

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 11 MARCH, 2021

Present: Councillors P Argyle (Chair), J Cox (Vice Chair), W Agnew, D Aitchison, G Carr, A Fakley, J Ingram, P Johnston, J Latham, I Mollison, G Reid, S Smith, I Taylor and R Withey.

Officers: Interim Director of Infrastructure Services, Head of Service (Planning & Environment), Head of Service (Transportation), Head of Service (Economic Development & Protective Services), Head of Commercial and Procurement, Team Manager, (Planning and Environment, D Ross), Strategy Manager, (Transportation), Passenger Transport Manager, (Transportation), Business Partner (Finance), Principal Solicitor (Legal & People) and Committee Officer (F Brown).

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 the following interests were intimated: –

- (1) Councillor Aitchison, Cox, Johnston, Latham (as substantive members) and Councillor Mollison (as substitute member) of the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA), declared an interest in agenda **Item 8** as Board members. That interest had a specific exclusion, therefore, those members concluded that they would remain and participate when that item was being considered.
- (2) Councillors Argyle, Aitchison, Carr and Cox (as substantive members) and Councillor Mollison as (substitute member) of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board (NESTRANS), declared an interest in agenda **Item 9**. That interest had a specific exclusion, therefore, those members concluded that they would remain and participate when that item was being considered.

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 is provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching a decision.

2B. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

Item No	Paragraph No of Schedule 7A
18	8

3. MINUTE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 21 JANUARY, 2021

The Committee had before them, and **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 21 January, 2021.

4. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

There was circulated a list of outstanding actions from previous meetings of the Infrastructure Services Committee, along with new items which had been deferred to future meetings of the Committee, as of 11 March 2021.

The Director introduced the report and the provided the Committee with a verbal update for each of the outstanding actions Items 1 to 9 below:

- Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 would stay on the list.
- Items 6, 8 and 9 could now be removed from the list.

Having considered the list of outstanding actions, the Committee **agreed to note** the current position in respect of actions arising at previous meetings.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTORATE PLAN 2020 – 2022

With reference to the Minute of the Aberdeenshire Council Meeting of the 23 July 2020 (Item 4), where the Council had set out a review of the previous Council Priorities, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Council services, there was circulated a report dated 18 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which presented, for approval, the Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan 2020-2022, which detailed the actions the service would undertake in support of the Strategic Priorities set out in the Council Plan 2020-2022.

It was reported that to support the delivery of the Council Plan, several specific Council priorities have been matched to the strategic priorities and Infrastructure Services would contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Priorities by taking the lead role in 15 of the agreed Council priorities as presented in Appendix 3, (page 64 of the agenda pack), many of which would involve cross-Service collaborative working. In addition to the actions being taken by the Service in support of the Council

priorities, the Directorate Plan set out the actions being taken by the Service in support of Operational Priorities as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Director introduced the report and advised the Committee that the plan would continue to develop as a living document; it would demonstrate service improvement; it would be supported by the detailed activities of the service and the delivery plans would sit beneath the Directorate Plan. That would then produce the performance information, including financial information which would be reported back to Committees on a regular basis.

The Chair advised the Committee that the plan had been shared with external audit and the Chair of the Communities Committee and both had provided some very positive comments as well as some very helpful suggestions as to how the plan may be improved going forward.

The Committee welcomed the report and acknowledged the exceptional professionalism and flexibility shown by the workforce during some extremely challenging times where staff continued to provide Council services during the pandemic.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **approve** the Infrastructure Service Directorate Plan 2020-2022 and associated priorities attached as Appendix 3 to the report; and
- (2) to **acknowledge** that the Director would continue to report, by exception, to the Committee quarterly, on performance measures against service objectives and six monthly on progress in delivering all aspects of the Directorate plan.

6. FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ERECTION OF DWELLINGHOUSE, SITE B, SAPPHIRE OF BLACKHILLS, LONMAY, FRASERBURGH – REFERENCE: APP/2020/1537

With reference to the Buchan Area Committee of 12 January 2021 (Item 5B), where the Area Committee had resolved to grant the application, against the recommendation of the Planning and Environment Service, there was circulated a report dated 8 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration of an application for Full Planning Permission, for the Erection of a Dwellinghouse at Site B, Sapphire of Blackhills, Lonmay, Fraserburgh – Reference: APP/2020/1537.

The Chair intimated that a request to speak had been received, and the Committee **agreed** to hear from Mr Jim Buchan, on behalf of the applicant.

The report explained that the application had been considered by the Buchan Area Committee, who had agreed that the application should be referred to the Infrastructure Services Committee for final determination with the recommendation that the proposal should be delegated to the Head of Service (Planning and Environment), to GRANT Full Planning Permission, on the basis that, in the opinion of the Buchan Area Committee, the proposal was an acceptable departure from the Local Development Plan, as the plot was part of a cohesive group.

The Team Manager, Planning and Environment (D Ross) introduced the report and advised the Committee that the key issues the Committee should consider were (1) the acceptability of the proposed development, which would be as a significant departure from Policy R2: Housing and employment development elsewhere in the countryside. While Policy R2 would allow for an addition to a cluster of a minimum of 5 existing dwellinghouses in the Rural Housing Market Area (RHMA), additions must not surpass 20% of the existing total of houses within a Plan period. As part of that 20%, a maximum of up to 2 new homes would be permitted to be added to the cluster, however, there were 10 connected houses within that cluster and two additions to that had already been approved in principle within the current Plan period (APP/2018/2132 and APP/2018/2133) leaving no further scope for growth under the present Plan. All other material considerations had been considered and Officer's recommendation was to refuse the application for the reasons contained in Section 6.1 to the report.

Mr Buchan then addressed the Committee and highlighted several issues which the applicant would like the Committee to consider when determining the application.

Mr Buchan stated that the site had previously obtained consent, but in the time since the detailed planning permission had been approved, the applicant's wife had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and sadly passed away. The applicant's full attention had been focussed on providing for his wife's needs during that difficult time and unfortunately the approval had lapsed.

When the applicant had identified that the approval had lapsed, he re-applied for the same permission, which he believed would just be a formality as the application was submitted on the basis that the site was within a cohesive grouping, identical to the original application.

On receipt, the Planning Officer had noted that there were two other site permissions which had been approved since 2017 which had meant that the allocations for sites for that area were now fully subscribed under the current adopted plan. As the applicant's original application for site B had been approved under the previous adopted plan, it was no longer valid.

While the applicant had assumed that if the application were refused, a new application could be submitted, when the forthcoming new development plan had been formally adopted, he was aware that there may be changes to the housing policy which could mean that the cohesive grouping proviso may no longer apply. The applicant was minded that the application would still conform with the currently adopted policies, with the exception that the allocation of sites, within the present plan period which was now fully subscribed.

The applicant believed that the principle of development had already been established on site for many years, with Planning Permission in Principle being granted in 2015 and sought Committee support to re-establish the consent previously obtained through the new application.

The Chair asked Mr Duncan to confirm that he had received a fair hearing. Mr

Duncan confirmed that he had received a fair hearing and thanked Committee for allowing his request to speak, on behalf of the applicant.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** that their reason for departing from the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017, in respect of Policy R2: Housing and employment development elsewhere in the countryside, was that the Committee had determined that the application plot was, in their view, part of a cohesive group and they considered that material weight should be given to the previous planning history for the site, which would allow them to set aside policy and support the decision of the Buchan Area Committee.

