

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday 3 October 2024

Present:

Councillors Walker (Convener), Burgess, Lezley Marion Cameron (except items 1 to 6), Munro, Doggart, Faccenda (substituting for Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron for items 1 to 6), Glasgow, Heap, McFarlane, McNeese-Mechan, Osler and Thornley.

1. Emergency Motion by Councillor Heap – Closure of Gorgie Farm to Volunteers

In accordance with Standing Order 4.5 the Convener ruled that this matter was urgent and it was accordingly considered by the Committee.

2. Deputations

a) Save the People's Story

(In relation to item 7.3 on the agenda - Mitigating Museums and Galleries Budgets 2024/25)

Although people had strong feelings about the sudden closure of the People's Story, he wanted the contribution for their campaign to be constructive. The report identified a financial problem, then referred to staffing issues, health and safety. It should be rejected and further work on it undertaken. The People's Story was a vital part of this city's social fabric and was strongly supported by academics, trade unions, historians, artists, musicians, writers, and residents. The thoughts of people in outlying districts should also be considered. There was little support for closing the museum, because it told the working-class history of this city.

The way to defeat racism and division was through telling positive stories of working -class solidarity. Any potential financial savings would be dwarfed with the political and social cost. The museum needed attention and investment. There should be a new structure in place for the People's Story. Although there were other aspects to the Council's wider strategy, there had been an outpouring of affection for this museum and what it represented.

(see item 9 below)

b) Communist Party of Britain (Edinburgh Branch)

(In relation to item 7.3 on the agenda - Mitigating Museums and Galleries Budgets 2024/25)

Their members objected to the closure of the People's Story Museum and wanted the Museum to reopen, and in the longer term to consider the future of the Museum, for a model that retained Council ownership, but with the expanded involvement of local community groups and relevant stakeholders., Cultural activities and experiences could promote awareness, creativity, and create a sense of equality, community and social justice. All recorded history was the history of class struggle, the present was informed by the past and offered lessons for the future. The Museum was important both as an archive of working-class history and as a cultural resource. That was why this closure had generated such opposition. The decision for closure was at odds with other Council projects that purported to promote Edinburgh's culture and heritage sector.

There had been reference to Edinburgh 900 which was currently advertising community and civic grants, and the Council's review of its museums and galleries. This would involve the Council's trade unions and mean that agreements may be made on staff contractual terms. It would be sensible to see what emerged from that review before any changes were made. On this basis, it was proposed that there should be an immediate reopening of the museum to its existing operating hours. In the longer term, particular consideration should be given to the future operation of the museum by establishing means that would allow the direct involvement of local community groups, local residents and the relevant stakeholders.

(see item 9 below)

3. Minutes

Decision

- 1) To approve the minute of the Culture and Communities Committee of 8 August 2024 as a correct record.
- 2) To approve the minute of the Culture and Communities Committee of 23 August 2024 as a correct record.

(References – Minutes of the Culture and Communities Committee, submitted)

4. Work Programme

The Committee's Work Programme was presented for review.

Decision:

To note the work programme.

(Reference – Culture and Communities Committee Work Programme, 3 October 2024, submitted)

5. Rolling Actions Log

The Culture and Communities Committee Rolling Actions Log was presented.

Decision:

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
 - Action 2 - City Centre Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Measures Update Report
 - Action 6 - Custom House – Recommendation for Development by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust
 - Action 9 - Eurovision 2023 Bid – Motion by Councillor Biagi
 - Action 10 - Third Party Cultural Grants Funding 2023-24 ([decision 5](#))
 - Action 11 - Response to Motion by Councillor Osler – Tree Protection in East and West Princes Street Gardens ([decision 2](#))
 - Action 12 - Lawn Tennis Association Investment in Parks Tennis Courts
 - Action 14 - Motion by Councillor Osler – Bowling Greens
 - Action 15 - Response to Motion by Councillor Heap - Concessionary Tickets Schemes for Cultural Events
 - Action 24 - Motion by Councillor Walker- Fireworks
 - Action 36 - Motion by Councillor Heap – Firework Control Zones
- 2) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.
- 3) To note that the action arising from Council the previous week regarding an update to this Committee via the Business Bulletin on a City Centre Neighbourhood Manager had not been included, as these papers were issued prior to the Council meeting, but that this would be included in the Action Log going forward.

(Reference – Culture and Communities Committee Rolling Actions Log 3 October 2024, submitted)

6. Business Bulletin

The Culture and Communities Business Bulletin was presented.

Motion

To note the updates on the Business Bulletin.

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron

Amendment

Committee notes:

- 1) That a new charging model came into effect on October 1, whereby Commercial events requiring Council support will have many costs incurred by the Council recovered on a 100% basis.
- 2) That the Council subsidised the Taylor Swift concerts by paying part of a range of costs, to the value of around £40,000.
- 3) That this is unacceptable when Council services are being cut.

