

# **MORAY COUNCIL**

## **Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee**

**Tuesday, 08 November 2022**

**Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson

### **APOLOGIES**

Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Derek Ross

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Governance Strategy and Performance, Head of Financial Services, Head of Education, Resources and Communities, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Payments Manager, Community Learning and Development Support Officer, Complaints officer, Senior Policy Officer (Poverty), Senior Officer Economic Strategy and Development, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the meeting

### **1. Chair**

Councillor Bridget Mustard, as Chair of the Corporate Committee, chaired the meeting.

### **2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests \***

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct Councillor Keith declared an interest in item 19 "GMB Mileage Claim" advising he was a member of that trade union but he had sought the advice of the monitoring officer who had advised that there was no conflict of interest. Councillor McBain also declared an interest in this item in his capacity as the Chair of the Appeals Committee. There were no other 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.

### **3. Resolution**

The meeting resolved that under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Item 19 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph Number of Minute	Paragraph number of Schedule 7A and reason
18	11 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations.

#### **4. Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee of 30 August 2022**

The minute of the meeting of the Corporate Committee dated 30 August 2022 was submitted and approved.

#### **5. Notice of Motion - Councillors Fernandes and Coull - Council Phone Charges**

In terms of Standing Order 35a, there was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillor Fernandes, seconded by Councillor Coull in the following terms:

Committee understands that phone calls to Moray Council services are currently charged at normal rates.

Committee understands that these charges can vary from 16p to 65p per minute from a landline and outside of inclusive mobile minutes, according to Ofcom. Committee recognises that the phone charges can be a barrier to accessing services, particularly for people on a low income.

Committee instructs officers to bring forward a report on the implementation of free phone numbers for Council service users.

Committee further instructs officers to bring forward a report on the implementation of free web-based methods of contacting Council services such as web chats and instant messaging.

During consideration, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that in terms of the second strand of the motion in relation to digital services to improve on what can be offered on-line including 'chat box' could be included as part of a wider and longer term programme already being undertaken through the improvement and modernisation strategy that will be regularly reported back to Committee. He further advised that in terms of the first strand of the motion regarding the free phone line, this links to the work being undertaken by the Cost of Living Working Group and the newly formed information hubs.

In response to further concerns regarding costs and time for getting a report back, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that the free phone line element is a standalone piece of work and whilst relatively achievable, in terms of timescale, he could not promise which committee it would come back to but that a report would be brought forward to this Committee, or if there were substantive cost implications, to full Council. He further advised that the second part of the motion regarding digital access would be included as part of a larger piece of work, which was already underway and reported back to Committee regularly.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed that:

Committee understands that phone calls to Moray Council services are currently charged at normal rates.

Committee understands that these charges can vary from 16p to 65p per minute from a landline and outside of inclusive mobile minutes, according to Ofcom. Committee recognises that the phone charges can be a barrier to accessing services, particularly for people on a low income.

Committee notes that the issues raised relating to the free phone line will be advised to the Cost of Living Working Group for its awareness, and meantime instructs officers to bring forward a report on the implementation of free phone numbers for Council service users to this Committee or full Council depending on costs.

Committee notes that officers will bring forward options for implementation of free web based methods of contacting the Council such as web chats and instant messaging etc as part of the wider piece of work within the digital and modernisation programme.

## **6. Written Questions \*\***

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

## **7. Community Identified Benefits**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) requested amendments to the Council procurement process to create a list of Community Identified Benefits, to be used as a platform for direct engagement with community groups in the delivery of community benefits clauses associated with Council contracts. This activity is linked to the development of a Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach within the Council.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i. the creation of the of a list of Community Identified Benefits to coordinate delivery of community benefits within Council procurements; and
- ii. to proposed changes to the Procurement Strategy to reflect the adoption of a list of Community Identified Benefits and increased focus upon delivery of community benefits in contracts of all values.

## **8. Procurement Annual Report 21-22 and Procurement Strategic Action Plan 22-23**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with an update report on Procurement activity in Moray and in particular report on procurement performance for 2021/2022 and sought Committee approval of the Strategic Action Plan for 2022/23.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the overall procurement performance for 2021/22 set out in the Annual report in Appendix 1 and summarised in Section 4 of the report; and
- ii. approve the Strategic Action Plan set out in Appendix 2 and summarised in Section 5 of the report.

## **9. Moray Council Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to approve the Moray Council Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027, included as Appendix 1 of the report.

During consideration Councillor Morrison sought clarification on where Moray Feis fitted into the education provision.