The Committee therefore **agreed** to endorse the decision of the Buchan Area Committee, and that authority to GRANT should be delegated to the Head of the Planning and Environment Service, subject to:

- a. Conditions covering the following matters:
 1. Roads
 2. Public water connection
 3. Foul and rainwater drainage
 4. Carbon neutrality
 5. Landscaping plan
 6. Means of enclosure

7. FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ERECTION OF DWELLINGHOUSE AT SITE TO THE NORTH OF FETTERANGUS, MINTLAW – REFERENCE: APP/2020/2150

With reference to the Buchan Area Committee of 12 January 2021 (Item 5D), where the Area Committee had resolved to grant the application, against the recommendation of the Planning and Environment Service, there was circulated a report dated 2 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration of an application for Full Planning Permission for the Erection of a Dwellinghouse at a Site to the North of Fetterangus, Mintlaw – Reference: APP/2020/2150.

The Chair intimated that a request to speak had been received, and the Committee **agreed** to hear from Mr Philip Baxter, on behalf of the applicant.

The report explained that the application had been considered by the Buchan Area Committee, who had agreed that the application should be referred to the Infrastructure Services Committee for final determination, with the recommendation that the proposal should be delegated to the Head of Service (Planning and Environment), to GRANT Full Planning Permission, on the basis, that in the opinion of the Buchan Area Committee, the proposal would be an acceptable departure to the Local Development Plan as it would comply with Policy P2 on the grounds that:

- (1) the size of the plot was acceptable, particularly with some additional landscaping around it, and the design would be in-keeping with the surrounding area,

- (2) the house would fit as there was already a nearby agricultural building, and the site was in-keeping with the local area as there were similar surrounding Fetterangus,
- (3) the issue of drainage could be addressed, and
- (4) the 200 metres has been exceeded in this case however, other applications have been withdrawn in terms of capacity and permissible growth.

The Team Manager, Planning and Environment (D Ross) introduced the report and advised the Committee of the principal planning issues that the Committee should consider were in relation to the acceptability of the proposed development, which would be a significant departure from Policy R2: Housing and employment development elsewhere in the countryside. The Committee were advised that Policy R2 would allow for small-scale growth of settlements, where a particular need for development had been identified, for those settlements, where such growth applied, as listed in Appendix 4 to the Local Development Plan. While Fetterangus was an identified settlement within Appendix 4, the application had shown that the site would exceed the distance specified in Policy R2, as it would lie more than 310 metres from the settlement boundary, which was significantly greater than the 200 metres stipulated in policy.

Furthermore, 11 planning applications have been granted under the exception of Policy R2, i.e., as organic growth of an identified Appendix 4 settlement, and as such the application as presented before them would represent the 12th house if granted, which was more than the maximum permissible growth of 10 dwellinghouses and that would have the potential to undermine the deliverability of the two allocated sites within the settlement of Fetterangus for a total of 53 houses. While the application was for a single house, the cumulative impact of single houses approved outwith the 20% policy limit could impact on the delivery within the settlement in the future.

It was further reported that since the report was finalised for consideration by the Buchan Area Committee, the Planning and Environment Service has received an application on the school site in Fetterangus (application reference APP/2020/2360) for 26 houses, which was currently pending consideration. The Committee were advised that consider that granting applications for houses on greenfield sites within the open countryside contrary to the development plan, had the potential to undermine housing allocations, and the development of vacant, derelict and brownfield sites.

The Committee were advised that the Planning and Environment Service would recommend that the Committee refuse the application for the four reasons contained in Section 6.1 to the report.

Mr Baxter then addressed the Committee and highlighted several issues which the applicant would like the Committee to consider when determining the application.

Mr Baxter advised the Committee the application was a very sensitive and an unusual application and had the applicant received correct advice from their original architectural agent back in 2017, they would have received planning permission for the dwellinghouse under the then 400 metre rule policy and that policy would have also allowed for up to 3 dwellinghouses on site. Originally, they were advised to

apply for their agricultural shed to conduct their business and then when that was established, to apply for the dwellinghouse. Unfortunately, the policy then changed which restricted the number and the distances of houses which could be added to settlements. Other applications had subsequently been submitted to take up the limited site allocations under the 200-metre rule and some of those applications had still not been developed.

