

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 29 October 2024 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors BILL DUFF, GEORGE MEECHAN, CHRIS BEATTIE, JULIE BELL, BRIAN BOYD, DAVID CHEAPE, JACK CRUICKSHANKS, LYNNE DEVINE, SERENA COWDY, IAIN GALL, ROSS GREIG, MARK McDONALD, IAN McLAREN, GAVIN NICOL, LOIS SPEED and CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM.

Councillor DUFF, Convener, in the Chair.

Prior to commencement of business, the Convener referred to the recent passing of former First Minister Alex Salmond and paid tribute to the distinguished public service rendered by him. There followed a one minute silence.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Heather Doran and Councillor Wann, with Councillor Cowdy and Councillor Fotheringham substituting respectively.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

Councillor Speed made a declaration of interest in relation to Item 10, Report No 314/24 – Angus Health and Social Care Partnership – Financial Hardship Support Policy, as she had a direct interest in the matter. She advised that she would not take part in any discussion and voting on the policy and would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor Greig made a statement of transparency in relation to Item 17, Report No 321/24 – Acquisition of New Cemetery Ground, Arbroath, as he was employed as a funeral arranger.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 3 September 2024 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

At this juncture Councillor Greig requested clarification regarding exclusion of the whole of Item 14. The Director of Legal, Governance and Change provided an explanation that procurement reports were treated as exempt, and although the full content of such report may not be exempt, information contained within the Report may be disclosed during the course of discussion.

The Committee then agreed, in terms of Standing Order 27(2), that the public and press be excluded during consideration of Items 14 to 19 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 6, 8, 9 and 10.

5. CAPITAL MONITORING – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME – 2024/25

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 August 2023, there was submitted Report No 302/24 by the Director of Finance, appraising the Committee of the capital expenditure incurred for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 August 2024 and measuring projected capital expenditure for the year against budgeted provision.

The Report indicated that with five months (41.67 per cent) of the financial year gone the actual spend levels presented in Tables 1 and 2 of the Report were 26.9 per cent on a gross basis and 35.3 per cent on a net basis respectively. Up to 10 per cent of annual capital spend could come through as accruals at the year end. The value of work completed up to 31 March 2024 would be assessed as part of the year end process and expenditure accrued accordingly, hence the reason why spend could increase significantly in the final month of the year. The Report also indicated that it should be noted that work was ongoing on a number of significant projects for which no payment had yet been made by virtue of the phasing of such

projects. For information purposes, the 2023/24 actual spend outturn was 94.5 per cent (gross) and 92.7 per cent (net). The projected net expenditure of £48.324 million (reflected in Table 2 in the Report) would be indicatively funded from the sources detailed in Table 3 in the Report.

Having heard from the Director of Finance, the Committee agreed to note the expenditure to date and projected outturn position on the General Fund capital programme as per Tables 1 and 2 of the Report and the Capital Monitoring statement attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

6. REVENUE MONITORING 2024/25 AND RENEWAL & REPAIR FUND POSITION 2024/25

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 29 February 2024, there was submitted Report No 311/24 by the Director of Finance, providing revenue budget performance information for the Committee to consider.

The Report outlined the latest projected year-end position for each main council service area, giving a brief explanation of significant variances and providing an update on expenditure funded through the Council's Renewal and Repair Funds. The Report also sought approval of the 2023/24 100% budget carry forwards. The position within the Report was based upon actual spend and income information as at 31 August 2024.

The Director of Finance outlined an amendment to the figure contained in the Report at Paragraph 6.1 in relation to ring-fenced funding for maintaining teacher numbers. The grant letter had been received and funding was £3.039m and not £3.084m as indicated in the Report.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the content of the Report, in particular the comment on the financial implications section regarding the projected year end position as set out in section 8.2 of the Report;
- (ii) to note the Renewal and Repair fund position as set out in section 5.18 of the Report and attached at Appendix D to the Report;
- (iii) to approve the 2023/24 100% budget carry forwards totalling £0.682 million as set out in Section 5.19 of the Report and attached at Appendix E to the Report in accordance with the Council's 100% budget carry forward scheme; and
- (iv) to note that the Council would be required to fund an additional 0.2% of the 2024/25 pay awards which had been agreed for implementation as set out in section 5.13 of the Report.

