

**The Highland Council
No. 19 2020/2021**

Minutes of **Special Meeting** of the **Highland Council** held REMOTELY on **Thursday, 4 March 2021** at 10.30am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence
A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mrs D Mackay
Mr B Allan	Mr D Mackay
Mr R Balfour	Mr W MacKay
Mrs J Barclay	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr A Baxter	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr B Boyd	Mr S Mackie
Mr R Bremner	Mr A Mackinnon
Mr I Brown	Ms A MacLean
Mr J Bruce	Mr C MacLeod
Mrs C Caddick	Mr D MacLeod
Mrs I Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Miss J Campbell	Mr R MacWilliam
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr J McGillivray
Mr A Christie	Mr N McLean
Dr I Cockburn	Mr H Morrison
Mrs M Cockburn	Mr C Munro
Ms K Currie	Ms L Munro
Mrs M Davidson	Ms P Munro
Mr J Finlayson	Mrs M Paterson
Mr M Finlayson	Mr I Ramon
Mr C Fraser	Mr M Reiss
Mr L Fraser	Mr A Rhind
Mr R Gale	Mr D Rixson
Mr J Gordon	Mrs F Robertson
Mr K Gowans	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Graham	Ms E Roddick
Mr J Gray	Mr K Rosie
Mrs P Hadley	Mr G Ross
Mr T Heggie	Mr P Saggars
Mr A Henderson	Mr A Sinclair
Mr A Jarvie	Ms N Sinclair
Ms E Knox	Mr C Smith
Mr B Lobban	Ms M Smith
Mr D Louden	Mr B Thompson
Mrs L MacDonald	Mrs C Wilson
Mr A MacInnes	

In Attendance:

Chief Executive	Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure & Environment
Executive Chief Officer, Communities & Place	Executive Chief Officer, Performance & Governance
Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning	Executive Chief Officer, Property & Housing
Executive Chief Officer, Health & Social Care	Executive Chief Officer, Resources & Finance
	Executive Chief Officer, Transformation & Economy

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

There were no apologies for absence.

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Convener, on behalf of the Council, thanked the Officers responsible for the compilation and circulation of the papers for the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Council **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 4 – Non-Financial - Mrs M Cockburn, Mrs M Davidson, Mr B Lobban, Ms E Knox, Ms L Munro, Mr B Thompson, Mr D Rixson, Mr A Christie, Mr T Heggie, Mr G Ross, Mr C Munro, Mr A Jarvie, Dr I Cockburn, Mr D Louden, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKinnon, Mrs D MacKay, Mrs I Campbell, Mr D Macpherson, Mr P Saggars, Mr C MacLeod, Mr R Balfour, Mrs M Paterson, Mr R Gale and Mrs A MacLean .

Item 4 – Financial - Mr A Christie, Mrs D MacKay, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Jarvie, Mr S Mackie, Mr C Munro, Ms M Smith, Mr N McLean, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs F Robertson and Ms P Hadley (all Financial)

3. **Appointment of Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee**

It was **NOTED** that Mr A MacKinnon had stepped down as Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee.

It was also **NOTED** that Mr J Gray had now replaced Mr T Heggie on the Committee.

On that basis, Mr M Reiss, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** that Mr J Gray should be appointed as Chair.

Mr R Bremner, seconded by Mr B Boyd, **MOVED** that Dr I Cockburn should be appointed as Chair.

On a vote being taken, Mr Gray received 42 votes and Dr Cockburn received 24 votes, with 4 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For Mr J Gray

Mr G Adam, Mrs J Barclay, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Ms I Campbell, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr B Lobban, Mrs L MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Mr W Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr J McGillivray, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Mrs L Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mrs T Robertson, Mr G Ross, Ms N Sinclair, Mr B Thompson and Ms C Wilson.

For Dr I Cockburn

Mr B Allan, Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mrs Campbell-Sinclair, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Mr C Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Ms E Knox, Mr D Louden, Mr A MacInnes, Mr G Mackenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D MacLeod, Mr R

MacWilliam, Mr McLean, Ms P Munro, Mr Ramon, Ms E Roddick, Mr K Rosie, Mr A Sinclair and Ms M Smith.

Abstentions

Ms P Hadley, Mr A Jarvie, Mr S Mackie and Mr C Smith.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr J Gray as Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee.

