

## Minute of Meeting Economy and Regeneration Policy Board

| Date                      | Time  | Venue  |
|---------------------------|-------|--|
| Tuesday, 07 November 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 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, R Cooper, Economic Development Manager, E Shearer, Senior Manager for Regeneration and Place (all Chief Executive's); and V Howie, Finance Business Partner and R Devine and E Gray, both Senior Committee Services Officers (all Finance & Resources).

### 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.

### Apology

Councillor McCulloch.

## **Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements**

Councillor Campbell indicated that she had a connection to item 6 of the agenda – Paisley Centre redevelopment - update - as she was an employee of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde but not in the Council's area. However, she indicated that she had applied the objective test and did not consider she had an interest to declare and intimated that it was her intention to remain in the meeting and to take part in any discussion or voting thereon.

### **1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report as at 15 September 2023**

There was submitted a joint report by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance & Resources for the period 1 April to 15 September 2023.

The report stated that the projected outturn as at 31 March 2024 for those services reporting to this Policy Board was an underspend position of £0.03 million. The projected capital outturn for projects reporting to this Policy Board as at 31 March 2024 was a breakeven position against the revised budget for the year. Tables 1 and 2 within the report summarised the position and further analysis was provided in appendices to the report. The report also advised there had been net revenue budget adjustments totalling £0.051 million processed since consideration of the previous report, and capital budget changes to date in the 2023/24 approved capital programme for Economy and Regeneration of £8 million. Details of the adjustments were provided within the report.

#### **DECIDED:**

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

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

(c) That the budget adjustments, detailed in sections 4 and 6 of the report, be noted.

#### **Sederunt**

Councillor McGurk joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

### **2 Scotland Loves Local Update 2**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Scotland Loves Local scheme in Renfrewshire.

The report provided an update on the Scotland Loves Local scheme in Renfrewshire, advising of take-up and spend to date, setting out future Council objectives and the associated marketing and activities plan to achieve these objectives. It was highlighted that the report required to be amended to indicate that the annual order form for the licence had been signed on 24 May 2023.

During discussion regarding the Marketing and Communications Plan it was intimated that arrangements would be made to provide elected members with further information regarding the scheme to enable them to promote the campaigns and support the development of the programme.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That the proposed objective framework and associated marketing and activities plan be approved;
- (b) That the Head of Economy & Development be authorised to continue the scheme until May 2025; and
- (c) That the report be otherwise noted.

**3 Retail Improvement Scheme – Update and Next Steps**

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of the Leadership Board held on 20 April 2022 there was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Retail Improvement Scheme (RIS).

The report advised that the RIS had operated annually since 2012 and supported Renfrewshire based businesses to undertake external property improvements. Grants were available for up to 70% of qualifying works to a current maximum of £12,000. In exceptional circumstances, larger awards had been offered to support projects which would likely result in significant regeneration outcomes. Since its inception, the RIS had been an important aspect of the Council's agenda for improving local town centres and building positive relationships with the local business community. An appendix to the report provided a detailed review of the scheme between 2021/24. It was highlighted that initially no funds had been allocated for the RIS for 2023/24, however, in recognising the importance of the RIS in supporting local businesses and making town centres more attractive and vibrant places, officers had launched a further round of funding, in August 2023, using unspent budget allocations from preceding years of £70,000. Interest in the new round of funding had exceeded the available budget and the report proposed that officers would consider how to fund future rounds of the RIS and report progress, on a rolling basis, to future meetings of this Policy Board.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That the Head of Economy & Development be authorised to explore potential funding options for future rounds of the Retail Improvement Scheme; and
- (b) That the report be otherwise noted.

#### 4 **Shared Prosperity Funding: Business Challenge Fund**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the proposed development of a Business Challenge Fund under the Local Business theme of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

The report advised that the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) was part of the Levelling Up programme to replace European Union financial support across the UK. There were three SPF investment priorities, Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. Additionally, the Multiply Programme, aimed at numeracy skills, sat as a separate, but linked, element of the SPF programme. Renfrewshire Council had been awarded £6.29 million from the SPF in respect of the 2022/25 programme period with the funding split across the three elements and the “Multiply” numeracy skills programme.

The report built on previous overview reports to the Policy Board on the progress and plans for the SPF programme in Renfrewshire and specifically provided an update on the proposed development of a Business Challenge Fund, under the Local Business theme, for the 2024/ 2025 programme period.

#### **DECIDED:**

(a) That the launch of the proposed Business Challenge Fund this year with £0.5 million Shared Prosperity Fund funding, to be delivered through extending and augmenting the existing Employability Grant Programme being delivered through the Local Employability Partnership, be agreed;

(b) That it be noted that regular updates would be submitted to this Policy Board on the implementation of the Challenge Fund and all projects supported through the Shared Prosperity Fund; and

(c) That the report be otherwise noted.

#### 5 **Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce – Vacant Shops Grant Scheme**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to progress made by the Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce in respect of developing a Vacant Shops Grant Scheme, together with updates on issues within the remit of the Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce.

The report outlined the remit and objectives for the Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce and detailed proposed activity to achieve these objectives. One of the specific initiatives referenced within the report was the Vacant Shop Grant Scheme and further information in respect of the core objectives of the scheme, funding, identification of properties and application process was provided.

#### **DECIDED:**

(a) That the creation of a Vacant Shops Grant Scheme, utilising existing identified budget for the Town Centre Vacancy Taskforce, be approved; and

(b) That the report be otherwise noted.

## 6 **Paisley Centre redevelopment - update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the proposed redevelopment of the Paisley Shopping Centre.

The report provided an update on the proposed redevelopment of the Paisley Shopping Centre since the granting of planning permission in principle in March 2022, highlighting aspects such as deliverability, cost and funding of the proposals and overall commercial viability challenges that had been assessed to deliver the scheme. The report indicated that the proposed development by Beyond Retail was not considered viable for 100% private sector funding and proposed that a detailed business case be prepared by the shopping centre owner which would highlight any potential role for the public sector in supporting a viable proposal.

It was noted that arrangements would be made to circulate details of Council-led interventions in similar non-commercially investable hotel developments undertaken in the UK to elected members.

Councillor Andy Doig, being the mover of an amendment, which failed to find a seconder asked that his dissent be recorded in terms of Standing Order 24.

### **DECIDED:**

(a) That the Council continue to work in conjunction with Beyond Retail to further develop a full business case for the proposed redevelopment of the Paisley Centre site;

(b) That it be noted that regular update reports would be submitted to future meetings of this Policy Board as the business case was progressed;

(c) That it be noted that Beyond Retail's business case would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board for consideration;

(d) That it be noted that arrangements would be made to circulate details of Council-led interventions in similar non-commercially investable hotel developments undertaken in the UK to elected members; and

(e) That otherwise the report be noted.