



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in Council Offices,
Council Offices, Stornoway on Tuesday 20
February 2024 at 3.00pm

PRESENT

Mr Paul Steele (Chair)	Mr Robert Mackenzie
Mr Duncan MacInnes MBE (Vice-Chair)	Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr Kenneth J Maclean	Mr Kenneth Macleod
Mr Iain M Macleod	Mr Donald F Crichton
Ms Susan Thomson	Dr Frances Murray
Mr Uisdean Robertson	Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr Grant Fulton	

APOLOGIES

Mr Paul Finnegan

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Iain A MacNeil	Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr Mustapha Hocine	Mr Malcolm K Macdonald
Mr Angus Morrison	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Ranaid Fraser	Mr Finlay M Stewart
Mr John Norman Macleod	
Mr Donald Macsween	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Mr Sandy Gomez
Mr Calum Iain Maciver	Mr Derek Mackay
Mr Norman Macdonald	Mr James Mackinnon
Mr Donald Macleod	Mrs Marina Macaulay

Declaration of Interest of 1

There were no declarations of interest.

FINANCE

The Chairman ruled items 2 and 3 as urgent in order to allow the Comhairle to set a balanced budget for 2024/25.

Budget and Council Tax Setting 2024/25 2

The Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer submitted a joint Report which sought approval of the Comhairle's budget for 2024/24 and to set the Council Tax for 2024/25.

Arising from consideration of this item it was noted that:

- (1) the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Executive would provide details of vacant posts to Elected Members; and
- (2) a Report on the throughput and financial performance in relation to Stornoway Abbatoir would be presented to the April 2024 series of meetings.

Recommendations 3
from Service
Committees

The Chief Executive submitted a Report which indicated that the Education, Sports and Children's Services Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee had considered and approved for their interests the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 Report.

The Report indicated that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee had agreed to recommend approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 Report with the following amendments in relation to the savings proposal in respect of bus operations:

- (a) to continue the Broadbay and Westside evening bus services funded from Crown Estate Funding, subject to the approval of the distribution of Crown Estate Revenues for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27;
- (b) that the Broadbay and Westside evening bus services be considered as part of the next round of tendering for the School and Public Bus Contracts as a distinct priced item;
- (c) the Head of Municipal Services consults with passengers and operators to design a peak passenger evening service for Broadbay and Westside; and
- (d) the Head of Municipal Services continues to explore alternative funding sources for the provision of evening bus services.

The Report further indicated that the Sustainable Development Committee had agreed to recommend approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 with the following amendment in relation to the Creative Industries funding:

To fund the exit strategy for creative industries through Crown Estate Funding, subject to the approval of the disbursement of Crown Estate Revenues for 2024/25 and 2025/

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) agree to accept the 2024/25 Settlement from the Scottish Government as set out in the Finance Circular in Appendix A to the Report;**
- (2) approve the Budget Strategy for 2024/25 as set out in Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Report;**
- (3) approve the draft Budgets for 2024/25 at Budget Item B of the Agenda, including:**

the following recommendations from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee:

- (a) to continue the Broadbay and Westside evening bus services funded from Crown Estate Funding, subject to the approval of the distribution of Crown Estate Revenues for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27;**
- (b) that the Broadbay and Westside evening bus services be considered as part of the next round of tendering for the School and Public Bus Contracts as a distinct priced item;**
- (c) the Head of Municipal Services consults with passengers and operators to design a peak passenger evening service for Broadbay and Westside; and**
- (d) the Head of Municipal Services continues to explore alternative funding sources for the provision of evening bus services.**

the following recommendation from the Sustainable Development Committee:

to fund the exit strategy for creative industries through Crown Estate Funding, subject to the approval of the disbursement of Crown Estate Revenues for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

- (4) agree the delegated Budget for Cùram is Slàinte nan Eilean Siar as detailed in Section 10 of the Report;
- (5) agree to freeze Council Tax at 2023/24 levels (£1290.75 for Band D properties);
- (6) agree to allocate additional funding to the provision of the Winter Maintenance contract, in the event of any increases to General Revenue Grant;
- (7) note the capital allocation for 2024/25 and that progress with the Capital Programme will continue to be monitored quarterly through the Policy and Resources Committee;
- (8) note the financial risks in Appendix C to the Report and agree to maintain the level of uncommitted reserves at £3.5m;
- (9) agree that the Budget and Strategy Board monitor progress with the implementation of Savings Plans;
- (10) note that the preparation of a medium-term financial plan is in progress;
- (11) note the draft Budget Book;
- (12) agree that a Budget Strategy update be provided to the June 2024 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee;
- (13) agree to a flat rate increase of 12.5% across all sections of the Harbour Rates and Dues;
- (14) agree to a 6.6% increase to Harbour Dues levied on CalMac Ferries Ltd;
- (15) agree that the mark up of the fuel at fishery pier service be increased by 2 pence per litre to 11 pence per litre from 1 April 2024;
- (16) agrees that the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure, retains authorisation, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, to make further future adjustments to the markup as required, providing at all times that it is sustainable and Prudential Borrowing can be adequately supported; and
- (17) agree to the Municipal Services Fees and Charges as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Municipal Services Fees and Charges Report.