

## Minute of Meeting Economy and Regeneration Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 28 May 2024	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 Robert Innes, Councillor Janis McDonald, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Andy Steel

### In Attendance

A Morrison, Head of Economy & Development, E Shearer, Senior Manager for Regeneration & Place, J Mackie, Principal Regeneration & Place Officer, J McLean, Vocational Training Officer (Programme Co-ordinator), H Stephen, Social Policy, Economic Development Graduate Intern, N Kiernan and M Doig, Economic Development Officers (Programmes & Performance) (all Chief Executive's); and C McCourt, Head of Finance & Procurement, R Devine, Senior Committee Services Officer and J Barron, Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

### Chair

Councillor Steel, Convener, presided.

### 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.

### Transparency Statements

Councillor Ann-Dowling indicated that she had a connection to item 3 by reason of her role as a foster carer. However, she indicated that she had applied the objective test and did not consider she had an interest to declare.

## **Declarations of Interest**

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

### **1 Johnstone Town Centre Vision Framework**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Johnstone Town Centre Vision Framework.

The report made reference to the existing Johnstone Town Centre strategy, produced in 2016, which provided a positive framework for investment within the town centre, the significant changes in retail trends in recent years, commuting patterns and climate resilience which impacted upon our centres. A strong demand had also emerged for town centres as places which supported local living and reduced the need to travel. A vision Framework had been developed, in that context, to reimagine Johnstone town centre, ensuring that it evolved as a diverse, sustainable and thriving place which served both the local community and settlements across West Renfrewshire, both currently and in the future.

The high-level Framework, developed in partnership with the local community, captured the priorities of local people while being flexible in response to changing circumstances, funding opportunities and available support. The Framework set out a vision for Johnstone town centre as a vibrant and distinctive place, supporting residents to live well locally while recognising the role of the centre as a hub for those across West Renfrewshire. It imagined the town centre as a well-connected place which offered a mix of spaces, uses and activities and a place which celebrated its heritage but looked forward to a positive future. Five key principles of identity, movement, economy and prosperity, heritage and culture and people and community underpinned the vision. These principles were supported by ten projects which helped to deliver the vision, ranging from 'early win' projects to longer term aspirations. A summary of project types was provided together with funding sources. The Framework provided a guide for action and decisions over initiatives and partnerships within the town centre over the next ten-year period.

Councillor Andy Doig proposed that recommendation 2.1 (ii) of the report be amended by adding "in particular to liaise with the Chief Planning Officer about the progress of the Millbrae planning application, and to liaise with the Chief Executive of OneRen about promoting the Theatre in Johnstone Town Hall as an arts and cultural venue". This was accepted by the Convener and agreed unanimously.

#### **DECIDED:**

- (a) That the Johnstone Town Centre Vision Framework be approved;
- (b) That the Head of Economy & Development be authorised to progress actions to realise aspirations within the framework, in particular, to liaise with the Chief Planning Officer about the progress of the Millbrae planning application, and to liaise with the Chief Executive of OneRen about promoting the Theatre in Johnstone Town Hall as an arts and cultural venue;

(c) That the Head of Economy & Development be authorised to explore potential funding opportunities from external sources to support the delivery of the Framework;

(d) That the Head of Economy & Development be authorised to undertake appropriate consultation and publicity with the local community and stakeholders to support further delivery of the Framework; and

(e) That it be noted that further progress on delivery of the Framework would be submitted to the Policy Board as appropriate.

## **2 Glasgow City Region Investment Zone – Renfrewshire Council Application**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the progress of the Glasgow City Region Investment Zone (GCRIZ) and seeking approval of the Council's application for funding submitted for an investment zone at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland (AMIDS).

