

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 18 March 2008 at 4.00 pm.

Present: Councillors BOB MYLES, IAN MACKINTOSH, IAIN GAUL, ALEX KING, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, JIM MILLAR, PETER MURPHY, ROB MURRAY, HELEN OSWALD, MARK SALMOND and SHEENA WELSH.

Councillor MYLES, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Frank Ellis, Ruth Leslie Melville MBE, David May and John Whyte, with Councillors Ralph Palmer, David Fairweather, John Rymer and Colin Brown substituting respectively.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Committee agree to note that no declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 5 February 2008](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Central Consultative Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Central Consultative Committee of 27 February 2008, a copy](#) of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

(c) Monitoring Group

The [minute of meeting of the Monitoring Group of 26 February 2008](#) was submitted and noted.

(d) Special Sub-Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Special Sub-Committee \(Review of Scottish Parliament Constituencies\) of 4 March 2008](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX II**).

4. CORPORATE PLAN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2008/2009

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 30 October 2007, there was submitted [Report No 325/08](#) by the Chief Executive seeking approval of the Corporate Plan Management Action Plan for 2008/2009.

The Report indicated that the Corporate Plan comprised corporate objectives and priorities which remained constant for the tenure of the plan, supplemented by a Management Action Plan listing actions and developments designed to support achievement of the objectives and priorities. The Management Action Plan was updated on an annual basis and incorporated actions from individual departmental service plans.

The Committee agreed to approve the contents of the Corporate Plan Management Action Plan for 2008/2009.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING - CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 December 2007, there was submitted [Report No 326/08](#) by the Chief Executive providing members with an update on progress being made by his department in implementing the actions within the department's 2007/22008 Service Plan and seeking approval of revisions to deadlines for service plan actions.

The Committee agreed to note the progress being made in delivering the actions from the Chief Executive's Department 2007/2008 Service Plan during the period 18 October 2007 to 25 January 2008 and in particular:

- noted the action marked "as completed" during the reporting period in the full report at Appendix 1; and
- approved the Chief Executive's recommendation for revisions to deadlines for those actions listed in the summary report at Appendix 2.

6. EMERGENCY PLANNING - PROGRESS REPORT APRIL 2007 - FEBRUARY 2008

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 20 March 2007, there was submitted [Report No 327/08](#) by the Chief Executive informing members of the work undertaken by the Emergency Planning Unit for the period April 2007 to February 2008.

The Report indicated that the role of the Unit was to ensure that the Council met its statutory responsibilities and could respond effectively to a major incident which might occur and gave details of activities undertaken by the Unit from April 2007 to February 2008.

The Committee agreed to note and endorse the contents of the Report.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IN ANGUS - QUARTERLY REPORT

With reference to Article 9(a) of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 December 2007, there was submitted [Report No 328/08](#) by the Chief Executive providing members with an update of Community Planning activities in Angus for the period November 2007 to January 2008.

The Report detailed the activities which the Angus Community Planning Partnership had been engaged in along with the activities of the thematic partnership groups and an update of local community planning activities, incorporating a report by the Head of Finance on the Community Planning budgets managed by Angus Council.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

8. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND FIRST PERIODIC REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 14 February 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 329/08](#) by the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services bringing forward details of the proposed representation by Angus Council to the Boundary Commission for Scotland on its draft proposals for revised constituencies for the Scottish Parliament for the area comprising of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council and Moray Council.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) that the Council object to the Commission's provisional proposals;
- (ii) that, in place of the Commission's proposals, the Council propose that Wards 1 (Kirriemuir and Dean), 4 (Monifieth and Sidlaw), 5 (Carnoustie and District), 6 (Arbroath West and Letham) and 7 (Arbroath East and Lunan) form one Scottish Parliament Constituency; that Wards 2 (Brechin and Edzell), 3 (Forfar and District) and 8 (Montrose and District) be combined with Aberdeenshire Council Wards 18 (part) (Stonehaven and Lower Deeside) and 19 (Mearns) to form a second constituency;

- (iii) that the names of the proposed constituencies be North Angus and Mearns and South Angus;
- (iv) to authorise the Chief Executive to respond to the Commission on behalf of the Council; and
- (v) to authorise the Chief Executive to submit a parallel representation to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland to adjust the southern boundary of the Monifieth and Sidlaw Ward abutting the Dundee City Council area at Fithiebank, to the effect that all the properties in the Fithiebank development fall within the Angus Local Government area.

