

# Business Bulletin

## Finance and Resources Committee

**10.00am, Thursday, 28 September 2023**

Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

# Finance and Resources Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Convener Councillor Mandy Watt</p> 	<p>Councillor Marco Biagi Councillor Graeme Bruce Councillor James Dalgleish Councillor Phil Daggart Councillor Lesley Macinnes Councillor Alys Mumford Councillor Vicky Nicolson Councillor Neil Ross Councillor Alex Staniforth Councillor Lewis Younie</p>	<p><a href="#">Taylor Ward</a> Committee Services</p> <p><a href="#">Louise Williamson</a> Committee Services</p>

Recent News	Background	Contact
<p><b>Consultation on Council Tax for Second Homes and Empty Homes, and Non-Domestic Rates Self-Catering Thresholds</b></p> <p>The Scottish Government issued public consultation on Council Tax for Second Homes and Empty Homes, and Non-Domestic Rates Self-Catering Thresholds. Council Officers provided a technical response requesting appropriate clarifications and greater flexibility within the legislation to address local considerations. A briefing note was circulated in June 2023 to elected member to assist with their own submissions to the public consultation. The date for the published outcome of the consultation is unknown but at the appropriate time officers will provide an update on the potential next steps for the Council.</p>		<p><a href="mailto:nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk">nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Joint Consultation on Council Tax</b></p> <p>The Scottish Government has advised that proposals contained within the recent Council Tax consultation is just one aspect of a broader range of potential measures that are under consideration. This includes changes to reflect the circumstances created by the cost crisis, and the potential longer-term reform of the system. With this information, the Scottish Government's Joint Working Group would appear to be the most appropriate vehicle to progress the issues raised at Committee in June. It is proposed that appropriate representatives would raise the matter with COSLA, for onward discussion in the Joint Working Group on Sources of Local Government Finance. To help clarify the specific questions to be raised via COSLA, a joint member/officer group will be created. This action replaces the immediate ask for a report to September's Committee.</p>		<p><a href="mailto:nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk">nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Community Asset Transfers – Annual Report</b></p> <p>Under Section 95 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the Council must publish an annual return by 30 June, specifying certain Community Asset Transfer (CAT) activity and the steps taken to promote CAT with community bodies from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The report has been published on the Council website and can be found at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/commercial-property-sale-let/community-asset-transfer/1">https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/commercial-property-sale-let/community-asset-transfer/1</a></p> <p>The report only includes requests that have been considered by a Stage 2 panel (sustainable business case) and transfers that have been completed with ownership transferred to the community body. In addition to the requests formally reported, we also dealt with the following during the reporting period:</p> <p>30 initial enquiries – most requests requiring research and informal meetings with potential applicants.</p>		<p><a href="mailto:peter.watton@edinburgh.gov.uk">peter.watton@edinburgh.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:graeme.mcgartland@edinburgh.gov.uk">graeme.mcgartland@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p>

