

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors MARK McDONALD, KENNY BRAES, DAVID CHEAPE, LINDA CLARK, SERENA COWDY, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, IAN McLAREN, GEORGE MEECHAN, LLOYD MELVILLE, LOUISE NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR, JILL SCOTT and IAIN GALL.

Councillor McDONALD, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Tommy Stewart with Councillor Iain Gall substituting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

The Committee agreed to note that there were no declarations of interest or statements of transparency made.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 15 August 2023 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. HOUSING SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE - ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 September 2022, there was submitted Report No 259/23 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, providing an update on the Council's performance in relation to housing services, what action was being taken to improve performance, and provided information to support members to agree the annual assurance statement required by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Report indicated that while the current engagement plan was based on performance reported for the year 2021/22, it should be noted that although performance had improved in a small number of areas in 2022/23 (the period covered by this Annual Assurance Statement), there were others where it had worsened. Performance against the ARC Key Performance Indicators were outlined in Appendix 2 of the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the Council's performance in relation to its statutory obligations for housing services;
- (ii) that the evidence provided was sufficient to assure members that the Council was meeting its statutory obligations in relation to housing services with the exceptions noted;
- (iii) to approve the draft Annual Assurance Statement attached as Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (iv) to note the Scottish Social Housing Charter Return results detailed in Appendix 2 to the Report.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL PLAN 2022-27

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 September 2022, there was submitted Report No 260/23 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and

Sustainable Growth, presenting to the Committee the updated 2022/27 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Plan, incorporating the 2023/24 capital monitoring budget.

The 2023/24 HRA Capital Plan had subsequently been updated to reflect the effect of the 2022/23 actuals, and a final 2023/24 capital monitoring budget of £11.937m detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report had been established following a comprehensive review of the 2022/27 Capital Plan, incorporating an updated position regarding specific projects in 2023/24.

The Report indicated that the construction industry was currently impacted by the prevailing economic conditions nationwide. High rates of inflation and energy costs continued to affect material prices and this, combined with increased salary levels, had a direct consequential impact on the pricing level of tenders. Contractors had experienced difficulties in attracting and retaining staff due to ongoing shortages of suitably skilled workers and variations in wage levels across the industry. This had adversely impacted programmes on some Angus Council projects however, there had been an increased level of tender response noted in recent months which suggested the overall picture, in terms of contractor capacity, may be improving.

The Service Leader, Housing introduced the Report and responded to members questions.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note that the 2022/23 actual position on the HRA Capital Plan as at 31 March 2023 was submitted to the meeting of Angus Council on 22 June 2023, (Article 7 of the minute refers);
- (ii) to approve the contents of the updated 2023/24 HRA Capital Plan attached as Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (iii) to note that the 2023/24 HRA Capital Plan represented the HRA's approved budget for capital monitoring purposes; and
- (iv) to note the Provisional Budget for the 2024/25 – 2026/27 HRA Capital Plan.

6. TRANSFER OF HOMELESSNESS SERVICES DELIVERY

There was submitted Report No 261/23 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth providing an overview of the current position of the transfer of the homelessness and prevention of homelessness service delivery from the Housing Service to the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP). The Report also sought approval for the transfer of £425,000 on an annual basis until 2025/26 when the Service Level Agreement expired from the General Fund (Other Housing) budget to the Adult Services budget which was under the control and direction of the AHSCP, to allow them to provide this service on behalf of the Housing Service and Angus Council.

The Report also set out the governance arrangements in place to ensure that the Council could satisfy the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator in relation to its duties towards homeless households in Angus.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the current position with regards to the transfer of the homelessness service to AHSCP;
- (ii) to note the governance arrangements for the Service Level Agreement between Angus Council Housing Service and the AHSCP as stated in the Service Level Agreement attached as Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (iii) to approve the transfer of £425,000 from the Housing Service (Other Housing) budget to the Adult Services budget (which was under the control and direction of the AHSCP) in 2023/24 on an annual basis until the Service Level Agreement expired in March 2026.

7. 2023/24 PLACE-BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 22 June 2023, there was submitted Report No 262/23 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth seeking approval of the applications recommended for approval, as detailed in Appendix 2, through the 2023/24 Scottish Government Capital Place-Based Investment Programme (PBIP) and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Report indicated that thirteen applications had been received, totalling £1,318,834.80 and an internal panel made up of 3 officers from Planning, Economic Development and Vibrant Communities had assessed and scored the applications based on the set criteria. A verification process by Senior Officers, which included in some cases seeking further information and to add value to the fund, determined if other sources of funding were available. Combined scores and comments from the officer group and verifiers were provided in Appendix 2 of the Report, and summary details of each project were detailed in Appendix 3 of the Report.

The Service Leader, Vibrant Communities introduced the Report and responded to members questions.

Much discussion took place and Councillors Cheape and Scott expressed concern at the overall costs to replace the roof coverings at the Arbroath Community Centre and noted at present no community groups had shown an interest in using the facility. Councillors Cowdy and Fairweather advised that there was a real need for community space within Arbroath and were confident that interest would be expressed from community groups once the repairs had taken place.

The Service Leader, Vibrant Communities responded to the concerns raised and advised that the funding proposed for approval from the UKSP fund required to be spent by March 2024.

The Committee agreed to adjourn for a period to allow Committee members to obtain advice from relevant Officers.

