

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee

Tuesday, 30 April 2024

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

PRESENT

Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Acting Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of Housing and Property Services, Environmental Protection Service Manager, Strategic Transport Services Manager, Consultancy Manager, Strategic Planning and Development Manager, Vehicle Services and Compliance Manager, Harbour Development Operations Manager, Mr R Adam, Network Asset Engineer (Roads Maintenance), Mr W Burnish, Senior Engineer (Flood Risk Management), Ms C English, Senior Project Manager, Property Asset Manager, Ms K Conti, Development Officer (Economic Growth and Regeneration), Ms S Creswell, Community Wealth Building Officer, Legal Services Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1 Chair

Councillor Macrae, being Chair of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee, chaired the meeting.

2 Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Orders 21 and 23 of 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 Minutes

The Minutes of the special meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services (EDIS) Committee dated 12 December 2023 and the meeting of the EDIS Committee dated 6 February 2024, were submitted and approved.

4 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

5 Environmental Protection Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024-25

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Committee of the plans to deliver the capital and revenue programme in Environmental Protection in 2024/25.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i. approve the plans to deliver the capital programme for 2024/25 as set out in the report;
- ii. grant delegated authority to the Service Manager (Open Space, Waste Management, Catering & Facilities) to proceed with necessary maintenance works and prioritise the works in accordance with any budgetary restrictions;
- iii. approve the proposed use of the cemetery capital funds for increased cemetery provision in Moray as set out in section 5 of the report; and
- iv. delegate authority to the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services to apply for grants in support of the areas of work identified in sections 4 and 5 of the report.

6 Roads Maintenance Revenue and Capital Budget 2024-2025

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) which requested that the interim outturn position for 2023/24 be noted and that the detailed expenditure plans for the funds allocated from the Revenue Budget 2024/25 for Roads Maintenance and the Capital Budget 2024/25, including resurfacing/reconstruction, surface dressing, footpaths, drainage, replacement of lighting columns, and lighting enhancements, be approved.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i. approve the detailed allocation of funds, from the Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25, to Roads Maintenance activities, as outlined in Section 5 of the report;
- ii. grant delegated authority to the Roads Maintenance Manager to proceed with necessary roads maintenance works whilst noting that the Roads Maintenance Manager will, as soon as possible, publish a main list of schemes, which can be funded from the budget provision recommended in this report, and a reserve list of desirable schemes, which cannot presently be funded, along with a list of projects to be funded from the Capital allocation; and
- iii. note that the list of schemes will be drawn up in accordance with the principles and objectives detailed in this report, in the Roads Asset Management Plan and in the Capital Plan.

7 Transportation Capital and Revenue Budgets 2024-2025

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Committee of plans to deliver the capital and revenue programme in Transportation for 2024/25.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i. approve the plans to deliver the capital and revenue programme for 2024/25 as set out in the report;
- ii. delegate authority to the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services to apply for grants for the funding areas set out in the report at paras 5.16 and 7.14; and
- iii. approve the plans for expenditure of the Cycling Walking and Safer Routes funding as set out in paras 7.11 and 7.12 of the report.

8 Roads Asset Management Planning

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting the latest information on the road network's condition.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. to note the latest Road Condition Indicator (RCI) results for Moray Council;
- ii. that the RCI results continue to be monitored and reported back on an annual basis to this committee; and
- iii. to note the clear commitment to the use of Road Asset Management Planning in Moray Council.

9 Coastal Adaptation Plans

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 8 February 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of Moray Coastal adaptation plans.

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the Service for bringing forward this significant piece of work and thereafter unanimously agreed to:

- i. adopt the Coastal Adaptation Plan for managing coastline falling within the Moray Council area; and
- ii. progress the case studies set out in section 6.2-6.4 of the report.

Councillor Bloomfield left the meeting at this juncture.

10 Long-Term Town Fund

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) which requested that the Committee delegate authority regarding funding opportunities through the Elgin Town Board.

The Committee joined the Chair in welcoming Mrs Beverly Smith to her first Committee meeting in her new role as Acting Head of Economic Growth and Development.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to approve delegation to the Head of Economic Growth and Development in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Strategic Leadership Forum (SLF - extended for this purpose as set out in the report) to develop and submit to the Elgin Town Board priority packages relating to the themes of Community Safety and Security, High Streets Heritage and Regeneration and Transport and Connectivity.

11 Tourism Business Improvement District - Renewal Ballot

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) seeking the Committee's approval to support the renewal ballot for the Tourism Business Improvement District (BID).

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. for Economic Growth and Regeneration to continue to support the Tourism BID through the undertaking of the renewal ballot; and
- ii. to note that a further report will be presented to Committee with full business proposal and supporting five-year business plan, including levy details and any potential future financial implications for the Council, and the assessment of the Council's right of veto.

