

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 20 January 2015 at 2.20pm.

Present: Councillors DONALD MORRISON, JEANETTE GAUL, BRIAN BOYD, BILL DUFF, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, IAIN GAUL, JIM HOUSTON, IAN MCLAREN, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, HELEN OSWALD, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, COLIN BROWN and EWAN SMITH.

Councillor MORRISON, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors David May and Mark Salmond; Councillor Colin Brown substituted for Councillor Salmond.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Donald Morrison declared a non-financial interest in item 12 (Report No 22/15), as he was a Director of Voluntary Action Angus. He indicated that he would not participate in discussion or voting, and that he would leave the meeting during that item.

Councillor David Fairweather declared a non-financial interest in item 4 (Report No 19/15), as he had been involved in meetings with Council Officers and PAMIS.

3. REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 12, to hear a deputation in relation to Report No 19/15 (Article 4).

The Committee then heard from Ms Lois Laird, who welcomed the terms of Report 19/15, and its recommendations. She urged the Committee to support the continuation of the expansion of Changing Places toilets across Angus.

Ms Laird was thanked for her contribution, and withdrew to the public seating.

In accordance with Standing Order 36(2), the Committee agreed that the order of business be varied from that published, and be considered in the following order.

4. CHANGING PLACES (PAMIS) FACILITIES

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 11 September 2014, there was submitted Report No 19/15 by the Strategic Director – Communities, reporting on the existing provision of Changing Places toilets – adults' changing facilities for use by persons with profound and multiple disabilities.

The Convener thanked Ms Laird for her attendance at the meeting and for her work and that of others in highlighting the need for such facilities. He also welcomed the work of Council Officers in bringing forward the report so promptly following the Council's adoption of Councillor Fairweather's motion on 11 September.

In response to questions raised by Councillor Smith, the Head of Technical and Property Services confirmed that the proposed facility at Arbroath Visitor Centre would match the opening times of the restaurant. As a matter of course, it was intended that efforts would be made to have later opening hours for such facilities rather than rely on availability of keys to gain access.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the current proposed Changing Places (PAMIS) toilets provision;
- (ii) to note the requirement to apply a further £12,000 of Communities current year revenue underspend to fund the proposed facility at Arbroath Visitor Centre, and that £6,000 of this amount would require to be considered for carry forward by the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee; and
- (iii) to undertake future consideration of Changing Places toilets and to build a network of facilities as opportunities arose.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Communities Committee

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 18 November 2014 was submitted, approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(ii) Arbroath Harbour Joint Consultative Committee

The minute of meeting of the Arbroath Harbour Joint Consultative Committee of 5 December 2014, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

6. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 19 NOVEMBER 2014 TO 20 JANUARY 2015

There was submitted and noted Report No 15/15 by the Strategic Director – Communities, together with its five schedules, providing information to members with regard to services delivered in the Communities Directorate for the relevant period.

7. HOUSING CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT – 2014/2015

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of previous meeting there was submitted Report No 16/15 by the Head of Planning and Place, setting out the actual capital spend to 30 November 2014, together with projected outturns for the year to 31 March 2015, and any required updated capital funding proposals.

The Report advised that the actual spend achieved to 30 November 2014 was £4,999,000, equating to 42.2% of the monitoring budget of £11,849,000. It was projected at the current time that by the end of financial year 2014/2015, net expenditure would total £11,478,000.

Having reviewed and scrutinised the contents of the Report, the Committee agreed to note the projected year end positions on capital expenditure as indicated in Appendix 1 of the Report, and the indicative funding proposals for the programme.

8. PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF FORMER CARETAKER'S HOUSE AT BORROWFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWHAME ROAD, MONTROSE

There was submitted Report No 17/15 by the Head of Technical and Property Services, advising that the former caretaker's house at Borrowfield Primary School, Newhame Road, Montrose, was vacant and surplus to the requirements of the Council; and proposing to appropriate the property to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the provision of affordable housing.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note that the former caretaker's house at Borrowfield Primary School, Newhame Road, Montrose, was surplus to the requirements of the People Directorate;
- (ii) to note that the Housing Division of the Communities Directorate had expressed an interest in the building for residential use for the provision of affordable housing; and

- (iii) to approve the appropriation of the caretaker's house at Borrowfield Primary School from the People Directorate to the Housing Revenue Account, subject to the approval of the Scottish Ministers, on the basis of Report No 509/13 (POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF SURPLUS GENERAL FUND ASSETS TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING).

9. PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Communities Committee of 21 July 2014, there was submitted Report No 18/15 by the Head of Technical and Property Services, advising of a new lease and a lease renewal, both requiring approval; and the disposal of a property, which transaction required to be homologated.

The Committee approved the property transactions, namely a new lease and a lease renewal, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively; and homologated the decision of the Head of Technical and Property Services, in consultation with the Convener, to accept the offer from a private individual for the former schoolhouse at Newtyle at a price of £215,000.

10. VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNAGE

There was submitted Report No 20/15 by the Head of Technical and Property Services, advising as to the procedures employed when dealing with concerns regarding speeding traffic on the Angus road network, and on the current use of Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) in Angus as one of the measures to assist in the reduction of speeding. A review of VAS provision had been requested at a meeting of the Member Officer Group on 13 November 2014, and had resulted in the various options detailed in the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to confirm the existing procedure for dealing with speeding in conjunction with the Council's community partners, Police Scotland;
- (ii) to increase the frequency of rotation of VAS for semi-permanent sites by reducing the period to two months at each site, which would enable a repeat visit to the site at approximately every eight months at an additional revenue cost of £5,000 per annum; and
- (iii) otherwise to note the content of the Report.

11. ARBROATH HARBOUR – CHARGING REGIME APRIL 2015 ONWARDS

With reference to Article 19 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 29 January 2013, there was submitted Report No 21/15 by the Head of Technical and Property Services, advising as to the level of charges proposed and discussed at the meeting of the Arbroath Harbour Joint Consultative Committee held on 5 December 2014, and making recommendations for the introduction of charges leviable at the Harbour from April 2015.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the proposed charges as considered at the meeting of the Arbroath Harbour Joint Consultative Committee on 5 December 2014; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed Schedule of Charges as set out in the Report, to apply for financial years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

Councillor Morrison, having declared an interest in the following item, left the meeting.

Councillor Jeanette Gaul, Vice Convener, took the Chair.

12. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH VOLUNTARY ACTION ANGUS FOR 2014/2015

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of the Social Work and Health Committee of 20 September 2012, there was submitted Report No 22/15 by the Head of Planning and Place, advising as to the proposed Service Level Agreement with Voluntary Action Angus (VAA).

The Service Level Agreement with VAA facilitated the provision of various service elements across the People and Communities Directorate, including the recruitment and training of volunteers for opportunities within Angus Council; enhancement and support work in the third sector; Kirriemuir and Forfar Friday Night Projects; and volunteering services for children and young people.

The Committee agreed to approve the Service Level Agreement for the amount of £73,577 to VAA for the financial year 2014/2015.

Councillor Morrison re-entered the meeting and resumed the Chair.

13. ARREARS UPDATE – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 30 September 2014, there was submitted Report No 23/15 by the Head of Planning and Place, updating members on current rent arrears levels, and the proposed write-off of debts owed in line with the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Council.

The Report advised that rent arrears levels had increased since previously reported to the Committee and efforts were ongoing to pursue outstanding monies. Since April 2014, 120 court actions had been taken, and in that time the Council had been awarded a decree by the court in 50 cases. 11 accounts totalling £17,087.90 required to be written off as a result of sequestration. It was likely that this would continue as tenants were unable to deal with debt, and it was anticipated that sequestrations would total in the region of £55,000 at the end of the financial year.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the current performance and progress in pursuing serious arrears of rent; and
- (ii) to note the proposed write-off of debts involving 11 accounts totalling £17,087.90, in line with the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Council.

14. REVIEW OF PARKS MANAGED UNDER A THIRD PARTY LEASE

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 17 January 2013, there was submitted Report No 24/15 by the Strategic Director – Communities, advising as to the results of the review of play areas, parks and open spaces managed under a third party lease. To enable the provision of various parks and open spaces throughout Angus, where often land in Council ownership was limited, ground might be leased from a third party for which an agreed annual rent was paid through existing revenue budgets from the Parks and Burial Grounds section of the Communities Directorate.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to authorise the Strategic Director – Communities to agree extensions to existing leases as required;
- (ii) to authorise the Strategic Director – Communities to enter into negotiations with local community groups to discuss the future management of parks and play areas;
- (iii) to authorise the Strategic Director – Communities to terminate existing leases as identified; and
- (iv) otherwise to note the terms of the Report.

15. REVIEW OF COMMERCIAL WASTE SERVICES AND CHARGES FOR 2015-2016

With reference to Article 21 of the minute of meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 14 November 2013, there was submitted Report No 25/15 by the Strategic Director – Communities, detailing proposals for the adjustment of charges levied by the Council for the collection and disposal of commercial wastes.

The Committee agreed to the application of reviewed charges for 2015/2016, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

16. SECTION 75 AGREEMENT FOR LAND AT NEWTON FARM, CARNOUSTIE

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 23 May 2013, there was submitted Report No 26/15 by the Strategic Director – Communities, relating to the option to purchase land at Newton Farm, Carnoustie and the development of the site to provide an outdoor recreational area which could be used by a variety of local clubs, organisations and the community at large. Initial discussions with local groups had highlighted a need for more outdoor grass pitches.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the plan to undertake levelling ground works, the installation of suitable drainage and the development of two grass pitches; and
- (ii) to note that public consultation had taken place.

17. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved in terms of Standing Order 27(2) that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, so as to avoid the possible disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, paragraphs 6, 8 and 9.

18. BRECHIN FLOOD PREVENTION SCHEME – COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

There was submitted Report No 34/15 advising as to the outcome of negotiations for compensation, including the acquisition of property, to enable the construction of the Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme.

The Committee approved the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.