The meeting resumed at 3.20pm.

The Committee agreed: -

- (i) to approve the projects recommended by the Angus Council officer panel for use of the balance of the 2023/24 Scottish Government Place-Based Investment allocation of £400,000 after allowing for the commitment already approved per paragraph 3.5 of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the allocation of £220,000 of the 2024/25 Place-Based Investment Fund to allow the recommended projects to proceed;
- (iii) to approve an allocation of £143,540 of UK Shared Prosperity funding towards the Angus Alive Signal Tower project;
- (iv) to defer consideration of recommendation (iv) of the Report in relation to the Arbroath Community Centre project to a future meeting; and
- (v) to delegate authority to the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth to approve any necessary emergency decisions for funding from the Scottish Government Place-Based Investment Programme for the remainder of the fund following consultation with the Convener of Communities.

8. WINTER ROADS SERVICES POLICY & PLAN FOR 2023-24

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 September 2022, there was submitted Report No 263/23 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment setting out the proposed Winter Roads Services Policy and detailing the proposed service provision for preventative treatment and snow clearing during the winter period 2023/24, together with contingency arrangements to cater for extreme conditions prevailing, in conjunction with the operational issues detailed in the Winter Roads Services Plan for 2023/24

attached to the Report. This was as recommended by “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice”.

The Director of Infrastructure and Environment introduced the Report and responded to members questions.

The Committee agreed: -

- (i) to note the service delivery, weather severity and outturn expenditure on winter road maintenance for 2022/23;
- (ii) to approve the Winter Roads Services Policy for the forthcoming winter 2023/24 as stated in Appendix 3 to the Report;
- (iii) to note the Winter Roads Services Plan for 2023/24 as stated in Appendix 4 to the Report;
- (iv) to note the arrangements proposed to meet the costs of the Winter Roads Services during 2023/24 as set out in the Report;
- (v) to delegate authority to the Manager – Roads Assets to temporarily change the level of service as proposed in the Report in extreme conditions as noted at paragraph 3.4.3 within the Report; and
- (vi) to delegate authority to the Manager – Roads Assets to deviate from the treatment decision matrix and introduce salt conservation techniques as proposed in the report if difficulties were experienced or anticipated in obtaining sufficient salt supplies.

9. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2009 – UPDATE

There was submitted Report No 264/23 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on the requirements of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, focused on the development of Cycle 2 2022-28 Local Flood Risk Management Plans for the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin area and the Tay area.

The Director of Infrastructure and Environment introduced the Report and advised that Angus Council were the lead authority for the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin local plan district however, due to senior staff absence the development of drafts and publication of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the second flood risk management plan cycle from 2022-28 for the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin had been delayed beyond the due date of 31 December 2022. The Report presented the draft Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the second flood risk management plan cycle from 2022-28 for the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Director of Infrastructure and Environment responded to questions from Councillors Melville, Duff and Cheape.

The Committee agreed: -

- (i) to note the delay in proposed publication of the Cycle 2 2022-2028 Local Flood Risk Management Plan for Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin area, as detailed in the Report;
- (ii) to note the publication by Perth & Kinross Council of the Cycle 2 2022-2028 Local Flood Risk Management Plan for Tay area, which included areas of Forfar and Kirriemuir, as detailed in the Report;
- (iii) to note the funding arrangements and distribution from Scottish Government capital funding allocations for flood risk management schemes and works remained subject to ongoing review by a sub-group directed by COSLA Leaders, as detailed in the Report; and
- (iv) to approve the publication of the Cycle 2 2022-2028 Local Flood Risk Management Plan for Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin area.

10. REVIEW OF THE KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

There was submitted Report No 265/23 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment which proposed a revised kerbside recycling service that would align with national policy, deliver savings identified in the Council's Change Plan, increase recycling and would be supported by grant funding from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund. A new procedure for tagging and not emptying purple household bins containing an unacceptable level of recyclables was also proposed. The report highlighted that continuing with the current arrangement for kerbside recycling, risked non-compliance with upcoming legislation and higher costs for processing of materials.

Having heard from the Convener, who advised that he had received assurances that the acceptance date for the funding had been extended, the Committee agreed that the Report be remitted for further consideration to the Special meeting of Angus Council on 19 October 2023.

11. STOPPING UP OF PART OF THE PUBLIC ROAD AT REFORM STREET, MONIFIETH

There was submitted Report No 266/23 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment which related to a proposal to stop up a part of Reform Street, Monifieth following a formal request for the removal of a hard landscaped strip by the title holder.

A copy of the request to stop up the identified part of the unnecessary road was attached as Appendix 1 to the Report and included an undertaking to meet the council's costs in promoting the stopping up order. A plan indicating the extents of the proposed stopping up was attached as Appendix 2 to the Report.

The Committee agreed: -

- (i) to note the request to stop up a part of Reform Street, Monifieth;
- (ii) to the promotion and making, if unopposed, of a Stopping Up Order to extinguish the public right of passage over a part of Reform Street, Monifieth;
- (iii) that the Director of Infrastructure and Environment bring a report back to a future meeting of this Committee if there were any objections to the Stopping Up Order that could not be resolved, and noted that there was the requirement to submit to Scottish Ministers for confirmation; and
- (iv) to the deletion of the stopped-up part of the road from the list of public roads, if the Stopping Up Order was confirmed.