

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 20 AUGUST, 2020

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

Apologies: Councillors J Latham and R Withey.

Officers: Director of Infrastructure Services, Head of Service (Planning & Environment), Head of Service (Transportation), Head of Service (Roads, Landscape Services and Waste Services), Head of Service (Economic Development & Protective Services), Matt Lockley, Service Manager (Economic Development & Protective Services), Corporate Finance Manager (S Donald), Principal Solicitor, Legal and Governance (R O'Hare) 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) Councillors Argyle, Aitchison and Cox, (as substantive members) and Councillor Mollison, (as a substitute member) of NESTRANS, declared an interest in agenda **Item 7**. That interest had a specific exclusion, therefore, those members concluded that they would remain and participate when that item was being considered.
- (2) Councillor Johnston declared an interest in agenda **Item 11** as a Director of Belhelvie Community Trust. Councillor Johnston concluded that having applied the objective test, the interest was remote and insignificant, and he 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.

3. MINUTE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 18 JUNE, 2020

The Committee had before them, and **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Meeting of 18 June 2020, subject to the wording of decision (3) on Page 8 being amended to be more explicit, in terms of what was meant. The decision should be amended to read “that officers discuss, with **bus operators at the next forum**, issues regarding post Covid requirements, to ensure that layout and service provision **will maximise social distancing as mitigation for health risks**”.

The minute would be signed, by the Chair, at a later date.

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 at 20 August 2020.

Having considered the list of outstanding actions, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) **note** the current position in respect of actions arising at previous meetings, and
- (2) **agree** that any actions which had now been completed should be removed from the outstanding actions list.

5. VISIT ABERDEENSHIRE DELIVERY PLAN 2020/21

The Chair welcomed Chris Foy, the Chief Executive Officer of Visit Aberdeenshire who addressed the Committee, providing an overview of the Visit Aberdeenshire Delivery Plan for 2020/21, which included three projects which sought to provide a business recovery programme to address sector priorities and to deliver tangible growth; promotional campaigns to drive demand for the North-east and a business to business focus to maintain a strong market presence. The presentation also highlighted additional priorities, including the Scottish Government recovery initiatives which looked at connections between government priorities and evolving projects; the UK Government Tourism Sector Deal; Food and Drink Tourism and a way forward post pandemic which would look to review the strategy in 2021.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr Foy for attending, and for providing an extremely informative presentation.

6. PROPOSED ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 – SITE OP46 ROYAL DEVENICK PARK

There had been circulated, a report dated 21 July 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which asked the Committee to consider Aberdeenshire Council’s draft response, as presented in Appendix 2 to the report, to the Proposed

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2020, taking on board the views of the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee, as presented in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Head of Service (Planning and Environment) introduced the report, and advised the Committee that the proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan had been formally published on 20 May 2020 and it had included a proposed allocation (site OP46) at Royal Park, for 150 homes (as presented in Appendix 1 to the report). Given the proximity of the proposed site to the Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire administrative boundary, officers had made the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee aware of the proposed allocation, and the potential implications on cross boundary matters in the North Kincardine Area. That was to allow both the Area Committee and then the Infrastructure Services Committee to contribute to the proposed response, which was required to be submitted by 31 August 2020.

The Committee acknowledged that officers had strongly opposed any further development of any scale in that area as discussed in Section 4.4 to the report, which was supported by the views of the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee, subject to the inclusion of additional wording to clarify point 8, relating to road access.

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

- (1) **Acknowledge** the views of the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee on Aberdeenshire Council's draft response to the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2020.
- (2) **Approve** Aberdeenshire Council's response to the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2020.

7. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 14 May 2020 (Item 6), there had been circulated a report, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided the Committee with updates on transportation projects across Aberdeenshire for the period between May to July 2020.

The report also provided the Local Transport Strategy Action update as presented in Appendix 1 to the report, covering the period from January to April 2020, which showed progress made against identified categories and Appendix 2 to the report presented the HTAP Programme Manager Update.

The Head of Service (Transportation) introduced the report and provided the Committee with some updates, since the report had been published, namely:-

- (1) Spaces for People - the Service were continuing to review, on a weekly basis, the measures which had been put in place during lockdown, to allow people to move around safely within town centres while maintaining social distancing. Space in town centres was extremely important and officers would continue, as part of a strategic approach, to provide support to the public to allow them

to return safely to town centres through a consistent and professional approach.

