

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN (WITH VIRTUAL ATTENDEES)

THURSDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2024

Present: Councillors S Adams, D Aitchison, N Baillie, D Beagrie, A Bell, D Black, G Blackett, S Brown, A Buchan, S Burnett, L Carnie, G Carr, R Cassie, Y Chou Turvey, J Cox, J Crawley, G Crowson, I Davidson, S Dickinson, E Durno, A Evison, M Ewenson, M Findlater, A Forsyth, J Gifford, J Goodhall, M Grant, A Hassan, M James, P Johnston, D Keating, A Kloppert, L Knight, G Lang, S Logan, D Lonchay, D A E Mair, D Mair, T Mason, L McAllister, R McKail, L McWhinnie, R Menard, C Miller, J Nicol, G Owen, S Payne, G Petrie, H Powell, G Reid, G Reynolds, D Ritchie, A Ross, A Simpson, C Simpson, H Smith, S Smith, K Stelfox, A Stirling, M Sullivan, I Taylor, A Turner, C Victor, I Walker and J Whyte.

Apologies: Councillors J Adams, W Agnew, G Hall, F Joji and R Withey.

Officers: Jim Savege (Chief Executive), Laurence Findlay (Director of Education and Children's Services), Mary Beattie (Head of Service, Finance), Kate Bond (Head of Service (Customer & Digital Services)), Rob Simpson (Director of Business Services), Karen Wiles, (Head of Service, Legal & People), Alan Wood (Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services), Pamela Milliken (Chief Officer - Health & Social Care Partnership) and Lynsey Kimmitt (Principal Committee Services Officer).

CHAIR

Councillor J Whyte, Provost of the Council, presided.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prior to consideration of the business of the meeting, the Provost congratulated a number of Aberdeenshire residents who had been recognised in the New Year Honours List:

- Gayle Gorman, latterly HM Chief Inspector and Chief Executive of Education Scotland was awarded a CBE for services to education and charity in the North East;
- Professor James N'Dow was awarded an OBE for the work that he has undertaken both in the North East and internationally in the fields of cancer and urology as well as for his voluntary work;
- Penny Gravill from Balmedie received an MBE for her work as a speech and language therapist at Aberdeen Royal infirmary, particularly for her work on the treatment of skull based tumours and facial palsies;
- Donald Cruickshank received an MBE for services to the medical profession and to the community of Braemar;
- David Clark, a school support officer, received an MBE for his services to education in Banffshire;
- Elaine Barnwell of Crathie received a British Empire medal for her charitable services to the Royal Marines Association and the Royal Marines charity;

- Morag Lightning received a British Empire medal for services to the community and Turriff particularly during the COVID pandemic;
- Alexander Ritchie of New Deer received a British Empire medal for his voluntary services to cultural heritage and to the community in the North East of Scotland.

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 declarations or transparency statements were made.

2A PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

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

3 MINUTE OF MEETING OF 23 NOVEMBER 2023

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record the Minute of the Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 23 November, 2023.

4 PRESENTATION BY NESTRANS

A presentation was made to Council from Rab Dickson, Director of Nestrans. Members were given an overview of the work of Nestrans.

The presentation provided background information on the work of Nestrans as well as information on the role of regional transport partnerships across Scotland and an overview of the regional transport strategy. Mr Dickson also provided some examples of what has been achieved over the last few years, highlighting how much has changed over the last decade. He also spoke about the ongoing role of Nestrans and its collaboration with the Council and with outside partners.

After the presentation, the Provost thanked Mr Dickson and opened it up to a question and answer session, during which members focussed on: the regional transport

strategy; sustainable transport; re-establishing transport links across Aberdeenshire; train travel; bus travel; economic development and improvements to the road network.

Thereafter, the Provost thanked Mr Dickson for an informative presentation which had generated a lot of interest from members through questioning. The Provost highlighted that members will have the benefit of access to the Agendas and Minutes of the Nestrans meetings allowing them to engage further as they wish.

