

THE MORAY COUNCIL

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 17 JUNE 2008

COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillor J Russell (Chairman), J Cree (Deputy Chair), L Bell, G Coull, J Divers, J Hamilton, G Leadbitter, G Mcdonald, I Ogilvie, P Paul and R Shepherd.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors G McIntyre & A Wright.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Director of Environmental Services, the Head of Development Services, the Transportation Manager, the Planning and Development Manager, the Consultancy Manager, the Transport Manager, in respect of item 7, L Paisey, Principal Accountant, A Scott, Principal Solicitor (Commercial and Conveyancing) and the Senior Committee Services Officer, Clerk to the Meeting.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

In terms of Standing Order 25 the meeting agreed to vary the order of business set down on the Agenda and take Item 5 (a) 'CIFAL Findhorn' immediately following the morning break

2. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS

In terms of Standing Order 20 the meeting noted that Councillor G Coull declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 15 '5 Westerton Road South Industrial Estate, Keith'

There were no other declarations from group leaders or spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the Agenda.

3. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A(4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the Items of Business appearing at the relevant Paragraphs of this Minute as specified below, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. TOURISM STATISTICS FOR MORAY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services inviting the Committee to consider co-funding the gathering of tourism statistics in Moray over a two-year period.

The meeting noted that it was proposed that the information will be collected on a monthly basis and a quarterly analysis will be provided. The data will also be broken down into the areas of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Keith and Speyside. In addition, tourism businesses will be invited to provide anecdotal information such as their views on business activity in the short and medium term and difficulties they are experiencing. To reward those businesses returning the data, it is proposed to operate a quarterly prize draw. The prize will be either a software programme, which will assist businesses to collect and use information about their customers, or additional marketing support to a maximum value of £300.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve a contribution of £13,000 to co-fund the gathering of tourism statistics in Moray over a two-year period;
- (ii) that a quarterly report on the information collected, to include the number of nil returns, be submitted to the Council's Tourism Steering Group and any issues of concern arising therefrom be referred to this Committee for consideration and determination; and
- (iii) that during negotiations with VisitScotland in regard to the SLA the question of a reduction in the Council's financial contribution be raised as the Council will not be using their statistical information.

5. MORAY CONNECTIONS AND THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services inviting the Committee to consider proposals for linkage with the Canadian Pacific Railway as Moray's signature event/celebrations of the Year of Homecoming. The meeting noted that the Year of Homecoming is an integral and pivotal part of the Development Plan to grow Ancestral Tourism in Moray.

The report also invited the Committee to consider proposals in regard to 'Moray Connections', which will celebrate the life of famous people of Moray who have made a significant contribution worldwide in various spheres from politics to arts. It was noted that any additions to those referred to in the report be referred to the Planning and Development Manager for consideration.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve funding of up to £12,400 for the Canadian Pacific Railway Project over the two financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10;

- (ii) to the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for The Moray Connections Project and to provide match funding of up to £50,000 should the application be successful over the two financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10;
- (iii) to grant permission to the Chair of the Tourism Steering Group and an officer to visit the Canadian Pacific Railway Corporation in Canada should discussion with the Corporation require it, and after consultation with the Convener and the Director of Environmental Services; and
- (iv) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in regard to the feasibility of some form of community involvement in Moray Connections to be funded through a Community Fund, and more detailed information on the projects.

6. MORAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL CORPORATE DINNER

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services inviting the Committee to consider continued support to Moray Chamber of Commerce for the next three years. The report also invited the Committee to consider supporting the Organisation's annual Business Award, which helps raise the profile of the best of Moray's businesses and the Council's involvement in local economic development, and attendance at the Annual Dinner.

Following consideration the Committee agreed, on the motion of Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Bell, to:-

- (i) financial support of £1,500 in respect of the current financial year and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the Role and Membership of the Moray Chamber of Commerce, and its effectiveness, based on information provided by the Organisation;
- (ii) support the proposal for the Business Award; and
- (iii) attendance at the Annual Dinner at a table of 8, with representation to be agreed, in consultation with the Convener and the Chief Executive.

7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISION

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services inviting the Committee to consider proposals, set out in section 3.4 of the report, in regard to a proposed reduction in subsidised services. The report also invited the Committee to consider proposals for the introduction of a demand responsive bus service in the Speyside area, subject to local consultations.

The meeting noted that if the proposed service alterations were to be approved this would reduce a current £71,000 overspend in the Transportation Revenue Support budget to £40,000, which would be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee, if appropriate.

Following discussion, during which officers responded to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) that the proposals relating to a proposed reduction in subsidised services, outlined in Section 3.4 of the report, be the subject of appropriate consultations and a report thereon be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (ii) to note the proposals for budget virement to contain budget provision;
- (iii) to note the proposals for the introduction of a demand responsive bus service in the Speyside area, subject to local consultation; and
- (iv) that under reference to Paragraph 17 of the Minute of the Policy Committee dated 19 December 2007, a report be submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee on the projected overspend in 2008/09.

