

**Minute of Meeting of the Moray Council Emergency Cabinet**

**Wednesday, 1 July 2020**

**Various Locations via Video-conference**

**PRESENT**

Councillor George Alexander (for Items 7-16), Councillor David Bremner (substituting for Councillor Leadbitter for Items 5 & 6), Councillor Frank Brown (substituting for Councillor Eagle for Items 7-11), Councillor John Cowe (substituting for Councillor Alexander for Items 5 & 6), Councillor John Divers, Councillor Ryan Edwards (substituting for Councillor Ross), Councillor Claire Feaver (substituting for Councillor Eagle for Items 5,6, 12–16), Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter (for Items 7-16) and Councillor Shona Morrison.

**APOLOGIES**

Councillor Tim Eagle and Councillor Derek Ross.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Financial Services, Head of Strategy, Governance and Performance, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Legal Services Manager, Planning and Development Manager, Consultancy Manager, Chief Officer Moray Health and Social Care Partnership, Head of Adult Health and Social Care and the Democratic Services Manager as Clerk to the meeting.

**1. Chair**

Councillor Morrison, being Chair of the Emergency Cabinet, chaired the meeting.

**2. Record of Thanks**

The Chair expressed thanks to all employees for all they have done over such a challenging time for the country and for all the work they have undertaken which has been greatly appreciated. She stated that she wished to give extra thanks to the educators and young people in Moray who have done a tremendous job over the last few months in the most difficult of circumstances, and to the parents in their response to the home learning that they have undertaken over the last 14 weeks and hoped that as they head towards the summer break they enjoy some rest and relaxation.

**3. Meeting Request – RAF Lossiemouth**

On the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Cowe addressed the meeting. He referred to an announcement that two contract workers employed by Voker Fizpatrick at RAF Lossiemouth had been tested for COVID-19 and stated that he

wished to raise the concerns on behalf of residents from the local areas in and around Lossiemouth following this announcement. He advised that due to the concerns raised, Richard Lochhead, MSP had held a zoom meeting with members from the Community Councils of Lossiemouth, Burghead, and Elgin and Hopeman Community Association along with himself and some others to discuss the situation and he had been asked by those attending the meeting to ask if the Council would facilitate a meeting of all interested parties in order to address the concerns of the local community.

In response the Chief Executive advised that he could request a meeting and would be guided by the Emergency Cabinet in this regard.

Following discussion the Chair suggested that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Council Leader seek to organise a meeting. This was agreed.

#### **4. Order of Business**

In terms of Standing Order 28 the meeting agreed to vary the order of business and bring forward Item 6 on the Agenda 'Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments Supplementary Guidance' to follow Item 3 on the Agenda 'Planning Application 20/00135/AMC' in order for those officers in attendance for both items to be excused from the meeting at an earlier time.

#### **5. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests**

Under reference to Section 5.7 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct Councillor Morrison declared an interest in item 3(a) 'Update on Children's social Work and Criminal Justice' in her capacity as Vice-Chair of the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) but would be relying on exemption as outlined in terms of Section 5.18 (2) (i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct to participate in this item.

Thereafter, in terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillor's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

#### **6. Planning Application 20/00135/AMC**

##### **WARD 8: FORRES**

**20/00135/AMC - Approval of the matters specified in condition 4 (layout of plot) condition 5 (plans sections and elevations) condition 6 (boundary treatments and other development) condition 7 (sections) condition 8 (landscaping) and condition 10 (affordable housing) of 19/00320/PPP to provide 8 affordable units on plot 13.2 At Land At North Whins, The Park, Findhorn, Moray**

A report was submitted by the Appointed Officer recommending that, for reasons detailed in the report, planning permission be granted for an application for the approval of the matters specified in condition 4 (layout of plot) condition 5 (plans sections and elevations) condition 6 (boundary treatments and other development)

condition 7 (sections) condition 8 (landscaping) and condition 10 (affordable housing) of 19/00320/PPP to provide 8 affordable units on plot 13.2 at Land at North Whins, The Park, Findhorn, Moray

It was noted that the application could have been determined by the Appointed Officer under the recently revised scheme of delegation however would previously have been reported to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee as it had been agreed at the meeting on 20 August 2019 that all further applications related to reference 19/00320/PPP be reported to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee. As the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee is suspended, the application had been brought to the Emergency Cabinet under the agreed revised delegation scheme as it had been called in for determination by a member of the Emergency Cabinet.

