

# ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors MARK SALMOND, TOMMY STEWART, KENNY BRAES, DAVID CHEAPE, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, BRENDA DURNO, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, DAVID LUMGAIR, MARK McDONALD, IAN McLAREN, RICHARD MOORE, LOIS SPEED and COLIN BROWN.

Councillor SALMOND, Convener, in the Chair.

## 1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ronnie Proctor and Braden Davy, with Councillor Colin Brown substituting for Councillor Proctor.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Moore intimated a non-financial declaration of interest relating to Item 7, Report 354/21, in that he had participated in a site visit and given procedural advice to some individuals present, but not in the presence of officers. He intended to withdraw from the meeting during any discussion and voting of this item.

Councillor Speed intimated that she had also been present at the site visit relating to Item 7 Report No 354/21, and approached by individuals asking questions, but that she had given no opinion on the matter. She intended therefore to take part in any discussion and voting on this item.

## 3. MINUTES

### (a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 September 2021 was submitted, approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

### (b) Arbroath Harbour Joint Consultative Committee

The minute of meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee of 1 October 2021 was submitted and noted.

## 4. INFORMATION REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD 26 MAY TO 23 NOVEMBER 2021

### (a) Communities Directorate

There was submitted Report No 350/21 and accompanying Schedule by the Interim Director, Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, providing key background information to members relating to Private Sector Housing Grants 2021/22 for Quarter 2 to 30 September 2021, albeit that a decision was not required in terms of the current Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Order of Reference of Committees.

Following questions from Councillor Devine and comments from Councillors Devine, Speed and Moore, the Committee agreed to note the Report and its appended Schedule.

### (b) Infrastructure Directorate

There was submitted and noted Report No 351/21 and accompanying four Schedules by the Service Leader – Roads and Transportation, providing key background information to members on the Winter Roads Service Review; the Public Transport Services Review; the Impact on Angus of the Dundee Low Emission Zone; and the Introduction of Scotland-Wide Free Bus Travel for Under 22s, albeit that decisions were not required in terms of the current Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Order of Reference of Committees.

Following comments from Councillors Braes and Speed and a question from Councillor Moore, the Committee agreed to note the Report and its appended four Schedules.

## **5. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2022/23 - 2026/27**

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee on 19 January 2021, there was submitted Report No 352/21 by the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, advising members on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for 2022/23 – 2026/27, and making proposals for the use of resources from the Affordable Housing Revenue Account.

In the course of discussion, the Service Leader – Housing in response to a question from Councillor Devine, advised that whilst the Council did not hold permanent accommodation specifically for homeless people, it did however retain temporary accommodation for that purpose, but was reducing the amount of temporary accommodation to just over 100 units while increasing the amount of permanent accommodation held. He undertook to forward details to all members.

In reply to a query from Councillor Cheape, the Service Leader – Housing confirmed that a housing association development would be built at Panbride, and that, as was usual in such cases, the Council as strategic housing authority had been asked by Scottish Government to have supporting contingency plans to enable their funding to be fully utilised.

Responding to a question from Councillor Speed, who expressed her concerns at the availability of housing stock to enable people to move on from temporary housing and overcrowding, the Service Leader – Housing explained that the SHIP was flexible and could be used to help the Council meet the changing demands in the housing market, and in the Council's housing strategy. It was important to try to achieve and maintain possession of a range of housing type and size, including one bedroom houses and a mix of 2 or 3 bedroom houses. Numbers of new units were of course limited by resources available from the Council, from Scottish Government and from Housing Association partners. 775 units are currently planned to be delivered in the SHIP to 2027. In terms of open market acquisitions, the Council was pro-actively buying back flats in shared blocks to enable the Council to own complete blocks. Currently, the Council is also actively buying properties 'off the shelf' on a number of sites across the county.

In response to a question from Councillor Duff, the Service Leader – Housing confirmed that Scottish Government grant is allocated in the SHIP for housing provision by Hillcrest Housing Association on the site of the former Strathmartine Hospital, with work taking place there and at Paton's Lane, Montrose, in 2022/23.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to approve the content of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022/23 – 2026/27 as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report No 352/21; and
- (ii) to approve the ongoing development of the SHIP and its associated programme plans and procedures with the Council's partners during the lifetime of the Plan.

