

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Moray Council

Wednesday, 10 November 2021

Remote Locations via Video Conference,

PRESENT

Councillor George Alexander, Councillor James Allan, Councillor David Bremner, Councillor Frank Brown, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor Gordon Cowie, Councillor Paula Coy, Councillor Lorna Creswell, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Ryan Edwards, Councillor Claire Feaver, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Louise Nicol, Councillor Laura Powell, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor Amy Taylor, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Walter Wilson

APOLOGIES

Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Community and Organisational Development), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Corporate Manager, Moray Integration Joint Board, Roddy Huggan, Team Leader and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the meeting.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Shona Morrison.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct the following declarations were made:

Councillors Morrison, Brown, Coull, Divers, Eagle, Nicol and Warren declared an interest with regards to items 9, 11 and 12 as members of the Moray Integration Joint Board.

Councillors Macrae and Taylor declared an interest in Item 10 as Board Members of Moray Leisure Centre.

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. Minute of Meeting of 15 and 20 September 2021

The minute of the meeting of 15 and 20 September 2021 was submitted and approved.

4. Written Questions **

The Council noted 2 written questions had been submitted.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BROWN

Given the published difficulties the IJB is experiencing in providing both social care and occupational therapy, both of which are the bedrock of care in the community along with the Home First policy, what steps are the council considering to support the IJB and to deliver care services to the elderly and vulnerable across Moray?

RESPONSE

As care services are delegated to the IJB, consideration of any support to the IJB would therefore need to be by way of a request from the IJB.

It is understood the IJB is yet to consider the issue and, if asked, this would likely be a matter for the Corporate Committee of the Council if there were staffing issues whilst resource issues would most likely need Moray Council consideration.

Councillor Brown sought confirmation from the Convener that the Council will now pro-actively work with the IJB and NHS Grampian to provide assistance with the recruitment of more staff.

In response, the Convener confirmed that the Council can assist with recruitment in the areas identified and prioritise the process.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR EAGLE

It is good to see the wide range of projects approved as part of the UK Community Renewal fund announced last week. Whilst it is disappointing Moray on this occasion did not succeed, I recognise we were not in the highest priority group. However, it does create questions on our ability to compete for external funding. I am concerned that Moray often misses the opportunity to attract external grant support. Given the huge potential funding coming from the UK levelling up fund and other national and local schemes can the convenor provide an absolute assurance that the Council is staffed to ensure detailed and high-quality bids for national grant schemes and that we as a council are committed to projects, including ensuring their place in the capital plan?

RESPONSE

The decision taken on the Moray UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) should not be viewed as indicative of an inability to compete for external funding. This funding stream opened with a very short application window and minimum project size. Bids for Moray were community based and complied with guidance. Of the 56 grants awarded in Scotland, only 14 were to local authorities that were not in the top priority group and so it is clear that competition was strong.

Officers across the Council are currently focussed as a priority on work to finalise documentation needed to enable draw down of the Moray Growth Deal funding which will leverage in excess of £100m into the Moray economy.

Whilst unsuccessful in the CRF process, Moray has been successful in many other funding streams and recently received confirmation of an award in terms of a separate round of economic development funding (details currently embargoed) with work ongoing to bid for Levelling Up funding, learning from the first phase of bids.

Officers from services across the council work in an agile way to consider bids for a wide range of funding opportunities as these arise. However, the nature and extent of funding opportunities is currently greater and emerging more rapidly than in previous years, typically with limited detail as to bid criteria available in advance and so it is hard to predict and plan for these opportunities. So for example, detail is currently awaited for the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and future elements of Climate Change funding from the Scottish Government. Staffing needs across Economic Development and Growth (which tends to lead on the bidding process) are currently under review including areas of budget pressure previously shared with members and where increased staffing to meet reasonably anticipated funding streams is required such as in climate change, this has been progressed. It should be recognised however that staffing is only one factor in compiling a successful funding bid.

Councillor Eagle sought further information on whether extra funding will be considered for additional staff.

