

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE****SKYPE MEETING, 3 SEPTEMBER, 2020**

Present: Councillors A Stirling (Chair), D Mair (Vice Chair), A Allan, G Blackett, M Buchan (as substitute for Councillor M Roy) Councillor R Cassie (as substitute for Councillor Robertson) P Gibb, A Hassan, A Kille, C Pike, G Reynolds, D Robertson, A Ross, M Roy, I Walker and S Wallace.

Apologies: Councillors D Robertson and M Roy.

Officers: Director of Infrastructure Services, Head of Service (Housing), Interim Head of Service (Lifelong Learning and Leisure), Head of Property and Facilities, Corporate Finance Manager, Area Manager (Buchan), Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Business Strategy Manager (Customer and Digital Services), Housing Manager (Housing and Building Standards), Strategic Procurement Manager, Housing Manger (Housing), Team Leader (Housing and Building Standards), Team Manager (Property and Facilities), Programme Manager (Health and Social Care Partnership), Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Co-ordinator, Principal Solicitor (Governance) (Lauren Cowie), and Senior Committee Officer (N David).

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Cllr Allan declared interests in Items 15 and 17 as a member of the Board of Houseability. Having applied the objective test she concluded that it was so remote and insignificant that she would remain and participate. Cllr Pike declared an interest in Item 19 as a former member of the Culture and Sport Sub-Committee. Having applied the objective test he concluded that it was so remote and insignificant that he would remain and participate

No further interests were declared.

2. RESOLUTIONS**A. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

In taking decisions on the undernoted 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 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 has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

B. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the items specified below so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the undernoted paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Item No	Paragraph No of Schedule 7A
20	8 and 10
21	8
22	8

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE OF 4 JUNE, 2020

The Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 4 June, 2020 had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

4. PROGRESS WITH OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

There was circulated a report, which updated members on the progress made, against outstanding actions agreed, at previous meetings of the Communities Committee, held on 5 September and 19 December, 2019, 20 February, 2 April and 4 June, 2020. The report also detailed the actions completed since the last meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the position with regard to the progressing of actions from previous meetings and those which had now been completed.

5. QUARTER 1 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: COMMUNITIES BUDGET

There was circulated a report dated 12 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services which provided the Committee with the revenue and capital financial performance information for those services which fall within the remit of the Committee as at 30 June 2020.

The report explained that on 18 March, 2020 Full Council approved a Revenue Budget of £135.292 million in respect of those services for which Communities Committee was responsible. It was proposed to transfer £16,356 from the Libraries budget to the Active Schools staffing budget (the expenditure related to a Health Walks Co-ordinator post), subject to approval by Full Council £139,350 of funding related to New Scots would be transferred to the Government Grants Reserve and £44,000 would be transferred from that same reserve for expenditure related to

HEEPS. These transfers subject to the appropriate approvals would result in a revised budget of £135.180 million and were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

The report further explained that the Communities Capital Budget for monitoring purposes for 2020/21 was agreed on 18 March, 2020 by Council at £7.031 million and this increased to £7.253 million due to £222,000 being carried forward from 2019/20. Details were outlined in Appendix 4 to the report.

Following the discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the Revenue and Capital Financial Performance for Quarter 1; and
- (2) approve the budget movements as set out in Appendix 3

6. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO 30 JUNE 2020 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

There was circulated a report dated 12 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services which provided the Committee with the revenue and capital budget monitoring information to 30 June 2020 for consideration.

The report reminded members that the HRA Revenue Budget for monitoring purposes for 2020/21 was agreed on 13 February, 2020 by Full Council as breakeven, with £64.513 million of income and expenditure. The phased budgeted income and expenditure on service delivery to the end of June 2020 was a net income position of £6.343 million and the actual was net income of £7.121 million, or £0.777 million more than expected and was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The HRA Capital Budget for the year 2020/21 was £64.801 million and was detailed in Appendix 3 to the report. To the end of June 2020, capital expenditure amounted to £4.201 million or 6% of budget after three months. It was anticipated that expenditure would be £30.362 million lower than budget due to the implications of Covid-19 on the delivery of the plan.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the revenue and capital budget monitoring to 30 June 2020.

7. ABERDEENSHIRE CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT – 2019/20 REPORT

With reference to the minute of meeting of the Committee of 2 April (Item 5), there was circulated a report dated 4 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services which requested that the Communities Committee to consider and agree the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report prior to its publication.

The report explained that Full Council approved the Action Plan on 26 April, 2019 and delegated the approval of future submissions of the Action Report to the Scottish Government to Communities Committee, following consideration and comments on the action plan by Area Committees and Education and Children Services Committee. The Scheme of Governance was updated to reflect this decision. The comments made by the six Area Committees and the Education and Children Services Committee were outlined to the meeting of the Communities Committee on the 2 April, 2020.