With regards to the application being a significant departure from policy, Mr Baxter asked the Committee to note that under the 2012-2017 Local Development Plan, that had allowed for 20% of the village numbers to be built, which would have been about 40 houses. The 2017 - 2022 Local Development Plan, also allowed a further 10 houses to be built, however, over the last 2 development plan periods only 23 of those potential 50 houses had been built in Fetterangus.

It was noted that the Council had already approved a new allocated OP3 site for 49 houses in the next Local Development Plan, and that would only be 100 metres away from the application site, which would bring the proposal right next to the village. It was also noted that 3 plots which had been approved under the settlement policy which had been superseded by the new allocation and the applicant was concerned that the next Local Development Plan would remove the 200-metre rule therefore his only chance to get approval for his application was to seek Committee support for the application.

The applicant considered that the dwelling design was of good quality and it was sympathetically designed to match its surroundings as could be seen by the plan and the size of the site was not out of keeping with any other site around Aberdeenshire. The applicant does not believe that a single dwelling, next to the existing agricultural business, would be detrimental to the landscape character or existing houses in the village and he respectfully asked that the Committee consider granting the application.

The Chair asked Mr Baxter to confirm that he had received a fair hearing. Mr Baxter confirmed that he had received a fair hearing and thanked Committee for allowing his request to speak, on behalf of the applicant.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to support the Officer's recommendation to REFUSE Full Planning Permission for the following reasons:

01. The Planning Authority considers that the application is for a development that is not in accordance with the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017.

The application is in conflict with the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017, in particular Policy R2 Housing and employment development elsewhere in the countryside, in that the proposed development fails to comply with any of the listed exceptions for development to be supported, including agricultural succession and growth of a settlement identified in Appendix 4 of the Local Development Plan. The site lies some 312 metres of Fetterangus, which is more than the limit of 200 metres away from a settlement listed in Appendix 4 as stated in the Local Plan. Furthermore, Fetterangus has exceeded permissible growth of 10 houses, with 11 live permissions for dwellinghouses within 200 metres of the settlement.

02. Due to the size of the plot, which is 0.4 ha (4,000 square metres), the proposed development is contrary to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017, in particular Policy P1 Layout, siting and design as the development would be out of keeping within the rural countryside, and Policy E2 Landscape by introducing a large area of curtilage.

Furthermore, it is contrary to Policy R2 Housing and employment development in the countryside which defines small scale development as being appropriate under the exceptions criteria, and the Plan defines 'small scale' as a plot 350 square metres in size and therefore it is considered that plot of 4000 square metres in area is grossly large compared with the expectation through the Development Plan.

03. The house located in the far southern corner of the proposed plot will be out of keeping surrounded by large areas of residential curtilage to the north and east. The proposed layout fails to take into consideration good quality design due to the location of the house being constrained to one corner of the plot. As such the application is contrary to Policy P1 Layout, siting and design, which promotes attractive and well-designed development.
04. The drainage for foul water would be private by way of a treatment plant to the watercourse, however, the accompanying drainage assessment report does not relate to this house design or provide any appropriate certification in terms of foul or surface water drainage. The application has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development can be suitably serviced and has therefore failed to demonstrate that it is not in conflict with Policy RD1 Providing suitable services.

8. ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY (SDPA) – AMENDMENTS TO MINUTE OF AGREEMENT

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) of 12 December 2020 (Item 3), there was circulated a report, dated 9 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought ratification of a decision taken by the SDPA for a modification to their Minute of Agreement, concerning the frequency of meetings, reducing meetings required per annum to a minimum of one per year, with meetings scheduled as an when needed, in lieu of the four previously required.

The report explained that given the Minute of Agreement was between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council, any modification would need to be ratified by both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee agreed to **ratify** the change to the Minute of Agreement as set out in paragraph 3.2 to the report.

9. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 26 November 2020 (Item 8), there was circulated a report, dated 25 February 20201 by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided the Committee with updates

on transportation projects across Aberdeenshire, for the period between November 2020 and February 2021 and considered progress made against identified categories, i.e., Travel Activity and Travel Effectively as presented in Appendix 1 to the report.

During discussion, the considered and then commented on several issues:

- (i) The Committee congratulated the Parking Team on their recent award success.
- (ii) As part of the Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy, it would be helpful to get regular updates on active travel and the Strategic Cycle Network, where Aberdeenshire were working with other partners, with cross border links, to identify any opportunities for funding.
- (iii) As part of the National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Project Review, the Committee commented that the regional network was important, and bridge maintenance was welcomed, however, there was still a gap that needed to be addressed in terms of future investment in the Local Trunk Network.
- (iv) The Committee also commented that the delivery plan had to have embedded carbon budget project figures.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **acknowledge** the progress made with projects, activities and developments taken forward by Nestrans, external agencies and stakeholders as outlined in the report;
- (2) to **accept** further updates on the progress of both the implementation and delivery of the Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy (LTS) as appropriate;
- (3) to **acknowledge** and **congratulate**, the Parking Team on their recent success at the British Parking Association's People in Parking Awards;
- (4) to **provide** comments on the National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review as detailed in (iii) and (iv) above;
- (5) to **delegate** the submission of comments on the National Policy documents referred to in Recommendation 2.4 to the Director of Infrastructure Services following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson for Infrastructure Services Committee; and
- (6) to **acknowledge** the funding announced by Scottish Government for Local Bridges Maintenance.

10. BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 18 June 2020 (Item 6), where the Committee agreed the continued participation in the

North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, there was circulated a report, dated 24 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought approval for the submission of a North East of Scotland Bus Alliance partnership bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund of up to £200 million. The report provided details of the proposed Bus Partnership Fund bid to be submitted by Aberdeen City Council on behalf of the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance as presented in Appendix 1 to the report, and which sought approval of Aberdeenshire Council's participation in the bid process.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **approve** Aberdeenshire Council's participation in a Bus Partnership Fund bid, in line with Appendix 1, to be submitted by Aberdeen City Council on behalf of the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, of which Aberdeenshire Council was a partner;
- (2) to **note**, that if successful, the funding will enable a step change in public transport across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, which will help support delivery of the Council's Priorities, including Climate Change objectives;
- (3) to **note** that, if successful, Aberdeen City Council will be the lead and Accountable Officer for the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance bid; and
- (4) to **instruct** Officers to report back to a future meeting of the Committee on the success or otherwise of the bid, on any additional resource requirements to deliver a successful bid and with recommendations for appropriate governance arrangements.

11. CARBON BUDGET, SIX MONTHLY UPDATE AND COVID 19 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE LESSONS LEARNED

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 18 March 2020 (Item 10), where the Council agreed that Policy Committees and the Sustainability Committee should submit six-monthly Carbon Budget updates, there was circulated a report, dated 24 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which presented the Carbon Budget six monthly update and which included the lessons learned across Infrastructure Services during Covid-19 relating to sustainability and climate change, as requested by the Sustainability Committee at their meeting of 20 May 2020 (Item 5).

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **note** the Infrastructure Services Carbon Budget six-monthly update, as presented in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to **determine** that no further actions were required by the Director of Infrastructure Services with regard to the Infrastructure Services Carbon Budget or from the Covid-19 sustainability and climate change lessons learned; and

- (3) to **note** the ongoing responsibility of each Director to secure their reduction targets as set out in the Carbon Budget, and to report progress at six-monthly to the relevant Policy Committees and to the Sustainability Committee.

