

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 10 MAY, 2018

Present: Councillors P J Argyle (Chair), J B Cox (Vice Chair), W A Agnew, D Aitchison, G Blackett, G W Carr, R A Cassie (as substitute for Councillor J Ingram), P K Johnston, J J Latham, D-P L G Lonchay, I J Mollison, C R Pike, S W Smith, and R S Withey.

Apologies: Councillor J Ingram

Officers: Director of Infrastructure Services, Head of Service (Planning and Building Standards), Head of Service (Roads, Landscape and Waste Management), Head of Service (Transportation), Planning Manager (M Stewart), Planning Manager (B Stewart), Service Manager, Economic Development and Protective Services, Roads Development Manager, Chief Accountant, Senior Solicitor (M Ingram) and Principal Committee Services Officer.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and no interests were declared.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

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 a decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 15 MARCH, 2018

The Committee had before them, and **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Meeting of 15 March, 2018, subject to the financial year referred to in paragraph 2 of Item 20 being amended to read 2018/2019.

3A. PRESENTATION

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Mr Tom O'Connor, Senior Engineer in the Roads Quality and Resources Team, to the meeting which thereafter heard a presentation on Mr O'Connor's journey through the Council's voluntary training scheme for career development for Engineers which had commenced in April 2015 and been completed in October 2017 with

Mr O'Connor being awarded the Tony Chapman medal from the Institute of Civil Engineers for best incorporated engineering review of the year and as a finalist in the Baroness of Platt Writtle Award 2017.

Mr O'Connor responded to questions from Members on work he had previously been involved in, engineering challenges for the Council in future, encouraging more women in to the profession and engaging with young people to raise awareness of the apprenticeship programme.

The Committee thanked Mr O'Connor for his informative and inspiring presentation and congratulated him on his award.

PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS

4. APP/2017/3158 FORMATION OF CAMPSITE, SITING OF 5 YURTS, 1 PORTABLE TOILET, ERECTION OF RECEPTION BUILDING WITH CAMPING FACILITIES AND ASSOCIATED PARKING AND ACCESS AT BEECHGLEN, SILVERSTRIPE

The Chair reported that requests to speak on the application had been received from the applicant's agent and a consultee and the Committee **agreed** to hear from Mr Bob MacGregor, applicant's agent, and Mr James Bayne, Alvah and Forglen Community Council prior to determination of the application.

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Banff and Buchan Area Committee of 27 March 2018 (Item 18A), there had been circulated a report dated 2 April, 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which sought consideration of an application for Full Planning Permission for formation of campsite, siting of 5 yurts, 1 portable toilet, erection of reception building with camping facilities and associated parking and access at Beech Glen, Silverstripe, Forglen, Turriff.

The report advised that in terms of Standing Order 5.5 the application had been referred to the Infrastructure Services Committee for final determination following a vote resulting in a decision to approve the application against officer recommendation at the Banff and Buchan Area Committee meeting on 27 March 2018.

The Planning Manager reported on the detail of the application and highlighted key areas for consideration including the location of the site to the nearest settlement, the size and scale of the development including design and layout, road safety and access issues including deliverability and engineering works required for the four passing places, the planning history of the site and the materiality of an appeal decision (APP/2016/2260) by the Scottish Government Reporter in refusing a similar larger scale development on the site and the current use of the site for agricultural purposes. Reference was also made to representations received including an outstanding objection from the Community Council. She advised that on balance and the materiality of the appeal decision particularly relating to road safety, the application was recommended for refusal for the reasons detailed in the report.

The Planning Manager then responded to questions from Members on the mixed use nature of the development site and, in respect of the private access road, the length of the road, the number of sites for which permission had been granted to be serviced by the road, the number of properties already built and using the road, the responsibility for maintaining the road and the surface material of the road.

The Committee then heard from Mr Bayne, who outlined the objections of Alvah and Forglen Community Council to the application on technical and road safety grounds. It was considered that the development did not comply with the Local Development Plan and the increased vehicular use of the private access road, not only for the proposed development but for the

applicant's new Equine Therapy business operating from the same site, would significantly increase the risk of road traffic accidents. In conclusion, he asked the Committee to refuse the application as recommended by Officers.

There were no questions from Members to Mr Bayne.

Mr MacGregor, on behalf of the applicant, then addressed the Committee and advised that the current application was a reduced version of that previously submitted in 2016 and outlined changes made to address previous reasons for refusal including a reduction in the number of holiday units to 5 and provision of passing places on the private access road. He then explained how the site would operate, expected occupancy rate at peak season, access to public transport, site measurements and distance from the nearest settlement, availability of local shop and restaurant facilities, nature of the adjacent Equine Therapy business and proposed arrangements for provision of passing places. In conclusion, he urged the Committee to approve the application.

There were no questions from Members to Mr MacGregor.

The Planning Officer then confirmed that in respect of the previous application in 2016 and in particular the views of the Roads Service at that time, this had been on the basis that there were publicly available driveways to properties along the private access road which provided adequate passing places. Since that time many of the driveways had been blocked off resulting in a revised view of the proposal by the Roads Service. The Committee also heard from the Roads Development Manager on the Council's remit in terms of seeking to have private roads upgraded to an adoptable standard.

Following discussion, Councillor Cox moved, seconded by Councillor Cassie that the Committee delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Building Standards to approve the application subject to appropriate conditions as detailed in paragraph 6.2.a in the report.

Councillor Argyle moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Lonchay, that the application be refused as recommended.

Members of the Committee voted:-

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----|---|
| for the motion | (8) | Councillors Aitchison, Cassie, Cox, Johnston, Mollison, Pike, S Smith and Withey. |
| for the amendment | (6) | Councillors Argyle, Agnew, Blackett, Carr, Latham and Lonchay. |

The motion was carried and the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Building Standards to approve the application subject to appropriate conditions relating to the following matters –
 - (a) Temporary holiday letting occupancy of the yurts;
 - (b) Waste and recycling facilities;
 - (c) Design and external materials;
 - (d) Roads and access;
 - (e) Foul and surface water drainage and public water supply arrangements;
 - (f) Landscape and Boundary Details; and
 - (g) the site being restored to its current condition should the development fall in to disuse in future.
- (2) the reasons for the departure from policy being that the proposal –

- (a) was considered to be well related to the settlement under Policy 3;
- (b) the departure from Policy R2 was outweighed by the benefits of development on the site; and
- (c) had satisfactorily demonstrated that the private access road which serves the development could be brought up to an adoptable standard to meet the requirements of Roads Development and comply with Policy RD1.

5. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT IN ABERDEENSHIRE 2016/2017 – PROGRESS REPORT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 26 November 2015 (Item 4, Page 936), there had been circulated a report dated 5 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which provided an overview of the activity of the Planning Enforcement Service over the 2016/2017 period. The report explained (1) the staffing structure within the enforcement service, (2) that an internal audit had carried out and that priority had been given to implementing the recommended actions, (3) service improvements already introduced and further improvements planned, (4) the implications of the Planning Bill in terms of enforcement provision, noting that only 3 of the 19 recommendations identified in the research paper commissioned by Scottish Government as part of the Planning Review 'Planning Enforcement in Scotland: research into the use of existing powers, barriers and scope for improvement' 2016, had been taken forward in the Bill, and (5) arrangements for engagement with Members on enforcement matters.

The Planning Manager introduced the report and highlighted service improvements and changes introduced, a number of existing challenges and opportunities within the Service, tools available to the Service to address breaches, the proposals within the Planning Bill relating to enforcement, the hope that the remaining recommendations from the planning research paper will be taken forward and plans for a seminar with Members on 21 May 2018 on enforcement matters.

