

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee

Tuesday, 16 February 2021

remote locations via video-conference,

PRESENT

Councillor David Bremner, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor Gordon Cowie, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Louise Nicol, Councillor Walter Wilson

APOLOGIES

Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Ryan Edwards

IN ATTENDANCE

1 Chair

Councillor Leadbitter, being Chair of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee, chaired the Committee.

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 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 Items 18-21 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

| Paragraph Number of Minute | Paragraph Number of Schedule 7a and Reason |
|----------------------------|--|
| 19 | 9 |
| 20 | 8 and 9 |
| 21 | 9 |

4 Minute of Meeting dated 1 December 2020

The minute of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 1 December 2020 was submitted and approved.

5 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

6 Commendation

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the Roads Service, local Farmers, Contractors, Emergency Services and BEAR Scotland for their efforts in keeping the roads clear and safe during the recent inclement weather and asked that the Roads Maintenance Manager pass on the appreciation of the Committee to the Roads Service.

In response, the Roads Maintenance Manager thanked the Committee for its support and agreed to pass on the appreciation of the Committee to the Roads Service.

7 Capital Plan 2020-21

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 1 December 2020, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised the Committee of the expenditure to 31 December 2020 under the capital plan for financial year 2020/21 and of estimates of projected expenditure profiled into quarters.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

note expenditure to 31 December 2020 of £23,666,000;

note the current projected expenditure of £41,118,000 for 2020/21 profiled into quarters in light of the caveat in paragraph 5.1 of the report;

note the projected overall expenditure for projects spanning more than one financial year, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;

note the projected overall expenditure for services which would normally report to Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report; and

approve amendments to the 2020/21 and 2021/22 capital plan as summarised in section 5.21 of the report.

8 Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised the Committee of the revenue monitoring position to 30 December 2020 and of the current estimated out-turn for 2020/21.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note:

the budget monitoring position of £573,000 over budget for 2020/21 as at 30 December 2020;

that this position consists of an underspend on Devolved School budgets of £1,236,000, an overspend on Social Care services delivered on behalf of the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) of £882,000 an overspend of £5,344,000 on Covid related expenditure and an underspend on other services of £4,417,000;

movement of £1,630,000 in the General Revenue Grant, as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report;

the current estimated out-turn for 2020/21 of an underspend of £2,505,000 and shortfall in Council Tax income of £2,400,000, a net £105,000 underspend, the retention under the Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme (BRIS) £1,859,000 and additional funding for loss of income £1,191,000 resulting in a decrease in projected net expenditure of £3,155,000 which has the effect of a projected return of £2,640,000 to the Council's ear marked reserves for transformation and reduction of planned use of free general reserves of £515,000; and the position regarding Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) as described in paragraph 8.3 of the report, with no cost implications for the Council.

9 Housing and Property Services Budget Monitoring - 31 December 2020

Under reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 12 February 2020, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presented the budget position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period up to 31 December 2020.

Councillor Nicol noted that this was the first report for the Committee to consider from the Housing and Property Service since 20 January 2021 when the Council had agreed that Tenant Representatives be invited to join meetings of this Committee via video-conference, however stated that although the Tenant Representatives had been invited to attend the meeting, they had declined as they were not confident joining the meeting via video-conference. The Tenant Representatives continue to receive committee reports relevant to the Housing and Property Service ahead of each meeting and provide any comment or queries to the Tenant Participation section of the Housing Service. This was noted.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the budget monitoring report for the period to 31 December 2020.

10 Housing Investment 2020-21

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the budget position to 31 December 2020 for the Housing Investment Programme for 2020/21.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the position as at 31 December 2020 with regards to the Housing Investment Programme for 2020/21.