- (2) Kintore Station – Transport Scotland had confirmed that the station would open in October 2020 following the completion of construction. Historic station benches had been delivered and installed in the community garden.
- (3) The Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy consultation had been published by Nestrans on 5 August 2020 and as part of that consultation process, a report would be issued to each Area Committee, seeking their feedback on the Strategy, with a report then being presented to the Infrastructure Services Committee on 1 October 2020, prior to Nestrans considering all responses at a meeting on November 2020.

During discussion, the Committee sought feedback on a number of issues highlighted within the report:-

- Policy papers would be presented to Area Committees (slightly delayed due to Covid-19), by the end of the year, which would provide a clear position on how to deal with the road networks, taking into account the significant shift in areas of activity.
- Local members would be kept informed on the works planning for charging points in Peterhead.
- Each Area Committee would be kept up-to-date with the ongoing discussions regarding the A90 and A952 improvements, whilst recognising that there had been some delay due to Covid-19 with junctions on the route not being progressed, however, Officers would continue to engage with Transport Scotland to identify when works on the route would be progressed.
- Details on funding allocations for charging points, at Hillside School, Portlethen would be provided to members.
- Officers would provide the allocation of Charge Place Scotland Grant 2020/21 Programme, including whether Kemnay was being looked at as part of those options.

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

- (1) **Acknowledge** the progress made with projects, activities and developments taken forward by Nestrans, external agencies and stakeholders as outlined in the report;
- (2) **Agree** to accept further updates on the progress of both the implementation and delivery of the Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy (LTS) as appropriate; and
- (3) **Note** the update on Spaces for People in Aberdeenshire.

8. A980 CAMPFIELD, TORPHINS – REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF SPEED LIMIT

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Marr Area Committee of 16 June 2020 (Item 5), there had been circulated a report dated 6 August 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration, following the submission of a Member Promoted Issue (MPI) raised by Councillor Argyle of the Marr Area Committee, concerning the proposed extension of the existing 40 mph speed limit on the A980, near Campfield Filling Station, Torphins, as presented as Appendix 1 to the report.

The report explained that the MPI had been raised by Councillor Argyle, following a decision taken by the Marr Area Committee on 28 March 2017 (Item 15), which had successfully implemented a 40 mph speed limit on the A980 at Camphill Filing Station, Torphins. The MPI sought a review of existing 40 mph speed limit, with consideration that it was extended westwards to cover the junction with the C4k Glassel road, where a fatal accident had occurred on 17 February 2017 and also reliable information on other near misses at that particular location.

The Head of Service (Roads, Landscape and Waste Services) introduced the report and advised the Committee that the report was seeking a departure from policy, however, it was the view of Officers, that the extension would be not be in line with the current policy position. The Roads Safety Unit had stated that speed limit reviews were based on accident history and there had not been a collision in the last 15 years to support the review that the speed limit should be extended on the grounds of road safety.

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

- (1) **Note** the Member Promoted Issue attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and the decision of Marr Area Committee at its meeting of 16 June 2020 as outlined in the extract from the draft minutes of that meeting as presented as Appendix 2 to the report;
- (2) **Note** the investigation and recommendations from Officers as noted within the report;
- (3) **Acknowledge** the request from Marr Area Committee to deviate from Roads Policy to allow the Marr Roads Team to begin the formal process to extend the existing speed limit as shown in Appendix 3; and
- (4) **Agree** to deviate from Policy in order to approve the request from Marr Area Committee for the reasons set out in this report and to extend the 40 mph speed limit, to a point approximately 100 metres west of the C4k Glassel junction.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2017-2021 – ANNUAL UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Aberdeenshire Full Council Meeting of 23 July 2020 (Item 4), where the Council agreed to close down the existing Council Plan and associated priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic,

there was circulated a report dated 23 July 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services which provided an update on the Economic Development Action Plan 2017-2020, in the context of the impact of Covid-19, on activities and projects delivered by the Economic Development Service.

The report explained that since March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic had had a huge impact on Aberdeenshire communities and its economy, with the likelihood of significant implications for economic growth and development across the short, medium and long term, with reference to a report presented to the Committee on 14 May 2020 (Item 8) which had set out the scale and extent of some of the forecast impacts.

