

## ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

### SKYPE MEETING, 7 OCTOBER, 2020

**Present:** Councillors K Adam, W Agnew, D Aitchison, A Allan, P Argyle, N Baillie, D Beagrie, L Berry, 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, H Partridge, 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 Taylor, B Topping, I Walker, L Wilson, R Withey and J Whyte.

**Apologies:** Councillors A Bews, A Buchan, I Sutherland and A Wallace.

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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prior to consideration of the business of the meeting, the Provost highlighted that as part of black history month held each October, Aberdeenshire Equalities team would be sharing local and national information, including personal accounts, on social media and other council communication channels.

### CHAIR

Councillor W Howatson, Provost of the Council, presided.

#### 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.

#### 2A. 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.

## **2B. EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The Council **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 5 below so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

## **3. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL PLAN 2020 – 2022**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 23 July, 2020 (Item 4) when it had been agreed to close down the previously approved Council Plan for 2017 – 2022 and adopt new Council principles and priorities to be embedded in a new Council Plan, there was circulated a report dated 17 September, 2020 by the Director of Business Services (1) seeking approval of the new Aberdeenshire Council Plan 2020 – 2022 which reflected the new principles and priorities previously approved, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, (2) outlining the proposed arrangements for monitoring delivery of the Plan on an annual basis, and (3) detailing the arrangements and proposed timescale for consulting with Area and Policy Committees on the development of Area and Service plans to support delivery of the outcomes.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and explained that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and further changes and restrictions in place since the report had been produced that further flexibility would be required in terms of the timetable for reporting to Area and Policy Committees with a suggested start date of December, 2020.

The Council Leader endorsed the proposed flexible approach to the reporting timetable and development of Service plans, thanked all officers and members for their contributions to the Plan, advised that an amended version of the Plan had been circulated under separate cover to all Members the previous day and published on the Council website and reflected on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery across Aberdeenshire.

The Council also heard from the Chairs of the Council's Policy Committees.

Thereafter, Councillor Gifford moved, seconded by Councillor Petrie, that Council –

- (1) note and approve the amended version of the Council Plan 2020 – 2022 circulated and associated priorities;
- (2) endorse a flexible approach to the reporting timetable and note the intention to commence reporting to Area and Policy Committees in December, 2020; and
- (3) agree to receive annual performance reports evidencing progress with the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 – 2022.

As an amendment, Councillor Ford moved, seconded by Councillor Wilson, that Council not approve the proposed new Council Plan because:

- (1) The priorities allocated to the three pillars of 'Our People', 'Our Environment' and 'Our Economy' in no way correspond to the pillars to which they are allocated;
- (2) Priorities as non-specific as 'Education' and 'Infrastructure' provide no useful guidance for activity;
- (3) Ends and means are confounded, and;
- (4) The vagueness, contradictions and inconsistencies in the Plan mean that the document would serve no useful purpose.

Members of the Council voted –

for the motion	(61)	Councillors Adam, Agnew, Aitchison, Allan, Argyle, Baillie, Beagrie, Berry, Blackett, Bruce, C Buchan, M Buchan, Calder, Carr, Cassie, Cox, Davidson, Dickinson, Duncan, Durno, Evison, Ewenson, Fakley, Findlater, Forsyth, Gibb, Gifford, Harper, Hassan, Hood, Howatson, Hutchison, Ingleby, Ingram, Kille, Kloppert, Latham, Leslie, Lonchay, Mair, McKail, McKelvie, Mollison, Owen, Petrie, Pike, Reid, Reynolds, Robertson, Ross, Roy, Simpson, H Smith, N Smith, S Smith, Stirling, Taylor, Topping, Walker, Whyte and Withey.
for the amendment	(3)	Councillors Ford, Johnston and Wilson
absent from the vote	(1)	Councillor Partridge.

The motion was carried and the Council **agreed** –

- (1) to note and approve the amended version of the Council Plan 2020 – 2022 circulated and associated priorities;
- (2) to endorse a flexible approach to the reporting timetable and note the intention to commence reporting to Area and Policy Committees in December, 2020; and
- (3) to receive annual performance reports evidencing progress with the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 – 2022.

#### 4. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There had been circulated a report dated 29 September, 2020 by the Director of Business Services presenting the findings of a Community Impact Assessment (CIA) process undertaken by the Council in August 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and outlining the reasons for the assessment. The report explained (1) that a CIA was a standard process used when a critical incident had been called to better understand how the community and statutory partners could work together towards recovery and next steps, (2) that the information collected would assist in informing short, medium and longer-term recovery plans from Covid-19 and had the potential to influence how community confidence, resilience and ability would be rebuilt (renewed) following the crisis, and (3) that the also CIA presented an opportunity to identify lessons learned about how the response phase to the incident was handled.

The Director of Business Services introduced the report and the Area Manager (Formartine) delivered a detailed presentation on the work undertaken and findings to date.

Thereafter, the Council **agreed**:

- (1) to note the Community Impact Assessment as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) to acknowledge that the report captured the position as at August 2020;
- (3) to acknowledge that Covid-19 does not affect all people or communities equally and this is evidenced in the findings of the Community Impact Assessment;
- (4) to endorse further work being undertaken to capture community views at a future stage, and particularly to ensure targeted engagement with vulnerable groups;
- (5) to note that the findings of the Community Impact Assessment provided evidence to support the development of the Council Plan, Service Plans, Area Plans and Community Plans; and
- (6) that Members be provided with a more detailed breakdown and application of the data received and work to be undertaken as a result.

#### 5. WORKSPACE – OFFICE SPACE STRATEGY

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 25 June, 2020 (Item 12) there had been circulated a report dated 16 September, 2020 by the Director of Business Services providing an update on the current position with the Office Space Strategy, taking into account the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work programme and proposing a review of the future use of Woodhill House and progress with the Inverurie and Ellon office space projects.

Following a full discussion, the Council **agreed**:

- (1) to endorse the workstream updates as detailed in the report at Appendices A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H & I;
- (2) the Heads of Terms for Woodhill House for Police Scotland as detailed in the report at Appendix D;
- (3) that a further report be presented to Council with a revised options appraisal for the required future use of Woodhill House by Aberdeenshire Council taking into consideration the emerging Council Plan, the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Workforce Strategy; and
- (4) that Officers continue to progress the Inverurie and Ellon office space projects and report back to the Council with updated Business Cases as part of the Programme Review.