

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Minute of hybrid meeting of Perth and Kinross Council held in the Council Chamber, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 4 October 2023 at 10:30am.

Present: Provost X McDade, Depute Provost A Parrott, Bailies C Ahern, A Bailey and R Brock, Councillors K Allan, H Anderson (left during consideration of Items 12-13), L Barrett, P Barrett, B Brawn, S Carr, A Chan, D Cuthbert, S Donaldson, E Drysdale, A Forbes, M Frampton, N Freshwater, K Harvey, D Illingworth, I James, N Khogali, G Laing, B Leishman, I MacPherson, I Massie, S McCole, T McEwan, J Rebbeck, C Reid (up to Item 11), W Robertson, C Shiers, F Smith, C Stewart, G Stewart, R Watters and J Welch.

In Attendance: T Glen, Chief Executive; L Simpson, Head of Legal and Governance Services; C Mailer, Executive Lead – Strategic Planning and Transformation; B Renton, Executive Director (Communities); S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children’s Services), S MacKenzie, Head of Finance; C Guild, Head of Innovation, J Pepper, Director/Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership/Chief Social Work Officer; B Wilson, S Hendry, D Williams, R Ramsay and M Pasternak (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Apologies: Bailies C McLaren and M Williamson, and Councillor J Duff.

Provost X McDade, Presiding.

The Depute Provost led discussion on Items 8, 10 and 11, and the Provost led discussion on all other items of business.

1. REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION

In terms of Standing Order 13, the Council agreed to hear deputation in relation to the Item 6 on the agenda Tay Forest National Park Bid, from Chair of Crieff Community Council Mr B Wilton.

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Provost McDade welcomed all those present to the meeting. An apology was noted as above.

3. TRIBUTE TO THE LATE BETTY BRIDGEFORD

The Provost paid tribute to the late Betty Bridgeford, former Director of Social Work at Perth and Kinross Council, who had sadly passed away on 25 September 2023.

4. UPDATE ON NAMING THE CROSS TAY LINK BRIDGE AND ROAD

The Provost gave an update to members on the naming of the new Cross Tay Link Road and bridge. In line with the motion agreed by Council in May 2023, schools had been asked to vote on the naming of both the new bridge and road. The outcome is that the new crossing would be called Destiny Bridge and the roadway between the bridge and the A94 at Scone had been named the New Kingsway.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declaration of Interests in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

6. MINUTE OF MEETING OF PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL OF 30 AUGUST 2023 FOR APPROVAL

The minute of meeting of Perth and Kinross Council of 30 August 2023 was approved as correct record.

7. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS STATEMENT

The Outstanding Business Statement was noted, and it was agreed to remove the completed actions.

8. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

8(i) Banking Hub

Motion By Councillors S Donaldson and R Watters

Council notes the major problems that have arisen for local residents and businesses due to the closure of banks in Kinross, Auchterarder and Aberfeldy over the last few years. It considers that the closure of the Bank of Scotland in Crieff next year could have led to a similar outcome but welcomes the promise to establish a banking hub there by summer 2024.

Council calls on the Council Leader to write to Cash Access UK, and Link, to support applications for banking hubs in the three towns where there is at present no banking provision. It believes that for our town centres to survive and thrive, access to banking services is essential.

Council further calls on Council officers to provide assistance where appropriate to Cash Access UK, and Link: in particular to help in locating premises in any of the three towns that are successful with their applications for a banking hub."

Proposed Amendment by Councillor P Barrett

In accordance with the Motion but to also incorporate the following wording into the 2nd paragraph after 'banking provision':

'and Dunkeld where the remaining bank is due to close'.

The mover and seconder of the Motion agreed to incorporate the proposed amendment into the Revised Motion.

Resolved:

In accordance with Revised Motion.

8(ii) Proposed Joining of the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities

Motion by Councillors I Massie and S McCole

This council notes the great work done by our Health and Social Care Partnership staff in relation to our older population from Integrated care teams, Care at home, Daycare, Care homes and Telecare to name but a few of the services they provide.

