

Minute of Meeting



Midlothian Council

Date	Time	Venue
4 October 2022	11.00 am	Council Chambers, Midlothian House

Present:

Provost McCall (Chair)	Depute Provost McManus
Councillor Parry – Council Leader	Councillor Cassidy – Depute Council Leader
Councillor Curran	Councillor Bowen
Councillor Drummond	Councillor Imrie
Councillor McEwan	Councillor McKenzie
Councillor Milligan	Councillor Pottinger
Councillor Russell	Councillor Smail
Councillor Scott	Councillor Winchester
Councillor Virgo	

In attendance:

Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive	Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships
Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place	Alan Turpie, Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer
Gary Fairley, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions	Nick Clater, Head of Adult & Social Care
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place	Fiona Clandillon Head of Development
Saty Kaur, Executive Business Manager	Lynn Cochrane Communications Team Leader
David Gladwin Financial Services Manager	Annette Lang , Strategic Service Re-Design Manager
Gordon Pollock, Project Director Zero Waste Edinburgh and Midlothian	Myra Forsyth Quality and Scrutiny Manager
Edel Ryan , Senior Manager Protective	

Marco Reece-Heal Business Analyst	Mike Broadway , Democratic Services Officer
Ross Neill, Democratic Services Team Leader	Andrew Henderson , Democratic Services Officer

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Provost welcomed everyone to the meeting reminding all that it was a public meeting being webcast live.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Alexander, Morag Barrow, Mrs Morton & Mrs Lawrie.

The Provost then asked all to stand and in memory of Her Majesty the Queen's Elizabeth II's passing.

Councillor Leader Parry offered words of condolence on behalf of Midlothian Council and best wishes to Charles III and the royal family. She reminded all present of the visit the late Queen made to Midlothian earlier in her reign. She thanked the people of Midlothian for all the tributes and council staff for providing opportunities for the public to note their condolences.

Councillors Milligan and Virgo also offered condolence to the Royal family. Both noted that the late Queen was a fantastic public servant whose duty to the country will be missed.

The Provost echoed all sentiments by fellow councillors adding her own condolences.

2. Order of Business

The Provost advised the order of business as per the agenda noting 9.2 had been withdrawn

3. Declarations of interest

None

4. Deputations

None received.

5. Minute of Previous Meeting

No.		:
5.1	MINUTE Midlothian Council for Approval 23 Aug 2022	Executive Director Place
Questions to Officers		
Accepted as a clear and fair record		

Midlothian Council Minute 23 August 2022
Private Midlothian Council Minute 23 August 2022

Proposed Councillor Parry
Seconded Councillor Smail

Decision

Approved

Action

All to Note

No.		:
5.2 & 5.3	Minute Volume	Executive Director Place
Questions to Officers		
5. 2 Minute Volume Index - 04 October 2022 5.3 PRIVATE Minute Volume Index - 04 October 2022		
All members were satisfied the action log was up to date and in order.		
Both proposed and seconded by		
Councillor Parry Councillor Milligan		
Decision		
All to Note		
Action		
None		

No.		:
5.4	Action Log Update	Executive Director Place
Questions to Officers		
All members were satisfied the action log was up to date and in order.		
Councillor Milligan asked if there would be an update to future Council meetings concerning the levelling up fund. He requested it focus on areas that 'Are left behind', aimed primarily at areas of Midlothian deemed deprived.		
Mr Anderson responded that this would be presented later in the year and had been submitted and the Council was awaiting the outcome of that.		
Decision		
All to Note		
Action		
None		