8. CIFAL FINDHORN

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services inviting the Committee to consider a request from CIFAL Findhorn to continue funding contributions to the CIFAL Findhorn UN Training Centre to assist in the implementation of the next stage of it's development. The meeting noted that the proposed annual contribution of £6,250 in 2008/09 and 2009/10 is 50% of the initial contribution in anticipation of increased private sector involvement.

The report also advised that the Organisation has suggested that individual centre, CIFAL Boards be chaired by a civic dignitary at the highest possible governmental level, and the Convener has been approached to consider taking on this more honorary role. This would not affect the existing two-Member representation of the Council on the current Board, and on this basis the Convener had expressed his positive support. The meeting also noted the concerns of some Members that this would place the Council in the majority on the Board.

Prior to considering the request the Committee received a presentation from May East, Executive Director, CIFAL Findhorn on the past and proposed future work of the Organisation. On the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor G McDonald also reported orally on his attendance at the CIFAL Steering Committee in Atlanta, USA on 8th and 9th May 2008.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to contribute two annual payments of £6,250 (financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10) to CIFAL Findhorn, subject to contributions also being secured from HIE and Scottish Government; and
- (ii) that once the views of the CIFAL Board are known in regard to the future membership of the Board a report thereon be submitted to a subsequent meeting of this Committee to include the possibility of the Convener being appointed Chair of the Board.

9. A96 BYPASSES STUDY REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services inviting the Committee to note the findings of a joint Hitrans and HIE funded study into the potential economic benefits of constructing A96 bypasses at Elgin, Keith and Nairn. A copy of the Executive Summary was appended to the report and a copy of the full report had been placed on the Member's Portal and also available, on request, from Committee Services.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the findings of a joint Hitrans/HIE study into the potential economic benefits of constructing A96 bypasses at Elgin, Keith and Nairn; and
- (ii) that a letter be sent to the Scottish Government Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change, to draw to his attention to the conclusions of this study.

10. MORAY ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2008-2010

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services, in terms of the Road Traffic Act 1974 (Section 8), seeking Committee approval of the draft Moray Road Safety Plan 2008-2010, copies of which had been placed in the Member's Library and also available, on request, from Committee Services.

During discussion the meeting noted that Area Forums and Community Councils will be included in the consultations referred to in section 3.5 of the report.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve, for consultation, the draft of the Moray Road Safety Plan 2008-2010.

11. CAPITAL PLAN 2008/2009 - ROAD SAFETY AND CYCLING WALKING AND SAFER STREETS SCHEMES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services seeking Committee approval of the list of Road Safety and Cycling Walking and Safer Streets scheme to be funded from the 2008/2009 Capital Plan, details of which were set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

During discussion clarification was sought in regard to the current position regarding a Safer Routes to School Scheme issue relating to St Peters School, Buckie and concerns expressed in regard to potential road safety issues at Crossroads Primary School.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve for funding from the appropriate Capital allocation in financial year 2008/2009:-
 - (a) the schemes identified in Appendix 1 to the report in regard to improving Road Safety; and

- (b) the schemes identified in Appendix 2 to the report as Cycling Walking and Safer Streets projects;
- (ii) that Ward Members to discuss any concerns they have regarding issues in their Wards with the Transportation Manager, particularly those with an interest in Crossroads Primary School.

12. SMARTER CHOICES, SMARTER PLACES : STAGE 2 BID (SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL DEMONSTRATION TOWNS) : ELGIN AREA

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services informing the Committee of the Council's success in stage 1 of the bidding process in respect of the Scottish Government's "Smarter Choices, Smarter Places" project. The report also sought approval to approach funding partners and secure match funding and to submit the application in more detail for stage 2 consideration. A copy of Stage 1 submission was set out in the Appendix to the report.

The meeting noted that Smarter Choices, Smarter Places project funding to develop sustainable travel demonstration towns has been offered to all local authorities in Scotland via a competitive bid process. Of the 40 original submissions Moray Council are one of only 13 through to the second round of the application process.

Following consideration, during which Members expressed their support for the project, the Committee agreed to approve the submission of a Stage 2 application and associated documentation to the Scottish Government and to potential funding partners.

13. PROPOSED ROAD TRAFFIC ORDER : VARIOUS STREETS, ELGIN

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services seeking Committee approval for the promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order to restrict parking on various streets in Elgin. There were appended to the report as Appendices A & B respectively, schedules and street plans indicating the locations of the proposed restrictions.

During discussion clarification was sought in regard to the Council's policy relative to parking restrictions in housing estates and residential areas

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposal to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order restricting parking around various streets in Elgin, as detailed in Appendix A and instruct the Director of Environmental Services and the Chief Legal Officer to proceed with the statutory process; and
- (ii) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the Council's policy relative to parking restrictions in housing estates and residential areas

14. ADOPTION OF ROADS ON TO LIST OF ROADS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services seeking Committee approval for the addition to Statutory List of Public Roads of the roads specified in the schedule appended to the report.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the adoption of the roads scheduled in the Appendix to the report to the Statutory List of Public Roads.

