

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 1000 HRS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK/BY VIDEO CONFERENCE

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Provost Claire Leitch and Councillors Stephen Canning, Ellen Freel and John McFadzean; Depute Provost John McGhee; and Councillors Caroline Barton, Elaine Cowan, David Richardson, James Adams, Jayne Sangster, Iain Linton, Douglas Reid, Graham Barton, Graham Boyd, Barry Douglas, Neal Ingram, Peter Mabon, Clare Maitland, Jim Todd, Beverley Clark, Sally Cogley, Kevin McGregor, Linda Mabon, Alyson Simmons, William Lennox, June Kyle, Jim McMahon, Neill Watts, Drew Filson, Jennifer Hogg; and James Kyle.

OFFICERS PARTICIPATING: Eddie Fraser, Chief Executive; Richard Grieveson, Depute Chief Executive, Craig McArthur, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Health and Social Care Partnership; David Mitchell, Chief Governance Officer; Marion McAulay, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services; Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Chief Education Officer and Head of Education; Joe McLachlan, Chief Financial Officer and Head of Finance and ICT; Iain Tough, Head of Corporate Support; David McDowall, Head of Economic Growth; Blair Millar, Head of Housing and Communities; Amanda Lowe, Head of People and Culture; Jane Corrie, Head of Roads: Ayrshire Roads Alliance; Colin Hastings, Depute Head of Finance; Robin Baker, Exchequer and Capital Finance Manager; Lynne Buchanan, People and Culture Manager - Communications; Simon Bell, Strategic Lead: Asset Investment; Barrie McDonnell, Team Leader, Traffic; Fiona Docherty, Senior Accountant; and Julie McGarry, Democratic Services Manager.

APOLOGY: Councillor Billy Crawford.

CHAIR: Provost Claire Leitch, Chair.

PROVOST'S OPENING REMARKS

The Provost began the meeting by welcoming newly elected Member, Councillor Caroline Barton to her first meeting of Council.

The Provost also advised of an additional item which she intended to take before the Motion.

PROVOST'S REMARKS

1. The Provost opened her remarks by advising that she had attended the Ayrshire Hospice 'Light up a Life' event on Sunday 8 December 2024. She was really honoured to go along to the Auld Kirk, Ayr, for the event which recognised that whilst Christmas can be wonderful, it can also be a really difficult time, particularly for those touched by bereavement. She had thanked all the young people who performed on their string, percussion and brass instruments and everyone really enjoyed Forehill Primary's choir. The Provost said there had been a moment for reflection when the lights were turned off and everyone was invited to light their candle in remembrance of someone they have lost.

The Provost then made reference to the trainee celebration at WG13 which she had attended on Tuesday 10 December 2024. She had attended the event to congratulate

all the trainees who had graduated at WG13. The Provost was pleased to attend to present the certificates and hear all their individual stories that led to where everyone was today, and that it had been very inspiring.

The Provost went on to say that she had a really nice time at the Festive Family Fun Day on Saturday 14 December 2024 at the Boswell Centre, Auchinleck. She said it was lovely to see the school children sing Christmas songs and see the array of different stalls held by local businesses and groups. The Provost had been asked to judge the Primary Schools Christmas card competition, they had all been so good which had made her job difficult.

The Provost then stated that she had had the pleasure of going along to the National Burns Memorial in Mauchline on Sunday 19 January 2025 where she had been asked to lay a wreath on behalf of the Council for the annual wreath laying ceremony in memory of Robert Burns. She said it was really lovely to see such a great turnout and the beautiful tributes that were laid. Afterwards everyone was invited back to the Pavilion for some hospitality where the Provost thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment and cup of tea.

The Provost then remarked that she had been invited along to a great 'Brew and Blether' event held at Kilmarnock Train Station on Monday 20 January 2025. The Provost advised that there were many support services from across the entirety of East Ayrshire supporting the event with their stalls offering information and help to people in many different areas. She said it was absolutely wonderful to see everyone from lots of different backgrounds coming together as a collective to continue efforts to tackle the many complexities surrounding mental health and the causes of death by suicide. The Provost said it had also been good to see such a visible event on the train station platform and the amount of people who were travelling engaging with the event.