6. Question to the Leader of the Council

None

7. Notices of Motion

None

8. Reports

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.1	MLC Annual Audit Report 2021-22	Report by EY, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>This report has been prepared in accordance with Terms of Appointment Letter from Audit Scotland dated 31 May 2016 through which the Accounts Commission has appointed us as external auditor of Midlothian Council (the Council) for financial years 2016/17 to 2021/22. As a result of the impact of Covid-19 our appointment was extended by a further 12 months to include the financial year 2021/22. We undertake our audit in accordance with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and our responsibilities as set out within Audit Scotland's Code of Audit Practice. This report is for the benefit of the Council and is made available to the Accounts Commission, the Controller of Audit and Audit Scotland. This report has not been designed to be of benefit to anyone except the recipients. In preparing this report we have not taken into account the interests, needs or circumstances of anyone apart from the recipients, even though we may have been aware that others might read this report.</p> <p>Any party other than the Recipients that obtains access to this report or a copy (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, through a Recipient's Publication Scheme or otherwise) and chooses to rely on this report (or any part of it) does so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Ernst & Young LLP does not assume any responsibility and will not accept any liability in respect of this report to any party other than the Recipients.</p> <p>Mr Fairley spoke to the report in the absence of EY representatives he noted it provides an unqualified opinion. There is no change to the reserve provision, financial sustainability is highlighted in 'Red' due to the current uncertainty. He added that since last year the financial management has moved from green due to the current transition period. Best value is currently making good progress.</p> <p>Councillor Parry thanked EY for the report and the former independent Chair of the Audit Committee, she added that a large part of the uncertainty is out with the Councils control.</p> <p>Both Councillor Parry and Smail suggested that in future the language within the report be plainer to allow it to be more accessible to the public. Councillor Smail also noted a reduction in surplus and asked for this to be explained.</p> <p>Mr Fairley responded that there are certain accountant etiquettes that must be followed and are a requirement of the accountancy code. That said, the summaries within the report do attempt to simplify the more technical aspects of the report.</p>		

Councillor Milligan echoed his Colleagues comments stressing that it is important now in light of the very challenging times that every penny is accounted for.

Proposed by Councillor Parry
Seconded by Councillor Small

Decision

None

Action

All to Note

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.2	Midlothian Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027 and associated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2027-28	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Outline of report and summary of discussion

Midlothian Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027, *A great, green place to grow: where people and the environment flourish*

1. *Inclusive, Empowered, Resilient and Safe Communities:*
2. *All children, young people, adults and communities in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be*
3. Health and Social Care Transformation
4. Accelerating Inclusive Growth
5. Carbon Neutral by 2030:

The aim of developing a Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to be that of providing a multiyear strategy aligned to the development and approval of the Midlothian Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027, *a great, green place to grow: where people and the environment flourish*. It seeks to support the Council in fulfilling its statutory duty to set a balanced budget and determine Council Tax levels annually. In that respect, the final budget for 2023/24 will be updated to reflect the actual position for Scottish Government grant and Council Tax policy once the Scottish Government's budget bill and the associated finance circular are published either late in 2022 or potentially early 2023. As updates are brought to Council a reassessment of pay and inflation provisions will be made taking cognizance of the Scottish Government Public Sector pay policy and the extent to which this is reflected in the grant settlement.

Recommendations –

Council is asked, on the recommendation of the Business Transformation Steering Group, to:-

- a) Note the draft of the Midlothian Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027, *A great, green place to grow: where people and the environment flourish* as set out in appendix B to this report and endorse moving forward with a period of communication, engagement and consultation with communities on the draft strategic plan in the context of the challenging financial outlook;
- b) Agree to receive a further report on the outcome of the communication, engagement and consultation with communities;
- c) Note the operational saving measures set out in appendix C;

- d) Note the adoption a range of additional transformation focused activity as set out in the report. In doing so agree that additional capacity to progress these at pace is funded from the set aside business transformation funds/capital receipts flexibility;
- e) Note that a further report will need to be presented to Council to formalise the compliance requirements set out in Finance Circular 2/2022 in respect of the use of the capital receipts flexibility;
- f) Note that the work of The Business Transformation Steering Group will continue to give consideration to further measures necessary to support the delivery of balanced budgets before any policy measures are presented to Council;
- g) Note that the financial outlook remains challenging for this term of Council and note the recommendation of the external Auditor that, "*as a matter of urgency, officers and elected members need to work together to develop and agree the medium-term financial strategy and progress the Council's transformation plans*".

