

Minute of Meeting Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 19 February 2021	11:30	Remotely by MS teams,

Present

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

Chair

Councillor Audrey Doig, Chair, presided.

In Attendance

F Carswell, Interim Park Co-ordinator, F Carlin, Head of Housing (Lead Officer), M Ball, Principal Accountant (Management Accounting) and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officers (all Renfrewshire Council); S Jamieson, Head of Regeneration & Planning (Inverclyde Council); and M Ferris, Senior Manager (Audit Scotland).

Declarations of Interest

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

1 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 11 December 2020.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Consultative Forum held on 11 December 2020.

DECIDED: That the Minute be noted.

3 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 2020 to 8 January 2021.

The report intimated that gross expenditure was currently £135,000 underspent and income was currently £207,000 under recovered resulting in a net overspend of £72,000.

It was noted that the year-end overspend was above the current reserves balance of £112,036, however historic project balances would be released to address the in-year projected deficit. In the event that the total of project balances and general reserves was insufficient to meet the actual deficit incurred, it was proposed that funding to address the remaining deficit would be provided by requisitioning councils, in proportion to the requisition payments made for 2020/21.

The report advised that the audited accounts for 2020/21 would be approved by Renfrewshire Council's Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board and copies of the signed approved accounts would be distributed to all requisitioning Councils.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 COVID Operational Update

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator providing an update on the ongoing activities across the park and highlighting the benefits of its open spaces and path networks.

The report intimated that in line with government guidance, Regional Park facilities closed to the public on 23 March 2020 and that since then service provision had been 'outside', socially distanced or online.

The report provided detail on all aspects of service provision and it was noted that the pandemic had resulted in many more people visiting outdoor locations and high visitor numbers clearly demonstrated the continued importance and value of green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing, outdoor learning and leisure activities.

DECIDED:

(a) That the content of the report and the benefits of accessible green spaces for people's mental and physical health be noted; and

(b) That the ongoing efforts of Regional Park staff to follow COVID advice and continually adapt the provision of services be noted.

5 Future Management Arrangements: Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

There was submitted a joint report by the Head of Regeneration & Planning, Inverclyde Council, and the Head of Housing, Renfrewshire Council setting out the ongoing management arrangements for the individual elements of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park and how both Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils would maintain continuity of operations.

The report intimated that the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Authority Joint Committee was governed by a Minute of Agreement, most recently updated in 2004. North Ayrshire Council had given notice of withdrawal from this Minute of Agreement on 17 February 2020 and following consideration by the remaining Councils, it had been concluded that it would be appropriate to terminate the Minute of Agreement and for the Park Authority to be dissolved.

Both Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils had agreed the termination of the Minute of Agreement from 31 March 2021. Following the dissolution of the Joint Committee, each local authority would make investment and operational decisions separately regarding the parts of the Regional Park lying within their respective boundaries. These arrangements would not affect the designation of Clyde Muirshiel as a Regional Park or any of the environmental designations that existed across the park area.

The report detailed the future management arrangements of North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils. It was noted that an Officer Liaison Group would be established by the Head of Operation & Infrastructure, Renfrewshire Council, and the Head of Regeneration & Planning, Inverclyde Council, with appropriate nominated officers to ensure that opportunities from a cross-boundary perspective were maximised.

The report advised that it was proposed that a Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Liaison Group be established to guide the strategic direction of the park. This group would be supported by park staff and senior officers from Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils and would meet on a twice-yearly basis with two elected members from each of the councils, nominated by their respective Councils.

It was noted that management and operations across the Regional Park would be delivered in full cooperation and for the benefit of the local population and visitors to the park. Liaison would continue to ensure the protection and enhancement of the Regional Park's natural environment while opportunities for ongoing community involvement in park activities would be encouraged. In addition, opportunities to generate income by providing services under service level agreements would continue to be investigated to support the ongoing provision and development of activities within the Regional Park.

DECIDED: That the ongoing operational and strategic management arrangements for individual elements of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park and the intention to establish a Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Liaison Group be noted.

On behalf of the Joint Committee, the Chair thanked park staff and officers for the work carried out to ensure that the Regional Park remained accessible to visitors safely during the global pandemic.