

CABINET

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting on 26 September 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

Present

in County Councillors Martin Dowey (Chair), Alec Clark, Brian Connolly, Ian Davis,
Hall: Stephen Ferry, Lee Lyons, Martin Kilbride, Bob Pollock and Bob Shields.

Attending**in County**

Hall: E. Howat, Chief Executive; M. Newall, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development; L. McRoberts, Director of Education; T. Baulk, Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement; C. Cox, Assistant Director – Planning and Development; K. Dalrymple, Assistant Director – Housing and Operations; S. Mulholland, Assistant Director – Education; M. Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Service; K. Briggs, Service Lead – Legal and Licensing; K. Anderson, Service Lead – Policy, Performance and Community Planning; M. Alexander, Service Lead – Housing Services; C. Boyd, Service Lead – Risk and Safety; A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer and C. McCallum, Committee Services Assistant.

Also**Attending****In County**

Hall: I. Gall; H. McGuire; G. Laird, N. Fullard, A. Allan; M. Gibson (in attendance for items 4 to 9); P. Murphy, Headteacher (in attendance for item 5); and Y. Templeton, Headteacher (in attendance for item 6).

Apology: D. Gemmell.

Opening Remarks.

The Chair took the sederunt, confirmed to Members the procedures to conduct this meeting and advised that the meeting was being broadcast live.

He then welcomed the new Education representatives to their first Cabinet meeting.

1. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest by Members of the Cabinet in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The [minutes](#) of 29 August 2023 were submitted and approved.

In terms of Standing Order No 13.3, the Panel agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

3. Decision Log.

The Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to note there were no overdue actions.
- (2) to approve the action listed with a [revised due date](#); and
- (3) to note the [recently completed actions](#).

Education

4. Educational Services Standards and Quality Report 2022/23 and Improvement Plan 2023-26

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Education seeking approval of the Educational Services Standards and Quality Report, which covered academic session 2022/23 and the Improvement Plan for 2023-26

The Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to approve the Standards and Quality Report 2022/23, attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to approve the Educational Services Improvement Plan 2023-26, attached as Appendix 2 to the report;
- (3) to note the progress by Educational Services and the collective efforts of all staff across the service over the past year; and
- (4) to agree the publication of the report and plan in line with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

5. Inspection of Barr Primary School and Early Years Centre: Education Scotland Report

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Education advising of the Education Scotland Report on Barr Primary School and Early Years Centre.

Having heard the Headteacher in further comment, the Cabinet, having considered the contents of the report by Education Scotland as contained in Appendix 1 to the report,

Decided: to agree that the main points for action would be addressed by the Headteacher and Quality Improvement Manager.

6. **Inspection of Colmonell Primary School and Early Years Centre: Education Scotland Report**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Education advising of the Education Scotland Report on Colmonell Primary School and Early Years Centre.

Having heard the Headteacher in further comment, the Cabinet, having considered the contents of the report by Education Scotland as contained in Appendix 1 to the report,

Decided: to agree that the main points for action would be addressed by the Headteacher and Quality Improvement Manager.

7. **South West Educational Improvement Collaborative – Regional Improvement Plan 2023/24.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Education seeking approval to agree and publish the South West Educational Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) Delivery Plan 2023/24.

The Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to approve the SWEIC Delivery Plan 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) to agree that the SWEIC Delivery Plan was published on all four Councils' websites for members of the public and other stakeholders.

Education/ Health and Social Care.

8. **Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23**

There was submitted a joint report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Education and the Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services seeking approval of the draft Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23.

The Cabinet

Decided: to approve the draft Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

9. **Children and Young People's Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23**

There was submitted a joint report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Education and the Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services seeking approval for the publication of the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026.

Following discussion regarding the roll-out to all Clusters; the importance of having a focus on mental health as well as physical health; the concerning opinion of young people where it had been indicated that 45% felt that their area was not a nice place to live; and the need to focus on mental bullying as well as physical bullying in schools, the Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to approve the Children and Young People's Service Plan 2023-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) to agree the publication of the report, in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Education representatives left the meeting at this point.

Corporate and Strategic/ Health and Social Care Partnership.

10. **Integrated Impact Assessment.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 18 September 2023 by the Director of Strategic Change and Communities seeking approval to pilot the new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) within the Strategic Change and Communities Directorate.

Following questions from Members of the Cabinet and having noted that implementation of this would fulfill the recommendation made by Audit Scotland in the recent Best Value report and that any refinements required would be reported to Cabinet, the Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to approve the cross cutting thematic areas, as identified in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) to agree that the new IIA would be initially piloted within the Strategic Change and Communities Directorate with a view to full roll-out across the Council during 2024.

Buildings, Housing and Environment.

11. Annual Assurance Statement – Housing.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development

- (1) providing an update on the Regulatory Framework for Housing; and
- (2) seeking approval to submit the Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator and publish the statement for tenants and other customers.

Following discussion regarding the areas listed which were below the Scottish average, the impact of homelessness, housing need, the number of emergency and non-emergency repairs, homeless applications and rent arrears, the Cabinet

Decided:

- (a) to note the content of the Assurance Action Plan, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and the overview of operational service delivery, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (b) to approve the Annual Assurance Statement, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report;
- (c) to approve the submission of the Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 October 2023 and its publication for tenants and other customers; and
- (d) to note the requirements of the Regulatory Framework and ongoing work outlined to achieve full compliance in the areas of Equalities and Human Rights, as outlined in paragraph 4.1.1 of the report.