It was noted that as a result of the operational impact of Covid-19 on the Economic Development Service, many aspects of the existing Action Plan had not been a priority since March 2020 and a full reassessment of priorities was therefore recommended, taking place with full cognisance of the proposed new Council Plan. As such the report recommended closing down the existing Action Plan, with a new Business Plan being brought forward to the Committee before the end of 2020, setting out medium-term priorities to 2020 and longer-term strategic objectives.

The Committee were advised that a final summary of achievements, against the 2017-2021 Action Plan to March 2020 was being compiled and would be circulated to the Committee as a bulletin report during the October cycle.

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

- (1) **Agree** to formally close down the Economic Development Action Plan 2017-2021 and associated priorities and actions agreed at Infrastructure Services Committee on 16 March 2017 and subsequently updated on 16 May 2019;
- (2) **Note** that a presentation on achievements towards the plan indicators to the end of March 2020 would be provided to the Committee by way of a bulletin report during the October cycle;
- (3) **Note** that two informal Infrastructure Services Committee sessions would be arranged to seek members input into the Action Plan, with a more detailed review being presented, by bulletin to members in October cycle; and
- (4) **Agree** to receive a proposed new Economic Development Business Plan in the November cycle, setting out new priorities and actions in line with the new Council Plan and Priorities and revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

10. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGIES

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 14 May 2020 (Item 8), there was circulated a report, dated 23 July 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided an update on announcements made by the UK and Scottish Governments, relating to actions to support economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and which sought the Committee's support for the 'North East Scotland Regional Economic Strategy – Statement in Response to Covid-19'.

The report explained that the Committee had previously approved a refreshed Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan on 21 June 2018 (Item 16) which covered the period 2018-2023, however, that plan was now subject to review, in terms of priorities, by regional partners, to reflect the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and to reiterate support for key aspects of the Regional Economic Strategy such as diversification and sector growth. The North East Regional Economic Scotland Regional Economic Strategy statement, in response to Covid-19 was presented in Appendix 2 to the report, and it was noted that it has also been presented and endorsed by ONE Regional Economic Partnership Forum on 21 July 2020.

It was noted that in Scotland, the Government had established an Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (AGER) which was tasked to recommend solutions that faced different sectors of the economy in recovering from the pandemic and Appendix 1 to the report, presented 25 recommendations to shape the economic future economic policy in Scotland and the types of intervention which might be required with the Scottish Government accepting all the recommendations, structuring their response in the form of an action plan.

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

- (1) **Note** the latest announcements from the UK and Scottish Governments on economic recovery actions, and in particular note the Scottish Government's response to the report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery;
- (2) **Agree** that Aberdeenshire Council should continue to influence, through formal and informal routes, developing national responses to the economic crisis with a focus on ensuring that issues specific to Aberdeenshire's communities and economies are adequately recognised and addressed; and
- (3) **Support** the 'North East Scotland Regional Economic Strategy – Statement in Response to Covid-19' (Appendix 2) and note that the Regional Economic Strategy and Action Plan will remain key documents in preparing a new Aberdeenshire Economic Development Business Plan.

Having proposed a motion, which was not seconded, "not to support the 'North East Scotland Regional Economic Strategy (Recommendation 2.3), but to refer it to Full Council for further debate", Councillor Johnston requested, as provided in Standing Order 5.2.4, that the terms of his motion be recorded in the minute.

11. COASTAL COMMUNITIES CROWN ESTATE FUNDING

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 23 January 2020 (Item 13), where the Committee agreed to allocate the majority of the 2019-20 allocation of Scottish Crown estate (Marine) Coastal Communities funding to a number of projects, there was circulated a report, dated 23 July 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which proposed an approach to the allocation of Coastal Communities Scottish Crown Estate funds, by Aberdeenshire Council, to a series of projects and initiatives in 2020-21.

The report explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in delays to projects awarded funding through the first tranche of Crown Estate funds and Officers had conducted an exercise with project sponsors to understand the impact of the pandemic on their projects, with a particular focus on timelines, bearing in mind that funds must be spent by March 2021. That exercise had resulted in amendments or decommitment of funding (where appropriate to do so) and Appendix 2 to the report presented the current status of projects, along with £458,659 which was available to commit to projects and activities which would benefit coastal communities as part of new tranche funding to be spent by end of March 2021.

