

BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY, 2025

Present: Councillors D Beagrie (Chair), A Simpson (Vice-Chair), M James, A Buchan, P Chapman, G Crowson, L McWhinnie, H Powell, G Hall, C Simpson and S Smith

Officers: Amanda Roe, Buchan Area Manager; Barbara Alexander, Solicitor; Lynne Gravener, Health and Social Care Partnership; Jeff Shaw, Partnership Manager; Jennifer Walker, Location Manager; Ryan McGregor, Mental Health & Learning Disability Manager; Gillian Robertson, Service Manager; Sarah Rochester, Service Manager; Theresa Wood, Area Committee Officer

Before proceeding, the Chair invited Councillor Powell to put forward a Pride of Buchan nomination.

Councillor Hannah Powell – Pride of Buchan Nomination –

“I would like to nominate Alan and Linda Hutchison for a Pride of Buchan Award. They started fundraising for Cancer Research in September 2015. They are regular faces outside of our local supermarkets and also make Christmas wreaths to help raise funds. Linda lost three brothers, a nephew and niece to cancer since 2015 and the couple’s wish is to prevent other families from having to suffer like their own – while also recognising the benefits of doing something positive to help with the great loss felt by so many.”

The Chair asked the Committee if they would support the nomination, and it was unanimously **agreed**.

The Chair then read the following Good News Stories for Buchan –

“Zoe Kane from Peterhead Bowling Club won a National Volunteer Award in the latest round of Bowls Scotland’s National Volunteer Awards. Zoe has been an integral member of the Bowling Club since 2018 and continues to promote the club’s annual “Try Bowls” events, providing coaching and a fun experience to first-time players who attend the club.

Strichen School’s Robotics Teams - Jurassic Jurivers and Robot Rulers - competed in the VEX IQ Robotics “Rapid Relay” Competition. The two teams came in joint 2nd at the Scotland Regional Heat held in Edinburgh on 31st January. Team Robot Rulers were also awarded the Robot Skills Champion. Both teams have also been invited to compete in the Vex IQ Robotics Competition for the UK Elementary School National Championship 2025 in Telford in March.

The Dolphin Café, Peterhead, has been nominated for Fish and Chip Shop of the Year at the Fishing News Awards 2025. The awards will take place in Aberdeen on 7th May with details of finalists to be expected soon.

Well done to all and can we send letters of congratulations please.

1 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

In terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no intimations of interest submitted.

2(A) PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY - GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

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 Integrated Impact Assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

2(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
9

Paragraph No of Schedule 7A
4

3 DRAFT MINUTE OF 4TH FEBRUARY 2025

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record the Minute of the Meeting of the Buchan Area Committee of 4th February 2025.

The Committee further **agreed** to request that the Area Manager discuss with Legal Services as to whether verbal representations should be verbatim within the Minute, or a factual representation of what was said relevant to the decision only.

4 ABERDEENSHIRE HSCP STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report by the Chief Officer for the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) had been provided advising the Committee with information on the Health and Social Care Partnership's performance in terms of progress against its Strategic Delivery Plan, and the Buchan HSCP Team update on local health and social care issues and priorities.

Having acknowledged the content of the performance report, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) having discussed the MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment) Standards, to await the submission of the next performance report in the hope that there are improvements,
- (2) in considering the Digital Strategy -
 - (a) to acknowledge that the 'Tech Room' in Peterhead is still quite new and therefore measuring success is difficult; information is now being gathered and will be reported in the next performance report, and
 - (b) that some of the actions may result in reducing personal interaction and therefore consideration should be given to counter-acting any negative effects,
- (3) to note concern with regard to the growing number of suicides and to acknowledge the need to work collaboratively with partners,
- (4) to request a timescale for the delivery of the Suicide Strategy,
- (5) in acknowledging that Peterhead Hospital is at capacity, to note that patient related issues have to be considered on a case by case basis and focus has to be on those with need,
- (6) in acknowledging that there is a shortage of support staff at Peterhead's Grangepark Home, to note that risk is constantly assessed so as to ensure that the residents continue to receive the care they need, and
- (7) to ensure best value, that Officers compare procurement costs between the Council and external agencies

5 EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING AND OUTCOMES REPORTS

A report by the Director of Business Services had been circulated asking the Committee to consider the progress made towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and to provide comments on the proposed Equality Outcomes for the next four years.

The Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to ask if transcriptions are available for Committee meetings, and if so how these could be used in going forward,
- (2) in considering Outcome 2, literacy, to ask the question 'do we need to move to cost recovery'; to make available a printer in a local library is often the only printer that is available for general use within a community, for example, for some families New Pitsligo Library is the only access they have to a printer,
- (3) in considering Outcome 3, at page 38, there is only mention of gypsy travellers, consideration needs to be given as to whether there is a need for a wider focus,
- (4) in considering Outcome 4, there is no mention of the Council's Autism Strategy; how many autistic people do we employ in core roles or as volunteers – is this an untapped population which could offer opportunities,

- (5) to ask if the Council has a budget centrally or held by Services for equalities work,
- (6) 'Age' is a protected characteristic so why don't we mention older people as well, only younger people are referred to in the appendix, and
- (7) 'Ethnicity' – is there a tangible way of measuring how many of our ethnic minority are offered a position and not just how many apply for roles

