

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee

Tuesday, 7 December 2021

Various Locations via Video-Conference,

PRESENT

Councillor David Bremner, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Claire Feaver, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Amy Taylor, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor Gordon Cowie, Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Walter Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environment and Commercial Services, Head of Housing and Property, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Environmental Services Manager, Harbours Manager, Open Spaces Manager, Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, Senior Officer, Economic Strategy and Development, Legal Services Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Graham Leadbitter.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' 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.

3. Minute of Meeting of 19 October 2021

The minute of the meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 19 October 2021 was submitted and approved.

4. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that a written question had been submitted.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR COULL

At the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee on the 6 October 2020 the Committee were informed of the current state of repair of public space CCTV systems and the potential extra expenditure required to repair current faults.

It was recommended and agreed to undertake a trial of necessary works to reinstate live feeds, from outlying populations which will remove the need for the matrices.

It would be helpful and appreciated if Committee members could receive an update on how this is progressing, what are the next steps required and a timeline for CCTV systems to be working appropriately throughout Moray.

RESPONSE

The approved trial had to be put on hold during Covid lock down due to movement restrictions and staff redeployment into Covid control enforcement. Ultimately this trial could not be completed due to several technological issues which proved to be insurmountable. The only option left available to reinstate live feeds would be to replace the entire system. This has an advantage in that with the ageing system maintenance of cameras will continue to be an issue even if the connectivity issues were resolved. This is currently being assessed to determine the most suitable system for Police Scotland and Council Services and establish costs. The cost of replacing the system would be a capital cost and providing costs are available will be reported as an option for inclusion in the capital plan for 2022/23 which will be reported to Council when the budget for 2022/23 is approved. Any additional revenue costs associated with running the system would be reported to the same meeting as a budget pressure.

5. Emergency Notice of Motion - Storm Arwen

A Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Warren, seconded by Councillor Coull in the following terms:

Reason for Urgency

The storm and the aftermath have just taken place and the normal timescales for submitting Notices of Motion could not be met.

Storm Arwen

We are bringing this emergency Notice of motion to Committee as we are aware of the immense damage cause by Storm Arwen on Friday 26 November. Many homes were plunged into darkness as the electricity lines were brought down in the storm.

This had the consequential effect of stopping heating and interrupting the water supply to many in our community. Thankfully many people's services were restored by Saturday. However, there are folk in the community who had to endure these harsh conditions for 6 days. Some of these people were without any form of communication with the outside world as roads were also blocked due to fallen trees and other storm damage. Many of the resilience plans in place for

communities were also impacted as local halls and other community buildings were also without basic utilities

In the light of the recent catastrophic Storm Arwen, whilst we are very thankful to everyone that worked tirelessly to support those affected by storm damage, we are aware that there were vulnerable people not getting the assistance needed.

We recommend to Moray Council that they ask for a report which reviews the Council's response to the emergency, the Council's emergency procedures and community resilience plans to look at what lessons can be learned.

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In response the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services confirmed that the Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) will carry out a lessons learnt review which is normal practice and the Council would then carry out its own review following the LRP review.

He further added that the response to Storm Arwen was co-ordinated by the LRP when it became apparent that the event was of such an extraordinary scale.

A date for the review has not yet been confirmed.

Councillor Leadbitter urged that Councillors be included in the LRP review in terms of gathering their views on what happened as Councillors do become a point for constituent queries and he felt that Councillors could provide useful feedback.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services said that he could not guarantee Councillor input as the initial review would be co-ordinated by the LRP and it is the LRP that sets the agenda. The LRP is chaired by Police Scotland. He further added that it could be requested but it could certainly be considered when the Council carried out their own review.

Following further consideration and as there was no one otherwise minded the Committee agreed to recommend to Moray Council that a report is requested on the Council's response to Storm Arwen.

6. Notice of Motion - Findochty Harbour

A Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Eagle, seconded by Councillor R McLean in the following terms

Findochty Harbour

It is great to see the new pontoons in Findochty finally in place with a huge difference being made to the harbour, however their remains outstanding issues which are taking a very long time to resolve and which is causing significant concern within the community.