9. SCOTLAND OFFICE CONSULTATION - SORTING THE BALLOT IMPROVING THE ELECTIONS TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

There was submitted [Report No 277/08](#) by the Chief Executive/Returning Officer bringing forward details of the recent Scotland Office Consultation Paper "Sorting the Ballot" and giving details of the joint response by the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) and the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators (SOLAR).

The Report indicated that following wide ranging concerns about the conduct of the 3 May 2007 elections, an independent review had been commissioned by the Electoral Commission which had been led by a Canadian elections expert, Ron Gould. This had involved meeting with a wide range of stakeholders associated with elections, consultation with members of the public and an analysis of rejected ballot papers. The Gould Report, which had been published on 23 October 2007, made a serious contribution to identifying the causes and proposed options and solutions to some of the problems encountered on 3 May. The Government had already accepted five recommendations contained in the Gould Report and were now wishing to seek views on these and a number of other recommendations contained in the Report prior to implementing further change to the election process.

The joint response by AEA, SOLACE and SOLAR, as appended to the Report, had been produced by experienced election practitioners and was fully supported by the Chief Executive in his role as Returning Officer. It was proposed that this be adopted by Angus Council and that the Head of Law and Administration respond to the Scotland Office in these terms, subject to any further comments by members following consideration of the Report.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note that the consultation related only to the conduct of elections to the Scottish Parliament;
- (ii) to note the questions raised in the Consultation Paper;
- (iii) to note and endorse the Joint AEA, SOLACE and SOLAR response to the consultation document which was fully supported by the Returning Officer;
- (iv) to make an additional representation that the Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections be de-coupled and that the Council support any move to introduce a five year term of office for local authority elected members for the next two Local Government Elections with a view to the Local Government Elections eventually being on a permanent basis two years after the Scottish Parliament Elections; and
- (v) to authorise the Head of Law and Administration to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

10. ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 5 February 2008, there was submitted and noted [Report No 330/08](#) by the Chief Executive summarising changes to the Education, Neighbourhood Services and Social Work and Health establishments during the period 7 January to 15 February 2008.

11. QUARTERLY JOINT STAFFING WATCH

With reference to Article 18 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 June 2007, there was submitted and noted [Report No 331/08](#) by the Chief Executive advising members of the Council's quarterly Joint Staffing Watch return to the Scottish Government for the period to December 2007.

12. SICKNESS ABSENCE OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2007

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 5 February 2008, there was submitted and noted [Report No 332/08](#) by the Chief Executive advising of the level of sickness absence within Angus Council for the period 1 October to 31 December 2007.

13. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH: REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS

There was submitted [Report No 333/08](#) by the Chief Executive proposing the adoption of an occupational health policy and the invitation of tenders for the provision of occupational health services.

The Report indicated that the Council, in common with all employers, had a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure as far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 set out what arrangements employers should have in place to discharge this duty, and within this general duty, the Council had specific obligations in respect of occupational health. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) took the view that all local authorities required a proactive and centrally co-ordinated occupational health policy and strategy and the Report detailed a number of actions to comply with the law and the HSE's strong advice.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the adoption of the occupational health policy as detailed at Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (iii) to approve the proposal to seek tenders for occupational health services; and
- (iv) to approve the continuation of the Council's physiotherapy and Employee Assistance Programme contracts pending the outcome of the tendering exercise.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR A SCOTTISH CLIMATE CHANGE BILL

There was submitted [Report No 334/08](#) by the Director of Infrastructure Services outlining a suggested response by Angus Council to the Scottish Government's consultation on a proposed Climate Change Bill for Scotland.

The Report indicated that the proposed Bill could have a profound effect on Scottish local authorities, depending on how the Scottish Government intended to implement their climate change targets. The response, as appended to the Report, put forward a pragmatic approach to the proposed Bill highlighting that any actions imposed on local authorities required to be backed up with the appropriate resources.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the draft response as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report and authorise the Director of Infrastructure Services to submit the response to the Scottish Government.

15. TRAVEL PLAN

With reference to Article 18 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 20 March 2007, there was submitted [Report No 335/08](#) by the Director of Infrastructure Services bringing forward a travel plan for Angus Council which was aimed at reducing the impact of commuter and business journeys undertaken by staff and visitors to the Council.

The Report indicated that Angus Council had been working toward a travel plan for some time, following commitments made in the Local Transport and Local Agenda 21 strategies published in 2001. A recent driver for a more formalised travel plan had come from the Scottish National Transport Strategy published in 2006. Also, the signing of the Scottish Climate Change Declaration in 2007 by the Council and had committed the Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accordingly, a travel plan had now been developed to formalise the Council's position and was attached at Appendix 1 of the Report. In addition, indicators had been developed to track progress of the plan and these would be monitored by the Environmental and Sustainable Development Corporate Working Group on a regular basis and measures reviewed or amended as appropriate, to keep progress on track.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the travel plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (iii) to note that the travel plan was deemed to be exempt from Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and that the SEA gateway had been notified accordingly.

