

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – REMOTE MEETING

12th November, 2020

10.20 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Leishman (Convener), David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, David Barratt, John Beare, Tim Brett, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Bobby Clelland, Dave Coleman, Bill Connor, Altany Craik, Neil Crooks, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, John Docherty, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Ian Ferguson, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, David Graham, Fiona Grant, Mick Green, Sharon Green-Wilson, Gary Guichan, Garry Haldane, Jean Hall-Muir, Judy Hamilton, Andy Heer, Zoe Hisbent, Linda Holt, Gordon Langlands, Helen Law, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, David MacDiarmid, Mino Manekshaw, Karen Marjoram, Lea McLelland, Alice McGarry, Tony Miklinski, Derek Noble, Dominic Nolan, John O’Brien, Tony Orton, Ross Paterson, Bill Porteous, Graham Ritchie, David Ross, David J Ross, Ryan Smart, Kate Stewart, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Brian Thomson, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker, Darren Watt and Jan Wincott.

The Provost advised that, in terms of Standing Order 8.1, he had agreed to accept an urgent motion in relation to Mossmorran and that this would be considered under Notice of Motions on the agenda.

195.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
	<p>Councillor Linda Holt declared an interest in paragraph 204 (Urgent Motion) below as she was a member of the Mossmorran Action Group. She intended to leave the meeting for this item.</p> <p>Councillors Jim Leishman and Ann Verner declared an interest in paragraph 203 below as they were Council appointed members of the St Andrews Links Trust. However, as this is a separate entity from the Management Committee, they considered that their interest was so remote and insignificant that they would remain in the meeting and participate in this item.</p> <p>Councillor Lesley Backhouse declared an interest in paragraph 203 below as a Council appointed member of the St Andrews Links Management Committee. She considered that her interest was so remote and insignificant that she would remain in the meeting and participate in this item.</p> <p>Councillor Brian Thomson declared an interest in paragraph 203 below as a Council appointed member of the St Andrews Links Management Committee. He intended to leave the meeting for this item.</p>
196./	

2020 FC 230

196.	CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN
	<p>There was circulated at the meeting a Civic Business Bulletin, a copy of which is appended as Appendix 1 to the minute.</p> <p>The Provost congratulated all of those listed as having received an award in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in the local area.</p>
197.	MINUTE
	The Provost, seconded by the Depute Provost, moved that the minute of the Fife Council meeting of 10th September, 2020 be approved.
	<u>Decision</u>
	The minute was approved.
198.	MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES
	<p>The minutes of the undernoted Committees and Sub-Committees, as contained in the volume of minutes, were submitted for accuracy:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) North East Planning Committee of 26th August, 23rd September and 21st October, 2020. (2) Central and West Planning Committee of 2nd September, 29th September and 28th October, 2020. (3) Fife Planning Review Body of 28th September and 26th October, 2020. (4) Regulation and Licensing Committee of 18th August and 15th September, 2020. (5) Glenrothes Area Committee of 14th October, 2020. (6) South and West Fife Area Committee of 7th October, 2020. (7) Kirkcaldy Area Committee of 8th September and 20th October, 2020. (8) City of Dunfermline Area Committee of 8th September and 20th October, 2020. (9) Levenmouth Area Committee of 9th September and 21st October, 2020. (10) Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 9th September and 14th October, 2020. (11) North East Fife Area Committee of 2nd September, 2020. (12) Policy and Coordination Committee of 27th August and 8th October, 2020. (13) Environment, Finance and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 25th August, 2020. (14) Education and Children's Services, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee of 16th September, 2020. (15) Standards and Audit Committee of 31st August and 15th October, 2020. (16) Superannuation Fund and Pensions Committee and Fife Pensions Board of 31st August and 30th September, 2020. (17) Fife Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board of 28th August and 25th September, 2020.
	<u>Decision</u>
	The minutes were noted.
199./	

2020 FC 231

199.	CO-LEADERS' REPORT
	The Council considered a report by the Co-Leaders on a number of strategic issues. The Co-Leaders provided updates on a number of issues in response to questions from members.
	<u>Decision</u>
	The Council noted the report.
200.	QUESTION TIME
	In terms of Standing Order 1.7, the questions put by members to the meeting, the written answers and supplementary questions, are contained in Appendix 2 to the minute.
<i>The meeting adjourned at 11.45 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon.</i>	
201.	FIFE COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING 2021 - TIMESCALES
	The Council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which advised members of contingency plans for the budget process in light of the potential delay in the Scottish Local Government Settlement being received, including contingent changes to Standing Orders to reflect any compressed timescales for decision.
	<u>Decision</u>
	The Council:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) noted the potential for late receipt of the financial information necessary to allow the Council to set its 2020/21 Budget; (2) agreed that, if required, Standing Orders may be amended so that Budget Proposals are to be delivered by 12 noon on the working day prior to the Budget meeting, with proposed amendments to such proposals to be lodged at the budget meeting; and (3) agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make the foregoing amendments to Standing Orders to give effect to these compressed timescales if this becomes necessary to enable an effective budget setting process, but that such changes will have effect only for the 2021/2022 budget setting process.
202.	CHANGES TO LIST OF COMMITTEE AND OFFICER POWERS
	The Council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which proposed recommendations for changes to the Council's List of Committee Powers and List of Officer Powers.
	<u>Decision</u>
	The/