- 4) However, that the new charging scheme is not comprehensive, and there is no requirement on officers to recoup costs not specified in the policy.

Amendment to recommendations:

Committee therefore agrees report with the following amendment:

Officers are requested to produce a proposal to recover all costs related to large commercial events including, but not limited to, Murrayfield concerts that are incurred by the Council on a 100% basis and recommend what events it would be appropriate to apply this to, with the proposal to be included in a report by the December meeting of the Committee.

- moved by Councillor Heap, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the Amendment was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

Decision

- 1) To note the updates on the Business Bulletin.
- 2) To note that a new charging model came into effect on October 1, whereby Commercial events requiring Council support would have many costs incurred by the Council recovered on a 100% basis.
- 3) To note that the Council subsidised the Taylor Swift concerts by paying part of a range of costs, to the value of around £40,000.
- 4) To note that this was unacceptable when Council services were being cut.
- 5) To note, however, that the new charging scheme was not comprehensive, and there was no requirement on officers to recoup costs not specified in the policy.
- 6) That officers are requested to produce a proposal to recover all costs related to large commercial events including, but not limited to, Murrayfield concerts that were incurred by the Council on a 100% basis and recommend what events it would be appropriate to apply this to, with the proposal to be included in a report by the December meeting of the Committee.

(Reference – Culture and Communities Committee Business Bulletin, 3 October 2024, submitted)

7. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Plan Performance Report – City of Edinburgh - April 2023 to March 2024

An update was provided from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the Edinburgh City Area for the period April 2023 to March 2024.

Decision

To note the update from the Area Commander.

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

8. Culture and Wellbeing: Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 – Month Three Position

Details were provided of a report by the Interim Executive Director of Place which forecast an overspend of £0.777m for the Culture and Wellbeing Service, based on expenditure and income at 30 June 2024.

The forecast Council-wide revenue budget position, based on expenditure and income at 30 June 2024, had been reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 19 September 2024. A Council-wide overspend of £26.741m was projected. This included a forecast overspend of £10.830m for the Place Directorate.

There was potential for further risks to emerge, including inflationary cost increases and demand-led pressures, particularly in homelessness services. Given these budget pressures, forecast overspends required to be fully mitigated.

Decision

- 1) To note the forecast overspend of £0.777m for the Culture and Wellbeing Service, based on expenditure and income at 30 June 2024.
- 2) To note that Place Directorate was forecasting a year-end overspend of £10.830m.
- 3) To note the need for all existing pressures, savings delivery shortfalls and risks to be fully and proactively managed within Directorates.
- 4) To note the requirement to develop plans for full mitigation of Directorate overspends, both in-year and on a sustainable basis.
- 5) To note the ongoing risks to the achievement of a balanced budget for services within the remit of the Culture and Communities Committee.

(References – Finance and Resources Committee of 19 September 2024 (item 7); report by the Interim Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

9. Mitigating Museums and Galleries Budget Pressures 2024/25

It was reported that the Council was developing a new operating model for the Museums and Galleries Service to provide an improved resident and visitor experience, generate increased income, and focus attention on the city's historic collections. The service was currently reporting in-year budget pressures which it had been unable to address and therefore this report sought approval to reduce this by closing the People's Story in the autumn and winter months and amending the service arrangements for the Queensferry Museum.

In accordance with Standing Order 33.1, the Convener agreed to hear a presentation from Ward Councillor Mowat.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.16, the Convener used her discretion to extend the time available to consider this item of business beyond the stipulated 40 minutes due to the level of interest, and number of questions being asked, by elected members.

Motion

- 1) To note the update on budget pressures within the Museums and Galleries service.
- 2) To approve the closure of the People's Story on a seasonal and temporary basis through the autumn and winter months, with a view to reopening in April 2025.
- 3) To approve the interim service proposal for Queensferry Museum, while officers consult on a new operating model with the local community.

Deletes 1.1.2 and adds:

Committee notes:

- 1) The operational decision by officers to temporarily close The People's Story due to staffing pressures across the Museums and Galleries service.
- 2) The importance of maintaining minimum staff levels to ensure safety.
- 3) The significance of the collections at The People's Story, which share unique insights into the history, culture, crafts and trades of working-class people in Edinburgh.

Therefore Committee:

- 1) Asks officers to include detail on alternatives to the closure of the People's Story in the museum transformation report coming to December's Committee, which could include reduced hours across the service, and charging for visitors.
- 2) If practicable in terms of timescale, asks for a report to go to Finance and Resources Committee in November on the urgent re-opening of the People's Story Museum.
- 3) In the meantime, asks officers to look into temporary options to display the People's Story Collection in the Museum of Edinburgh, such as a digital exhibition or utilising the Keeping the Faith display, and displays in local offices and libraries.
- 4) Appreciates work by museums and galleries staff to maintain the service to the best standard possible, in the hope that the visitor levy in 2026 will enable an improved service that supports 7-day opening across the service, development of the new collections centre, and opportunities to spread collections more widely across the city.

