

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee

Tuesday, 30 August 2022

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

PRESENT

Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Chief Financial Officer, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Housing and Property Services, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Property Asset Manager, Audit and Risk Manager, Asset Management Co-ordinator, Community Learning and Development Support Officer, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1. Chair

Councillor Bridget Mustard, being Chair of the Corporate Committee, chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct Councillor Mustard, on behalf of the Conservative Group, declared that the Group had discussed all of the items on the agenda but no party whip was applied. 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. 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 Item 14 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee of 14 June 2022

The Minute of the Meeting of the Corporate Committee dated 14 June 2022 was submitted and approved.

5. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

6. Improvement and Modernisation Programme

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the progress made in developing the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP) and asked the Committee to consider and note the outcome of the reviews of IMP work, governance and resulting actions and to consider extending the post of Project Leader (Transformation).

During consideration, and in response to concerns raised by Members, the Chief Executive clarified that the report covered an ongoing 5 year programme of projects that had been reported at various points and summarised both past and future actions. It was acknowledged that newly elected Members were being introduced to the IMP programme part way through the process. He further noted that there was potential for member briefings prior to the next update.

Thereafter, and following lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the progress on the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP);
- ii. note the outcomes of the review of IMP work and governance and resulting actions;
- iii. note the review of project governance arrangements including Transforming Boards set out in paragraphs 3.20-3.23 of the report; and
- iv. to extend the post of Project Leader (Transformation) for an additional 12 months noting that funding for that would be included in a later report to Council regarding the use of capital receipts to fund transformation projects.

7. Property Asset Management Appraisal

A report by the depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with a progress update on outstanding key recommendations set out within the Property Asset Management Appraisal.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the updates and progress achieved to date in relation to the remaining recommendations as set out within the Property Asset Management Appraisal (PAMA);
- ii. note the merging of the Depot and Store reviews to ensure maximum benefits can be derived from the reviews; and
- iii. note the new timescales for the remaining outstanding recommendations within the PAMA, with future reporting for recommendations 5 - 7 being provided through updates on the Improvement and Modernisation Programme.

8. Revenue Budget Monitoring to 30 June 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised the Committee of the revenue budget monitoring position to 30 June 2022.

Prior to discussion, the Chief Financial Officer advised of the following corrections to the report:

- Recommendation 2.1 iv should reference paragraph 6.2 and
- Recommendation 2.2 should reference paragraph 8.3.

Councillor Morrison left during the discussion of this item.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i. to note the budget monitoring position of £657,000 under budget for 2022/23 as at 30 June 2022;
- ii. that this budget position consists of an underspend of £263,000 on Children's services, an overspend on Social Care services delivered on behalf of the Moray Integration Joint Board of £279,000 and an underspend on other services of £349,000;
- iii. to note movement of £11,235,000 in the General Revenue Grant, as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report;
- iv. to note the increasing budget pressure noted in paragraph 6.2 of the report; and
- v. to approve the use of ear-marked reserves for Covid of £960,000 as detailed in paragraph 8.3 of the report.

9. Capital Plan 2022-23

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy Environment and Finance) advised the Committee of expenditure to 30 June 2022 under the capital plan for financial year 2022/23 and of estimates of projected expenditure profiled into quarters.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note expenditure to 30 June 2022 of £4,394,000;
- ii. note the current projected expenditure of £55,929,000 for 2022/23 profiled into quarters, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- iii. note the projected overall expenditure for projects spanning more than one financial year, as set out Appendix 2 of the report; and
- iv. approve amendments to the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Capital Plan detailed in section 6.1 of the report.

10. Rental Support Reviews

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to consider policy changes concerning the provision of rental

support to voluntary and community organisations and actions in relation to the review of the rental support provided to Keith Golf Club.

Councillor Morrison rejoined the meeting at this juncture.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- i. that existing beneficiaries under the former Community Rental Grant Scheme who have their requests for a continuation of rental support refused following a review may re-apply at subsequent rent reviews;
- ii. that voluntary and community organisations who have an existing lease from the Council but who do not currently enjoy any form of rental support may, at the Council's discretion, apply for rental support whenever their rent falls to be reviewed; and
- iii. to authorise the Property Asset Manager to proceed with the next stage of the review process for Keith Golf Club as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

11. Moray Council Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 - Draft for Consultation

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider and comment on the draft Moray Council Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027, Appendix 1 of the report.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027; and
- ii. consult with the public and relevant national and local bodies on the draft Gaelic Language Plan, before agreeing a final version of the plan at Corporate Committee on 8 November 2022 prior to formal submission to Bord na Gaidhlig.

12. Corporate Risk Register

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided the Committee with a copy of the Council's recently updated Corporate Risk Register.

Following consideration, the Committee approved the updated Corporate Risk Register dated August 2022.

13. Question Time ***

Under reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 14 June 2022, Councillor McBain sought clarification on the question raised by Councillor McLennan with regard to Elected Members having sight of the action log from the Committee meetings so that they could monitor the progress on any actions and the response given by the Chief Executive.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that an action log is prepared and shared with the Chair for each committee.

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 14 June 2022, Councillor Keith provided an update on the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund applications. He advised that the Head of Economic Growth and Development confirmed that the next stage of the process will be in September and that the 3 applications were currently being assessed.

Councillor Robertson sought clarification on school meal debt in the light of the cost of living crisis and due to the sense of urgency asked if a report could be put to full Council on 28 September 2022 detailing what Moray's school meal debt is with a view to potentially writing this off.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that he would take direction from the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance in terms of governance and the Chief Financial Officer in terms of what would be involved.

The Chief Financial Officer advised that the current figures on school meal debt are a week old but are showing approximately £25,000. This could be updated and a report produced for full Council setting out the practicalities involved in writing the debt off. One issue in agreeing to this would be that it could be seen as a signal to people to effectively stop paying for their school meals.

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that full Council would be the correct place to hear the report.

Councillor Divers raised the issue of Member's waiting until the Committee to ask questions, as he was of the opinion that a number of questions could not be answered as the information was not to hand. He stated that Member's get papers 7 days before the Committees and have ample opportunity to ask questions of officers before the Committee. The question could then be asked again in the Committee and an answer given so that the public are able to access the information.

Councillor Cowe paid tribute to Member's today for the collaborative working, highlighting that it was looking good for the future.

The Committee joined the Chair in expressing their condolences to the family of the late Bob Hellyer, former Community Councillor and retired Nimrod captain who sadly died on 29 August 2022.

14. Community Asset Transfer Request - Forres Common Good [Para 4 and 9]

A confidential report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to consider an asset transfer request made in respect of a potentially inalienable Common Good site at Bogton Road, Forres.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. refuse the asset transfer request for the reasons set out in paragraph 8.2 of the report; and
- ii. consider a future application to amend the existing lease terms as set out in paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 of the report.