2020 FC 232

	<p>The Council:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) approved the changes to the List of Committee Powers as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;(2) approved the changes to the List of Officer Powers as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, subject to the approval of Scottish Government in respect of the proposed changes to the Planning Scheme of Delegation; and(3) delegated authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make any consequential and non-substantive amendments to the List of Committee and Officer Powers arising from the report.
<p><i>Councillor Thomson left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item having declared an interest.</i></p>	
203.	EXTERNAL ORGANISATION - APPOINTMENT TO ST ANDREWS LINKS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
	<p>The Council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services seeking appointment of an elected member representative to the St Andrews Links Management Committee.</p>
	<p><u>Decision</u></p>
	<p>The Council agreed unanimously to reappoint Councillor Lesley Backhouse as an elected member representative to the St Andrews Links Management Committee for a four year period from 1st January 2021 to 31st December, 2024.</p>
<p><i>Councillor Thomson rejoined the meeting after consideration of the above item.</i></p>	
204.	NOTICE OF MOTIONS
	<p>The Council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which required the Council consider the motions submitted in terms of Standing Order 8.1.</p>
	<p><u>Motion 1</u></p> <p>Councillor Calder, seconded by Councillor Brett, moved as follows:-</p> <p>Supporting 'Teach the Future'</p> <p>"Fife Council notes the continuing climate emergency and the efforts, both local and national, being undertaken to tackle this.</p> <p>Fife Council also notes the positive work by 'Teach the Future', led by young people in schools and further education, to ensure that the climate emergency is high in the education agenda. Teach the Future has noted that only 4% of students feel they know a lot about climate change, 68% of students want to learn more about the environment and 75% of teachers feel they have not received adequate training to education students about climate change.</p> <p>Council/</p>

2020 FC 233

Council resolved to support the following asks of the Scottish Government by Teach the Future:

Ask 1: A government commissioned review into how the whole of the Scottish formal education system is preparing students for the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

Ask 2: Inclusion of the climate emergency and ecological crisis in teacher education and a new professional teaching qualification.

Ask 3: Increased priority for sustainability in school inspections and publicly influencing educational rankings

Ask 4: A Scottish Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Education Act
Fife Council asks the Council co-leaders to write to the Scottish Education Secretary in support of this.

Furthermore Fife Council also calls for a paper on Climate Change education to be brought to the Education and Children's Services Subcommittee at some point in the near future, detailing what action is currently being taken."

Decision

The Council agreed the motion unanimously.

Motion 2

Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Beare, moved as follows:-

"Subject to the recommendations in the Report on Changes to the List of Committee Powers and Officer Powers being approved, this motion proposes the following changes to the Conveners of the following Sub-Committees:-

Assets and Corporate Services sub-committee , replace Councillor Craig Walker with Councillor David Barratt.

Education and Children's Services sub-committee, replace Councillor Fay Sinclair with Councillor Craig Walker."

Decision

The Council:-

- (1) agreed the motion unanimously; and
- (2) noted the confirmation by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that Special Responsibility Allowances transfer to the elected member appointed as Convener of the Sub-Committees of the Policy and Coordination Committee. As such, these changes could be accommodated within the scope of the Council's allocation of Special Responsibility Allowances.

Motion 3

Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Verrecchia moved as follows:-

WHIR/

WHIR Project/16DAYS

“Council notes that 25th Nov begins the Annual “16 days of action against Gender-based violence;

Recognises that as we have retreated into our homes during an unprecedented lockdown, reports of domestic abuse have increased in Fife.

Believes that we as Councillors are leaders in our communities; and as such have responsibility to highlight and call out domestic or gender-based violence wherever it is found.

We recognise the tireless work of our staff - through the WHIR (Womens’ Health Improvement Research) Project, working in Housing Services and across the Fife Housing Partnership - and other Council Services, through the Violence against Women Partnership; and others who work with victims and survivors to improve housing support and reduce homelessness among this group of clients; and support this work with our communities.

Today, we commit once again to the White-Ribbon Campaign to stand up; speak out and say NO to violence against women. As Leaders in our communities, we will pledge to Never Commit; excuse or remain silent about violence against women.”

Decision

The Council agreed the motion unanimously.

Councillor Richard Watt joined the meeting following consideration of Motion 3.

Motion 4

Councillor Backhouse, seconded by Councillor Glen, moved as follows:-

“Fife Council believes that no child should go hungry in the school holidays. This Council fully supports Marcus Rashford in his campaign to ensure no child in England goes hungry in the school holidays.”

Amendment 1

Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Guichan, moved as follows:-

“Council further notes the success of the Marcus Rashford campaign in influencing Government policy on this and calls on the Scottish Government to fully fund Scottish local authorities in the long term to ensure that no child goes hungry in Scotland during the school holidays without the need to cut back on other vital local services.”

Amendment 2

Councillor/

2020 FC 235

Councillor Lothian, seconded by Councillor Calder, moved as follows:-

“Fife Council believes that no child in the UK should go hungry on any day of the year.”

Amendment 3

Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Dempsey, moved as follows:-

“Council

- Notes that the motion as tabled is already well out of date.
- Notes the concern expressed by the proposer and seconder for other parts of our shared and United Kingdom and looks forward to councils in other parts also debating the provision of school meals in Scotland.
- Notes the massive financial measures taken by Government in the face of the pandemic, made possible by one of the world’s strongest economies with currency of its own and its own central bank.
- Notes that it is Scottish Conservative policy to provide free breakfast and lunch to ALL Primary schoolchildren.
- Asks the Co-Leaders to write to the Scottish Government in its support of Elaine Smith MSP’s future Right to Food (Scotland) Bill that would place duties on current and future Scottish Governments to ensure that food is accessible to people – financially and geographically – and that food is adequate in terms of nutrition, safety and cultural appropriateness.

With the consent of the Provost, the mover of the motion agreed to conjoin with Amendments 1 and 2. For the purposes of the vote, the conjoined motion was as follows:-

Conjoined Motion

“Fife Council believes that no child should go hungry in the school holidays. This Council fully supports Marcus Rashford in his campaign to ensure no child in England goes hungry in the school holidays.

Council further notes the success of the Marcus Rashford campaign in influencing Government policy on this and calls on the Scottish Government to fully fund Scottish local authorities in the long term to ensure that no child goes hungry in Scotland during the school holidays without the need to cut back on other vital local services.

Fife Council believes that no child in the UK should go hungry on any day of the year.”

Roll Call

For the Conjoined Motion – 57 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, David Barratt, John Beare, Tim Brett, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Bobby Clelland, Bill Connor, Altany Craik, Neil/

2020 FC 236

Neil Crooks, Colin Davidson, John Docherty, Linda Erskine, Ian Ferguson, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, David Graham, Fiona Grant, Sharon Green-Wilson, Gary Guichan, Garry Haldane, Jean Hall Muir, Judy Hamilton, Zoe Hisbent, Linda Holt, Gordon Langlands, Helen Law, Jim Leishman, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian David MacDiarmid, Karen Marjoram, Lea McLelland, Alice McGarry, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Ross Paterson, Bill Porteous, David Ross, Ryan Smart, Kate Stewart, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Brian Thomson, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker and Jan Wincott.