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron.

Amendment 1

Deletes 1.1.2 and insert:

- 1) Committee recognises the unique nature of the City's People's Story Museum, one of the first of its kind to focus on the history of ordinary citizens rather than on the lives of aristocracy, royalty and a tiny elite few noting that The People's Story Museum won awards for innovation when it originally opened in the 1980s.

- 2) Committee notes that The People's Story remains the only museum where people can learn about and celebrate the achievements of the trade union movement and the history of the guilds which preceded them in the Medieval era.
- 3) Committee therefore does not agree to the temporary closure of The People's Story Museum until April 2025.
- 4) Committee instead requests that the update on the Museums and Galleries Transformation due in December outlines a staffing plan to allow the museum to continue operating on at least a part-time basis.
- 5) Additionally, this report should consider plans to better market and publicise this resource to schools, community groups and tour organisers, including via our Trade Union partners. The report should also detail what meeting have taken place between the Convenor of the Culture and Communities Committee and representatives of the Trade Unions, including any minutes of the meetings to-date on the Museums and Galleries Transformation piece and/or the concerning staff absence rate in the service.

- moved by Councillor McFarlane, seconded by Councillor McNeese-Mechan.

Amendment 2

Adds:

Background

Committee notes:

The People's Story museum tells the story of the working-class people of Edinburgh from the late 18th century to the present day.

Widespread public and trades union support for the valuable role in promoting awareness of working class history.

Amendment to recommendations

Committee therefore agrees report with the following amendment:

Amend 1.1.2 so it reads

Decline the temporary closure of the People's Story and instead agree

- a. That the museum should re-open, or, should this not be possible.*
- b. That the museum opens for a limited number of days a week until the planned reopening in April 2025, or should this not be possible*
- c. Officers operate the museum using an interim service proposal similar to that proposed for the Queensferry Museum, with a fuller re-opening to take place no later than April 2025.*

- moved by Councillor Heap, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Amendment 3

Adds:

And commits to engaging with the community to discuss ways forward for the Peoples' Story Museum.

- moved by Councillor Munro, seconded by Councillor Doggart.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 3 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to Amendment 1.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 3 was accepted as an addendum to Amendment 1.

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 6 votes

For Amendment 1 (as adjusted) - 5 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Lezley Marion Cameron, Doggart, Munro, Osler, Thornley and Walker.

For the Amendment (as adjusted); Councillors Burgess, Glasgow, Heap, McFarlane and McNeese-Mechan.)

Decision

- 1) To note the update on budget pressures within the Museums and Galleries service.
- 2) To approve the interim service proposal for Queensferry Museum, while officers consult on a new operating model with the local community.
- 3) To note the operational decision by officers to temporarily close The People's Story due to staffing pressures across the Museums and Galleries service.
- 4) To note the importance of maintaining minimum staff levels to ensure safety.
- 5) To note the significance of the collections at The People's Story, which share unique insights into the history, culture, crafts and trades of working-class people in Edinburgh.
- 6) To ask officers to include detail on alternatives to the closure of the People's Story in the museum transformation report coming to December's Committee, which could include reduced hours across the service, and charging for visitors.
- 7) If practicable in terms of timescale, to ask for a report to go to Finance and Resources Committee in November on the urgent re-opening of the People's Story Museum.
- 8) In the meantime, to ask officers to look into temporary options to display the People's Story Collection in the Museum of Edinburgh, such as a digital

exhibition or utilising the Keeping the Faith display and displayed in local offices and libraries.

- 9) To appreciate work by museums and galleries staff to maintain the service to the best standard possible, in the hope that the visitor levy in 2026 would enable an improved service that supports 7-day opening across the service, development of the new collections centre, and opportunities to spread collections more widely across the city.
- 10) To be committed to engaging with the community to discuss ways forward for the Peoples' Story Museum.

In accordance with Standing Order 31.1 the decision of the Committee was referred to Council for approval.

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

10. Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy

Approval was sought to undertake public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy - the Council's plan for the ongoing regeneration of Princes Street's buildings, the transformation of its public realm and strategic management of the Waverley Valley (including the planning and placemaking considerations for the future of the Ross Pavilion and Waverley Station Masterplan).

Following consultation and finalisation, the Strategy would represent a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and guide place management decisions.