Reference was made to the report submitted to the meeting of this Policy Board held on 19 March 2024 which had advised that the Glasgow City Region (GCR) had been allocated £160m of funding from the Scottish and UK governments over a ten-year period to form an investment zone (IZ), with the aim of stimulating private sector investment, which in turn would increase the GCR's innovation potential, drive economic growth, reduce economic inequalities and create high value jobs across the Region. The finalised programme for the IZ would be subject to final agreement from both the UK and Scottish Government and require to comply with both the Levelling-Up Strategy and the Scottish National Strategy for Economic Transformation. It was highlighted that the IZ funding could be used flexibly between capital/revenue spending and tax incentives for investing companies. To determine the allocation of funding, the GCR had carried out a number of key stages, including the scoping of key objectives and parameters, an open call for eligible applications and collation of proposals and projects. Summaries detailing current activity in terms of each stage was provided.

The report stated that the main emphasis for the Council's IZ bid was to achieve the overarching ambition of AMIDS becoming Scotland's premier destination for advanced manufacturing innovation. Securing IZ funding would complement and support previous infrastructure investment creating a conducive environment for growth and development. The Council's bid had been developed in collaboration with its Joint Venture partner and key stakeholders. The Council's bid planned to use IZ funding to help implement the AMIDS Development Programme (ADP), which aimed to scale up activities at AMIDS, acting as a catalyst for securing additional investment and creating modern workspace for advanced manufacturing companies which would ultimately increase economic activity to benefit local, regional, and national economies.

The ADP comprised an integrated series of IZ projects and bids, from the Council and AMIDS partners, aimed at achieving transformative advanced manufacturing development. The ADP was dependent on realising three objectives: enhancing modern infrastructure for sectoral growth, attracting future investment and increasing skills and innovation among the workforce and businesses. It was anticipated that securing IZ funding would be a key driver in achieving these outcomes. Specifically,

the Renfrewshire Council IZ bid was based upon two main elements: creation of a tax site at Netherton Campus alongside Westway and potentially Glasgow Airport and securing capital investment for “Tech Terrace” at Netherton Campus, a new facility providing modern individual spin out units with a specific focus on advanced manufacturing SMEs. The Council had also asked for potential additional capital investment which would enhance the appeal of AMIDS further to potential occupiers and improve development viability. A copy of the full application submission was available to elected members on request.

GCR would review and assess all IZ bid applications and prepare an Investment Zone Programme based on the finalised sector, projects and tax sites which would be submitted to both the UK and Scottish Governments for sign-off. It was expected that this process would be completed by Summer 2024. The outcome of the Council’s bid for IZ funding and future governance arrangements regarding the IZ funding would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board, once the position had been confirmed by the GCR and Government.

**DECIDED:**

(a) That the Council's submission for Investment Zone funding at AMIDS, including bidding to become one of the Investment Zone’s tax sites, encompassing Netherton Campus, Westway and potentially Glasgow Airport, as well as applying for capital investment to help fund “Tech Terrace” at Netherton Campus and to attract potential occupiers to improve future development viability be approved; and

(b) That the timescales for the development of the GCR Investment Zone proposal for submission to UK/Scottish Governments be noted and that it also be noted that updates and required approvals would be submitted to this Policy Board at regular intervals as appropriate.

### 3 **Modern Apprenticeship Programme Update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Modern Apprenticeship Programme.

The report advised that. Renfrewshire Council’s Modern Apprenticeship Programme had been successfully delivered for approximately 18 years, supporting approximately 80 apprentices at any given time, with around 30 new opportunities available each year. The Modern Apprenticeship Programme mainly supported young people aged 16 to 24 into employment, however, increasingly opportunities were being made available to applicants of all ages, with particular support offered to those aged up to 29 who were disabled or care experienced. The programme outcomes consistently exceeded national targets, compared well to other providers and were shown to support under-represented individuals and groups. The report provided updates on progress of the Programme during 2023/24, advised that the Skills Development Scotland contract had been renewed for 2024/25 and that up to 27 modern apprenticeship opportunities would be available.

**DECIDED:** That the continuation of funding from Skills Development Scotland into 2024/25 be noted and the content of the report be noted.

#### 4 **Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) 2022/23 Indicators Framework Report**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) 2022/23 Indicators Framework Report.

