

MORAY COUNCIL

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

Tuesday, 13 April 2021

Remote Locations via Video-Conference

PRESENT

Councillor David Bremner, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor Gordon Cowie, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Louise Nicol, Councillor Amy Taylor

APOLOGIES

Councillor Walter Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

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, Consultancy Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Meeting.

1 Chair

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

4 Minute of Meeting of 16 February 2021

The Minute of the meeting of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 16 February 2021 was submitted and approved subject to a correction to Councillor Nicol's name being changed from Councillor Laing, to Nicol in paragraph 9 of the Minute.

5 Corporate Asset Management Plan

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 9 April 2019, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with a report of progress made against the Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2019/20 and to consider targets for 2021/22.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) note the work done to date to meet the targets set in the Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2019/20 during 2019/20 and 2020/21;
- (ii) note the status of Asset Management Plans for each type of asset as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (iii) note that the focus of asset management planning in the council has been on ICT due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; and
- (iv) approve the targets set in the Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2020/22 as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.

6 Flood Risk Management and Bridges Revenue and Capital

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the Flood Risk Management Schedule of Clearance and Repair for 2021/2022 and of the Bridge Maintenance Schedule of Works and the programme of Capital works for Bridges.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- (i) the Flood Risk Management Schedule of Clearance and Repair for 2021/22;
and
- (ii) the proposed Schedules of Road Bridge Revenue and Capital Maintenance Works and Non-network Bridge Capital Maintenance Works to be undertaken for 2021/22.

7 Roads Maintenance Capital and Revenue Budgets Report 2021 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to approve detailed plans for the expenditure of funds allocated from the Revenue Budget 2021/22 to Roads Maintenance and from the Capital Budget 2021/22 including resurfacing/reconstruction, surface dressing, footways, drainage, lighting column replacement and lighting improvements.

During discussion, concern was raised in relation to the number of complaints received by Councillors in relation to the condition of non-adopted roads and it was queried whether a report could be brought to a future meeting of this Committee with regard to the condition of un-adopted roads with a view to bringing them up to a better standard.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that the Council does not have responsibility for un-adopted roads and if frontagers wished the council to have responsibility for a particular un-adopted road then it would have to be brought up to standard before the Council could adopt the road.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) approve the detailed allocation of funds, from the Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22, to Roads Maintenance activities, as outlined in Section 5 of the report;
- (ii) grant delegated authority to the Roads Maintenance Manager to proceed with necessary roads maintenance works whilst noting that the Roads Maintenance Manager will, as soon as possible, publish a main list of schemes, which can be funded from the budget provision recommended in this report, and a reserve list of desirable schemes, which cannot presently be funded, along with a list of projects to be funded from the Capital allocation;
- (iii) note that the list of schemes will be drawn up in accordance with the principles and objectives detailed in this report, in the Roads Asset Management Plan and in the Capital Plan;
- (iv) note that approval of the budget allocation for the A95 Landslip River Isla will be sought in a report to Moray Council on 30 June 2021.

8 Transportation Capital and Revenue Budget Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of plans to deliver the capital and revenue programme in Transportation for 2021/22.

During discussion, Councillor Gatt sought clarification as to what was the total capital budget and the total revenue budget, as this was not clear in the report.

In response, the Transportation Manager advised that the total revenue budget was £5.2 million however she did not have the total capital budget to hand and advised that this would require to be calculated as the transportation budget falls across several services.

Having considered the report in detail, the Chair moved that the Committee agree the recommendations as printed within the report. This was seconded by Councillor Bremner.

Councillor Gatt raised concern that the Committee were being asked to approve delivery of the capital and revenue programme for 2021/22 without the total capital budget being detailed in the report and moved as an amendment that the Transportation Manager withdraw her report and re-present it at a future meeting of this Committee detailing a breakdown in capital and revenue budgets. This was seconded by Councillor R McLean.

On considering Councillor Gatt's amendment, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that a decision to withdraw a report could only be made by the Convenor in agreement with the relevant Senior Officer.