These issues are –

There is a significant concern in regards the anchors installed which are apparently double fluked. Whilst local members have been informed these are correctly installed it does look dangerous with spikes rising out the water. Given the use of harbours by local people we seek urgent clarification from Officers that these are not a health and safety risk.

There has been significant discussion around the safe berthing for Fin keel and long keel vessels that has never been resolved. As yet the updated plan has not been provided. The committee seeks a confirmed date from Officers when this plan will be delivered, within a short timeframe.

The ramp to access the pontoons has caused some concerns within the community. Whilst most are delighted with the overall works the ramp is out of character with a small historic harbour like Findochty. This motion asks Committee to agree to Officers contacting local fabricators to see if minor works could be done to remove the top of the structure but yet maintain structural stability and to bring back to committee likely costs for this.

In response to point 1, the Harbours Manager confirmed that a diving team had been on site and the anchor has now been buried below the sea bed. He further confirmed that photographs would be taken of the work and circulated to members.

With regards to point 2, the Harbours Manager confirmed that communication had been sent out within the last week to the affected vessel owners and Harbour Advisory Committee Members which detailed the scope of the timeline over the next couple of months to ensure everyone is aware of the berthing arrangements.

The Harbours Manager confirmed that in respect of point 3, there is no feasible solution to change the ramp. The design is such that it is accessible for all to use, any change would require a total re-design.

Following the comments from the Harbours Manager, Councillor Eagle confirmed he was happy with the responses to points 1 and 2 and confirmed that in respect of point 3 he would like to change the wording to acknowledge that the Council has had discussions around the design of the ramp and at the current time there is no feasible option to change the design without changing the whole pontoon system.

As there was no one otherwise minded the Committee agreed to acknowledge that the Council have had discussions around the design of the ramp with the consultancy team and at the current time there is no feasible option to change the design without changing the whole pontoon system.

7. Capital and Revenue Budget Monitoring Quarter 2 period to 30 September 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the current position regarding Environmental and Commercial Services and Economic Growth and Development Services (Economic Development) Capital and Revenue Budgets.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget monitoring report for the period to 30 September 2021.

8. Performance Report - Economic Growth and Development Services – Period to September 2021

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 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September and the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

9. Economic Recovery Key Performance Indicators - Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the pre and post pandemic baseline data for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Economic Recovery Plan for Moray.

During consideration of the report, it was agreed that briefing papers would be drafted for Group Leaders on the following:

- a) Rates relief options in particular for vacant properties which cannot be filled;
- b) options to address the unfilled vacancies and recruitment challenges in the Council.

Following further consideration in which Officers responded to questions regarding Foundation Apprenticeships, the Council's Kickstart places and unemployment in Moray the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the position of the Moray economy in the current phase of recovery from the Covid pandemic;
- ii) agree to future reporting on the Key Performance Indicators on an annual basis;
- iii) a further report to be presented to the Corporate Committee to approve the proposed changes relating to the procurement process; and
- iv) an update report with broader economic indicator analysis to be presented to the meeting of this Committee in March subject to the SLAED data being available.

10. Performance Report - Environmental and Commercial Services - Period to September 2021

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 November 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September and the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

11. Draft Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to consider and approve the draft Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan (2022 - 2027) for public consultation and for consultation responses to be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee, along with the final Strategy and Action Plan.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) to approve the draft Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 for a 12 week public consultation period; and
- ii) that consultation responses are reported back to a future meeting of the Committee along with the final Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan for approval.

12. Events Charging and Management - Open Spaces

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to consider the opportunity to introduce charges for commercial and other specified events held in open spaces and to improve the application procedure and guidance provided to event organisers staging events in open spaces.

In terms of Standing Order 83 the Committee agreed to suspend Standing Order 75 to continue the meeting past 12.45pm.

Councillor Leadbitter moved that community/charity/not for profit events of any size with no entry fee and any community/charity/not for profit event with an entry fee up to 1,000 attendees should be exempt from charges.