15. ROTHES FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME STAGE 1 : SCOPE CHANGE & PROGRAMME TO WORKS START

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services seeking Committee approval of proposed changes to the scope of the Rothes Flood Alleviation Scheme Stage 1. The report also invited the Committee to note the programmed start date and indicative costs, details of which were set out in the appendix, tabled at the meeting.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:-

- (i) approve the changed scope of Rothes Flood Alleviation Scheme Stage 1, as set out in the Appendix to the report, and to note the programme to works start; and
- (ii) note indicative costs for Stage 1 and the implications for the whole scheme.

16. PROGRESS REVIEW AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN, REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO MARCH 2008

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental Services providing the Committee with an update on performance against indicators, Service Improvement Plan and Revenue and Capital Budgets for Economic Development and Infrastructure Services within the Environmental Services Department. The report also included an overview of complaints for the Service overall, details of which were set out in Section 4.5 of the report (Complaints). The meeting also noted that, as previously agreed (Para 14 (iv) of the Minute of the Environmental Services Committee dated 10 October 2007 refers) appendices detailing the relevant information had been placed in the Member's Library.

Suspension of Standing Orders (12.45 p.m)

During consideration of this item the Committee agreed to Suspend Standing Order 66 and continue the meeting in order to complete the business set down in the Agenda.

Following consideration, during which Officers responded to questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note:-

- (a) the progress made against the targets laid down in the Environmental Services Service Improvement Plan 2007 to 2008;
 - (b) the update of Service Performance against the Performance Indicators relating to the Environmental Services Department;
 - (c) the progress against departmental budgets;
 - (d) the effect staff recruitment problems are having on performance and service delivery.
- (iii) that an update on 'Developing the Local Economy, Feasibility Study for the Barmuckity Business Park' be circulated to members of the Committee;
 - (iv) that a report on current service standards relating to street lighting performance be submitted to the Audit & Performance Review Committee;
 - (v) that Members be advised in regard to which projects are to be deleted in order to meet the Environmental Services allocation for procurement savings; and
 - (vi) that appropriate measures be taken to ensure consistency across Committees in regard to the issue of Appendices relating to performance reporting reports.

17. QUESTION TIME

Under reference to Paragraph 3 of the Minute of the meeting of the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee dated 3 June 2008 Councillor Divers sought an update on the temporary road traffic measures and the issue of the water tank on Thornhill Road, Elgin

The meeting noted that whilst, as agreed at the meeting of the Environmental Services Committee on 16 April 2008 (para 7 of the Minute refers) temporary road makings were put in place there had been little reported progress on the issue relating to the water tank. The Transportation Manager advised the meeting that the Developers had submitted three alternative road designs, two of which compromised the original design and were rejected. The third alternative indicated that by removing a concrete porch at the front of the water tank the Developer can satisfy the requirements of the original road construction consent. Given the commercial sensitivity of the ongoing discussions regarding this issue it was agreed that the Transportation Manager appraise Members at the conclusion of the meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Russell in regard to growing traffic problems within Elgin the Transportation Manager referred Members to the two coloured maps tabled earlier in the meeting. The meeting noted that the first map gave details of the total number of vehicles on some of the main roads based on a 5 day average. The second map gave the same figures plus those for heavy goods vehicles, both of which showed a steady increase over the last few years and were now nearing full capacity and unless steps are taken to alleviate the situation the traffic, in some areas, may grind to a halt.

18. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET : MONITORING REPORT FOR TRADING ACCOUNTS (PARA 6)

There was submitted and noted a monitoring report by the Director of Environmental Services informing the Committee of the progress of trading accounts against revenue budgetary targets in respect of Grounds Maintenance, Roads and Fleet Services for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

19. 5 WESTERTON ROAD SOUTH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, KEITH (PARA 9)

Councillor Coull declared a personal interest in this item and left the meeting taking no part in the discussion or determination of the item.

There was submitted a report by the Head of Estates Services seeking approval for the of the Council's interest in the building at 5 Westerton Road South Industrial Estate, Keith and simultaneous grant of a 99 year lease of the site.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to declare the building at 5 Westerton Road South Industrial Estate, Keith surplus to requirements and agreed to:-

- (i) approve the termination of THL Home Improvements Limited's lease of 5 Westerton Road South Industrial Estate, Keith;
- (ii) approve, for the Committee's interest, the provisionally agreed terms for the sale of the building and terms for the lease of the site to THL Trade Limited, as detailed in Section 3.9 of the report; and
- (iii) remit it to the Policy & Resources Committee to consider the terms for the sale of the building at 5 Westerton Road South Industrial Estate, Keith.

On the determination of this item Councillor Coull rejoined the meeting.

16. FORRES (BURN OF MOSSET) FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

There was submitted a report by the Head of Estates Services seeking Committee approval of a payment of compensation, as detailed in the report, to Mr Dean of Blervie Farm Forres. The meeting noted that part of Blervie Farm lies partly within the proposed flood water storage area and will be subject to periodic inundation as part of Forres (Burn of Mosset) Flood Alleviation Scheme proposals.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the compensation payment to Mr Dean.