

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - COWDENBEATH AREA COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING**

**Willie Clarke Centre, Lochore Meadows Country Park, Lochgelly**

**28 February 2024**

**2.00 pm – 6.20 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alex Campbell (Convener), Alistair Bain Linda Erskine, Rosemary Liewald, Mary Lockhart, Lea McLelland, Bailey-Lee Robb and Darren Watt.

**ATTENDING:** Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service, Anne-Marie Vance, Community Manager - Cowdenbeath Area, Sarah Roxburgh, Community Manager (Strategy and Commissioning), Scott Blyth, Project Manager and Izzy Scott-Trim, Community Development Team Manager (Cowdenbeath Area), Communities and Neighbourhoods Service; Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services, Peter Corbett, Lead Officer (Economy) and David Grove, Lead Officer (Town Centre Development), Business and Employability Service; Tariq Ditta, Head of Facilities Management Services, Shirley McKie, Service Manager (Hospitality) and Linda Hume, Hospitality Team Manager, Facilities Management Service; Michael Anderson, Service Manager (Structural Services), Vicki Connor, Lead Consultant (Roads Lighting and Asset Management), Lesley Craig, Lead Consultant (Traffic Management), Frances Radcliffe, Lead Consultant (Bridges and Structures); Paul Hocking, Co-ordinator (Asset Management and Programme Development) and Brendan Stenzel, Technician Engineer, Roads and Transportation Service; Scott Clelland, Service Manager (Grounds Maintenance Service), Sandy Anderson, Service Manager (Domestic Waste and Street Cleansing) and Stephen Duffy, Team Manager, (Dunfermline Parks), Environment and Building Services; Mary McKay, Education Manager, Stephen Ross, Headteacher and David Lowrie, Depute Rector, Cowdenbeath High School (including four senior pupils) and Ross Stewart, Headteacher, Lochgelly High School, Education Service; Helena Couperwhite, Manager (Committee Services) and Wendy MacGregor, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

**101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

**102. MINUTE**

The committee considered the minute of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee on 20 December 2023.

Arising from the minute, in relation to paragraph 93 - Minute - the Convener advised that the workshop requested by members with representatives from Scottish Water and Roads and Transportation Services, to facilitate a discussion on flooding in the Benarty and Cardenden areas, had not taken place as planned in February 2024 but had been rescheduled to March 2024. Members were asked to submit any questions or areas of concern to the Community Manager

## 2024 CAC 54

(Cowdenbeath Area), prior to the workshop, to allow Scottish Water time to investigate.

With regard to paragraph 94(2) and (3) - Spending on Roads over the Last Three Financial Years in the Cowdenbeath Area - the committee noted that the report which had been requested detailing road defect repairs had not been included within the Area Roads Programme (ARP) 2024-25 report at today's meeting and requested that this be included within the ARP when this was due to be presented at a future meeting of the committee.

### **Decision**

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

#### **103. PRESENTATION - COWDENBEATH HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS - SCHOOL MEALS**

The Convener had agreed, in terms of Committee Powers No. 7.2.1 that four senior school pupils from Cowdenbeath High School, accompanied by David Lowrie, Depute Headteacher, be permitted to address the meeting, regarding quality, quantity and price of school meals in Cowdenbeath High School, following a number of concerns raised by pupils using the school cafeteria.

The pupils asked for consideration to be given to provide Fife Schools with similar quality and pricing of meal deals available in Perth and Kinross High Schools, more vegan/vegetarian options, to ensure foods advertised by Fife Council were made available in schools and payment for food/drink purchases by debit card.

Members thereafter asked a number of questions which were subsequently answered by the school pupils.

The Convener thanked the school pupils for raising awareness of the situation and for their outstanding, informative presentation.

#### **104. SCHOOL MEALS PROVISION AT BEATH HIGH SCHOOL**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Facilities Management Service providing an update on progress on the development of the school meals service at Beath High School (and other secondary schools across Fife).

### **Amendment**

Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb, seconded by Councillor Linda Erskine, moved as follows:-

“Cowdenbeath Area Committee welcomes the presentation from students of Beath High School and commends them for having their voice heard on matters that concern them per Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Committee thanks them for taking the time to share their thoughts on this important matter that has been under consideration since 2019.

