

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of **ANGUS COUNCIL** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 12 September 2024 at 2.00pm.

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

DEPUTE PROVOST Clark, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Heather Doran.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

There were no declarations of interest or statements of transparency made.

3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

(a) Angus Council

The minute of meeting of Angus Council of 20 June 2024 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

(b) Special Angus Council

The minute of Special meeting of Angus Council of 1 August 2024 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. APPOINTMENTS

(i) Election of Provost

The Council was advised that Councillor Brian Boyd had intimated his resignation as Provost.

Councillor Duff, seconded by Councillor Meechan, moved that Councillor Clark be appointed Provost of Angus Council.

The Council unanimously resolved to appoint Councillor Linda Clark as Provost of Angus.

(ii) Appointments to Committees Etc

(a) Policy & Resources Committee

The Council was advised that Councillor Whiteside had resigned as Convener and a member of the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council resolved to appoint Councillor Devine to the Policy and Resources Committee and Councillor Duff as Convener of the Policy and Resources Committee.

(b) Tay Road Bridge Joint Committee

The Council was advised that Councillor Braes had intimated his resignation from the Tay Road Bridge Joint Committee.

The Council resolved to appoint Councillor Melville to the Tay Road Bridge Joint Committee.

(c) Angus Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee

The Council was advised that Councillor Devine had intimated her resignation from the Angus Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Council noted that there was no requirement to fill this vacancy.

5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee of 27 August 2024, there was submitted Report No 232/24 by the Director of Finance detailing the Council's treasury management arrangements, activity and performance during 2023/24.

The Report indicated that the financial year 2023/24 had seen significant events that impacted on treasury operations related to the Economy and Interest Rates. As a result, Angus Council continued to hold temporary cash balances in 2023/24 which was due mainly to increased expenditure on large capital projects and the decision not to undertake new borrowing in 2023/24. Having the temporary cash balances available for investment meant there was no urgency to take new borrowing particularly given that borrowing rates had increased during 2023/24. The Bank of England, at their March 2024 meeting, had left bank interest rates at 5.25% for the fifth time in a row and the Bank's communication had suggested that there was improved confidence in the UK economy and that inflation would fall sustainably back to the 2% target. This may result in cuts to the bank rate in 2024/25. Although temporary cash balances were expected to reduce in 2024/25 due to expenditure on large capital projects, the Council may wish to secure some of its borrowing needs if the anticipated cuts in borrowing rates came to fruition.

The Director of Finance provided a brief overview of the Report and also highlighted the significant events that had impacted on treasury operations during 2023/24, following which the Committee thanked the Director of Finance and his team for all their work.

The Council, having reviewed the Report, resolved to note the 2023/24 Treasury Management Annual Report and associated Appendix to the Report.

6. PLANS & BUDGETS - CONSULTATION PROPOSALS FOR THE 2025/26 BUDGET SETTING

There was submitted Report No 271/24 by the Director of Finance advising members of a plan for communication and consultation as part of the Council's 2025/26 planning and budget setting process and seeking approval of the proposed plan.

The proposed plan for communication and consultation was outlined at Section 4, and Appendix A of the Report. It was also proposed that implementation of the plan be monitored through the Policy & Budget Strategy Group.

Following a number of questions regarding the consultation proposals, the Council resolved: -

- (i) to note the background to the proposals and that these would be taken forward in line with the Council's Communication, Engagement and Consultation Policy;
- (ii) to approve the 2025/26 budget communication and consultation plan as set out in the Report and the content of Stage 1 as set out in Appendix A to the Report;
- (iii) to agree that implementation of the plan be monitored through the Policy & Budget Strategy Group;
- (iv) to note that a further report with the proposed content of Stage 2 of the consultation would be brought back to a future meeting for approval prior to being launched.

7. ANGUS COUNCIL PLAN ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 7 September 2023, there was submitted Report No 272/24 by the Chief Executive presenting the Angus Council Plan Annual Performance Report for 2023/2024 covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The annual performance report for 2023/24 focused on what had been achieved over the previous 12 months including an overview of performance and progress with improvement actions, provided an update in relation to the Performance Indicators and included case studies which reflected examples of the work progressed over the year to 31 March 2024.

The Service Leader – Governance, Change & Strategic Policy provided a comprehensive overview of the achievements following which officers responded to members' questions.

Thereafter, the Council, having reviewed the Report, resolved to approve the 2023/24 Angus Council Plan Annual Performance Report, as appended to the Report.

8. SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 7 September 2023, there was submitted Report No 273/24 by the Chief Executive presenting the Scrutiny and Audit Committee 2023/24 annual report for comment and approval.

The Annual Report, provided at Appendix 1 to the Report, had been prepared to inform Angus Council of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny and Audit Committee during 2023/24. It included an action plan for 2024/25 and an update on the actions identified in last year's annual report.

The Report concluded "As Convener of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee, I am satisfied that the Committee complies with the Cipfa Position Statement. The work undertaken by the Committee during 2023/24 fulfils the Committee remit and provides reasonable assurance that the Council's control environment, risk management arrangements, and governance framework operated effectively and efficiently during 2023/24. Operational risk registers still need to be finalised by some Directorates. Actions have been put in place to address any weaknesses identified and the Committee will continue to monitor completion of these actions. Significant weaknesses identified have been included in the Annual Governance Statement and Corporate Governance action plan as appropriate."

The Council resolved: -

- (i) to note the contents of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee 2023/24 Annual Report, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) that no further detail or assurances were required from the Scrutiny and Audit Committee; and
- (iii) to approve the Scrutiny and Audit Committee 2023/24 Annual Report.

9. REVIEW OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

There was submitted Report No 274/24 by the Chief Executive advising members that following the retirement of the Depute Chief Executive on 31 July 2024, it was proposed that a review of the Council's senior management structure and arrangements be undertaken drawing on support commissioned from an external professional adviser as required.

The Council resolved: -

- (i) to note that the Chief Executive was instigating a review of the Council's senior management structure following the retirement of the Depute Chief Executive on 31 July 2024; and the commissioning of an external resource to support the undertaking of the review and to provide potential structural models for consideration;
- (ii) to note that a further report would be submitted to Council following the completion of the review.

10. ANGUS LOCAL HEAT & ENERGY EFFICIENCY STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN FINAL REPORT

There was submitted Report No 275/24 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth seeking approval of the Angus Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan.

The Report indicated that the production of LHEES became a statutory duty for local authorities in May 2022 through the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022. In developing the LHEES and Delivery Plan, the Council had followed the eight-stage process, outlined in the methodology guidance issued by Scottish Government.

Public consultation on the draft Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan had taken place between 20 June and 2 August 2024. There were 93 responses to the consultation; the vast majority of comments came from respondents who owned a home in Angus and private landlords with properties in Angus. Appendix 1 to the Report, analysed and grouped the responses into themes; provided the proposed response to them from the Council and any appropriate changes proposed to be made to the proposed LHEES and Delivery Plan.

The LHEES and Delivery Plan had generally been well received from the respondents and a brief summary of the responses to the consultation was set out in Section 5.3 of the Report. Overall, there was support for the LHEES and Delivery Plan as proposed.

Following a number of questions, the Council resolved: -

- (i) to note the feedback received from the consultation undertaken on the draft LHEES and Delivery Plan, and the responses to the feedback;
- (ii) to agree the proposed changes as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (iii) to approve the Angus LHEES and Delivery Plan as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 to the Report; and
- (iv) to delegate authority to the Service Leader – Planning and Sustainable Growth to make any minor technical and typographical changes, as well as any presentational and graphical changes to the Angus LHEES and Delivery Plan where required.