

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee

Tuesday, 06 September 2022

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 Draeyk Van Der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Mustard (Item 6 - Cloddach Bridge Structural Assessment)

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of Housing and Property, Consultancy Manager, Mrs D Anderson, Senior Engineer (Transportation), Public Transport Manager, Opportunities for All Officer, Property Asset Manager, Ms S Ward, Climate Change Strategy Officer, Harbour Development and Operations Manager, Mr C Muir, Senior Officer (Economic Strategy and Development), 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 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 Minutes

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted and approved:

- (i) Minute of Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure Appointments Committee dated 9 June 2022;

- (ii) Minute of Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 21 June 2022; and
- (iii) Minute of Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure Appointments Committee dated 1 July 2022.

4 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

5 Notice of Motion - Councillors McBain and Dunbar

In terms of Standing Order 34a, there was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillor McBain, seconded by Councillor Dunbar in the following terms:

The current Scottish Government promised to 'ensure that 100 per cent of premises across Scotland have access to super-fast broadband by 2021' but even before the pandemic, this was not on track to be met. Work will now run until at least 2027.

The continued delays on delivering broadband have been unacceptably slow. Superfast and reliable broadband is vital for Moray, particularly as we emerge from the pandemic and see working from home continuing for many. Yet, we continue to have slow speeds particularly in our more rural communities.

As a result, we ask the committee to consider the following motion:

The committee recognises the lack of progress by the Scottish Government on rolling out super-fast broadband across Moray and the impact this is having on individuals and businesses.

The committee asks the chair to write to the Deputy First Minister for an update on plans for roll out and detail as to what action is being taken to speed up timescales to achieve 100% super-fast broadband coverage.

Councillor Leadbitter was of the view that the lack of progress by the Scottish Government on rolling out super-fast broadband across Moray was due to a number of unfortunate delays that could not be avoided such as the Covid-19 pandemic and noted that improving broadband coverage was a UK and Scottish Government project. He therefore moved, as an amendment, that the Committee:

- (i) acknowledge the importance of rolling out super-fast broadband across Moray and the positive impact it is having on individuals and businesses;
- (ii) further acknowledge that a number of delays in rollout have occurred, including as a result of the pandemic; and
- (iii) instruct the Chair to write to both the Scottish and UK Governments, who are partners in the R100 programme, impressing upon them the importance making up time, welcoming the recent joint Scottish and UK Government announcement of an additional £36M investment in the programme and seeking an update on timescales and plans for roll out in Moray and detail

as to what action is being taken to speed up timescales to achieve 100% super-fast broadband coverage.

This was seconded by Councillor Harris.

After considering the amendment put forward by Councillor Leadbitter and seconded by Councillor Harris, both Councillors McBain and Dunbar agreed to withdraw their original motion in favour of the amendment.

There being no-one otherwise minded, the Committee:

- (i) acknowledged the importance of rolling out super-fast broadband across Moray and the positive impact it is having on individuals and businesses;
- (ii) further acknowledged that a number of delays in rollout have occurred, including as a result of the pandemic; and
- (iii) instructed the Chair to write to both the Scottish and UK Governments, who are partners in the R100 programme, impressing upon them the importance making up time, welcoming the recent joint Scottish and UK Government announcement of an additional £36M investment in the programme and seeking an update on timescales and plans for roll out in Moray and detail as to what action is being taken to speed up timescales to achieve 100% super-fast broadband coverage.

6 Cloddach Bridge Structural Assessment

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the structural condition of Cloddach Bridge which is currently closed in the interest of public safety and advised on the options available for the future operation of this bridge.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Mustard stated that Cloddach Bridge is a vital route for the local community in terms of connection to Elgin High School, is used by agricultural machinery, a diversion when other routes in Elgin are flooded and supports the rural economy and that closure of the bridge increases journey times considerably for the local community. As the Council is considering the permanent closure of the bridge, the community wished their concerns to be noted prior to any decision being made. Councillor Mustard went on to state that the community had actively voiced their concerns via Heldon Community Council, a Facebook group, by means of a public meeting and by submitting a petition to the Council. Councillor Mustard stated that the Community supported recommendation i) in the report which recommended that Cloddach Bridge remains closed to vehicular traffic but open to pedestrians and cyclists with regular inspections to monitor the condition of the bridge. However, with regard to recommendation ii) the community were concerned in relation to the permanent nature of this recommendation which they believed left no opportunity for the community to explore options to keep the bridge open. The community did not feel that their views on the closure of the bridge had been properly considered by the Council and asked that the Committee consider deferring the decision for the closure and removal of the bridge with a view to exploring options with the community before any decision is made.

Councillor Cowe stated that he had attended the public meeting at the bridge the previous evening along with other Elected Members and noted the large number of people that had attended the meeting. He acknowledged the financial state of the Council and stated that the Council did not have the funds to keep the bridge open. Councillor Cowe stated that the community would like to explore ways in which to keep the bridge with the support from Moray Council Officers and moved that the Committee agree recommendation i) as printed with an additional recommendation for a meeting between representatives from Heldon Community Council, Cloddach Bridge Action Group, key Council Officers, Group Leaders and local Ward Members to be arranged, within Council premises, to determine future options with regard to Cloddach Bridge, with composition of the meeting being delegated to the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Chair of this Committee and Group Leaders. This was seconded by Councillor Divers.