For Amendment 3 – 14 votes

Councillors Dave Coleman, Dave Dempsey, Gavin Ellis, Mick Green, Andy Heer, Kathleen Leslie, Mino Manekshaw, Tony Miklinski, Dominic Nolan, Tony Orton, Graham Ritchie, David J Ross, Darren Watt and Richard Watt.

Decision

Accordingly, the conjoined motion was carried.

Motion 5

Councillor McGarry, seconded by Councillor Stewart, moved as follows:-

Independent Review of the Impact of Policing during the Miners' Strike 84/85

"Fife Council welcomes the Final Report of the Independent Review of the Impact of Policing on Affected Communities in Scotland during the Miners' Strike from March 1984 to March 1985, which was commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2018.

The Report concluded that it was impossible to separate out the impact of policing during the Strike from the many other factors at play during that time and recognised that, despite the constitutional, legal and cultural landscapes in Scotland having changed fundamentally in the 35 years since the Strike, the strength of feeling and the sense of injustice at the treatment of the miners and their families continues to be felt in mining communities.

We welcome the single recommendation in the Report which is that "subject to establishing suitable criteria, the Scottish Government should introduce legislation to pardon men convicted for matters related to the Strike".

Fife Council recognises the positive impact that this will have on ex miners, the families of deceased miners and the mining communities in Fife and we ask that the Scottish Government proceeds to introduce the necessary legislation as soon as practicable.

In its consideration of this legislation, we ask the Scottish Parliament to interpret the recommendation as widely as possible and to also consider the issue of compensation for unjustified loss of livelihoods and pension rights.

We/

We also recognise the need for a UK wide public inquiry into the Strike and ask the Scottish Government to continue to press the UK Government to undertake this.

Finally, Fife Council thanks those who pressed for this Review and all who contributed in any way to the Report and its outcome, particularly the National Union of Mineworkers and the Retired Police Officers' Association as well as individual miners, police officers and members of the mining communities who provided accounts of their experiences in order to aid understanding and reconciliation."

We ask the Co Leaders to convey the views of Fife Council on this matter to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice."

Amendment

Councillor Clelland, seconded by Councillor Noble, moved as follows:-

"Para 3 , third line , remove MEN and insert ALL THOSE

Para 6 , second line, after , as widely as possible ,insert :-

To ensure that all those convicted during the 84 - 85 miners strike , are pardoned.

Will read as follows , :- see below

Independent Review of the Impact of Policing during the Miners' Strike 84/85

"Fife Council welcomes the Final Report of the Independent Review of the Impact of Policing on Affected Communities in Scotland during the Miners' Strike from March 1984 to March 1985, which was commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2018.

The Report concluded that it was impossible to separate out the impact of policing during the Strike from the many other factors at play during that time and recognised that, despite the constitutional, legal and cultural landscapes in Scotland having changed fundamentally in the 35 years since the Strike, the strength of feeling and the sense of injustice at the treatment of the miners and their families continues to be felt in mining communities.

We welcome the single recommendation in the Report which is that "subject to establishing suitable criteria, the Scottish Government should introduce legislation to pardon ALL THOSE convicted for matters related to the Strike".

Fife Council recognises the positive impact that this will have on ex miners, the families of deceased miners and the mining communities in Fife and we ask that the Scottish Government proceeds to introduce the necessary legislation as soon as practicable.

In its consideration of this legislation, we ask the Scottish Parliament to interpret the recommendation as widely as possible, TO ENSURE THAT ALL THOSE CONVICTED DURING THE 84 - 85 MINERS STRIKE ARE PARDONED , and to also/

also consider the issue of compensation for unjustified loss of livelihoods and pension rights.

We also recognise the need for a UK wide public inquiry into the Strike and ask the Scottish Government to continue to press the UK Government to undertake this.

Finally, Fife Council thanks those who pressed for this Review and all who contributed in any way to the Report and its outcome, particularly the National Union of Mineworkers and the Retired Police Officers' Association as well as individual miners, police officers and members of the mining communities who provided accounts of their experiences in order to aid understanding and reconciliation."

We ask the Co Leaders to convey the views of Fife Council on this matter to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice."

With the consent of the Provost, the mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment to paragraph 6 and the conjoined motion was as follows:-

Independent Review of the Impact of Policing during the Miners' Strike 84/85

"Fife Council welcomes the Final Report of the Independent Review of the Impact of Policing on Affected Communities in Scotland during the Miners' Strike from March 1984 to March 1985, which was commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2018.

The Report concluded that it was impossible to separate out the impact of policing during the Strike from the many other factors at play during that time and recognised that, despite the constitutional, legal and cultural landscapes in Scotland having changed fundamentally in the 35 years since the Strike, the strength of feeling and the sense of injustice at the treatment of the miners and their families continues to be felt in mining communities.

We welcome the single recommendation in the Report which is that "subject to establishing suitable criteria, the Scottish Government should introduce legislation to pardon men convicted for matters related to the Strike". Fife Council considers this to apply to all those convicted.

Fife Council recognises the positive impact that this will have on ex miners, the families of deceased miners and the mining communities in Fife and we ask that the Scottish Government proceeds to introduce the necessary legislation as soon as practicable.

In its consideration of this legislation, we ask the Scottish Parliament to interpret the recommendation as widely as possible to ensure that all those convicted during the 84 – 85 miners strike are pardoned, and to also consider the issue of compensation for unjustified loss of livelihoods and pension rights.

We/

2020 FC 239

We also recognise the need for a UK wide public inquiry into the Strike and ask the Scottish Government to continue to press the UK Government to undertake this.

Finally, Fife Council thanks those who pressed for this Review and all who contributed in any way to the Report and its outcome, particularly the National Union of Mineworkers and the Retired Police Officers' Association as well as individual miners, police officers and members of the mining communities who provided accounts of their experiences in order to aid understanding and reconciliation."

