

# MORAY COUNCIL

## Minute of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee

Tuesday, 31 October 2023

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

### **PRESENT**

Councillor John Divers, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Ms Karen Donaldson (UNISON),

### **APOLOGIES**

Councillor Bridget Mustard, Ms Karen Adams (Unite), Ms Janis Donaldson (Unison), Mr Marc Jackson (Unite), Mr Ken Matthews (UNISON), Ms Anita Stuart (GMB)

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Susan Slater (EIS) and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer.

#### **1. Appointment of Chair**

Councillor Robertson nominated Councillor Mustard as Chair and suggested that, due to Councillor Mustard's absence, she was her substitute for this meeting and would Chair the meeting.

This was unanimously agreed.

#### **2. Admission of Additional Participant**

The Committee agreed unanimously to allow Susan Slater (EIS) to join the meeting.

#### **3. Declaration of Members Interests \***

In terms of Standing Order 21 and 23 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the Committee noted the following declarations:

Councillor Divers declared that he was a member of Unite, Unison and the Trade Union Council.

Councillor Harris declared that she was a member of UNISON.

Councillor Leadbitter declared that he was a member of Unite.

Councillor McLennan declared that he was a member of EIS and that he would be providing a transparency statement. He advised that a transparency statement as agreed with the Standards Commission, Monitoring Officer and himself was also sent to the Ethical Standards Commissioner by the Standards Commission. He

advised that he has a connection, via his partner's employment, that could be an interest that requires to be declared in any discussion on the particular line of the budget that would directly impact on their post. He did not consider, however, that it would meet the objective test in respect of the budget as a whole. This is because he does not consider that a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts (being that the connection only applied to one line of the budget) would reasonably regard the connection as being so significant, in terms of consideration of the overall budget, that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making on the overall budget.

He would need to declare the interest and leave the room if that particular line is being discussed (as opposed to simply being noted), until the discussion and any voting on that line had concluded.

There were no further declarations from Committee Members 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.

#### **4. Quorum**

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that the meeting was not quorate due to there only being one Trade Union Representative from those unions in the constitution in attendance.

The Committee agreed unanimously to continue informally.

Clarification was sought on the constitution for the Joint Consultative Committee and the need for substitutes to notify the Clerk in writing at least 24 hours before the meeting.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development confirmed that the constitution was not a substantive item on the agenda but it could be added to the Trade Union Officers Group agenda for review if required.

#### **5. 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 Items 6 - 10 of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph Number of Minute	Paragraph Number of Schedule 7a and Reason
6	1 - Information relating to staffing matters 11 - Information to any consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations
7	1 - Information relating to staffing matters
8	1 - Information relating to staffing matters
9	1 - Information relating to staffing matters
10	1 - Information relating to staffing matters

#### **6. Workforce Planning Implications of Corporate and Financial Planning [Para 1 & 11]**

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) inviting the Committee to discuss the workforce implications of the Council's financial circumstances and in particular the proposals that are contained in the attached Appendix 1 Budget Consultation Pack for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

During consideration Ms Donaldson (UNISON) sought clarification on whether there were 2 or 3 options of suitable alternative employment given to staff under the Transform process.

In response the Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that she would confirm the details and let the Committee know.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities, and Organisational Development) advised that as the No Compulsory Redundancy Policy was written at speed there may be an error and it would be checked.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) sought clarification on people being advised that their job was at risk through an article in the Press and Journal, but when questioned, their manager did not know about it. The position in question had no workforce implications but there was an assumption made by staff that there would be.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) made further reference to another service manager who was unable to answer staff questions but no service was identified.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that all of the changes that had a workforce implications had been briefed to staff but that the position identified would be looked at.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) noted that although the focus was on workforce implications, there had been some feedback that people would like to have more direct information on bigger picture and invited views on this so that it could be taken into account for future communications.

As an further example, Mrs Slater (EIS) raised concerns that there was no briefing for all staff as to the changes to the devolved school budgets as she was of the opinion that head teachers should be raising awareness that there is no workforce impact.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that head teachers and managers have been briefed to be able to respond to staff questions.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) suggested that a line be added to the manager briefings to staff which states that there will be savings but many have no workforce implications.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) noted that there was content to this effect in the team brief but agreed to consider how this could be made clearer , however, confirmed that those people impacted had been informed.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the workforce implications of the Council's financial circumstances and in particular the proposals contained in Appendix 1- Budget consultation pack for 2024/25.

## **7. Consultation Pack [Para 1]**

The meeting had before them the Consultation Pack and associated documents for consideration.

During consideration Mrs Slater (EIS) sought clarification on what budget information could be shared as she would like to get feedback from colleagues.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that the papers are only confidential until agreed at a full Council meeting and the trade unions and those impacted are informed. Thereafter, the trade unions could proceed to share and discuss the information with their members as part of the normal consultation processes.

Thereafter the Consultation Pack was noted.

## **8. Statements of Change [Para 1]**

The meeting had before it the Statements of Change for consideration.

During consideration Mrs Slater (EIS) stated that the Statements of Change for education should not mention Transform. She further stated that the Voluntary Early Retirement document had been discussed at the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) previously and that there had been no more recent work to update it.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that this would be looked into.

Thereafter the Statements of Changed were noted.

## **9. Short to Medium Term Financial Plan [Para 1]**

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) that had been submitted to a special full Council meeting on 25 October 2023 for information.

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided an update that there will be open engagement on what future options might look like for culture, leisure and libraries as agreed at the full Council meeting.

## **10. Team Talk Feedback Summary [Para 1]**

The meeting had before it the Team Talk Feedback Summary for information.

There were no additional comments.