

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 31 August 2021 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors DAVID FAIRWEATHER, ANGUS MACMILLAN DOUGLAS OBE, BRIAN BOYD, BRADEN DAVY, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, SHEILA HANDS, ALEX KING, BEN LAWRIE, BOB MYLES, MARK SALMOND, TOMMY STEWART, RON STURROCK, and BETH WHITESIDE.

Councillor FAIRWEATHER, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Derek Wann.

Councillor Brown as substitute for Councillor Wann, joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stewart declared a financial interest in Item 6, Report No 265/21, as he had received a grant as part of the taxi operator funding. He also declared an interest in Item 10, Report No 269/21, as a friend had an interest in a piece of land related to the agenda item. He indicated that he would not participate in any discussion and voting on these items.

Councillors Devine and Duff declared non-financial interests in Item 9, Report 268/21, as Council appointed Board members of ANGUSAlive. They indicated that they would not participate in any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Salmond declared a non-financial interest in Item 10, Report 269/21, in that the applicant for the lease sought advice regarding the process with officer contact information being provided. He indicated that he would participate in any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Sturrock declared a non-financial interest in Item 10, Report 269/21, as his wife visits the coffee shop and knows lessee. He indicated that he would participate in any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor King declared a non-financial interest in Item 11, Report 270/21, as the former treasurer of Abbey Theatre Club, Arbroath. He indicated that he would participate in any discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Myles and Whiteside declared non-financial interests in Item 12, Report 271/21, as Council appointed members of Tayside Contracts. They indicated that they had a specific exclusion and would participate in any discussion and voting on the item.

3. MINUTES

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 June 2021 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

With reference to Article 5(v) of the minute, the Committee noted that Councillor Lawrie had come off the Climate Change MOG, in accordance with the revised allocation for non-aligned members.

4. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

There was submitted Report No 263/21 by the Director of Finance providing an update to members in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates Performance, Irrecoverable Bad Debt and General Performance.

Having heard from members who commended the work of the Service Leader – Revenues, Benefits and Welfare Rights and his team, and in response to members questions, the Director of Finance provided an updated, thereafter the Committee agreed to note the Report.

5. 2021/22 FINAL CAPITAL BUDGET – GENERAL FUND

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of the special meeting of Angus Council of 4 March 2021, there was submitted Report No 264/21 by the Director of Finance presenting to members the updated 2020/2025 General Fund Capital Plan, incorporating the 2021/22 capital monitoring budget.

Following a number of questions and comments from members, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the contents of the Report and that there remained a degree of uncertainty around the financial impact that the current market volatility could have on the capital programme which may continue for some time;
- (ii) to approve the contents of the updated 2020/2025 General Fund Capital Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (iii) to approve the requests for additional funding totalling £152,000 (paragraph 5.2 refers); and
- (iv) to note that the 2021/22 capital budget represented the Council's approved budget for General Fund capital monitoring purposes.

Councillor Stewart having declared an interest at item 2 above, left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

6. COVID-19 FUNDING RECEIVED AND SPEND 2020/21

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of Angus Council of 10 September 2020, there was submitted Report No 265/21 by the Director of Finance updating members on the funding received by Angus Council during financial year 2020/21 from the Scottish Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the value of what was spent, how the funding had been used to support people and businesses in the Angus community and the proposed use of any remaining funding in future years.

The Committee agreed to note the detailed funding received from the Scottish Government in 2020/21, the spend through financial year 2020/21 and the proposed spend of the balance in future years, as contained in Appendices A, B & C of the Report.

Councillor Stewart re-joined the meeting.

7. COVID-19 FUNDING – DISCRETIONARY FUNDING PROJECT APPROVALS

There was submitted Report No 266/21 by the Director of Finance seeking members agreement to use Scottish Government COVID-19 funding provided to the Council to help support local people and communities where the Council had a degree of discretion over the use of the funding.

The Report indicated that at present the Council currently had one funding stream provided to enable COVID related support to local communities on a discretionary basis. Angus had received a Flexible Fund allocation of £653,000 of which £445,554 remained available. The individual projects seeking approval were outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.

Councillor Devine requested further information in relation to the drop in café's project in Arbroath and Forfar, and in response the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth provided an update and also confirmed that she would also seek to issue further background information to members following the meeting.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed use of COVID-19 funding, in the sum of £12,645, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

8. RURAL COMMUNITIES TESTING CHANGE FUND

There was submitted Report No 267/21 by the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth requesting members to note that a bid had been submitted by Angus Council on behalf of an interim Rural Steering Group to access funding from the Scottish Government Rural Communities Testing Change Fund and seeking approval for Angus Council to act as Accountable Body for the period of the fund to 31 March 2022 and to delegate authority to the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth to accept the grant offer.

The Report indicated that with the closure of the LEADER programme, £3m funding was confirmed in the Scottish Government Budget 2021 to test new ways to support and deliver on community-led local development (CLLD) in Scotland. It was proposed that funding would be delivered in two tranches. As part of the first tranche of funding, there were two funding streams being made available to Local Action Groups (LAGs).

Stream 1 – Local Action Group Innovation Fund was opened in July 2021, with final bids required to be submitted by 13 August 2021. Scottish Government has awarded £35,000 to be used in Angus. Stream 2 – Local Action Group Challenge Fund offered additional funding of £400,000 and had also been made available as part of the first tranche of the Rural Communities Testing Change Fund for allocation via a bidding and assessment process.