Motion

- 1) To note the development of the Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy as non-statutory, place-based guidance under City Plan 2030.
- 2) To acknowledge that the Draft Strategy's approach brought together Council service remits to be considered by this committee, Planning Committee and Transport and Environment Committee. In September, matters relating to Planning Committee and Transport and Environment Committee were approved to go forward for consultation. The changes approved by these committees were set out in section 3 of the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place.
- 3) To approve the draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy (Appendix 1) for consultation with regard to Culture and Communities matters set out in Appendix 3 of the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place.
- 4) To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place to action minor editorial changes to the Draft Strategy prior to consultation.

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron.

Amendment 1

Adds:

- 1) Reiterates the call made by the Transport and Environment Committee as to the strategic importance of addressing the castle rockfall issues to re-enable access to West Princes Street Gardens.
- 2) Notes Nature Scots ambition to create more, high quality ponds to replace those lost nationally in the 20th Century.
- 3) Believes there may be a missed opportunity to respond to the nature emergency and improve sustainable rainwater management through the creation of new wetland / pond habitat within the gardens and therefore requests that the forthcoming consultation consider this.
- 4) Agrees that appropriate CEC Staff who have expertise working in Princes Street Gardens should be given adequate time to respond to the forthcoming consultation and thereafter to analyse the results and proposed strategy to identify any potential risks associated with a look to long term maintenance requirements of any proposed changes.

- moved by Councillor McFarlane, seconded by Councillor McNeese-Mechan.

Amendment 2

Adds new introduction:

“Council presents the following report which has interactions with a number of Council strategies as enumerated in Appendix 3 and notes that these interactions complicate the consultation and make any changes reliant on other council policies; equally should there be changes to other Council policies which interact with this Strategy, the implications on any changes on this strategy need to be clarified.”

Adds at end new 1.1.4:

“Agrees that the consultation should ask about the order of the three phases detailed at paragraphs 4.14.1 – 3 to determine whether residents order the priorities as proposed in the paper, given that recent responses to budget consultations would suggest these should prioritise footway improvements first.”

- moved by Councillor Munro, seconded by Councillor Doggart.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

- 1) To note the development of the Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy as non-statutory, place-based guidance under City Plan 2030.
- 2) To acknowledge that the Draft Strategy’s approach brought together Council service remits to be considered by this committee, Planning Committee and

Transport and Environment Committee. In September, matters relating to Planning Committee and Transport and Environment Committee were approved to go forward for consultation. The changes approved by these committees were set out in section 3 of the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place.

- 3) To approve the draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy (Appendix 1) for consultation with regard to Culture and Communities matters set out in Appendix 3 of the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place.
- 4) To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place to action minor editorial changes to the Draft Strategy prior to consultation.
- 5) To reiterate the call made by the Transport and Environment Committee as to the strategic importance of addressing the castle rockfall issues to re-enable access to West Princes Street Gardens.
- 6) To note Nature Scots ambition to create more, high quality ponds to replace those lost nationally in the 20th Century.
- 7) Committee believed there may be a missed opportunity to respond to the nature emergency and improve sustainable rainwater management through the creation of new wetland / pond habitat within the gardens and therefore requested that the forthcoming consultation consider this.
- 8) To agree that appropriate CEC Staff who had expertise working in Princes Street Gardens should be given adequate time to respond to the forthcoming consultation and thereafter to analyse the results and proposed strategy to identify any potential risks associated with a look to long term maintenance requirements of any proposed changes.
- 9) Adds new introduction:

“Council presents the following report which has interactions with a number of Council strategies as enumerated in Appendix 3 and notes that these interactions complicate the consultation and make any changes reliant on other council policies; equally should there be changes to other Council policies which interact with this Strategy, the implications on any changes on this strategy need to be clarified.”
- 10) To agree that the consultation should ask about the order of the three phases detailed at paragraphs 4.14.1 – 3 of the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place to determine whether residents order the priorities as proposed in the paper, given that recent responses to budget consultations would suggest these should prioritise footway improvements first.

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

11. TCV Grant Funding

Approval was sought for grant funding for The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to deliver nature conservation activities that delivered against the Edinburgh Nature Network and the Nature Emergency declared by the Council.

Motion

- 1) To approve a grant funding award to The Conservation Volunteers as a contribution towards the overall delivery of the Urban Biodiversity Improvement Plan for Edinburgh.
- 2) To approve a grant funding award to The Conservation Volunteers to create a Green Skills Traineeship under the Green Skills John Muir Way project.
- 3) To note that both programmes were aligned to the Edinburgh Nature Network and deliver actions that respond to the Nature Emergency declared by the Council

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron.

Amendment 1

Committee adds:

Agrees to update in a year's time as set out in 5.3.

- moved by Councillor Osler, seconded by Councillor Thornley

Amendment 2

In 1.1.2 inserts "in principle" after "Approves" and inserts after "project", "subject to a member briefing emphasising the financial security of the charity".