4. Revenue Budget 2021/22 to 2023/24 Buidseat Teachd-a-steach agus Cìs Comhairle

Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion:-

Mrs M Cockburn – as a Council appointee - Board member of the Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau

Mrs M Davidson – on the basis of a family member being employed by the Council

Mr B Lobban – as a Director of Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Limited and whilst the company was not specifically mentioned, funding for tourism was mentioned in the report

Ms E Knox – as a Trustee of Thriving Families, a Highland charity supporting parents and carers of children with additional support needs

Ms L Munro – as a Director of High Life Highland

Mr B Thompson – as a Director of High Life Highland

Mr D Rixson – as the Council's representative on the Lochaber Housing Association, its subsidiary Lochaber Care and Repair and the Isle of Rum Community Trust and as the Secretary of the Mallaig Heritage Centre

Mr A Christie – as General Manager of the Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau and as a parent of a child in secondary education

Mr T Heggie – as a Director of High Life Highland

Mr G Ross – as an Office Bearer with Highland Disability Sport

Mr C Munro – as Chair of the Local Community Trust

Mr A Jarvie – as a Director of High Life Highland, a Director of the Inverness & Nairn Citizens Advice Bureaux, a Council appointee on the Inverness Access Panel and a Council appointee on Highland Disability Sport

Dr I Cockburn – as a Board member of Ullapool Museum

Mr D Louden – as a Director of Made in Tain and a Director of the Tain Heritage Trust

Mr S Mackie – on the basis of a family member being employed as a Probationary Teacher

Mr A MacKinnon – on the basis of family members being employed by the Council

Mrs D MacKay – as a Director of the East Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau

Mrs I Campbell – as a Director of the Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association

Mr D Macpherson – on the basis of a family member being employed as a Teacher

Mr C Munro – as the Council representative on the Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations

Mr P Sagers – as a Director of Nairn Citizens Advice Bureau

Mr C MacLeod – as a Director of the Skye & Lochaber Citizens Advice Bureau and the Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association

Mr R Balfour – as a Director of the Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau

Mrs M Paterson – as a Director of the Puffin Pool Board, Chair of the Highland Football Academy and on the basis that family members were Teachers

Mr R Gale – as Trustee of the Go Golspie Development Trust

Mrs A MacLean – as a Director of Ross & Cromarty Citizens Advice Bureau and a Director of Sight Action

The following Members declared financial interests but, having applied the test, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion:-

Mr A Christie - as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland

Mrs D MacKay - as a Board member of NHS Highland for which she had a dispensation and as a Director of the East Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau

Mr A Jarvie – as a Communications Officer with Inclusion Scotland and on the basis that a family member was in their final PGDE year as a Probationer Teacher

Mr S Mackie – as the Chair of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group

Mr C Munro – on the basis that a family member was employed as a Gaelic Medium Teacher

Ms M Smith – as the Chair of Albyn Housing Society

Mrs C Caddick – as a member of the Cairngorm National Park Authority Board

Mrs F Robertson – on the basis of work undertaken for Blythswood Care

Ms P Hadley – as a member of the Cairngorm National Park Authority Board

The following Members also declared financial interests and confirmed that they would leave the meeting if there was any detailed discussion as follows:-

Mr K Gowans – on the basis that a family member was an employee of High Life Highland and he would leave the meeting if there was any discussion regarding the budget line HC 050320

Mr N McLean – as a Director of Geo-Rope Limited/Geo-Structural Limited/Geo-Info Limited and he would leave the meeting if there was any discussion regarding Roads & Transport development issues as part of Strand 2 of the report.

There had been circulated Report No. HC/1/21 dated 18 February 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer (Resources & Finance) which detailed proposals in relation to the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

In this regard, there had been tabled Amended Template in relation to Saving 2.17 (Corran Ferry).

There had also been tabled 'Alternative Budget Proposal' from the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group which detailed alternative proposals in respect of protecting Services, additional investment priorities, additional savings and use of reserves.

In summarising the budget proposals which had been presented, the Depute Leader of the Council confirmed that he would move the recommendations within the report

(together with the revised template in respect of Corran Ferry) at the appropriate time. In this regard, he expressed his thanks to the previous Budget Leader/Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee for the work and commitment which he had given over recent years and also to Council Officers, the SNP Group, the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group and non-aligned Members for their input which had been sought on the basis of being as inclusive as possible throughout the budget process.

Continuing, he specifically thanked the SNP Group (for engaging so positively with the Administration in producing a collaborative budget which was welcomed as a new approach for the Council) and Councillor Andrew Baxter (for his input to the amended template in respect of Corran Ferry).

These were unprecedented times for the Highlands as a result of the pandemic and a number of issues had to be taken into account, including the number of staff who were currently furloughed, the level of business closures, the rise in unemployment, the increase in claims for Universal Credit and the impact on economic, physical and mental health across the area.

