

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 29 October 2019

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

PRESENT

Councillor Frank Brown, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor Lorna Creswell, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Louise Laing, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor George Alexander, Councillor Ryan Edwards

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Chief Financial Officer, Acting Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Transformation Officer, Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, Estates Manager, Mr R Cooper, Facilities Officer, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1 Chair

Councillor A McLean, being Chair of the Policy and Resources 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 Resolution

The meeting resolved that, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items of business appearing at the relevant paragraphs of this minute as specified below, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph of Minute	Number	Paragraph Number of Schedule 7A and reason
17	1	Information relating to staffing matters
18	6 & 9	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s) and information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority.

4 Minute of Meeting dated 3 September 2019

The minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 3 September 2019 was submitted and approved.

5 Minute of Special Meeting dated 2 October 2019

The minute of the special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 2 October 2019 was submitted and approved.

6 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

7 Charging for Services

Councillor Cowe joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 28 October 2017, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to agree the default increase for fees and charges for Council services for 2020/21.

During discussion, Councillor Eagle stated that he was disappointed that the Council had to consider raising its charges by 5% although accepted the reasoning behind the proposal. He did however raised concern that a 5% increase across all services could result in a loss of income as this may deter the uptake in certain services and therefore moved that an additional recommendation be added to ensure that individual services review charges with a view to maximising income against demand. This was seconded by Councillor Brown.

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

- i. that the default increase for charges for Council services for 2020/21 is 5% as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report;
- ii. that Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) be requested to recommend charges for services delivered under the aegis of MIJB as set out in paragraph 3.12 of the report;
- iii. to re-affirm the current policy of permitting circus lets only if the circus concerned is a member of the Association of Circus Proprietors; and

- iv. that individual services review charges with a view to maximising income against demand.

8 Banking Set Off Agreement

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) sought approval from the Committee to enter into a set off agreement with the bank.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. enter the set off agreement with the Bank; and
- ii. authorise the Chief Financial Officer to sign the set off agreement.

9 Business Loan Scotland

Under reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 28 June 2018, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of proposed changes to Business Loan Scotland of which Moray Council is a Full Member and sought approval of the recommendations within the report.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. approve the amendments to the Articles of Association and if approved agree to grant delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Economic Growth and Development to sign the Special Resolution as set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report;
- ii. approve a request that the Council's investment allocation to be returned as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report;
- iii. withdraw representation on the Business Loan Scotland board as detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report; and
- iv. note that members will be advised should repayment not proceed as anticipated.

10 Change of May Day 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to approve changing the May Day public holiday in 2020 following a recent announcement by the UK Government to shift the Early May Bank Holiday next year from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May to coincide with celebrations for the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve moving the May Day public holiday in 2020 from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May to coincide with VE Day commemoration.

11 Business Gateway Service Level Agreement Review

Under reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 23 January 2018, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the review of the Business Gateway Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Highland Council and sought approval for the recommendations detailed within the report.

During discussion surrounding the services provided by Highland Council to facilitate the Business Gateway Service SLA, Councillor Brown noted that the report stated that there was little evidence provided of direct work activity associated with the SLA. He emphasised the current financial state of the Council and that £48000 would be a welcome saving given that there appeared to be no requirement to carry out substantial work in terms of SLA and therefore moved that the Committee terminate the SLA and that the saving of £48000 be returned to the Council.

In response, the Head of Economic Growth and Development advised that the Council had asked Highland Council for evidence of the work associated with the SLA however this evidence had not been forthcoming therefore the report stated that there was little evidence provided of direct work activity associated with the SLA. He further advised that the report before the Committee was asking for agreement to give the required 3 months notice to terminate the SLA and that a further report would be provided where the Committee could debate the merits of future funding associated with the SLA.

After considering the advice from the Head of Economic Growth and Development, Councillor Brown agreed to withdraw his motion.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the outcomes of the annual review of the Business Gateway SLA with Highland Council;
- ii. approve the required 3 months' notice for terminating the SLA by the end of this financial year; and
- iii. note a further report to Committee will be provided concerning future Local Growth Accelerator Programme arrangements and staffing requirements as detailed in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

12 2019 Workforce Strategy and Plan

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided the Committee with an update on the progress made against the actions set out in the 2018 Workforce Plan and proposed an updated Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy and Plan for 2019-2022.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the progress made against the actions in the 2018 Workforce Plan; and
- ii. approve the Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy as set out in Appendix A and Plan for 2019 as set out in Appendix B.

13 Property Asset Management Appraisal

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 12 December 2018, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with a progress update on the key recommendations set out within the Property Asset Management Appraisal.

The Committee joined the chair in commending the Transformation Officer for his considerable efforts to improve how the Council manages its property assets, and thereafter agreed to note:

- i. the progress achieved to date as set out in Section 4 of the report;
- ii. the intention to present the Property Asset Management Structures to Council in November 2019 providing the job evaluations for all new posts have been agreed;
- iii. that a progress report on the Leisure Estate will be presented to Council in November 2019;
- iv. the revised timescales identified for the completion of key actions and agrees to continue the secondment of the Head of Housing and Property up to 31 December 2019;
- v. that a further update on the various actions within the PAMA that are nearing completion will be presented to this Committee in February 2020; and
- vi. that revenue savings of £16k and capital receipts of £914k have been achieved to date.

14 Tourism Business Improvement District - Ballot

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee dated 16 April 2019, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee on the ballot for the Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) and sought the Committee's approval to support the proposals.

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the work of Moray Speyside Tourism for their efforts which had resulted in a significant increase in tourism in Moray and thereafter agreed:

- i. to approve the Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) proposal and business plan for 2020 – 2025 as set out in Appendices I and II of the report; and
- ii. at the ballot stage to vote in favour of the minimum annual levy cost of £365.

15 Community Access to Sanitary Provision

Under reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Committee dated 29 May 2019, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the project to provide free sanitary protection to eligible members of the public throughout Moray.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report in relation to Community Access to Sanitary Provision.

16 Question Time

Councillor Morrison noted that the UK Government had been unable to set a budget which will have an impact on the Scottish Government's budget setting process and queried how this will affect the Council.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that Scottish Local Authority Chief Executives had attended a recent COSLA meeting where they had been advised that there was uncertainty over budget dates following the announcement from the UK Parliament that there would be no UK budget set on 6 November 2019 which in turn affected the Scottish Government's planned budget date of 12 December 2019. He further advised that a series of meetings are due to take place with COSLA and Scottish Government Ministers over coming days which will provide further information in terms of the implications for the Council in setting its budget which requires to be set by February 2020.

17 Museums Service [Para 1]

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the Meeting of Moray Council dated 26 September 2018, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to note the work of the Museums Service and sought approval for all Museum staff to be notified of the risk of redundancy.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the achievements of the Museums Service contained in the Annual reports 2017/18 and 2018/19 as set out in Appendices I and II of the report;
- ii. note the work done to date to develop a sustainable base from which to transfer the museum service to a trust, noting that there is no current prospect of a viable model being identified and implemented by April 2020 or shortly thereafter;
- iii. note the wider developments being investigated for a Future Falconer should a viable model be identified and in light of the council's decision in February 2019 to either transfer the museum service to a trust or close it and that all Museums staff are notified of the risk of redundancy and placed in the Councils Transform programme.

18 Proposed Sale of Property in Elgin [Para 6&9]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to approve the provisionally agreed main terms for the sale of Council land in Elgin.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. approve the main provisional terms of sale as set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report; and
- ii. refer the matter to the Legal Services Manager to conclude the transaction.