Councillor Feaver sought confirmation that the ridge height of the buildings would not be above the bowl height as some of the diagrams appeared to indicate.

In response, Mr MacPherson, Principal Planning Officer advised that the levels vary across the development however the Applicant had went to great lengths to ensure that the development was lower in the landscape and not prevalent.

Councillor Feaver was of the view that the planning application was contrary to several policies within the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2020, namely PP1 (Placemaking) specifically in relation to part (v) biodiversity as it does not create a high quality, multifunctioning green blue space and does not save wildlife; EP 2 (Biodiversity) as the development would not create biodiversity; EP1 (Natural Heritage Designations) specifically in relation to part (iii) ensuring that compensatory measures are provided to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natural network is protected, as the impacts of the development cannot be mitigated to enhance the site; EP1 (d) European protected species as the lichen has been destroyed; EP1 (e) other protected species, EP 17 (Coastal Change) as it will adversely affect the coastal protection zone; DP1 (Development Principles) (i) Design, specifically parts (b) (c) and (d), DP2 Housing specifically in relation to part (b) Piecemeal/individual plot development proposals as the development is taking place gradually and policy IMP1 (Developer Requirements) of the MLDP 2015 in terms of the scale and density of the development which is not appropriate to surrounding area. Taking all of the above into consideration, Councillor Feaver moved that the Emergency Cabinet refuse planning permission in relation to Planning Application 20/00135/AMC.

In response, Mr MacPherson explained the transition from MLDP 2015 to MLDP 2020 in terms of the weight given to policies when determining planning applications however advised that the Emergency Cabinet were being asked to approve conditions from planning permission in principal for application 19/00320/APP that was approved by the Planning and Regulatory Services on 4 November 2019.

Mrs Scott, Legal Services Manager further advised that as planning permission in principle had already been granted in respect of Planning Application 19/00320/PPP and that this application was to consider the conditions of the planning application, it was not appropriate to revisit the principles of the consent at this stage.

Councillor Feaver, having considered the advice from the Planning and Legal Advisers moved that the Emergency Cabinet refuse planning permission in respect

of Planning Application 20/00135/AMC as, in her view, the proposal does not comply with DP2 (Housing) a) as the ridge height of the development would not be within the bowl height as expected. On failing to find a seconder, Councillor Feaver's motion fell.

Thereafter, the Emergency Cabinet agreed to grant planning permission in respect of Planning Application 20/00135/AMC subject to:

- (i) the completion of a Section 75 minute of agreement prior to issue of planning consent for applications 20/00016/APP and 19/01649/AMC; and
- (ii) the following conditions and reasons:

1. The development hereby granted forms part of, and is related to, the development granted planning permission under formal decision notice 19/00320/PPP dated 4 November 2019 wherein the terms and conditions as attached to that permission are hereby reiterated and remain in force in so far as they relate to the development hereby approved, in particular Conditions 10-20 inclusive, including any details already approved thereunder to discharge the requirements of the identified conditions.

**Reason:** To ensure an acceptable form of development and that it progresses in accordance with the already approved and required details

2. As part of the permission hereby granted, the houses and flats hereby approved shall only be used for affordable housing purposes in accordance with the agreement(s) reached between the applicant/developer and Moray Council and/or any registered social landlord (e.g. housing association or similar) to enable the long term delivery of affordable housing on this site; and no development shall commence until details of the agreement(s) to confirm the arrangements for the delivery of the proposed affordable accommodation hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, as Planning Authority.

Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** To ensure an acceptable form of development in terms of the required provision and delivery of the affordable housing accommodation proposed for this site wherein the benefits of such provision are passed on to serve the community in future years.

3. No development shall commence on any unit hereby approved until the widening and improvement of the existing refuge crossing and footway on the east side of the B9011 from the existing main access to the Findhorn Foundation has been completed in accordance with the details (Drawing No 134482/1005 A) approved under application reference 19/00320/PPP.

**Reason:** In the interests of pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the proposed development, road safety and the provision of information currently lacking from the submission.

4. No development shall commence until a site specific Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Transportation Manager.

Thereafter the development shall not proceed except in accordance with the approved details. For the avoidance of doubt the details shall be in accordance with the Construction Traffic Management Plan North Whins 1.1 dated 11 March 2020.

**Reason:** To ensure an acceptable form of development in terms of the arrangements to manage traffic during construction works at the site.

5. No development shall commence until a site specific updated Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA. Thereafter development shall not proceed except in accordance with the approved plan. For the avoidance of doubt the details shall be in accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan North Whins 1.1 dated 1 April 2020 and all appendices.

**Reason:** In order to minimise the impacts of the development works upon the environment.

6. No development shall commence until all the tree protection measures have been implemented as detailed on the approved Tree Protection Plan sheet 1 of 1. Thereafter the measures shall be retained as approved throughout the construction period.

**Reason:** To ensure the protection of existing trees during the construction period

7. No trees other than those identified for removal in the approved site and landscaping plan A102 - REVB shall be removed without the prior written approval of the planning authority.

**Reason:** In order to ensure tree removal is adequately controlled.

8. Development shall not proceed except in accordance with the Drainage Impact Assessment SK2371/GKIC – 8 Affordable Units, North Whins, Findhorn dated January 2020.

**Reason:** In order to minimise the impacts of the development works upon the environment.

## **7. Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments Supplementary Guidance**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment And Finance) asked the Emergency Cabinet to agree the updated Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments Supplementary Guidance (SG) and delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth & Development to submit the updated SG to the Scottish Government for approval.

Following discussion the Emergency Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) the updated Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments Supplementary Guidance, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;

- (ii) to grant delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth & Development to submit the updated Supplementary Guidance to the Scottish Government for approval and agrees that the Supplementary Guidance, upon approval, will form part of the statutory Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2020 when adopted; and
- (iii) that the Supplementary Guidance will be a material planning consideration for development management purposes as of 2 July 2020.

## **8. Update on Children's Social Work and Criminal Justice**

A report submitted by the Interim Chief Officer, Moray Health And Social Care Partnership provided a position statement on Children and Families and Justice Social Work, including an overview of the National Context; the Local Context; The Independent Care Review; the current position in Moray; rationale for transformational change; reconnecting social work; and delegation of services to Moray Integration Joint Board.

Prior to discussion of this item the Chair welcomed Simon Bokor-Ingram, the recently appointed Interim Chief Officer, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership to the meeting who thereafter introduced the report and responded to questions.

Following lengthy discussion, the Emergency Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) note the work being carried out to make improvements to the service; and
- (ii) continue with the programme which will seek agreement at a future date to delegate Children's Social Work and Criminal Justice to the MIJB (Moray Integration Joint Board).

The Chair expressed her thanks to the Chief Officer and Head of Adult Health and Social Care for the report and asked that they pass on thanks to all the Health and Social Care Teams for all they have done in what has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone which has been greatly appreciated. In particular she thanked the Chief Officer, who had only taken up the post at the beginning of the outbreak, for his pace and enthusiasm and looked forward to working with him for the remainder of his secondment.

## **9. Unaudited Accounts for 2019-20**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment And Finance) asked the Emergency Cabinet to consider and approve the unaudited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2020 for both the Moray Council and the Connected Charity Trust Funds administered by the Council.