We ask the Co Leaders to convey the views of Fife Council on this matter to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice."

Decision

The Council agreed the conjoined motion unanimously.

Councillors Langlands and Leslie left the meeting following consideration of Motion 5.

Urgent Motion

Councillor Lockhart, seconded by Councillor Erskine, moved as follows:-

"Council notes with dismay last week's Sepa report of the emission of up to 13,800 tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere from the Shell Exxon plant at Mossmorran between the 4 and 6 October.

This was the fourth period of unscheduled elevated flaring at the plant in 2020, was followed by an extended period of ground flare operation and has prompted weekly protests of growing numbers of residents outside the plant.

Last weekend there was further noisy elevated and ground flaring, with neither notice not subsequent explanation.

Council further notes that whilst the Scottish Government has set up a Just transition Board for Grangemouth, no such Board has been established for Mossmorran.

Council reaffirms its call to the Scottish Government to commission an Inquiry into the Health and Social Impacts of operations at both Mossmorran plants: and calls on the Scottish Government to establish a Just Transition Board to examine all options for the short, medium and long term future of the plants, including phased decommissioning.

In the event that, despite these continued operational failures at the plant, the Scottish Government continues to refuse to act, Council will explore setting up a Just Transition Board of its own, as a follow on from the work of the Working Group set up by former MP Lesley Laird.

Council/

2020 FC 240

Council will also urge the IJB and NHS Fife to act to fill the gaps identified in its 2019 report on the health impacts of flaring at Mossmorran, and in particular to set up a dedicated facility to record and monitor the flaring related health complaints of residents.”

The meeting adjourned at 1.45 p.m. and reconvened at 1.50 p.m.

Amendment

Councillor Vettraino, seconded by Councillor Backhouse, moved as follows:-

“Council notes with dismay last week's SEPA report of the emission of up to 13,800 tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere from the ExxonMobil plant at Mossmorran between the 4th and 6th October 2020.

Council also notes that that was the fourth period of unscheduled elevated flaring at the plant in 2020 and that it was followed by an extended period of ground flare operation, which has prompted weekly protests of growing numbers of residents outside the plant. Over the weekend of 31st October and 1st November last, there was further noisy elevated and ground flaring, with neither notice nor subsequent explanation.

Council further notes that the Scottish Government announced on September 1st 2020 the formation of a Just Transition Board for Grangemouth.

Council notes, too, that SEPA have referred ExxonMobil Chemical Limited to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for consideration of prosecution related to flaring that took place over Easter 2019 and that SEPA remains ‘frustrated by the frequency of flaring and the flow of information from the operator’ and that in October this year it confirmed that it is ‘investigating whether there has been a breach of permit conditions which would inform our next steps in line with our published Enforcement Policy’.

Council welcomes these legal proceedings and notes that the current consideration by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service may preclude a concurrent Scottish Government Inquiry.

Given the foregoing, the Council:

- Calls on Fife Council and NHS Fife to work together to commission a further report into the Health and Social Impacts of operations at both Mossmorran plants;
- calls on the Scottish Government to work with the Council to establish a Just Transition Board similar to that at Grangemouth, to examine all options for the short, medium-and long-term future of the plants, including phased decommissioning. This Board to look at all key issues, including the recognition of the large numbers of jobs involved and to seek the inclusion of the GMB and Unite Unions in the Board and
- in/

2020 FC 241

- in the event of anticipating a delay in the creation of a Just Transmission Board, will commence the process of establishing a Working Group to progress the relevant issues until a such a Board is established by the Scottish Government and will seek the inclusion of the GMB and Unite Unions in that Group.”

Roll Call

For the Motion – 39 votes

Councillors Tim Brett, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex/

Alex Campbell, Bobby Clelland, Dave Coleman, Altany Craik, Neil Crooks, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Linda Erskine, David Graham, Mick Green, Gary Guichan, Garry Haldane, Judy Hamilton, Andy Heer, Helen Law, Jim Leishman, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, Mino Manekshaw, Tony Miklinski, Derek Noble, Dominic Nolan, Tony Orton, Ross Paterson, Bill Porteous, Graham Ritchie, David Ross, David J Ross, Ryan Smart, Jonny Tepp, Brian Thomson, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt and Jan Wincott.

For the Amendment – 26 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, David Barratt, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Bill Connor, John Docherty, Ian Ferguson, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Sharon Green-Wilson, Jean Hall Muir, Zoe Hisbent, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Karen Marjoram, Lea McLelland, Alice McGarry, John O'Brien, Kate Stewart, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Ross Vettraino and Craig Walker.

Decision

Accordingly, the motion was carried.

Councillor Richard Watt left the meeting during consideration of the Urgent Motion.

205. BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE PROVOST AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

It was noted that there was no business to be brought forward under this item as the Urgent Motion had been considered under Notice of Motions.

CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN

12th November, 2020

The Queen's Birthday Honours List

A number of people associated with Fife have received recognition in The Queen's Birthday Honours List –

The following persons were awarded the O.B.E. –

Dr Lesley Holdsworth of Newport-on-Tay for services to Physiotherapy and Health Services..

Dr Sarah Nelson of Newport-on-Tay for services to Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse.

The following persons were awarded the M.B.E. -

Mr Collieson Briggs of Kirkcaldy for services to vulnerable people in the community of Fife during the Covid-19 response.

Professor Nigel Mathers of Pittenweem for services to General Practice.

Mrs Alison Milne of Auchtermuchty for services to Rural Scotland and Agriculture.

The following persons were awarded the B.E.M. -

Mrs Agnes Cook of Kelty for services to the community in Kinross during Covid-19.

Helen Duncan of Kirkcaldy for services to the Children's Hearings System and the community in Glenrothes, Fife.

Mr Thomas Kenny of Kincardine for services to Policing and the community in Tulliallan.

Mr Paul Mackean of Dalgety Bay for services to the NHS during the Covid-19 response.

Miss Lorraine Mullen of Glenrothes for services to the community of Lochgelly during Covid-19.

Mrs Kirsten Urquhart, Limekilns for services to Young People in Scotland during Covid-19.