Councillor Eagle confirmed that he was happy to second Councillor Leadbitter's motion but sought agreement from him to include Personal Trainers/Boot Camps in the exemption with a view to including it as a line in the Council charges to be reviewed annually as part of the Charges Report. Councillor Leadbitter said he was happy to include Personal Trainers/Boot Camps as per Councillor Eagle's proposal.

Councillor Cowe sought clarification on whether this Committee had the authority to set the charges as he was concerned that the decision was not being considered by all Councillors, in particular those from Forres and Elgin.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) confirmed that the Committee did have the authority to set the charges however the Committee could agree the charges subject to the approval from Moray Council on 19 January 2022 when the charges report will be presented for approval.

As there was no one otherwise minded, the Committee agreed, subject to approval of the Charges Report being presented to Moray Council on 19 January 2022:

- i) the introduction of charges for specified events and activities in open spaces with effect from 1 April 2022 with the exception of the following where no charges will be levied:
 - any community/charity/not for profit event of any size with no entry fee;
 - any community/charity/not for profit event with an entry fee up to 1,000 attendees

- personal trainers/boot camp, however to be included in the annual charges report for review annually by Moray Council so these could be considered for charges in future years.
- ii) to approve the draft event guidance and event charging structure in Appendix 2 and the charging structure outlined in Table 1 of this report for inclusion in future charges report; and
 - iii) to note that Officers are in the process of improving the information on the Council website to enhance the customer experience and improve the customers' ability to self-serve.

13. Property Level Protection

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the proposed scheme to provide Property Level Protection products at cost to people in Moray.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) the proposed scheme to purchase £5,000 of Property Level Protection Products for sale to the public and if demand is high, purchase a further £15,000 of products; and
- ii) make a recommendation to Council on 19 January 2022, as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the report.

14. Question Time ***

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the minute of the meeting of 19 October 2021, Councillor Warren sought an update on how successful the Scotland Loves Local Gift Card Initiative has been.

In response the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager confirmed that 170 businesses had registered and 96 are live on the website. She further added that there is still work ongoing to promote the scheme and some national chains are now available. A report will be presented to Committee in March with an update on the scheme.

Under reference to paragraph 3 of the minute of the meeting of 19 October 2021, Councillor Coull sought an update on Kinloss Barracks.

In response, Councillor Leadbitter confirmed that following the Moray Economic Partnership meeting, he had written to the Secretary of State for Defence.

A subsequent announcement by the Government confirmed that Kinloss Barracks is not under threat and there is a possibility of more investment in the barracks.

Councillor Feaver requested a briefing paper to ED&I and ECLS Committee on the ongoing problems with water ingress and flooding at Forres Academy with an update of the remedial actions put in place together with timings for this work.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property confirmed that remedial work had been undertaken and a review of the work carried out over the last several months is being carried out. He further added that there are a number of factors at play, in terms of maintenance that has previously been undertaken and as yet it is too early to give a precise answer on the causal factor. He further added that they are confident the roof works are adequate.

The Head of Housing and Property confirmed that he would be happy to answer any further questions Councillor Feaver may have but as yet it is too early to provide any further clarification on issues.

Councillor Macrae sought clarification on whether the Council had been offered the chance to tender for the works at neighbouring harbours as there is currently a Danish vessel operating in MacDuff.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services confirmed he would check with colleagues to see if the Council had been given the opportunity to tender for the work but confirmed that currently the focus is on carrying out work in the Council's own harbours.

Councillor Feaver asked the Council Leader to write to the Scottish Government to seek confirmation on the dualling of the A96 and the timing for it.

The Council Leader confirmed he would write to the Scottish Government to seek an update on the dualling of the A96.

Councillor Warren sought an update on the depth of the harbour at Buckie as she was aware that it had changed and although notification of the change had been sent to mariners the notice was not on the Buckie Harbour Facebook Page or the almanac and she wanted confirmation that the change had been registered.

The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services said he would speak to Officers and confirm the position with Councillor Warren following the meeting.