

## 2024 FECSS 29

### HE FIFE COUNCIL - FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

25 January, 2024

10.00 am – 12.45 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Allan Knox (Convener), Alistair Bain, Auxi Barrera, Ian Cameron, Rod Cavanagh, Eugene Clarke, Colin Davidson, Graeme Downie, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Louise Kennedy-Dalby (substituting for Councillor Ann Verner), Robin Lawson, James Leslie, Gordon Pryde and Alistair Suttie.

**ATTENDING:** Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services; Pamela Stevenson, Enterprise and Business Development Manager, Business and Employability Service; Pam Ewen, Head of Planning, Alastair Hamilton, Service Manager Development Management, Planning Service; Heather Honeyman, Assessor; Charlie Anderson, Head of Business Technology Solutions, Martin Kotlewski, Service Manager - Solutions and Service Assurance, Business Technology Solutions; Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Donna Grieve, Accountant, Jackie Johnstone, Accountant, Finance and Corporate Services; Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources, Human Resources Service; Les Robertson, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services, Revenue and Commercial Services; Caroline Macdonald, Service Manager - Category Management, Derek Hamilton, Category Manager, Procurement; Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Helena Couperwhite, Service Manager - Committee Services and Michelle Hyslop, Committee Officer, Committee Services, Legal and Democratic Services.

#### 80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

#### 81. MINUTE

- (i) Minute of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 26 October 2023.

##### **Decision**

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

- (ii) The following minute was submitted for noting:-

- Budget Scrutiny Working Group of 25 October, 2023.

##### **Decision**

The minute was noted.

**82. PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 12 (2022-2023): SCOTTISH MINISTER'S FEEDBACK**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Services providing an update on the performance of the planning authority as set out in the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 12, for the period 2022/23. The report also outlined the feedback that was received from the Scottish Government.

**Decision**

The committee scrutinised and provided feedback on the performance of the planning authority as set out in the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 12.

**83. BUSINESS GATEWAY FIFE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business & Employability providing an annual overview of the performance of Business Gateway Fife Ltd in delivering services during the period April 2022 to March 2023 including the council's financial assistance to businesses scheme. The report outlined information on performance and highlighted areas of service adjustments to assist in the transition from European (EU) Funding to UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

**Decision**

The committee: -

- (1) noted the performance, expenditure and activity information for Business Gateway Fife in 2022/23;
- (2) noted the repositioned delivery focus theme of Leading Economic Recovery in supporting Fife businesses;
- (3) acknowledged the transition of EU Funding to UK Shared Prosperity Funding from 1st April 2023; and
- (4) agreed that a briefing would be issued to members with updated information when a decision had been made on the outcome of the Business Loans Scotland Strategy.

*Councillor Alistair Suttie joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

**84. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT 2022-23**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services providing a summary of Procurement activity and its impact during the financial year 2022/2023.

**Decision**

The committee: -

- (1) noted the Annual Procurement Report, detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, which would be published online and notified to Scottish Ministers; and

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- (2) agreed that officers would prepare a briefing note for members providing updated information on the annual value report.

### 85. ETHICAL PROCUREMENT

The committee considered a report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services providing information on how Corporate Procurement, and those with Delegated Procurement Authority (DPA), addressed the requirements of Ethical Procurement. The report focussed on the ethics of prospective/existing suppliers rather than the ethics of procurement staff/activity, although this was touched upon as part of the evaluation process, noting that organisational ethics, including involvement in procurement activity, was incorporated in the Employee Code of Conduct.

#### Decision

The committee: -

- (1) noted the activity taken by the procurement functions and acknowledged that additional due diligence and investigations would be undertaken on a case to case basis as and when required; and
- (2) considered the potential opportunities for continuous improvement as detailed in Section 4 of the report.

### 86. FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES' DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services presenting the 2022/23 performance scorecard for the Finance and Corporate Services' Directorate.

#### Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the arrangements set out in Section 1.0, to fulfil the council's obligation to comply with Audit Scotland's 2021 SPI Direction; and
- (2) the Finance and Corporate Services' Directorate performance information and the Key Performance Indicators as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

*The meeting adjourned at 11.30 am and reconvened at 11.45 am.*

### 87. 2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – PLANNING SERVICE, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director – Place providing an update on the projected outturn financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

#### Decision

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The committee noted the current financial performance and activity detailed in the report.

### **88. 2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – BUSINESS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director - Place providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the areas in scope of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

#### **Decision**

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

### **89. 2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the projected outturn financial position for 2023/24 for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

#### **Decision**

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

### **90. 2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE**

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year for the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.

#### **Decision**

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

### **91. FINANCE, ECONOMY & CORPORATE SERVICES FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) outlining a draft workplan for future meetings of this committee.

#### **Decision**

The committee:

- (1) noted the current Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Work Plan;

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- (2) agreed that the absence and wellbeing interim progress report scheduled for 18 April 2024 would be moved to 13 June 2024 meeting; and
- (3) asked that consideration be given to identify an additional meeting in 2024 to avoid undue delay in consideration of committee business.

*The committee resolved, under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 6 and 14 of Schedule 7A of the Act.*

### 92. FORTH GREEN FREEPORT – DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability outlining the relevant devolved fiscal incentives that are to apply within the proposed Forth Green Freeport (FGFP). The report summarised the investment incentives available, the expected Non-Domestic Rates Relief granted and the subsequent Rates Retention income for re-investment in place led economic development and subsidy control requirements.

#### **Decision**

The committee noted and commented on the key early actions for Fife Council in relation to developing:

- (1) a Forth Green Freeport (FGFP) non-domestic rate retention methodology including the proposed development of like-minded local economic development place led investment projects within inner and outer boundary of Forth Green Freeports; and
- (2) an in-principle approach to subsidy control funding requirements for relevant Forth Green Freeport projects including projects that would be funded from the reinvestment of NDR retention and the proposed Forth Green Freeport seed projects in Fife. This would occur as part of consistent practice and procedure agreed across other Forth Green Freeport Local Authorities and in line with Forth Green Freeport governance.

### 93. COUNCIL'S PREPAREDNESS TO DEAL WITH ISSUES AROUND RANSOMWARE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business Technology Solutions which outlined the council's existing arrangements and planned improvements to minimise the risk of an attack on the council following a number of high-profile cyber-attacks across the public sector.

#### **Decision**

The committee noted the existing controls and improvements being made to manage the threat of ransomware attacks.