

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee

Tuesday, 08 February 2022

Various Locations via Video-Conference

PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

Councillor Walter Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environment and Commercial Services, Head of Housing and Property, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Transportation Manager, Harbour Development and Operations Manager, Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, Mrs D Anderson, Senior Engineer (Transportation), Mr W Burnish, Senior Engineer (Flood Risk Management), Climate Change Strategy Officer, Legal Services Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1 Chair

Councillor Leadbitter, 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 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.

Councillor Bremner declared an interest in Item 8 "Adaptation Plan for Coastal Erosion – Kingston" as he resides in the area however stated that he would take part in its consideration. There were no other declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3 Written Questions

The Committee noted the following written question from Councillor Eagle:

Keep Scotland Beautiful

A local action group in Buckie, Buckie Roots, has worked hard for a few years now to maintain previous council flower beds and make the town of Buckie beautiful. I commend highly their work and their success in reaching level 4 of the 'it's your neighbourhood' Keep Scotland Beautiful award. A huge achievement and a credit to the hard work of the group. I hope all in the committee share our thanks to the volunteers involved.

I am aware that like Buckie many areas have groups similarly involved in looking after flowerbeds and litter picking.

I have been passed information as at the link below relating to Keep Scotland Beautiful roadside litter campaign and their offer to work with local authorities and communities to reduce the impact of litter.

Has consideration been given to Moray Council joining this campaign?

The link for information is –

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/roadside-litter-campaign/take-action/local-authorities/>

RESPONSE

I am pleased to be able to confirm that we will, as we have in previous years, be participating in the Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) Spring Clean. This year the Spring Clean is taking place between the 21 March and the 21 April. KSB are in the process of finalising details and will be distributing information prior to Saturday 12 February.

We have been in touch with our colleagues in the Communications and Media Teams and an officer in KSB and confirm that our approach will include :-

- Issuing a series of communications that will include key messages and information on the Spring Clean before and during the Spring Clean. This will include links to KSB information so that communities can access information packs, litter guidance and FAQs, supporters and communications packs with posters etc.
- Moray Council will continue to provide communities who wish to organise litter picks in their communities by providing black bags, disposable gloves, loaning litter pickers and lastly collecting the refuse at a pre-arranged time and place.

Councillor Eagle thanked Officers for the response and urged Communities to become involved in the Keep Scotland Beautiful Spring Clean.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the following Committees were submitted and approved:

- (i) Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 7 December 2021;
- (ii) Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Appointments Committee dated 10 December 2021; and
- (iii) Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Appointments Committee dated 20 January 2022.

5 School Streets Report - Pilot Project Evaluation

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 5 November 2019, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the outcomes to date of the School Streets Pilot Projects at New Elgin and Seafield Primary Schools in Elgin. The report also provided an evaluation of the School Streets pilot project, encompassing vehicle volumes, pedestrian volumes, parent/guardian and resident perceptions and stakeholder representations received, including from Police Scotland.

During discussion, it was noted that not every school in Moray is suitable for the School Streets initiative and it was queried whether the same amount of funding could be made available for every school to explore other safety initiatives such as Park Smart.

In response, the Transportation Manager advised that the safety of children travelling to and from school is taken very seriously by the Council and School Streets is just one tool that is available when considering road safety at schools. She explained that each school is considered individually and that funding is targeted where the need is greatest however assured the Committee that Moray has safe roads in general.

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the work of the Transportation Service in implementing the School Streets Project and thereafter agreed to:

- (i) note the outcomes of the evaluation of the two School Streets Pilot Projects at New Elgin and Seafield Primary Schools;
- (ii) commence the statutory process to make permanent the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders for the two pilot projects;
- (iii) delegate authority to the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services in consultation with local ward members to consider and determine objections received as part of this statutory process;
- (iv) approve the inclusion of School Streets schemes as an option for reducing the number of vehicles outside schools and encouraging Active Travel; and
- (v) approve the criteria set out in paragraph 4.20 of the report for assessing future applications from schools for a School Streets scheme on the roads around their school.

