

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Moray Council

Wednesday, 10 March 2021

various locations via video conference,

PRESENT

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 Tim Eagle, Councillor Ryan Edwards, Councillor Claire Feaver, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Louise Nicol, Councillor Laura Powell, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor Amy Taylor, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Walter Wilson

APOLOGIES

Councillor George Alexander

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of Financial Services, Energy Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Shona Morrison.

2. Change to the Agenda

The Chair confirmed that Item 15 on the agenda had been withdrawn.

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. Resolution

Councillor Gatt sought clarification on why it was necessary for Item 14 of the agenda to be discussed in confidence.

In response the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that it was customary when discussing staffing issues for reports to be discussed in confidence so not to unnecessarily worry staff when consultation with staff and unions may still need to take place.

Councillor Gatt, having considered the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance's advice and having read the report, moved that Item 14 on the agenda should be moved and consideration take place in the open section of the agenda, this was seconded by Councillor Brown.

Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor A McLean proposed consideration of the report in confidence.

On the division there voted:

For the Motion (12)	Councillors, Gatt, Brown, Allan, Eagle, Edwards, Fever, Macrae, M McLean, R McLean, Powell, Ross and Wilson
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For the Amendment (13)	Councillors Leadbitter, A McLean, Bremner, Coull, Cowe, Cowie, Coy, Creswell, Divers, Morrison, Nicol, Taylor and Warren
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Abstentions (0)

Accordingly the amendment became the finding of the meeting, Item 14 was to be considered in confidence and the resolution was agreed.

5. Minutes of meeting of 18 February 2021

The minute of the Special Meeting of Moray Council on 18 February 2021 was submitted and approved.

6. Written Questions **

The Council noted that no written questions had been submitted.

7. Use of Capital Receipts Fund Transformation

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) requested Council's approval to use capital receipts to fund a specified range of transformation or service redesign projects, in terms permitted by Scottish Government Finance Circular No 4/2019.

Following consideration the Council agreed to:

- i) approve the use of capital receipts to fund expenditure estimated at £220,000 in 2020/21 on the Improvement and Modernisation Programme and Digital Services, as set out in section 4 of this report;
- ii) note that annual recurring savings of at least £2,121,000 are projected to be achieved from this and the last two years' investment of capital receipts; and

- iii) note that further reports on the use of capital receipts in 2021/22 will be brought for approval as the details of the Improvement and Modernisation Programme and other proposals for transformation are developed.

8. Former Greenbrae Landfill

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Council of costs for removal of gas extraction equipment from Greenbrae Landfill.

Following consideration the Council approved a budget of £90k to remove the gas extraction system at the former Greenbrae Landfill, Cummingston.

9. Covid Related Pressures and Service Prioritisation

A report by the Chief Executive provided the Council with an assessment of the impacts of the latest lockdown as a consequence of the national pandemic, including additional Covid-related provisions that are being delivered by Council services, and the affect this is having on staff capacity and service delivery.

Following consideration the Council agreed to:

- i) note the additional Covid related services being delivered, pressures that this puts on service delivery as a consequence; ad the effect on the services in a specific number of areas;
- ii) acknowledge the expectation of a scaled down delivery of the non-statutory services outlined in Section 4 of this report; and
- iii) to review the situation in June 2021.

10. Wellbeing Support for Children, Young People and Families - Project Resources

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) and the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray asked the Council to approve the recommendation from the Education Communities and Organisational Development (ECOD) Committee in relation to project management staffing requirements for the revised Children's Services locality planning pilot.

Following consideration the Council approved the recommendation from the ECOD Committee to establish a temporary Project Manager post to facilitate the implementation of the revised locality planning pilot. The pilot will operate for an 18 month period.

11. Best Value Assurance Report Action Plan Progress Report

A report by the Chief Executive informed the Council of progress on the Best Value Assurance Report Strategic Action Plan.

Following consideration the Council noted progress made on the Best Value Assurance Report Strategic Action Plan.

12. Procurement Annual Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) provided the Council with an update report on Procurement activity in Moray in particular report on the procurement performance in 2019/20.

Following consideration the Council noted the overall procurement performance for 2019/20 set out in the Annual Report in Appendix 1 and in Section 4.