- moved by Councillor Doggart, seconded by Marie-Clair Munro.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

- 1) To approve a grant funding award to The Conservation Volunteers as a contribution towards the overall delivery of the Urban Biodiversity Improvement Plan for Edinburgh.
- 2) To approve in principle a grant funding award to The Conservation Volunteers to create a Green Skills Traineeship under the Green Skills John Muir Way project subject to a member briefing emphasising the financial security of the charity.
- 3) To note that both programmes were aligned to the Edinburgh Nature Network and deliver actions that respond to the Nature Emergency declared by the Council.
- 4) To agree to update in a year's time as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place.

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

12. Firework Displays

The report by the Interim Executive Director of Place set out various options in respect of the feasibility and cost of hosting and/or supporting fireworks displays for Bonfire Night within Edinburgh.

Motion

To note the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place, which had been prepared in response to a request from Committee in February 2024.

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron

Amendment

Adds:

“Committee does not agree to further progression or development of option 4.1.3 or option 4.1.4 in the report due to climate, wellbeing and cost implications noting that there are regularly several larger scale professional fireworks displays across the city providing a similar function and often raising money for charities.”

- moved by Councillor McFarlane, seconded by Councillor Glasgow.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the Amendment was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place, which had been prepared in response to a request from Committee in February 2024.
- 2) That Committee did not agree to further progression or development of option 4.1.3 or option 4.1.4 in the report due to climate, wellbeing and cost implications noting that there were regularly several larger scale professional fireworks displays across the city providing a similar function and often raising money for charities.

(References – report by the Interim Executive Director of Place; Culture and Communities Committee of 29 February 2024 (item 12), submitted.)

13. Hostile Vehicle Mitigation – Update Report

It was detailed that since the last update report to the Committee in 2021 and the subsequent Business Bulletin update in 2022, there had been three key areas which continued to be the focus of development:

- Police Scotland security recommendations for crowded place events requiring temporary rated equipment deployments to mitigate against a hostile vehicle attack.
- Permanent vehicle security barrier installation as part of planned public realm works and the replacement of the National Barrier Asset.

- The introduction of Martyn's Law (Protect Duty) which the UK Government have pledged to support, which would have an impact on public spaces and therefore local authorities and businesses within scope of the legislation.

Decision

To note the update on Hostile Vehicle Mitigation in Edinburgh.

(References – Culture and Communities Committee of Committee on 26 April 2022 (item 4); report by the Interim Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

14. Leith Custom House Update

A summary was provided of the progress made in the development of the Leith Custom House project by Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) since the approval (by Culture and Communities Committee in December 2022) of a preferred option for a Mixed-use Community, Creative and Heritage hub and proposed next steps.

The report by the Interim Executive Director of Place described the development of the hybrid use scheme to create a new landmark digital museum at the Custom House, augmented and supported by community-creative spaces along with commercial opportunities to ensure long-term viability.

Following the appointment of a new Director of SHBT in early 2024, working with community representatives and others, the project had clarified its strong social mission: to provide a new civic space for Leith and North Edinburgh, supporting the integration of a rapidly growing and changing demographic and the evolution of Leith's proud civic tradition; and that a Community Management Trust would be established by SHBT to manage the digital museum element.

In accordance with Standing Order 33.1, the Convener agreed to hear a presentation from Ward Councillor Faccenda.

Decision

To note this update on the Leith Custom House Development.

(References – Culture and Committee of 13 December 2022 (item 9); report by the Interim Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

15. Draft Climate Ready Plan – Referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee

On 22 August 2024, the Policy and Sustainability Committee approved the Draft Climate Ready Edinburgh (CRE) Plan. The Plan was developed in partnership by the Edinburgh Adaptation and Nature Partnership which was chaired by Scottish Water. Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan was a strategy based on a Climate Change Risk Assessment that detailed objectives with actions that the city must take to prepare for the shocks and stresses associated with climate change impacts (such as extreme flooding events, heat waves and other associated weather events). As the strategy, objectives and actions applied to many different workstreams in the Council, which were governed through different committees, the plan was being presented at all

committees. The Policy and Sustainability Committee had agreed to refer the report to this Committee.

Motion

To note the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron

Amendment 1

Committee adds;

- 1) Notes that Policy and Sustainability Committee will receive annual updates on progress against the plan.
- 2) Therefore, requests a briefing note be circulated to Culture and Communities Committee members outlining the current state of areas within its responsibility, when considered against the plan, to give members a clear picture of what is necessary to make further progress and that members can consider this when developing their budget proposals.

- moved by Councillor Thornley, seconded by Councillor Osler.

Amendment 2

Committee:

- 1) Notes the significant areas of crossover between the Climate Ready Edinburgh plan and the work of committee.
- 2) Requests that Officers engage with committee members and officers from across the Council (including members of CLT, if required) to bring a proposal to the next committee meeting about how committee papers can better reflect considerations from within the Climate Ready Edinburgh plan and build adaptation governance into routine committee decision making.