Following discussion on enforcement cases which could not be progressed where matters had reached a legal impasse and how this might be addressed through provisions in the Planning Bill, how enforcement matters were identified and/or reported to the Service and thereafter dealt with in terms of screening and research undertaken and on surveillance proposals contained within the report, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the contents of the progress report providing an overview of the activity of the Planning Enforcement Service over the 2016/2017 period; and
- (2) that the Chair write to the relevant Scottish Minister, and copy the Local Government Committee considering the Planning Bill, on the Committee's concerns relating to matters where a legal impasse had been reached and seek clarification on how these matters might be resolved through the provisions of the new Planning Bill legislation.

TRANSPORTATION

6. BUS QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 24 August 2017 (Item 14), there had been circulated a report dated 25 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) seeking approval for an overarching voluntary regional Quality Partnership for Public Transport to be known as the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, (2) explaining that the Partnership Agreement was intended to support delivery of the North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) Regional Transport Strategy, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils' respective Local Transport Strategies and to lock in the benefits of significant investment in recent and imminent infrastructure improvements, (3) setting out the

purpose and objectives of the Alliance as specified in the Partnership Agreement attached at Appendix 1 to the report, (4) outlining the governance arrangements including structure and responsibilities, membership requirements, stakeholder engagement, dispute resolution and reporting requirements, and (5) advising that any projects from the Bus Alliance would be managed through the Council's governance arrangements and reported to Committee as appropriate.

The Committee heard from the Head of Transportation that the Partnership Agreement had been approved by Nestrans and was due to be considered by Aberdeen City Council in June 2018, that membership of the Bus Alliance Board would be at Officer level and on the key deliverables and objectives of the Partnership.

During discussion officers responded to questions from Members on the impact of major roadworks and engagement with operators on potential route changes, reliability of rural bus services, impact of reduced services on access to further education, use of hydrogen buses, provisions contained within the passenger charter, dispute resolution process for passengers, opportunities for smaller operators to contribute to the partnership, reducing lost mileage, provision of park and ride facilities at Portlethen and cost impact of reduced passenger numbers. Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the participation of Aberdeenshire Council in the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance Quality Partnership as outlined in the partnership agreement and detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to delegate authority to the Head of Transportation to sign the Partnership Agreement on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council;
- (3) that the Director arrange a Seminar for Members on public transport and bus services at an appropriate point in the future, to be tied in to the work of the Member/Officer Working Group appointed to oversee the review of the Passenger Transport Strategy; and
- (4) that the Committee receive regular updates on progress with the work of the partnership.

7. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 25 January 2018 (Item 10) a report dated 25 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services had been circulated providing an update on Local Transport Strategy Actions and work undertaken by officers to progress projects and initiatives including (1) work to reinstate a railway station at Kintore, (2) work with Transport Scotland to assist with the preparation of the Transport (Scotland) Bill and associated Financial Memorandum, (3) construction and development of shared use cycle schemes at Huntly (Deveron Road), Ellon (Riverside to Formartine and Buchan Way) and on the A96 between Kintore Business Park and Thainstone, (4) development of a series of 'Treasure Trail' maps of Aberdeenshire towns, and (5) the establishment of a member/officer working group to review off-street car park operations and tariffs.

The Committee heard from the Head of Transportation who introduced the report and responded to questions from Members on plans to extend walking/cycle routes to Stonehaven, options to assist with the ibike project, the design route for the Ellon to Balmedie cycle route including the route between Balmedie and Blackdog.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) endorse the progress and developments taken through Nestrans and acknowledge the activities and developments being taken forward by external agencies and stakeholders as outlined in the report;
- (2) accept further updates on the progress of both the implementation and delivery of the Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy (LTS) as appropriate;
- (3) note that Councillor Cox, as Vice Chair of the Committee, was a member of the Member/Officer Working Group established to review off-street car park operations and tariffs not Councillor Aitchison as specified in the report;
- (4) that plans to extend the walking/cycle route to Stonehaven be confirmed;
- (5) that officers look at opportunities to design in features to assist in promoting travel to school by bike as part of the lbike project; and
- (6) that the design of the proposed Ellon to Balmedie cycle route be clarified to confirm whether the route includes Balmedie to Blackdog.

ROADS, LANDSCAPE SERVICES AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

8. MID-SEASON REVIEW OF ROADS WINTER SERVICES

There had been circulated a report dated 24 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services on a review of winter services delivered during severe weather events in December 2017 and February/March 2018 and proposing short and medium term improvements to the delivery of winter services.

The Committee heard from the Head of Roads and Landscape Services who introduced the report and provided detail on the Council's current policy objective for winter maintenance, budget provision, number of ploughs and drivers available, primary treatment routes based on forecasts, reactive treatment of other routes, conditions faced during the severe weather events, further funding allocated by the Scottish Government and proposals for improvements to current practice in the short and medium term including a full scale review of policy.

Officers responded to questions from Members on community self-help schemes including grit bins, treatment of footways and secondary routes, more robust communication tools to enable accurate information to be shared with communities, school playground treatment, use of farmers network in rural areas, driver training and retention, key incline spots within communities, treatment of lock block routes, message management and managing expectation.

The Committee unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Order 2.1.2 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 1pm to conclude determination of the matter prior to adjourning for lunch.

Following a full discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the findings of the Roads Service's review of winter services in relation to the storm events during December 2017 and February/March 2018;
- (2) to approve the proposed developments to winter services as detailed in the report and the timescales for their introduction; and
- (3) that officers work with Members to identify specific locations within communities which might benefit from additional measures being put in place in future.

Councillors Blackett and Lonchay left the meeting at this point.

The meeting reconvened at 2.15pm.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

9. MEMBER PROMOTED ISSUE – DOGS IN SCHOOL GROUNDS AND COUNCIL PLAYPARKS

A report dated 23 March 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services was circulated seeking consideration of a Member Promoted Issue, as provided for in Standing Order 4.2.8, by Councillor Davidson on the presence of dogs in school grounds and council playparks and proposing that a policy be developed which would see dogs banned from specific council owned/managed premises including school playgrounds, school playing fields and enclosed/defined playparks where play equipment is located. Her concerns centred on lack of responsible dog ownership giving rise to issues with dog fouling and lack of control of dogs.

Councillor Davidson explained that she had received many complaints on this issue over a number of years, that she considered there was plenty of scope and areas available for people to exercise their dogs without using school grounds and council playparks and that the development of a clear policy in this regard would allow the Service to manage, monitor and enforce the matter more effectively.

Following discussion on cost implications, other options available to address the matter and incorporating Council cemeteries in any option proposals, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) that the Director of Infrastructure Services produce an options paper incorporating the views of Councillor Davidson on the matter and including a draft policy together with any cost implications;
- (2) that cemeteries be included for consideration in the options paper; and
- (3) that the options paper be presented for consultation with Area Committees with a view to reporting back to Infrastructure Services Committee following the summer recess.

10. FUNDS AWARDED BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES AND BUSINESS GATEWAY ACTIVITY 2017-18

There had been circulated a report dated 3 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) on the distribution of funds in 2017-2018 from (a) the Support for Aberdeenshire Business Scheme assisting 19 businesses, (b) the First Employee Grant Scheme with 15 awards, (c) the new Social Enterprise Support Fund with 2 awards, and (d) the Business Gateway contract, all as detailed in the appendices to the report; and (2) proposing that officers explore the introduction of a new grant as part of the First Employee Grant Scheme to encourage the development of new digital technologies.

The Service Manager, Economic Development and Protective Services introduced the report and responded to questions from Members on the inclusion of additional information in future reports on added value and, in terms of the proposal to support the development of digital technologies, why this was proposed to be in the form of a grant and not a loan.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to endorse the information on the distribution of funds from the 'Support for Aberdeenshire Business Scheme' in 2017-18, the First Employee Grant Scheme; the

new Social Enterprise Support Fund and the Business Gateway contract in 2017-18, as detailed in the appendices attached to the report;

- (2) to authorise the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to explore the introduction of a new grant to encourage the development of new digital technologies, outlined in section 2.7 of the report, and report to the Committee on the outcome; and
- (3) that future reports include more detail in terms of output, business growth and added value achieved.

11. EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL & INVESTMENT FUNDS EXTENSIONS

There had been circulated a report dated 6 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Scottish Government call for applications to extend Strategic Interventions until 2023 as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds which provided funding for a number of development programmes managed by organisations including Local Authorities. The report advised that Aberdeenshire Council currently managed three Strategic Interventions which were due to end on 31 December 2018 and a list of projects supported to date was provided in Appendix 1. The report contained proposals for the submission of bids to extend programs to 2023 and sought approval for the commitment of match funding.

Having heard from the Service Manager, Economic Development and Protective Services, that the figures provided in 2.3.4 of the report should be added together to provide the correct total figure, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) endorse the submission of bids to extend the Council's European Structural & Investment Funds programmes to 2023 as detailed in the report; and
- (2) approve the commitment of £2,202,390 of match funding towards the Aberdeen City and Shire Business Gateway + Strategic Intervention extension.

12. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2017-2021 – UPDATE 2017-2018

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 16 March 2017 (Item 16) there had been circulated a report dated 6 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services providing a progress report on the delivery of the Economic Development Action Plan during 2017-18, identifying priorities for 2018-2019 and confirming that the action plan would be reviewed in 2019.

The Service Manager, Economic Development and Protective Services, introduced the report and responded to questions from Members on growing the food and drink industry, the availability, unit fit and location of the industrial estate infrastructure, rural partnership support and income, alternative methods to promote and increase applications for loan funds and energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) endorse the progress made in 2017-18 on the Economic Development Action Plan 2017-21 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) authorise the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to report progress on the Action Plan annually.

Having moved a motion that was not seconded, seeking to have the progress report noted, not endorsed, Councillor Johnston requested, in terms of Standing Order 5.2, that his motion be recorded in the minute.

13. DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE IN OUR NORTH COAST COMMUNITIES – 6 MONTH REPORT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 5 October 2017 (Item 11) there had been circulated a report dated 15 March 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services providing an update on progress with the Regeneration Strategy “From Strategy to Action: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities” which concentrated regeneration effort in the four northern towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. The report indicated (a) that progress was being made across the themes in the action plans, (b) that External funding was becoming more difficult to source as projects such as CARS (Conservation Area Renewal Scheme) enter their final stages and other European funds change their requirements as they too were at their end phase of delivery, and (c) that the changes to the overall funding regime would affect the Council’s own delivery of projects as well as those third sector organisations who were stakeholders and delivery partners in the plans.

The Committee heard from the Regeneration and Town Centres Manager who introduced the report, provided an update on progress with the regeneration programme and advised that it was intended to report to Committee annually with a six monthly progress report in the intervening period via the Members Bulletin. She responded to questions from Members on project timelines and current allocation and spend in terms of funding and on reporting details, and the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the contents of the report and appendices 1 to 4 for the towns of Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Macduff and Banff;
- (2) instruct the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to report on the regeneration plans in May 2019 and to circulate a progress update bulletin report in 6 months’ time; and
- (3) that future reports provide numbers in addition to percentages in the output measure target column.

CORPORATE

14. EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING AND OUTCOMES UPDATE

There had been circulated and was **noted** a report dated 6 February, 2018 by the Director of Business Services on progress against the Equality Outcomes set in the Mainstreaming and Equalities report 2017 – 2021 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

15. COUNCIL PLAN 2017 – 2022 – DELIVERY

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Council of 23 November 2017 (Item 10) when the Council Plan for 2017 – 22 had been approved providing strategic direction through the confirmation of eleven priorities, there had been circulated a report dated 2 April 2018 by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the development of governance, performance and scrutiny arrangements and activity plans to deliver on the agreed priorities. The report explained that each priority would be led by a specific Directorate of the Council, with other Directorates influencing and supporting delivery, and each Policy Committee would be responsible for scrutinising delivery of specific priorities related to its delegated functions. The three priorities proposed to be aligned to the Infrastructure Services Committee included

(1) supporting a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy, (2) having the best possible transport and digital links across our communities, and (3) protecting our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report, explaining that a similar report would be presented to each Policy Committee related to their priorities and functions, that more work would be done around actions to deliver outcomes, that progress reports by exception only would be provided at least every six months and that access to further performance information would be available to Members through the Council's performance management system. He indicated that further Member input would be required and proposed that the matter be discussed in further detail as part of a Members away day to be scheduled following the Council summer recess.

Following discussion on the actions and measures of success included in the delivery plans relating to car parking management, developer obligation contributions, the A947 route implementation strategy and reducing carbon impact, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the Council Plan 2017-2022 priorities for Infrastructure Services Committee scrutiny;
- (2) to approve the delivery plans and proposed measures of success whilst acknowledging that this was a live document which would require further editing and adjustment;
- (3) that the Director of Infrastructure Services report progress to the Committee at least six-monthly evidencing progress with delivery of the Council Plan 2017-2022; and
- (4) that the Director of Infrastructure Services arrange an Away Day for Members after the summer recess;

ITEMS FOR NOTING

The Committee had before it and **noted**:-

- (a) Minute of Meeting of Rural Affairs Working Group of 8 November 2017, as detailed in Appendix A hereto.
- (b) Minute of Meeting of Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee of 10 November 2017, as detailed in Appendix B hereto.
- (c) Note of Meeting of Planning and Building Standards Member/Officer Working Group of 15 November 2017, as detailed in Appendix C hereto.
- (d) Minute of Special Meeting of Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee of 29 November 2017, as detailed in Appendix D hereto.
- (e) Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group (NESAAG) of 6 December 2017, as detailed in Appendix E hereto.
- (f) Minute of Meeting of the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) of 1 February 2018, as detailed in Appendix F hereto.

APPENDIX A

RURAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

COMMITTEE ROOM 4, WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN

WEDNESDAY, 8th NOVEMBER, 2017

Present: Councillors M Buchan, S Duncan, V Harper, A Hassan (as a substitute for Cllr Simpson), W Howatson, J Ingram, I Taylor and J Whyte.

Apologies: Councillor A Simpson.

Officers: D McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural and Maritime);
A Cunningham, European Programmes Co-Ordinator, and
A Ziarkowska, Committee Officer.

In presence of: Mr Steven Thomson and Mr Ken Rundle (SRUC)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

This being the first meeting of the Rural Affairs Working Group after the local government election in May 2017, nominations for the Chair were requested, after which Councillor Howatson was **appointed** by majority vote as Chair of the Working Group.

2. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Members were asked if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were intimated.

3. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Working Group **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:-

- (1) 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,
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- (2) consider the contents of equality impact assessments, where provided, and to take those into account when reaching a decision.

4. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 29th March, 2017

The Minute of Meeting of 29th March, 2017 was circulated and **approved** as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Derek McDonald went through the action sheet from the last meeting to provide an update on progress in respect of each point. There were no further matters arising.

6. PRESENTATION: BREXIT AND SCOTTISH AGRICULTURE – SOME CONSIDERATIONS’ BY STEVEN THOMSON

The Chair invited Mr Steven Thomson, Senior Agricultural Economist & Communities Sectoral Lead for SEFARI (Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes) at SRUC to deliver a presentation on ‘Brexit and Scottish Agriculture.’ Mr Thomson gave a brief overview of the current agriculture framework. He highlighted the importance of EU payments to the agricultural sector using diagrams to illustrate the Regional and Sectoral Split of the CAP budget in Scotland. Mr Thomson commented on the huge uncertainty over the future for agriculture in Scotland and identified the main issues facing the sector including access to EU single market in post-Brexit period, access to finance and labour. Mr Thomson then summarised the role of regulation and trade in the functioning agricultural framework and outlined a timeline for Brexit negotiations. He also reported that Government intend to adopt a New Agricultural Policy in April 2019 and issue a Command Paper setting out new principles for Agricultural Policy by the end of 2017 with delivery mechanisms detailed in a White Paper in Spring/Summer 2018.

During discussion Members expressed their concern over the future financial viability of the agricultural sector in Scotland and asked Mr Thomson what Council can do to ensure local interests are properly represented in EU - UK negotiations.

The Chair thanked Mr Thomson for informative presentation. Thereafter, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the presentation.

7. PRESENTATION ON THE EU LEADER PROGRAMME IN ABERDEENSHIRE BY ALASDAIR CUNNINGHAM.

The Chair invited Mr Alasdair Cunningham, European Programmes Co-Ordinator at Aberdeenshire Council, to deliver a presentation on the EU Leader Programme in Aberdeenshire. Mr Cunningham gave a brief overview of the current ‘Community-Led Local Development’ (Leader) programme which is funded by European Union and Scottish Government. It was noted that the programme was designed to implement local development strategies and is managed by Local Action Groups. Members were advised that each project must address at least one of the cross-cutting themes, namely Innovation, Sustainability, Equal Opportunities and Community Empowerment & Social Capital. Mr Cunningham outlined the examples of successful projects including rural stores and outlets, a centre for provision of advanced veterinary services, Strathhorn Riding School and Aberdeenshire Highland Beef.

The Chair thanked Mr Cunningham for informative presentation. Thereafter, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the presentation.

8. VERBAL REPORT: THE LAND BASED SECTOR IN NE SCOTLAND – FACING THE FUTURE

There had been circulated a report on the Land Based Sector in North East Scotland which provided Members with an analysis of the industry. Derek McDonald advised that NESAAG had commissioned the study and it had been delivered in March 2016 by a team of led by Peter Cook, an independent agricultural economist at the time; now Director of Agriculture Food and Drink at Opportunity North East. The study had been funded by Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Councils, Scottish Enterprise, HIE Moray and Forestry Commission

Scotland and covered the local authority areas of Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray from 2007 to 2014. Derek McDonald drew members' attention to the report's recommendations and provided a verbal progress update.

After consideration, it was **agreed** to note the information provided.

9. RINGLINK INTERNSHIP/PRE-APPRENTICESHIP - BULLETIN REPORT

There had been circulated a report dated 26th October, 2017 by the Head of Economic Development, which provided members with an update on Ringlink Internship project. The report gave an overview of the Internship Scheme and described its objectives, priorities, funding sources and structure. It was reported that the Internship started in 2013 with financial assistance from the council and is designed to provide young people with a structured introduction to a career in the rural sector through a programme of training and a mentored, paid work placement. The internship is currently the only training programme in Scotland actively recruiting young people into the land-based industry with no prior experience and which provides the opportunity to 'try the job' before committing longer term to the industry. The Internship has been recently accredited by SRUC as a Pre-apprenticeship programme (from 2018 onwards) and since its creation has trained and developed 59 trainees who have gone on to a career in the sector. The internship format is a 3 week induction period which includes Health & Safety, First Aid, manual handling training and site visits, followed by a 6 month paid and mentored work placement.

During discussion, Members considered how best to secure the long-term viability of the Internship programme and how to encourage new mentors to participate in the scheme.

After consideration, it was **agreed** to note the information provided.

10. DAIRY PROCESSING PROJECT - VERBAL REPORT

Derek McDonald provided Members with a verbal update on the NE dairy situation and the project currently underway in support of the local dairy sector. Since the Muller Wiseman dairy processing plant in Tullos had closed in July 2016 locally produced milk was now being transported (at a cost to dairy farmers of 1.75 pence per litre) to Bellshill near Glasgow for processing, which put local producers at a major commercial disadvantage. ONE and Aberdeenshire Council had jointly funded a project to examine the viability of alternative processing options to help secure the future of local dairy production and try to find parties willing to invest. Negotiations were ongoing. Meanwhile local dairy farmers had founded NE Milk Producers Association to represent their interests and to create a vehicle for grant applications. The new association had raised funds from members based on their milk production levels and had appointed a specialist dairy consultant to carry out a detailed feasibility study and business case assessment of a potential dairy processing facility in North East Scotland. Derek McDonald advised that the association was currently working on an application to the Food Processing Marketing and Cooperation (FPMC) grant scheme and was engaging closely with existing buyers of dairy products to determine potential markets and product requirements with a view to future supply contracts. Derek McDonald concluded by advising that a further update would follow at the next meeting of the group.

After consideration, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the update.

11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Derek McDonald advised Members to put their suggestions for Group site visits next year. It was also reported that presentations from the meeting would be circulated to Members via email.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **noted** that the next meeting of the Group will be held on Wednesday, 14th March, 2018 and calendar invites would be issued to Members in due course.

APPENDIX B

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World



ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

10 NOVEMBER, 2017

Present: Councillors J Gifford, (Chair), P J Argyle, and R Thomson (Aberdeenshire Council);

Councillors M Boulton, J Laing, and D Lumsden (Aberdeen City Council); and

Mrs J Craw, Professor S Logan, and Mr P Machray; (ONE).

Apologies: Sir Ian Wood.

In attendance: J Savege, Chief Executive, Aberdeenshire Council; S Archer, Director of Infrastructure Services, Aberdeenshire Council; B Miller, Head of Economic Development and Protected Services, Aberdeenshire Council; A Wood, Head of Finance, Aberdeenshire Council; R O'Hare, Principal Solicitor (Democratic Services), Aberdeenshire Council; J P Cleary, Senior Programme Manager, Programme Management Office, Aberdeen City Council; R Matheson, Service Manager – Industry Sectors – Aberdeenshire Council; S Rochester, Service Manager – Communications and Marketing, Aberdeenshire Council; H Martin, Project Manager, Commercial and Procurement Shared Service; P Finch, Strategic Transport Manager, Aberdeenshire Council; N McIntosh, Finance and Commercial Director, The Oil & Gas Technology Centre; S Haston, Head of IT and Transformation; D Torrance, Senior Transport Planner, Transport Scotland; D McGowan, Head of Communities and Housing, Aberdeen City Council); and J McRobbie, Committee Officer, Aberdeenshire Council.

Present: Colin Parker, Chief Executive, Matt North, Commercial Director, and James Bell, Finance Director, Aberdeen Harbour.

1. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Apologies were intimated from Sir Ian Wood, ONE.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. RESOLUTIONS

(A) Public Sector Equality Duty

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Joint 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;

APPENDIX B

- (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 content and take this into account when reaching a decision.