12. Vacant Educational Premises in Maybole

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development recommending future uses or disposals of Council properties in Maybole.

Following discussion regarding budget transfers and title checks and having heard the Assistant Director – Planning and Development advise that it should also be agreed to declare the St Cuthbert's Primary School site surplus to the Council's requirements, the Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to agree to declare the St Cuthbert's Primary School site surplus to the Council's requirements and to grant authority to the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development to market the site for sale, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) to approve a strategic review of Facilities and Management to meet the future needs of the service; and

- (3) to approve the Professional Design Services undertaking a design, technical and financial analysis for Cairn Primary School.

Finance, HR and ICT.

13. Budget Management – Revenue Budgetary Control 2023/24 – Position at 31 July 2023

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 18 September 2023 by the Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement presenting a financial overview of the General Services Revenue Account, Housing Revenue Account and Common Good Accounts for 2023/24 as at 31 July 2023.

Following discussion on the number of current vacancies within the Council, it was noted that this was a concern that required to be addressed.

It was agreed that the Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement would provide a Briefing Note to Members regarding the shortfall in the efficiency savings listed in table 6 of the report.

The Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to note the revised Directorate Budget following the budget movements, as outlined in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report;
- (2) to approve the budget transfers as outlined in the Directorate financial performance reports, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 4.1.6 of the report;
- (3) to approve the requested earmarking of resources to be carried forward to 2024/25, as summarised in paragraph 4.1.7 of the report;
- (4) to note the projected in-year over-spend of £3.287m. after earmarking;
- (5) to request Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service to take the steps to ensure that Directorate/Services were not overspent against budget by 31 March 2024 as per section 5.3 of the Financial Regulations; and
- (6) to note that the proposed actions to address the overspend would be included in the next Budget Management Report due to be considered at Cabinet in November.

14. **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Quarter 1 Update Report 2023/24**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement providing an update on the 2023/24 treasury prudential indicators for the period April to June 2023 (Quarter 1) and an update on the latest wider economic position.

Following a question from a Member of the Cabinet on the process of borrowing for capital projects, the Cabinet

Decided: to approve the Quarter 1 Update Report.

At this point, the Cabinet adjourned for five minutes.

Corporate and Strategic.

15. **Strategic Risk Management**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Head of Legal and Regulatory Services providing an update on the reviewed Strategic Risk Register, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, in line with the agreed reporting framework.

There was discussion relating to ash dieback and child protection and following the cost of staff absence having been raised, it was agreed that the Chief HR Adviser would provide Members with a Briefing Note to include such matters as the reasons for absence.

The Cabinet, having considered the reviewed Strategic Risk Register, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, updated by Chief Officers,

Decided: to note the fourteen key risks and to endorse the work currently being undertaken or proposed by risk owners to mitigate these risks.

Health and Social Care Partnership.

16. **Unannounced Inspection of Cunningham Place Children's House**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 14 September 2023 by the Director of Health and Social Care advising that there had been an unannounced inspection by the Care Inspectorate on Cunningham Place, one of South Ayrshire's Children's Houses; and that the inspection had been carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate with in-person visits taking place and feedback provided on 9 June 2023.

The Cabinet

Decided:

- (1) to acknowledge the Care Inspectorate's unannounced inspection of Cunningham Place Children's House and the grading of being Adequate;

- (2) to reflect upon the key messages from the Inspection report; and
- (3) to acknowledge the Health and Social Care Partnership's Improvement plan and the assurances of the ongoing improvement work being undertaken.

Corporate and Strategic/Buildings, Housing and Environment/ Finance, HR and ICT.

17. Proposed Ward Capital Projects – Update 2023 to 2025

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 18 September 2023 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development

- (1) providing an update on implementation of capital projects approved by Council at its meeting of 29 June 2023;
- (2) recommending further capital projects for initiation and implementation during 2023/24; and
- (3) providing an update on arrangements for considering potential capital investment programmes related to Ayr esplanade and Ayr town centre in the period 2024-27.

Having heard Members of the Cabinet raise issues relating to specific Projects such as Troon Esplanade, community notice boards and Dailly carpark, the Cabinet

Decided:

- (a) to note the progress made with the capital investment projects identified in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) to agree that a report would be brought back to Council in March 2024 identifying a comprehensive programme of further capital investment projects for implementation during the financial period 2024 to 2027;
- (c) to agree the capital investment projects identified in Appendix 2 of the report for initiation during the financial year 2023-24;
- (d) to note the intention to prepare a Draft Ayr Esplanade Improvement Strategy and a Draft Ayr Town Centre Development Strategy that would provide the basis for a coherent package of capital investment projects in each of these locations; and
- (e) to note that the Draft Ayr Esplanade Improvement Strategy would be recommended to the Cabinet meeting of 28 November 2023 for approval as a basis for public engagement and a Draft Ayr Town Centre Development Strategy would be recommended to the Cabinet Meeting of 29 October 2023 for approval as a basis for public engagement.

18. Closing Remarks.

The Leader of the Council intimated that this was the Chief Executive's last meeting of Cabinet prior to her retirement and thanked her for her valuable work over the years.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.