In addition to the recommendations of Business Transformation Steering Group:-

- a) Note the update on Scottish Government grant prospects incorporating the additional measures, which support the 2022/23 pay negotiations including additional grant together with the exploration of funding flexibilities.
- b) Note the direct implications arising from the UK Government fiscal event on 23 September 2022 and that an update to the Scottish Governments budget is expected to follow;
- c) Note the potential for a delay in the publication of the draft Scottish Government budget for 2023/24 and associated grant settlement for Councils as a consequence of the timing of the UK Autumn Budget Statement;
- d) Note the update on the position with 2022/23 pay claims and future pay provisions and the associated impact for the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- e) Delegate to the S95 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council authority to implement the most appropriate mechanism to utilise the additional capital grant being provided in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to part fund increased pay bill costs;
- f) Note the update in respect of fiscal flexibilities;
- g) Note that the underlying budget gap for 2022/23 is now projected to be £11.730 million and that as a consequence of both the inflationary increase in costs and cash flat grant settlements the projected budget gap for 2023/24 now stands at £13.4 million rising to a projected £26.2 million by 2027/28;
- h) Otherwise note the remainder of the report.

Dr Vickers introduced the report noting that it followed on from a previous report, adding it is imperative that all work together to face the challenges, risk & uncertainty ahead. The report outlines the budget gap 23/24 of approximately £13 million through to 27/28 where it will rise to approximately £26 million. It is recommended within the report that the new draft 5 year strategy go out for consultation.

Drawing attention to Section 9 of the report, Dr Vickers noted it covers the cost saving measures, and the Capital grant. She noted again the challenges and complexities contained with the report.

Mr Fairley spoke in depth to report focusing on key areas noting again the financial challenges and projections. He also noted the work on savings covered by the Business Transformation Steering Group (BTSG).

Mr Fairley spoke to Section 5, this covers the Scottish Government Grant Prospects and noted the mechanism to use the capital grant, and this comes in a very challenging environment as outlined in the previous report by EY. The projection includes uncertainty over pay rises and if there is any increase in Government funding. Work is continuing to fully establish all the implications post pandemic in partnership with Audit Scotland. The budget gap is described in detail and predicts future years before any rent increase or any other funding.

Members agreed this is the most challenging of times, the public through communications need to be encouraged to participate in the consultation. At present all efficiencies have already been made and services in some areas reduced. The public must be made aware of Statutory services. No decision made by Councillors will be made lightly.

There was debate around the wording of certain targets and commitments and although items such as reduction in child poverty were to be achieved they should be striven for.

Councillor Milligan felt the strategic plan for 2022 to 2027 needed to be rewritten

Councillor Parry suggested it return to BTSG

Councillor Virgo agreed that some of the targets within the plan are aspirational and not commitments and a re-write was in order.

All groups content for BTSG to review and draft a re-write of the 5 Year strategic plan.

Councillor Parry proposed the report and its recommendation with the exception of 1A - the 5 year strategic plan

Councillor McKenzie seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

5 year Strategic Plan passed to BTSG for further work and a re-write

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.3	National Public Holiday for HM The Queen's Funeral Report	Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships
Outline of report and summary of discussion		

The Council is asked to approve the recommendation to change the planned school holiday day of 19 September 2022 to Monday 24 October 2022 and the Staff Development day scheduled for 24 October 2022 to Tuesday 25 October 2022.

Recommendation –

To seek the Council's approval to re-arrange the pre-existing school holiday scheduled for 19 September 2022 to Monday 24 October 2022, in light of the national bank holiday on 19 September to mark the State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Ms Robertson spoke to the report noting the Scottish Government is expected to give consent, it was also in lined with neighbouring local authorities and would result in one less learning day.

Councillor Parry proposed
Councillor Virgo seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

None

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.4	Standing Order 19.2 Decision Report	Chief Executive
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the decision taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council in terms of Standing Order 19.2.</p> <p>Recommendation –</p> <p>Council is invited to note the terms of this report.</p> <p>Dr Vickers introduced the paper drawing attention to key areas for noting.</p> <p>Councillor Parry thanked all staff who had to make other provisions on the day</p>		
Decision		
None		
Action		
All to Note		

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.5	Midlothian Cares Practical Support Measures Identified Report	Strategic Service Re-Design Manager
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The purpose of this report is to explore the potential mitigating actions Midlothian Council could take to support local people experiencing additional challenges from the cost of living crisis. The report also sets out some immediate recommended</p>		

actions and others for further exploration to enable a fuller assessment of cost, impact and deliverability.