The value of our community health and social care services in protecting our most vulnerable people was highlighted during the pandemic and has been described as the glue that binds our communities together.

The standards and principles that underpin our services to older people mirror the standards and principles of the World Health Organisation Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

This Council calls on the Provost to write to the World Health Organisation to propose that Perth and Kinross join the Who Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

This global platform aims to empower cities and communities to become more age friendly by promoting healthy ageing well-being and inclusivity for older adults.

We believe that by participating in this programme Perth and Kinross can benefit greatly and create a community that fosters the dignity and well-being of our older residents.

Resolved:

In accordance with the Motion.

9. TAY FOREST NATIONAL PARK BID

There was submitted a report by Head of Planning and Development (23/263) seeking approval of the engagement strategy to help shape the Council's bid to create a new national park in northern Perthshire.

Mr B Wilton addressed the Council on the proposals in the report and thereafter returned to the public gallery.

Motion by Councillor G Laing and Provost X McDade

- The engagement approach set out in Report 23/263 be agreed, and officers be asked to seek input from communities and stakeholders.
- It be agreed that the findings of the engagement exercise will be reported back to Council in early 2024, along with the finalised bid submission.
- It be agreed that the proposed name of the new park shall be the Tay Forest National Park.
- The branding that has been designed to support the bid be noted.

Amendment by Councillors S Donaldson and Bailie R Brock

In accordance with the Motion but to add an additional recommendation:

Council agrees to include the town of Crieff in the proposed Tay Forest National Park area, and to hold an additional consultation event in Crieff as part of the engagement process. This will allow local people in the town to be involved and provide them with the opportunity to give their views and opinions.

The mover and seconder of the Motion agreed to incorporate the amendment into the Revised Motion.

Resolved:

In accordance with the Revised Motion.

THERE FOLLOVED A SHORT RECESS AND THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 12.00PM.

10. GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN 2023-28

There was submitted a report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (23/264) outlining the next, and third version, of the Perth and Kinross Council Gaelic Language Plan for the period from 2023 – 2028, and asking Council to approve the Plan, subject to final review by Bòrd na Gàidhlig which monitors Gaelic Language Plans on behalf of Scottish ministers.

Resolved:

- (i) The implementation of the new Gaelic Language Plan 2023 – 2028, subject to any final review comments received from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, be approved.
- (ii) The Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to provide an annual progress update report to the Learning and Families Committee over the lifetime of this new 5-year Plan, with the Scheme of Administration to be amended accordingly.

11. PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2023-25 and EQUALITIES PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-23

There was submitted a report by Head of Innovation (23/265) detailing the Council's equality aims, outcomes and actions every 4 years, and providing the related Equalities Performance Report combining information for 2021/22 and 2022/23 including the Annual Diversity in Employment Report for the same periods.

Resolved:

- (i) The Equalities Bi-Annual Performance Report 2021-23 (Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.
- (ii) The Equality & Diversity in Employment Report 2021–23 (Appendix 2 to the report) be approved.

THERE FOLLOWED A RECESS AND THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 1.45PM.

12. DRAFT CORPORATE DELIVERY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25

There was submitted a report by Chief Executive (23/266) presenting the draft Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan (CDIP) for 2024/25 for consideration, and also highlighting four amended, replacement or new key performance indicators and seeking approval for these to be added to monitoring for future annual performance reports.

Motion by Councillors G Laing and E Drysdale

- The draft Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan for 2024/25 be approved.
- The proposed amendments to the key performance indicators for the Corporate Plan priorities as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

Amendment by Councillor C Stewart and Bailie A Bailey

In accordance with the Motion but to add the following additional recommendations:

- (1) When the final CDIP is remitted to Council following the budget process, that baselines be set for each of the proposed improvement actions, so that improvement can be objectively measured;
- (2) That the Scrutiny and Performance Committee be remitted to consider the draft CDIP and recommend whether any additional targets be included (or whether any be excluded) for the final 2024/25 CDIP.