Finally, the Provost remarked that KULOC had invited her along to the Chinese New Year event at the Beijing Banquet on Queen's Drive Kilmarnock on Tuesday 4 February 2025. The Provost advised that she had been delighted to go again this year to celebrate Chinese New Year – one of the most important and joyous festivals in the Chinese calendar. She stated that here in East Ayrshire, we are very proud to embrace and celebrate the rich cultural diversity that make up our communities and rightly recognising the contributions that everyone brings. She advised that this year was the year of the snake!, said to be a symbol of transformation, wisdom and adaptability, and she hoped these qualities would inspire us all as we move forward together.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. Councillor McMahon, as a private landlord, stated that in terms of transparency he had a non-financial connection in respect of Item 6 below "Setting the 2025/2026 Revenue Budget" (Item 26 of the 2025/26 Expenditure Reduction Options which made reference to an increase in Private Landlord Registration charges) which was not deemed to be significant, having considered the terms of the objective test, as outlined in Paragraph 5.5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Accordingly he did not consider the connection to amount to a declarable interest that would require him to withdraw from the meeting in accordance with Paragraph 5.7 of the Code. Councillor Richardson joined the meeting at this point.

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL - WARD 2, KILMARNOCK
NORTH BY-ELECTION - 20 FEBRUARY 2025**

3. There was submitted and noted a report dated 21 February 2025 (circulated) by the Chief Executive which provided the results of the recent Council By-Election for Ward 2, Kilmarnock North, held on Thursday 20 February 2025.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

4. There were submitted (circulated) and approved as a correct record, the Minutes of Council Meeting of 12 December 2024 (pages 7-17).

CABINET/COMMITTEE MINUTES

5. There were submitted (circulated) and approved as correct records and approval of any recommendations contained therein (with the exception of the Minutes of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee, the Integration Joint Board and the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee which were noted) the Minutes of the undernoted Meetings, viz:-
 - 5.1 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 15 JANUARY 2024 (pages 18-19)**
 - 5.2 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 19 FEBRUARY 2024 (pages 20-21)**
 - 5.3 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 20 MAY 2024 (pages 22-24)**
 - 5.4 **AYRSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE OF 7 JUNE 2024 (pages 25-28)**
 - 5.5 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 4 SEPTEMBER 2024 (pages 29-31)**
 - 5.6 **AYRSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE OF 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 (pages 32-36)**
 - 5.7 **INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD OF 23 OCTOBER 2024 (pages 37-43)**
 - 5.8 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 30 OCTOBER 2024 (pages 44-45)**
 - 5.9 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 25 NOVEMBER 2024 (pages 46-48)**
 - 5.10 **CABINET OF 4 DECEMBER 2024 (pages 49-55)**
 - 5.11 **GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 5 DECEMBER 2024 (pages 56-60)**
 - 5.12 **INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD OF 11 DECEMBER 2024 (pages 61-66)**
 - 5.13 **SPECIAL GRANTS COMMITTEE OF 12 DECEMBER 2024 (pages 67-68)**
 - 5.14 **PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 13 DECEMBER 2024 (pages 69-74)**
 - 5.15 **LOCAL REVIEW BODY OF 14 JANUARY 2025 (pages 75-77)**
 - 5.16 **CABINET OF 15 JANUARY 2025 (pages 78-84)**
 - 5.17 **CABINET OF 29 JANUARY 2025 (pages 85-87)**
 - 5.18 **PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 31 JANUARY 2025 (pages 88-90)**
 - 5.19 **CABINET OF 12 FEBRUARY 2025 (pages 91-94)**

5.20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT LICENSING PANEL OF 13 FEBRUARY 2025 (pages 95-97)

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY SETTING THE 2025/2026 REVENUE BUDGET

6.1 Order of Debate and Time Limit for Speeches

It was noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, a mover of a motion or amendment should speak for no more than 10 minutes with succeeding speakers entitled to speak for no more than 5 minutes, with the original mover then having the right to speak for no more than 5 minutes in reply.