There being no-one otherwise minded, the Committee agreed that:

- (i) Cloddach Bridge remains closed to vehicular traffic but open to pedestrians and cyclists with regular inspections to monitor the condition of the bridge; and
- (ii) a meeting between representatives from Heldon Community Council, Cloddach Bridge Action Group, key Council Officers, Group Leaders and local Ward Members be arranged within Council premises to determine future options with regard to Cloddach Bridge, with composition of the meeting being delegated to the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Chair of this Committee and Group Leaders.

7 National Strategy for 20mph

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) updated the Committee on the Scottish Government's National Strategy for 20 mph which aims to ensure all appropriate roads in built-up areas have a safer speed limit of 20 mph by 2025.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note that Transport Scotland are gathering information from local authorities with respect to 20mph speed limits and zones, after which it is anticipated that Transport Scotland will provide further guidance, information on funding and a timetable for implementation; and
- (ii) to review forthcoming guidance and information on funding before proceeding with any new 20mph speed limits or 20mph zones in Moray.

8 Proposed Revision of Bus Fare Structure

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to consider the proposal to both simplify and harmonise the current supported bus service fares through the introduction of a zonal fare structure and grant delegated authority in setting additional fares and promotions to meet market demand.

During discussion, Councillor Warren raised concern at the cost of a single weekly bus pass for 2 zones being £42 given the cost of living crisis, particularly as some single parents are having to transport children to nurseries outwith the area in which they stay due to lack of nursery spaces, and asked if this fare could be reduced.

In response, the Public Transport Manager advised that the suggested bus fares are on par with other bus fares nationally. The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services further advised that calculating bus fares is a complicated task whereby there is a balance to be made between covering the cost of running the service and being affordable.

Councillor Warren remained of the view that £42 for a 2 zone weekly ticket was too expensive and moved that the Committee agree recommendations 1 and 3 however asked that a further report be brought to a future meeting of this Committee before enacting the weekly and monthly tickets. This was seconded by Councillor Morrison.

As an amendment, Councillor McBain moved the recommendations as printed within the report. This was seconded by Councillor Bloomfield.

On a division there voted:

For the Motion (5):	Councillors Warren, Morrison, Harris, Leadbitter and Van Der Horn
For the Amendment (8):	Councillors McBain, Bloomfield, Cowe, Divers, Dunbar, Gordon, Keith and Macrae
Abstentions (0):	Nil

Accordingly, the amendment became the finding of the Committee and it was agreed to:

- (i) approve the proposal to simplify and harmonise bus fare options through a zonal system on demand responsive and local bus services;
- (ii) award the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services delegated authority to enact new ticket types as set out in paragraph 4.6 of the report; and
- (iii) award the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services delegated authority to consider short term fares offers and promotions as appropriate.

9 Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership Delivery Plan

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with the Moray Pathways delivery plan 2022-2025 and the new governance structure to align funds and integrate local employability services.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the delivery plan and the governance structure for local employability funds and delivery.

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) sought the agreement of the Committee to adopt the Moray Hydrogen Strategy and agree that an application to the North East Just Transition Fund to progress action on the strategy be submitted if the Council's expression of interest is successful.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) approve and adopt the Moray Hydrogen Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, including recommended actions; and
- (ii) note the Council's expression of interest to the North East Just Transition Fund, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, in respect of funding for hydrogen pilot project feasibility studies, and the development of a costed delivery plan.

11 Local Heat And Energy Efficiency Strategy

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the duties required under the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (Scotland) Order 2022 and sought approval of plans to comply with the Order.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) note the duties required under the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (Scotland) Order 2022 and the recent announcement of funding for the council to progress this;
- (ii) approve the appointment of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) Officer as proposed in the report and associated consultancy work (within the Scottish Government funding provided) to develop an LHEES and delivery plan; and
- (iii) approve the submission of this report and agreed recommendations to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), and for subsequent progress updates to be copied to the CPP.

12 Depot and Store Review

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with an update on the progress with undertaking a review of the Council's operational depots and stores, in accordance with the Council's Property Asset Management Appraisal (PAMA).

During discussion surrounding the appropriate storage of items that had previously been stored within the Buckie Drifter and common good items currently in storage in Forres, assurance was sought that these items were being stored appropriately and it was further queried whether a list of the items in storage is available.

In response, the Property Asset Manager advised that items previously stored within the Buckie Drifter were now being stored in the former Lossiemouth Library

and agreed to circulate information following the meeting confirming that the items previously stored within the Buckie Drifter which are now currently stored at the former Library in Lossiemouth and also common good items currently stored in Forres are being stored in appropriate storage conditions including a list of the items in storage.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note:

- (i) the work undertaken to date;
- (ii) that Officers have identified opportunities and are working to deliver early savings as outlined in paragraph 4.7 of the report;
- (iii) that a further update on progress will be provided once the outline business case is developed; and
- (iv) that information be circulated following the meeting confirming that the items previously stored within the Buckie Drifter which are now currently stored at the former Library in Lossiemouth and also common good items currently stored in Forres are being stored in appropriate storage conditions including a list of the items in storage.

