

Minute of Meeting

Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 14 February 2020	11:30	Corporate Meeting Room 2, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present

Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Andy Doig, Councillor Tom Begg and Councillor Bill Binks (all Renfrewshire Council); and Councillor David Wilson and Councillor Innes Nelson (both Inverclyde Council).

Chair

In the absence of a Chairperson, Councillor Wilson, Vice Chair, presided.

In Attendance

F Carswell, Interim Park Co-ordinator, F Carlin, Head of Planning and Housing Services (Lead Officer), A MacArthur, Head of Finance, S Jones, Assistant Regeneration Manager, M Ball, Principal Accountant (Managing Accounting) and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council); and P Bonfanti, Auditor (Audit Scotland).

Declarations of Interest

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

Additional Items

The Vice Chair intimated that there were additional items of business in relation to North Ayrshire Council and Rigghill Wind Farm, Skelmorlie which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting. The Vice Chair, being of the opinion that the items which are dealt with at items 3 and 11 below, were urgent in view of the need to advise members of the position, authorised their consideration.

1 Minute of Joint Committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 6 September 2019.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Minute of Consultative Forum

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Consultative Forum held on 6 September 2019.

DECIDED: That the Minute be noted.

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Councillor Andy Doig entered the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

3 North Ayrshire Council

The Lead Officer advised that at a meeting held on 12 February 2020 North Ayrshire Council considered a report which sought approval to withdraw from Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

At the meeting it had been agreed that North Ayrshire Council would serve notice to withdraw from Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Joint Committee and that officers would agree the date of North Ayrshire's withdrawal from the Joint Committee with Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils.

DECIDED: That the decision taken by North Ayrshire Council be noted.

4 Revenue Budget Monitoring

There was submitted a revenue budget monitoring report by the Treasurer in respect of the Joint Committee for the period 1 April 2019 to 3 January 2020.

The report intimated that gross expenditure was currently £19,000 underspent and income was currently £5,000 over-recovered resulting in a net underspend of £24,000. The projected year end position showed an increase to the general reserve of £17,500.

At the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 21 June 2019 it was decided that the one-off costs for the early release of staff, estimated to be £68,761, would be funded by utilising £20,000 of reserves with the remaining balance being funded by constituent authorities in proportion to the requisition level in 2017/18. It was noted that the actual one-off costs were £73,250 and that due to the projected year end underspend the additional costs would be met from the current year revenue budget.

DECIDED: That the report be noted

5 Revenue Estimates 2020/21

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Committee held on 21 June 2019 there was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the revised revenue estimates for 2020/21 and associated requisitions, a copy of which were appended to the report.

The report intimated that revised revenue estimates for 2019/20 had been agreed at the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 21 June 2019 following the outcome of a service review and associated voluntary redundancy exercise.

The general financial environment in which the Park Authority and constituent authorities operated continued to be characterised by cost and income pressures and the Park Authority had a demonstrable history of seeking operational savings and alternative income sources to ensure financial sustainability.

However, the level of requisition income available from constituent authorities had been reducing in recent years, most significantly in the case of North Ayrshire Council who had intimated that it would not be in a position to make any requisition payment in 2020/21. Given this position, and the impact this loss of income would have on the already pressured financial position of the Park, budget estimates for a single year only had been outlined in this report, with the expectation that an updated financial outlook would be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee to be held on 19 June 2020.

The report provided information on the revised expenditure forecast constructed on the basis of the budget assumptions detailed in the report; the level of revised requisition in 2020/21; and the savings required in 2020/21 in order for the Park Authority to break even.

The report proposed that in order to continue park operations in the coming months, the Joint Committee agree to the utilisation of up to £30,000 of reserves for the period to the end of June 2020, at which point a further update with regards the financial outlook for the Park would be considered by the Joint Committee.

The Interim Park Co-ordinator and Lead Officer would continue to control expenditure on a 'bottom line' basis and any significant factors which affected either expenditure or income would be reported to the Joint Committee at the earliest opportunity.

DECIDED:

(a) That the revenue estimates of the Joint Committee for 2020/21, as detailed in the appendix to the report, be approved and that the requisitions payable by each constituent authority, as detailed in paragraph 4.3 of the report, be agreed;

(b) That the utilisation of reserve balances to meet the projected funding gap over the period to the end of June 2020, as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report, be approved; and

(c) That it be noted that an updated financial outlook would be developed and submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee to be held on 19 June 2020.

6 Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2019/20

There was submitted a report by Audit Scotland relative to the annual audit plan 2019/20 for the Joint Committee which outlined Audit Scotland's planned activities in their audit for the 2019/20 financial year. A copy of the annual audit plan was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That Audit Scotland's annual audit plan 2019/20 be noted.

7 Pricing Policy for Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the proposed pricing policy for Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park for 2020, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report intimated that prices were benchmarked and reviewed annually. A concession rate was provided for most activities to allow young people and disadvantaged groups access to services.

The outdoor learning activities provided by the Countryside Ranger Service was currently supported through the Park's core funding. In pursuit of best value, the report proposed that a new pricing policy for ranger led services be piloted in 2020 to enable a more efficient deployment of resources and to allow the service to respond to known peaks in demand.

DECIDED:

(a) That the pricing policy for 2020 be supported; and

(b) That the continued efforts to develop services and increase income from all sectors be recognised.

8 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Annual Report 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Annual Report 2018/19, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The annual report provided a summary of outputs and achievements for the year in alignment with the approved Park Strategy and Action Plan 2016/21.

DECIDED:

(a) That the content of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Annual Report 2018/19 be noted; and

(b) That the continued efforts to provide services effectively and efficiently be recognised.

9 Quarterly Health and Safety Report

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator providing information on the quarterly health and safety monitoring for the period July to September 2019.

The report intimated that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents. It was noted that staff continued to work with Renfrewshire Council Health and Safety officers to align its health and safety policies, plans and accident prevention programmes with those currently in use within Renfrewshire Council.

DECIDED: That it be noted that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents during the period.

10 Quarterly Absence Statistics

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the quarterly absence statistics for the period 24 June to 22 September 2019.

The report provided information relating to the absence statistics and reasons for absence.

DECIDED: That the quarterly absence statistics for the period 24 June to 22 September 2019 be noted.

11 Rigghill Wind Farm

Councillor Nelson advised that this matter had been discussed at the earlier meeting of the Consultative Forum when it had been decided that the Consultative Forum would submit a formal objection to North Ayrshire Council in connection with the planning application for Rigghill Wind Farm, Skelmorlie.

Councillor Nelson proposed that the Joint Committee also submit a formal objection to North Ayrshire Council in connection with the planning application for Rigghill Wind Farm, Skelmorlie and this was agreed unanimously. It was then proposed that members of the Joint Committee advise Councillor David Wilson, Vice Chair of the Joint Committee and Councillor Audrey Doig, Renfrewshire Council of the grounds for refusal they wished included in the objection for submission to North Ayrshire Council. This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Vice Chair submit a formal objection to North Ayrshire Council, on behalf of the Joint Committee, in connection with the planning application for Rigghill Wind Farm, Skelmorlie; and

(b) That members of the Joint Committee advise Councillor David Wilson, Vice Chair of the Joint Committee and Councillor Audrey Doig, Renfrewshire Council of the grounds for refusal they wished included in the objection for submission to North Ayrshire Council.

12 Date of Next Meeting

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held at 11.30 am on 19 June 2020 in the offices of North Ayrshire Council; and

(b) That members be advised if the venue for the meeting required to be changed.