Deaths of Former Councillors

Sadly we have been informed of the deaths of Danny Leslie (former Kirkcaldy District Councillor, Vice Chair of the Housing Committee) and Peter Douglas (former North East Fife & District Councillor, Vice Chair of the East Fife Development Committee). We send out condolences to both families.



MEETING OF FIFE COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2020

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 1 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

What role does Fife Council have to play with regard to the roll-out of 5g in Fife? Is Fife Council supporting or investing in the roll-out of 5g technology in Fife?

Answer

- The Council is not investing in 5G roll out (this is State Aid)
- To support 5G investment – the Council has signed up as a participant in the Scotland's 5G Centre's Intralink programme that started this month. This is an 18 month programme to prepare for 5G investment in Scotland. More information below.
- The Intralink programme will help the Council determine its role in 5G roll out. The Policy & Coordination Committee would consider the options available and determine the role based on an officers' report once the programme is further on in its development.

We have many potential roles e.g. public health. The Public Health team have created a page on the Council's website with information on 5G

[https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/environment2/environmental-health/5g-mobile-](https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/environment2/environmental-health/5g-mobile-network)

[network](https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/environment2/environmental-health/5g-mobile-network). There is more information on the Scotland 5G centre's website

<https://scotland5gcentre.org/knowledge-bank/does-5g-have-implications-for-health-and-safety/>

I'm not aware of any plans for investment in 5G in Fife by the Mobile Network operators. Their current priority is the cities, in areas with high population density as this is a commercial investment decision by them. The Council's role would be small – their first step if they decide to invest in Fife - would be to upgrade the equipment on existing masts. The Council would likely have no role in that commercial decision.

The 5G signal doesn't travel as far as the 4G one so there may be investment required to fill in the gaps. Any new masts or poles may require Planning and/or Roads Consents (so the Council's role is regulator) but this would be handled by those teams as part of their normal service delivery. Generally, Mobile Network operators will try to use adopted ground but might require a site from the Council's Estates team if there was one available. Telecoms is a reserved matter so UK Government policy is to make it easier for investment to take place and remove perceived barriers. You may have seen press coverage recently mentioning relaxing regulation.

The Intralink programme is being delivered by the Scotland 5G Centre. The Centre is the Scottish Government's lead body to encourage 5G investment in Scotland and to get the maximum socio-economic benefit from the technology. The Intralink programme is looking to take some of the burden from individual organisations by developing standard agreements and processes for use in Scotland. Not just Local Authorities but national agencies. More information can be found in this article

<https://www.scotsman.com/business/business-organisations-join-forces-ramp-scotlands-5g-roll-out-plans-2948240> or on the Scotland 5G Centre's website.

Dundee City Council is trialling 5G in the Waterfront with UK Government investment to support the development there. Through the regional partnership, I expect that they'll share the results so we can assess what is relevant to Fife. Scotland's 5G centre is anticipating that 5G investment in larger towns follows on from the cities and smaller towns and rural areas over the longer term. I'm hoping that the Intralink programme will help influence what interventions they intend to make to accelerate this.

QUESTION 2 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

Can the administration set out its aspirations with for the delivery of online face to face teaching across the key Nat 5 and Higher curriculum in the event of a further lockdown or partial lockdown.

Answer

All Secondary schools as part of their recovery planning in June have developed a full range of models for Recovery. These include plans for phased approaches of blended learning for options ranging from up to 30%, up to 50% or a full online learning model.

In addition to this, there is a SLWG already established (this was approved by the P&C committee on 27 August) to ensure that there is clear guidance on supporting National qualifications since there will be no exam. This group will also develop a contingency for Highers and Advanced Highers. Senior officers are also linking directly with SQA on national moderation.

Guidance on planning and delivering effective blended learning, using a flipped approach, has been prepared for schools and companion guidance for parents/learners on making the most of blended learning is also ready.

To further support face to face delivery of lessons, where appropriate, there is a variety of support and guidance in place for schools to access and to contribute to. Comprehensive guidance has been shared with all schools on planning for delivering live lessons safely and effectively. This has been well received and put into practice in many schools.

The National eSgoil offer to schools features the Scholar Programme which has revision notes and assessments along with online study support sessions for pupils in the senior phase. Schools can also access online live video courses at senior phase and BGE levels (primary and secondary) as required, for a cost.

Nationally, support for learners and teachers is developing through a shared resource centre of teaching resources and recorded videos of live lessons. This is being grown through collaboration across all local authorities with practitioners contributing to the resource and the quality assurance processes. This will be free to access using Clickview on Glow, licences for which are being provided by Education Scotland for all authorities.

This broad range of options facilitates each school in developing its own local online support for learners should they go into lockdown. Schools are looking at the guidance and security around live video learning but it is also acknowledged that this does not suit all families, so a variety of options will be essential to supporting all learners to effectively engage.

Supplementary

When do we hope to achieve 100% ability to deliver online learning?

Answer

This matter will be discussed further at the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee.

QUESTION 3 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

Local authorities in England can set energy standards beyond building regulations*. Can we do the same in Fife and require higher standards through the planning process now in order to address both climate change and fuel poverty?

* <https://www.ukgbc.org/news/government-confirms-local-authorities-can-set-energy-standards-beyond-part-l-in-nppf/>

Answer

It is not entirely clear that the premise in the question is entirely accurate. The link provided takes you to a July 2018 lobby group response to a draft of the English National Planning Policy Framework. The English NPPF was then published in February 2018 and Page 44, Para 150(b), states; "New development should be planned for in ways that: (b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.

Fife Council can set its own policy but a change in national planning and building standards legislation would be required to make such a change enforceable.

Section 2F of The Town and Country (Scotland) Planning Act 1997 (as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019) states local development plans must include policies requiring all developments to in their area to be designed to ensure that all new buildings avoid a specified and rising proportion of the projected greenhouse gas emissions from their use. This is to be achieved through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies.

Scottish Planning Policy states local development plans should support new build developments, infrastructure, or retrofit projects which will deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted.