<p>5 Stage 1 panels – convened to assess expressions of interest and to allow successful requests to proceed towards Stage 2.</p> <p>14 live cases are currently being considered, with the majority preparing their sustainable business cases for a Stage 2 panel submission.</p> <p>In addition to working with applicants throughout the application process, we continue to provide support and guidance to community groups, council officials and elected members.</p>		
<p><b>HR System (Oracle) – Project Update</b></p> <p>On 10 March 2023, Committee approved Oracle HCM as the new partner for the Council’s HR and Payroll system, subject to ratification at Full Council. A Business Bulletin update was provided on 23 June 2023 to Committee with a commitment to bring a further update in September 2023.</p> <p>As outlined in previous updates, the critical underpinning drivers for the new HR and Payroll system are to deliver a service that is engaging and inclusive, enables colleague and line manager self-service, removed duplication and manual transactions, reduces risk, simplifies processes, allows data driven insight by ensuring our processes are right first time all the time, and supports Council strategies and initiatives.</p> <p>A project Governance Framework has been established and relevant groups have been put in place to ensure close monitoring and decision making across all workstreams.</p> <p>Midland HR (MHR) have provided the HR and payroll solution (iTrent) to the Council since 2002. The current contract with MHR ends on 31 March 2024.</p> <p>The project has been split into two phases. Phase one will go live on 1 April 2024 and will prioritise transferring all employees ‘core’ HR data to the new Oracle platform, along with delivering a new payroll system. Taking this phased approach ensures we can continue to pay employees on time but also means for the first time circa 5,000 employees who do not have access to the current HR and Payroll system will be able to ‘self-serve’.</p> <p>Other benefits from Phase one to the organisation, line managers, employees and HR include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing payslips online. This will eliminate the need for any paper payslips to be issued to employees, reducing our carbon footprint.</li> <li>• All employee self-service for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Overtime and mileage claims submission, this will reduce duplication and eliminate manual processes for line managers, HR and operational support areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">F&amp;R Committee, March 2023</a> (B agenda)</p> <p><a href="#">F&amp;R Committee June 2023</a></p>	<p><a href="mailto:nareen.turnbull@edinburgh.gov.uk">nareen.turnbull@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recording and viewing leave entitlement. This includes annual leave, special leave (paid and unpaid) and sickness absence (view only for employees).</li> <li>○ Viewing and updating personal details. Personal details such as home addresses, etc. can be updated and contractual information can be viewed. This data can be used at organisational level to inform future Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion action plans.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The second phase has an implementation date of 1 October 2024. Oracle Recruitment will be implemented, with the aim of significantly enhancing the way we attract potential candidates through a new recruitment job board, improving the overall candidate experience, whilst at the same time removing duplication for recruiting managers and HR. Phase two will implement an integrated Oracle Helpdesk module and Oracle HR digital assistant both of which will provide an improved experience for colleagues and line managers interacting with HR.</li> <li>● The project is currently on track to deliver Phase one, however, as with any project of this size, complexity and aggressive implementation timescales, there remains significant risk which continue to be monitored and mitigated. Discussions continue with MHR on an additional one-year extension to 31 March 2025. This has been discussed at the Project Board and is deemed to be prudent from a business continuity perspective in case of 'worst case scenario' planning due to the robust implementation timescales.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief</b></p> <p>The proposed changes to the Council's Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property policy were considered by Committee in June 2023 and the direction of travel was noted. Following further consultation, work is ongoing to consider adjustments relating to the appropriateness of a transitional and target appeals process, and expansion of the evidence to trigger the 12-month relief extension and how these link to longer term market conditions. These matters will be presented to Committee in November, alongside the proposed scheme with a recommendation that the revised policy is operational from 1 April 2024.</p>	<p><a href="#">F&amp;R Committee, June 2023</a></p>	<p><a href="mailto:nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk">nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:neil.jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk">neil.jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Participatory Budgeting</b></p> <p>As part of monitoring Scottish councils' progress in working towards allocation 1% of total budgets through Participatory</p>		<p><a href="mailto:corporate.finance2@edinburgh.gov.uk">corporate.finance2@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p>

<p>Budgeting (PB), the Council increased relevant spend from “2.6m to £8.1m in 2022/23.</p> <p>Building upon the existing £eith Chooses community grant-based initiative, the Edinburgh Community Climate Fund (ECCF) was launched in early 2023, distributing £140,000 to a range of innovative environment-related projects across the city. Deliberative and iterative dialogue with key stakeholders also lay at the heart of a £3.8m PB-based project to transform the Gypsy Travellers’ Site at North Cairntow, as well as £3.6m through the (Housing) Estates Improvement Programme (EIP), with opportunities to deepen dialogue in respect of the latter actively explored during the year.</p> <p>While, at 0.84%, falling marginally short of the 1% target, significant progress was demonstrated during the year. Securing engagement and budget availability across a wider range of services will be key to making further progress and updates will continue to be reported to the Committee.</p>		
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**Forthcoming activities**

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