

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Special Meeting of the Moray Council

Tuesday, 01 December 2020

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 Claire Feaver, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Louise Nicol, Councillor Laura Powell, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Walter Wilson

APOLOGIES

Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Ryan Edwards, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Amy Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, communities and Organisational Development), Head of Financial Services, Legal Services Manager and the Democratic Services Manager as clerk to the meeting

Also in Attendance:

Brian Howarth and Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland.

1 Chair of Meeting

Councillor Leadbitter 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 Order of Business

In terms of Standing Order 68 the meeting agreed to discuss Agenda Item 6 'Health and Social Care Budget Pressure' in confidence in order to allow Members to discuss the report in more detail.

The Meeting therefore 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 Agenda Item 6 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.

4 2019-20 Annual Audit Report to Council

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Council with a copy of the External Auditor's Annual Audit Report to Council on the 2019/20 Audit.

On the invitation of the Chair, Brian Howarth, External Audit provided the meeting with a summary of the main findings arising from the 2019/20 audit of Moray Council. He stated that it was a clean audit certificate and as part of that had drawn attention to the greater uncertainty seen this year with property devaluations, COVID-19 and some elements of the pension fund investments. He also referred to the impact the current global pandemic has had on the audit process and recorded thanks to the support provided by officers given during this time of remote working and lockdown. He further stated that overall 2019/20 financially had been a good year for the Council with savings targets being exceeded and the general fund increased and referred to Exhibit 6 in the report which shows a general pattern of decline in the general fund has been reduced in the past few years which has allowed the council to set aside reserves to help with transformation. He further highlighted the key messages as outlined in page 30 of the annual report. Thereafter he responded to Members questions.

Following discussion, the Council agreed to note the External Auditor's report.

5 Moray Council's Audited Annual Accounts for the Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) submitting to the Council the Audited Annual Accounts for Moray Council for the year ended 31 March 2020 and asking the Council to approve the sign off of the Annual Accounts.

Following discussion the Council agreed to approve the sign off of the Annual Accounts, having regard to the Annual Report from the external auditor considered earlier at the meeting.

6 Moray Council's Connected Charities' Audited Accounts for the Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) submitted to the Council for approval the audited Annual Accounts for Moray Council's Connected Charities for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Following consideration the Council agreed to approve the audited Annual Accounts for the Connected Charities for the financial year 2019/20.

7 Health and Social Care Budget Pressure

A report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Council to consider a request to increase the Health and Social Care budget to meet an emerging budget pressure.

Following lengthy discussion Councillor Macrae, seconded by Councillor Alexander moved approval of the recommendations as detailed in the report. There being no one otherwise minded the Council agreed:

- i) a budget increase of £356,000 (full year effect) pro-rated for the remainder of 2020/21, and
- ii) that any reduction in budget requirement arising from review of support needs is returned to the Council as a saving.