Prior to discussion the Head of Financial Services advised that the reporting of the accounts had been delayed as a result of resource issues arising from COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, and outlined some amendments to the report, in particular in

relation to the recommendations which should read that the Cabinet approve rather than note both the Unaudited Accounts and the Connected Charity Trust Funds Trustees' Report. She advised that the Connected Charity Trust Funds Report would normally have been circulated to members prior to the meeting, but had not, however the information needed to approve the report was contained within the main committee report and that she would circulate a full copy to members following the meeting. She outlined a further amendment in regard to the figure at para 3.15 of the report relating to free reserves which should read £14.639M.

She further advised that the governance statement which was currently out for consultation and management commentary, which was yet to be drafted due to the lateness of the preparation of the accounts, would be included within the final document for submission to the Auditor.

In terms of the covering report she advised that this concentrated on key headline figures and in respect of this she referred to para 3.15 of the report in relation to the balance of free reserves which had been estimated in March 2020 at £10M and which was now £14.639M. She advised that there would normally be a report accompanying the accounts on variances but due to time pressures this had not been possible to prepare. She further advised that a report would be brought to a future meeting on the use of reserves.

During discussion Councillor Alexander asked if further information could be provided in regard to the compulsory redundancies as he had thought that the Council had avoided having any compulsory redundancies.

In response the Depute Chief Executive advised that there are a number of situations that may arise which would result in redundancy other than as a result of the budget but would need to investigate the circumstances surrounding each case.

Councillor Leadbitter stated that the issue of no compulsory redundancies had been subject to a vote by the Council which had resulted in the option of compulsory redundancy remaining as a tool officers could use. He stated that a lot of work had been undertaken to minimise this through redeployment which had resulted in the numbers being significantly lower than first feared and it would be interesting to see the information from HR and the circumstances relating to the redundancies.

Councillor Gatt in referring to the list of assets held by the Common Good funds, asked whether it would be possible that these could be set out in a clearer way showing each area's common good assets, what the income was and what the outgoing was, for example in relation to the Cullen Common Good it was not possible to identify the income received from the sale of the Cullen Town Hall.

In response the Head of Financial Services advised that it was not possible to show income from the sale of assets under the common good as the movement of assets from property to liquid does not show as income as it is not disposable income, however she suggested that some form of informative note could be added to the end of the more detailed accounts to be produced which do relate to the disposable income of the common good.

In response to a further question from Councillor Gatt regarding the ownership of Victoria Park, the Head of Financial Services advised that she would check and advise him accordingly.

Thereafter the Emergency Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) approve the unaudited Annual Accounts for Moray Council for the year ended 31 March 2020;
- (ii) approve the Moray Council Connected Charity Trust Funds Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020;
- (iii) note that a report on the use of reserves would be brought to a future meeting,
- (iv) further detailed information relating to the compulsory redundancies be sought from HR and circulated to members, and
- (v) information relating to the sale of common good assets be included as a footnote to the more detailed accounts relating to common good funds.

## **10.2020-21 Capital Plan Update**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment And Finance) updated the Cabinet on the Capital Plan for 2020/21 and future ten years and asked the Cabinet to approve amended Capital expenditure for 2020/21 and detailed expenditure on areas falling within the remit of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee.

Following consideration the Emergency Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) approve the amended Capital expenditure for 2020 / 21 as set out in the revised indicative ten year capital plan in APPENDIX 1 of the report;
- (ii) approve the detailed expenditure on areas falling within the remit of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee as set out in APPENDICES 2 to 5 of the report; and
- (iii) note that a more detailed review of the Capital Plan will be conducted and presented to Committee in December.

## **11. Financial Planning**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment And Finance) informed the Cabinet of the current position regarding financial planning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and set out the issues facing the Council in terms of managing its budget during 2020/21 and recommended actions to be taken to advance financial planning for 2020 onwards. The report also made recommendations in regard to managing the Council's debts as we move out of lockdown.



Following consideration the Emergency Cabinet agreed to:

- i. note the first, high-level estimate of the full financial year impact of the response to the pandemic as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and the approach to short term financial planning as set out in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.11 of the report, and
- ii. approve the recommencement of debt management process as described in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.15 of the report, with immediate effect.