- moved by Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Heap

Amendment 3

adds as 1.2

1.2 Notes the content of the plan, and specifically notes from the covering report by the Chief Executive that paragraph 5.1 indicates that milestones and key performance indicators are yet to be developed, and that paragraph 6.2 indicates that an investment and delivery plan and a series of business cases are still to be developed. Considers that without timescales, financial and performance information, the plan is incomplete and regrets that it did not remain in draft until this work can be publicly scrutinised by Committee.

- moved by Councillor Doggart, seconded by Councillor Munro

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 9 votes

For Amendment 3 - 2 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Burgess, Lezley Marion Cameron, Glasgow, Heap, McFarlane, McNeese-Mechan, Osler, Thornley and Walker.

For Amendment 3; Councillors Doggart and Munro.)

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services.
- 2) To note that the Policy and Sustainability Committee would receive annual updates on progress against the plan.
- 3) Therefore, requested a briefing note be circulated to Culture and Communities Committee members outlining the current state of areas within its responsibility, when considered against the plan, to give members a clear picture of what was necessary to make further progress and that members could consider this when developing their budget proposals.
- 4) To note the significant areas of crossover between the Climate Ready Edinburgh plan and the work of committee.
- 5) To request that Officers engaged with committee members and officers from across the Council (including members of CLT, if required) to bring a proposal to the next committee meeting about how committee papers could better reflect considerations from within the Climate Ready Edinburgh plan and build adaptation governance into routine committee decision making.

(References – the Policy and Sustainability Committee of 22 August 2024 (item 10); report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

16. Community Centre Strategy

An update was provided on progress in engaging with Community Centre Management Committees following the actions agreed by Committee on 16 May 2024. It also provided an update on the approach to individual lease renewals.

Motion

- 1) To note the update on the actions agreed by Committee in May 2024.
- 2) To note that Committee would be kept updated on progress of both engagement with community centre management committees on the draft vision and principles of the Community Centre Strategy and on the lease renewal programme.

Adds:

- 3) That there is currently an unfunded pressure of over £20m for necessary capital improvements to the community centre estate, not including costs for suitability, accessibility, or net zero improvements.
- 4) Committee appreciates the considerable energy and commitment that Management Committees have brought to engaging with officers and exploring ideas for future service provision.
- 5) Given the need for a long-term strategic approach to the community centre estate that ensures centres are fit for purpose with the capacity for robust service provision, Committee asks officers to explore options for capital grant funding, including the possibility of match funding, with property services and to include this work in future reporting to Committee on the Community Centre Strategy.

- moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron

Amendment 1

Adds:

- 1) Agrees that within an asset-based community development perspective the right time to ask communities to step-up and take on further responsibilities is when they are at their most resilient, noting that in the work to-date in assessing the situation across the city there is a mixed picture in terms of resource and that many communities are still sadly suffering from over a decade of austerity.
- 2) Notes that the current partnership arrangement between Edinburgh Council and management committees has been in place for decades and that management committees are volunteers who give-up free time to ensure the community centres respond to local needs.
- 3) Further notes that there has been no decision of committee taken to withdraw FM support or explicit agreement that management committees should become responsible for the condition of community centre buildings and that this report is just for noting.
- 5) Understands that the proposals at 4.7 would either effectively end or significantly alter this partnership working and transfer significant responsibility onto these volunteers.
- 6) Recognises the risk if these changes are implemented without the consent or active desire of Management Committees and agrees that the additional burden could lead to their collapse entirely in some cases.
- 7) Agrees that on the publication of all future Community Centre Strategy Update Reports that a copy should be pro-actively shared with all Management Committees to allow them as much opportunity to respond.
- 8) Further agrees that it is unacceptable that The Braidwood Centre remains closed as we approach winter despite the proposed new lease being agreed by councillors at Finance and Resources Committee on 14th March 2024 following

an even longer period of closure after the collapse of the management committee and therefore agrees for an urgent update on the status of the lease negotiations and their expected conclusion to be provided to City Centre Ward councillors.

- 9) Also notes that the management committee at Bingham Community Centre have expressed concerns about the lease process that is currently ongoing, and that there are meetings arranged with ward councillors to discuss this. Agrees that engagement with ward councillors should continue and that a business bulletin update should be provided on the outcome of this process, including lessons learned around clear communication.

- moved by Councillor McFarlane, seconded by Councillor Glasgow.