5 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2023/2024 FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023

There had been circulated a report by the Director of Business Services providing an update on the financial position of the revenue and capital budgets for the Council for the period ended 31 October 2023.

The report outlined (1) the forecast revenue financial position at 31 October 2023 which was £7.651 million more than budget; and (2) capital expenditure incurred to 31 October 2023 which was around 32% of the revised budget with Directorate Project Leads anticipating a forecast position of £98.155 million against a revised budget of £118.532 million.

The Head of Finance introduced the report and the Council **agreed**:

- (1) to note the revenue and capital position for 2023/24 set out in this report and Appendix A, including the balances held in Reserves at 31 October 2023;
- (2) to approve the new grant funded budget lines as reflected in the Capital Plan for 2023/24 in Appendix A; and
- (3) that Full Council will receive regular financial performance monitoring updates.

6 ANNUAL AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL AND ITS CHARITABLE TRUSTS

There had been circulated a report by the Director of Business Services presenting the audited Annual Accounts for the financial year 2022/2023 for the Council and its Charitable Trusts.

The report highlighted that the audited Annual Accounts for 2022/2023 had been approved for signing by the Audit Committee on 21 December 2023 and that full Council was being asked to endorse the Annual Accounts and the Annual Report in terms of the Council's Scheme of Governance.

The Head of Finance introduced the report and the Council **agreed**:

- (1) to note the External Audit report which states that the Council's financial statements give a true and fair view and have been properly prepared for 2022/23;

- (2) to endorse the Audited Annual Accounts 2022/23 for Aberdeenshire Council;
- (3) to note the External Audit report which states that the Council's Charitable Trusts financial statements give a true and fair view and have been properly prepared for 2022/23 and
- (4) to endorse the Audited Annual Accounts for 2022/23 for the Council's Charitable Trusts.

7 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2023/24 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

There had been circulated a report from the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services dated 17 November 2023 presenting the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial performance information for the period ending 30 September 2023. The report detailed revenue and capital income and expenditure to 30 September 2023 and provided a forecast outturn for the year to 31 March 2024. The report further noted that the financial performance information in respect of the HRA had been considered and approved by the Communities Committee on 14 December 2023.

The Head of Finance presented the report and the Council **agreed**:

- (1) to note the HRA Revenue and Capital forecast position for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A; and
- (2) to note the balances held in Reserves associated with the HRA at 30 September 2023.

8 UK GOVERNMENT LEVELLING UP FUND

There had been circulated a report from the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services dated 6 November 2023 providing an update to the Council on the UK Government Levelling Up Fund process following the request from full Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

The Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services presented the report and highlighted that the maximum grant of £20 million had been allocated to projects and the fund was now fully allocated. Thereafter, the Council **agreed** that work is halted on the development of further Levelling Up Fund projects due to the fund being fully allocated and awarded on allocation only.

9 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SCHEME OF GOVERNANCE

There had been circulated a report from the Director of Business Services setting out the proposed changes to the Scheme of Governance as part of the year's Annual Review. The report highlighted that this was the second report to come to Full Council in relation to this matter as per the terms of Standing Orders which require the Council to have two meetings where the changes are considered. The report sought approval of the changes.

The Head of Legal and People presented the report and the Council **agreed** the proposed changes to the Scheme of Governance as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

10 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

There had been circulated a report from the Chief Executive/Returning Officer providing the Council with information regarding polling districts and polling places in the Council area. The report recommended the retention of the existing polling district boundaries and polling places following by a further review of said polling districts and places.

The report noted that there is a legislative duty upon the Council, in terms of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 to undertake a review between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025, of parliamentary polling districts and polling places under the Council's control.

The Chief Executive/Returning Officer presented the report and the Council **agreed:**

- (1) to the proposed revisions to the existing polling district boundaries and attached as Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) to approve the commencement of a six-week period of consultation with various stakeholders on the proposed revisions to the polling district boundaries and for the identification of alternative venues for polling places and report back to Full Council for agreement of any subsequent changes to the designation of polling places in the Aberdeenshire Council area.