13. Climate Change Strategy Report 2020-2030

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) sought agreement of the Council to adopt the Climate Change Strategy for 2020-2030.

Councillor Eagle welcomed the Strategy but expressed concern and sought clarification on the funding for achieving the Strategy including whether the Council Leader would write to both Westminster and Scottish Governments regarding funding streams to assist the Council in meeting its target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

In response, the Head of Economic Growth and Development confirmed that climate change is being embedded in all policies across government and although there are specific funds that can be applied to for external funding it is also embedded in some of the major infrastructure funds i.e school estate and any new school buildings the requirement wrapped around that funding will be that their performance and sustainability in carbon terms is excellent.

The Council Leader further added that following agreement of what is proposed in the report he would be happy to write to both Governments and highlight the strategy and that the Council would be keen to access any funding streams available.

He further added that he would write to the Scottish Government regarding Teach for the Future.

Councillor Wilson sought clarification on page 98 of the papers as he indicated there may be a word missing. In response, the Energy Officer confirmed that the word heritage was indeed missing and that he would arrange for the correction to be made to the strategy.

Councillor Feaver requested that the working 'as experienced recently with numerous gorse fires and a very large heather fire near Knockando' on page 97 be removed as she felt it was misleading, as it had subsequently been found that the fires were started deliberately. Councillor Nicol confirmed she was happy to remove the wording.

Following further lengthy debate and consideration the Council agreed to:

- i) approve and adopt the Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 in Appendix 1; subject to delegation to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to amend and publish the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as outlined in Section 5 and in consultation with the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group;
- ii) approve current draft action plan in Appendix 2 noting the further developments proposed in this report and noting the need for further development work for key actions in relation to hydrogen, buildings and transport;
- iii) approve the budget and staffing resources proposals in summary:
 - Revenue Budget of £20,000
 - Staffing budget of £164,746 (subject to job evaluation);
- iv) note a request for a consultancy budget as set out in paragraph 7.8 is to be submitted through the Transformation funding review process;
- v) that the Head of Economic Growth and Development reports progress to the appropriate Council committee on a 6 monthly basis;
- vi) to embed Climate Change and Biodiversity considerations within Council/Committee reports through the inclusion of a dedicated paragraph in the Summary of Implications with effect from August 2021, once staffing is in post;
- vii) that the actions for 2021/22 are added to service performance reports and included in individual service plans at the next review point;
- viii) note the proposed next steps contained within Section 8;
- ix) the Council Leader will write to the Westminster and Scottish Governments highlighting the Council's strategy and seeking funding opportunities and grants; and
- x) the Council Leader will write to the Scottish Government regarding Teach for the Future.

14. Question Time ***

Under reference to paragraph 4 of the minute of the meeting of 18 February 2021, Councillor Brown sought clarification from Councillor Leadbitter regarding his sympathy expressed for the charges levied to those residents in Moray with wash/dry toilets and his subsequent vote to continue with the maintenance charge.

In response, Councillor Leadbitter said that he continued to have sympathy for those who faced paying the charge but further added that the charge needed to be

considered more holistically and strategically in a wider context as part of the review of the contributions policy.

With reference to an article in the Forres Gazette on 8 March 2021 regarding a pupil in 6th Year who is studying advanced highers and the article stated that he is only receiving 3 hours per week of online support to undertake his advanced highers. Councillor Brown sought assurances from the Chief Executive, that he would look into the case, and if the claims were correct that he would take steps to provide a better level of service than the Council appear to be providing.

In response the Chief Executive clarified that he was not in a position to respond as he had not seen the article but confirmed that he would investigate the claims and take any necessary action if required and respond to Councillors accordingly.

15. Re-alignment of Management Responsibility [Para 1]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) sought approval to transfer management responsibility for Taxation Services from the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance to the Chief Financial Officer.

Following consideration the Council agreed to approve:

- i) the transfer of management responsibility for Taxation Services from the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance to the Chief Financial Officer;
- ii) changes to the management structure as outlined in Appendix 1; and
- iii) the re-focus of the Customer Services Manager post as a Customer Development Manager with direct report, along with the Benefits and Money Advice Manager, to the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance.