

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING

BY SKYPE, 10 JUNE, 2020

Present: Councillors K Adam, W Agnew, D Aitchison, A Allan, P Argyle, N Baillie, D Beagrie, L Berry, A Bews, G Blackett, R Bruce, C Buchan, M Buchan, S Calder, G Carr, R Cassie, J Cox, I Davidson, S Dickinson, A Duncan, E Durno, A Evison, M Ewenson, A Fakley, M Findlater, M Ford, A Forsyth, P Gibb, J Gifford, V Harper, A Hassan, F Hood, W Howatson, J Hutchison, M Ingleby, J Ingram, P Johnston, A Kille, A Kloppert, J Latham, S Leslie, D Lonchay, R McKail, A McKelvie, D Mair, I Mollison, G Owen, G Petrie, C Pike, G Reid, G Reynolds, D Robertson, A Ross, M Roy, A Simpson, H Smith, N Smith, S Smith, A Stirling, I Sutherland, I Taylor, B Topping, I Walker, A Wallace, L Wilson, R Withey and J Whyte.

Apologies: Councillors A Buchan and H Partridge.

Officers: Chief Executive, Director of Business Services, Director of Education and Children's Services, Director of Infrastructure Services, Head of Service (Finance), Head of Service (Legal & Governance), Partnership Manager (Central), Health and Social Care Partnership and Principal Committee Services Officer.

CHAIR

Councillor W Howatson, Provost of the Council, presided.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prior to consideration of the business of the meeting, the Provost congratulated local community groups who had been recognised through the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services including Portsoy Community Enterprise, Invercairn Gala Committee and North East Open Studios.

The Provost also reflected on recent events and how they were shaping communities across Aberdeenshire by reinforcing a strong sense of community, by supporting each other and standing together in difficult times and, in reference to the protests spreading across the UK against racism, restated the Council's commitment to promoting equality in communities and condemning racism in all its forms.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

2. STATEMENT ON EQUALITIES

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Council **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 their decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL OF 30 APRIL, 2020

The Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 30 April, 2020, had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record.

4. COVID- 19 RECOVERY REFERENCE GROUP

There had been circulated a report by the Chief Executive seeking the establishment of a Covid-19 Recovery Reference Group to oversee the Council's transition from the response phase of the Covid- 19 pandemic. The report explained the purpose of the Reference Group and the proposed Terms of Reference as detailed in Appendix 1.

During discussion, Members paid tribute to the work of all staff, partner organisations and communities across Aberdeenshire for their support and contribution to the delivery of services during the response to the pandemic.

At this point in the proceedings, due to network signal difficulties, the Provost was unable to maintain full online connection to the meeting and the Deputy Provost took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Thereafter, the Council **agreed** to:

- (1) establish a reference group to be known as the Covid-19 Recovery Reference Group;
- (2) approve the Terms of Reference for the Covid-19 Recovery Reference Group at Appendix 1 to the report;
- (3) appoint 14 Elected Members to the Covid-19 Recovery Reference Group based on political proportionality as agreed by Full Council and as outlined in paragraph 4 of the Terms of Reference;

- (4) to suspend the operation of the Procedures Committee and transfer its remit to the Covid-19 Recovery Reference Group with immediate effect;
- (5) to receive regular updates from the Covid-19 Recovery Reference Group on the work of the Group; and
- (6) to receive a report to consider the continued necessity for the Reference Group in January 2021.

5. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

There had been circulated a report dated 14 May, 2020 by the Director of Business Services requesting that the Council (1) note the resignation of Councillor Thomson, (2) note the changes in political group affiliation for Councillors Berry, Bews, Gifford, Hutchison, Roy and Wilson and consider the impact of those changes on the composition of committees, (3) approve arrangements for the filling of current vacancies and the future appointment of members to the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee; and (4) take the necessary steps to fill the vacancy of Vice Chair of the Communities Committee.

The Council **agreed**:

- (1) to note the formal resignation of Councillor Thomson effective from 24 April, 2020 and that arrangements for a by-election to fill that vacancy would be published in due course;
- (2) to note the change in political group affiliation for Councillors Berry, Bews, Gifford, Hutchison, Roy and Wilson, following notification to the Chief Executive, to the effect that: the Administration has 41 members (comprising Conservatives (16 - previously 20), Liberal Democrats (14) and Aligned Independents (11 - previously 7)), the Partnership has 20 members (comprising SNP (18 – previously 21) and the Aberdeenshire Labour and Communities Alliance (2)), the remaining 8 members comprise - the Democratic Independent Green Group (2), Social Democratic Group (2) and individuals (4) and there was 1 vacancy;
- (3) that the political proportionality for the current standard model 14 member, 8 member and 5 member meeting groups required adjustment as a result of the notification referred to at (2) above and requested that the Head of Legal and Governance report on changes required, maintaining continuity of membership where possible, to the September 2020 meeting of Council;
- (4) the exact composition of the four Policy Committees and the Audit Committee, having regard to the principle of each member being allocated one committee place as follows –

	Business Services	Education and Children's Services	Infrastructure Services	Communities	Audit	Total
Administration	8	8	9	8	8	41
Partnership	4	4	4	4	4	20
Amalgamated small groups and individuals	1	2	1	2	2	8
Vacancy	1					1

- (5) that the current vacancies and any future changes to named appointments to the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee during the current Council term should be made by the political groups in line with the proportionality previously agreed by Council of 2 substantive members of the Administration and 1 substantive member of the Partnership, with equivalent named substitutes; and
- (7) to defer consideration of the appointment of a Vice Chair of the Communities Committee to the next meeting of Full Council.

6. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

There had been circulated a report dated 25 May, 2020 by the Director of Business Services on items of business previously scheduled to be reported back to Council and proposing action to be taken as a result of restrictions on travel and other activities implemented in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council **approved** the arrangements for dealing with outstanding business as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

7. USE OF DELEGATED POWERS BY OFFICERS BY REASON OF SPECIAL URGENCY

On a circulated report dated 25 May, 2020 by the Director of Business Services, the Council **noted** the number of occasions when officers had used delegated powers between 18 April 2020 to 29 May, 2020, to take decisions by reason of special urgency related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as detailed in the Appendix to the report.