## 2024 CAC 55

Committee welcomes the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills instructing Scottish Government officials to engage with the students on their concerns as far as they fall within the regulations. (the Cabinet Secretary had written to Councillor Robb to this effect)

Committee therefore agrees under Committee Power 7.2.6, to remit this matter to the Education Scrutiny Committee, recommending that they undertake a Fife-wide review of school meals with a particular focus on engagement and consultation with students and also on how best, and how often, elected members should be briefed on school meal provision. This will facilitate effective Fife wide scrutiny of the issue and then to consider any recommendations that the Education Scrutiny Committee will make to Cabinet and/or the Council."

### **Decision**

The committee unanimously approved the amendment.

### **105. REPORT ON EDUCATION OUTCOMES 2021/22**

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services providing the attainment outcomes achieved by pupils within the area's schools during the school year 2021/22. The report also included an overview of the range of strategies being developed to support key priorities to raise attainment.

### **Decision**

The committee noted:-

- (1) the overall progress in raising levels of attainment in 2021/22;
- (2) the strategies being implemented to raise attainment;
- (3) that a members' workshop, with officers from the Education Service and Headteachers of schools, would be arranged to discuss attainment prior to the Educational Outcomes 2022/23 report being submitted to the committee; and
- (4) requested that an explanation/breakdown of all categories of positive destinations be provided to members at the future workshop, to include a follow up review of data for positive destinations at six month and one year intervals for comparison purposes.

### **106. FORMER ST ANDREWS CHURCH LOCHGELLY**

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Economy and Employability Services and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service providing background detail on the project to renovate and re-use the former St Andrews Church as a regional climbing centre under the auspices of Rockgelly and the potential future options for the building now that a project for the exclusive use of the former church building by Rockgelly no longer seemed tenable.

**Amendment 1**

Councillor Mary Lockhart, seconded by Councillor Linda Erskine, moved to add an additional recommendation to the report (3), as follows:-

- (3) Committee agree to remit to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service to develop a wider community consultation on community use and development of Lochgelly Town Hall;

**Amendment 2**

Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb, seconded by Councillor Mary Lockhart, moved to add further recommendations (4) and (5) to the report, as follows:-

- (4) Committee request an update report on progress in six months on the future of Lochgelly Town Hall; and
- (5) Committee request that officers explore methods to ensure members of the public were kept updated with all relevant information and documents that could be released, to be released in the interest of transparency, on the Rockgelly/St Andrews Church development project at relevant intervals.

**Decision**

The committee, having agreed to include the additional recommendations proposed by Councillors Lockhart and Robb (Amendments 1 and 2):-

- (1) noted the current position regarding St Andrews church and Rockgelly;
- (2) noted the potential uses and approximate timelines for getting the church operational for community and leisure use;
- (3) agreed to remit to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service to develop a wider community consultation on community use and development of Lochgelly Town Hall;
- (4) requested an update report on progress in six months on the future of Lochgelly Town Hall; and
- (5) requested that officers explore methods to ensure members of the public were kept updated with all relevant information and documents that could be released, to be released in the interest of transparency, on the Rockgelly/St Andrews Church development project at relevant intervals..

*Councillor Linda Erskine left the meeting following consideration of the above item.*

*The committee adjourned at 4.00 pm and reconvened at 4.10 pm.*

**107. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM BUDGET REQUEST (APRIL 24 - MARCH 25)**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service seeking agreement for an allocation of funding from the Ward 7 and Ward 8 Local Community Planning and Anti-Poverty Budgets to support the work of the Area Community Team.

**Amendment**

Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb, seconded by Councillor Mary Lockhart, moved as follows:-

'Cowdenbeath Area Committee notes that the permanent recurring budgets for local Ward, LCPB, and Anti-Poverty budget allocation for 2024-25 have not changed following the Council's budget decision on 22 February 2024. Committee further notes that there is likely to be a level of recurring spend from 2023/24 that will impact on the 2024/25 budgets due to previous decisions of this committee and also to note that carry forward budgets cannot be confirmed until after the financial year end for 2023/24.

Committee notes that a more comprehensive (but not conclusive given the timing) budget position update for the 2024/25 financial year will be provided at the forthcoming scheduled elected member workshop, taking place on 26 March 2024, to allow Members to be better appraised of the financial position before making significant budgetary commitments from the 2024/25 budget allocation.

