

Minutes

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday 26 September 2019

Present

Councillors Rankin (Convener), Cameron (Vice-Convener), Booth, Bruce, Corbett, Gordon, Hutchison, Johnston, Neil Ross, Munn and Watt.

1. Cameron House Community Centre Budget Allocation

a) Cameron House Community Education Centre Management Committee

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Moira O'Neill of Cameron House Community Education Centre Management Committee in relation to the report on Cameron House Community Centre budget allocation.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- The deputation referenced section 3.5 of the report that referred to previous A agenda reports that were considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee and the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, and following the meetings advised that an apology was issued to Cameron House Management Committee by the Council.
- The deputation felt it was important to bring to the Committee's attention that an action plan was agreed with the Chief Executive and the then deputy Chief Executive as noted in 3.7 of the report in terms of changing the liaison/relationship between the Council and Cameron House.
- Committee were further advised that impartial robust protections were implemented for the relevant staff member.
- A meeting between the deputation, the Council monitoring officer and a senior member of staff was held to discuss the practicalities involved in facilitating and implementing these changes. It was agreed at the meeting that the existing tertiary budget to Cameron House would be ringfenced.

Thursday, 26th September, 2019

- The Community Centre Management Committee were informed the ringfenced budget was being reduced, which led to services for children and young people being reduced.
- The deputation raised concerns on behalf of the management committee, mainly that the ringfenced budget agreement made was entered in to in good faith and was at risk of being set aside and of undermining the goodwill and trust between the Council, the Management Committee and the service users of the Centre.
- The deputation highlighted that this was a unique situation brought about by extenuating circumstances and the wish of the management committee was that Committee took the information into account when considering the report.

The Convener thanked the deputation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the report by the Executive Director of Resources.

b) Ward Councillors

In accordance with Standing Order 31.1, the Convener agreed to hear a presentation from Ward Councillors Burgess, Dickie and Rose in relation to the report on Cameron House Community Centre Budget Allocation.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- Councillor Rose drew the Committee's attention to the fact that this was a cross-party presentation and Councillor Ian Perry who was unable to attend supported the cross party amendment that was before the Committee.
- There had been a break down in trust over a long period which was in the process of being repaired through the management plan.
- The Community Centre was a well-run, well used and valuable resource to the local community.
- Committee was urged to consider the wider history of the Community Centre when considering the report.
- There was a difference of understanding in what was agreed between Council officers and the Management Committee.

c) Report by the Executive Director of Resources

A motion was approved at Finance and Resources Committee on 23 May 2019 detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report. The report fulfilled the motion and set out the position with regard to the budget for Cameron House Community Centre ("Cameron House") and sought the Committee's decision with regard to the budget allocation for 2019/20 and beyond.

Motion

- 1) To agree to preserve the 17/18 budget level for Cameron House for 19/20 (Option B detailed in paragraph 4.13 of the report).
 - 2) To agree that all future meetings between council officials and the Management Committee be minuted and circulated to the local councillors. The minute taker to be agreed by both parties.
- Moved by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Cameron

Amendment

- 1) To agree that all future meetings between council officials and the Management Committee be minuted and circulated to the local councillors. The minute taker was to be agreed by both parties.
- 2) To note the further background information from all four Southside-Newington Ward Councillors, provided to assist the Committee to make a more fully informed decision.
- 3) To note that following a breakdown in the relationship between the Council and Cameron House Community Education Centre Management Committee as outlined in the report, a Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive's Action Plan was agreed, which included: the removal of Cameron House from the Community Learning and Development section in Children and Families, providing the Community Learning and Development Worker with robust protection and a suitable senior CEC contact with no prior involvement.
- 4) To note that having met with representatives of the Management Committee and with relevant officers, all four ward councillors were of the view that there was a difference in understanding over what was agreed about ringfencing the tertiary budget available to the Management Committee.
- 5) To note that ward councillors had seen correspondence from the Management Committee to the council that indicates that they understood the agreement that the tertiary budget would be ringfenced.
- 6) To note that in 2019 the programme of community education activities at Cameron House was curtailed owing to the reduction in the tertiary budget.
- 7) To note the uncertainty in resolving this issue had not been helpful to all involved.
- 8) To agree that in the context of the difficulties referred to in the report, including the details outlined in the documents referred to in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.8, the issue was less about the amount of lower payment than expected, but one of maintaining trust and a good working relationship.

Thursday, 26th September, 2019

- 9) To agree to resolve to observe the ringfencing of the amount available to the Management Committee, and to approve Option B detailed in the report, to preserve the 2017/18 budget level for Cameron House for 2019/20 up to the next local government election and with the funding being taken from the Council Priorities Fund, or other fund approved by the Chief Executive.

- Moved by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Hutchison

In terms of Standing Order 21.11, the Cross-Party Amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion by Councillor Rankin.

