

FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 17 NOVEMBER 2020

Present: Councillors I Davidson (Chair), K Adam (Items 1 to 10), A Duncan (Items 1 to 11), A Forsyth, J Gifford (Items 1 to 8), A Hassan, P Johnston, A Kloppert, L Mcallister, G Owen, E.A. Stirling (Items 4 to 13) and I Taylor

Officers: E Brown (Formartine Area Manager), C Young (Area Committee Officer), M Ingram (Senior Solicitor, Legal & Governance), J Wheeler (Senior Planner, Infrastructure Services), G Roberts (NESBReC Co-ordinator, Infrastructure Services), C Herbert (Archaeologist, Infrastructure Services), F Banks (Ranger Co-ordinator, Infrastructure Services), J Evans (Team Leader, Economic Development & Protective Services, Infrastructure Services), D Redford (Business Change Manager, Business Services), L Jolly (Head of Children's Services, Education and Children's Services) and A Martin (Community Safety Team Leader, Infrastructure Services)

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

Councillor Owen advised that she had a connection to Item 5A as a resident of Schoolhill Road, Ellon. She had responded to questions from local persons and had directed them to the Planning Service, but she had not expressed any views on the Planning Application. Having applied the objective test she concluded that she had no interest to declare.

Councillor Johnston declared an interest in Item 11 as his wife reported to the report author. He advised that he would leave the meeting for the duration of the item and would take no part in the deliberations.

2. RESOLUTIONS

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

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

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 27 OCTOBER 2020

The Committee had before them, and approved as a correct record, the minute of the meeting of 27 October 2020.

4. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL NESBReC STRATEGY REVIEW 2017-20 AND NESBReC STRATEGY 2020-23

There had been circulated a report dated 20 October by the Director of Infrastructure Services which advised of the work of the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NRSBReC), through the NESBReC Strategy Review 2017-20. The report also sought comments on the draft NESBReC Strategy 2020-23.

The documents had been considered by the Planning and Environment Member and Officer Working Group and, following consultation, would be presented to Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2021.

Members welcomed the report which they found clear, concise and interesting. It was commented that members would find Formartine based information helpful, as well as a highlight of the changes in the six areas over the years. They also queried what methods the service used to promote the strategy within the community.

Following discussion, the Committee:-

- (1) **Acknowledged** the work of NESBReC over the 2017-20 period to manage, protect, enhance and promote the biodiversity of the region, as outlined in the NESBReC Strategy Review 2017-20 (as detailed in appendix 1 of the report), and
- (2) Provided the following **comments** on the draft NESBReC Strategy 2020-23 (as detailed in appendix 2 of the report):
 - a) It would be helpful if the service could share information with Councillors that they could use to promote the strategy,
 - b) The Area Committee would welcome an annual update from the service, and
 - c) It would be helpful for all members to receive a copy of the Infrastructure Service Committee annual update report, for their information, via Ward Pages.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION

Reference	Description	Decision
A. APP/2020/1422	Full Planning Permission for Erection of 40 Dwellinghouses and Associated Infrastructure at site at Former Ellon Academy, Ellon	Defer

6. LOCAL REVIEW BODY DECISION NOTICE – LRB 490, APP/2019/2505 – GORDON COTTAGE, URQUHART ROAD, OLDMELDRUM

There had been circulated and was **noted** a Review Decision Notice dated 20 October 2020, advising that the Local Review Body agreed to uphold the Notice of Review and reversed the decision reviewed by it, thereby granting Full Planning Permission.

The salient points to be acknowledged by the Committee and the Service had been outlined within the information provided to members.

Following discussion, the members **requested** that officers bring a report back to Committee to clarify the current policy position.

7. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE STRATEGY REVIEW 2017-20 AND ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE STRATEGY 2020-23

There had been circulated a report dated 19 October 2020 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which advised of the work of the Archaeology Service through the Archaeology Service Strategy Review 2017-20. The report also welcomed comments on the draft Archaeology Service Strategy 2020-23.

The documents had been considered by the Planning and Environment Member and Officer Working Group and, following consultation, would be presented to Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2021.

During discussion, the members thanked the service for the report and what had been achieved. It was commented that the volume of archaeological finds in Aberdeenshire was outstanding and questioned what should and could be saved for the future. It was queried whether there was a facility to achieve historical information and whether the service had enough resources available, especially given the challenges faced by climate change.

