

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of **ANGUS COUNCIL** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 9 May 2024 at 2.00pm.

Present: PROVOST BRIAN BOYD, DEPUTE PROVOST LINDA CLARK, Councillors CHRIS BEATTIE, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, DAVID CHEAPE, SERENA COWDY, JACK CRUICKSHANKS, LYNNE DEVINE, HEATHER DORAN, BILL DUFF, BRENDA DURNO, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, IAIN GALL, ROSS GREIG, MARK MCDONALD, GEORGE MEECHAN, LLOYD MELVILLE, GAVIN NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, JILL SCOTT, MARTIN SHEPHERD, LOIS SPEED, TOMMY STEWART, DEREK WANN and BETH WHITESIDE.

PROVOST BOYD, in the Chair.

Prior to the commencement of the business, the Provost welcomed Councillor Cruickshanks to his first meeting of Angus Council. Councillor Cruickshanks thanked the Provost and addressed the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ian McLaren and Louise Nicol.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

Provost Boyd declared an interest in item 5(i), as he had companies with various properties held by them and also had personal rental properties. He indicated that he would not take part in any discussion and voting and would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

(a) Special Angus Council

The minute of meeting of the Special Angus Council of 29 February 2024 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

(b) Angus Council

The minute of meeting of Angus Council of 21 March 2024 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Council agreed, in terms of Standing Order 27(2), that the public and press be excluded during consideration of Item 9 so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Paragraphs 8 and 9.

The Provost having declared an interest at item 2 above, left the meeting during consideration of Item 5(i) below. The Depute Provost took the Chair.

At this stage in the meeting (2.11pm), the Council resolved to adjourn for 5 minutes due to technical difficulties with the microphones.

The meeting resumed at 2.20pm.

5. MOTIONS IN TERMS OF STANDING ORDER 24(1)

(i) Housing Emergency

Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Doran, moved the following motion: -

We wish for Angus Council to acknowledge Shelter Scotland's call to declare a Housing Emergency and declare one for the Angus area. In doing this we want Council to create a Housing Emergency Action Plan bringing together partners and external organisations. We also wish to request monitoring and regular updates on the progress to the Housing Emergency Action Plan.

We wish to request that the council leader writes to the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister, the Housing Minister, and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, outlining the actions council is taking to address the housing emergency, and seeks additional resources to help meet the severe challenges.

In Angus we have three areas that need focus on:

1. Although the bathrooms meet SHQS, many of our tenants have been awaiting bathroom upgrades since 2019. Contractor issues has delayed this.
2. Reduce housing voids which have shown a slight improvement but needs to reduce further at an increased pace.
3. We are concerned that there may be a shortage of social and private properties in Angus and consider that an interim plan is required to tackle this"

Much discussion took place and questions were asked of the Service Leader, Planning & Sustainable Growth.

COUNCILLOR BRAES, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR COWDY, MOVED AS AN AMENDMENT, THAT THE COUNCIL TAKE NO ACTION IN RELATION TO THE MOTION.

On a vote being taken, members voted:

For the motion:

Councillors Cruickshanks, Doran, Fotheringham, Gall, Greig, Nicol, Proctor, Scott, Speed, Stewart and Wann (11).

For the amendment:

Councillors Beattie, Bell, Braes, Cheape, Depute Provost Clark, Cowdy, Devine, Duff, Durno, McDonald, Meechan, Melville, Shepherd, Whiteside (14).

The amendment was declared carried and the Council resolved accordingly.

The Provost rejoined the meeting at this stage and retook the Chair.

(ii) Disability Employment Charter

Councillor Doran, seconded by Councillor Scott, submitted the following motion: -

To ask Council to commit to publishing disability pay gap data biannually and aspire to achieve the aims set out in the Disability Employment Charter.

Angus Council as an employer already has commitments for promoting opportunities for all, has published disability pay gap data voluntarily and is a disability confident, carer positive and armed forces friendly employer.

Recent research from UNISON has found that disabled people are much less likely to be employed than the wider population. Across the whole economy, in 2022/23 the disability employment gap was 31.6% in Scotland.

By taking this action it will reinforce the values that Angus Council already holds and signals to others how important it is to address this issue.

The Disability Employment Charter was established in 2021 by the organisations; Disability Rights UK, Disability@Work, the University of Warwick, the DFN Charitable Foundation, Leonard Cheshire, Scope, Shaw Trust Foundation and UNISON.

The Council resolved to approve the motion.

6. RESULTS OF THE ARBROATH WEST, LETHAM & FRIOCKHEIM BY-ELECTION

There was submitted Report No 149/24 by the Chief Executive and Returning Officer advising members of the outcome of the Arbroath West, Letham & Friockheim by-election which had been held on Thursday 25 April 2024.

The Chief Executive introduced the Report and responded to Councillor Melville's question in relation to postal votes.