The Community Learning and Development Support Officer advised that there is a pilot programme and so far one school, Dallas Primary, has come forward. Moray Feis will connect with the school directly.

Councillor Mustard asked if an information report could be brought back to Committee with details of the pilot.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- i. to approve the Moray Council Gaelic Plan 2022-2027 prior to formal submission to Bord na Gaidhlig, included as Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. that an update on the pilot be reported to this committee as an information report in due course.

#### **10. Lease of Pinefield Allotment Site**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to approve the lease of the Pinefield Allotment site to the Elgin Allotment Association at a nominal rent of £1 per annum.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to provide the Elgin Allotment Association with a lease for occupation of the Pinefield Allotment site once developed at a nominal rent at £1 per annum, for as long as the group are undertaking agreed delegated management functions.

#### **11. Mental Health and Wellbeing Pulse Survey 2022**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the results from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Pulse Survey 2022 and asked the Committee to approve the actions arising from the report.

During consideration, Councillor Leadbitter requested for the planned December Workforce Culture group to take place after the meeting of the Council on 7 December. He further sought clarification on whether the number of people homeworking had been taken into consideration in the survey results.

The Chief Executive advised that the membership of the working groups was still to be confirmed and that a report would be brought to a future meeting of the Council.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that further analysis of the percentage of the overall workforce working from home not included in the results needs to be undertaken.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the results of the 2022 mental health and wellbeing survey;

- ii. approve the actions arising from the results;
- iii. request that the planned December Workforce Culture Group meeting be rescheduled to take place following the meeting of the Council on 7 December 2022.
- iv. note that a report on the membership of the various Working Groups will be brought to a future meeting of the Council; and
- v. further analysis of the percentage of the overall workforce working from home not included in the results be undertaken.

## **12. Elected Members Family Leave**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to consider and note the proposed new scheme on relation to Family Leave for Elected Members.

During consideration Councillor Morrison sought clarification on the amount of leave members were entitled to after a still birth (post 24 weeks).

In response the Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that she would provide information to the Committee on the miscarriage (pre 24 weeks) and still birth (post 24 weeks) policy in place across the Council and what other local authorities have in place for elected members.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

- i. approve the Family Leave for Elected Members scheme. This is a new scheme which incorporates the recommended guidance on Family Leave which was endorsed by COSLA in September 2019 and updated in May 2020 and is Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. note that the scheme would need to be referenced in the separate Members Allowance and Expenses Scheme.

## **13. Complaints Annual Report 2021-22**

A report by the depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the Complaints Annual Report 2021-22.

During consideration, Councillor Mustard requested a briefing for members on the complaints policy.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that he would be happy to provide a briefing to Members, along with the Complaints Officer.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the contents of the Complaints Report at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. note performance as indicated in the report;

- iii. approve the report for submission to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman; and
- iv. instruct the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance and the Complaints Officer to provide a briefing to Members on the Complaints Policy.

#### **14. Council Poverty Plan Progress Update**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of progress in developing a cross service whole Council poverty action plan as part of the Council's strategic response to reducing poverty in Moray.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the progress in developing a cross service, whole council Poverty Action Plan as part of the Council's strategic response to reducing poverty in Moray and that a further report will come forward for determination of content and approach in early 2023.

Councillor Cowe left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

#### **15. Performance Report (Financial Services) Period to September 2022**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 30 September 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2022; and
- ii. note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

#### **16. Performance Report (Governance, Strategy and Performance) Period to September 2022**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 30 September 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2022; and
- ii. note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

#### **17. Performance Report (Human Resources, Information Communication Technology and Organisational Development) Period to September 2022**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 30 September 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2022; and
- ii. note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

## **18. Question Time \*\*\***

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 30 August 2022, Councillor Keith sought an update on the status of the 3 applications to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised that on 21 October 2022 the Lossie 2-3 Group and the Forres Area Community Trust progressed to stage 2 of the process. The outcome will be known in either December 2022 or January 2023. The application by the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust was unsuccessful.

## **19. GMB Mileage Claim [Para 11]**

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the report and agree the recommended option in response to a claim from the GMB union and recommend onward referral to the Council for approval of the necessary budget.

Councillor McBain, as Chair of the Appeals Committee, left the meeting for the discussion of this item.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the conclusions reached by officers in relation to the collective grievance from GMB and agreed to authorise officers to make a formal offer to settle the grievance as set out in the report, subject to Council agreement to finance the payments; and
- ii. recommend to the Council that up to £30,000 is allocated to fund the settlement of the grievance on the basis set out in the report.