Councillor Stirling undertook to raise this strategy with the Head of Live Life Aberdeenshire to ascertain where links could be made to these works.

Following debate, the Committee:

- (1) **acknowledged** the work of the Archaeology Service over the 2017-20 period to manage, protect and promote the historic environment of the region, as outlined in the Archaeology Service Strategy Review 2017-20 (as detailed in appendix 1 of the report), and
- (2) provided the following **comments** on the draft Archaeology Service Strategy 2020-23 (as detailed in appendix 2 of the report):
 - a) It would be helpful to strengthen links with Live Life Aberdeenshire and the Library Service,
 - b) It would be helpful to have wider links with the Council's Ranger Service, and
 - c) Members would welcome any relevant training being made available on the ALDO system.

8. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL RANGER SERVICE STRATEGY REVIEW 2017-20 AND RANGER SERVICE STRATEGY 2020-23

There had been circulated a report dated 26 October 2020 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which advised of the work of the Ranger Service through the Ranger Service Strategy Review 2017-20. The report also sought comments on the draft Ranger Service Strategy 2020-23.

The documents had been considered by the Planning and Environment Member and Officer Working Group and, following consultation, would be presented to Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2021.

During discussion, the members welcomed the report and the update on the breadth and depth of what the service carried out. Members commented that often a mix of face to face and digital engagement was successful and queried whether officers were engaging the community in identifying areas of biodiversity, noting that the service was working with Greenspace officers.

Following debate, the Committee:

- (1) **acknowledged** the work of the Ranger Service over the 2017-20 period to raise awareness of the natural and cultural heritage of the region to protect and enhance its biodiversity, as outlined in the Ranger Service Strategy 2017-20 (as detailed in appendix 1 of the report), and
- (2) provided the following **comments** on the draft Ranger Service Strategy 2020-23 (as detailed in appendix 2 of the report):
 - a) The Committee would welcome regular updates to enable them to engage with the strategy, and
 - b) Consideration should be given as to how this work could be reflected in Area Delivery Plans.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE DECLARATION CONSULTATION

There had been circulated a report dated 14 October 2020 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which sought to consult on how Aberdeenshire Council should work towards its Climate Change Declaration targets and commitments.

Following debate, the Committee **noted** Aberdeenshire Council's Climate Change Declaration and provided the following **comments** for Full Council:

- a) The title 'Climate Change Declaration' is too soft,
- b) Decisions on financial investments should be weighted to consider carbon budget return,
- c) We should develop a carbon cost curve,
- d) Partners should be encouraged to also develop a carbon budgeting process,
- e) Support was given to moving the carbon budget responsibilities onto directorates,
- f) Further consideration should be given as to how we engage our local residents,
- g) It should be requested that all Committee reports assess sustainability,
- h) Fuel efficiency and insulation should be encouraged in local buildings,
- i) Driving efficiency should be encouraged, and

- j) Consideration should be given as to how this work could be reflected in Area Delivery Plans.

10. ABERDEENSHIRE'S DIGITAL STRATEGY

There had been circulated a report dated 3 November 2020 by the Director of Business Services which sought to consult on Aberdeenshire's Digital Strategy.

Following debate, the Committee provided the following **comments** on Aberdeenshire's Digital Strategy:

- a) There needs to be clear mitigation for those with vulnerabilities,
- b) There needs to be a partnership and collaborative approach,
- c) The strategy should remain flexible,
- d) More information is required on what is being developed alongside this strategy for those who are not digitally enabled, to ensure there are no gaps in provision,
- e) The Equalities Impact Assessment needs to be widened to include all groups who may not be digitally enabled, including those who do not wish to be, and
- f) There should be further consideration of whether the timing of this strategy is right and whether sufficient time has been given for meaningful consultation with all committees.

11. CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT

There had been circulated a report dated 27 October 2020 by the Director of Education and Children's Services which presented progress made by Aberdeenshire Council and Partners on the Corporate Parenting Plan. The report also demonstrated the ongoing commitment to listening to Care Experienced young people to ensure that lived experience directed and influenced the service design and provision.