FIFEplan LDP Policy 11 *Low Carbon Fife* is used to discharge the statutory obligation in section 3F of the Act. The policy was adopted after being subject to examination. The policy requires proposals for new development to meet the current carbon dioxide emissions target and notes that the target will rise during the Plan period. *Low Carbon Fife* Supplementary Guidance was adopted in January 2019 and provides more detail on how the low carbon policy will be applied. The targets - and exemptions - are defined in Scottish Building Standards and the point here is that this is separate from planning legislation.

The Council could seek to apply higher standards but risks:

1. being unable to enforce those standards; and
2. being challenged if a planning application were to be refused because a development does not exceed national standards.

Supplementary

Will the Administration show leadership on this issue?

Answer

Issue has already been raised with Scottish Government and already taking action.

QUESTION 4 FROM COUNCILLOR MARGARET KENNEDY

Next month (December), sees the fifth anniversary of the application to develop land to the North of Cupar. Can I ask if there any timescales set by Planning for determination of this application and indeed for the retention of the allocated Strategic Development Area status?

Answer

The Cupar North Strategic Development Area consists essentially of two parts, land at Gilliesfaulds and the larger area of land to the North of the town. The NE Planning Committee recently approved an application for residential development at Gilliesfaulds subject to a legal agreement. The application referred to for the remaining part of the Strategic Development Area has been with the Council for a considerable period of time, as Cllr Kennedy's question notes. Whilst it is not unusual for applications of this scale and complexity to take a number of years to assess and consider, the Planning Service has been awaiting for some time revised assessments (such as environmental assessment) to be submitted. The Planning Service is currently discussing the application with the applicant to again seek further clarity on their intention on the timing of submitting assessments in order the application can be progressed. Once this is clarified the Planning Service will seek to agree with the applicant timescale for processing the application.

The Cupar North Strategic Development Area has been allocated in the Development Plan for many years, both at local and strategic level for many years. It is part of the Council's agreed strategy, as well as the agreed TAYPlan strategy, it is therefore part of the Council's agreed strategy to deliver new homes within this part of Fife and the necessary infrastructure. A review of the Fife Local Development Plan is due to formally commence late 2021.

Supplementary

Can you give local residents assurances that there will be public consultation if there are any changes.

Answer

Any changes would need to come to a committee of the council if there were to be any changes.

QUESTION 5 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

What annual tonnage of household waste was generated in Fife in 2017,18,19 – and what percentage was recycled, diverted from landfill, and landfilled in each year?

(We appear to be one of the 7 LAs whose recycling rates have decreased since 2011 and 1 of 11 LAs that have decreased since 2016 – if I've read the tables correctly – do we know why this might be?)

Year	Household Waste Generated (tonnes)	% Recycled	% Diverted from Landfill	% Landfilled
2017	178,478	54.7	6.8	38.5
2018	167,353	51.1	6.3	42.6
2019	174,977	44.5	10.8	44.7

Recycling rates across Scotland have plateaued in recent times and I suspect that every local authority is encountering the same problems, although they are more pronounced in those local authorities, such as Fife, which is one of the leaders in terms of the percentage of waste that is recycled.

Contributing factors to that situation include stricter guidelines on compost accreditation thereby reducing the percentage of material, which can be recycled and increasing the percentage sent to landfill. Moreover, wood waste is now used as biomass for district heating and cannot now be included in the recycling tonnage.

Perhaps most significant of all, however, is the contamination to which the brown, grey and green bins are subject. For example, the contamination of the brown bins now stands at around 13%. I am at a complete loss to understand why that should be so. There cannot be any doubt in anyone's mind that the brown bin is for food and garden waste only. Nor can there can be no dubiety about what is food and what is not and what is garden waste and what is not. I can only conclude, therefore that it is down to some members of the community flatly refusing to use properly using the comprehensive recycling facilities, which the council provides and which must rank among the very best in the country. For that situation to improve, there will have to be a change in attitude on the part of those members of the community, but I don't know how to effect that. We all have the attitude that we have, because of our experiences up to and including this minute. Changing attitudes, therefore, is a profound thing for a council to try to do. For the community, however, as far as recycling is concerned, it is easy. Simply use the recycling services properly. There is, therefore, a great deal that the community can do to help itself.

The position relative to the green bins, Provost, is even worse! Prior to a month or so ago, less than 50% of the content of these bins could be recycled, mainly because 30% of the contents were plastic film. I will confess, however, that it is not always clear what is plastic film and what is not. It is also possible, however, that some people may not have read the Council's advice about not putting plastic film in the green bins.

The good news, however, is Fife Resource Solutions, on behalf of the Council, has internalised all of the processing of recyclable materials, so that all of the material collected in Fife, is processed in Fife and, because it is controlled internally, a higher quality of product is obtained thereby opening up additional markets at a better price. In addition, a new process which renders plastic film suitable to be recycled has been commissioned by Fife Resource Solutions and that process, together with working with other organisations, means that previously worthless low-quality plastic products can now be recycled and produce significant income. I am confident, therefore that these measures will contribute to a sharp improvement in the recycling statistics.

Supplementary

Will the Administration not accept any responsibility?

Answer

The Administration always accepts responsibility for those issues within its control and in this case, as always, does whatever it can to help the community to utilise properly the services which it provides. I am, however, always pleased to listen to any views about how the Council can improve on what it does.

QUESTION 6 FROM COUNCILLOR GORDON LANGLANDS

There are growing concerns by residents regarding the continuing closure of the Burntisland Beacon Leisure Centre and in particular the Swimming Pool.

Can we please have an update on the appointed pool consultant's investigations and whether a possible short term solution has been identified to allow the opening of swimming pool in 2021 and the progress of any longer term permanent plan.

Answer

The Trust is working with Fife Council, as well as industry experts, with regard to the issues around the pool and ventilation systems to explore, which, if any, solutions can be delivered. These investigations will allow us to determine any possible short-term, and further long-term, measures which are needed. I can confirm that Barr & Wray were on site at the Beacon Leisure Centre on Wednesday 28th October to review the pool, pool plant equipment and operational practice, as well as carry out a dye test. We are currently awaiting the final report however the investigation work and resulting outcomes will determine the timescales involved in delivering solutions.