During discussion the Committee recognised the challenges faced during 2020/21 which regards to prescriptive timescales for funding allocations to be spent by the end of the financial year and the Committee suggested that Area Committees should be asked to consider, in advance of the next funding allocation for 2021/22 to identify what community opportunities there were for community groups to bid for coastal project funding, to ensure that the budget allocation could be dispersed timeously, to allow sufficient time for the funding allocation to be spent by March 2022.

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

- (1) **Note** the Coastal Communities Scottish Crown Estate (Marine) funding that has been awarded to Aberdeenshire Council in 2019-20 and 2020-21;
- (2) **Approve** the proposed changes to existing commitments (made at Infrastructure Services Committee on 23rd January 2020) as set out in paragraph 4.5 to the report;
- (3) **Approve** the commitment of some of the remaining Scottish Crown Estate (Marine) funding as set out in paragraphs 4.9, 4.10, and 4.13 to the report; and
- (4) **Approve** the establishment and launch of a Coastal Communities Challenge Fund with immediate effect, to be managed through existing arrangements as set out in paragraph 4.12 to the report and in accordance with the criteria and guidance as described at Appendix 3.
- (5) **Agree** that Area Committees should be asked to consider, in advance of the 2021/22 funding allocation (in April/May 2021) to identify community opportunities there were for community groups to bid for coastal project funding.

12. FINANCIAL MONITORING TO 30 JUNE 2020

There was circulated a report, dated 7 August 2020, by the Director of Business Services, which provided the Committee with the revenue and capital budget monitoring information for budgets within their remit to 30 June 2020.

The report explained that the planned budget expenditure on service delivery to the end of June 2020 was £16,430 million, with the actual expenditure incurred within that period being £16.421 million, with a breakdown of those figures being as presented as Appendix 1a and 1b to the report. Section 4.3 to the report highlighted

several emerging issues which would be monitored throughout the financial year, some which were consistent with previous financial years.

It was also reported that the Infrastructure Services revenue budget for 2020/1 had been agreed on 18 March 2020 at £62.340 million, that had increased to £62.354 million as presented in Appendix 2 to the report, as a result transfers from reserves, transfers from reserves with virement which required approval and their explanations as presented in Appendix 3 to the report.

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

- (1) **Note** the revenue and capital budget monitoring to 30 June 2020; and
- (2) **Approve** the budget movements as set out in Appendix 2, with further details in Appendix 3.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

- A. Minute of the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) of 29 January 2020 (Appendix A)
- B. Minute of Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee of 5 June, 2020 (Appendix B)

APPENDIX A

ABERDEEN, 29 JANUARY 2020, MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY

Present: Councillors J Cox (Chair); D Aitchison, P Bell, M Boulton, A Forsyth (as substitute for Councillor B Topping), J Cooke, G Graham, R Grant, P Johnston, J Latham, D Mair, and I Yuill.

Apologies: Councillor B Topping.

Officers: **Strategic Planning Authority:** Ms S Lamont, Senior Planner;
Aberdeen City Council: Ms G Beattie, Chief Officer, Strategic Place Planning; Mr D Dunne, Policy and Strategy Manager, Strategic Place Planning; Mr A Thomson, Solicitor, Governance; and Mr T Walsh, Senior Planner, (Local Plan Team); and
Aberdeenshire Council: Mr P Macari, (Head of Service, Planning and Environment); Mr C Smith, Accountant; and Ms J McRobbie (Committee Officer).

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked if there were any declarations of interest. No interests were declared.

2. NOMINATION OF VICE-CHAIR

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 14 June, 2019, (Item 9), when inter alia, the rotation of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority were considered, the Chair advised that nominations for a Vice Chair from amongst Aberdeen City Councillors were requested.

He moved, seconded by Councillor Graham, that Councillor Boulton be appointed as Vice Chair to the Authority.

There being no further nominations, the Authority unanimously agreed:- that Councillor Boulton be appointed as Vice Chair to the Authority.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY OF 25 SEPTEMBER, 2019

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record the Minute of Meeting of 25 September, 2019.

4. REPORT OF EXAMINATION OF THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

There had been circulated a joint report by the Chief Officer, Strategic Place Planning, Aberdeen City Council and the Head of Planning and Environment, Aberdeenshire Council, requesting Members' consideration of the Scottish Government's Examination of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan and explaining the timescale and process for the next steps of the Plan.