The report also contains a communications plan of how we will ensure local people are made aware of the additional supports available through the Midlothian Carers Communication Plan, as well as a Calendar of Activity for Challenge Poverty Week.

Recommendations –

- Note the range of time limited crisis mitigation measures outlined in the report, and
- Note the time limited review timescales for these measures due to rapidly changing landscape and pressures
- Agree to take forward some immediate measures in advance of winter from utilisation of £118,013 (22/23) from earmarked Covid funding on the basis that it supports wellbeing.
- Note the launch of Midlothian Cares Communication Plan including pledges from Local Businesses and Organisations
- Note and promote the Calendar of Activities for Challenge Poverty Week.

Ms Lang spoke to the report highlighting the decisions of the Task Force and the work ongoing by Council Services & partners, she noted it sets out short term and long term goals for consideration.

Members thanked all for their contribution of the 3rd sector partners and others who worked closely with Council services providing assistance for the most vulnerable in the community. That vulnerable will also need to be regularly re-assessed

Ms Lang agreed that the projections predict household with incomes of £40k may begin to be affected by the Cost of Living increases. Therefore the definition will need to be flexible.

Councillor Imrie asked if every penny goes to those in need.

Ms Lang confirmed that it does but partners do incur running costs and 15% is attribute to those costs which include fuel, Facilities, photocopying etc. This figure has been benchmarked with other funding.

Members asked further questions concerning information exchange protocols between Partners to combat fraud. Also the provision of school meals in particular children not eating them.

Ms Lang confirmed that within the limits of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation there is information sharing and regular checks. The Cost of Living Task Force also has two head teachers present who will provide a briefing to the group in due course.

Ms Robertson added that the school uniform provision is out to consultation, it covered a number of options to reduce costs that would be considered. Food standard for school meals is set by the Scottish Government and is very strict.

A monthly audit of how the finds are distributed and spent was requested by Members.

Ms Land confirmed that partners already had a reporting template in place

Councillor Curran suggested that once the results of the School uniform consultation were back and policy on school uniforms could be drafted.

Ms Robertson confirmed a report will be presented to Council in due course

Councillor Parry proposed
Councillor Scott seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

Audit of funding distribution report – Annette Lang

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.6	Housing Revenue Account – Rent Setting Strategy 2023-24 - 2025-26 Report	Executive Director Place

Outline of report and summary of discussion

This report presents rent setting strategy options for future rental charges for council housing from April 2023, which in turn will support the continuing investment in the Council's existing Housing stock and will determine the level of new build investment beyond the Council's current social housing programme commitment.

Recommendation –

It is recommended that Council approves the Rent Setting Strategy options for 2023/24 – 2025/26 for consultation. Following approval the options will be subject to consultation with all Midlothian Council tenants and waiting list applicants during the Winter 2022 period. The consultation outcomes and a recommended option will be reported back to Council in February 2023.

Mr Anderson spoke to the report noting council housing demand will increase, he also drew member's attention to the potential rent increase required in 2023 to 2026, adding that there has been a rent freeze for 2 years.

Councillor McKenzie thank Mr Anderson and his team adding his support for a public consultation.

Councillor Curran asked how the Scottish Government decision affect the house building.

Mr Anderson replied that there is already an overspend position for the end of the year. We can however go back to the Scottish Government in light of any rent freeze anticipate an increase in social housing demand.

Councillor Smail suggested that the 4.1% rent increase anticipate should be made clearer.