6 UPDATE - PETERHEAD PROJECTS

A report by the Director of Business Services had been circulated providing the Committee with an update on recent activity in relation to key Aberdeenshire Council led projects in the town of Peterhead.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note that it is hoped the Operator for the Carnegie Building will give a briefing on 4th March,
- (2) to note that it is hoped that a Levelling Up Briefing will be arranged for after Buchan Area Committee on 18th March,
- (3) to highlight that the appendix, attached to the report, has a 'link' at bullet point 2 which requires updating,
- (4) that the Library move is 'sub-optimal', and that Officers need to reconsider and make adjustments where necessary to provide a better solution, and
- (5) following-on from visits to local Primary Schools on 18th February and having voiced some concerns, the following issues require to be addressed without delay -
 - (a) Anna Ritchie – there are holes in the soffits and fascias outside and the disability swing has no access for wheelchairs as there is no path, and
 - (b) Dales Park – is over-crowded and consideration needs to be given to a re-zoning exercise being undertaken, and - as a quick fix for the rain issue - a canopy would be sufficient

7 SFRS PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3

A report by the Local Senior Officer and the Director of Business Services had been circulated informing Members how Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is performing locally in Buchan against key performance measures and associated targets, as set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan and Buchan Multi-Member Ward Plan

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note that it is hoped Members will meet informally with the new Station Commander in April and to request that they be provided with his email address so that they can approach him regarding support in their communities,
- (2) to ask for more information in relation to 'medical incidents' (page 9),
- (3) to ask what changes are proposed for 'Breakfast Clubs', and
- (4) to ask why there has been more deliberate fires and to congratulate Officers on the connected success (page 5)

8 STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING BUSINESS AS AT 14TH FEBRUARY 2025

The Area Manager gave the following updates to the Statement of Business –

- (1) Action 1, Members may have now seen the consultation outputs from the Safer Schools work piece in Buchanhaven which specifically mentions Balmoor Terrace. The site at Balmoor Terrace has met the requirements for a PedEx crossing (a traffic light controlled crossing) and a detailed design of the site will be undertaken in the next couple of months as the team are currently finishing off the 24/25 programme. We are looking to have the crossing being funded through the Scottish Government Active Travel Transformation fund. There will be a timeline for construction once design works has been completed,
- (2) Action 3, our Estates Team continue to keep the site at Catto Drive tidy, however, without support from a community group to maintain it, no additional soft landscaping can be undertaken. Our Green Spaces Officer is continuing to work with groups in Peterhead and will continue to have this on the radar should community groups come forward. For now I suggest removing this action as it won't change beyond the update that is there – agreed,
- (3) Action 5, we have sought an update from the Project Officer for Clerkhill Shopping Centre work and as soon as we receive that we will circulate it to Members,
- (4) In relation to the Peterhead Projects update, briefings are being arranged for Members on 4th and 18th March. Members have undertaken site visits so we suggest those specific actions around site visits be removed – agreed. I will work with the Area Committee Officer to try and improve and maintain this section and keep the actions coherent. Hopefully with the briefings upcoming, we will be able to remove a few of the actions,
- (5) Action 7, there is no further update that I can provide regarding the flooding at Longside. The Council has taken action where possible and I would propose we remove this action and take it into the Ward 4 meetings as I am aware the community will continue to look at how we collectively try to resolve the flooding issues – agreed, and
- (6) Action 8, there was a request to ask for feedback as to why there were spikes at 6pm in regards to fire-raising. The new SFRS Station Commander has responded and explained that it is due to incidents involving garden waste and loose refuse. There doesn't appear to be a pattern surrounding the incidents, however advice was given to the homeowners by the officer in charge. If it is

reported as a wilful fire and a pattern is identified, police would have been notified. A spike of 4 incidents around the same time of day across this quarter and in relation to the causes wouldn't be of concern and I ask that we remove that action – agreed

9 APPLICATION FOR ACT2 FUNDING

A report by the Director of Business Services had been circulated asking the Committee to consider an application for ACT2 funding.

Following a discussion, Councillor A Simpson moved as a motion, seconded by Councillor Crowson, that the application be Refused and that the Applicant be advised that alternative funding is available through the Welfare Rights Team.

As an amendment, Councillor James, seconded by Councillor McWhinnie, moved that the application be deferred to allow Officers to seek further detail in relation to the Applicant's monthly income and expenditure.

The Members of the Committee voted:-

For the motion (9) Councillors Beagrie, A Simpson, Chapman, Crowson, Hall, McWhinnie, Powell, C Simpson and Smith

For the amendment (1) Councillor James

Declined to vote (1) Councillor Buchan

The motion was therefore carried and the Committee **agreed** that the application be Refused and that the Applicant be advised that alternative funding is available through the Welfare Rights Team.

The Committee further **agreed**:-

- (1) to request that Officers review this fund with the intention that either more financial information is sought at the time of making the application or consent is given to allow Officers to access financial information to allow Members to make a more informed decision, and
- (2) that more detail be provided along with the online application in relation to other funds available, ie Cost of Living etc