However, the recovery phase had now begun and as such it was vital to build upon the work already underway through the Recovery Board which had to be the way forward for the Council. As such, the strategy now had to focus on health and prosperity in the coming months and this would include dealing with not only issues as a result of the pandemic but also the situation arising from the Brexit process and the increase in poverty.

In this respect, the budget proposals would be regularly reviewed in the coming months in line with good governance and also to measure outcomes and assess risks. As such, it was vital that collaboration was continued as part of delivery of the proposals so that planned outcomes could be successfully achieved.

The Leader of the SNP Group expressed his thanks to the Chief Executive and the Executive Chief Officers for the help and assistance given to his Group over recent months as part of the collaborative work which they had undertaken to help to deliver the budget which had been presented.

In working towards presenting proposals to aid recovery across the whole of the Highlands, he highlighted the role of his Group in evaluating and scrutinising the budget process and confirmed that this effective and regular scrutiny would be continued in the coming weeks and months in order to ensure that the required outcomes were delivered.

Issues arising from both Covid-19 and the Brexit process were uppermost in the minds of many people across the Highland area and as such the budget proposals sought to mitigate as many problems as possible from both situations.

Whilst it might be considered to be unprecedented to produce a collaborative budget of this kind, it was strongly felt that this was what Highland communities both wanted and expected in the current circumstances.

The Leader of the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group, in presenting an 'Alternative Budget Proposal' from his Group, paid tribute to the hugely important and significant role which local communities had played across the Highlands over the past year which represented localism in action. Specifically, local services had been delivered to a very high standard and this was hugely commended by all.

In expressing thanks to the Depute Leader of the Council for the inclusion which had been shown to the Group within the budget process, he expressed the hope that this would be continued in future as it was considered that the impact from Covid-19 was far from over and the implications would be felt for many years to come across the Highland area.

In this regard, and whilst being supportive of certain budget recommendations within the report, there were some specific areas where it was felt that alternative proposals should be considered, including childcare, early learning, tourism, roads and burial fees. As such, the Group's 'Alternative Budget Proposal' contained detailed and specific recommendations in relation to removal of proposed Administration savings, additional investments, additional savings and additional use of reserves and it was hoped that serious consideration would be given to these alternative proposals, both now and in the coming months.

Following a short recess, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to all for the extraordinary level of work which had been undertaken on the collaborative budget from the Administration/SNP Group and also the Alternative Budget Proposal from the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group;
- for the first time in many years, the budget which had been presented for approval contained an element of growth and, whilst there was still a need for a degree of prudence in the coming months, thanks were due to the Scottish Government for the funding which had been received;
- the proposed budget would be subject to review in June and in the Autumn and it was recognised that there would be challenges ahead but it was hoped that the budget proposals (which aimed to help and support communities across the Highland area) would be welcomed by all;
- there were no immediate budget pressures to be taken account of which was a welcome situation for the Council at this time and as such it should be recorded that this was also due to additional funding which had been received from the UK Government;
- the fundamental difference between the Administration/SNP budget and the Alternative Budget Proposal from the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group was the use of reserves. As such, it was not considered that this was the most appropriate time to add to the Council's current level of reserves when they could be used to help and assist those in need across the Highlands, including many local businesses;
- it was also questioned as to whether it was the right time to make savings through deletion of posts and reducing budgets for mental health and cyber security in particular;
- in regard to the health and wellbeing aspect of the budget, the rights and needs of service users had to be paramount in decision making and thanks were recorded to the Scottish Government for increasing the funding currently available for mental health services. In this respect, it was imperative that Officers were both supported and resourced in relation to delivering tailored services, such as through early intervention programmes;
- it had been anticipated by the SNP Group that a large surplus was likely in the current year and it was therefore welcomed that a strong focus was now being given to a large programme of investment to help recovery across the Highlands. In this regard, thanks were conveyed to the Scottish Government for the additional investment which was helping to make this possible;
- the proposals for investment in modern apprenticeships were especially

welcome at this time;