Amendment 2

Committee, deletes the recommendations and replaces with;

Committee;

- 1) Notes the ongoing concerns and frustrations of Centre Management Committees, Centre users and elected members around inconsistency and a lack of clarity in communication as part of the strategy's development.
- 2) Notes with concern that, over 18 months after the development of a Community Centre Strategy was approved by committee, a clear statement of the aims and expected timeline for the strategy has not come forward.
- 3) Believes that without an established aim for the strategy, it is not possible to continue developing one.
- 4) Notes that in March 2023, committee agreed a report which at 4.7 and 4.16 stated;
 - a) *4.7 In order to develop a coherent strategy, it is proposed to undertake a strategic review of the current arrangements for community centres.*
 - b) *4.16 The strategic review is expected to commence at the beginning of the new financial year (April 2023) and for the final community centre strategy to be provided to committee for approval within one year.*
- 3) Notes that committee has received a number of updates since then, and that the clear message resulting from those updates has been that the challenges facing community centres are specific to individual centres.
- 6) Believes therefore that it is not possible to address individual centre's challenges as part of a city-wide strategy.
- 7) Further notes the incredibly concerning risks highlighted in Section 9 of the report, especially 9.4, and that while further work to develop a strategy continues, these risks are not being addressed.
- 8) Recognises the pressures the Council is under to manage properties and facilities across the city and agrees that the report expected in December 2024 should;

- a) Detail the individual pressures on each community centre so that elected members can consider them when developing their budget proposals.
 - b) Be referred on to January Finance and Resources committee.
- 9) Agrees to receive an update report in April 2025 detailing the aims of the Community Centre Strategy and a timeline for its delivery, and an update on the progress of developing this in the Business Bulletin in February 2025.
- 10) Believes that Community Centre Management Committees and User Groups need clarity on the aims and purpose of any Community Centre Strategy, which has been lacking to this point, and that the update report at 9) should provide that clarity.

- moved by Councillor Thornley, seconded by Councillor Osler

Addendum

Adds

2. Additionally requests that elected members are kept updated on engagement with Management Committees or other lease-holders of Community Centres in their wards, and given the opportunities to attend local meetings relating to the draft vision and principles of the Community Centre Strategy and on the lease renewal programme.

- moved by Councillor Heap, seconded by Councillor Burgess

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was adjusted and was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the Motion was accepted as an addendum to Amendment 1.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the Addendum was accepted as an addendum to Amendment 1.

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 6 votes

For the Amendment (as adjusted) - 5 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Lezley Marion Cameron, Doggart, Munro, Osler, Thornley and Walker.

For the Amendment (as adjusted); Councillors Burgess, Heap, Glasgow, McFarlane and McNeese-Mechan.)

Decision

- 1) To note the update on the actions agreed by Committee in May 2024.
- 2) To note that Committee would be kept updated on progress of both engagement with community centre management committees on the draft vision and

principles of the Community Centre Strategy and on the lease renewal programme.

- 3) That it be noted that there was currently an unfunded pressure of over £20m for necessary capital improvements to the community centre estate, not including costs for suitability, accessibility, or net zero improvements.
- 4) That the considerable energy and commitment that Management Committees have brought to engaging with officers and exploring ideas for future service provision is appreciated.
- 5) Given the need for a long-term strategic approach to the community centre estate that ensured centres were fit for purpose with the capacity for robust service provision, Committee asked officers to explore options for capital grant funding, including the possibility of match funding, with property services and to include this work in future reporting to Committee on the Community Centre Strategy.
- 6) To agree that within an asset-based community development perspective the right time to ask communities to step-up and take on further responsibilities was when they were at their most resilient, noting that in the work to-date in assessing the situation across the city there was a mixed picture in terms of resource and that many communities were still sadly suffering from over a decade of austerity.
- 7) To note that the current partnership arrangement between Edinburgh Council and management committees had been in place for decades and that management committees were volunteers who gave-up free time to ensure the community centres responded to local needs.
- 4) Further noted that there had been no decision of committee taken to withdraw FM support or explicit agreement that management committees should become responsible for the condition of community centre buildings and that this report was just for noting.
- 7) Understood that the proposals at paragraph 4.7 would either effectively end or significantly alter this partnership working and transfer significant responsibility onto these volunteers.
- 8) Recognised the risk if these changes were implemented without the consent or active desire of Management Committees and agreed that the additional burden could lead to their collapse entirely in some cases.
- 9) Agreed that on the publication of all future Community Centre Strategy Update Reports that a copy should be pro-actively shared with all Management Committees to allow them as much opportunity to respond.
- 10) Further agreed that it was unacceptable that The Braidwood Centre remained closed as winter approached, despite the proposed new lease being agreed by councillors at Finance and Resources Committee on 14th March 2024 following an even longer period of closure after the collapse of the management committee and therefore agreed for an urgent update on the status of the lease

negotiations and their expected conclusion to be provided to City Centre Ward councillors.