6.2 Consideration of item

There was submitted the remit and recommendations (circulated) from the Cabinet meeting held on 26 February 2025.

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor McMahon moved to approve the recommendations from Cabinet, namely:-

- (i) the expenditure reduction measures at Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (ii) the Resource Allocations shown at paragraph 101 of the report be approved;
- (iii) service plans be updated accordingly to reflect management actions and the updated Resource Allocations;
- (iv) that Band D Council Tax level for 2025/26 be increased by 8% as noted at paragraph 113 of the report;
- (v) fees and charges budgets be increased by 3% with service proposals for increases detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, other than those previously approved as part of service reviews or are set nationally or by partners;
- (vi) the risk that had been created by the specific Scottish Government condition in respect of maintaining teacher numbers (paragraph 33 of the report) is noted;
- (vii) the outcome of the Scottish local Authorities Remuneration Committee review (paragraph 35 of the report) is noted;
- (viii) the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Responsibilities and the indicated funding (paragraph 37 to 39 of the report) is noted;
- (ix) the utilisation of £0.600m from the Early Intervention and Prevention Fund to support speech, language and communication interventions (paragraphs 43 to 44 of the report) is approved;
- (x) the allocation of £1.000m to support Anti-Poverty and Inequalities Strategy (paragraphs 45 to 49 of the report) is approved;
- (xi) the available employability resource that will be used to support the Jobs and Training Initiative (paragraphs 50 to 52 of the report) is noted;
- (xii) the creation of a five year strategic partnership with Centrestage (paragraphs 53 to 62 of the report) is approved;
- (xiii) the establishment of a strategic review of community Safety and Enforcement (paragraph 63 of the report) is approved;

- (xiv) that £1.570m of additional resource be provided to the Health and Social Care Partnership (paragraphs 83 to 84 of the report) is approved;
- (xv) the East Ayrshire Integration Joint Board provide Direction to the Council on the level of service to be provided as part of the Commissioning Plan (paragraph 86 of the report) is approved;
- (xvi) the significant reduction in Grant Aided Expenditure for 2025/26 is noted furthermore, and approve that the reduction is charged against the uncommitted allocation in the Settlement rather than being passed to Services (paragraph 89 of the report);
- (xvii) the Reserves and Balances Strategy set out in Appendix 3 of the report is approved;
- (xviii) the outcome and views arising from the budget engagement events at paragraphs 102 to 107 of the report and the full detail which is attached at Appendix 4 of the report is noted; and
- (xix) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

He also moved the undernoted additional measures:-

- (i) to allocate a further £1.5M to extend the jobs and training initiative in each of the next three years;
- (ii) to provide free school meals for primary pupils and continue half price school meals for secondary pupils in the next two academic years 2025/26 and 2026/27;
- (iii) for 3-4 four year olds attending nursery, and based on the success of the introduction of this grant last year, to extend footwear and clothing grant for academic year 2025/26, increasing the grant from £50 to £75;
- (iv) to provide £200,000 to the Depute Chief Executive to make wider arrangements to support active businesses in our town centres;
- (v) to allocate £800,000 for some of the residential areas in our towns and villages to continue to tackle some of the worst roads and pavements;
- (vi) to set aside £700,000 for officers to come back to Members with plans as part of the wider civic pride improvements, to include littering, fly tipping, graffiti, dog fouling and parking and to tackle all community safety and enforcement issues;
- (vii) to use Community and Economy balances to provide funding for a further year to allow the negotiations to take place or for alternatives to be identified for the public toilets in Mauchline;
- (viii) to set aside £70,000 towards restoration of the play park in Shortlees following recent vandalism; and
- (ix) to allocate £30,000 to fund a feasibility study to widen the use of the Woodroad Park in Cumnock with the feasibility study being tasked with identifying the sources of funding needed to progress the ambitions of local residents.

Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor Linda Mabon then moved as an amendment:-

- (i) to accept recommendations (i) to (viii) from the Cabinet meeting with the following exceptions - at Appendix 1 to remove proposals 23, deletion of posts

at Tanyard Toilets, Cumnock; Proposal 27 the outsourcing of front-line parking enforcement at this time and Proposal 28, extending the parking charges to towns and villages across East Ayrshire;

- (ii) to a further three years funding to the jobs and training scheme with £4.5m of funding allocated over three years but also to include summer placements for 16-18 year olds still in education but about to enter the world of work with a focus on the high demand areas of employment needed such as home care and renewables and to propose an allocation of £1.5m per annum from the early intervention and prevention fund;
- (iii) to allocate an extra £80,000 to Greener Communities to increase the number of appointments available at our recycling centres to pay for the staffing and additional costs for disposing of items such as POPS that will emerge from greater accessibility for residents to our recycling centres;
- (iv) to an additional £500,000 for 2025/26 to Ayrshire Roads Alliance for upgrades to roads and footpaths but with proposals being brought to Members for consideration so Members can ensure their constituent priorities are being met in this regard;
- (v) that two pilot areas be brought forward with the installation of CCTV cameras in hotspot areas of the New Farm Loch Courts and the Newton to tackle anti-social behaviour and the dumping of rubbish that is a blight on these communities thereby utilising approximately £70,000 to £80,000 of this funding;
- (vi) to an hour's free parking across Kilmarnock's on-street parking and car parks to support local businesses and encourage people into our town centre, and allocate £586,000 for a year's trial for 2025/26 with an evaluation to be undertaken with local businesses and stakeholders to demonstrate if footfall is increasing within Kilmarnock Town Centre;
- (vii) that primary school pupils receive a free school meal and half price meals for secondary school pupils and to fund this for another year from August 2025 to June 2026, but extending free school meals for all primary school children, with funding coming from the £40m Early Intervention and Prevention Fund;
- (viii) to continue £50 clothing grant to 3 and 4 year olds in early years establishments and the costs for this, being £40,000, be taken from the Early Intervention and Prevention Fund; and
- (ix) sum of £30,000 to evaluate the provision of municipal bus services with a focus on routes covering Muirkirk/Sorn; Doon Valley and North Kilmarnock during peak hours.

ADJOURNMENTS/RECONVENTIONS

7. The meeting adjourned at 1036 hours and reconvened at 1051 hours; and 1203 hours and reconvened at 1234 hours.

Clarification was then given on the amendment to the Motion as follows:-

- (i) to include £30,000 to evaluate the provision of municipal transport for communities impacted by connectivity issues in the north of Kilmarnock, Muirkirk, Sorn and Doon Valley; and

- (ii) that the cuts proposed at numbers 27 and 28 regarding parking and charges and that these two elements should be included in the corporate review of Community Safety and Enforcement along with relevant funding.

On a vote by calling the roll, the Motion was carried by 21 votes to 10.

Council also agreed, to support in principle, the issue raised by Depute Provost, in relation to the provision of housing for our residents, and that officers engage further with Members on the mechanisms and pathways that already exist, particularly through the Strategic Housing Investment Programme and the Housing Contribution Statement, as to how improved housing can assist with the health and wellbeing of our residents particularly people with disabilities and the elderly.

BUILDING A FUTURE EAST AYRSHIRE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

8.1 Order of Debate and Time Limit for Speeches

It was noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, a mover of a motion or amendment should speak for no more than 10 minutes with succeeding speakers entitled to speak for no more than 5 minutes, with the original mover then having the right to speak for no more than 5 minutes in reply.

8.2 Consideration of item

There was submitted the remit and recommendations (circulated) from the Cabinet meeting held on 26 February 2025.

