined in the Director's report to make available £(0.388) million of recurring resources to manage the net impact of new service and cost pressures within Adult Social Care Services, and agreed a further estimated £3.3 million would follow in relation to the payment of the Living Wage once the distribution of the £100 million of resource for this purpose was formally confirmed. In addition, Council agreed to provide £1.054 million to Renfrewshire HSCP in support of the ongoing costs of the 2022/23 pay award;

(j) Agreed the base budget assessment for all services for 2023/24 as recommended by the Director of Finance & Resources and agreed a 2023/24 base budget of £483.228 million;

(k) Agreed to make provision in 2023/24 for pay inflation as detailed in section 5.6 of the Director's report and make no provision for general non-pay inflation, as recommended by the Director;

(l) Agreed to a general 5% inflationary increase in charges for services as recommended in the Director's report, subject to the note at paragraph 18 below. In addition, a garden waste permit scheme would be introduced during 2023/24 at a rate of £40 per property, with the operational policy supporting the introduction of this scheme being the subject of a future report to be considered by the Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board;

(m) Agreed the resource allocations for 2023/24 for all services, as amended by these proposals;

(n) Agreed the detailed Revenue Estimates for all services be amended to reflect these proposals and the necessary allocation of central support costs, central repairs costs, capital charges, specific grants and loan charges provision with Directors authorised to take any action necessary to implement these decisions;

(o) Subject to agreement of the above, agreed that the council tax for 2023/24 be set

at £1,436.17 for Band D subjects, representing a 6.0% increase in the 2022/23 level, and for all bandings to be set at:

Band	2022/23	2023/24
A	903.26	957.45
B	1,053.79	1,117.02
C	1,204.34	1,276.60
D	1,354.88	1,436.17
E	1,780.17	1,886.97
F	2,201.69	2,333.78
G	2,653.31	2,812.50
H	3,319.46	3,518.62

Noted that the increase of 6% supported a financially responsible objective of minimising the use of ringfenced reserve balances, thereby underpinning the Council's financial sustainability over the medium term and demonstrating the sound financial management this Administration was committed to;

(p) Subject to agreement of the points above, agreed that the Council's budget was supported by appropriate decisions and made appropriate provision to meet the specified commitments in the package of conditions linked to the Council's grant settlement; and

(q) Agreed to increase other charges for services by 5% (as detailed in paragraph (i) above) or where appropriate by the rate set in national legislation or guidance, or where charges were based on full cost recovery by the appropriate increase to maintain this position, subject to Directors being authorised

(i) to round the charge up or down to a figure deemed by them appropriate; and

(ii) not to impose any increase, if having reviewed the implications of the increase, he or she determined it would be inappropriate to do so, having regard to any material factor applicable to the goods or services to which the charge related.

Council noted the requirement of financial code 13 that Directors review the amounts their departments charged for goods or services and if they thought any charge needed to be increased, they recommend this to the appropriate Board. The Council therefore agreed that when a Director carried out such a review and believed a charge for goods or services should be levied which reflected an increase greater than the increase of 5% or the rate set in national legislation or guidance, he or she would be entitled to recommend the same to the appropriate Board for approval.

Sederunt

Councillors Ann-Dowling and Montgomery re-joined the meeting.

4 Non Housing Capital Investment Programme, Prudential Framework and Treasury Management Strategy, and Capital Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the

2023/24-2027/28 planned capital investment for non-housing services which covered a range of corporate projects across all service areas within the Council with the exception of council housing. The report advised that the resources available to support investment included prudential borrowing and capital grant as well as contributions from revenue, partners, and external funding bodies.

The report intimated that on 15 December 2022 the Scottish Government had published the draft Scottish Government budget for 2023/24 and the provisional local government finance settlement. The proposed 2023/24 capital grant for Renfrewshire Council was £19.169 million. It was noted that this was broadly in line with the level of general capital grant allocated to the Council in 2022/23 with the addition of £80 million relating to the expansion of free school meals and £120 million, non-recurring, to fund the 2022/23 local government pay award. It was highlighted that in the context of the current funding environment, there was little scope for any investment in assets other than rolling lifecycle maintenance, unless the Council was able to access and secure other sources of funding. There were likely to be limited opportunities for capital receipts as a source of income to the capital plan, potentially placing a greater reliance on increased borrowing as the main source of capital funding. It was highlighted that increased borrowing, would result in revenue pressures at a time when the revenue fund was also severely constrained. It was also noted that the capital plan outlined in the report and detailed in the Appendices to the report extended beyond 2023/24 but that no capital grant from 2023/24 had been incorporated. Approved programmes already in place which were funded by other arrangements, for example prudential borrowing or specific funding related to the City Deal had however been included. It was further noted that this approach did not preclude the Council taking further investment decisions as part of the budget process where separate funding arrangements were established.