- there was a need to continue to focus on projects for the longer term and especially opportunities for self-funding investment, especially in relation to climate change;
- it was acknowledged that it had not been possible to undertake a zero-based budgeting exercise in the current year but the commitment which had been given for this to be taken forward over the next two years was welcomed;
- an increased focus on carbon reduction/sequestration across the Council estate was now required, with a particular focus on efficiency measures to reduce the cost of energy being used in Council buildings and investigation of the opportunities available to increase revenue by undertaking generation where possible;
- it had to be clarified that the Council would be spending £20m on roads over the next two years and that whilst it was always an aim to spend more, there were factors in place which limited the spend in any one year;
- it was felt that the budget proposals provided a balanced result for the year and whilst some savings might appear unpalatable, they were essential in order that the Council could move forward with the health and prosperity strategy which had been outlined;
- restrictions as a result of the pandemic were likely to be in place for some time and as such the economic outlook remained bleak and it was important that this was acknowledged;
- Council staff had to be commended for the way in which they had embraced new and flexible ways of working at a time when they were also dealing with new challenges;
- it was imperative that the Council worked closely with partners to attract investment, address skills shortages and improve connectivity across the Highlands;
- a low carbon agenda (with climate action being taken as and when necessary) had to be at the forefront of discussions across the Council in the months and years ahead;
- in regard to the £10k saving which had been proposed in relation to the Nigg/Cromarty Ferry, it was stressed that this ferry was crucial for the tourism infrastructure of Easter Ross and the Black Isle, not least in view of the fact that any loss of visitors would impact hugely on tourist attractions in the area. Also, considerable work and investment had been undertaken at a local level to instigate/implement improvements to the current structure over recent months. For this reason, both Local Committees in the area would work together to identify a solution which would include discussion on the possibility of each being able to contribute £5k from the new place based funding to ensure that there was no change in support for the ferry;
- the Council was now working 'smarter' in terms of identifying efficiencies and improvements and this was welcomed, with specific reference being made to the proposed allocation in respect of roads which would be an investment for the future;
- as part of future discussions on the allocation of Ward Discretionary Funds, consideration should be given to investing in play parks in order to address issues currently being dealt with by children and families across the Highland area;
- consideration should also be given to improving the current CCTV arrangements where and when necessary;
- it was considered that this was very much a budget which focused on 'people priorities' and this was warmly welcomed;
- as the first budget for many years which delivered significant investment in the Highlands, it was important to record thanks to both the UK and Scottish

Governments, and Senior Officers, for their contributions in this regard;

- it was also extremely important to highlight and acknowledge how well local communities across the Highlands had dealt with the pandemic over the past year and to convey the thanks of the whole Council in this respect;
- the budget proposals represented a huge programme of work over the coming year which was both ambitious and exciting and in this regard specific reference was made to the work to be undertaken on asset management and the identification of new ways of working across the Council which could be transformative for both this Council and the new Council in 2022;
- whilst welcoming the significant level of work which had been undertaken in relation to the alternative budget proposals being put forward, it was however important to note that a fundamental difference was in the financial sustainability aspect and specifically the use of reserves;
- in regard to the alternative budget proposals which had been put forward by the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group, it was highlighted that this was not a 'peace time' budget but one which was being presented at a time of great uncertainty for communities, businesses and public institutions. In this respect, thanks were conveyed to the Depute Leader of the Council, Mr M Reiss and Officers for the time which had been given to discussion of the proposals and the Group looked forward to working with the new Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee in the coming months. All Members wanted the Council to be as ambitious as possible so it was hoped that the alternative proposals would be the subject of close scrutiny;
- it was also of the utmost importance to convey thanks to the key workers, community volunteers and charitable groups across the Highlands whose contributions during the past year had ensured that the situation had not been as bad as it might have been. As such, their actions taken pressure off both the Council and the NHS on every occasion that they had stepped up to help;
- there was widespread concern about the condition of roads across the area so it was hoped that all efforts would be used to identify significant additional investment whenever possible;
- the contribution of the Council, and the work of the Executive Chief Officer (Infrastructure & Environment) and his team in particular, in relation to the Wick Airport PSO was highlighted and hugely appreciated by all concerned;
- it was hoped that the close collaboration and consultation from the budget process could be continued in the coming months and would include local communities across the Highland area;
- it was suggested that in hindsight it had been beneficial for the Council that there had been no agreement for an 'emergency budget' in the previous year and in this regard it was also queried as to whether the Corporate Resources Budget Sub Committee was now to be removed as it did not appear that it had been used as part of the current budget process;
- thanks were conveyed to the Depute Leader of the Council for the consultation on the Corran Ferry savings template which had led to a better outcome than had originally been proposed and was much appreciated;
- the proposed funding for tourism management was welcomed and it was hoped that the Council could build on that in future years;
- it had been very refreshing to see an entire alternative budget proposal from the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group and thanks were conveyed to the members of the Group for the considerable work which had been undertaken in that regard;
- clarification was provided in relation to the current situation with looked after children in the Highland area and it was stressed that the situation was still unclear at the present time and could be subject to change in the coming weeks and months;