Committee therefore:-

- (1) agree given the timing implications for the delivery of the Easter programme, to commit £7,000.00 of funding;
- (2) agree that the other recommended financial commitments (as detailed in the report) be deferred until the Cowdenbeath Area Committee meeting on 17 April 2024 for further consideration by the committee, and
- (3) with reference to the Committee Powers 7.2.2, requested the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service attend the meeting of the committee on 17 April 2024, to discuss and respond to questions on the lack of a core resource budget for community capacity building, adult learning or family work.'

**Decision**

The committee unanimously approved the amendment.

**108. ANTI-POVERTY REQUEST - LO'GELLY LUNCHES**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Neighbourhoods and Communities Service presenting a request for funding for Lo'gelly lunches required to support the group in continuing to deliver their services to the community.

**Decision**

The committee agreed to approve an allocation of £10,000 funding for Lo'gelly Lunches from the Anti-Poverty budget to support food purchases.

*Councillor Rosemary Liewald left the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

**109. AREA ROADS PROGRAMME 2024-25**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Roads and Transportation identifying projects proposed for inclusion in the 2024-25 Area Roads Programme for the Cowdenbeath area.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) approved the report and appendices 1-3;
- (2) agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment to manage the lists of Category 1 and 2 projects in line with the available resources/funding as the programme developed, in consultation with the Area Convener, Depute Convener and, following an amendment from Councillor Bailey Lee-Robb, seconded by Councillor Alistair Bain, to also include local ward members;
- (3) noted the content of appendices 4 and 5 to the report;
- (4) noted that a briefing note would be provided for members following review of reserve schemes to show where the additional funding would be allocated to promote the work on the schemes in financial year 2024/25; and
- (5) requested that consideration be given, during the allocation of additional funding, to progress Station Road, Kelty traffic calming measures with the work to be undertaken during the next financial year.

**110. FIFE LOCAL AREA ECONOMIC PROFILES 2022-23**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services providing an annual overview of the performance of the local economy and labour market in the Cowdenbeath area. The information presented was intended to provide background and context to council activity within the area and to help inform area committee discussion and decision-making.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) noted the issues raised from the analysis of the available data; and
- (2) recognised the ongoing economic challenges.

**111. DOMESTIC WASTE, STREET CLEANSING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE ANNUAL REVIEW 23-24**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Environment and Building Services advising on the performance of the Grounds Maintenance and Domestic Waste and Street Cleansing Services in 2023-24

**Decision**

The committee noted:-

## 2024 CAC 59

- (1) the continued improved performance in grounds maintenance, domestic waste collection and street cleansing services in 2023;
- (2) the planned delivery of local priorities to help communities shape their environment; and
- (3) that a workshop would be arranged by the Service Manager, Grounds Maintenance Service, with members of the committee and the Community Manager (Cowdenbeath Area), to consider decentralisation of the Grounds Maintenance Service in the local decision making process.

### 112. **LOCHORE MEADOWS COUNTRY PARK OPERATIONAL UPDATE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service updating on current work underway at Lochore Meadows Country Park (LMCP). An update was also provided on the Lochore Meadows Country Park Draft Development Plan, including progress on a number of project areas specifically in relation to the following request from Cowdenbeath Area Committee on 1st February 2023:

“Committee notes the intention for the development of a draft development plan, and requests officers present this to the Area Committee at a future meeting over the next twelve months.”

#### **Amendment**

Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb, seconded by Councillor Alistair Bain, moved to add recommendations (5) and (6) to the report, as follows:-

- (5) Committee requested that officers and members discuss the consultation event held in December 2022 at the forthcoming elected member workshop to be held later in the year, to review the community feedback from that event with a view to considering if similar events could be held in the future to provide meaningful and purposeful consultation events with the local community across the Cowdenbeath Area; and
- (6) Committee requested an annual update on the status of the development plan to provide effective scrutiny.