The Council resolved to note that Jack Alistair James Cruickshanks had been duly elected as a Councillor for the Arbroath West, Letham & Friockheim Ward of Angus Council.

7. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

(a) Communities Committee

The Council was advised that a vacancy existed on the Communities Committee

The Council resolved to appoint Councillor Cruickshanks to the Communities Committee.

(b) Development Standards Committee

The Council was advised that a vacancy existed on the Development Standards Committee.

The Council resolved to appoint Councillor Fotheringham to the Development Standards Committee.

(c) Policy and Resources Committee

The Council was advised that a vacancy existed on the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council resolved to appoint Councillor Cruickshanks to the Policy and Resources Committee.

At this stage in the meeting (3.27pm), the Council resolved to adjourn for 15 minutes to allow work to be done to rectify the issues with the microphones.

The meeting resumed at 3.42pm

8. AGILE WORKING AND ESTATES REVIEW

There was submitted Report No 150/24 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment seeking approval to market the under-occupied office property at Angus House, Sylvie Way, Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar for part lease, full lease or sale for a period of 18 months for the purpose of informing future estate rationalisation options. A further report would be submitted to Council with the outcomes of the marketing exercise after the property had been marketed for a period of 18 months, or earlier if necessary.

The Director of Infrastructure and Environment introduced the Report and advised members that since 2015 the Agile Working and Estate Rationalisation programme had delivered £3.68 million of revenue savings, Capital receipts of £1.33million and emissions savings of 298 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂). This had been achieved through a reduction in the Council estate of 32 properties which had now either been returned to the Common Good, leased out, a successful Community Asset Transfer (CAT), disposed of or were currently in the process of disposal. The Council had therefore been pro-active in managing its estate, responding to new opportunities and delivering significant financial savings through its agile programme.

At this stage in the meeting, the Council resolved to exclude the public and press to consider the contents of Item 9 - exempt Appendix in relation to Report No 150/24.

During the private session and at (4.53pm) the Council resolved, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 21(5), that the meeting continue to the conclusion of the business.

Thereafter, the meeting resumed in public at 5.02pm and which time the Council resolved to adjourn for 10 minutes.

The meeting resumed at 5.12pm at which time Councillor Cheape gave notice of an amendment.

COUNCILLOR WHITESIDE, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR BRAES, MOVED THAT THIS COUNCIL RESOLVES:-

- (I) TO NOTE THE OUTCOMES OF THE AGILE WORKING AND ESTATE RATIONALISATION PROGRAMME TO DATE INCLUDING THE SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL AND CARBON SAVINGS WHICH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED;
- (II) TO NOTE THE CURRENT UNDER-UTILISATION OF ANGUS HOUSE AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE USE OF THE PROPERTY;
- (III) TO APPROVE THE MARKETING OF ANGUS HOUSE, FORFAR FOR PART LEASE IF SUB-DIVIDED INTO SMALLER SUITES, FULL LEASE OR SALE, ALL FOR A PERIOD OF 18 MONTHS FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFORMING FUTURE ESTATE RATIONALISATION OPTIONS; AND
- (IV) TO NOTE THAT A FURTHER REPORT WOULD BE BROUGHT TO COUNCIL PRESENTING THE OUTCOMES OF THE MARKETING EXERCISE AFTER A PERIOD OF 18 MONTHS OR EARLIER IF NECESSARY.

Councillor Cheape, seconded by Councillor Melville, moved as an amendment, that the Council resolves: -

- (i) to note the outcomes of the agile working and estate rationalisation programme to date including the significant financial and carbon savings which had been achieved;
- (ii) to note the current under-utilisation of Angus House and the opportunities for future use of the property;
- (iii) to seek Council officers to undertake a review of all Council's remaining properties in Forfar and, when appropriate, present an Options Appraisal to elected members that considers their future use based on potential lease income or sale value, required capital expenditure, building suitability, environmental impact, review implications and service delivery; and
- (iv) that the review and options appraisal would be undertaken while the marketing of Angus House for part lease if sub-divided into smaller suites, full lease or sale, all for a period of 18 months for the purpose of informing future estate rationalisation options is also undertaken.

On a vote being taken, the members voted: -

For the motion: -

Provost, Councillors Braes, Cruickshanks, Devine, Doran, Duff, Fotheringham, Gall, Greig, McDonald, Proctor, Scott, Wann and Whiteside (14).

For the amendment: -

Depute Provost, Councillors Beattie, Bell, Cheape, Cowdy, Durno, Meechan, Melville, Shepherd, Speed and Stewart (11).

(Councillor Gavin Nicol having left prior to the vote.)

The motion was declared carried and the Council resolved accordingly.

9. EXEMPT APPENDIX – AGILE WORKING AND ESTATES REVIEW

The Council noted that the Appendix had been considered as part of Item 8 above.

