

Minute of Meeting Economy and Regeneration Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 24 January 2023	10:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Alison Ann-Dowling, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Graeme Clark, Councillor Andy Doig, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Colin McCulloch, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Andy Steel

Chair

Councillor Steel, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

A Morrison, Head of Economy & Development; B Walker, Programme Director (City Deal & Infrastructure), R Cooper, Economic Development Manager, G Hunter, Chief Economic & Regeneration Officer, E Shearer, Senior Manager for Regeneration and Place, V Thomson, Heritage Project Officer and D Christie, Senior Communications Officer (all Chief Executive's); G Dickie, Partnering & Commissioning Manager, D Pole, End User Technician, V Howie, Finance Business Partner, R Devine and E Gray, both Senior Committee Services Officers and D Cunningham, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources) and K Devine, Project Director (OneRen).

Webcasting of Meeting

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

Declarations of Interest

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

Transparency Statement

Councillor Nicolson indicated that he had a connection to Item 4 of the agenda – Cultural Infrastructure Projects: Update - by reason of him being a Director of the Paisley Museum Reimagined Board. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider that he had an interest to declare and intimated that it was his intention to remain in the meeting and to take part in any discussion and voting thereon.

1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a joint report by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the projected revenue outturn as at 11 November 2022 for those services reporting to the Economy & Regeneration Board which reported a breakeven position. The projected capital outturn for projects reporting to this Board as at 31 March 2023 was a breakeven position against the revised budget for the year. Tables 1 and 2 summarised the position and further analysis was provided in the appendices to the report. The report advised that since consideration of the previous report at the meeting of this Policy Board held on 1 November 2022 there had been net capital budget adjustments in the 2022/23 approved capital programme for Economy and Regeneration of £15.053m, largely as a result of reprofiling budget from 2022/23 into 2023/24 for Paisley Town Hall and Paisley Museum to reflect updated cashflows.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the projected Revenue outturn position detailed in Table 1 be noted;
- (b) That the projected Capital outturn position detailed in Table 2 be noted; and
- (c) That the budget adjustments detailed in sections 4 and 6 of the report be noted.

2 Renfrewshire Economic Profile Update (January 2023)

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the eighth edition of the Renfrewshire Economic Profile.

The report indicated that the purpose of the Economic Profile was to describe and track local demographics and economic indicators for Renfrewshire on an annual basis. The data and analysis presented provided context and a baseline to assess the Renfrewshire economy over time and enabled members to track changes in the local economy through a set of key statistical indicators. The report made reference to a number of key indicators and provided associated statistical data via an economic indicator dashboard. It was noted, in terms of the profile, that as with previous versions of the report, Scotland and Glasgow City Region (GCR) had been selected as the most appropriate comparators. The report highlighted that the profile aligned with the Renfrewshire Economic Strategy, would be shared with stakeholders and become the key source of data relating to the performance of the local economy.

It was proposed following reference to the closure of M&Co in Johnstone that officers from the Council's Economy and Development Service arrange to meet with the Administrators and the trade unions. This was agreed. The Convener, seconded by Councillor Campbell moved that the content of the January 2023 Renfrewshire Economic Profile Update be noted. This was agreed.

Councillor Doig, seconded by Councillor Steel, moved as an addition that 'this Board welcomes the continued success of the Retail Improvement Scheme in assisting town centre traders and small businesses across Renfrewshire's Town Centres to retain and improve their retail footfall, but notes with concern the level of town centre vacancy rates in both Paisley and Johnstone and therefore agrees that a Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce consisting of relevant officers be formed with a specific remit to examine the barriers to occupancy and letting, bringing forward potential policy changes that assist in removing identified barriers, promoting vacancies which are market ready and identifying actions for those which are not.' This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That officers from the Council's Economy and Development Service arrange to meet with the Administrators and the trade unions in connection with the closure of M & Co in Johnstone;

(b) That a Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce, consisting of relevant officers, be formed with a specific remit to examine the barriers to occupancy and letting, bringing forward potential policy changes that assist in removing identified barriers, promoting vacancies which were market ready and identifying actions for those which were not; and

(c) That the content of the January 2023 Renfrewshire Economic Profile Update be noted.

3 Net Zero Business Support and Grants

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Green Economy workstream, including the Net Zero Business Grant fund and wider support to businesses.

The report stated that an initial action within the Green Economy remit was the design and implementation of a Net Zero Business Grant for Renfrewshire. The Grant Fund had been established via resources secured through the Climate Change Action Fund and Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Fund and launched in June 2022. The report provided an overview of the fund to date, outlined actions to increase successful applicants, as well as the wider green economy support package being progressed with City Region Partners. Additional funding had been identified through the Business Theme of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which was open to small and medium sized enterprises with premises within Renfrewshire and enabled local businesses to apply for up to £10,000, to a maximum of 50% grant rate, towards eligible projects which would reduce their carbon emissions. The total fund available, to 31 March 2025, was approximately £500,000. It was noted that the grant fund had attracted significant interest and enquiries however conversions to successful applications had been limited. Various factors considered to be contributing to the low conversion rate were outlined within the report. A survey of Renfrewshire businesses was currently being undertaken to provide a platform for businesses to communicate

the obstacles and challenges they faced in achieving net zero and to inform the Council's approach to green business support provision.