Councillor Sturrock joined the meeting during discussion of the following item.

## **6. HOUSING CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2021 / 22**

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee on 29 September 2020, there was submitted Report No 353/21 by the Interim Director, Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital performance to date in 2021/22, and setting out the actual capital spend to 30 September 2021, together with outturns as projected to 31 March 2022 and any required updated capital funding proposals.

The Service Leader – Housing responded to questions from Councillor Duff on issues with the gas heating systems currently being installed as replacement for electric systems and the ongoing changes in gas prices; and from Councillor Stewart on the lack of engagement from tenants - below 40% - with the mandatory upgrade of smoke detection systems. This latter work was due to be completed by February 2022, and as yet, there had been no word from Scottish Government of any extension to that deadline. The Service Leader - Housing indicated that if

the access problems persisted then the Council would have to use forced entry means to achieve completion of necessary works.

Councillor Fotheringham was pleased to note that the bathroom replacement programme was making progress and that regular meetings were taking place with the contractor to monitor ongoing supply issues. The Service Leader – Housing was clear that the contractors were doing their best in a challenging labour market, and that these conditions were persisting around the country. In response to a question from Councillor Moore, officers advised that all smoke detection units being installed were hard wired as opposed to battery operated.

Members were advised that private householders who inquired about smoke detector installation should be referred to the Council's Trusted Trader Scheme, which would be able to offer a measure of assurance on relevant qualified contractors.

Councillor Devine appreciated that garages were low on the list of priorities for the service at present, but was pleased to note the planned demolition of garage properties which had been identified as being in a dangerous condition.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) having reviewed and scrutinised the contents of Report 353/21, to note the Report, and, in particular, the projected year end positions on capital expenditure, and the indicative funding proposals to the programme; and
- (ii) to note that the projected outturn overspend position described in Paragraph 5.1 of the Report reflected the intention to make the most of having contractors on site delivering stock improvements ahead of programme, in order to bring maximum benefit to tenants, especially in terms of energy saving works as outlined in the narrative at Section 6.1 of the Report.

*Councillor Moore, having declared a non-financial interest in the following item as detailed in Article 2 above, left the meeting at this point.*

## **7. APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO PLACE TABLES AND CHAIRS IN A PUBLIC ROAD AT THE CORN EXCHANGE, MARKET PLACE, ARBROATH**

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 September 2021, there was submitted Report No 354/21 by the Director of Infrastructure, dealing with an application to add to existing authorisations by creating an additional area for the placing of tables and chairs in a designated area where the consumption of alcohol in public places was prohibited.

As agreed at the previous meeting, members of the Committee had carried out an unaccompanied site visit on 22 October 2021 to enable members to consider fully the impact of the tables and chairs proposed in the application for the Corn Exchange. The application was for two additional areas – one was an increase to the depth of a current existing area so that the second row of two seater tables could seat four; and the second was for an additional seating area for no more than six picnic tables. The Convener invited local members for the area to put forward their views.

Councillor Durno questioned whether additional seating was really required. Councillor Speed expressed her concerns regarding access issues. While she was keen generally to support local businesses particularly in hard times as at present, she was concerned about pedestrian access and accessibility, and remained unconvinced by the evidence available that the existing seating was fully utilised under the present arrangements.

Councillor Speed, seconded by Councillor Durno, moved that the Application be refused.

Councillor Stewart advised that he had concerns about this application in that he considered that there was sufficient external provision under present arrangements. Councillor Braes noted that the applicants already had obtained access to two areas of public property and that was under-utilised at present. Councillor Fotheringham agreed and indicated that he would not support the application.

The Committee then, having considered the application for an addition to the existing authorised areas by the creation of a third authorised area in light of previous Report No 315/21 and the site visit by the Committee on 22 October 2021, determined to refuse the application for the placing of tables and chairs in a third additional area.

*Councillor Moore returned to the meeting at this point.*

## **8. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING SPEED LIMITS – A930 BARRY ROAD ENTRANCE TO CARNOUSTIE; B9134 ENTRANCES TO ABERLEMNO; AND THE C46 SEATON ROAD ENTRANCE TO ARBROATH**

There was submitted Report No 355/21 by the Director of Infrastructure advising as to concerns raised over speeding on the A930 Barry Road eastbound approach into Carnoustie, the B9134 east and westbound approaches in Aberlemno and the C46 Seaton Road southbound entrance into Arbroath, requesting reduction in the speed limits and detailing the findings of the engineering investigations carried out.

