

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE - BLENDED MEETING**

**Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes**

**5 June, 2025**

**10.00 am - 1.25 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Allan Knox (Convener), Naz Anis-Miah, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Patrick Browne, Ian Cameron, Rod Cavanagh, Colin Davidson, Sean Dillon, Peter Gulline, Kathleen Leslie (substituting for Councillor James Leslie), Lynn Mowatt (substituting for Councillor Auxil Barrera), Gordon Pryde, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp (substituting for Councillor Gary Holt) and Ann Verner.

**ATTENDING:** Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Les Robertson, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services, Charlie Anderson, Head of Business Technology Solutions, Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources, Stevie Murray, Service Manager, Human Resources Service, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; Alan Paul, Head of Property Services, Carlene Simpson, Project Manager (Strategic Growth City Deals), Property Services and Pam Ewen, Head of Planning Services, Place Directorate.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors Auxil Barrera, Gary Holt and James Leslie.

Prior to the start of business, the Convener intimated the intention to vary the sequence of items from that on the agenda by considering para. 150 - Change in Membership - prior to para. 149 - Appointment of Depute Convener.

**149. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTE CONVENER**

Following the resignation of Councillor Robin Lawson from the Conservative Group and the resultant change in political balance, the committee were asked to appoint a new Depute Convener for the Finance Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Motion

Councillor Kathleen Leslie, seconded by Councillor Allan Knox, moved that Councillor Peter Gulline be appointed as Depute Convener.

Amendment

Councillor Ann Verner, seconded by Councillor Naz Anis-Miah, moved that Councillor Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw be appointed as Depute Convener.

Roll Call Vote

**For the Motion - 9 votes**

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Councillors Patrick Browne, Ian Cameron, Colin Davidson, Sean Dillon, Peter Gulline, Allan Knox, Kathleen Leslie, Gordon Pryde and Jonny Tepp.

### **For the Amendment - 7 votes**

Councillors Naz Anis-Miah, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Rod Cavanagh, Lynn Mowatt, Alistair Suittie and Ann Verner.

### **Decision**

Having received a majority of votes, Councillor Gulline was appointed as Depute Convener of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

*Councillor Jonny Tepp joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

### **150. CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP**

The committee noted that Councillor Naz Anis-Miah had replaced Councillor Stefan Hoggan and Councillor Peter Gulline had replaced Councillor Robin Lawson as members of the committee.

### **151. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

As a matter of transparency, with reference to para. 153 - Statutory Report to Scottish Parliament on the Number of Assessors and Available Resources - Councillor Ann Verner declared she had a property that required consultation with the Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax teams; also with reference to para. 157 - Tay Cities Deal - Annual Report - Councillor Ann Verner advised that she was a Trustee of St. Andrews Harbour Trust. However, as these were not considered a connection under the Councillors' Code of Conduct for the purposes of this report, she remained and participated in the meeting.

### **152. MINUTE**

The committee considered the minute of the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny committee meeting of 30 January 2025.

### **Decision**

The committee approved the minute.

### **153. STATUTORY REPORT TO SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON THE NUMBER OF ASSESSORS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services and the Assessor for Fife informing the committee that a report on the number of assessors and available resources in Fife had been submitted to the Scottish Parliament as per the statutory requirement.

### **Decision**

The committee agreed with the report which had been submitted to the Scottish Parliament relating to the number of Assessors and availability of resources within Fife Council.

**154. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2024-2025**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources providing an update on the annual Health and Safety activity for 2024-2025.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) reviewed the performance activity for the 2024-2025 financial year;
- (2) noted the progress made regarding improving workforce practices and performance in the organisation;
- (3) endorsed the continued focus on the priorities identified;
- (4) agreed that future reports should include a separate breakdown of accidents / incidents involving members of the public and council employees within Fife Council properties; and
- (5) agreed that future reports should include a breakdown of employer liability claims for each category including the value of each settlement.

**155. ASSET AND ESTATES UPDATE**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Property Services outlining some of the key activities undertaken by the teams responsible for property acquisition, disposal, property management, and strategic oversight of council assets over the past year.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) considered the information contained in the report; and
- (2) noted the performance in relation to asset management, vacant property and capital receipts.

*Councillor Naz Anis-Miah left the meeting following consideration of the above item.*

*The meeting adjourned at 12.00 pm and reconvened at 12.20 pm.*

**156. REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FIFE COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Planning Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services providing information on the structure, business and operation of the two main Fife Planning Committees to enable the committee to consider the effectiveness of those planning committees.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) scrutinised the information contained in the report; and

- (2) agreed that a Working Group be set up to consider the makeup of the Planning Committees inviting nominations from each of the political parties.

**157. TAY CITIES DEAL - ANNUAL REPORT**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Property Services presenting the fourth Annual Report on progress by the Tay Cities Region Deal.

**Decision**

The committee noted the information contained in the report and the progress on activity in North East Fife.

**158. EDINBURGH AND SOUTH EAST OF SCOTLAND CITY REGION DEAL ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 AND UPDATE ON THE BENEFITS REALISATION PLAN FOR THE FIFE INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION INVESTMENT (i3) PROGRAMME.**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Property Services providing an annual update on the Benefits Realisation Plan for the Fife Industrial Innovation Investment (i3) Programme, funded through the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and presenting the City Region Deal Annual Report for 2023/24.

**Decision**

The committee noted the performance of the Fife i3 programme and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Annual Report for 2023/24.

*Councillor Naz Anis-Miah rejoined the meeting during consideration of the above item, Councillors Rod Cavanagh, Sean Dillon and Katheen Leslie left the meeting during consideration of the above item and Councillor Lynn Mowatt left the meeting following consideration of the above item.*

**159. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business Technology Solutions outlining the potential benefits and risks associated with the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies within Fife Council which was the single most impactful digital development offering transformative opportunities for enhancing service delivery, improving efficiencies, enriching jobs and achieving better outcomes for residents of Fife.

**Decision**

The committee noted:-

- (1) the current and potential range of significant benefits that Fife Council could achieve through the use of AI technologies;
- (2) the need for governed approaches to mitigate risk and build trust in AI;
- (3) the impacts that the explosion of AI usage within populations could have on the council as a public service provider;
- (4) that further investment in AI technologies and investment in the adoption of AI would be required to deliver potential benefits; and

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- (5) the roles of the Digital Programme, Digital Portfolio Board and CET Reform Board in agreeing, governing and reporting on progress of AI.

### **160. FINANCE, ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) outlining a draft workplan for future meetings of this committee.

#### **Decision**

The committee noted the current committee work plan for the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.