The Authority heard further from officers of the activities behind the finalisation of the plan, submitted in April, 2019 and recommendations made to the Scottish Ministers and shared with the Authority on 17 January, 2020; of the minor textual amendments and areas of key discussion, all as detailed in the appendix to the report, relating to the wind energy capacity diagram, construction aggregate availability across City and Shire, numerous mediated textual changes agreed with Transport Scotland, the agreement in principle to the use of the 2019 Housing Land Audit to inform the plan and its tables; and that the plan effectively now belonged to the Scottish Government for approval or rejection, in whole or in part, there being no further opportunity for additional submissions to be made.

There was discussion on the options available for the Government should it decide to reject part, or all, of the plan, and the legal scrutiny which would attend any such decision; and the possible ambiguity, and intention behind the reporter's recommended inclusion of wording on the Formartine and Buchan Way as one of Scotland's great trails, which it was hoped would not prejudice any future infrastructure options to extend a railway north of Aberdeen.

The Authority agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report on the outcomes of the Examination of the Proposed Plan;
- (2) to note concerns expressed regarding the additional wording on the Formartine and Buchan Way. and
- (3) to note the next steps of the Plan process.

5. SDPA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER, 2019

There had been circulated a report dated 21 January, 2020, by the Treasurer, providing the budget position as at 31 December, 2019 for Members' consideration and reporting that, as expected, there had been little spend other than on staff costs and those associated with the Examination of the Strategic Development Plan.

The Authority agreed:- to note the budget monitoring position as at 31 December, 2019.

6. SDPA BULLETIN JANUARY, 2020

There had been circulated a joint report by the Chief Officer, Strategic Place Planning, Aberdeen City Council and the Head of Planning and Environment,

Aberdeenshire Council, providing updates in respect of (a) the Local Development Plans for Aberdeen City and for Aberdeenshire; (b) the new development plan system, fostered by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which removed the requirement to have strategic development plans, and therefore strategic development authorities and gave great emphasis to nationally agreed planning frameworks to set out the policy for land use planning; (c) the parallel review of the National Transport Strategy, alongside the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2; (d) confirmation on 19 December, 2019, that the Scottish Government were to end the Abellio Rail contract early; (e) an ongoing consultation on planning performance and fees, which may ultimately only be increased on the evidence of improved performance; (f) a response sent by the Authority to an Aberdeen City Council planning Application 191171/PPP for the erection of residential led, mixed use development of approximately 550 homes, community and sports facilities, retail (Classes 1, 2, 3 and Sui Generis) with associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure at land east of the A92 Ellon Road at Cloverhill, Murcar, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen on the basis that the allocation of new land should be better considered as part of a development plan process; (g) the 2018/19 Employment Land Audit, showing the continuation of a generous supply across the area; (h) a seminar held in December, 2019, on the Regional Economic Strategy, refocusing to ensure the vision reflected an area subject to economic change and transition; and (i) updates on major infrastructure projects, Laurencekirk and A96 east of Huntly, Route Options and Designs, and the works progressing the opening of Kintore Railway Station in spring 2020.

The Authority agreed: to note the updates provided.

Councillor John Cox
Chair

APPENDIX B

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

5 June 2020

ABERDEEN, 5 June 2020. Minute of Meeting of the ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Laing, Chairperson; Councillor Jim Gifford, Vice-Chairperson; Councillors Peter Argyle, Marie Boulton, Ann Evison (as substitute for Councillor Thomson) and Douglas Lumsden; Professor Stephen Logan, Mr Patrick Machray, OBE and Sir Ian Wood.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

1. The Clerk sought nominations for Chairperson of the Joint Committee, whereupon:-

Councillor Gifford, seconded by Councillor Argyle, moved:-
that Councillor Jenny Laing be appointed as Chairperson of the Joint Committee.

The Clerk then sought nominations for Vice Chairperson of the Joint Committee, whereupon:-

The Chairperson, seconded by Councillor Lumsden, moved:-
that Councillor Jim Gifford be appointed as Vice Chairperson of the Joint Committee.

There were no other nominations.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

- (i) to appoint Councillor Laing as Chairperson; and
- (ii) to appoint Councillor Gifford as Vice-Chairperson.

At this juncture, Councillor Laing assumed the chair.

CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

2. The Joint Committee had before them a notification of a change to its membership as follows:-

Councillor Alex Nicoll to replace Councillor Stephen Flynn as a named substitute.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

to note the change to the membership.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

3. The Chairperson (1) made reference to the Joint Committee's Standing Orders advising that they do not currently allow for members' who were participating remotely to consider confidential or exempt business; and (2) explained that a report proposing changes to the Standing Orders, would be considered later on the agenda.

In this regard, the Chairperson moved to suspend Standing Order 33 in order for the Joint Committee to consider an exempt report at item 13 (City Region Deal – Financial Update Q4 2019/20). Article 12 of this minute refers.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to suspend Standing Order 33 to consider the exempt report; and
- (ii) in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting at item 13, so as to avoid disclosure of information of the classes described in paragraph 6 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. No declarations of interest were intimated in respect of the items on today's agenda.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 7 FEBRUARY 2020, FOR APPROVAL

5. The Joint Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 7 February 2020, for approval.

With reference to article 4 (Quarterly Progress Update), the Joint Committee heard Jennifer Crow provide and update in relation to the unsuccessful challenge fund bid relating to the Food Hub, advising that the final awards were announced on 29 May 2020 and that officers were now aware of the type of projects that were successful and the amounts awarded.

With reference to article 6(3) (Audit Scotland: Scotland's City Region Deals and Growth Deals), The Project Manager advised that Audit Scotland had responded on 14 February 2020 advising that it was not in their remit to make recommendations to the private sector, however the principles were carried forward and therefore it would be good practice for all members to take their comments on board.

With reference to article 8 (Finance Report – Financial Update Q3, 2019/2020), the Joint Committee heard Patrick Machray intimate that the minute did not quite encapsulate his strong view in relation to the need for a commitment on the funding for building projects, particularly in light of contractual arrangements. In response, the Project Manager advised that the Chair of the programme Board had discussed with the Scottish Government the need for assurances that funding could be rolled over and that funding would be available to complete projects. Verbal assurances had been given and officers are awaiting written confirmation

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would provide an update in relation to written clarification from the Scottish Government regarding future years funding for City Region Deal projects;
- (ii) to note the information and updates provided; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the minute as a correct record.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL - PROPOSED CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS

6. The Joint Committee had before them a report by the Chief Officer – Governance, which presented recommendations to facilitate and enable full remote decision-making to include confidential and exempt information for the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and UK and Scottish Government advice for people to restrict social contact.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee –

- (a) agree in principle an amendment to the Joint Committee’s Standing Order 22 to enable the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to cancel meetings as outlined at paragraph 3.4 of the report;
- (b) agree in principle an amendment to the Joint Committee’s Standing Order 32 and 33 to enable remote access for full meetings, including any confidential and exempt business as outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report;
- (c) agree in principle to delegate authority to the Chief Officer – City Growth, Aberdeen City Council and the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services, Aberdeenshire Council, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee, to submit performance reports as required by the Scottish Government in exceptional circumstances where a meeting of the Joint Committee cannot be held. Any such action to be notified to members of the Joint Committee; and
- (d) agree that the situation be kept under review and that a report be submitted to the Joint Committee at the appropriate time.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LETTER TO DEALS

7. The Joint Committee had before it a report by the Programme Manager which provided an update on the UK/Scottish Government communication in response to COVID-19.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee –

- (a) note the content of the letter from Scottish Government (attached to the report);
- (b) instruct the Chair of Aberdeen City Region Deal Programme Board to continue discussions with UK/Scottish Government on the impact of COVID-19 to keep the Deal delivering and progressing in line with the Region's priorities;
- (c) instruct the Digital Programme Lead to report to the Joint Committee in September 2020 with a proposal to maximise the Digital Resource in response to the current pandemic; and
- (d) instruct the City Region Deal Programme Manager to report to the Joint Committee in December 2020 with a Benefits Realisation Plan that reflects the impact of COVID-19.

Jennifer Crow provided an update in relation to the Bio-Hub project advising of the challenges due to the pandemic, specifically (1) that there had been delays in construction; (2) that there were concerns regarding the direct impact this would have on the economic benefit of the project for the region; and (3) that there was a clear increased demand for the Bio-Hub to be progressed as soon as possible.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to recommendation (d) above, that the Benefits Realisation Plan report be submitted to the September 2020 meeting;
- (ii) that a special meeting of the Joint Committee be arranged in July 2020 to consider a report on the specific challenges, mitigations and additional support for each of the City Region Deal projects, including how each project could be progressed;
- (iii) that an update report on the Memorandum of Understanding (Housing Element) be submitted following officers' discussions with the Scottish Government; and
- (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE

8. The Joint Committee had before it a report by the Programme Manager which detailed the progress of the City Region Deal and its constituent workstreams.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee note the content of the report, its appendix, and the progress made.