7. BEST VALUE THEMATIC WORK IN COUNCILS 2023/24

With reference Article 4 of the minute of Scrutiny & Audit Committee of 24 September 2024, there was submitted Report No 285/24 by the Chief Executive, presenting Audit Scotland's report on 'Workforce Innovation - how councils are responding to workforce challenges', which was part of Audit Scotland's Best Value thematic work in councils 2023/24.

The Report indicated that in 2023, the Accounts Commission/Audit Scotland had introduced a new approach to auditing Best Value in Scottish councils. The new approach continued to audit against the statutory duty but was now fully integrated with the annual audit at each council. It also included detailed work each year, focusing on a theme across all of the councils, which was then collated into a national report.

Audit Scotland's 2023/24 Report provided further assurance to members that Angus Council was working in a manner that was well aligned with the Best Value principles under review as part of the thematic audit. The Report included seven improvement actions along with the Council's management responses which were outlined in Section 6 of the Report. The improvement actions, along with the Council's management response, would be added to the Council's performance management system and reported to this Committee as part of the Corporate Governance improvement action update reports.

Following questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the content of Audit Scotland's Best Value thematic report: 'Workforce Innovation - how councils are responding to workforce challenges';
- (ii) to note the Key Messages and the Improvement Actions which were included in Audit Scotland's report; and
- (iii) that the Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference be updated to explicitly include responsibility for monitoring, oversight and decision making on workforce planning matters included as recommendation 7 of Audit Scotland's report.

8. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000 – ANNUAL REPORT

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 October 2023, there was submitted Report No 312/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change, requesting that the Committee note that an annual review of the Council's 'Policy and Guidelines on the Use of Covert Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources' and 'Surveillance Through Social Media Policy' had been undertaken in accordance with guidance from the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office and that no amendments were required at present.

The Committee agreed: -

- (i) to note that the Council's 'Policy and Guidelines on the Use of Covert Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources' and 'Surveillance Through Social Media Policy' had been reviewed and no amendments were required at present; and
- (ii) to note that the Policies referred to at (i) above would be presented to this Committee annually for approval in accordance with guidance from the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office.

9. PROPOSED CHANGES AT ARBROATH LIBRARY AND RE-LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

With a reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 4 June 2024, there was submitted Report No 313/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change, providing details of the responses to the public consultation in respect of design proposals for Arbroath Library to improve the delivery of face-to-face library and ACCESS services, and the re-location of Council Archives housed at the Hunter Library, Restenneth, Forfar. The Report also requested that the Committee, having had regard to the responses to the public consultation, approve the upgrade works to Arbroath Library as detailed in the Report.

The Director of Legal, Governance and Change introduced the Report, reminding members that the library access merger had been agreed by Members on 3 November 2022, therefore did not form part of the consultation.

Following discussion the Committee agreed: -

- (i) to note the responses received following the public consultation in respect of proposed changes at Arbroath Library and re-location of the Council Archives housed at the Hunter Library, Restenneth, Forfar as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the proposals for the upgrade works to Arbroath Library to both improve the delivery of face-to-face Library/ ACCESS services, and to improve the storage and public access arrangements for the Council's Archives, as detailed in the Report.

Having declared an interest at Article 2 above, Councillor Speed left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

10. ANGUS HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP – FINANCIAL HARDSHIP SUPPORT POLICY

There was submitted Report No 314/24 by the Chief Officer, Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, setting out a change to the Social Care Contributions Policy Non-Residential

Services and outlining a proposal to introduce a Financial Hardship Support Policy for services provided by Angus Health and Social Care Partnership through Angus Council by no later than 1 March 2025.

The Report indicated that since the introduction of the Community Care & Health (Scotland) Act 2002, COSLA had produced annual guidance known as 'COSLA National Strategy and Guidance on Charges Applying to Social Care Support for People at Home'. The guidance defined a set of principles to underpin the development of local charging policies for social care support for people at home and was subject to ongoing revision as appropriate, on an annual basis or as policy developed.

Within the COSLA guidance there was a recommendation that Local Authorities and Integration Authorities used their powers to abate or waive charges on a case-by-case basis due to financial hardship. Work had been undertaken to formalise a local Financial Hardship Support Policy and, if approved by Committee, the next steps would be to finalise the operational application of the policy.

As part of the review of the Financial Hardship Support Policy element of the Contributions Policy, a small number of more minor improvements would be progressed regarding wording in the overall policy document with the intention of these being actioned by January 2025.