The mover and seconder of the Motion agreed to incorporate the amendment into the Revised Motion.

Resolved:

In accordance with the Revised Motion.

13. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-30

There was submitted a report by Head of Finance (23/267) (1) summarising the implications of the latest projections on future Council General Fund Revenue Budgets over the medium term, (2) providing an update on the Council's Capital Budget, Housing Revenue Account and Reserves position, and (3) setting out a proposed approach to the development of the Revenue and Capital Budgets over the short and medium term.

Resolved:

- (i) The Strategic Lead – Finance & Business Support to maintain the Medium-Term Financial Plan and further refine the assumptions which underpin it – see paragraph 7.47.
- (ii) The setting of the 2024/25 Final Revenue Budget, updated 2025/26 and 2026/27 Provisional Revenue Budgets on 28 February 2024 – see paragraph 8.5, be approved.
- (iii) The setting of the Capital Budget on 28 February 2024 – see paragraph 9.9, be approved.
- (iv) The submission of the updated Reserves Strategy to Council on 28 February 2024 – see paragraph 10.7, be approved.
- (v) The proposals to determine the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and rent levels for 2024/25 and the five-year Housing Investment Programme at the meeting of the Housing and Social Wellbeing Committee on 24 January 2024 – see paragraph 11.3, be endorsed.

14. WORKING SMARTER TRANSFORMATION PROJECT PULLAR HOUSE MOTHBALLING /CITY CENTRE ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

There was submitted a report by the Head of Property Services (23/268) providing an update on progress in relation to implementing the budget decision of March 2023 to mothball Pullar House from April 2024 and realise savings in 2024/25 and 2025/26 from reviewing operational buildings through rationalisation, consolidation or working with other public sector partners.

The report also set out the high level emerging logistical, financial, operational and strategic risks and opportunities identified whilst undertaking the required work to implement Council's decision. Based on assessment of the implications of the mothballing proposal, the report also sought authority to undertake a more detailed options appraisal and develop a concurrent business case to create a Public Service Hub and retain Pullar House for consideration by Council in August 2024. The report also sought approval to draw down funding from the Working Smarter earmarked reserves to complete this work.

Motion by Councillors G Laing and E Drysdale

- The content of the report and the work undertaken to date to progress the decision of Council in March 2023, including the operational, financial, partnership and strategic implications which have been identified, be noted.
- The instruction from March 2023 to mothball Pullar House from April 2024 be paused.
- It be noted that officers are currently developing a hybrid working policy for approval by January 2024
- The principle of the development of a public service hub, be agreed.
- Officers be instructed to develop a business case, to include the potential purchase of Pullar House, in accordance with the Council's approved Investment Planning framework, for consideration and decision at a Special Council meeting in August 2024.
- In the absence of a viable business case being presented to Council for consideration in August 2024, staff to be relocated and Pullar House to be mothballed from 1 October 2024 with the lease arrangement terminated on 10 September 2025.
- A Special Council meeting to take place on 19 August 2024 to make a final decision on the future of Pullar House.
- The funding of £179,000 be applied from the Working Smarter earmarked reserve to take forward this work.

Amendment by Bailie A Bailey and Councillor B Leishman

In accordance with the Motion but with the following additional resolutions:

- 1 The business case for the public sector hub model shall achieve the maximum possible level of cost recovery whilst recognising that other public sector and charity bodies also play a vital role in delivering positive outcomes for our residents;
- 2 Council notes that both it and all other public sector bodies are currently very focussed on their journey towards net zero. It therefore requests that officers work with the potential partners to fund and realise net zero ambitions for Pullar House in order to make it a more attractive proposition to potential tenants.

The mover and seconder of the Motion agreed to incorporate the amendment into the Revised Motion.

Amendment by Councillors P Barrett and L Barrett

To agree the recommendations in Report 23/268.

THERE FOLLOWED A RECESS AND THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 4.27PM.

In terms of Standing Order 2.8, The Provost moved that the requirements of Standing Order 20.1 be suspended for the remainder of the consideration of this item of business.