The report stated that that the Prudential and Treasury Management Codes played a key role in capital finance in local authorities and required the Council to set prudential and treasury management indicators for the following three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Treasury Management Code further required that the Council approved, annually in advance, a strategy for its treasury management activities, whilst the Prudential Code also required full Council approval of the Capital Strategy which set out the long-term context within which capital investment decisions were made to improve capital, revenue and balance sheet planning. Details of the proposed prudential indicators and treasury management strategy and proposed capital strategy were attached as Appendices 3 and 4 of the report respectively.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the Capital Investment Programme, covering the period up to 2027/28, as summarised in Table 2 of the report and detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, be approved;
- (b) That the level of core capital grant available be noted and that it also be noted that no assumptions were included within the planned programme beyond this financial year in respect of future grant levels;
- (c) That authority be delegated to the relevant Heads of Service, in consultation with the Director of Finance & Resources, to adjust, where appropriate, resources across individual components of the lifecycle maintenance, roads and structures and schools investment programmes respectively;

(d) That the Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved subject to any required adjustments arising from decisions taken by the Council in relation to the capital and revenue budget reports submitted to this meeting of the Council;

(e) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24, including the treasury management indicators, set out in Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and

(f) That the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix 4 of the report be approved.

5 Housing Revenue Account Budget & Rent Levels 2023/24 and Housing Capital Investment Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

There was submitted a joint report by the Directors of Communities & Housing and Finance & Resources relative to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget 2023/24 and the Housing Capital Investment Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28. Information was also provided which enabled consideration of rent levels for 2023/24. The proposed budget adjustments for 2023/24 were shown across the high level HRA categories in summary form on Appendix 1 and were analysed in more detail in Appendix 2.

The report highlighted the impact of the economic pressures on the HRA and set out the range of operational pressures that had emerged and the adjustments to budgets and resources required to deal with these pressures. It was also highlighted that in setting the 2023/24 HRA budget, members required to consider the medium and longer-term financial context for the HRA considering the ongoing risks and challenges facing the HRA as outlined within the report.

An update was provided on the consultation undertaken with tenants on the annual rent setting process which had asked five key questions regarding the priorities tenants had identified previously and as to whether they felt they were still very important, important, or not important. The consultation results identified that only 3.8% of responses deemed the priorities previously identified as not important.

The report also detailed the Housing Capital Investment Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 which would deliver a total investment of £270.840 million in the Council's housing stock. It was anticipated that this level of investment would attract £26.595 million of government grant for projects including new-build housing and that this resulted in a net capital programme of £244.245 million.

Councillor McGurk, seconded by Councillor Innes, moved "that the recommendations in the report be amended as follows:

(i) Considers the contents of this report and approves an average weekly rent increase of £4.53, which is below the commitment made by COSLA to keep increases below £5 on average, and equates to a 5.5% increase for house rents. A 5.5% increase is also proposed for lock ups;

(ii) Approve the development of a tenant's support fund and to increase our housing

advice provision to support tenants in financial hardship;

(iii) Notes the findings of the recent Tenant Consultation exercise and the feedback from tenants concerning the importance of the ongoing capital investment in their homes and in regeneration, and instruct officers in identifying the £300k recurrent saving brought about by this motion to identify savings from revenue spending and operating costs (ie not capital financing costs) and bring back options to a future meeting of the Communities and Housing Board.

(iv) Agree that £300k from HRA reserve balances be utilised to compensate for a lower level of rent increase in 2023/24 while recurrent savings options are developed.

(v) Approves the Housing Revenue Account Budget for financial year 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 2 subject to the amendment in point (iv) above.