6 Charges for Electric Vehicle Charging

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 8 June 2021, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of proposals to vary the mechanism for payments for the use of public electric vehicle charge points.

During discussion, concern was raised in relation to users charging their cars at electric charging points for lengthy periods of time resulting in charging points not being available for other users to charge their vehicles and it was queried whether the Council had plans to implement an "overstay" charge. Further concern was also raised in relation to the rising cost of electricity and whether our tariff for using electric charging points needed to be reviewed earlier, in line with the rising cost of electricity.

In response, the Transportation Manager advised that a way of assessing whether a car was parked and charging or just parked was currently being investigated however, this was not considered to be a concern at present as the demand for electric charging points is not excessive. She further advised that a report would be brought to this Committee in 12 months, or earlier if required, which will include further information in relation to an overstay charge and whether the tariff needs to be reviewed due to the impact of the increased cost in electricity.

The Chair suggested that appropriate signage is displayed at charging points encouraging consideration for other users when charging.

In response, the Transportation Manager advised that she would liaise with the Council's PR and Communications Service in relation to appropriate signage being displayed at charging points encouraging consideration for other users when charging.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note that a wider Electric Vehicle Strategy focussing on further developing the public charging network and transitioning the council's fleet of vehicles to ultra-low emission vehicles will be brought to a future meeting;
- (ii) to approve the recommended changes to tariffs for charging vehicles at council operated charge points as specified in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the report;
- (iii) that a report would be brought to this Committee in 12 months, or earlier if required, which will include further information in relation to an overstay charge and whether the tariff needs to be reviewed due to the impact of the increased cost in electricity; and
- (iv) that the Transportation Manager will liaise with PR and Communications Service in relation to appropriate signage being displayed at charging points encouraging consideration for other users when charging.

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised the Committee of the Council's Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2020-21 and updates to the reporting methodology and statutory requirements.

During discussion, it was noted that the Scottish Workplace Journey Challenge was taking place between 1-31 March 2022 and it was queried whether the Council was promoting this in any way.

In response, the Climate Change Strategy Officer advised that consideration will be given to the Council promoting the Scottish Workplace Journey Challenge during 1-31 March 2022.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the Council's Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2020/21;
- (ii) to note updates made to the Council's reporting methodology for 2020/21;
- (iii) to note the latest guidance from the Scottish Government on best practice and timescales to reflect updated statutory requirements set out in '*Public Sector Leadership on the Global Climate Emergency*'; and
- (iv) that consideration will be given to the Council promoting the Scottish Workplace Journey Challenge during 1-31 March 2022.

8 Adaptation Plan for Coastal Erosion - Kingston

Councillor Bremner declared an interest in this item however continued to take part in the debate and decision.

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 20 January 2015, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the change to the tidal lagoon at Kingston and the government funding available to develop a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to progress the development of an adaptation plan for the Moray coastline, starting with Kingston as outlined in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

9 Edinburgh Declaration and Biodiversity

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to agree to recommend to Moray Council to sign the Edinburgh Declaration and note potential future actions to assist in halting biodiversity decline.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) recommend to Moray Council to sign the Edinburgh Declaration;

- (ii) note potential future local actions to help address biodiversity decline within section 4.3 of the report; and
- (iii) note further reports on the draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) consultation and Local Development Plan guidance will be reported to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 1 March 2022 which will set out the national policy and evidence gathering requirements to address the nature crisis.

10 Marine Safety and Operational Updates Q3 2021-2022

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 20 March 2018, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee with regard to matters of Marine Safety and compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) for the third quarter of 2021/22.

During discussion surrounding the Ice Plant, it was queried whether consideration had been given to a loyalty scheme for users of the Ice Plant. In response, the Harbours Development and Operations Manager advised that there were no plans for a loyalty scheme at present however he would raise this at the Harbour Advisory Committee.

During further discussion surrounding out of service navigation lights, it was noted that this had been a feature in previous reports but was not included in this report and it was queried whether this had improved now that the lights had been replaced with LED bulbs.

In response, the Harbours Development and Operations Manager advised that Out of Service Hours in relation to Navigation Lights is reported annually and that he would ensure that an annual comparison is included in the next report so that Members can compare with last years figures.