*16. UTILISATION OF REGIONAL TRANSPORT FUNDS 2008/2009

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 8 March 2007, there was submitted [Report No 336/08](#) by the Director of Infrastructure Services outlining the arrangements for capital funding for Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (TACTRAN) Projects and making proposals for utilising this funding in 2008/2009 based on the regional transport priorities.

The Report indicated that, following the Scottish Government's 2007 spending review, monies to implement transport projects and deliver the benefits of the strategy had been rolled up and included in the Council's Capital Grant allocation for the next three financial years. These monies were not ringfenced and it was for Angus Council to decide how it would use these resources. For 2008/2009 these monies amounted to £776,000 for Angus. The Director of TACTRAN had written to the Council requesting that the monies allocated to Angus Council be transferred to the Partnership to develop its delivery plan based on regional priorities.

Whilst the Council recognised the benefits of the Partnership, the proposal in the Report was not to pool the funding with Dundee and Perth and Kinross Councils as the programme of works for 2008/2009 detailed in Appendix 2 to the Report, was mainly a continuation of programmes previously funded by TACTRAN.

COUNCILLOR MYLES, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MACKINTOSH MOVED THAT THE COMMITTEE AGREE:-

- (I) TO NOTE THE CHANGE IN FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2007/2008 AND 2008/2009;
- (II) TO APPROVE THE USE OF THESE FUNDS FOR ANGUS COUNCIL TRANSPORT PROJECTS WHICH FULFILLED THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND ASSISTED IN THE DELIVERY OF SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS IN ANGUS;
- (III) TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED SCHEMES TO BENEFIT FROM THESE ARRANGEMENTS AS OUTLINED IN APPENDIX 2 TO THE REPORT; AND
- (IV) THAT THE FUNDING REQUIREMENTS OF THE TACTRAN DELIVERY PLAN BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE FUTURE YEARS BUDGET SETTING PROCESSES.

Councillor Gaul, seconded by Councillor King, moved as an amendment, that the monies allocated to Angus Council be transferred to the Regional Transport Partnership to develop its delivery plan based on regional priorities.

On a vote being taken, members voted:

For the motion:

Councillors Myles, Mackintosh, Fairweather, Rymer, Millar, Murphy, Salmond and Brown (8).

For the amendment:

Councillors Palmer, Gaul, King, Glennis Middleton and Welsh (5).

No vote:

Councillors Murray and Oswald (2).

The motion was declared carried.

Thereafter, Councillor Oswald, seconded by Councillor Glennis Middleton, moved as a further amendment, that the Committee defer any decision on Report No 336/08 until such time as the Director of Infrastructure Services could clarify the outcome of any discussions he had had with officers from the other constituent Councils in TACTRAN on Angus Council's proposals not to pool the resources.

On a vote being taken, members voted:

For the motion:

Councillors Myles, Mackintosh, Fairweather, Rymer, Millar, Murphy, Salmond and Brown (8).

For the amendment:

Councillors Palmer, Gaul, King, Glennis Middleton, Welsh, Murray and Oswald (7).

The motion was declared carried and became the finding of the meeting.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 39(3)(i), Councillors Gaul and King indicated that they wished the matter referred to the Council for a decision.

17. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FUND

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 June 2007, there was submitted [Report No 343/08](#) by the Chief Executive advising members of decisions taken with regard to proposals submitted for utilisation of the Community Priorities Fund and seeking agreement to carry forward any unexpended Community Priorities Fund balances to next financial year. The Report also sought agreement to provide separate funding for successful additional grant aid applications received through the Community Priorities Fund submission process.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the decisions taken with regard to disbursement of the Community Priorities Fund as set out in the Appendices to the Report;
- (ii) to refer grant aid applications to the Corporate Grant Aid Group for consideration for funding in financial year 2008/2009;
- (iii) to approve any monies unexpended in 2007/2008 in respect of the Community Priorities Fund being carried forward to 2008/2009;

- (iv) to authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Head of Finance to utilise underspends identified in the current year's Miscellaneous Other Services revenue budget for carry forward to 2008/2009 to be utilised to meet successful corporate grant aid applications; and
- (v) to review the provisions of the Community Priorities Fund in 2008/2009 in light of experience gained this year and the introduction of a new civic pride and environment schemes.