(vi) Approves the Housing Capital Investment Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report; and

(vii) Notes the continuing requirement to achieve best value in the commissioning of works by having an optimum workflow over the 5 years of the investment plan and authorises the Director of Communities and Housing to liaise with the Director of Finance and Resources to re-profile the capital programme and available resources, as necessary, in line with the appropriate limits established under the Council's capital prudential framework arrangements. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That an average weekly rent increase of £4.53 be approved, which was below the commitment made by CoSLA to keep increases below £5 on average and equated to 5.5% for house rents. A 5.5% increase was also proposed and approved for lock-ups;

(b) That the development of a tenant's support fund be approved and the provision of housing advice to support tenants in financial hardship be increased;

(c) That the findings of the recent Tenant Consultation exercise and the feedback from tenants concerning the importance of the ongoing capital investment in their homes and in regeneration be noted and that officers be instructed, in identifying the £300,000 recurrent saving brought about by this motion, to identify savings from revenue spending and operating costs and submit options to a future meeting of the Communities & Housing Policy Board;

(d) That it be agreed that £300,000 from HRA reserve balances be utilised to compensate for a lower level of rent increase in 2023/24 while recurrent savings options were developed;

(e) That the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 2 be approved subject to the amendment in point (d) above;

(f) That the Housing Capital Investment Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and

(g) That the continuing requirement to achieve best value in the commissioning of works by having an optimum workflow over the five years of the investment plan be noted and that the Director of Communities & Housing Services be authorised to liaise

with the Director of Finance & Resources to re-profile the capital programme and available resources, as necessary, in line with the appropriate limits established under the Council's capital prudential framework arrangements.

Valedictory

Councillor McGurk, as Convener of the Communities & Housing Policy Board, advised that this was the last meeting of the Council that Mary Crearie, Director of Communities & Housing Services would attend before her retirement and took the opportunity to thank her for service to the Council and made reference to her professionalism and the invaluable help, support and advice she had provided during her employment with Renfrewshire Council.

Sederunt

Having previously declared an interest in the following item of business Councillor K MacLaren left the meeting.

6 Council Motion – Street Furniture, Towns and Villages

Under reference to item 13 of the Minute of the meeting of the Council meeting held on 24 June 2021- there was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services relative to the motion agreed at that meeting in connection with the difficulties encountered by blind, visually impaired and disabled people resulting from the proliferation of street furniture in Renfrewshire towns and villages.

The report intimated that a survey had been developed by the Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership to engage with blind, visually impaired and disabled community organisations to gather as much information as possible regarding issues experienced by these communities in relation to street furniture in Renfrewshire towns and villages to enable identification of options and targeted intervention. A summary of the survey and outcomes received was provided within section 3 of the report. To address the survey's outcomes, the report proposed that a Town and Village Centre Engagement forum, comprising representatives from the Council's Environment & Infrastructure and Chief Executive's Services, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership, Paisley First, Renfrewshire Access Panel, Renfrewshire Visual and hearing-impaired Forums and Shopmobility, be created. The forum would meet three times a year, with the inaugural meeting being held during Spring 2023, to discuss community infrastructure matters as well as proposed future infrastructure or public realm projects in Renfrewshire.

The Head of Corporate Governance advised that the report required to be amended to indicate that future updates would be submitted to meetings of the Council rather than the Environment & Infrastructure Policy Board and that the word stakeholders should be deleted from paragraph 4.7 of the report.

DECIDED: That the creation of the Town and Village Centre Accessibility Forum be approved and that it be noted that updates, in the form of operational reports, would be submitted to future meetings of the Council.

Sederunt

Councillor K MacLaren re-joined the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11.50 am and reconvened at 12.20 pm.

7 Notice of Motion 1 by Councillors Smith and Davidson

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors Smith and Davidson in the following terms:

"Disposable Vapes Ban

Renfrewshire Council agrees to support the 'Ban Disposable Vapes' campaign. Council officers will write to the Scottish Government to ask them to enact the ban."

Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Davidson, then moved the motion which was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: Disposable Vapes Ban

Renfrewshire Council agrees to support the 'Ban Disposable Vapes' campaign. Council officers will write to the Scottish Government to ask them to enact the ban.

Sederunt

Having previously declared an interest in the following item of business Councillor McCulloch left the meeting.

8 Notice of Motion 2 by Councillors McCulloch and Montgomery

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors Montgomery and McCulloch in the following terms:

"Affordable Housing Programme

Despite nearly fifteen years of sustained affordable home building, and the repeal of the damaging 'Right to Buy' that crippled local affordable housing supply, the number of homeless families remains unacceptably high. Tens of thousands of people are without a place to call home, with thousands of children languishing in wholly unsuitable temporary accommodation.