(B) Exempt Information

The Joint Committee **agreed**, in terms of Sections 50A (4) and (5) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item 8, as tabled, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE OF 8 SEPTEMBER, 2017

The Joint Committee had before them and **approved** as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the Sederunt to list Professor F von Prondzynski as present, and apologies from Professor S Logan, the Minute of Meeting of the Joint Committee of 8 September, 2017.

4. CITY REGION DEAL PROGRESS UPDATE

There had been circulated a report by the Senior Programme Manager, providing an update on the City Region Deal (CRD) and its constituent workstreams. Having heard from the Senior Project Manager that there were separate detailed reports on each of the areas of work on the agenda, the Joint Committee **agreed** to note the updates provided.

5. ABERDEEN HARBOUR UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 8 September, 2017, (Item 7), The Chair, on behalf of the Joint Committee, welcomed Colin Parker, Chief Executive, Matt North, Commercial Director, and James Bell, Finance Director, Aberdeen Harbour to the meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee heard in detail of the Harbour's expansion plans, utilising, in part, the £11m of City Region Deal funding towards the harbour's development work at Nigg Bay, to ensure that the infrastructure complied with state aid rules. This was in the context of the additional funds in local authority management in developing a development framework for the area, and the STAG transport appraisal which would look at issues of connectivity to the wider City and Shire.

In terms of the ongoing construction work, approximately 200m of breakwater had been installed, with approximately 400m to be installed in spring to complete the north breakwater. Thereafter work would be started on the south breakwater, with the works to be completed 2019. Bay dredging had started and would continue. Mr Parker advised the Joint Committee of the different construction methods for the West and North Quay; compared to the "shipping in" of caissons pre-fabricated sections, planned for February, 2018, these would be a more traditional suspended desk with piles.

The works would include a large building on the south side as manufacturing facilities for aquapod – 16 tonnes in weight, 9000 would be built on site at Altens, where the current facilities limited production to 15 per day, using individual moulds. Larger rocks were coming

APPENDIX B

from Norway. The construction works were progressing on schedule and within budget, expected to be complete by May 2020.

The cycle path on the south side of the bay had still to be completed, including its link to Hareness Road on the line of the old railway line.

A visitor centre had been established beside Girdleness Lighthouse, for which Building Warrant was currently being sought. Initially it would be open for invited guests, before ultimately being made a public facility. The centre benefitted from a fantastic view into Nigg Bay.

In terms of business development, Mr Parker spoke of the regular conversations with companies, local and potentially new to the areas. It was anticipated that the Harbour redevelopment would attract decommissioning, cruises (with larger vessels that could currently be accommodated in the existing harbour); offshore wind opportunities. Talks were also progressing with Transport Scotland about the potential to have larger ferries in the future. Modelling of this suggestion seemed to indicate that this was an option, with a larger passenger terminal.

The Cruise Aberdeenshire steering group was already working hard to prepare the local market for opportunities which would be created by the advent of more, and potentially larger, ships, and it was acknowledged that in order to ensure a return market, it was crucially important to have a first class visitor experience product available from day 1. Extensive research was being undertaken and consultation with various tour operators. It had already been identified that a city shuttle bus running to, and from, the quayside was critical; as was the availability of local guides; and the early holding of Familiarisation Trips for tour and cruise operators.

Investigation of decommissioning opportunities was also proving very worthwhile. Discussions were also being progressed with various waste handlers in meetings described as encouraging.

There was discussion of the work with cruise lines, with two companies wanting to come before the works were completed; the potential for the Nigg Bay works to be a “game-changer” for the whole of the north-east of Scotland, negating the requirement for vessels to be tendered to shore; and the understanding that 2018’s provisional bookings would be a progressive start to a chrysalis year; the possible increase in numbers of vessels using the harbour, as well as the capacity for larger vessels; the importance of the awaited outcomes from the STAG appraisal to inform further infrastructure linkages, and comparisons made with the Orkney bus links to go and collect disembarking passengers; the potential for the harbour’s operation to be less disrupted by rough weather; connections being made with local food and drink producers and the cruise lines; contacts made with grain exporters to discuss potential shared business interests; the possible impact on the capacity of the current harbour, more in terms of expansion, not relocation; consideration of shore side power supply provision, as happens in other European ports, despite the lack of interest from current users and suppliers (given a different tax regime to places such as Norway) and challenges with the availability of power supply.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to commend the Harbour development plans; and
- (2) to thank Harbour representatives for an informative and interesting presentation.

6. TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

There had been circulated a report by the Strategic Transport Projects Manager, Aberdeenshire Council, requesting the Joint Committee’s consideration of the Strategic Transport Appraisal Business Case. The report detailed an update on the strategic transport

APPENDIX B

appraisal elements of the City Region Deal, to be jointly funded by UK and Scottish Government and advised of the newly upgraded regional transport model Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) which would be applied, to the Strategic assessment when received, together with review of previous studies and appraisals, undertake fresh public and stakeholder opportunities to (a) identify the key transport problems and opportunities, and analyse their impact on regional economic performance; (b) develop and refine a set of objectives as response; and (c) generate, sift, and appraise a series of options with the potential to contribute towards achieving the City Region Deal's economic aspirations.

There was discussion of the timings of the scheme and its interface with the ongoing work on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), and the requirement not to prejudice any future opportunities; the existing identification, through modelling, of pressure points, and the need to revise the assumptions arising from previous modelling which, being undertaken in 2004- 2011, had been a very different economic climate; timescales for the Harbour Road Improvement; and the clear STAG monitoring process.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to approve, for their interest, the detailed Business Case for the Strategic Transport Appraisal, as appended to the report, noting that it would be submitted to the UK and Scottish Governments and Aberdeenshire Council for approval; and
- (2) To note, in all other respects the updates provided.

7. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 8 September, 2017, (Item 6), there had been circulated a report by the Head of IT and Transformation, Aberdeen City Council, containing an Outline Business Case for the strategy on delivery of the Digital Infrastructure workstream and seeing approval for the next steps.

Having heard further from The Head of IT and Transformation, and the Service Manager – Industry Sectors, as to the opportunities which were now afforded by new Government project potential match funding, on which a decision would be advised in February, 2018; a potential connection voucher scheme; the option to explore further expansion of the Duct infrastructure already in place in Aberdeen City; ongoing discussions on the potential Regional Information Exchange; commercially sensitive competitive opportunities which may become available to providers; and the need for clarity in making information about opportunities publicly available, the Joint Committee **agreed :-**

- (1) To approve for further development the Outline Business Case as appended to the report;
- (2) That a detailed Business Case be submitted for approval in early course;
- (3) To note the opportunities afforded in the City Region Deal area by the gigabit fibre voucher scheme;
- (4) Note that any detailed business case for Duct extension would be subject to agreement by the Scottish and UK Governments;
- (5) That a supportive communications strategy be developed and reported to a future meeting; and
- (6) That a detailed Business Case for the delivery of a Regional Information Exchange be developed and submitted for approval at the next meeting.

8. ADDITIONAL £254M INVESTMENT – 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

There had been tabled a report by the Senior Programme Manager providing an update on the additional £254m investment from the Scottish Government in terms of (a) the Housing Infrastructure Fund and (b) Transport.

APPENDIX B

The Joint Committee noted that the report should have been stamped as exempt in terms of Paragraph 6 of the Section 50A (4) and (5) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and not merely copied on green paper and marked “confidential”.

The Joint Committee heard from the Head of Communities and Housing, Aberdeen City Council, of continuing discussions between the Scottish Government and the Councils on the issue of housing provision, and the challenges of developing and delivering projects to access funds when the commitment was made on a yearly basis, including the requirement to consider a “Plan B”.

