

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held remotely, on Tuesday, 29 September 2020, at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors MARK SALMOND, TOMMY STEWART, KENNY BRAES, BRIAN BOYD, BRADEN DAVY, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, BRENDA DURNO, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, DAVID LUMGAIR, MARK McDONALD, IAN MCLAREN, RICHARD MOORE, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, and LOIS SPEED.

Councillor Salmond, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor David Cheape, with Councillor Boyd substituting.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Brian Boyd declared a non-financial interest in item 4, in that he was a Director of Kinloch Properties Ltd and a private landlord. He indicated that he would participate in any discussion and voting on this item.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 18 August 2020 was submitted, approved as a correct record, and signed by the Convener.

4. HOUSING SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE – ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 September 2019, there was submitted Report No 238/20 by the Director of Communities, providing an update on the Council's performance in relation to Housing Services; action being taken to improve performance; and providing information designed to assure elected members that the Council was meeting its statutory obligations with regards to Housing Services in order that they might approve the Annual Assurance Statement required by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

In the course of discussion, Councillor Moore expressed certain reservations regarding information as presented in the Report, and what he saw as the lack of clarity with which some of the information was presented. He posed several questions to officers, to which the Director replied. Councillor Durno also raised a question regarding the Timmergreens housing development and the possible use of temporary housing units to accommodate displaced tenants. The Director advised that there was currently a shortage of temporary accommodation but the Council had been, unusually, using bed and breakfast accommodation which had served as an initial response to the Covid-19 situation.

Officers also answered questions from Councillors Devine, McDonald, Braes, Boyd, Fotheringham and Speed.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the Council's performance in relation to its statutory obligations for housing services;
- (ii) to agree that the evidence provided was sufficient to assure Members that the Council was meeting its statutory obligations in relation to housing services; and
- (iii) to approve the draft Annual Assurance Statement attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 16(11)(ii), Councillor Moore requested that his dissent be recorded from the foregoing decision.

5. HOUSING DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

There was submitted Report No 239/20 by the Director of Communities, presenting the Domestic Abuse policy prepared for implementation by the Housing Division. The policy set out how the Housing Division would respond to and support primarily women who suffered from or were threatened with domestic abuse. It was highlighted however that the policy applied equally to any person, regardless of gender, who suffered from or who was threatened with, domestic abuse.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to approve the Housing Division's Domestic Abuse Policy as detailed in Appendix A to the Report; and
- (ii) to note the consultation which had been undertaken with stakeholders and communities in preparing the Domestic Abuse Policy as detailed in Appendix B to the Report.

6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL PLAN 2020-24

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee on 13 August 2019, there was submitted Report No 240/20 by the Director of Communities, presenting the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Plan, incorporating the 2020/2021 capital monitoring budget.

The 2020/21 Capital Monitoring Budget amounted to £13,943,000, with monitoring estimates on that position to be reported to members at future meetings of this Committee; the provisional 2020/21 HRA Financial Plan amounted to £19,861,000, taking account of the estimated resources available.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note that the 2019/20 actual position on the HRA Capital Plan as at 31 March 2020 was submitted to the meeting of Angus Council on 12 August 2020 (Article 8 of that minute refers);
- (ii) to approve the contents of the updated 2020/21 HRA Capital Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the Report ;
- (iii) to note that the 2020/21 HRA Capital Plan represented the HRA's approved budget for capital monitoring purposes; and
- (iv) to note the Provisional Budget for the 2021/22 – 2023/24 HRA Capital Plan.

7. PARKS AND BURIAL GROUNDS PLANT AND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME 2020 / 2021

With reference to Article 10 of the Minute of Meeting of this Committee of 13 August 2019, there was submitted Report No 241/20 by the Director of Communities, seeking approval of the recommendation to purchase plant and equipment required for the 2020/21 Parks and Burial Grounds Capital Replacement Programme.

The Committee heard the Director of Communities give a brief explanation of the renewal policy, including the time between renewal of equipment and how purchasing was done. The Director also alluded to the duty of care owed by the Council to its staff to provide good quality and safe equipment, which, despite regular maintenance, was, over time, subject to increases in vibration, and thereby increased risk to the operator of white finger syndrome, to the extent that there was no alternative to regular replacement of equipment. Procurement was through the Scotland Excel framework, enabling Angus Council to benefit from economies of scale. The Director also answered questions from Councillors Moore and Braes.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to approve the estimated total cost of £161,111 for the purchase of grounds maintenance plant and equipment required for the 2020/2021 capital replacement programme;
- (ii) to authorise officers to procure grounds maintenance plant and equipment on the basis set out in this Report; and
- (iii) to note the financial implications included in Section 5 of the Report.

8. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (SECAP) - UPDATE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council on 5 September 2019, there was submitted Report No 242/20 by the Director of Communities providing an update on the work being carried out on Angus Council's Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) and the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The Committee heard from Councillor McLaren, Convener of the Climate Change Member/Officer Working Group, who advised that, in accordance with the Action Plan, the consultants Urban Foresight were currently carrying out internal stakeholder interviews ahead of a workshop for the Climate Change Member/Officer Group to take place on 20 October 2020. The Committee also heard Councillors Duff and Devine who welcomed the Report. The Director of Communities confirmed that it was still intended to hold a presentation to all elected members, likely in the next Council cycle.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the content of the Report on the ongoing work to produce the SECAP; and
- (ii) to authorise the Director of Communities to carry out all the required steps under the SEA for the SECAP up to the point of its adoption by the Council to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

9. PARKING REVIEW

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 10 September 2020, there was submitted Report No 243/20 by the Director of Infrastructure, requesting the Committee to re-establish the Member/Officer Working Group to review carparking in accordance with the agreed amendment to Report 211/20, in that the remit of the MOWG was extended to review on- and off-street car parking in Angus.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note that the re-established MOWG would comprise Councillors Salmond, Stewart, Speed (representing the Administration) and Councillor Cheape (Independent Member), all of whom previously sat on the MOWG; and Councillors Devine and Duff (representing the SNP Group); and
- (ii) to note the timescale for implementing any future changes to current Orders as set out in Paragraph 4.5 of the Report.

10. UPDATE REPORT FOR THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH BAKER HUGHES

With reference to Article 4(a) Schedule 2 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 May 2019, there was submitted Report No 244/20 by the Director of Communities, updating members in regard to progress on projects set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Angus Council and Baker Hughes (BH) in December 2018.

The Convener and Councillors Duff and Braes welcomed this working agreement.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the progress made in relation to the projects set out in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Angus Council and Baker Hughes in December 2018; and

- (ii) to authorise the Director of Communities to continue to work in partnership with Baker Hughes to deliver the remaining outcomes identified in the Memorandum of Understanding.