The Programme Manager (1) intimated that The Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) had announced this week that Martin Gilbert had been appointed as their new Chairperson, replacing Archie Kennedy; and (2) advised that she was in contact

with the Harbour Board in relation to the construction delays and contract situation for the Aberdeen harbour expansion, working with them to identify new milestones for the development and completion of the project.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

- (i) to welcome the appointment of Martin Gilbert as Chair of the OGTC and acknowledge the leadership and contribution that Archie Kennedy had made during his three-year tenure;
- (ii) to acknowledge that there was a requirement to make arrangements for Equalities and Investment training for Members; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

CITY REGION DEAL - FINANCIAL UPDATE Q4 2019/20

9. The Joint Committee had before it a report which provided an update on the finances of the Aberdeen City Region Deal for actual expenditure in financial year 2019/20 including details of the 2019/20 forecast.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee note the content of the report and the details contained in the appendices.

The Joint Committee heard Alan Wood provide an overview of the financial situation.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - TRANSPORT

10. The Joint Committee had before them a report which provided an update on the progress of projects being taken forward through the additional Scottish Government investment announced alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal, Including progress on the A90/A937 Laurencekirk Junction Improvement Scheme and the investment in the rail network to improve services between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee note the update in the report.

Damian Briody and Amy Phillips, Transport Scotland were in attendance and highlighted key information in relation to the report.

Sir Ian Wood made reference to the additional £200M funding and sought information on the specific details of the projects including seeking assurance that the funding was currently in place. In response Mr Briody outlined the key projects and interventions to improve journey times and increase capacity on key rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt for passengers and freight. He emphasised that the projects would be delivered by 2026 or sooner and that the funding was committed under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Sir Ian Wood requested that a short summary of the key projects, their costs and their benefits be prepared and circulated to members. In response, Mr Briody intimated that Network Rail were currently preparing a report in this regard, and that it would be available by the end of June 2020, following which details could be shared with members of the Joint Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Lumsden regarding journey times from Aberdeen to the Central Belt, Mr Briody advised that:-

- the average journey time would be 2 hours 10 minutes or less for inter-city services between Aberdeen and Edinburgh;
- the average journey time would be 2 hours 30 minutes or less for inter-city services between Aberdeen and Glasgow; and
- the average journey time would be 1 hour 10 minutes or less for inter-city services between Aberdeen and Dundee.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Mr Briody, Transport Scotland would submit a breakdown of the projects and their costs and the economic benefits for the region at the special Joint Committee meeting in July 2020; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information provided and approve the recommendation in the report.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

11. The Joint Committee had before it a report which presented the draft Aberdeen City Region Deal Annual Report 2019-20 and sought approval for its wider publication.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee endorses the Annual Report.

Members discussed the contents of the report and the following suggestions and additions were intimated:-

- acknowledged that the Annual Report was prepared using the UK/Scottish Government template to provide them with the necessary detail they required, however a shorter, user friendly version of the Annual Report should also be prepared for members of the general public; and
- the report should highlight the positive impact the City Region Deal was having on inclusive economic growth.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Annual Report had still to be formatted by the City Council's Design Team; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendation, subject to officer's undertaking the suggested changes and additions outlined above.

In accordance with the decision recorded under article 3 of this minute, the following item of business was considered in private with the press and public excluded.

CITY REGION DEAL - FINANCIAL UPDATE Q4 2019/20 - EXEMPT REPORT AND APPENDIX

12. With reference to article 9 of this minute, the Joint Committee had before it an exempt report which provided details on the finances of the Aberdeen City Region Deal for the Final Outturn of expenditure in financial year 2019/20.

The report recommended:-

that the Joint Committee note the content of the report and its appendix.

The Programme Manager responded to questions from members of the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Programme Manager would liaise with Project Leads to provide an update on the funding position for each project in light of the construction delays due to COVID-19 and that details be submitted to the special meeting in July 2020; and
 - (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.
- **COUNCILLOR JENNY LAING, Chairperson**