Mr Torrance, of Transport Scotland, provided updates on the Laurencekirk grade separated junction proposal’ rail improvement works, focusing on the capacity to reduce point to point journey time, and establish greater consistency, by improving infrastructure; the potential increasing freight demands.

There was discussion of where improvement locations might be identified, not necessarily within the geographical area of the City Region Deal, but with potential to benefit journey times, and whether this should still qualify for City Region Deal allocated funding.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) that a letter be sent to the Minister, on behalf of the City Region Deal Joint Committee, exploring concerns on rail improvements; and
- (2) in all other respects to note the terms of the updates.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Joint Committee **noted** that the next meeting would be held, at the Oil and Gas Technology Centre, on Friday 9 February, 2018, meeting at 9.30am.-

Councillor Jim Gifford, Chair

APPENDIX C

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

PLANNING & BUILDING STANDARDS MEMBERS OFFICER WORKING GROUP

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 15 NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Cllr Fergus Hood (Chair), Cllr David Aitchison, Cllr Mark Findlater, Cllr Ross Cassie, Cllr Robbie Withey, Cllr Iain Sutherland, Cllr Iain Taylor, Cllr Dennis Robertson

Apologies: Cllr John Cox, Cllr Martin Ford, Cllr Ian Mollison, Cllr Norman Smith, Cllr Peter J Argyle.

Officers: Bruce Stewart, Planning Service Manager (BPS)
Piers Blaxter, Team Leader Policy (PB)
Ailsa Anderson, Senior Policy Planner (AA)
Susan Cowie, Members Support Administrator
Becky Holmes, Admin Support Officer (Note Taker) (BH)

1. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 13 SEPTEMBER 2017

The Minute of 13 September 2017 was approved.

2. DEVELOPERS OBLIGATION PLANNING ADVICE

BPS advised that the Developer Obligations Planning Advice was a technical document and therefore did not require Committee approval. Members noted the Advice and it was agreed that BPS would forward a copy of the Advice to the Councillors that were attending as substitutes.

3. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GRAMPIAN HOUSEBUILDERS' COMMITTEE OF HOMES FOR SCOTLAND - HOUSING LAND ISSUES

PB advised that the Policy Team met with the Grampian Housebuilders Committee and advised them on the research carried out on the housing need for the area. The outcomes of the research are highlighted in paragraph 2.5 of the Report. PB advised that the Grampian Housebuilders Committee agreed that there was a need to look at the constrained housing sites and where these can be delivered.

The Housebuilders raised that whilst there is a need to sustain growth, it should be delivered to where there was demand and to where employment is currently located.

BPS advised that the SDPA are currently working on their Main Issues Report and that they were to be meeting the Grampian House Builders Committee in the near future.

Members noted the discussions with the Grampian Housebuilders Committee.

4. ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 - DEVELOPMENT BIDS SUBMISSION FORM

PB advised that the Policy Team will be looking at bids for land from January to the end of March 2018. Information on the Bids will then be presented to Area Committees in May and June. The Bid form will be collecting information on the characteristics and

impacts of potential development sites and looking to see if there is any conflicts. In line with Scottish Government advice the importance of sites being deliverable is very important.

Members agreed that the Bid form was informative and was suitable for use.

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL UPDATE

BPS advised that the Policy Team are currently visiting 68 Community Councils.

PB advised that so far there have been 32 meetings with Community Councils. Early feedback from the Chairs of The Community Councils is that the engagement is very worthwhile.

Some of the main issues being raised at the meetings are with employment land and with getting businesses to take up the land. The need for small residential sites to be allocated and the need for more affordable housing has also regularly been raised.

Councillors who had attended the Community Council meetings had stressed to attendees that it was important to engage with the Local Development Plan process and that the positive feedback they have been receiving confirms that this has been a good exercise.

Members agreed that the work with the Community Councils was very good and will be very useful.

6. POLICY REVIEW UPDATE

PB advised that the Policy Team are currently looking at the policies within the current Local Development Plan to see if there is changes that need to be taken into account for the next Plan. Once this task has been completed the Team will engage with Development Management.

7. DRAFT PLANNING ADVICE 02/2017: SP=EED® – ADVICE FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

AA introduced the report. She advised that Policy P1 Layout, siting and design, states that we will assess all development using appropriate public consultation. We are recommending that all Major Applications comply with SP=EED. Guidance notes to help engage with the planning system have been based on PAS. Appendix 1 to the Report has been produced between PAS and ourselves. We have consulted with Development Management to ensure the document can be applied to the pre-applications. Although there is no formal requirements to adapt SP=EED, we are recommending that this is looked at in the pre-application discussions.

Members all agreed that SP=EED was a useful tool and agreed the report recommendations.

PB advised that AA is the only person in Scotland that was SP=EED verified.

Cllr Hood thanked all officers in attendance at the meeting for the informative and comprehensive reports and presentations.

APPENDIX D

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World



ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

29 NOVEMBER, 2017

Present: Councillors J Gifford, (Chair), PJ Argyle, and R Thomson (Aberdeenshire Council);

Councillors M Boulton, J Laing, and D Lumsden (Aberdeen City Council); and

Mrs J Craw, Mr P Machray, and Sir Ian Wood; (ONE).

In attendance: J Savege, Chief Executive, Aberdeenshire Council; B Miller, Head of Economic Development and Protected Services, Aberdeenshire Council; R O'Hare, Principal Solicitor (Democratic Services), Aberdeenshire Council; J P Cleary, Senior Programme Manager, Programme Management Office, Aberdeen City Council; S Haston Head of IT and Transformation, Aberdeen City Council; and J McRobbie, Committee Officer, Aberdeenshire Council.

1. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

2. RESOLUTIONS

(A) Public Sector Equality Duty

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 content and take this into account when reaching a decision.

(B) Exempt Information

The Committee **agreed**, in terms of Sections 50A (4) and (5) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item 4, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

APPENDIX D

The Committee, having heard from the Principal Solicitor in respect of the remote participation of Members under Standing Orders, **agreed** to suspend Standing Order 33 to allow Members attending remotely to participate in the undernoted matter containing confidential and exempt information.

4. CONNECTIVITY UPDATE

There had been circulated a report by Simon Haston, Head of IT and Transformation, Aberdeen City Council, providing an update on an urgent issue relating to connectivity in terms of the innovation theme of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, and seeking approval of a Business case for Digital Infrastructure, to utilise a fifth of the £10M Scottish Government Additional £254M Investment, to extend Aberdeen City Council's wide area network to ultrafast fibre connectivity.

The Joint Committee heard from The Head of IT and Transformation of the opportunities, throughout the City Region which would benefit, directly, or indirectly, if the investment were approved, and of the risks, given that the best outcome would depend on commercial negotiations.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the business case to invest £2M to extend Aberdeen City Council's wide area network to ultrafast broadband;
- (2) to note that formal approval would be required for the business case and the investment from the Scottish Government; and
- (3) that there be a standing item for future meetings of the Committee with an update on digital progress across the region as a whole, including the use of "bundling" to maximise cover opportunities.