Mr Anderson agreed to incorporate that into the public consultation

Councillor McKenzie proposed the report
Councillor Curran seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

Clearly communicate the anticipated 4.1% rent increase within the Public Consultation – Mr Anderson

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.7	Midlothian Council's Housing Services Assurance Statement 2022, Report	Executive Director Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>To comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Regulatory Framework, the Council must approve and submit an Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) each year providing assurance that it is meeting legislative and regulatory standards for social housing in Scotland.</p> <p>This report explains the Regulatory Framework and appends an Assurance Statement for approval by Council. The AAS confirms the Council fully meets the SHR required standard and outcomes.</p> <p>Following Council approval, the AAS will be published on the SHR and Midlothian Council's websites.</p> <p>Recommendations –</p> <p>Council is recommended to approve the Housing Services Annual Assurance Statement 2022, as attached at Appendix B, for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 October, 2022.</p> <p>Mr Anderson introduced the report and detailed key areas within the paper.</p> <p>Councillor Curran proposed the Report Councillor Parry seconded</p>		
Decision		
Agreed		
Action		
None		

12.29 pm Provost announced a short recess

12.45 pm All returned

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
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8.8	Mayfield Town Centre Regeneration Close-out Report on Community Led Project	Head of Development
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a closing out report on the Mayfield In It Together (IIT) project following conclusion of the Mayfield Town Centre Masterplan, as agreed in the October 2019 report to Council.</p>		
<p>Recommendations –</p>		
<p>a) Note the progress made in identifying the community’s aspirations for improvements at Mayfield Town Centre and the significant achievement of the In It Together partnership who delivered this project;</p> <p>b) Note the content of the Masterplan and areas for improvement identified in the Mayfield Town Centre as a long term ambition by the local community and partners to deliver; and</p> <p>c) Note the proposed next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In It Together will continue to lead on the delivery of the project, taking steps to resource a development manager to develop a robust business case that reflects current priorities and context. • The In It Together group will continue to work with different partners, including Midlothian Council, setting out clear parameters and expectations in relation to their roles and responsibilities from the outset. • Midlothian Council will seek to develop a Place Brief as part of the Strategic Infrastructure Investment Framework, working with local partners to establish priorities in the local area. 		
<p>Ms Clandillon spoke to the report and the aspects required to finish the current phase, noting the long term framework is for regeneration of the town centre using a cluster model. She asked members to acknowledge the significant progress and achievements made.</p>		
<p>Responding to a question concerning timescale Ms Clandillon said the ambition and scale is significant, emphasizes is on key areas that would make an impact but a further year would be required of further project development.</p>		
<p>Members welcomed the paper and thanked all involved for their efforts.</p>		
<p>Councillor Bowen proposed the report Councillor McKenzie seconded</p>		
Decision		
Agreed		
Action		
None		

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.9	Vogie Country Park – feasibility update Report	Head of Development
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>A report was requested form elected members on the current status of Vogie Country Park and to provide answers to the following:</p>		

- How many user groups utilise Vogrie Country Park?
- How much it costs Midlothian Council to run Vogrie Country Park year on year and what income is generated by the Park?
- What are the locations of the Core Paths around Vogrie?
- What is the estimated time for progressing any emerging investment strategy?

Recommendations –

- Note the findings of the User Survey and the contents of this report;
- Approve the use of £40,000 of Blueprint funding (in addition to the £10,000 previously allocated to Vogrie) to commission a landscape and access strategy for the site, noting that officers will ensure that the redirection of Blueprint Grant (£50,000) to fund this has the full written consent of Scottish Ministers prior to any expenditure being incurred;
- Approve the preparation of an updated Management Plan by Midlothian Council, which would be resourced internally by Land and Countryside team.
- Approve the allocation of £200,000 of the 2022/23 Place Based Investment Fund towards the upgrade of toilet facilities within Vogrie, as an immediate action in response to the User Survey;
- Support the continued exploration of revenue streams that are complementary to an overall vision and ambition to utilise the asset of Vogrie Country Park.

Ms Clandillon noted that the completed report follows work completed in 2018, adding a wide range of groups currently use the park and asked members to consider the long term recommendations to improve the facilities included within the report.

Members thanked all who took part in the consultation adding that they would like to see further ambitious proposals in future. Also members noted that there are current issues with parking also that more visitors are likely to increase pressure on the residents of Dewarton adjacent to the park.