## **12. Capital Plan 2019-20**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment And Finance) informed the Cabinet of the expenditure to 31 March 2020 under the capital plan for financial year 2019/20 and to recommend budget adjustments for inclusion in the 2020/21 Capital Plan and future years. The report also asked the Cabinet to approve carry forwards to 2020/21 and future years.

Following consideration the Emergency Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) note the expenditure to 31 March 2020 of £56,728,000 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) note the projected overall expenditure for projects spanning more than one financial year as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, and
- (iii) approve carry forwards to 2020/21 and future years totalling £10,486,000 as detailed in Section 5 of the report.

## **13. Trust Funds – Summary Expenditure for 2019-20 and Estimated Disposable Income for 2020-21**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Emergency Cabinet of the disbursements made from Trusts in 2019/20 and asked the Cabinet to agree the estimated disposable income available for disbursement in 2020/21.

During discussion Councillor Gatt asked whether the limit relating to the dispersal of funds could be removed from those where the income was less than £50 which in turn would allow for those smaller funds to be closed.

In response the Head of Strategy, Governance and Performance advised that it would be reasonable to review this and would look into the matter.

In response

In response to queries raised by Councillor Feaver the meeting noted that information would be circulated to members in relation to how the proceeds from

the sale of Logie Cottatge would be dispersed and that the Head of Financial Services would look into the issue of how to publicise more widely the details and objectives of Donald Manson Trust Fund.

Following consideration the Emergency Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) note the disbursements made from the Trust Funds in 2019/20, as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (ii) the estimated income available for disbursement in 2020/21, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

#### **14. Common Good Funds**

A report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Cabinet of the final position of Common Good Funds at 31 March 2020 and the estimated income available for disbursement in 2020/21. The report also asked the Cabinet to approve carry forward of undisbursed balances for 2019/20 to be made available in 2020/21 and approve the estimated income available for disbursement in 2020/21.

During discussion Councillor Gatt asked whether the information relating to deficit and income respectively could be combined into a single appendix as he found the current format confusing where information was spread across two separate appendices. He further asked whether some explanatory notes could also be included to provide information relating to the various income streams for example.

In response the Head of Financial Services advised that both appendices could be combined in future.

Councillor Feaver stated that there was currently no indication within the annual accounts that showed how much individual organisations were receiving from common good funds and asked if there was a possibility of making the accounts more transparent by showing this type of information.

In response the Head of Financial Services advised that the accounts were laid in terms of the Council's statutory requirements and should not show individual arrangements but would give consideration to the point raised as to how this may be addressed within the management information that is provided to Members.

Thereafter Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) note the disbursements approved for 2019/20 for each of the Common Good Funds shown in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) approve the carry forward of the undisbursed balances for 2019/20 for the Buckie, Dufftown, Elgin, Forres, Portknockie and Keith Funds to be made available in 2020/21;
- (iii) the estimated Income available for disbursement in 2020/21 shown in Appendix 2 of the report, and
- (iv) note the Common Good fund asset register shown in Appendix 3 of the report.

## **15. Revised Committee Timetable – September 2020 – February 2021**

Under reference to paragraph of the minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 17 June 2020, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities And Organisational Development) asked the Emergency Cabinet to consider and agree the revised committee calendar.

During discussion the Chair asked that the meetings of the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) be included in the calendar as this would be helpful for Members.

Following consideration the Emergency Cabinet agreed the revised committee calendar as set out in Appendix 1 of the report with the addition of the MIJB.

## **16. Meeting Request - RAF Lossiemouth Update**

Councillor Gatt referred to the previous discussions relating to the issues raised in regard to workers employed at RAF Lossiemouth and to a press release just issued from the contractor Voker Fitzpatrick which he stated goes some way to putting minds at ease with the situation regarding the workers who had allegedly possibly had contracted COVID-19. He stated that he welcomed the press release which should provide the community with some confidence as to how the health and safety of the workforce at RAF Lossiemouth is managed. He further referred to the fact we live in an age of social media where everything is made public and urged everyone to take care when posting information to ensure that it is 100% fact and this was particularly important when referring to somewhere like RAF Lossiemouth which represents a large part of the economy of Moray.