It was proposed that an online discussion event be convened with all elected members to obtain their views and feedback received by them from businesses within their wards as to potential revisions to Net Zero Business support and grant eligibility criteria with the aim of increasing uptake. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That an online discussion event be convened with all elected members to obtain their views and feedback received by them from businesses within their wards as to potential revisions to Net Zero Business support and grant eligibility criteria with the aim of increasing uptake and that otherwise the report be noted.

4 **Cultural Infrastructure Projects - Update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the progress of the Council's Cultural Infrastructure Programme, which was being delivered on behalf of the Council by the City Deal & Infrastructure Team, with project management expertise from the Council's Property Services team, and in the case of the Paisley Museum Project, OneRen.

The report stated that the Cultural Infrastructure Programme was a once-in-a-generation investment in Paisley town centre that would use Paisley's internationally significant cultural and heritage story to transform the future for visitors and events within Scotland. The programme of work would bring new footfall and life to the town centre, new homes, top class events and life-changing cultural experiences whilst preserving the heritage of the town. It was highlighted that since the beginning of the Cultural Infrastructure Programme, the scale of the economic shock experienced from global events, such as the pandemic and war in Ukraine, had been unforeseeable and introduced significant pressure on the Council and its contractors in delivering the ambitious plans. Completion of the projects was central to the recovery and inclusive growth of the Renfrewshire economy and Paisley Town Centre. It was highlighted that whilst each of the Cultural Infrastructure projects individually contributed to economic growth in Renfrewshire, it was important to note that the combined social and economic outcomes from the investments was greater than the sum of the individual parts. Coupled with the Council's wider economic investments in City Deal, AMIDS, housing and other regeneration projects the social and economic outcomes for local residents and visitors was enhanced further.

Individual updates were provided in respect of the Paisley Town Hall Redevelopment, Paisley Learning and Cultural Hub, Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley Museum Reimagined, Abbey Quarter and St James Playing Fields & Ferguslie Sports Centre Projects and the Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme 2 (TH.CARS2), together with details of community benefits, marketing, communications and engagement arrangements. It was noted that planned progress had been difficult to maintain in line with programmes on all projects and that the Council continued to work closely with contractors to monitor and provide reasonable support to ensure the successful delivery of the projects. The Council and OneRen teams were currently working together to finalise opening plans for venues and an update would be prepared and submitted to the next meeting of this Policy Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the progress and current stage of construction of the projects outlined in the report be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that OneRen would submit details of the cultural infrastructure opening programme and marketing plans to the next meeting of this Policy Board.

5 **Tourism Update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the development of a new Tourism Action Plan.

The report advised that the Renfrewshire Visitor Plan, produced within the context of a live bid for the 'UK City of Culture 2021', had concluded in 2021, with annual reports and a final report submitted to the meeting of the Leadership Board held on 2 December 2020. In this respect, there was now perceived to be an opportunity to refresh Renfrewshire's approach to supporting tourism in the context of an 'action' plan that set out a number of key themes. Reference was made to the investment in Paisley's cultural infrastructure and its anticipated impact on the visitor economy in the region. It was also highlighted that the region was home to a national gateway in the form of Glasgow International Airport and that it was vital that Renfrewshire built on this success to support wider tourism ambitions across the region.

The report made reference to strategic links already in place which could be utilised to develop and support a Tourism Action Plan, the review of the current position of Renfrewshire's tourism economy, undertaken by Business Pointer, and areas for future focus. Initial work had been carried out to consider the key strengths and opportunities of the tourism sector and a series of key themes identified, namely Collaboration, Infrastructure, Rural Renfrewshire, Paisley, Events, and Business Tourism. It was also indicated that work would continue with key industry stakeholders to build on the key themes and develop a new tourism action plan by March 2023.

It was proposed that the Head of Marketing & Communications be invited to provide, at the next meeting of this Policy Board to be held on 14 March 2023, a summary of planned promotional activity, (i) for the wider Renfrewshire area; and (ii) that builds on the significant capital investment across key buildings in Paisley. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the work undertaken and progress to date in engaging industry and key stakeholders around a series of key themes for progression be noted;

(b) That the intent to develop a new Tourism Action Plan, by March 2023, which would be led by a new tourism industry group, aligned to the Economic Leadership Panel, be noted; and

(c) That that the Head of Marketing & Communications be invited to provide, at the next meeting of this Policy Board, a summary of planned promotional activity, (i) for the wider Renfrewshire area; and (ii) that builds on the significant capital investment across key buildings in Paisley.