The report reminded members that the approach within Aberdeenshire to tackling Child Poverty focussed on tackling the root causes and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability, improving quality of life, helping families manage the impacts of poverty and promoting positive life choices.

The report concluded that all the Aberdeenshire wards had levels of poverty that were lower than the Scottish average however it was anticipated that the impact of Covid 19 would increase these levels over the next few years. The increased levels of unemployment with the reduction of employment opportunities, especially for young people, digital exclusion and increase in household costs would all contribute to the anticipated increase in those living in poverty. The Child Poverty Action Report outlined positive impacts along with the challenges and areas of development going forward over the next 12 months and beyond.

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

- (1) to approve the Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2019 / 20;
- (2) that six monthly monitoring reports be submitted to the Committee, with the first to include a presentation by the Lived Experience Forum if possible; and
- (3) that information be provided to Area Committees as appropriate.

8. TACKLING POVERTY & INEQUALITIES – PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

With reference to the minute of meeting of the Committee of 2 April (Item 5), there was circulated a report dated 11 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services on a review of the Council's participation in the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group in line with the Council's Partnership Policy.

The report reminded members that at the meeting on 5 September, 2019, the Communities Committee approved the Aberdeenshire Information and Advice Delivery Framework, which was funded and supported by the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group. When approving the Framework, the Committee agreed, that progress in relation to delivery of the Framework, would be included as part of the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Annual Report which was submitted to Committee on the 2 April, 2020.

The Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group was set up to coordinate strategic development across partners. The approach to tackling poverty focussed on early intervention and prevention by tackling the root causes and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances. The role, remit and membership of the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities partnership was described in Appendix 1 to the report. The latest partnership review and action plan was outlined in Appendix 2.

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

- (1) to endorse the partnership review of the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategic Group;

- (2) that the Council continue to participate in the partnership for a further three years; and
- (3) that Area Managers be given the opportunity to provide feedback to the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategic Group.

9. FINANCIAL INCLUSION - PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

There was circulated a report dated 11 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services on a review of the Council's participation in the Financial Inclusion Partnership in line with the Council's Partnership Policy.

The report explained that the Financial Inclusion Partnership was set up in 2010 as a delivery group which improved financial inclusion services, increased income, reduced people living in poverty and improved their health and wellbeing, enhancing their quality of life. The partnership reported to the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group. The partnership group was set up to address financial exclusion through developing a partnership approach ensuring those most effected can access services, advice and support. The role, remit and membership of the partnership was described in Appendix 1.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to endorse the partnership review of the Financial Inclusion Partnership; and
- (2) that the Council continue to participate in the partnership for a further three years.

10. LOCALITY PLANNING ANNUAL REPORTING

There was circulated a report dated 11 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services on the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) draft Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) Annual Report for 2019/20.

The report explained that the LOIP and Locality Plans were monitored and scrutinised by the CPP Executive and CPP Board through update reports on a quarterly basis. The third annual report (2019/20), detailed in Appendix 1, highlighted a number of performance indicators (PIs) to illustrate where the LOIP was achieving its outcomes as well as the gaps that remained. Over the coming years, targets identified for each of the PIs would give a clear sense of aims and allow the CPP to assess whether as much progress was being made as should be. Some PIs had been established for the Locality Plans booster projects and case study examples of progress had also been provided to demonstrate how outcomes were being achieved. The final draft of the report would be presented to the CPP Board at its meeting on 5 October 2020 for endorsement.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the draft LOIP and Locality Planning Annual Report 2019/20.

11. LOCALITY PLANNING ANNUAL 3 YEAR REVIEW

There was circulated a report dated 3 August, 2020, by the Director of Business Services on the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) draft Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Locality Planning 3 Year Review.

The covering report explained that the review had highlighted a few areas for CPP members to consider in progressing the LOIP and Locality Plans, namely:

Taking a collaborative approach to reduce siloed thinking around alcohol as many cases involved engaging with the same families;

Consideration of a refocus of the alcohol priority;

In relation to Child Poverty, the future focus to be for all partners to be aware of the impact of COVID-19 and ensure future plans were informed, not only by those with lived experience, but by having a clear understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty;

The priority title of “Reducing Child Poverty” changed to a wider definition that encompassed seeking to reduce poverty and the impact of poverty for families and households across Aberdeenshire;

To help bridge the gaps that existed the monitoring and evaluation of booster projects within Locality Plans, a framework in the north around the hubs would be developed to help evidence and evaluate progress;

A revision of the Connected and Cohesive Communities Terms of Reference to include:

- the opportunity of widening the scope of the group to include an approach for dealing with socio-economic issues highlighted through the various Area Community Plans that were out with locality planning arrangements.