Councillor Braes welcomed the proposed changes at Aberlemno, while Councillor Cheape was pleased to see the intended speed limit changes in Barry Road, although he thought that the 40mph signage to be placed 130 metres west of the junction, should be placed further out from the junction if it was to achieve an effective reduction from 60mph to 40mph.

Councillor Speed indicated her full support of the proposed speed reduction in Seaton Road, and expressed the hope that some local people might be encouraged to take up active travel arrangements.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the concerns raised by local residents over speeding;
- (ii) to note the findings of the engineering investigations carried out to assess the concerns;
- (iii) to the implementation of the amendments to the existing speed limits on the A930 Barry Road, Carnoustie;
- (iv) to the implementation of the amendments to the existing speed limits on the B9134 at Aberlemno; and
- (v) to the implementation of the amendments to the existing speed limits on the C46 Seaton Road, Arbroath.

## **9. PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE - AUDIT**

There was submitted Report No 356/21 which presented the Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) for Arbroath Harbour along with the result of the 2021 Port Marine Safety Code Audit carried out by the Council's Designated Person who measured performance against the Code. The Code set out a national standard for every aspect of port marine safety, aiming to enhance safety for everyone who used or worked in the UK marine environment.

The Audit had found that there were two non-compliances and 72 satisfactory components, including 2 items of best practice (the Aids to Navigation; and the safe and efficient navigation of the Harbour).

Councillor Moore was impressed with the Report, describing it as "excellent" and well laid out, suggesting that it was an ideal benchmark for all reports. In response to a question from Councillor Moore, the Harbourmaster gave an assurance that Harbour staff had access to all legislative material relevant to the Harbour. Councillor Braes had recently undertaken the dutyholders' training and had found it to be of much interest. He queried the annual cost of £15,000 for the regular bathymetric survey; however the Service Leader – Roads and Transportation advised that while the training had to be done every year, it might be possible to find a provider at a lower cost, in what was a relatively competitive market.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the results of the 2021 Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) Audit including the areas of non-compliance, observations, recommendations and areas of good practice identified; and
- (ii) to approve the actions to address the areas of non-compliance identified within the Report.

**10. PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE REPORT – CASTLE STREET AND WEST HIGH STREET, FORFAR**

There was submitted Report No 357/21, presenting the results of the public consultation process regarding the proposed amendments to the existing on-street parking arrangements on Castle Street and West High Street, Forfar.

In response to a question from Councillor McLaren on the expected timing of the introduction of the proposed changes, the Service Leader – Roads and Transportation advised that he anticipated that once work started, it would be between three to nine months until completion.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the comments received and the range of opinion expressed during the consultation process regarding the proposed amendments to the on-street parking arrangements on Castle Street and West High Street, Forfar;
- (ii) that a new disabled parking bay be installed in West High Street, Forfar, in the vicinity of the library / ACCESS Office;
- (iii) that two new loading bays be installed on Castle Street, Forfar;
- (iv) that additional on-street time-limited waiting bays be provided on Castle Street, Forfar;
- (v) that, subject to the above provisions, to note that the promotion and making of the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders might require further approvals if objections were received; and
- (vi) subject to the above provisions and the promotion of the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders, to approve the making of the Orders if objections were received.

**11. 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 items 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 (Article 12) and paragraphs 2, 3 and 6 (Article 13).

**12. LOCAL BUS SERVICE PROVISION OF CONTRACTS EXTENSION AND RETENDER**

There was submitted Report No 358/21 seeking authority for the Director of Infrastructure to award ten local bus service contracts upon the conclusion, and best value analysis, of a tender process; and also detailing the decision of the Director of Infrastructure to extend 15 local bus service contracts to May 2022 and a further 14 local bus service contracts to May 2023.

The Committee agreed to approve recommendations (i) to (iv) as set out in Report 358/21.

**13. RATIONALISATION OF RENTS FOR HOUSING STOCK**

There was submitted Report No 359/21 by the Interim Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth exploring the issues raised by the transfer of properties from the former Angus Care Charitable Trust and from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account in 2019 and 2021.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendation as set out in Report 359/21.