For the reason stated above, I am not in a position to set out a date for the re-opening of the Centre at this stage; however, we will be updating the local community with any progress and developments which may allow for parts of the building to become operational in 2021.

The Beacon Leisure Centre closure is not solely down to the swimming pool, the design of the building does not lend its self to the current COVID-19, 2 metre social distancing measures. However if the government guidance on COVID-19 restrictions ease on social distancing, FSLT will endeavour to phase the re-opening of indoor facilities.

I hope you appreciate that we cannot compromise the safety of our staff and customers.

QUESTION 7 FROM COUNCILLOR TIM BRETT

How much EU funding has the Council received in each of the last three years? Where has this funding been spent and on what projects?

Answer

EU Funding programmes operate on a 7-year programme cycle with the current cycle running for the period January 2014 to December 2020. Many programmes will continue to be delivered beyond the end date of 31 December 2020 due to on-going implementation and completion of approved projects.

Fife is involved in the following programmes:

- European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF and ESF)
- LEADER
- Inter-territorial Programmes (ERASMUS and INTERREG)

In all cases Fife Council leads on these programmes on behalf of a partnership and the funds that are awarded and claimed are paid to both Fife Council and a range of partner organisations, primarily those in the third sector. The amounts noted below are the total funding drawn down to Fife, and not just to the Council.

European Structural and Investment Funds

The **ERDF programme** provides additional funding for Business Gateway interventions, allowing Fife to provide activities that go beyond the scope of mainstream Business Gateway contracts to add activities such as the Expert Help programme, an HR Specialist Advisory Service and an IT Specialist Advisory Service. The following claims have been paid during the last 3 years:

2018	Claims of £189,978.19 + £167,463.62	£357,441.81
2019	Claims of £197,549.45 + £140,060.99	£337,610.44

A further claim has been submitted and is currently being verified. Payment is expected in this financial year.

The **ESF programme** is the largest in terms of grant awarded in Fife, supporting employability services through the Opportunities Fife Pathway programme aimed at combatting the barriers faced by the most disadvantaged individuals and those furthest from the job market. The following claims have been paid during the last 3 years:

2018	Claims of £668,867.58 and £1,205,509.26	£1,874,376.84
2020	A claim of £1,063,505.09	£1,063,505.09

The last claim was paid in June and staff are currently working on the next claim which should be submitted before the end of the calendar year.

A smaller ESF programme has been awarded to help combat Poverty and Social Inclusion. This is also an employability project providing a holistic and preventative approach; delivering a range of support services to ensure that the barriers faced by individual members of the household are not treated in isolation, but rather as a planned approach to supporting the whole family. The following claims have been paid during the last 3 years:

2018	£25,150.31
2019	£132,943.47

The Programme came to an end in July 2019 and the final claim is currently being prepared for submission.

LEADER

Fife also delivers a LEADER EU rural development programme. The LEADER Programme has been worth £3.7 million to Fife for both community and rural business projects and has supported a wide variety of activities since its launch in 2015. Fife Council manages this programme on behalf of the Scottish Government and the European Commission with the majority of funds supporting local community-based projects. The claims paid in the last 3 years are as follows:

2018	£502,140.75
2019	£960,036.39
2020	£782,163.51

A small number of projects in the LEADER Programme have still to be completed and claims will continue to be made up to end of March 2021.

Inter-territorial Programmes

Fife Council also benefits from funding from 2 of the transnational programmes as detailed below. 4 projects have been funded in the last 3 years (some starting prior to 2018) as noted below. Information on individual claims for these project can be provided if required for each of the 3 years in question.

INTERREG – Fife is currently taking part in 3 projects: **CLIPPER** (supporting SMEs in the maritime sector); **UNEET** (tackling unemployment of young people); **RIGHT** (designing and testing tailored educational and training programmes and initiatives in a fast changing skills environment). These projects are worth around of €740,000 to Fife.

ERASMUS - Fife also benefits from funding for an ERASMUS project focussed on developing a skills, apprenticeship and employment pathway for the heritage building sector to address a recognised global shortage in Traditional Building Skills – value €204,680.

Supplementary

Can you provide an update on where we are with replacement funding from the UK Government?

Answer

Quantum will be similar but have received no details yet.

QUESTION 8 FROM COUNCILLOR TIM BRETT

What preparations and plans has the Council made for a No Deal Brexit on the 1st January 2021?

Answer

There remains a lot to clarify at national level to prepare for the 1st January 2021 and the current end date for the transition period for the UK to exit the European Union

There is as yet not trade deal in place though negotiations continue.

The UKG led Internal Market deal is still in process of passage with a key milestone decision in the Lords last Tuesday.

Scottish level

- The national PrepareforBrexit.scot website is being updated by Scottish Enterprise – as in 2019, this will be the single point of information for business advice and support relating to Brexit.
- The Scottish Government has announced initial funding of £2.9m to fund additional Environmental Health support posts for a year to help deal with the increased workload required after the end of the Transition Period as well as the ongoing work on Covid. Challenges still remain and there is still a need for more fully qualified Environmental Health Officers, particularly given the likely considerable increase in Export Health Certificates post-EU exit. COSLA continues to pursue further resourcing to meet this need.

- An enforcement letter has been received advising Local Authorities of the Scottish Government's decision to continue certain flexibilities against the Food Law Code of Practice in recognition of the continued efforts of Environmental Health Services in the National response to COVID-19. The flexibilities outlined in this letter will apply until 28th February 2021; this will allow prioritisation of resource to deal with COVID and Brexit related issues.
- UK assumptions are now available and being reviewed for impact. It is indicated that the Scottish Government will not be leading any separate assumptions at this time.