- spatial planning linkages and planning legislation to help strengthen relationships.

- a review of the membership of the group as well as the format of future Meetings; and Progress the work around obesity to determine whether there was ample evidence to support obesity becoming a LOIP priority.

A copy of the 3 Year review formed Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the draft LOIP and Locality Planning 3 Year Review and to provide comment to Aberdeenshire’s Community Planning Partnership (CPP) that the wording “metabolic health” replace “obesity” as appropriate.

12. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE– REVIEW OF LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN FOR ABERDEENSHIRE

There was circulated a report dated 3 September, 2020, by the Director of Business Services on the review of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire.

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review for 2020 was included as an appendix.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the information contained in the review and progress made over the lifetime of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan; and

- (2) approve the proposed priorities for the development of the revised Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire.

13. ABERDEENSHIRE RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN (RRTP) UPDATE

There was circulated a report dated 4 August, 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the progress being made by the Housing Service on the actions identified in the Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024. The report provided detailed background information on the RRTP and also an update on recent activity which explained that in June 2020 the Council were required to submit a monitoring report to the Scottish Government outlining spend of the RRTP funding and to give an update on progress to date. The monitoring report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, enabled the Council to provide detail on the amount and range of activities carried out in implementing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and to demonstrate that the funding provided had been spent. Prior to submission the report was circulated within the RRTP Member Officer Working Group and received positive comments.

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

- (1) to acknowledge the activities being undertaken jointly by Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and partners to deliver the actions identified within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24;
- (2) that a further update on progress be provided in six months; and
- (3) to the response to the modifying of local connection consultation as detailed in appendix 3.

14. HOUSING ACTION PLAN

There was circulated a report dated 7 August, 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the key areas for improvement for the Housing Service arising from the Annual Return on Charter.

The report reminded members that the Housing Action Plan was brought before the Communities Committee at six monthly intervals and updated following receipt of benchmarking data. The Housing Service worked on improvements continuously, with a clear action plan being a key part of retaining focus on specific areas for improvement.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) approve the Housing Action Plan; and
- (2) receive six monthly updates on the progress of the Action Plan.

15. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

There was circulated a report dated 4 August, 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the delivery of the Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy during 2019/20.

Aberdeenshire Council agreed the Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023 in December 2017 and received an annual update to monitor. The strategy aligned with Scottish Government guidance on the development of local housing strategies and identified six priorities of affordable housing; energy efficiency, fuel poverty and climate change; homelessness and housing options; independent living; minority ethnic communities; and private sector housing.

Appendix 1 reported progress during the second year in delivering the Local Housing Strategy. For each priority there was a range of performance information and action plan monitoring included. On the whole performance was positive with 24 out of 33 indicators considered to be on track.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge and endorse the annual report.

16. REVIEW OF LETTABLE STANDARD

There was circulated a report dated 4 August, 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the review of Lettable Standard.

The report explained that in April 2019 Aberdeenshire Council commissioned Arneil Johnston to support the Council to review its void processes. The implementation of the Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Housing Plan (RRTP) included a commitment to “making better use of our current resources and carrying out a review of the current void procedure”. The commitment was to significantly reduce re-let times by reviewing voids processes and improving practice and performance. The review of the lettable standard was a key aspect of this improvement process. The outcome of the review was to limit work when the property was empty by working with the outgoing tenant to undertake works before they vacate and to then work with the incoming tenant to undertake necessary upgrades and adaptations once they were in the property. The result would be more person centered, whilst minimising the number of days a property was empty and significantly reducing void rent loss.

Following discussion, Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Ross, **moved** that the streamlined revised Lettable Standard detailed in Appendix 5 be approved, subject to the addition of 4 elements from Appendix 4 namely: ensure washing machine connections are operational; ensure cooker space has 620mm space; minor mould wash and treatment to be carried out; and removal of non original and defective porches to take place. Thereafter, that implementation be monitored for 6 months with a report back to Committee.

As an amendment, Councillor Reynolds, seconded by Councillor Allan, **moved** that the revised Lettable Standard detailed in Appendix 4 be approved, and that it be monitored for 6 months with a report back to Committee thereafter on the implementation.