#### **Decision**

The committee, having agreed to include the additional recommendations proposed by Councillor Robb (Amendment):-

- (1) noted progress and supported future plans;
- (2) agreed to continue to support the park as a local asset through ongoing engagement with local communities, ensuring developments support meeting local needs;
- (3) recognised that the park was also a key Fife wide asset and that further investment and support was required in order to position the park as a destination venue and realise the aspirations of the local community;

## 2024 CAC 60

- (4) agreed to support the direction of travel that all improvements would be in line with both recommendations 2 and 3 and that these would complement the Community Wealth Building approach set out in the Recovery and Renewal Plan for Fife 2021 – 2024;
- (5) requested that officers and members discuss the consultation event held in December 2022 at the forthcoming elected member workshop to be held later in the year, to review the community feedback from that event with a view to considering if similar events could be held in the future to provide meaningful and purposeful consultation events with the local community across the Cowdenbeath Area; and
- (6) requested an annual update on the status of the development plan to provide effective scrutiny.

*Councillor Mary Lockhart left the meeting following consideration of the above item.*

### **113. PLAN 4 COWDENBEATH 2023-2026 ACTION PLAN - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Community Manager (Cowdenbeath Area) provided a verbal update on the Plan 4 Cowdenbeath 2023-26 Action Plan. The Action Plan would be presented to the committee at its next meeting on 17 April 2024. The Action Plan would be a living document that expected to be developed during the three year period to deliver projects to support the aims of the local community plan.

Meetings had been underway with individuals leading on tasks to ensure they were aware of requirements over the three year period. It was noted that positive discussions had taken place and exciting opportunities were being developed and delivered to the benefit of the Cowdenbeath Area. Services that linked in with the Area Committee had also been asked to consider how the work they carried out would link in with the Community Plan to ensure this remained at the forefront of service delivery to make a real impact.

Where appropriate, other services and third sector groups would be invited to attend the Area Committee to update members on progress within their specialist area.

*Councillor Linda Erskine re-joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

#### **Decision**

The committee noted the update.

### **114. COWDENBEATH AREA FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

#### **Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) noted the forward work programme;



## 2024 CAC 61

- (2) noted that a briefing paper on 'How will Fife Council realise children's rights within the Cowdenbeath area' had been circulated to members and would be removed from the Work Programme under the meeting on 4 September 2024;
- (3) noted that the report on Education Outcomes 2023/24, detailed at the meeting on 17 April 2024, would be submitted to the meeting on 12 June 2024;
- (4) noted the concluding report on the Plan 4 Cowdenbeath 2019-22 would be submitted to the meeting on 17 April 2024;
- (5) noted the report on Community Wealth Building across Cowdenbeath area, expected to be delivered at the meeting on 17 April 2024, would be submitted to the meeting on 12 June 2024;
- (6) requested the report on Mary Pit Head - Restoration Work, listed under the unallocated section of the Work Programme, be submitted to the next available meeting of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee, following the outcome of the structural survey that had been undertaken in January 2024;
- (7) requested the recently elected members of the Scottish Youth Parliament be invited to attend the next available Cowdenbeath Area Committee meeting;
- (8) noted that the workshop with members, Scottish Water and Roads and Transportation Services' representatives would take place in March 2024 and that the report on Flooding, expected for submission to the committee meeting on 17 April 2024, would be removed from the work programme; and
- (9) requested that the Convener write to Amanda Cathrew, Housing Services Manager to request that the report for submission to the meeting on 17 April 2024 on Area Housing Plan 2023-26 include the most recent set of statistics and figures.

### 115. PUBLIC QUESTION

The following question was submitted by the public in terms of Standing Order No. 14.0, from Mr. Tom. Kinnaird, resident, Benarty.

'The raised hump pedestrian crossing point to the north of the development at the Shank of Navitie has still not been installed. Is that scheduled? (The hump part was laid, deemed too high and removed previously, and works were then abandoned.)

#### **Response from Fife Council Lead Consultant, Traffic Management, Roads and Transportation Service:-**

It is the responsibility of the Developer (Springfield Properties) to complete the crossing installation. Colleagues in Transportation, Development Management had yet another site meeting with the Developer last week, Developer has given assurances that this would be completed and they have been asked to complete this by the end of the Financial Year. This would depend on them applying for a permit to occupy the road and for this to be granted in line with all other works in the area.

## **2024 CAC 62**

We now have to give them the time to complete the work and as soon as this has been completed we will have it commissioned and working.

We are in discussions with Legal Services as to what could be done in the event that it is not completed by the Developer.

### **Decision**

The committee noted the response to the public question.