12. CROWN ESTATE SCOTLAND FUNDING

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 21 January 2021 (Item 20), there was circulated a report, dated 4 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought support to establish a framework for the future use of Crown Estate Scotland Funding, which had been allocated to Aberdeenshire Council.

The report explained that Aberdeenshire had received a total of £770,916.15 to date, and those funds had been awarded a range of projects and initiatives as set out in Appendix 3 to the report. It was recognised that it had proved challenging for funding to be awarded, and to be spent within a single financial year. The report set out a longer-term framework for the future use of Crown Estate Scotland Funding, as presented in Appendix 4 to the report, which aimed to support a proactive, longer term and strategic focus for the use of funding and how that could be managed in the future.

The report further considered engagement activity with the four coastal Area Committees which had been undertaken throughout December 2020 as presented in Appendix 5 to 8 with a summary of the results of the engagement activities provided as Appendix 9 to the report.

During discussion, the Committee recognised the impact that lockdown restrictions had placed on several projects who would have significant difficulty in meeting the spend deadline of their funding by 31 March 2021. The Committee welcomed the discretion afforded to all local authorities to allow projects to carry over funding into 2021/22, and that that flexibly being extended to current committed activity and projects.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **endorse** the proposed framework for the use of Crown Estate Scotland Funding set out at Appendix 4 to the report;
- (2) to **approve** the allocation of 50% of future Crown Estate Scotland allocations to the Council's four coastal Area Committees, divided equally between them;
- (3) to **approve** the allocation of 50% of future Crown Estate Scotland allocations to an Aberdeenshire Coastal Communities Challenge Fund; and
- (4) to **approve** the extension of the deadline to commit and spend any unspent funds from the second Crown Estate Scotland allocation to 31 March 2022.

13. IMPROVING ACCESS TO DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

With reference to the Minute of the Aberdeen City Region Deal (CRD) Joint Committee meeting of 5 February 2021 (Item 8), where that Committee approved the allocation of £220,000 from the CRD Digital Theme to create new staff capacity to further advance the provision of future-proof digital infrastructure in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, there was circulated a report, dated 18 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided the Committee progress on digital infrastructure within Aberdeenshire and which proposed the use of Aberdeenshire Council funding to create additional capacity to support improved connectivity in areas of limited coverage.

The report explained that the £220,000 would be allocated from both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council, as their contribution towards the CRD Digital Theme and approval of that expenditure was required from the Committee as part of the governance of its financial commitment to the City Region Deal.

Section 4.2 to the report detailed the outcomes of the commissioned gap analysis of digital infrastructure across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and that analysis sought to provide then provide options for future investment in digital infrastructure through resources allocated to the Digital These in the City Region Deal.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (2) to **note** the update on the gap analysis of digital infrastructure and forthcoming investments in Aberdeenshire; and
- (3) to **approve** the use of up to £110,000 of Aberdeenshire Council's contribution to the City Region Deal digital workstream to create additional staff capacity to improve take up of digital infrastructure services and voucher schemes.

14. POLICY REGISTER ANNUAL REPORTING

There was circulated, a report dated 3 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which detailed the current position of policies that were delegated to the Infrastructure Services Committee as presented in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report explained that policies had been categorised using a traffic light system to indicate readiness for review, as categorised in Section 4.3 of the report with Red indicating a review was required, Amber for monitoring and Green, no action was required. When considering the 13 policies that had been categorised as 'red' and due for full review, 5 were planned for review and approval by the Committee in 2021, 7 were planned for review in the medium-term for 2022-24 and there was no timescale indicated for the remaining review.

During discussion, the Committee considered the categorisation of ISS-010-TPT, Unauthorised Signs Policy and its readiness for review and queried whether that should be moved from Amber to Red, to allow the review to take place before 2022.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **acknowledge** the policies delegated to Infrastructure Services Committee that have been reviewed during 2020;

- (2) to **agree** the proposed plans for review, for those policies that had expired, as well as those that were approaching their review date (as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report), to be considered at future committees;
- (3) to **identify** any gaps or review requirements as part of the agreed annual overview of the Council's Policy Framework, as per section 3.5 of the Policy Development and Review Framework in Part 4B of the Scheme of Governance; and
- (4) to **instruct** Officers to take a report back to Committee, proposing how ISS-010-TPT the Unauthorised Signs Policy could be taken forward.

15. FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW: PROPOSED APPROACH

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 25 January 2018 (Item 4), there was circulated a report dated 14 February 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought permission to amend the approach for the 2021 Review of Fees and Charges by Infrastructure Services. The proposed amendment would bring recommendations in respect of those charges currently in need of a Committee decision to Infrastructure Services Committee in 2021, and to carry out the work of the full review (in compliance with the requirements of the Corporate Charging Framework) in 2022. That would result in the report being submitted to Committee one year later than currently planned, in January 2023.

The report explained that the Corporate Charging Framework required Infrastructure Services to conduct a Review of Fees and Charges during 2021, with the final review report being presented to the Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2022, however, due to the exceptional workload caused by Covid-19, the Service considered that it did not have the capacity to conduct the review within the required timeframe. As such, the report sought consideration by the Committee to approve the postponement of the review until January 2023, and only prioritised fees and charges requiring Committee decisions would be presented in the current year.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **agree** that only prioritised fees and charges, requiring Committee decisions, would be presented to the Committee in the current year.
- (2) to **agree** that the formal Fees and Charges Review, covering all routine fees and charges levied by Infrastructure Services, would be postponed for consideration by the Committee until January 2023.

16. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019-2020

With reference to Section 18 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, which requires every Scottish Local Authority to publish an annual procurement reports on its regulated procurement activities for procurement of goods and services with a value above £50,000, and works and contracts with a value above £2 million, there was circulated a report dated 3 February 2021, by the Director of Business Services,

which presented the Annual Procurement Report 2019-2020 as presented in Appendix A to the report.

The report considered performance and procurement activity across Aberdeenshire Council as presented in Appendix A to the report, which was being presented to each Policy Committee and which covered all regulated procurements completed during the financial year 2019-2020 and the anticipated future procurements covering the next two years (2020-2022).

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed to note** the content of the Annual Procurement Report 2019/2020, as presented in Appendix A to the report, which had been previously approved by the Business Services Committee on 7 January 2021.

17. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/21

With reference to the Minute of the Audit Committee meeting of 17 September 2020 (Item 8) where it had agreed to approve the Annual Governance Statement action plan and to receive quarterly progress reports on the Annual Governance Statement, there was circulated a report, dated 8 February 2021, by the Director of Business Services, which sought consideration of the Corporate Improvement Plan, specifically, those action within the remit of the Infrastructure Services Committee.

The report explained that during the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, concerns had been raised around progressing some of the actions and lack of awareness of updates and it had been agreed that regular updates on all corporate action plans would seek to provide assurance to members that actions were being appropriately addressed and progressing.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **note** the Corporate Improvement Plan (“the Plan”) as presented in Appendix 1 to the report, which had been presented to Audit Committee on 4 February 2021; and
- (2) to **agree** to receive quarterly updates for monitoring and scrutiny.

18. INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTORATE, ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLAN 2021/22

There had been circulated a report, dated February 2021, by the Director of Business Services, which presented the annual Infrastructure Services Directorate Procurement Plan for 2021/22 as presented in Appendix 1 to the report, which listed all the proposed procurements, falling within the remit of the Committee, with a contract value of £50,000 or more which were planned for 2021-2022.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **approve** the items in the Procurement Plan as presented in Appendix 1 to the report;

- (2) **not to reserve** approval of the Procurement Approval Form for any item on the Procurement Plan where the value of the matter is between £50,000 and £1,000,000;
- (3) to **approve** the Procurement Approval Forms for items on the Procurement Plan as presented as Appendices 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 to the report.