Council calls upon the Scottish Government to further expand its affordable house building programme, focusing on building for social rent and ensuring homeless people are prioritised for these new homes to reduce homelessness across Scotland. Council further calls upon the Scottish Government to markedly increase and expand the provision and funding of critical housing support services, so that more people are offered the vital holistic support needed to avoid homelessness."

Councillor Montgomery, seconded by Councillor McMillan, then moved the motion.

Councillor Leishman, seconded by Councillor McGonigle, moved as an amendment

“That the number of homeless families remains unacceptably high. Tens of thousands of people are without a place to call home, with thousands of children languishing in wholly unsuitable temporary accommodation.

Council calls upon the Scottish Government to further expand its affordable house building programme, focusing on building for social rent and ensuring homeless people are prioritised for these new homes to reduce homelessness across Scotland. Council further calls upon the Scottish Government to markedly increase and expand the provision and funding of critical housing support services, so that more people are offered the vital holistic support needed to avoid homelessness.”

On the roll being called, the following members voted for the amendment: Councillors Adam, Airlie-Nicolson, Ann-Dowling, Burns, J Cameron, Provost L Cameron, Councillors Campbell, Clark, Davidson, Andy Doig, Audrey Doig, Gilmour, Grady, G Graham, Hannigan, Hughes, Innes, MacFarlane, K MacLaren, M MacLaren, McDonald, McEwan, McGurk, McGuire, McMillan, McNaughtan, Montgomery, Mullin, Mylet, Nicolson, Paterson, Rodden, Shaw, Smith and Steel.

The following members voted for the motion: Councillors N Graham, Gray, Leishman, J MacLaren and McGonigle.

5 members having voted for the amendment and 35 members having voted for the motion, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

DECIDED: Affordable Housing Programme

Despite nearly fifteen years of sustained affordable home building, and the repeal of the damaging ‘Right to Buy’ that crippled local affordable housing supply, the number of homeless families remains unacceptably high. Tens of thousands of people are without a place to call home, with thousands of children languishing in wholly unsuitable temporary accommodation.

Council calls upon the Scottish Government to further expand its affordable house building programme, focusing on building for social rent and ensuring homeless people are prioritised for these new homes to reduce homelessness across Scotland. Council further calls upon the Scottish Government to markedly increase and expand the provision and funding of critical housing support services, so that more people are offered the vital holistic support needed to avoid homelessness.

Sederunt

Councillor McCulloch re-joined the meeting.

9 Notice of Motion 3 by Councillors Innes and Audrey Doig

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors Innes and Audrey Doig in the following terms:

“Linwood War Memorial Association”

Council welcomes the news that Linwood War Memorial Association has received official charity status from the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Notes the hard work and dedication that has been put in by this local group to give Linwood a place to honour victims of war.

Council agrees that officers provide relevant support to Linwood War Memorial Society in their efforts going forward."

Councillor Innes, seconded by Councillor Audrey Doig, then moved the motion which was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: "Linwood War Memorial Association"

Council welcomes the news that Linwood War Memorial Association has received official charity status from the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Notes the hard work and dedication that has been put in by this local group to give Linwood a place to honour victims of war.

Council agrees that officers provide relevant support to Linwood War Memorial Society in their efforts going forward.

Sederunt

Having previously declared an interest in the following item of business Councillors Andy Doig and Audrey Doig left the meeting.

10 Notice of Motion 4 by Councillors N Graham and Leishman

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors N Graham and Leishman in the following terms:

"Opposition to any ban on alcohol advertising.

Council agrees to write to the Scottish Government to state our opposition to any ban on alcohol advertising in Scotland out with the safeguards that are already in place. The proposed legislation will have a damaging impact on Scotland and Renfrewshire.

Council will continue to work with services such as RCA Trust and partners across Renfrewshire and beyond to help those with addictions to alcohol and to promote the safe consumption of alcohol."

Councillor N Graham, seconded by Councillor Leishman, then moved the motion.