Councillor Cowe in agreeing with Councillor Gatt's comments regarding the importance of RAF Lossiemouth to the Moray economy, further stated that in addition to the press release, he had received an email from Douglas Ross MP which had been sent to all the Heldon and Laich Councillors which stated that he was having extensive discussions with the government minister Jeremy Quinn MP in charge of the improvement project and that he had agreed a request for a virtual meeting on Thursday 2 July with all the local elected members and members of community groups in the area. Councillor Cowe stated that he would still wish the meeting previously agreed by this meeting go ahead.

In response the Chief Executive advised that during the course of this meeting he had had a telephone conversation with the Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth which echoed all that Councillor Cowe had stated and it was his understanding that there will indeed be a zoom meeting on Thursday 2 July at 09.30 am hosted by the appropriate government minister. He further advised that he would be liaising during the course of the afternoon at the request of the Station Commander with Mrs Sarah Evans in regard to who should be participating in that meeting and it was his understanding that it is cross party Councillors and appropriate community representatives.

## **17. Question Time**

Councillor Feaver asked, in light of the items that are of public interest which will be discussed in private following this meeting on the opening of toilets, economic

development recovery and charging of car parking, why is so much of ongoing council business is being discussed in private by the Sounding Board rather than as information items to the Emergency Cabinet which would allow public and press scrutiny and demonstrate a degree of democracy?

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised that it was simply a reflection of the fact that as the Council entered the pandemic, the Council's response and more recently the recovery processes, have been channelled through the Council's Recovery and Renewal Management Team and issues which have been judged higher risk where Members input is required are then fed through the Sounding Board process. She further referred to the governance around that process which had been subject to previous debates by the Council. She further advised that many of the recovery issues are based around operational matters which can be discussed more appropriately in the Sounding Board context rather than at committee which should not be getting into operational details such as what cleaning products are in place etc. The use of the Sounding Board was not in any way intended to constrain transparent public debate.

The Chief Executive advised that it has been about striking a balance between what needs to be done operationally and what Councillors need to be involved in. He referred to a recent paper which summarised the situation across Scotland in terms of the balance of decision making through democratic processes and decision making through emergency powers and that Moray was in the top 3 in terms of that balance. He further advised that all the decisions that are being taken are within the bounds of the Council's own policies and some of the wider legislation which the Council is required to respond to in terms of the ongoing COVID-19 situation and hoped that this provided the assurance that Councillor Feaver was seeking that everything is being done to get the public toilets, car parking and a whole range of services back up and running as soon as possible. He further advised that in respect of the Lands and Parks services and those within Direct Services were almost recovered in terms of operating and that hopefully the public is reassured by that also.

In response Councillor Feaver stated that she had little to add to what had been said other than the fact that the Sounding Board is discussing ongoing council business and not, in her opinion, emergency business in confidence where the public can have no say.

In response the Council Leader stated that he took issue with the inference made by Councillor Feaver that the operation of the Sounding Board was undemocratic as the decision to form the Sounding Board was taken by the full council, the review of its continuation was also by taken by the full council and on both occasions followed a democratic vote with the majority decision to continue with both the Emergency Cabinet and the Sounding Board. He further stated that this was the democratic decision of the Council which has put in place review processes which have been, and will continue to be, adhered to and Members will be given the opportunity to express a view on whether they want these to continue or not.

Councillor Alexander asked if the Council Leader had received a response or acknowledgement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the letter he had sent some time ago?

In response the Council Leader stated that he had received a comprehensive response from the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance Kate Forbes MSP which he had been hoping to circulate along with a response from the Chancellor but had not yet received a response from him. However, he would now circulate the response from Kate Forbes MSP and will await a response from the Chancellor.