- 11) Also noted that the management committee at Bingham Community Centre had expressed concerns about the lease process that was currently ongoing, and that there were meetings arranged with ward councillors to discuss this. Agreed that engagement with ward councillors should continue and that a business bulletin update should be provided on the outcome of this process, including lessons learned around clear communication.
- 12) To note the ongoing concerns and frustrations of Centre Management Committees, Centre users and elected members around inconsistency and a lack of clarity in communication as part of the strategy's development.
- 13) To note with concern that, over 18 months after the development of a Community Centre Strategy was approved by committee, a clear statement of the aims and expected timeline for the strategy had not come forward.
- 14) Committee believed that without an established aim for the strategy, it was not possible to continue developing one.
- 15) To note that in March 2023, committee agreed a report which at 4.7 and 4.16 stated;
 - a) 4.7 In order to develop a coherent strategy, it was proposed to undertake a strategic review of the current arrangements for community centres.
 - b) 4.16 The strategic review was expected to commence at the beginning of the new financial year (April 2023) and for the final community centre strategy to be provided to committee for approval within one year.
- 16) To note that committee had received a number of updates since then, and that the clear message resulting from those updates had been that the challenges facing community centres were specific to individual centres.
- 17) Believed therefore that it was not possible to address individual centre's challenges as part of a city-wide strategy.
- 18) To further note the incredibly concerning risks highlighted in Section 9 of the report, especially 9.4, and that while further work to develop a strategy continues, these risks were not being addressed.
- 19) To recognise the pressures the Council was under to manage properties and facilities across the city and agree that the report expected in December 2024 should;
 - a) Detail the individual pressures on each community centre so that elected members could consider them when developing their budget proposals.
 - b) Be referred on to the January Finance and Resources committee.
- 20) To agree to receive an update report in April 2025 detailing the aims of the Community Centre Strategy and a timeline for its delivery, and an update on the progress of developing this in the Business Bulletin in February 2025.

- 21) Committee believed that Community Centre Management Committees and User Groups needed clarity on the aims and purpose of any Community Centre Strategy, which had been lacking to this point, and that the update report at 9) should provide that clarity.

(Reference – Culture and Communities Committee of 16 May 2024 (item 9); report by the Interim Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

17. Closure of Gorgie Farm to Volunteers – Motion by Councillor Heap

The Convener ruled that the following item, notice of which had been given at the start of the meeting, be considered as a matter of urgency to allow the Committee to give early consideration to this matter.

The following motion was submitted by Councillor Heap in terms of Standing Order 17:

By Councillor Heap – Closure of Gorgie Farm to Volunteers

“Committee:

- Notes the briefing provided to Committee Members and Sighthill/Gorgie Councillors on 2 October
- Regrets that EVOC have unexpectedly handed back the lease of Gorgie Farm to the Council.
- Understands that a new tenant will not be in place until April 2025 at the earliest.
- Is concerned that the complete closure of the site for a prolonged period will lead to further deterioration of the site and create additional barriers for the new tenant as they try to realise the proposal agreed by Committee on August 8th.

Committee therefore:

- Requests a note within one week explaining why the whole site is not currently safe and why not even the garden areas cannot be safely accessed.
- Agrees that the Council will take the necessary steps to make site safe at the earliest opportunity, so that volunteers are able to return to the garden area.
- Agrees that the Council will provide ongoing Facilities Management support in relation to the above until a new tenant is in place.”
- Agrees that the next stage of the bid process for the farm will make clear that that the Council's expectation is that any part of the site that can be safely opened to volunteers and to the public will be opened without delay after the lease is awarded.”

- moved by Councillor Heap, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Amendment

To refer the matter to the Finance and Resources Committee.

- moved by Councillor Thornley, seconded by Councillor Osler.

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 7 votes

For the Amendment - 4 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Burgess, Lezley Marion Cameron, Glasgow, Heap, McFarlane, McNeese-Mechan and Walker.

For the Amendment; Councillors Doggart, Munro, Osler and Thornley.)

Decision

1. that the briefing provided to Committee Members and Sighthill/Gorgie Councillors on 2 October be noted
2. that it be regretted that EVOG has unexpectedly handed back the lease of Gorgie Farm to the Council.
3. that it be understood that a new tenant will not be in place until April 2025 at the earliest.
4. that the Committee is concerned that the complete closure of the site for a prolonged period will lead to further deterioration of the site and create additional barriers for the new tenant as they try to realise the proposal agreed by Committee on August 8th.
5. that a note be requested within one week explaining why the whole site is not currently safe and why not even the garden areas cannot be safely accessed.
6. Agrees that the Council will take the necessary steps to make site safe at the earliest opportunity, so that volunteers are able to return to the garden area.
7. Agrees that the next stage of the bid process for the farm will make clear that that the Council's expectation is that any part of the site that can be safely opened to volunteers and to the public will be opened without delay after the lease is awarded."