Fife Council Level

- The Fife Council EU Exit IMT was stood up from the 28th October and is meeting every 2 weeks to monitor and take action as necessary.
- Fife has stood up its Brexit Business Advisory Group, first meeting held on 5th November. The Group is formed of business representative organisations including the Federation of Small Businesses, Fife Tourism Partnership, Fife Chamber of Commerce and Scottish Engineering, together with FVA, Fife College, Fife Economy Partnership and University of St. Andrews. The Group highlighted areas of readiness requirements for workforce, visitors, trade and export, and potential opportunities for Fife businesses for onshoring of activity. The Group will meet on a monthly basis into early 2021.
- Fife Council has engaged with the Fife fisheries fleet through the Mutual Association to encourage preparation for Brexit and in particular usage of the Lanarkshire export health certification hub for fish exports. All Fife fishing vessels require inspection prior to 31st December 2020 to allow them to export produce after this date. Officers within Environmental Health have received training and these vessels (just under 100) will be inspected prior to this date.
- Local Authority approved freezer, reefer or factory vessels that land frozen or processed fish and fishery products directly into the EU or NI will require, among other documents, a Captain's Certificate signed by a captain who is designated by APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) as a 'Captain of the Food Approved Vessel'. Fife Council has made contact with the owners of these factory/freezer vessels to make them aware of the changes.
- There is ongoing engagement with Fife exporters to understand the number and quantity of consignments which will require Export Health Certificates from 1 January 2021; the Council's Environmental Health team has been training staff in preparation for this certification activity.
- Senior officers from Business & Employability, Protective Services and Communities & Neighbourhoods are involved in fortnightly Brexit readiness calls led by COSLA.
- Fife Council's resilience plans and arrangements are in place and can be activated as required. Council is already in response mode due to COVID.
- EU Exit risks are being reviewed considering current situation and taking into account COVID impacts where appropriate.
- Officers are Linking with Fife LRP partners to ensure a co-ordinated approach. Officers will be attending Resilience Partnership Workshops during November.

Supplementary

Can a briefing to all elected members be prepared?

Answer

An elected member briefing will be prepared and circulated in due course.

QUESTION 9 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

Since the governance changes earlier in the year that converted Committees into Sub-Committees, which reports have gone to a Committee or Sub-Committee that is a distinctly different body from that to which they would have been submitted under the preceding arrangements?

I've included "distinctly" as I don't want to be told of reports that went to the X Sub-Committee rather than the X Committee, where X is the same in each of those.

Answer

Since the governance changes made at the Council meeting on 6th August 2020, there has been one full Committee Meetings cycle and we are part way through another. There have been two meetings of the Policy & Co-Ordination Committee.

At the meeting on 27th August, the Policy & Co-Ordination Committee received a verbal update on Recovery and Reform that included areas that would otherwise have fallen within the remit of the previous Strategic Committees.

At the meeting of 8th October, the committee considered a written report on Recovery and Reform, again covering a wide range of subjects that would otherwise have been reported to the previous Strategic Committees.

Supplementary

Is the Co-Leader in a position to predict when we will get a substantive report going to a different committee from that which it would have gone to prior to these changes?

Answer

Recovery and Reform are the most substantive areas of focus for the Council. In addition, we have asked the sub-committees to look at specific areas and any reports flowing from these will be dealt with in terms of the new governance arrangements.

QUESTION 10 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

From time to time a member of the public alerts the Council to a road or street lighting problem whose resolution is down to an external body such as Scottish Water or Scottish Power. If and when the member of the public enquires about progress, is it Council policy to invite the member of the public to enquire directly with the outside body?

Answer

If a utility company is installing a new service or supply for the Council or repairing a fault that affects the continuity of a service such as street lighting, then Fife Council deals directly with the customer enquiries. These responses include reference to current information from the utility regarding their expected repair times. Occasionally, if a customer is unhappy with Scottish Power's planned repair date, and they want to contact Scottish Power direct, the Service may advise the customer of the Utility's customer care line if asked.

If the works are part of a utility's routine commercial activity, we will advise the enquirer what we know about the works. If this is insufficient or if they wish to complain, we will pass their complaint on to the point of contact that we have for the utility so they can reply direct. We sometimes also advise the enquirer of a publicly available contact 'helpline' number so they can contact them directly.

Recent heavy rainfall has resulted in some Scottish Water sewers that the council relies upon for road drainage, to exceed capacity. If the drainage issue relates solely to the sewer capacity and is not an issue with the road drains that connect to it, then customers are directed to Scottish Water. It is understood that this has led to confusion for some customers and we are working towards clearer communications as part of our partnership working with Scottish Water to resolve road flooding problems.

QUESTION 11 FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN WATT

Every year, beginning on the 9th of October, Baby Loss Awareness Week aims to raise awareness about pregnancy and baby loss in the UK.

In 2018, Sands, the still born and neonatal death charity, found almost half (49%) of employers did not discuss entitlements to pay and leave with people following the death of their baby. Furthermore, four in ten people were not offered any additional time away from work, four in ten did not feel their employers' communication was sensitive and appropriate and 43% reported that no one talked to them about the death of their baby after returning to work.

What support do Fife Council currently provide for staff who have been impacted by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby?

Answer

The Council recognises the need to provide immediate support to employees in times of bereavement and loss.

The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018 (known as 'Jack's Law') came in to force in April 2020.

Fife Council introduced this leave from April 2020 on the basis of two weeks full pay (the legislation is only statutory pay) for all employees, regardless of length of service (the legislation has statutory limitations). This entitlement applies to parents who suffer the loss of a child from a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. It gives reasonable paid time off work in addition to the 5 days given under the Compassionate Leave Policy.

In addition, all employees have access to Time for Talking counselling. Time for Talking provides support to employees which is psychological, emotional and practical. Counselling is for both work-related and personal problems and cover issues such as personal or emotional difficulties, relationship or family concerns, dealing with change, stress, harassment or bullying, bereavement, etc. The Time for Talking website provides information, podcasts and self-help strategies www.timefortalking.co.uk

QUESTION 12 FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN WATT

Following an onsite meeting with fellow ward Councillors, Councillor Vettrano, Councillor Graham and senior managers from Fife Resource Solutions, it was agreed for a report to be carried out to determine if Cowdenbeath Recycling Centre can safely be reopened. Several weeks later, the report came back positive and outlined some changes required to facilitate the reopening of the centre, albeit at a cost of £45,000.

Could the report and breakdown of costs be shared for the benefit of local residents who have been without their local recycling centre for over seven months?

Answer

Yes, it can and I will do so by way of making them available by way of the Ward 7 Elected Members.