During discussion the members thanked the service for the fantastic work they had carried out and commended the Head of Children's Services for her enthusiastic approach to change.

Following debate, the Committee:

- (1) **noted** the information contained within the report and provided the following **comments** to the Corporate Parenting Leads Strategic Leads Group on the update contained within the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2019-20 (as detailed in appendix 1 to the report):
 - a) The Committee welcomed this report being presented to Area Committees, and
 - b) Further consideration should be given to the ways we deliver our corporate parenting responsibilities by: refreshing responsibilities within services; having a dialogue with the young people involved; and looking at the outcomes, and
- (2) **agreed** to continue to support the Council's corporate parent duties by listening to the needs, fears and wishes of children and young people, and being proactive and determined in our collective efforts to address these.

12. COMMUNITY SAFETY GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC ARRANGEMENTS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

There had been circulated a report dated 16 October 2020 by the Director of Infrastructure Services and the Chair of the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Executive, which invited the Committee to note the Governance arrangements for Community Safety Partnerships, as approved by the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board. The report also sought comments on the Community Safety Strategy.

During discussion, the members commended the Team Leader on the works he had carried out since taking up the post.

Following debate, the Committee:

- (1) **noted** the governance arrangements as outlined in paragraph 4.15 of the report, and
- (2) **provided** the following **comments** on the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Strategy (as detailed in appendix 1 to the report), to the Communities Committee for their consideration on 17 December 2020:
 - a) The strategy sets out clear priorities, but we need to deliver on these and measure outcomes to assess the impact it has had, and
 - b) A closer working relationship with the Formartine Community Planning Group would be welcomed.

13. STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

The Committee had before them and **noted** a report by the Formartine Area Manager, updating on matters that had previously been discussed by the Committee but remained to be resolved. The Area Committee Officer and Area Manager verbally updated on progress in relation to items 1, 3, 6 and 9.

APPENDIX A

5A. Reference No: APP/2020/1422

Full Planning Permission for Erection of 40 Dwellinghouses and Associated Infrastructure at Site at Former Ellon Academy, Ellon, Aberdeenshire

Applicant: Aberdeenshire Council

Agent: Aberdeenshire Council

The Senior Planner introduced the application and the Committee heard oral representations from the applicant and an objector.

During discussion, members asked about onroad parking for those in Schoolhill Road and the current restrictions; queried whether the current yellow lines on Schoolhill Road were to remain; queried alternative crossing facilities available if the current pedestrian crossing was to be removed; queried whether the pavements in front of houses H, I, J and K would be wide enough for wheelchair access and use by double buggies; queried why the anticipated obscure glazing for bathroom windows was not made definitive if there was any concern about overlooking; queried the adoption of the open spaces and whether the landscape maintenance would indeed include the raking and removal of grass cuttings; sought clarification on the proposed bin storage across the site and collection of waste; clarified the finishings to be used for the proposed buildings; sought clarity on the boundary treatments to be used and who would be responsible for their maintenance; asked about drainage in terms of the surface water coming off hard surfaces, and whether this would go into the combined sewer or a surface water drain; asked if there would be pourous paving and if so how this would be maintained in the longer term; clarified that there was a pedestrian zone within the communal car parking area and queried whether any electric charging points would be made available; asked about the proposed tenure of the properties and what the current needs were in the area; sought assurance that these homes were being designed as homes for life and any designed for those with specific needs would be be accessible, have sufficient room for mobility equipment and would have parking at the property; asked about developer obligations; clarified that there would be no Right to Buy on these properties and they would remain in perpetuity as housing stock; raised concern about houses H, I, J and K having their front doors open onto the main street, with no fencing as a protective barrier, noting that the current railings were to be removed during pavement installation; and noted that Schoolhill Road was currently only partly one-way.

Following debate, the Committee **agreed to defer** consideration of the planning application for one cycle, pending further clarification in relation to:

- a) The potential for electric charging points in the car parking area,
- b) Whether a replacement pedestrian crossing could be provided rather than its removal,
- c) The proposed placement and design of the bin stores for houses H, I, J and K,
- d) Possible boundary treatments for the properties to the south of the site,
- e) Landscaping maintenance available under the current policy,
- f) The finish of the proposed buildings, and
- g) An assessment of the traffic on Schoolhill Road.