- in acknowledging and welcoming the positive budget situation, thanks were recorded to Officers and also the Trade Union representatives for their contributions;
- the focus had to be on repairing lives across the Highlands so the proposals which would impact positively on both physical and mental health were very much welcomed;
- when discussing the current level of reserves and their possible use, it was essential to recognise the unprecedented number of factors and risks across a range of issues and these had to be taken into account when making decisions for the coming weeks and months;
- it was suggested that there was now an urgent need to identify a possible solution for the underfunding of Local Authorities and the NHS both locally and nationally;
- there would be huge opportunities in respect of future energy systems within the Highlands and these had to be explored;
- all Members were deeply indebted to the Council staff who had risen to all challenges during the pandemic and this should be recorded;
- in terms of the visitor management strategy, the quick action and additional funding which had been provided was welcomed, not least because of the reassurance which it would provide for local communities;
- the economic prosperity fund, and specifically the targeted support for social enterprises, was also welcomed and represented huge potential for communities across the Highlands; and
- it had to be highlighted that this was the first budget where there were opportunities to invest widely in communities across the area and to ensure that the needs of people came first across a range of issues at a time of great uncertainty.

Thereafter, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr R Bremner, **MOVED** the recommendations within the report - together with the amended template in respect of Corran Ferry.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr P Saggars, moved the following:-

- to amend recommendation (iv) within the report to read as follows – ‘Agree the savings plans as detailed in Sections 16 and 19 and Appendix 1 of the report, adjusted for those savings as detailed on the ‘Removal of Proposed Administration Savings’ schedule of the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group’s alternative budget.
- to add the following recommendations to the report - (x) agree to the ‘Additional Investments’ as included in the Conservative Group’s alternative budget and (xi) agree to the Additional Savings, and additional Use of Reserves, to balance the budget as outlined in the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Group’s alternative budget.
- to delete recommendation (vii) within the report (which sought agreement for maintaining General Fund non-earmarked reserves at a minimum of £24.7m as outlined in Section 17 of the report).

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 58 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 11 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion

Mr G Adam, Mr B Allan, Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mrs C Caddick, Ms I Campbell, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr J Gordon, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Ms E Knox, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Loudon, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr A MacInnes, Mrs D Mackay, Mr W Mackay, Mr G Mackenzie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mrs A MacLean, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr J McGillivray, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Mrs L Munro, Ms P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mrs T Robertson, Ms E Roddick, Mr K Rosie, Mr G Ross, Mrs G Sinclair, Ms N Sinclair, Ms M Smith and Mr B Thompson.

For the Amendment

Mr A Baxter, Mr J Bruce, Mrs P Hadley, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr I Ramon, Mr P Sagers, Mr A Sinclair and Mr C Smith.

Decision

The Council: -

- i) **AGREED** the Scottish Government's offer of £4.231m and to freeze Council Tax rates at 2020/21 levels as outlined in Section 13 of the report;
- ii) **AGREED** the investment of £9.81m in a Visitor Management Strategy, Economic Prosperity Fund, Place Based Investment and Ward Discretionary Budget top-up as detailed in Section 19 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- iii) **AGREED** to progress the nine key transformation projects as detailed in Section 19 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- iv) **AGREED** the savings plans as detailed in Sections 16 and 19 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- v) **APPROVED** the funding of budget pressures and budget uplifts as detailed in Sections 10 and 11 and Appendices 3 and 4 of the report;
- vi) **AGREED** to the reprofiling of previously agreed savings as outlined in Section 15 and Appendix 7 of the report;
- vii) **AGREED** to maintain General Fund non-earmarked reserves at a minimum of £24.7m as outlined in Section 17 of the report and that anything in excess of this amount could be deployed within future phases of the Investment Plan as detailed in the Health and Prosperity Strategy at Appendix 1;
- viii) **AGREED** that the impact of any changes in Government funding that might come as part of a final budget settlement be considered as part of the budget review and development of a medium-term financial plan over the coming months; and
- ix) **AGREED** to lobby as a matter of urgency to secure as much funding as possible from the Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Council also **AGREED** the amended template for Saving 2.17 (Corran Ferry) as follows - savings template amended to reflect a lower increase in fares for the vast majority of drive up customers (cars, motorcycles etc). The fares to increase from £8.80 to £9.10 (an increase of 3%). Campervans and minibuses of less than 6m to see an increase in fares from £8.10 to £13.00 and the changes to larger campervans and caravans to remain as per the original template.

The meeting ended at 1.20pm.