In response, the Council Leader confirmed that budget templates are starting to be produced and being considered as part of the budget setting process, any pressures or service developments will be identified through this process.

5. Notice of Motion - Queens Platinum Jubilee

A Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Cowe, seconded by Councillor Alexander in the following terms:

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Plans announced by the Royal Family for an extended bank holiday in June 2022 to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and will provide an opportunity for communities and people throughout the United Kingdom to come together to celebrate the historic milestone.

It is proposed that, whilst retaining the requirement for all necessary licences and permissions, the Council waives charges (as detailed in the Council's list of charges) for these licences and permissions for events organised by communities/not for profit organisations as detailed on the Council's list of charges to commemorate the Queen's platinum jubilee on the weekend of Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 June 2022.

As licencing broadly operates a cost recovery system, it is anticipated that costs would indirectly be picked up through wider licensing charges.

Councillor Brown expressed concern around the costs of waiving the fees for charity and not for profit organisations and the costs being borne by businesses and proposed, seconded by Councillor Bremner not to waive the charges.

Councillor Leadbitter, following clarification from Officers confirmed that he would be happy to support the motion if Councillor Cowe would be happy to amend the motion to cover only civic licences.

In response, Councillor Cowe confirmed he would be happy for the motion to be amended to cover only civic licences.

Councillor Brown confirmed that he would withdraw his amendment following the change to the original motion to cover civic licences only and the removal of the need to pass on the additional costs to other licence applicants.

Councillor Taylor following further consideration proposed to reject the motion as she felt it was not fair to cover the costs by passing onto other licence holders. As there was no seconder the amendment fell.

Following clarification from Councillor Cowe with regards to his motion and as there was no one otherwise minded the Council agreed that, whilst retaining the requirement for all necessary licences and permissions, the Council waives charges (as detailed in the Council's list of charges) for these civic licences and permissions for events organised by communities/not for profit organisations as detailed on the Council's list of charges to commemorate the Queen's platinum jubilee on the weekend of Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 June 2022.

6. Arrangements for the Local Government Elections 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Council of arrangements in regard to the management of the 2022 Local Government Elections.

Following consideration the Council agreed to note the arrangements in regard to the management and administration of the 2022 Local Government Elections.

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

7. Initial Review Proposals for UK Parliamentary Constituencies

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Council of the initial proposed changes to the UK Parliamentary (UKP) constituency in the Moray Council area.

Following consideration the Council agreed to:

- i) note the proposals made by the Boundary Commission for Scotland for the constituency covering the Moray Council area; and
- ii) submit a consultation response to the Boundary Commission for Scotland with Group Leaders agreeing the final response.

8. Remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) sought the Council approval, as part of the final stage of the Council's review of committee governance arrangements, to clarify the scrutiny remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to approve a Scrutiny Guide.

Councillor Leadbitter moved that the Council agree recommendation (i), (ii) and (iii) as printed, to reduce the frequency of meetings of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to quarterly and for there to remain 14 members on the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Warren.

In response, Councillor Gatt, seconded by Councillor Brown proposed that the remit of Audit and Scrutiny Committee remain as is currently constituted in the Scheme of Administration for the remainder of the Council term, the frequency of meetings remain at 8 weekly and for there to continue to be 14 members on the Committee.

On the division there voted:

For the Amendment (10)	Councillors Leadbitter, Warren, Alexander, Bremner, Cowe, Cowie, Coull, Coy, Morrison and Nicol
For the Motion (10)	Councillors Gatt, Brown, Allan, Divers, Eagle, Feaver, Macrae, Powell, Ross and Wilson
Abstention (3)	Councillors Creswell, Edwards and Taylor

There being an equality of votes the Chair, in terms of Standing Order 65(e), cast her casting vote in favour of the motion.

Accordingly the motion became the finding of the meeting and the Council agreed:

- i) the remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee contained in paragraph 4.2;
- ii) that the Council's Scheme of Administration is revised to reflect the remit in terms of Appendix 1;
- iii) to approve the Scrutiny Guide attached as Appendix 2 to be adopted as part of the Council's Second Tier Governance Documents;
- iv) to reduce the frequency of meetings of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee from 8 weekly to quarterly; and
- v) to continue with 14 members sitting on the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillors Cowe, Creswell and Edwards joined the meeting during the consideration of this item.

9. Proposed Childrens Services Sub Committee

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Council to consider options and the outcome of consultation over the creation of a temporary Children's Services Sub-Committee.

Councillor Brown moved to create a sub Committee with full powers that discuss items to remove the need for the reports to be submitted to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, this was seconded by Councillor Ross.

Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor Warren, proposed that the status quo remains, with Children's Services continuing to reporting through Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee.

On the division there voted:

For the Motion (10)	Councillors Brown, Ross, Allan, Eagle, Edwards, Feaver, Gatt, Macrae, Powell and Wilson
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For the Amendment (13)	Councillors Leadbitter, Warren, Alexander, Bremner, Coull, Cowe, Cowie, Coy, Creswell, Divers, A McLean, Morrison and Nicol
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Abstentions (1)	Councillor Taylor
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Accordingly the Amendment became the finding of the meeting and the Council agreed to keep the status quo, with Children's Services reporting through the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee.

10. Appointment to Outside Bodies

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Council to consider making an appointment to Moray Leisure Centre - Board of Directors following a resignation and an appointment to the Moray Anchor Network, which will oversee the development of a Community Wealth Building Strategy for Moray.

Following consideration the Council agreed to appoint:

- i) Councillor Aaron McLean to the Moray Leisure Centre - Board of Directors; and
- ii) Councillor Graham Leadbitter as Chair of Moray Anchor Network to oversee the co-ordination of a Community Wealth Building Strategy.

11. Membership of MIJB Updated Integration Scheme

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray requested the Council approve the minor updates to the Moray Integration Joint Board Integration Scheme requested by the Scottish Government.

Following consideration the Council approved the updated MIJB Integration Scheme at Appendix 1.

12. Policy for Contributing to the Cost of Adult Social Care and Support

A report by the Chief Social Work Officer, Health and Social Care Moray recommended the Council adopt the updated Health and Social Care Moray

Contributions Policy in relation to charges applying to non-residential social care services.

Following consideration the Council agreed to adopt as policy the draft Health and Social Care Moray Contributions Policy as attached at Appendix 1.

13. Question Time ***

Under reference to para 26 of the minute of the meeting of Moray Council on 15 and 20 September, Councillor Alexander sought an update on whether the Council Leader had written to the University of the Highlands and Islands.

In response Councillor Leadbitter confirmed that he had written and a response had been received in which a meeting was being sought at the beginning of December.

Under reference to para 9 of the minute of the meeting of Moray Council on 15 and 20 September, Councillor Macrae sought confirmation that the Council Leader had written to both Governments regarding the removal of the Universal Uplift.

In response Councillor Leadbitter confirmed he had written to both governments but had not received a response to date.

Under reference to para 10 of the minute of the meeting of Moray Council on 15 and 20 September, Councillor Coull sought an update on the housing negotiations with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in regards to accommodation for refugees.

In response the Chief Executive confirmed that agreement had been reached with regards to accommodation with the MOD on 4 November but no further update was available.

Councillor Ross raised concerns about the meeting of the Joint Community Council (JCC) due to be heard in person at the Town Hall later in the evening. He further added that the community transfer rate for Covid was high in Moray and was concerned that having an in person meeting was not appropriate.

In response, the Chief Executive confirmed that the JCC is a separate body and is responsible for how it conducts its business and if anyone had concerns regarding the venue then they should be directed to the Environmental Health Team.

Councillor Alexander sought an update on the dualling of the A96.

In response, the Chief Executive confirmed that discussions had taken place between Senior Civil Servants from the government and Officers within the Council. The Chief Executive further added that he would get a fuller response from the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) and circulate to members.

Councillor Warren left the meeting during this item.