Ms Clandillon confirmed the parking issue has been noted and will be addressed in the future.

Councillor Parry moved to accept all recommendations
Councillor Scott seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

None

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.10	Brexit and COVID-19 – An Economic Assessment for Midlothian Council, Report	Chief Officer Place

Outline of report and summary of discussion

In March 2022, Midlothian Council commissioned Ekosgen to undertake an analysis of the economic impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic on Midlothian's economy.

Ekosgen's report (Appendix B) presents an analysis of challenges, opportunities and strategic priorities that will enable the Council, along with its strategic partners, to respond to the impacted economic landscape through a refreshed economic strategy.

This report summarises the key findings and the strategic priorities that are recommended to be taken forward through a new Economic Strategy.

Recommendations –

- Note the contents of the Economic Assessment;
- Endorse the ten strategic priorities listed within the Economic Assessment and summarised in Sections 3.9 to 3.18 of the report;
- Approve the creation of a new Economic Strategy for Midlothian, to be presented to Council for approval in early 2023.

Mr Oliver highlighted aspects of the reports analysis on the much changed circumstances to allow future planning. A further report will be presented in 2023.

Councillor Imrie pointed out that the report endorses the actions we would need to take anyway

Members discussed the issues and factors that affect one area of Midlothian but not another noting that some business models within the county are more resilient than others, the changing face of town centres being one example. In general members welcomed the report and noted the challenging funding situation and how funds are allocated.

Mr Oliver responded that Midlothian is made aware of what funding is available and in certain circumstances have time to present projects making them ready for submission. Applications for levelling up and Prosperity funding were still awaiting a decision. The strategy going forward will include all possible funding options.

Councillor McKenzie asked if the weaker £ affects the Council?

Mr Fairley confirmed the Council doesn't have a huge exposure to financial fluctuations but simply put, money doesn't go as far as it did before.

Councillor Parry moved to accept all recommendations

Councillor Cassidy seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

None

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
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8.11	Short-Terms Let Licensing Policy for Midlothian Council for Consideration and Adoption Report	Chief Officer Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The report provides details of the attached Short-term Let Licensing Policy for Midlothian Council. It provides members with information on the new powers which have been given to local authorities to regulate short term lets in the form of a licensing scheme. An appended report details the public consultation which took place regarding this policy, the responses received and the action taken as a result.</p> <p>Recommendation –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the terms of this report; and • Adopt the Short-term Lets Licensing Policy for Midlothian Council <p>Mr Oliver presented the report to members</p> <p>Councillor McKenzie moved to accept the report Councillor Virgo seconded</p>		
Decision		
Agreed		
Action		
All to Note		

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.12	Voluntary Community Asset Transfer, Report	Executive Director Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The purpose of the report is to advise Council that CATs may be achieved by agreement between the Council and community groups without requiring such groups to submit a formal application in terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, subject to compliance with the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010 and related Scottish Government guidance. A similar report was considered by the CAT Committee at its meeting of 24 February 2022 when it was agreed to refer the matter to Council for further consideration. This report includes revisions which were suggested by the CAT Committee.</p> <p>Recommendations –</p> <p>(a) Note the terms of this report; and</p> <p>(b) Approve a revision to the current practice for Community Asset Transfers (CATs) and allow a voluntary approach to be adopted, where appropriate, as an alternative to the formal process under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.</p> <p>Mr Anderson spoke to the report in particular Section 3, outlining the existing process of changing/ varying the scheme. Mr Anderson confirmed that the statutory process is being used.</p> <p>Councillor Parry moved to the report Councillor Milligan seconded</p>		
Decision		