13 Nature Restoration Fund

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the delivery of projects under the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund grant in 2021-22 of £101,000 and of this year's allocation from the same fund of £124,000 and asked the Committee to agree proposals for 2022-23.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the delivery of the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund grant allocation in 2021/22;
- (ii) to note receipt of the £124,000 grant from the same fund for 2022/23;
- (iii) the proposed projects for 2022/23 as set out in para 5 of the report and that any changes to costs across these projects can be authorised by the Head of Economic Growth and Development; and
- (iv) that a further report be submitted on 15 November 2022 setting out a longer term plan.

14 Marine Safety and Operational Update Q1 2022-2023

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee on matters of Marine Safety and compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) for the period Q1 year 2022/23.

During discussion surrounding the dredging plan for Buckie Harbour, confirmation was sought that the basins would be included when dredging the channel.

In response, the Harbour Operations Manager confirmed that the channel in Buckie Harbour is a priority for dredging and that this includes the basins and that these will be included in the dredging plan for Buckie Harbour going forward.

During further discussion surrounding Harbour Advisory Committee meetings, it was queried whether Action Logs and Minutes from these meetings could be forwarded on to the Harbour Advisory Committee once completed.

In response, the Harbour Operations Manager agreed to forward the Action Log and Minutes from Harbour Advisory Committee meetings to the Harbour Advisory Committee once completed.

The Harbour Operations Manager further responded to questions from the Committee in relation to maintenance of the Selkie, the quality of navigation lights, safety of pier lighting and the updating of CCTV cameras.

The Committee joined the Chair in welcoming the new style of reporting of the Marine Safety and Operation Update reports and thereafter agreed to note:

- (i) the safety performance, fulfilling their function as Duty Holder under the Port Marine Safety Code;
- (ii) that the channel in Buckie Harbour is a priority for dredging and that this includes the basins and that these will be included in the dredging plan for Buckie Harbour going forward; and
- (iii) that the Action Log and Minutes from Harbour Advisory Committee meetings will be forwarded to the Harbour Advisory Committee once completed.

15 Capital and Revenue Budget Monitoring to 30 June 2022

In terms of Standing Order 83, the Committee agreed to suspend Standing Order 75 to allow the meeting to proceed beyond 12:45 pm.

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:

- (i) note the budget monitoring report for the period to 30 June 2022; and
- (ii) approve the funding allocation under the Switched on Fleets programme as set out in para 6.12 of the report.

16 Economic Recovery Key Performance Indicators

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with an annual report of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Economic Recovery Plan for Moray.

Following consideration, the Committee joined the Chair in congratulating the Procurement Service for spending 25.8% of its spend within Moray which is a considerable support to local business and thereafter agreed to note the impact of the Economic Recovery plan in supporting the Moray economy as it continues to recover from the COVID pandemic.

17 Question Time

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 21 June 2022, Councillor Warren sought an update as to when the report on the use of glyphosate will be brought to this Committee for consideration.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that the ban would not be operative until 2025 and it was hoped the report would be brought to the meeting of this Committee on 7 February 2023.

Under reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 21 June 2022 in relation to the Dial M Service, Councillor Warren sought an update as to how the service is being promoted within the community outwith social media.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that a joint late summer campaign alongside Stagecoach is underway promoting the use of public transport. Furthermore, work is ongoing to produce a marketing tender to support the launch of additional services associated with the Growth Deal project which will promote the Dial M Service. With regard to raising awareness in the community, work is underway to re-establish the Transport Forum which is community led and an excellent means of promoting the transportation service within community groups.

Under reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 21 June 2022 in relation to support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and charities in relation to rising energy costs, Councillor Warren acknowledged that the Chair had previously written to the UK Government highlighting the struggles of SMEs however asked that a further letter be written asking for a price cap on energy for businesses as many are struggling with the rising cost of energy.

In response, the Chair agreed to re-write to the UK Treasury in this regard.

Councillor Cowe stated that there was a possibility that the GP Surgeries in Hopeman and Burghead may close leaving some constituents with a 3 hour round trip to attend an appointment at the Surgery in Lossiemouth and queried if there was anything the Council could do to assist in this regard.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that resources had been moved around to provide additional demand response services and that the Public Transport Manager would be happy to discuss this further with Councillor Cowe following the meeting.

Councillor Warren noted that the use of red diesel is no longer permitted for use in the Council's industrial plant and machinery and asked if the Chair could raise this at a future meeting of COSLA with a view to further investment in clean green plant and machinery.

In response, the Chair advised that he would raise this at the next meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure members at COSLA in October and report the outcome back to the Committee.

Councillor Gordon noted the increase in the amount of industrial traffic on the A941 at Rothes and sought assurance that the road could cope with this increased usage.

In response, the Head of Economic Growth and Development advised that, with each planning application, a transport assessment is carried out that considers any impact on local roads and mitigates against this.