The funding will be used to contract external support/resources to engage with rural communities and identify potential Test of Change projects to be delivered through Stream 2.

The Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth responded to members questions and comments, thereafter the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note that a bid was submitted by Angus Council on behalf of an interim Rural Steering Group to access funding from the Scottish Government Rural Communities Testing Change (RCTC) Fund;
- (ii) to approve Angus Council to act as an Accountable Body for the period of the fund to 31 March 2022;
- (iii) to delegate authority to the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth to accept the grant offer; and
- (iv) to note that a decision to continue or not beyond 31 March 2022 as Accountable Body for Tranche 2 of the Fund would be the subject of a future Report.

Councillors Devine and Duff having declared an interest at item 2 above, did not participate in any discussion during consideration of the following item.

9. COMMON GOOD FUNDS – PROJECT APPROVALS

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of Angus Council of 24 June 2021, there was submitted Report No 268/21 by the Director of Infrastructure seeking Committee approval for 2021/22 Common Good funded projects.

The Committee agreed to approve the requested funding of £12,549 for the 2021/2022 projects from Montrose Common Good Fund as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

Councillor Stewart having declared an interest at item 2 above, left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

10. MONTROSE COMMON GOOD SURPLUS PROPERTIES

There was submitted Report No 269/21 by the Director of Infrastructure seeking Committee approval to declare a number of properties held on the Montrose Common Good fund surplus and to the disposal of these properties subject to consultation and legal criteria.

The Report indicated that the disposal of Common Good property was governed by both Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and Section 75 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. There is a requirement for consultation with the community, together with potential legal constraints on what could be done with the land. Section 3.4 of the Report outlined the necessary steps to be followed.

The Committee agreed to approve the following properties surplus:-

- (i) the Inch pavilion and bowling green at Croft Road as shown on the plan in Appendix 1 to the Report, and to market for sale;
- (ii) the Land at Broomfield Road as shown on the plan in Appendix 2 to the Report, and to market for lease or sale;
- (iii) the Land at Traill Drive as shown on the plan in Appendix 3 to the Report, and to lease; and
- (iv) to note that further Reports would be brought to Committee as appropriate in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Councillor Stewart re-joined the meeting.

11. PEPPERCORN AND DISCOUNTED RENTAL OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of the Special Arrangements Committee of 26 May 2021, there was submitted Report No 270/21 by the Director of Infrastructure seeking to inform Committee of the current situation in regard to peppercorn and discounted rents of council property.

The Report indicated that the existing policy on the lease of Council Land and Buildings to Community/Voluntary Groups was established by the former Strategic Policy Committee in July 2013, Report 409/13, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report. Appendices 2 and 3 detailed the list of properties leased at peppercorn and discounted rents.

Following discussion and having heard from some members who indicated that it would be more appropriate for the policies to be reviewed, following the Election in May 2022. Having also heard from the Director of Infrastructure, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the current properties leased at reduced rent in accordance with the existing council policy;
- (ii) there were no changes required at this time to the existing policy for peppercorn rents as set out in Report 409/13 amended by Report 138/19; and
- (iii) there were no changes required at this time to the existing policy for discounted rents as set out in Report 409/13.

12. TAYSIDE CONTRACTS CENTRAL PRODUCTION UNIT – INCLUSION OF PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of the Policy and Resources Committee of 8 October 2019, there was submitted Report No 271/21 by the Depute Chief Executive seeking Committee approval for Perth & Kinross Council to become part of the specific partnering arrangement relating to the Tayside Contracts Central Production Unit facility currently held by Angus Council, Dundee City Council and Tayside Contracts. Perth & Kinross Council had made a request to be included to receive their school meal provision from the facility from January 2022.

The Report indicated that Perth and Kinross Council's inclusion in the CPU would mean that fixed costs such as borrowing costs for the creation of the CPU and rental costs would be split 3 ways in future, rather than between Angus and Dundee City only. This would also provide direct savings to Angus Council of around £29,000 in a full year on a recurring basis in addition to the addition to the £107,000 already allowed for in the Council's budgets. Further savings were to be expected from the overall economies of scale from the larger operation into future years.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to the inclusion of Perth & Kinross Council to the Tayside Contracts Central Production Unit partnering arrangement currently held between Angus Council, Dundee City Council and Tayside Contracts; and

- (ii) to note that there are no service implications for Angus Council as a consequence of the inclusion and financially this was to the Council's benefit as detailed in Section 6 of the Report.

13. TAY CITIES REGION DEAL – AUDIT

There was submitted Report No 272/21 by the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform seeking to inform the Committee of the recent Audit carried out that sought to review the governance arrangements in place for the Tay Cities Region Deal, following updates to the Tay Cities Management Group and Joint Committee respectively.

The Report indicated that the Executive Summary as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report had been presented to Dundee City Council's Scrutiny Committee in June 2021. The audit findings and recommendations had been formally reported to the Executive Director of City Development and the Executive Director of Corporate Services by the PMO Manager and the appropriate actions agreed to address the matters raised.

The Committee agreed to note the recommendations of the Audit Report carried out by Dundee City Council as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.

14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 28(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 8 and 12.

15. MONIFIETH LEARNING CAMPUS – PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY APPROVAL REQUEST

With reference to Article 20 of the minute of Angus Council of 24 June 2021, there was submitted Report No 273/21 by the Director of Infrastructure seeking procurement authority for the design and construction of Monifieth Learning Campus.

Following discussion and having heard from a number of members, the Committee agreed to approve the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.