Councillor Jim Gifford, Chair

APPENDIX E

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND AGRICULTURE ADVISORY GROUP

COMMITTEE ROOM 5, WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN

WEDNESDAY, 6th DECEMBER, 2017

Present: **Aberdeenshire Council** – Councillors W Howatson (Chair), S Duncan, I Taylor and J Whyte.
Aberdeen City Council – Councillors N MacGregor.
Angus Council – Councillors K Braes.
Moray Council – D Bremner.
Aberdeen University - Profs K Thomson and D Roberts.
James Hutton Institute - LA Sutherland
SGRPID – J Kinnaird
RSPB - H Maggs
SRUC – K Black and K Rundle
Forestry Commission Scotland - J Nott
LANTRA – H Graham and J Adamson
NFUS - L Paterson
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce – J Muir

Apologies: Aberdeenshire Council - Councillor J Hutchison, J Ingram and D Robertson.
Aberdeen City Council - Councillors B Crockett and A MacKenzie.
Angus Council - Councillor C Brown, A Macmillan Douglas and B Myles.
Moray Council – Councillor T Eagle
Angus Council - H Tasker
Opportunity North East – P Cook
RSPB – K Cunningham
James Hutton Institute – B Slee
Scottish Enterprise – G Ford
LANTRA - S Howden and K Patrick
NFUS – A Connon, R Catto and J Hall
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce – C Phillips
Ringlink (Scotland) Ltd – G Robertson
Ringlink Services Ltd - P Wood
SEPA - P Wright
SLE – D Fyffe
OBE - Dr B Pack
SAC Consulting - A Laing
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – L Irwin and M Havers
Visit Scotland - Jo Robinson
RICS – D Smart
SAOS Limited – J Booth

Officers: D McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Aberdeenshire Council)
A Ziarkowska, Committee Officer (Aberdeenshire Council)

In presence of: Simon Turner (Peter Chapman' office MSP)

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the meeting. Members were asked if they had interests to declare. No declarations of interest were intimated.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Partnership **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 and 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; and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment had been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 20th SEPTEMBER, 2017

The Minute of Meeting of 20th September, 2017 was circulated and **approved** as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Derek McDonald went through the action sheet from the last meeting to provide the update on progress in respect of each point and confirmed that the presentations from the previous meeting were available. There were no further matters arising

5. PRESENTATION: FARMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW ENTRANTS BY HENRY GRAHAM, CHAIR OF LANTRA SCOTLAND

The Chair invited Mr Henry Graham – Chair of Lantra Scotland - to deliver a presentation on the Farming Opportunities for New Entrants (FONE). Mr Graham reported that there has been much discussion and debate about the need to attract and encourage new entrants to Scottish farming. He outlined that the structure of farming creates significant challenges for new entrants as farming businesses are overwhelmingly small or micro businesses, mostly family owned and run and generally operating as sole traders or partnerships. It was further observed that the number of farm occupiers aged 40 years and younger has dropped to around 9% while those aged 65 years and over has risen to over a third. Mr Graham continued by stating that new entrants in agriculture tend to drive innovation and best practice, improve efficiencies, contribute towards the economic vitality of the sector and are generally recognised to be vital for the future of the industry. Thereafter, Mr Graham presented the Farming Opportunities for New Entrants programme and highlighted that the Scottish Government is determined to facilitate entry for the next generation by lowering capital and land barriers, supported by a first-class skills, knowledge and training package. He concluded by citing some potential entry routes for the next generation of Scottish farmers including contract farming opportunities, and share farming models.

During discussion Members expressed their support for Scottish Government measures to support New Entrants and young farmers to secure the long-term future of the agricultural sector.

The Chair thanked Mr Graham for his informative presentation. Thereafter, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the presentation.

6. PRESENTATION: WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE STUDY BY LEE-ANN SUTHERLAND, JAMES HUTTON INSTITUTE

The Chair invited Ms Lee-Ann Sutherland from James Hutton Institute to deliver a presentation on Women in Agriculture Study. Ms Sutherland outlined that in 2016 the Scottish Government commissioned research to investigate the role of women in farming and agriculture in Scotland. The purpose of the study was to establish a baseline position on women in the agriculture sector under 5 headings, namely daily life, aspirations, career paths, leadership and comparative analysis with women in other family businesses, with a view to informing future policies to enhance the role of women in the sector. Ms Sutherland continued by indicating that the research showed that women play a major role in Scottish agriculture and participate fully across a range of farming activities. However, women often encounter major barriers to advancing their roles on-farm and in farming organisations due to a lack of time, practical training opportunities and male domination amongst the elected leadership of national farming organisations. The importance of inheritance, training and farm safety also emerged as important issues. Ms Sutherland concluded by presenting recommendations from the study: that the long-established practice of passing on large farms intact to one son needs to be challenged; that there should be a 30% quota system for women on farming organisation boards and committees; the establishment of a 'talent bank' of suitably qualified women for farming positions; the development of financial incentives for farmers to purchase equipment suitable for women to use, and to encourage the use of childcare facilities.

During discussion Members focused on the role of women across the full range of farming activities and measures to enhance their involvement and inclusion within it.

The Chair thanked Ms Sutherland for her informative presentation. Thereafter, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the presentation.

7. PRESENTATION: GENDER ACTION PLANNING WITHIN SRUC BY KYRSTEN BLACK, SRUC

The Chair welcomed Kyrsten Black from SRUC to deliver a presentation on bridging the Gender Gap in Land-based Education. Ms Black advised that SRUC offers education and training across a wide range of land-based disciplines and works with a number of universities and research partners to provide taught and research opportunities which are designed to enable young people to maximise their future employment or research choices. In 2014/15 male students comprised 49.1% of Higher Education students within SRUC while 50.9% were female. However in Further Education the ratio was 64% male and 36% female. Ms Black reported that in order to progress the issue of gender equality SRUC had established a project with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) to review and take positive reinforcement action through images, discussion with students and high profile role models. Ms Black concluded by saying that project leaders will continue to work with Focus Groups and industry to promote careers including "broaden your horizons" events for school pupils.

The Chair thanked Ms Black for her valuable presentation. Thereafter, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the presentation.

8. UPDATE ON OPPORTUNITY NORTH EAST AND THE LOCAL DAIRY SECTOR BY PETER COOK - ONE

As Mr Peter Cook was unavailable, the Chair invited Derek McDonald to provide a verbal update on the NE dairy situation and the project currently underway in support of the local dairy sector. Mr McDonald gave a brief overview of the current position of the local dairy sector. Following the closure of the Muller Wiseman dairy in Aberdeen, milk from the NE is being transported to Bellshill near Glasgow for processing at a cost to dairy farmers of 1.75 pence per litre, putting local producers at a major commercial disadvantage. ONE and Aberdeenshire Council had jointly funded a project to seek an inward investor and examine the viability of alternative processing options to help secure the future of local dairy production. With assistance from SAOS, dairy farmers had set up NE Milk Producers Association and raised funds from members for a dairy industry specialist to carry out a detailed feasibility study and business case assessment of a potential dairy processing facility in North East Scotland. Mr McDonald advised that the association is currently working on an application to the Food Processing Marketing and Cooperation (FPMC) grant scheme and engaging closely with existing buyers of dairy products to determine potential markets and product requirements with a view to future supply contracts. Mr McDonald concluded by advising that a further update would follow at the next meeting of the group.

The Chair thanked Mr McDonald. Thereafter, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the update.

Action point 1: Dairy Sector study progress update to Members at next meeting.

9. REPORT: CONSIDERATION OF ENLARGED GROUP MEMBERSHIP

There was circulated a report dated 28th November, 2017 by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which invited Members to consider the enlargement of a Group Membership. The report outlined that NESAAAG is a cross-party, a cross-sectoral group which provides communication channel between the agricultural industry and political representatives at all level. It was noted that the importance of communicating the unique perspective, challenges and opportunities of the agricultural and related sector in NE Scotland to political representatives at all levels will play an important part in helping to ensure as favourable an outcome post-Brexit for the region as possible, including influencing the shape and form of any policy succeeding CAP. The Group was therefore recommended to consider whether the membership of NESAAAG should be enlarged to include MPs, MSPs and MEPs.

