

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, GORDON HOUSE, INVERURIE

ON 8 OCTOBER 2019

Present: Councillors F Hood (Chair), N Baillie, L Berry, M Ewenson, M Ford (for items 1 to 5 inclusive), V Harper, D Lonchay, R McKail, A McKelvie, H Smith, I Walker and J Whyte

Apologies: Councillors D Aitchison, S Leslie and G Reid,

Officers: M-J Cardno (Garioch Area Manager), J Joss, (Senior Solicitor), B Strachan (Senior Planner), M Booth (Quality Improvement Manager), R Goldring (Learning Estates Team Leader) E Reid (Team Leader – Housing), E Williams (Environment Planner), M MacAulay (Team Leader, Stock Improvement), J Gahagan (Estates Manager), M Hall (Strategy Manager, Transportation) and Alison Cumming (Area Committee Officer).

1. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

In accordance with the Councillors' Code of Conduct the following interest was declared:-

Item 10 – Councillor Walker as she is employed by a party to the item, but continued to take part in consideration of the item.

2. RESOLUTIONS

2A. EQUALITIES

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010:-

1. to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
2. where an Equality Impact Assessment was provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching its decision.

2B. EXEMPT ITEMS

The Committee **agreed** that, under Sections 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for certain items of business on account of the likely disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Item Nos.	Paragraph Nos.
9	9
10	6 and 9

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

In accordance with Standing Order 7.1.1, the Committee **agreed** that the Minute was a correct record of proceedings. The Minute was duly signed by the Councillor presiding over the meeting.

4. 2019 SUITABILITY CORE FACTS

A report by the Director of Education and Children's Services was circulated presenting to the Committee with an update on the suitability grades for schools within Garioch.

Officers explained that the process for assessing the suitability of education facilities had been reviewed and changes made. They confirmed that this meant that the assessment was more appropriate for Curriculum for Excellence and was now based on actual school rolls rather than school capacity numbers. They explained that Officers considered accessibility of the facilities to be a priority and the Service was keen to see these improvements in a staged approach with a view to all Academies and enhanced provision centres being accessible to all. They further indicated that schools with C gradings would be addressed at an early stage and said that some of the required changes would be relatively quick and easy to rectify.

Officers provided details to the assessment process and indicated that the new assessment had been carried out by the Learning Estates Team and now provided a moderated and more robust process.

Councillors sought clarification regarding the grading of a number of Garioch schools. Members focussed on issues around schools in Hatton of Fintray and Kellands seeking assurances and arrangements to be made to deal with ongoing concerns. Westhill Members were keen to understand the gradings more fully and asked for the detailed assessment information to be provided for these schools. They were also keen to understand the Westhill Academy gradings in comparison to those of Banchory Academy.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

1. welcome the report and the comprehensive briefing provided by Officers;
2. note that Officers that will be progressing works relating to accessibility and C graded schools as a priority;
3. note that a report will be provided to E&CS Committee in February with a detailed action plan;
4. request that Officers provide Ward 13 Councillors with the workings behind the grades for all Ward 13 schools along with a comparison between Banchory Academy and Westhill Academy;
5. request that Officers arrange a meeting with Ward 11 Members regarding Kellands School and regularly update them on progress made at the school; and
6. request that the Area Manager work cross service to establish the future education requirements in Hatton of Fintray and the facilities that will be required to achieve this.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION

The following application was considered along with any valid representations received and were dealt with as recorded in **Appendix A** to this Minute.

APP/2019/2013	Erection of freestanding sign at S&S Services (Scotland) Ltd Headquarters, Oyne, Inch	Grant
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6. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2020-2025

A report by the Director of Infrastructure Services was circulated presenting the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020-2025 and seeking comments to the Communities Committee.

The Team Leader explained that comments on the draft plan would be reported to Communities Committee and that although the plan had to be submitted to the Scottish Government in advance of the Policy Committee meeting, this would be done with an indication that further amendments may be made following the meeting.

Members noted the ambitious nature of the plan and the impact of the rate of development on the delivery of the plan. Members sought clarification in relation to the partners delivering affordable homes in Garioch and the Help to Buy Scheme.

Thereafter, Committee **agreed** to:-

- 1 welcome the report and the delivery of affordable housing in Garioch, noting that this will be dependent on the rate of development that takes place; and
2. request that an update report be provided to Committee by end of June 2020 on the delivery of the SHIP for the 2019/20 financial year.

7. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL NATURAL HERITAGE STRATEGY 2019-2022 (DRAFT)

A report by the Director of Infrastructure Services was circulated presenting the draft Natural Heritage Strategy and seeking comments to Infrastructure Services Committee.

The Environment Planner explained that the strategy covered the work of the Environment Team for a three-year period with a one year action plan. She confirmed that it sat alongside the Access and Built Environment Strategies and would provide a focus for work to protect the natural landscape. She indicated that Councillor Biodiversity Champions were already in place, but said that these could be used more effectively.

Members sought clarification as to the input of the Section into the Local Development Plan and in particular the protection of conservation sites. The Environment Planner said that Environment Officers had been heavily involved in the Local Development Plan process and had considered all of the bid sites. She undertook to provide Councillors with an updated list of conservation sites and confirmed that Councillors could suggest further areas for consideration. Members welcomed the work done by the Team and sought clarification about some of the ongoing projects.

Committee **agreed** to:-

1. comment to Infrastructure Services Committee that consideration should be given to focussing on a theme covered by a number of Councillor Biodiversity Champions each year with a view to making best use of this as awareness raising; and
2. to request that a list and map of the current conservation sites in Garioch be provided to Members;

8. GARIOCH AREA INITIATIVES FUND 2019/20

A report by the Director of Education and Children's Services was circulated detailing an application from Fetternear Hall Management Committee for consideration.

The Committee **agreed** to grant £1,750 to Fetternear Hall Management Committee towards the upgrade of kitchen facilities.

9. SUPPLEMENTARY HOUSING WORK PLAN AND BUSINESS CASE – PROCUREMENT APPROVAL FOR WORKS AT LITTLEWOOD COURT, KEMNAY

A report by the Director of Infrastructure Services was circulated seeking approval to proceed with further investigatory works at Littlewood Court, Kemnay.

Members sought clarification as to the work involved and the appropriateness of the costs concerned and were assured that they were in line with the works required.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

1. approve the item on the Supplementary Workplan at Appendix 1 as falling within the remit of this Committee and note that it will be added to the Annual Housing Workplan previously approved by Communities Committee on 21st February 2019;
2. approve the Business Case at Appendix 2 for the contract for additional investigatory works at Littlewood Court, Kemnay;
3. acknowledge that the Head of Housing has the delegated power to award the final contract.
4. to request that reports be provided on the following:-
 - a) detailing the costs, implications and remedial work required following the investigation; and
 - b) giving a comparison business case for alternative heating sources for Littlewood Court, Kemnay.

10. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT INVERURIE

As indicated in section 1, Councillor Walker declared an interest, but continued to take a full part in determining the item.

A joint report by the Director of Business Services and Director of Infrastructure Services was circulated detailing the terms of an offer to purchase a property in Inverurie

Members requested that Officers provide an update regarding title for the land following the meeting.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

1. approve the purchase of the property in Inverurie as detailed in the report on the terms set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report; and
2. delegate to the Head of Legal & Governance agreement of detailed terms, after consultation with the Head of Property & Facilities Management.

Councillor Presiding over meeting

Print Name

Signature

Date

GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE

8 OCTOBER 2019

APPENDIX A

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION

Reference No: APP/2019/2013

Advertisement Consent for Erection of Freestanding Sign at S&S Services (Scotland) Ltd Headquarters, Oyne, Inch, Aberdeenshire, AB52 6QS

Applicant: S & S Services (Scotland) Ltd
Agent: Morris Tait

The Senior Planner confirmed that the application had been brought to the Committee as the result of an unresolved objection by the Community Council. He explained that the application would see the erection of 2 separate signs erected together on 2 steel poles. He confirmed that the proposed signs were not considered to cause concerns over public safety and at the scale and location would only have a negligible impact on the character and amenity of the area. He confirmed that due to buildings and trees in the location the sign would only be visible when travelling from the west.

Members asked whether the design, content and colours used within the signage was something that was controlled by policy. The Senior Planner confirmed that there were no specific policies relating to this and the policies used to consider the application relate to layout, siting and design and road safety. He confirmed that these did not control the content and design of the signs themselves.

Members acknowledged the concerns of the Community Council, but considered that the siting of the sign would result in minimal impact and was appropriate for the location.

The Committee **agreed** to grant Advertisement Consent

Reason for Decision

The proposed signage is considered acceptable as it complies with Policy P1 and Policy E2 of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (Scotland) Regulations 1984.