Agreed
Action
None

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.13	Scottish Government Funding for Children's Outdoor Play Refurbishment of Play Areas, Report	Chief Officer Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The purpose of this report is to advise on the proposed expenditure of £0.097 million across the council play estate to replace equipment that has either been removed or requires replacement along with appropriate safety surfacing and where required an access path to the refurbished play area in accordance with equalities legislation.</p> <p>Recommendations –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A capital expenditure budget of £0.097 million in the General Services Capital Plan, to be fully phased in 2022/23 and to be fully financed by £0.097 million of Scottish Government Capital Grant funding; • Subject to Council approval, the proposal to install the outdoor play equipment be progressed. <p>Mr Oliver introduced the report and referred to key areas contained within the document.</p> <p>Councillor Cassidy welcomed the report Councillor Winchester stipulate the paths must be wheelchair accessible</p> <p>Councillor Parry moved to accept the report Councillor Scott seconded</p>		
Decision		
Agreed		
Action		
None		

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.14	Audit Committee – Independent Chair & Independent Non-Voting Member Report	Executive Director Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The council invited applications to the posts of Independent Chair and Independent Non-Voting Member of the Audit Committee. The roles are voluntary but expenses are paid. The appointments are at the council's discretion and are expected to run until the council elections in May 2027.</p> <p>Recommendation –</p> <p>Council is to note that no applications or notes of interest were received for the recently advertised roles of the Independent Chair and Independent Non-Voting</p>		

Member of the Audit Committee and is recommended to consider the alternative options available to;

- i) re-advertise the roles across an additional range of recruitment sources; or
- ii) continue with an elected member chair; or to
- iii) Address the matter in the Standing Orders review to potentially combine the committee remit into another relevant wider scope committee ie. a prospective Audit, Risk & Performance Review Committee.

Mr Anderson referred to the report noting the background and the current situation contained within the paper and that no applications for the position were received.

Councillor Parry moved recommendation 2
Councillor Cassidy seconded

Councillor Milligan queried whether a substitute council member could hold the position full time.

Mr Turpie responded that the governance could not be changed and that the current situation is just for the time being.

Decision

Agreed – Recommendation 2

Action

None

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.15	Pupil Admissions Policy Update Report	Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships

Outline of report and summary of discussion

Following the conclusion of the 2022/23 P1 and S1 intake, the Children, Young People and Partnerships Business Support Team have been working to review, update and improve the admissions process. This report provides the updated revisions to the admissions policy. The main areas for approval are:

- The inclusion of the explanation around reserved places.
- The process for late placing requests, including those with exceptional circumstances.
- An explanation of what constitutes exceptional circumstances and how this is incorporated into the waiting list criteria.

Recommendation –

This report seeks Council approval to the revisions made to the Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools policy

Ms Robertson introduced the report highlighting key areas including how gratefully she was for the feedback from Parents and Elected Members.

Councillor Scott moved to accept the report
Councillor Virgo seconded

Decision

Agreed

Action

None

Report No.	Report Title	Report by:
8.16	Appointment of Member to Champion the White Ribbon Campaign Report	Executive Director Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>Midlothian Council has previously committed to the White Ribbon Campaign towards Men working to end Violence Against Women. White Ribbon Day is on 25th November, 2022 which correlates with the start of the 16 Days of Action. A programme being developed locally alongside the Violence Against Women and Girls Officer in the Midlothian & East Lothian Public Protection Team.</p> <p>Recommendation –</p> <p>The Council is invited to endorse a ‘champion’ as part of previously agreeing to support the White Ribbon Campaign initiative and it is recommended that role is assigned to Councillor Connor McManus to align with his portfolio as Equalities champion.</p> <p>Mr Anderson spoke to the report noting Midlothian Council’s long standing involvement and contribution.</p> <p>Councillor Winchester spoke about how pleased she was that Midlothian Council was continuing its involvement, she added that although this group focused on violence toward women al should note there are cases of violence towards men also.</p> <p>Members spoke of their ongoing commitment to this campaign and their unwavering support.</p> <p>Councillor Parry nominated Councillor McManus Councillor Curran seconded</p>		
Decision		
Councillor McManus Nominated		
Action		
None		

The Provost joined Dr Vickers in acknowledging Gary Fairley (Chief Officer Corporate Solutions) , who was attending his final Midlothian Council meeting, she wished him well in future endeavours and thank his long services and loyalty , all members echoed those sentiments.

Public Council Meeting ended at 13.45 pm

Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 11am