During discussion Members expressed their concerns about inclusion of the high-level politicians as this may impact on the quality and dynamic of discussions at the meetings. It was observed that any politician is welcomed to attend the NESAAAG meetings as they are all open to public, however, their formal membership at NESAAAG needs to be consulted with the Legal Team.

After discussion, Members **agreed** to allow MPs, MSPs and MEPs attendance at NESAAAG meetings in the observer capacity and refer this matter to Legal Team for advice.

10. UPDATE ON ISSUE WITH BRISKET TAGS ON CATTLE

The Chair invited Derek McDonald to provide a verbal update on use of cattle brisket tags. Mr McDonald informed Members that the use of brisket tags on cattle in the Aberdeenshire area was widespread, but that they were not an approved form of identification (on animal welfare grounds) and that farmers using such tags faced penalties if they were detected during official inspections. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) confirmed that the use of brisket tags was not permitted and advised against removing any tags already inserted to minimise pain and distress to cattle. There was therefore no way of avoiding a non-compliance penalty once attached. The Group's assistance was sought to find a solution. A member of the council's Animal Health and Welfare team had contacted APHA and been advised that it would be guided by the advice of the British Veterinary Cattle Association (BCVA). It was suggested that brisket tag removal under veterinary supervision might be permissible without incurring penalties but written confirmation had still to be obtained. Regular contact had been maintained with NFUS which was working to advise members that no new brisket tags should be used. Members will be updated at the next meeting.

After discussion, Members **agreed** to note the information provided in the update.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms Jennifer Kinnaird advised that she is leaving her post as Principal Agricultural Officer at SGRPID at the end of 2017 and that she will be unable to attend future meetings of the Group. The Chair thanked Ms Kinnaird for her regular attendance and valuable input to NESAAG discussions.

Action point 2: presentations to be posted on NESAAG webpage and members to be advised accordingly.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **agreed** that the next meeting of the North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group would take place on:

- Wednesday, 18th April, 2018 at 10.00 a.m. in Woodhill House, Aberdeen

APPENDIX F

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN

FRIDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2018

Present: Councillors M Boulton, D Aitchison, J Cooke, G Graham, A Forsyth (as substitute for Councillor B A Topping), R Grant, PJ Johnston, D Lonchay, (as substitute for Councillor Wallace), and J Latham.

Apologies: Councillors J Cox; B Hunt, B A Topping, I Yuill, and S Wallace.

Officers: - **Strategic Development Planning Authority:** Senior Planner.
Aberdeen City Council: Head of Planning & Sustainable Development (Interim); Planning and Environmental Policy Manager, Legal Advisors (E Carlisle).
Aberdeenshire Council: Head of Planning and Building Standards, Accountant (B Allan), and Committee Officer (J McRobbie).

1. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cox, Hunt, Topping, Yuill, and Wallace.

2. MINUTE OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 20 SEPTEMBER, 2017

The Authority had before them and **resolved** to approve as a correct record the Minute of Meeting of 20 September, 2017.

3. MAIN ISSUES REPORT

There had been circulated a joint report by the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development (Aberdeen City Council) and the Head of Planning and Building Standards, (Aberdeenshire Council), requesting consideration of the Main Issues Report, as part of the process for establishing a replacement Strategic Development Plan for the area, delayed in part by the ongoing work in respect of the Scottish Government's Review Of Planning, and the Supreme Court case on the Strategic Transport Fund. The report contained details of the initial workshop discussion of the potential issues with the Authority in September, 2017; the need to amend the vision to have a greater focus on environmental and social resilience rather than just economic resilience and to have greater consideration of economic diversification, in line with the Regional Economic Strategy; maintenance of the current special strategy, in the context of the potential for growth West of Aberdeen (A93 and A944), the AWPR, and regeneration priorities; the economy; housing, including affordable housing and the housing land supply; energy; transportation; and minerals and waste.

Noting that the New Planning Legislation, if approved, would remove the need for Strategic Development Plans, but that Minister had advised that the work should proceed, in order to meet the current statutory deadline of renewal by 28 March, 2018.

The Authority resolved: -

- a) to approve for consultation the Main Issues Report, as detailed in Appendix 1, and note the supplementary documents;
- b) that a consultation period of 10 weeks be established; and
- c) that, prior to its publication, approval of any drafting changes to the Main Issues Report be delegated to officers, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority.

4. PLANNING (SCOTLAND) BILL – CALL FOR EVIDENCE SUBMISSION

There had been circulated a joint report by Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development (Aberdeen City Council) and the Head of Planning and Building Standards, (Aberdeenshire Council), requesting Members' consideration of a proposed additional submission on the Scottish Government's proposed Planning (Scotland) Bill in the context of considered implications for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire of the legislation as drafted. The report contained officers' suggested responses to the 2 questions asked by the Scottish Government relating to regional and strategic planning in its call for evidence submission.

After discussion of the success of the Authority's strategic partnership's joint working over strategic planning over a number of years, and of the benefits in building on that partnership experience and inter-authority political mechanisms,

The Authority resolved to approve the response, as detailed in the appendix in the report, for submission to the Scottish Government.

5. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY BULLETIN

There had been circulated a report containing bulletin information for the Authority in terms of (a) the two local development plans, which were up to date, with development plan schemes approved by Aberdeen City Council, indicating January 2018 as the date for consideration of a Main Issues report, and Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee to consider its development plan scheme on 25 January, 2018, proposing a Main Issues Report to be considered in November, 2018; (b) on a third submission, made on behalf of the Authority in respect of the Kingsford Stadium Planning application, of strategic importance, and which the City Council had approved, subject to conditions at a recent meeting; (c) the Employment Land Audit for both Councils, published in December, 2017; and (d) of positive feedback received from the Scottish Government on 3 January, 2018 on the region's planning performance framework 2016/17.

The Authority resolved to note the updates provided.

6. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY BUDGET MONITORING AS AT 30 NOVEMBER, 2017

There had been circulated a report dated 17 January, 2018, by the Treasurer, providing monitoring information on the Authority's budget to 30 November, 2017.

There was discussion of the additional costs incurred in respect of the case for the Strategic Transport fund, and the Treasurer provided assurance that the additional costs would fall on the two Councils as partner authorities, and that budget provision had already been made for this.

The Authority **resolved** to note the budget monitoring as at 30 November, 2017.

7. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 20 September, 2017, (Item 3), there had been circulated a report dated 17 January, 2018 by the Treasurer, contained a proposed revised Financial Regulations for the Authority, produced in response to External Audit's annual assessment of the Authority to conform with the 2014 Regulations.

The Authority **resolved** to approve the revised Financial Regulations as detailed in the Treasurer's report.

8. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FUND – SUPREME COURT RULING

There had been circulated a joint report by the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development (Aberdeen City Council) and the Head of Planning and Building Standards, (Aberdeenshire Council), updating the Authority on the decision of the Supreme Court on the Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) regarding the Strategic Transport Fund (STF).

The Authority **resolved** to note the updates provided.

9. DATE OF FUTURE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY MEETINGS

The Authority **noted** the remaining scheduled meeting dates for the 2018/19 diary as undernoted:-

- 21 March, 2018 at 2.00pm at Aberdeen City Town House;
- 27 June, 2018 – Woodhill House;
- 26 September, 2018 – Aberdeen City Town House;
- 19 December, 2018 – Woodhill House; and
- 20 March, 2019 – Aberdeen City Town House.

Councillor Marie Boulton
Chair