It was agreed to approve the recommendations from Cabinet, namely:-

- (i) that the strategic principles of the Asset Management Framework remain the basis for future investment priorities linked to the Strategic Plan priorities;
- (ii) to note the positive progress being made with project delivery and development within challenging financial constraints and market volatility;
- (iii) to allocate an additional £8.500m to the Doon Valley Community Campus project and note the ongoing positive dialogue with Scottish Government regarding potential LEIP 2 grant funding;
- (iv) to allocate an additional £2.400m to the Stewarton Academy project supported by future developer contributions associated with LDP 2 housing growth in the area;
- (v) to allocate an additional £1.500m to the Lainshaw Primary School project supported by future developer contributions associated with LDP 2 housing growth in the area;
- (vi) to request officers provide, to a future Cabinet, further information on the wider needs of the Learning Estate as part of the Learning Estate Management Plan 2024 – 25;
- (vii) to allocate £2.000m utilising CFCR funding to support East Ayrshire Leisure Trust's applications for external funding bids, upgrade collection display, commercial growth and potential redevelopment of the Civic Centre South

building in Kilmarnock;

- (viii) to request officers report to a future Cabinet the outcome of the current tender review for the Cultural Kilmarnock project noting the ongoing discussion with the UK government for LUF funding;
- (ix) to request officers provide to a future Cabinet, further information on the Council's property investment, maintenance and disposal priorities as part of the Property Management Plan 2024 – 25
- (x) to note the challenges of progressing the Bridge Improvement Programme for 2024/25 due to the pressure to address road slips and that funding through the review of revenue balance and Repairs and Renewals funding will be considered to ensure ongoing priority of bridge works;
- (xi) to note the re-profiling of priorities within the overall Roads and Bridges budget and request officers to provide further information on the Roads Asset Management Plan 2025 - 26 to a future Cabinet;
- (xii) to allocate a fund of £1.200m revenue funding split over the next two years funded from CFCR to support the ongoing commitment to maintain and improve condition and suitability of the Council's existing building assets;
- (xiii) to recognise the overall capital borrowing within the report remains within the agreed Treasury Management limits due to additional funding from alternative CFCR, developer contributions and other external funding; and
- (xiv) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2025/26

9. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Finance and ICT to request that Members consider and approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for financial year 2025/26.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to approve the Prudential Indicators contained within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

ADDITIONAL ITEM - CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

10. It was agreed to the request received from the Labour Group that Councillor Sangster replace Councillor Douglas on the Integration Joint Board.

MOTION BY COUNCILLOR JAYNE SANGSTER

11. Councillor Sangster presented her Motion as follows:-

“As a local Councillor I am concerned about our government's treatment of the WASPI women.

Nearly 8000 women across East Ayrshire have been affected and we recognise that these women will be hugely disappointed that no compensation has been offered and will feel that a single apology is not enough.

As a minimum, we believe there should have been at least a commitment made that would have allowed for compensation for the WASPI women.

We believe not accepting recommendations of the PHSO erodes public trust and we would urge the UK Government to reconsider its position.

We understand the financial restraints this Government is facing right now and would request that when the economy improves this commitment is followed through.

We the Labour Group would like to put forward a motion to ask the UK government to look again at the Ombudsman's report and follow its recommendations to pay the WASPI women the compensation they deserve."

11.1 Adjournment/Reconvention

The meeting adjourned at 1325 hours and reconvened at 1330 hours.

11.2 Consideration of Item

Council then agreed the following amended Motion:-

"As a local Councillor I am concerned about our government's treatment of the WASPI women.

Nearly 8000 women across East Ayrshire have been affected and we recognise that these women will be hugely disappointed that no compensation has been offered and will feel that a single apology is not enough.

As a minimum, we believe there should have been at least a commitment made that would have allowed for compensation for the WASPI women.

We believe not accepting recommendations of the PHSO erodes public trust and we would urge the UK Government to reconsider its position.

We understand the financial restraints this Government is facing right now and would request that when the economy improves this commitment is followed through.

We the Labour Group would like to put forward a motion to ask Council to write a joint letter from the three Leaders that the UK government to look again at the Ombudsman's report and follow its recommendations to pay the WASPI women the compensation they deserve, and that this letter be also sent to the two local Labour MP's."

The meeting terminated at 1331 hours