Concern was raised in relation to Findochty Harbour regarding the hole that has reappeared and whether or not there are sufficient cleats available on the pontoons as harbour users say there aren't enough yet the Council say there are a sufficient number of cleats for the number of vessels.

In response, the Harbours Development and Operations Manager advised that he was aware of the hole in Findochty Harbour and that this would be getting properly fixed in due course. He further advised that records show that there are a sufficient number of cleats available for the number of vessels using the harbour however advised that he was looking into this personally and would liaise with local Ward Members.

Councillor Cowe raised concern in relation to the number of hours the MV Selkie had managed to operate due to adverse weather conditions when similar vessels appeared to be operating normally and asked that a report be brought to the next meeting of Moray Council on 23 February 2022 detailing the cost to the Council for operating the dredger in 2021/2022 to ascertain whether the cost of owning the dredger outweighs the running costs.

In response, the Harbours Development and Operations Manager advised that he is aware of Members' concerns regarding HM Selkie and that work is underway to streamline the process to make it more efficient with a view to increasing the number of operational days from 53 days and also increasing the amount of tonnage removed. With regard to comparing MV Selkie to other similar vessels, the Harbours Development and Operations Manager explained that Marine Scotland Licensing is strict and that operating in conditions over force 3 requires additional time for the vessel to be weighted and affects its stability.

The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services further assured the Committee that the efficiency of the dredger is a priority of the Service and offered to include a performance and financial update in relation to the MV Selkie in the next Marine Safety and Operational Update report. This was agreed.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the safety performance, fulfilling their function as Duty Holder under the Port Marine Safety Code;
- (ii) that future reports will include an annual comparison for Out of Service Hours in relation to Navigation Lights; and
- (iii) that the next Marine Safety and Operational Update report will include a performance and financial update in relation to the MV Selkie.

11 Question Time

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services (EDIS) Committee dated 7 December 2021, Councillor Warren acknowledged that a report on the Scotland Loves Local Gift Card Scheme is expected at the meeting of the EDIS Committee in March 2022 however raised concern in relation to difficulties some people were having when trying to purchase the Gift Card as it is only available online and local towns such as Elgin and Buckie aren't recognised when searching for participants in the scheme as users have to search specifically for Moray.

In response, the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager advised that the upcoming report will show how the gift card has been promoted and advised that it is currently only available to purchase online according to local authority area and is not town specific.

Councillor Macrae thanked Officers for the information in relation to the closing of Cloddach Bridge and sought an update as to when the external report would be completed.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that he did not have a date at present and that this would be circulated to the Committee as soon as it was available.

Councillor Warren raised concern in relation to the rising cost of energy and asked if the Council is working with the Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) to support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) who are struggling with rising energy costs.

In response, the Chair advised that, in his capacity as Chair of the MEP, he would highlight this at the next meeting.

The Head of Economic Growth and Development advised that there is no funding currently available to support SMEs with energy bills however the Business Resilience Forum is attended by Moray's MP and MSP which is effective in communicating any issues to the UK and Scottish Government.

Councillor Eagle raised concern surrounding children who suffer from food allergies and that, due to supply issues, the Council are struggling to ensure that there are no allergens in school meals. He also raised concern that parents are asked to sign a form which ensures that the Council cannot be held responsible if any allergic reactions occur and felt this was unfair as parents rely on the school to be aware of allergens so that children can be kept safe whilst at school.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that he would liaise with the Catering Manager and provide a full response to Councillor Eagle in this regard.

Councillor Warren noted that this week is National Apprenticeship Week and asked if the Council was promoting this in any way?

In response, the Head of Economic Growth and Development advised that the Employability Partnership had carried out some work in relation to National Apprenticeship Week. He further advised that there is an action in the Local Outcome Agreement Plan to deliver an Apprenticeship Strategy which will look at the future demand for apprenticeships in Moray. The aim is to have a strategic view of what apprenticeships are required in Moray and how this will align with education, aspiration and training so that this can be promoted to young people and that this will also include public sector apprenticeships.