Councillor J Cameron, seconded by Councillor K MacLaren, moved as a first amendment that the motion be replaced with

"Council notes that the consultation on alcohol advertising is on-going. No decisions have yet been made on the types of restrictions that could be implemented. There are ongoing discussions with the drinks and advertising industry, and these will be considered as part of the consultation.

Council recognises that alcohol-related harm is one of the most pressing public health challenges in Scotland and that steps must be taken to reduce it. One of the key aims

of the proposed legislation is to limit the exposure of children to alcohol advertising.

Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drug Commission considered the impact of alcohol consumption on children in the home and the wider community. This included work by the Scottish Children's Parliament, from the report 'It's all around you, all the time'. The children who participated in this national investigation spoke about how visible and available alcohol is and the negative impact that this has on their lives.

Council supports a review on alcohol advertising and awaits the outcome of the consultation."

Councillor McMillan, seconded by Councillor Davidson, moved as a second amendment that

"Council notes that the Scottish Government are currently carrying out a consultation to seek views on potential restrictions on alcohol and promotion in Scotland.

This consultation is due to end on the 9th March.

Renfrewshire Council looks forward to hearing the results of this consultation".

In terms of Standing Order 27, Councillors J Cameron and K MacLaren, being the mover and seconder of the first amendment, accepted the second amendment as an addition.

On the roll being called, the following members voted for the amendment: Councillors N Graham, Gray, Leishman, J MacLaren and McGonigle.

The following members voted for the motion: Councillors Adam, Airlie-Nicolson, Ann-Dowling, Burns, J Cameron, Provost L Cameron, Councillors Campbell, Clark, Davidson, Gilmour, Grady, G Graham, Hannigan, Hughes, Innes, MacFarlane, K MacLaren, M MacLaren, McCulloch, McDonald, McEwan, McGurk, McGuire, McMillan, McNaughtan, Montgomery, Mullin, Mylet, Nicolson, Paterson, Rodden, Shaw, Smith and Steel.

34 members having voted for the amendment and 5 members having voted for the motion, the amendment was accordingly declared carried.

DECIDED:

Council notes that the consultation on alcohol advertising is on-going. No decisions have yet been made on the types of restrictions that could be implemented. There are ongoing discussions with the drinks and advertising industry, and these will be considered as part of the consultation.

Council recognises that alcohol-related harm is one of the most pressing public health challenges in Scotland and that steps must be taken to reduce it. One of the key aims of the proposed legislation is to limit the exposure of children to alcohol advertising.

Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drug Commission considered the impact of alcohol consumption on children in the home and the wider community. This included work by the Scottish Children's Parliament, from the report 'It's all around you, all the time'. The children who participated in this national investigation spoke about how visible and available alcohol is and the negative impact that this has on their lives.

Council supports a review on alcohol advertising and awaits the outcome of the consultation.

Council notes that the Scottish Government are currently carrying out a consultation to seek views on potential restrictions on alcohol and promotion in Scotland.

This consultation is due to end on the 9th March.

Renfrewshire Council looks forward to hearing the results of this consultation.

Sederunt

Councillors Andy Doig and Audrey Doig re-joined the meeting.

11 Notice of Motion 5 by Councillors Davidson and Ann-Dowling

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors Davidson and Ann-Dowling in the following terms:

"International Women's Day

Council notes that the 8th of March is International Women's Day. Council commends the annual illumination of Renfrewshire landmarks in the colour purple each year on the 8th March to celebrate the achievements of Renfrewshire Women and the indispensable contributions women make worldwide."

Councillor Davidson, seconded by Councillor Ann-Dowling, then moved the motion which was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: International Women's Day

Council notes that the 8th of March is International Women's Day. Council commends the annual illumination of Renfrewshire landmarks in the colour purple each year on the 8th March to celebrate the achievements of Renfrewshire Women and the indispensable contributions women make worldwide.

12 Notice of Motion 6 by Councillors McMillan and G Graham

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors McMillan and G Graham in the following terms:

"IJB Reserves

Council notes that the IJB are in the process of returning unspent monies previously allocated to them by the Scottish Government that was for Covid related issues.

Council believes that a substantial percentage of this money should be reallocated to Scottish councils in order for them to address the continuing challenges resulting from the pandemic.

Furthermore, council agrees to write to the finance minister to this effect."

Councillor McMillan, seconded by Councillor G Graham, then moved the motion which was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: IJB Reserves

Council notes that the IJB are in the process of returning unspent monies previously allocated to them by the Scottish Government that was for Covid related issues.