36 Members voted for the suspension as follows:

Provost X McDade, Depute Provost A Parrott, Bailies C Ahern, A Bailey and R Brock, Councillors K Allan, H Anderson, L Barrett, P Barrett, B Brawn, S Carr, A Chan, D Cuthbert, S Donaldson, E Drysdale, A Forbes, M Frampton, N Freshwater, K Harvey, D Illingworth, I James, N Khogali, G Laing, B Leishman, I MacPherson, I Massie, S McCole, T McEwan, J Rebbeck, W Robertson, C Shiers, F Smith, C Stewart, G Stewart, R Watters and J Welch.

The Mover and Secunder of the Revised Motion made the following further revisions to the Revised Motion:

- The content of the report and the work undertaken to date to progress the decision of Council in March 2023, including the operational, financial, partnership and strategic implications which have been identified, be noted.

- The instruction from March 2023 to mothball Pullar House from April 2024 be paused.
- It be noted that officers are currently developing a hybrid working policy for approval by January 2024
- The principle of the development of a public service hub, be agreed.
- Officers be instructed to develop a business case, to include the potential purchase of Pullar House, in accordance with the Council's approved Investment Planning framework, for consideration and decision at a Special Council meeting in August 2024.
- In the absence of a viable business case being presented to Council for consideration in August 2024, staff to be relocated and Pullar House to be mothballed from 1 October 2024 with the lease arrangement terminated on 10 September 2025.
- A Special Council meeting to take place on 19 August 2024 to make a final decision on the future of Pullar House.
- The funding of £179,000 be applied from the Working Smarter earmarked reserve to take forward this work.
- The business case for the public sector hub model shall seek to achieve the maximum possible level of cost recovery whilst recognising that other public sector and charity bodies also play a vital role in delivering positive outcomes for our residents.
- Council notes that both it and all other public sector bodies are currently very focussed on their journey towards net zero. It therefore requests that officers work with the potential partners to realise net zero ambitions for Pullar House in order to make it a more attractive proposition to potential partners.

The mover and seconder of the amendment agreed to withdraw their amendment.

Resolved:

In accordance with the Revised Motion.

15. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES/OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Bob Brawn to replace Councillor Chris Ahern on the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Andy Chan to replace Councillor David Illingworth on the Licensing Committee.

Councillor David Illingworth to replace Councillor Angus Forbes on the Finance and Resources Committee.

Baillie Chris Ahern to replace Councillor Angus Forbes on the Property Sub - Committee.

Baillie Chris Ahern to replace Councillor Noah Khogali on the Executive Sub-Committee of Learning and Families Committee.

Councillor John Duff to replace Baillie Chris Ahern on the Licensing Board.

Councillor Hugh Anderson to replace Councillor Keith Allan on the Environment, Infrastructure and Economic Development Committee.

Councillor Keith Allan to replace Councillor Hugh Anderson on the Planning and Placemaking Committee.

Councillor Angus Forbes to replace Councillor Noah Khogali on the Housing and Social Wellbeing Committee.

Councillor Frank Smith to replace Councillor Noah Khogali on the Perthshire Tourism Board.

Councillor John Duff to replace Councillor Ian James on the Tayside Support Team – Children’s Hearings.

Councillor Hugh Anderson to replace Baillie Chris Ahern on the Tayside Valuation Joint Board.

16. CHANGES TO 2024 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

The Environment, Infrastructure and Economic Development Committee scheduled for 27 March be moved to 7 February at 1.00pm.

The Learning and Families Committee scheduled for 27 March be moved to 11 March at 1.00pm

A special meeting of Perth and Kinross Council to be arranged for 19 August at 1.00pm.

The Property Sub-Committee scheduled on 19 August be moved to 21 August at 1.00pm.

17. ELECTED MEMBERS BRIEFING NOTES

Resolved:

The Elected Members Briefing Notes, issued since the previous Council meeting and as set out on the agenda, be noted.