Decision

- 1) To agree that all future meetings between council officials and the Management Committee be minuted and circulated to the local councillors. The minute taker was to be agreed by both parties.
- 2) To note the further background information from all four Southside-Newington Ward Councillors, provided to assist the Committee to make a more fully informed decision.
- 3) To note that following a breakdown in the relationship between the Council and Cameron House Community Education Centre Management Committee as outlined in the report, a Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive's Action Plan was agreed, which included: the removal of Cameron House from the Community Learning and Development section in Children and Families, providing the Community Learning and Development Worker with robust protection and a suitable senior CEC contact with no prior involvement.
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- 5) To note that ward councillors had seen correspondence from the Management Committee to the council that indicates that they understood the agreement that the tertiary budget would be ringfenced.
- 6) To note that in 2019 the programme of community education activities at Cameron House was curtailed owing to the reduction in the tertiary budget.
- 7) To note the uncertainty in resolving this issue had not been helpful to all involved.
- 8) To agree that in the context of the difficulties referred to in the report, including the details outlined in the documents referred to in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.8, the issue was less about the amount of lower payment than expected, but one of maintaining trust and a good working relationship.

- 9) To agree to resolve to observe the ringfencing of the amount available to the Management Committee, and to approve Option B detailed in the report, to preserve the 2017/18 budget level for Cameron House for 2019/20 up to the next local government election and with the funding being taken from the Council Priorities Fund, or other fund approved by the Chief Executive.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 18 August 2016 (item 9); report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

2. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Finance and Resources Committee of 15 August 2019 as a correct record.

3. Finance and Resources Committee Work Programme

The Finance and Resources Committee Work Programme was submitted.

Decision

To note the Work Programme.

(Reference – Finance and Resources Committee Work Programme, submitted.)

4. Rolling Actions Log

The Finance and Resources Committee Rolling Actions Log September 2019 was submitted.

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:

Action 1 – Sickness Absence Policy

Action 3 – Gender Pay Gap

Action 4 – Business Bulletin

Action 10 – Motion by Councillor McVey – Support for Council Employees Subject to Domestic Abuse

Action 12 – Revenue Monitoring 2018/19 – Outturn Report

Action 15 – Workforce Dashboard

Action 16 – Update on the Implementation of the Construction Charter

Action 17(3) – Corstorphine Youth and Community Centre

- 2) To otherwise note the Rolling Actions Log.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

5. Business Bulletin

The Finance and Resources Committee Business Bulletin for September 2019 was submitted.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

6. City of Edinburgh Council - 2018/19 Annual Audit Report to the Council and the Controller of Audit

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on 17 September 2019 considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Resources, which detailed the principal findings that arose from the Council's 2018/19 external audit.

Decision

- 1) To approve the audited Annual Accounts for 2018/19.
- 2) To refer the report to Council for noting.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 17 September 2019 (Item 5); joint report by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

7. 2018-19 Common Good Annual Performance Report

Details were provided on the outturn position for the Common Good Fund and the performance of its cash investments for the 2018/2019 financial year. An update was also provided on the Common Good Property Planned Maintenance Fund and the plans for the 2019/20 financial year, along with the current issues affecting Common Good in Edinburgh.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 27 September 2018 (Item 9); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

8. The City of Edinburgh Council Charitable Trusts – Report to those charged with Governance on the 2018/19 Audit

Details were provided of the External Auditor's view on matters arising from the Charitable Trusts audit in compliance with International Standard on Auditing 260. An unqualified audit opinion was issued on the Trustee's Annual Report and Accounts for 2018/19.

Decision

- 1) To approve the Trustee's Annual Report and Accounts for 2018/19 and note that these would be submitted to the External Auditor by 30 September 2019 and to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) by 31 December 2019.
- 2) To note the commentary on the management of the Charitable Trusts included in the Audit Management Report in Appendix 1 of the report.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 27 September 2018 (Item 8); report by Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

9. Consultants Costs 2018/19

Details were provided of expenditure on consultants for provision of professional services during 2018/19

Decision

- 1) To note the revenue and capital expenditure incurred for provision of professional services in financial year 2018/19.
- 2) To note that revenue expenditure on consultants had decreased by £0.814m (14%) from 2017/18. The cost of engaging consultants to provide specialist and technical advice to support the Capital Investment Programme had increased by £2.772m as the Council had progressed delivery of major capital investment in Early Years properties, School buildings, 21 Century Homes and Meadowbank Sport Centre.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee, 11 October 2018 (Item 8); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

10. Edinburgh Boundaries Extension and Tramways Act 1920 Centennial - Funding Allocation

The Edinburgh Boundaries Extension and Tramways Act of 1920 was an important piece of legislation which led to a major expansion of the city's boundaries. Details were provided regarding a project proposal and associated costs to ensure the event could be celebrated through a series of outreach and community focused events.

Decision

To approve the cost of £10,000 to be funded from the Chief Executive's revenue budget to fund the consultancy work and funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund.

(References – City of Edinburgh Council, 20 September 2019 (Item 6); report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Cameron declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a member of the steering group for the Edinburgh Boundary Extension.

Councillor Gordon declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a member of the steering group for the Edinburgh Boundary Extension.

11. Debt Restructuring - Lender Option Borrowing Option (LOBO) Loans

The Committee, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, excluded the public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business for the reason that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

Committee considered a report on the Council's Inverse Floating Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans.

Decision

- 1) To note the discussions which had been undertaken with Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) / Nat West Markets.
- 2) To agree to proceed as described in the report by the Executive Director of Resources.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)