Council believes that a substantial percentage of this money should be reallocated to Scottish councils in order for them to address the continuing challenges resulting from the pandemic.

Furthermore, council agrees to write to the finance minister to this effect.

13 Notice of Motion 7 by Councillors Andy Doig and Hood

There was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillors Andy Doig and Hannigan in the following terms:

"Citizens Assembly on Council Tax
Replacement and the Funding of Local Government –

This Council regrets the lack of political impetus in Holyrood towards the replacement of the hated Council Tax with a comprehensive system of local government finance which is fair, progressive, and effective, and which delivers the certainty and fiscal security which Scottish local authorities need.

Council notes that a Citizens Assembly on Council Tax replacement was a condition of the SNP/Green Coalition Agreement, and looks with interest on the openness of the Welsh Labour/Plaid Cymru Government to new approaches for local government finance such as a Land Value Tax.

Council therefore calls on the Scottish Government to convene a Citizens Assembly on Council Tax replacement at the earliest opportunity, and on the conclusion of its findings and recommendations to convene an All Party Commission at Holyrood to examine them with a view to implementing the replacement of the Council Tax with an agreed alternative."

Councillor Andy Doig, seconded by Councillor Hannigan, then moved the motion.

Councillor McMillan, seconded by Councillor Clark, moved as an amendment:

"Council notes the SNP stood on a manifesto commitment in 2007 to abolish the Council Tax.

Council notes that this promise has never been delivered.

Council agrees a review of how local government in Scotland is financed is long overdue.

Other fundraising options should be looked at such as a tourist tax and land value tax. Council therefore agrees to write to the Finance Minister to urge the Scottish Government to start tackling this issue as a matter of urgency".

On the roll being called, the following members voted for the amendment: Councillors

Ann-Dowling, Clark, Davidson, Gilmour, N Graham, Grady, G Graham, Gray, Leishman, J MacLaren, McCulloch, McDonald, McGonigle, McGuire, McMillan, Montgomery, Mullin and Smith.

The following members voted for the motion: Councillors Adam, Airlie-Nicolson, Burns, J Cameron, Provost L Cameron, Councillors Campbell, Andy Doig, Audrey Doig, Hannigan, Hughes, Innes, MacFarlane, K MacLaren, M MacLaren, McEwan, McGurk, McNaughtan, Mylet, Nicolson, Paterson, Rodden and Steel.

18 members having voted for the amendment and 22 members having voted for the motion, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

DECIDED: Citizens Assembly on Council Tax
Replacement and the Funding of Local Government –

This Council regrets the lack of political impetus in Holyrood towards the replacement of the hated Council Tax with a comprehensive system of local government finance which is fair, progressive, and effective, and which delivers the certainty and fiscal security which Scottish local authorities need.

Council notes that a Citizens Assembly on Council Tax replacement was a condition of the SNP/Green Coalition Agreement, and looks with interest on the openness of the Welsh Labour/Plaid Cymru Government to new approaches for local government finance such as a Land Value Tax.

Council therefore calls on the Scottish Government to convene a Citizens Assembly on Council Tax replacement at the earliest opportunity, and on the conclusion of its findings and recommendations to convene an All Party Commission at Holyrood to examine them with a view to implementing the replacement of the Council Tax with an agreed alternative.

14 **Emergency Motion by Councillors McMillan and Mullin**

Councillor McMillan, seconded by Councillor Mullin, moved an emergency motion in the following terms:

“Changes to McGill's services

Council notes the information received by elected members from McGill's buses concerning changes to their services within the Renfrewshire area.

Council agrees to convene a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity with SPT, the Scottish Government, Local MSPs and the appropriate Councillors to discuss the impact of these changes and to seek any possible actions that would mitigate any possible negative impact on communities and the public who rely on bus travel”.

This was agreed unanimously.

It was proposed that McGills buses be represented at the meeting. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That Council notes the information received by elected members from McGill's buses concerning changes to their services within the Renfrewshire area and agrees to convene a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity with McGills buses,

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), the Scottish Government, local MSPs and the appropriate Councillors to discuss the impact of these changes and to seek any possible actions that would mitigate any possible negative impact on communities and the public who relied on bus travel.

That McGills buses be represented at the meeting