MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee

Tuesday, 15 March 2022

Various Locations via Video-Conference

PRESENT

Councillor George Alexander, Councillor James Allan, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Claire Feaver, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Amy Taylor, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Walter Wilson

SUBSTITUTES

.

APOLOGIES

Councillor Frank Brown

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Chief Financial Officer, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Community Learning and Engagement Team Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1 Chair

Councillor A McLean, being Chair of the Corporate Committee, chaired the meeting.

2 Acknowledgements

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Corporate Committee for this Council and thanked the Committee, Officers and Committee Services for their support during this term.

3 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.

4 Minute of meeting dated 1 February 2022

The Minute of the meeting of the Corporate Committee dated 1 February 2022 was submitted and approved.

5 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

6 Notice of Motion - Councillors Leadbitter and A McLean

Dolphin Grinds in the Faroes

The Committee noted that the Notice of Motion brought by Councillors Leadbitter and A McLean had been withdrawn following conversations with the Monitoring Officer.

7 Notice of Motion - Councillors Leadbitter and Morrison

Definition of Islamophobia

Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor Morrison, proposed a Motion in the following terms:

Council notes the request made to the Council Leader by Muslim Engagement & Development (MEND), backed by 32 community, charitable and religious organisations, that Moray Council adopt the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia, which has also been accepted by all political parties in the Scottish Parliament.

Council considers that adopting the APPG definition of islamophobia will assist Moray Council in meeting all three elements of its public sector equality duties on the grounds of race and religion. It demonstrates a proactive consideration by the council of the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 on the grounds of race and religion in relation to the Muslim Population
- Promote equality of opportunity on those grounds
- Fosters good relations between the Muslim population and other groups in our Community

Council therefore agrees to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia, which states:

"Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."

During discussion, it was noted that some members had experienced Anglophobia whilst living in Scotland which was considered to be unacceptable and it was queried whether the Council's intolerance to Anglophobia could be included in the motion.

In response, Councillor Leadbitter agreed with the points made in relation to Anglophobia and stated that any form of discrimination, whether it be race, religion or any other group is not acceptable however, as the motion was specifically in relation to Islamophobia, he did not feel that including reference to Anglophobia was best placed for this particular motion. He further stated that he was not averse to including a definition of Anglophobia within Council policy however this would need to be carefully considered using the correct definition of Anglophobia, which he did not know at the time.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to adopt the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) definition of Islamophobia which states "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness".

8 Financial Services Service Plan 2022-23

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 19 January 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to consider the Financial Services Service Plan 2022-23.

The report stated that the Service Plan had been prepared identifying the improvements targeted up until April 2023 and took into account risk, performance data, the Loip, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit and inspection outcomes as well as taking into consideration the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery required to respond to same. The Service Plan further identified the resources allocated to Financial Services and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements and improvements.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the Service Plan for Financial Services as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

9 Human Resources, ICT and Communications and Governance, Strategy and Performance Service Plans 2022-23

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 19 January 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to consider the Human Resources, ICT and Communications and Strategy Governance and Performance services' Service Plans for 2022-23.

During her introduction, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) apologised as the report and agenda displayed the wrong title which should read "Human Resources, ICT and Communications and Strategy Governance and Performance services' Service Plans 2022-23". This was noted.

The report stated that the Service Plan had been prepared identifying the improvements targeted up until April 2023 and took into account risk, performance

data, the Loip, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit and inspection outcomes as well as taking into consideration the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery required to respond to same. The Service Plan further identified the resources allocated to each service and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements and improvements.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the Service Plans for services within Human Resources, ICT and Communications and Governance, Strategy and Performance as set out in Appendices 1, 1a and 2 of the report.

10 Allotment Policy

Under reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 25 May 2010, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the requirement to update the Council's Allotment Policy and sought approval of the revised policy.