The Chair then sought the agreement of the Committee to take a short adjournment so that he could consult with the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance in terms of the competency of Councillor Gatt's amendment. This was agreed.

Following a short adjournment, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that it would be competent for Councillor Gatt to move to defer consideration of the report and ask that a further report be brought to a future meeting of this Committee including the specific information requested however highlighted that this deferral would result in projects detailed within the report not progressing during this time.

After considering the advice from the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Councillor Gatt moved as an amendment that the report be deferred and brought back to a future meeting of this Committee clearly detailing the capital and revenue programme, similar to the layout used for the Roads Maintenance Capital and Revenue Budget report. Councillor R McLean agreed to second Councillor Gatt's amendment.

On a division there voted:

For the Motion (8):	Councillors Leadbitter, Bremner, Coull, Cowe, Cowie, Divers, Nicol and Taylor
For the Amendment (4):	Councillors Gatt, R McLean, Eagle and Macrae
Abstentions (1):	Councillor M McLean

Accordingly, the motion became the finding of the Committee and it was agreed to:

- (i) approve the plans to deliver the capital and revenue programme for 2021/22 as contained in the report; and
- (ii) delegate authority to the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services to apply for grant funding as set out in paragraphs 7.11 – 7.13 of the report.

9 Archaeology - Aberdeenshire Shared Service Agreement

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with proposals for a Shared Service Agreement for provision of an Archaeology Service for the Council, with a specific focus on assisting the planning service and other sections where required.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) enter into a Shared Service Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council for the provision of an Archaeological Service in accordance with the terms set out in the draft agreement; and
- (ii) the cost of the Shared Service Agreement being fixed at £15,000 for 3 years, with the amount then being reviewed for the 2024/25 financial year.

10 Community Asset Transfer - Old Ogilvie School - Keith

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to consider an application under the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) scheme for the renewal of rental support.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) approve the application from the 2nd Keith Scout Group for the renewal of its 100% rental concession; and
- (ii) initiate a series of 5-yearly rent and rental concession reviews for this case in accordance with the arrangements in place for the review of similar rental support under the former Community Rental Grant scheme.

11 Local Employability Partnership

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Committee with an update on the range of activities and provision being delivered by the local employability partnership.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the plans and progress on work associated with a range of local employability partnership interventions.

12 Question Time

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee dated 16 February 2021, Councillor Cowe sought clarification in relation to the council tax position at the end of the financial year.

In response, the Chief Financial Officer advised that an estimated outturn for the year would not be available until the end of May however an interim report had revealed a shortfall in council tax of £2.4 million.

The Committee joined the Chair in commended the work of the Finance and Revenue Section during the extremely challenging past year.

Councillor Eagle queried whether there is sufficient capacity within the Council to access external funding opportunities as they arise.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised that success in being awarded grant funding was not only down to completing application forms on time and that, in many cases, projects need to be ready to commence by having the ground work scoped out in preparation and that having a dedicated Grants team would not necessarily help in those instances as service expertise and capacity was required.

Councillor Eagle sought an update in relation to the tourism infrastructure that was agreed as part of the budget.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund was not going to be accessible this year and that a report will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee to explore alternative funding mechanisms. He further advised that the revenue and capital budget agreed at the recent budget meeting was available and that a tender process was being undertaken on waste disposal points for a number of sites and a recruitment exercise for additional staff was underway.

Councillor Nicol sought an update in relation to using recycled plastic to resurface roads.

In response, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services advised that, to date, no information was available demonstrating satisfactory trials in relation to using recycled plastic to resurface roads and that the Council needed to ensure long term durability before this could be considered. He further advised that the situation was being monitored and that a report would be brought to the appropriate service committee when this information is available.

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

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presented the budget monitoring information for the period to 28 February 2021 for the Building Services Trading Operation.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the:

- (i) financial information for the period to 28 February 2021, as detailed in section 5 and Appendix I of the report;
- (ii) Building Services operating performance as set out in section 6 of the report; and
- (iii) revised year end forecast to 31 March 2021 as detailed in section 7 and Appendix I of the report.