The report advised that SLAED was the network for Scottish economic development officers providing an annual report on local authority economic development activity and performance, which was published by the Improvement Service. The Indicators Framework divided data into five categories, namely inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, as well as information in respect of priority areas such as wellbeing economies and inclusive growth. The report facilitated meaningful comparisons to be made on the relative performance of areas, which assisted with monitoring of performance and effective resource allocation. A copy of the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) 2022/23 Indicators Framework Report was attached as Appendix 1 of the report.

**DECIDED:** That the contents of the report, which summarised the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) Indicators Framework Report 2022/23, and Renfrewshire Councils contribution towards local and national economic development, be noted.

#### 5 **Scottish Government Employability Grant Award 2024/25**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the 2024/25 funding allocation from the Scottish Government for employability support in Renfrewshire.

The report stated that employability played an essential role in delivering both Scottish and local government's aims of tackling poverty, promoting inclusion and social justice and creating a fair and prosperous Scotland. It was also a key component of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), contributing to delivery of the vision for a strong economy where good, secure and well-paid jobs and growing businesses drove a significant reduction in poverty and child poverty. Collectively, Scottish and local government aimed to build an employability system that tackled inequalities in Scotland's labour market by creating a more responsive, joined up and aligned employability system that met the needs of employers and local labour market and helped people of all ages achieve their potential. Reference was made to the significant challenges and barriers faced by many individuals to obtaining and sustaining work and the consequential demand for employability support.

The No One Left Behind initiative promoted a strengthened partnership approach where Scottish and local government worked together with public, private and third sector organisations to identify local needs and deliver a mixed economy of provision. Local authorities acted as lead accountable bodies for funding, with funding being used by Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) to design and deliver services that met the needs of people and labour markets in their area.

The Scottish Government had announced its budget earlier in 2024 and indicated a figure of around £90 million for employability support, of which £75.196 million would be provided to Councils and Local Employability Partnerships. Renfrewshire Council would be accountable for the resources which would be directed and managed

through the Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership. Indicative allocations were provided to Councils in March 2024 and the anticipated allocation for 2024/25 for Renfrewshire was £2.262 million. Unfortunately, grant award letters have not been forthcoming resulting in delays in delivery and as a result the issue has been raised at both CoSLA Community Wellbeing Board and with Council Leaders and discussions with Scottish Government are ongoing. The Scottish Government has confirmed that they remained committed to working with CoSLA to deliver on the joint No One Left Behind ambitions. Discussions are continuing to finalise allocations, with funding being released as decisions are taken to ensure activities in agreed areas can proceed as soon as possible. To enable progress and support continuity of service, the Scottish Government has decided to release funding equivalent to the first quarter of the financial year allocation for No One Left Behind and a grant award letter for £0.546 million has been received by the Council. As part of the offer of grant an Annual Investment Plan would be developed for Employability for the year ahead and submitted to the Scottish Government. It was highlighted that although the Council did not have formal confirmation of the full financial award under the No One Left Behind banner as the Invest in Renfrewshire budget had been established to cope with retrospective payments and funding delays the service was able to continue operating. Reference was made within the report to the mitigations in place to downsize certain elements of the service in the event there was a reduction in the level of future grant award.

**DECIDED:**

(a) That the acceptance by the Director of Finance & Resources of grant funding from the Scottish Government of £0.546M for 2024/25 under the banner of No-One Left Behind be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that a further funding allocation for the balance of funds and a separate award through the General Revenue Grant was anticipated in the next two months and would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board in due course.

## 6 **Renfrewshire Economy Conference**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Renfrewshire Economy Conference to be held in Paisley Town Hall on 12 June 2024.

The conference, organised by Renfrewshire Council's Economic Development Team in association with the new Renfrewshire Business Support Partnership, a group established for all business support agencies and organisations in the area, would consider Renfrewshire's economy and the key economic factors for sustainable growth and be aimed at those involved in economic, business and skills development in Renfrewshire from the public sector, local economic agencies, Further Education and Higher Education, local businesses, and social enterprises. If successful it was proposed that it could become an annual event. The objectives of the conference were detailed within the report together with a synopsis of the event. It was highlighted that invitations to attend would be issued to members of this Policy Board.

**DECIDED:** That the report be noted.