The Council Leader welcomed the policy and noted that there is an active growing community of people in Elgin involved in community gardens and private allotments which links to the Council's priorities in relation to climate change, biodiversity and is also known to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

1. approve the revised Allotment Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and

2. delegate the duty to maintain waiting lists, make allotment site regulations and progress the provision of allotments in line with the legislation to the Head of Education Resources and Communities.

11 Employment Policy Framework Review 2021-22

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to consider the update on the employment policy framework for 2021-22 following a review to ensure that the policies are up to date and relevant based on the priorities within the Corporate Workforce Plan and strategic direction of the Council.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the update on the employment policy framework for 2021-22 as follows:

1. Secondment Policy – amalgamate the guidance and policy into one document for ease of reference;

2. Lone Working Policy – Updated and refreshed to provide clarity of application and associated guidance; and

3. Flexible and Early Retirement –The flexible and early retirement policies have been combined into one policy each for teaching and non-teaching staff and the format updated.

12 Health and Safety Annual Report 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the annual Health and Safety report and approve the progress noted, proposed future actions and carry forward of outstanding actions for the next year.

The report showed that the Council continues to provide a healthy and safe environment for its employees and service users however it was recognised that the decrease in incidents may be attributed to the impact of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was further noted that there had been significant progress in a number of areas which is hoped to continue, with particular focus on the Council's safety culture by supporting managers and employees to take responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

1. note the content of the annual health and safety report, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and the progress towards the outcomes established in the last report; and

2. approve the carry forward of outstanding actions and proposed future actions for 2022.

13 Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the results from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021 and asked the Committee to approve the actions arising from the report.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021 revealed a mixture of positive results and identified key areas for improvement which would inform further work with Services to identify solutions.

The Committee joined the Chair in expressing their appreciation of Moray Council employees who have provided services through challenging circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic and acknowledged the importance of the wellbeing of the Council's employees, and thereafter agreed to:

1. note the results of the 2021 mental health and wellbeing opinion survey; and

2. approve the actions arising from the results.

14 Public Performance Report 2020-21

Under reference to paragraph 24 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 15 September 2021, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the Public Performance Report 2020-21 in its reporting of actions and performances of council services against Corporate Plan priorities.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the Public Performance Report 2020-21 in its reporting of council performance and progress against Corporate Plan priorities.

15 Improvement and Modernisation Programme

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 15 September 2021, 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) which aims to improve the future efficiency and sustainability of the Council.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note progress on the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP) and agreed to add a new ninth workstream to capture strategic policy projects which at present include Climate Change, Poverty and Participatory Budgeting.

16 Question Time

Councillor Leadbitter expressed his disappointment in having to withdraw his Notice of Motion on Dolphin Grinds in the Faroes is it was considered to be a subject that was of no relevance to the business of the Council and asked the Monitoring Officer if there is another means by which topics such as this could be debated by the Council in the future.

In response, the Chair acknowledged the frustrations of Councillor Leadbitter in not being able to provide a representation on behalf of the Council to the Faroese Authorities in this regard however suggested that if Councillor Leadbitter were to write to express his views as a Councillor then other Councillors may join him.

The Monitoring Officer further advised that his advice to the Chair when considering the competency of the motion was that this matter was out of the statutory remit of the Council and suggested that Committee Services look at ways in which other Local Authorities deal with similar situations.

Councillor Leadbitter again expressed his disappointment that he could not make a response, particularly as this had been submitted as a petition with at least 50 signatures from people in Moray and asked that this be considered when the petition process is reviewed in the future.

In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that the petitions procedure was being reviewed in the next few months and that this would be included in the report for consideration by the Council.

Councillor Eagle sought an update in relation to when Minor Injury Units would re-open.

In response, the Chief Executive agreed to raise this query with the Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray) and provide the Committee with a response following the meeting.

Councillor Alexander referred to a post on social media which had claimed that charging for brown bins is a false economy and asked if this was the case.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised that she was not aware of the post however would ask that the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services look into this further and circulate a brief for Members in this regard.