12 Cultural Quarter - Delivery Plan and Mapping

Councillor Bloomfield re-joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) which presented the Committee with two reports outlined in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. These were commissioned as part of the Cultural Quarter Full Business Case to support the strategic, commercial and financial case for the Cultural Quarter Project. They also offered solutions for the implementation of the project in the context of wider cultural regeneration in Elgin and Moray. Additionally, the report requested delegated authority in relation to funding opportunities.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i. note the content of both reports as providing valuable supporting information for the strategic case and proposed implementation of the Cultural Quarter project as part of the Moray Growth Deal; and

- ii. delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to submit priority packages of connecting routes and public realm from the Cultural Quarter Delivery Plan as shown in Appendix 1 to external funding opportunities as they become available and, in the event match funding is required, existing approved project funding will be utilised.

13 Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy and Action Plan

Under reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 20 June 2023, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presented the Committee with the Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy (CWB) for approval, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

During discussion, Councillor Leadbitter recognised that this strategy was significant in terms of economic development in Moray and expressed a wish to highlight this new strategy to the UK and Scottish Governments. He moved that that the Committee agree an additional recommendation for the Chair to write to the Regional Economic Partnership and the Moray Economic Partnership informing of the Council's recent adoption of the Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy. This was unanimously agreed.

Thereafter, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. to note the consultation that has taken place with Stakeholders;
- ii. to approve the Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy and Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- iii. that the Chair write to the Regional Economic Partnership and the Moray Economic Partnership informing of the Council's recent adoption of the Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy.

14 Suspension of Standing Orders

The Chair sought the agreement of the Committee to suspend Standing Order 77 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 12:45 pm. This was unanimously agreed.

15 Zero Emission Fleet Replacement Strategy

Under reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 7 February 2023, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with a strategic overview to decarbonise the Council's fleet and meet the agreed net zero targets.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. to note the EV strategy proposed by Fleet Services to ensure the Council is well placed to meet its ambitious net zero targets;
- ii. to note the council's progress made to date in reducing fleet carbon emissions;

- iii. to note that options put forward within the strategy will require varying levels of capital investment, and endorses the preferred option 2, which will be subject to consideration as part of the standard financial planning process going forward;
- iv. to note that the transition to a zero-emission fleet cannot progress at scale until suitable charging infrastructure is in place following the depot review and smarter working projects;
- v. that proposals for Ashgrove depot are developed as the council's centralised green depot with alternative infrastructure in place to allow development of net zero alternatives;
- vi. to the Council exploring external funding opportunities for future hydrogen and biogas pilots.

16 Resumption of Meeting

PRESENT

Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor Shona Morrison

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Acting Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of Housing and Property Services, Strategic Transport Services Manager, Consultancy Manager, Harbour Development Operations Manager, Mr W Burnish, Senior Engineer (Flood Risk Management), Property Asset Manager, Legal Services Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

17 Flood Risk Management and Bridges Capital and Revenue Budgets 2024-25

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Committee of the Flood Risk Management Schedule of Clearance and Repair for 2024/25.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. the Flood Risk Management Schedule of Clearance and Repair for 2024/25;

- ii. the proposed Schedules of Road Bridge Revenue and Capital Maintenance Works and Non-network Bridge Capital Maintenance Works to be undertaken for 2024/25; and
- iii. to delegate authority to the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services to apply for grant funding as set out in paragraph 3.23 of the report.

18 Marine Safety and Operational Summary of 2023-24 and Q3-4 2023-24 Updates

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Committee on matters of Marine Safety and compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) for the year 2023/24 including details of Q3 and Q4 2023/24.

During his introduction, the Chair pointed out that, although the recommendation in the report asked that a 3 yearly statement of compliance letter be written to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), this was no longer required as the MCA had advised that they were deferring the 3 yearly compliance exercise. This was noted.

During discussion, several health and safety concerns were highlighted in relation to the harbours in Moray as a result of the incidents detailed within the report and it was queried what measures were being taken to address these issues.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services reiterated the Council's commitment to the safety of harbour users and staff. She noted that the reported number of incidents is not unusually high compared to other similar services within her remit, however acknowledged the need to review the report's wording with her team to avoid causing unnecessary concern in the future.

During further discussion surrounding the Weighbridge in Buckie, it was acknowledged that the bridge is fully operational, yet there were questions raised regarding its lack of use. Additionally, it was observed that debris from previous roadworks remained at the exit of the weighbridge and it was asked if this could be cleared.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that the Strategic Transport Services Manager and the Harbour Development Operations Manager would look into why the weighbridge is underutilised and ensure the debris at the exit is cleared.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to note:

- i. the safety performance, fulfilling their function as Duty Holder under the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC);
- ii. that the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services would review the manner in which harbour incidents are reported;
- iii. that the Strategic Transport Services Manager and the Harbour Development Operations Manager look into why the weighbridge is underutilised and ensure the debris at the exit is cleared.

19 Depot and Store Review

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the meeting of this Committee dated 20 June 2023, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided an update on the Depot and Store review progress and sought approval for the outline business case and resource request.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. to approve the Outline Business Case for the Depot and Store Review;
- ii. to fund a project resource of a temporary Senior Project Officer at grade 11 for an initial period of 1 year from the initial savings generated (£64,700) and the balance from reserves (£11,300); and
- iii. to note that a further update on progress will be provided once the full business case is developed.