Following questions and comments, the Committee agreed: -

- (i) to approve the proposed Financial Hardship Support Policy as set out in Appendix 1, Section 6 to the Report which was considered a material change to the Social Care Contributions Policy – Non-Residential Services; and
- (ii) to approve the implementation of the Financial Hardship Support Policy by no later than 1 March 2025.

11. ANGUS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24

There was submitted Report No 315/24 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, presenting the Angus Community Planning Partnership Annual Performance Report 2023/24 and detailing the work delivered by the Angus Community Planning Partnership (ACPP) for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 including the Our Bright Futures Report and the Community Learning and Development Annual Report covering the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

Following questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the Community Plan Annual Performance Report for 2023/24;
- (ii) to note the Our Bright Futures Progress Report for 2023-24; and
- (iii) to note the Community Learning and Development Annual Report.

12. COMMUNITY ASSET CAPITAL GRANT FUND

With a reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 3 September 2024, there was submitted Report No 316/24 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, seeking approval of the proposed approach and scoring criteria for the distribution of the Community Asset Capital Grant Fund. It further requested delegated authority to be given to the Policy and Resources Executive Sub-Committee to decide the final list of grant awards and recipients following recommendations from the officer assessment panel.

The Committee agreed: -

- (i) to approve the approach and scoring criteria for the distribution of the Community Asset Capital Grant Fund as set out in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 of the Report; and
- (ii) to delegate authority to the Policy and Resources Executive Sub-Committee to decide on the final list of grant awards and recipients following the officer assessment panel.

13. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GRANTS

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 2 March 2023, there was submitted Report No 317/24 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, seeking approval to establish a Community Resilience Fund, using a combination of funding to provide grants to support communities in their preparedness for winter. The Report also sought approval of the proposed scoring criteria. Furthermore, the Report sought approval to delegate authority to the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth to consider applications and allocate funding from the Community Resilience Fund in accordance with the scoring criteria.

The Report indicated that a dedicated fund had been developed based on the identified needs, enabling groups to purchase the necessary equipment to support future emergencies. In addition, to further strengthen community resilience, wrap-around support would be provided by Angus Council Vibrant Communities and Roads staff as well as the Scottish Flood Forum. This fund would target localities in Angus identified as highly impacted or most vulnerable from flooding and other emergencies.

Following questions, the Committee agreed: -

- (i) to approve the establishment of a Community Resilience Fund as detailed in the Report;
- (ii) to note the inclusion of £50,000 from one off Angus Council reserves for Climate Change, noted in paragraph 4.18 of the Report; along with an allocation of £18,000 from an Angus Rural Partnership external grant and an allocation of £93,000 from an SSEN grant award, noted in paragraph 4.2 of the Report;
- (iii) to approve the scoring criteria for the distribution of the Community Resilience Fund set out in paragraph 5.3 of the Report; and
- (iv) to delegate authority to the Director of Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth to consider applications and allocate funding from the Community Resilience Fund in accordance with the scoring criteria.

14. APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT ON BEHALF OF ANGUS ALIVE

There was submitted Report No 323/24 by the Acting Chief Executive, ANGUSalive, seeking approval for Angus Council to be the contracting entity for a purchase for use by ANGUSalive.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.

15. LOCAL BUS SERVICE PROVISION CONTRACTS EXTENSION AND TENDER

There was submitted Report No 319/24 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment, seeking authorisation to award 12 local bus service contracts. Furthermore, the Report detailed the extension of two local bus service contracts to May 2025, as permitted under the terms of those contracts.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.

16. PROCUREMENT REPORT FOR GAS UTILITY CONTRACT SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS

There was submitted Report No 320/24 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment, seeking approval to confirm the current arrangements in place to continue with allowing Scottish Procurement to procure a Gas Framework Agreement on behalf of Angus Council through a national contract.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.

17. ACQUISITION OF NEW CEMETERY LAND, ARBROATH

There was submitted Report No 321/24 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment, relating to a proposed land acquisition to create a new cemetery in Arbroath.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.

18. TAY CITIES REGION DEAL – PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY APPROVAL REQUEST FOR MERCURY DRONE PORT

There was submitted Report No 322/24 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, seeking procurement authority to commission services to develop a road map to identify the gaps in infrastructure, systems and processes that will be needed to support the development of the Mercury Drone Port and achieve beyond visual line of sight operations.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.

19. DEVELOPMENT LAND LEASE WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE – MONTROSE

There was submitted Report No 323/24 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, relating to the new lease and option to sell vacant development land in Montrose.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.