Members of the Committee voted as follows:-

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----|---|
| for the motion | (9) | Councillors Stirling, M Buchan, Gibb, Hassan, Kille, Mair, Pike, Ross and Walker. |
| for the amendment | (4) | Councillors Allan, Blackett, Cassie and Reynolds. |

The motion was carried in the following terms:-

that the streamlined revised Lettable Standard detailed in Appendix 5 be approved, subject to the addition of 4 elements from Appendix 4 namely: ensure washing machine connections are operational; ensure cooker space has 620mm space; minor mould wash and treatment to be carried out; and removal of non original and defective porches to take place. Thereafter, that implementation be monitored for 6 months with a report back to Committee.

17. AFFORDABLE HOUSING – AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT

There was circulated a report dated 4 August, 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on a briefing in respect of a report carried out by Audit Scotland for the Scottish Government entitled “The Scottish Government’s affordable housing supply target”.

The report explained that The Scottish Government commissioned Audit Scotland to carry out an audit of which the aims were to: report on progress towards the Scottish Government’s affordable housing target and assess what impact it had; and consider what more the Scottish Government and councils needed to do to support the continued increase in affordable housing for those in need.

Aberdeenshire Council’s position was detailed in Appendix 1.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge Aberdeenshire Council’s position and provide comments as appropriate; and
- (2) monitor future delivery of actions through the Local Housing Strategy Annual Report to this committee.

18. ABERDEENSHIRE HSCP PERFORMANCE & OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK QUARTER 3 AND 4 REPORTING – OCTOBER 2019 TO MARCH 2020

There was circulated a report dated 5 June, 2020, by the Partnership Manager, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership which aimed to ensure the Integration Joint Board (IJB) fulfilled its ongoing responsibility to ensure effective monitoring and reporting on the delivery of services and on the programme of work as set out in the Strategic Plan.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the content of the Integration Joint Board Performance Quarter 3 and 4 Report.

19. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE: LIVE LIFE

There was circulated a report dated 12 August, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services which recommended changes to the governance arrangements for the oversight of the Culture and Sport services delivered through Live Life Aberdeenshire due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The report explained that given the unprecedented impact on the delivery of the service and change in Council priorities, the recommendation was that, in the current climate, the Culture and Sport Sub-Committee was not best placed to make the decisions on matters within its remit. Decisions required to be made in the context of the Council's response to coronavirus being cognisant of the impact of decisions on other areas of the Council and the budget and so it was currently appropriate that the Communities Committee, who were represented on the Recovery Reference Group, resume the responsibility for the Live Life Aberdeenshire services.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge that the pilot period for the Aberdeenshire Culture and Sport Sub-Committee had come to an end.
- (2) acknowledge that the planned review of the governance of culture and sport services was delayed due to the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Live Life Aberdeenshire service.
- (3) to recommend to Council that the services provided by Live Life Aberdeenshire should be the direct responsibility of the Communities Committee and that the Sub-Committee should be disestablished due to the changing nature of the service provision and the wider changes in governance introduced corporately and implications arising through the new Council priorities as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

20. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (HIP) 2017-2021

There was circulated a joint report dated 17 August, 2020, by the Directors of Business Services and Infrastructure Services providing an update on the progress of the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme for Year 2, the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the programme.

The report reminded members that a previous report had been submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 4 June, 2020 and thereafter a briefing note which gave details of the Re-start Plan Model for the phased resumption of the Housing Improvement Plan. In addition, members had previously requested quarterly update reports to the Communities Committee.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) endorse the current position with regard to progress on the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme for Year 2;
- (2) acknowledge the forecast expenditure for the Financial Year 2020/2021 on the Housing Improvement Programme; and

- (3) endorse the current position with regard to the current impact the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the subsequent UK and Scottish Government shutdown of non-essential construction work, had and would have on the future progress of the Housing Improvement Programme Year 2.

21. HARD FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (HARD FM) UPDATE AND WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

There was circulated a report dated 31 July, 2020, by the Director of Business Services on the performance of FES Limited, the term contractor, under the Hard Facilities Management contract.

The report provided up to date information.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) acknowledge the performance of FES Limited under the Hard Facilities Management contract;
- (2) acknowledge the feedback following the Hard FM Workshop held on 18 June 2020; and
- (3) to receive further updates on a quarterly basis.

22. LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE DIRECTORATE PROCUREMENT PLAN – 2020/2021

There was circulated a report dated 19 August, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services which presented a Directorate Procurement Plan for the renewal of the contract Civica Spydus Library Management System.

The report explained that the reason for the report was to seek and gain approval for expenditure to enter into a new contract for provision of the Civica Spydus System under a new supplier.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the item on the Procurement Plan detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) to acknowledge that the Head of Service had the delegated authority to award the final contract of the item with a contract value up to £1,000,000; and
- (3) that a briefing note be provided the Committee regarding the implementation, after an appropriate length of time.