11 Performance Report (Housing and Property Services) for Year to December 2020

Under reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of the meeting of the Communities Committee dated 27 August 2019, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of performance of the service for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

note performance of the Service Plan, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of December 2020;
note performance on key Charter indicators against benchmarking comparators;
and
extend the current Tenant Participation Strategy for one year to 2022/23 for the reasons set out in para 6.1 and 6.2 of this report

12 Roads Asset Management Planning

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the latest network condition information.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- i. to note the latest road condition indicator (RCI) results for Moray Council;
- ii. that the RCI results continue to be to be closely monitored to determine if this year's results are a one-off reversal in trend and future financial modelling is undertaken based on our RCI results that are reported November 2022; and
- iii. to note that any adjustment to investment will be part of the council's budget setting process.

13 Marine Safety Performance Review Q3 2020-21 Update

Councillor Bremner left the meeting during consideration of this item.

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 2020/21.

During discussion surrounding an incident at Buckie Harbour where a Skipper had ignored the advice of the Harbour Office and proceeded to enter the Harbour, it was noted that incidents of this nature tended to happen at Buckie Harbour and it

was queried whether further action could be taken to ensure that Skippers listen to and comply with information provided by the Harbour Office.

In response, the Transportation Manager agreed that consideration will be given to more effective means of communication with Skippers, particularly in Buckie.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note:

the contents of the report; and

that consideration will be given to more effective means of communication with skippers, particularly in Buckie.

14 Performance Report (Financial Services) - April to December 2020

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee on 1 December 2020, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2020.

Following consideration, the Committee welcomed the good performance within the report and thereafter agreed to note:

- i. performance of the Service Plan, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of March 2020;
- ii. the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

15 Performance Report (Environmental and Commercial Services) - 1 April to 31 December 2020

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 1 December 2020, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2020.

Following consideration, the Committee welcomed the good performance within the report and thereafter agreed to note:

- i. performance of the Service Plan, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of December 2020; and
- ii. the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

16 Performance Report (Economic Growth and Development Services) - Year to September 2020

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 1 December 2020, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

informed the Committee of the performance of the service relating to Economic Development for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The Committee welcomed the good performance within the report and joined the Chair in thanking Business Gateway and Development Services who have been processing the large volume of business grant applications as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and thereafter agreed to note:

performance of the Service Plan related to Economic Development, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of December 2020; and

the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

17 Community Asset Transfer - Dufftown Woodlands

Under reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 21 March 2017, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to grant delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to obtain specialist external valuation advice following a formal expression of interest from a local community body in a free transfer of ownership of five areas of woodland in the Dufftown area.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer to obtain specialist external valuation advice in respect of five areas of woodland, including fishing rights, in Dufftown that are held on the Common Good account.

18 Question Time

Under reference to paragraph 22 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 1 December 2020, Councillor Cowe sought an update in relation to the funding generated from the sale of 3 Logie Cottages, Forres and its use to further the attainment of pupils at Forres Academy.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) agreed to provide Councillor Cowe with an update in this regard following the meeting.

19 Building Services Trading Operation Budget 2020-21 - Budget Monitoring [Para 9]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presented the Committee with the budget monitoring information for the period to 31 December 2020 for the Building Services Trading Operation.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note:

the financial information for the period to 31 December 2020, as detailed in section 5 and Appendix I of the report;

Building Services operating performance as set out in section 6 of the report; and the revised year-end forecast to 31 March 2021 as detailed in section 7 and Appendix I of the report.

20 Marine Assets [Para 8 and 9]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of commercial options in relation to the council's dredger MV Selkie.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

note the opportunity set out in para 4.3 of the report; and approve the proposal set out in section 5 with a backstop position as set out in para 5.15 of the report.

21 Buckie Harbour Development - Update [Para 9]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with an update in relation to the proposed development of Buckie Harbour.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to give delegated authority to the Head of Governance Strategy and Performance who, in consultation with other relevant Council officers, will finalise an agreement as set out in section 5 of the report.

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Acting Head of Housing and Property Services, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Roads Maintenance Manager, Transportation Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Meeting.