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Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

ABERDEEN, 28 August 2024. Minute of Meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Brooks, Davidson, Hutchison, Kuszniir, Mennie, Tissera and Watson.

External Advisers:- Professor John Bone (University of Aberdeen), Kerry Gavin (CFINE), Sophy Green (Instant Neighbour), Maggie Hepburn (ACVO), Marjorie Johnston (NHS Grampian) and Edward Obi.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

WELCOME

1. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the two new External Advisers, Kerry Gavin and Marjorie Johnston, whose appointments had been agreed by the Council on 3 July 2024.

URGENT BUSINESS

2. There was no urgent business.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

3. There was no exempt business.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

4. Members were requested to intimate any Declarations of Interest or Transparency Statements in respect of the items on the agenda.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Councillor Kuszniir advised that he had connections in relation to agenda item 9.2 (Accessing Money Advice and Advisory Services) as he was (1) a Board Member of Aberdeen Citizens Advice Bureau; (2) a current employee of Burnett and Reid Solicitors and with regard to Taggart Meil and Mathers Solicitors which had been assumed as part of Burnett and Reid; and (3) a financial guardian for four individuals however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connections amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the item;
- (ii) to note that Councillor Brooks advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda item 9.2 as he had family working for Aberdeen Citizens Advice Bureau

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

28 August 2024

- and adjacent organisations however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the items;
- (iii) to note that Councillor Watson advised that he had a connection in relation to the agenda as he was on the Executive of Aberdeen Trades Union Council however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on any item; and
- (iv) to note that Professor Bone advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda item 9.1 (Working in Partnership for Aberdeen – Supporting People with the Cost of Living: Round Two of Funding Allocations) as he was a Board Member or CFINE however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the item.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 12 JUNE 2024

5. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 12 June 2024.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

6. The Committee had before it the planner of committee business, as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the Planner.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR ABERDEEN - SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH THE COST OF LIVING: ROUND TWO OF FUNDING ALLOCATIONS - CORS/24/229

7. The Committee had before it a report seeking approval for the allocation of the remaining funds from the £1million provided by the Council to support people with the cost of living. The Corporate Strategy and Community Planning Manager introduced the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) note that the Council, on 3 July 2024 (1) approved the allocation of funds agreed by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 12 June 2024; and (2) agreed that the remaining funding balance be allocated by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

28 August 2024

Committee without the need for further approval from the Finance and Resources Committee or Council; and

- (b) approve the proposed allocation of remaining funds from the £1million provided by Council to support people with the cost of living crisis during 2024/25 as described in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved:-
that the Committee approve the recommendations.

Councillor Kuszniir, seconded by Councillor Brooks moved as an amendment:-
that the Committee:

- (1) note that 'outcome reports' from each funded organisation are required as part of the funding agreements to demonstrate best value for taxpayers;
- (2) note that an update on outcomes will be provided as part of the report scheduled for the next Committee meeting and instruct the Executive Director – Corporate Services to provide a full evaluation report to Committee in June 2025 which will include details of (a) a breakdown of how taxpayers' money has been spent by each organisation, (b) the ultimate spend on staffing and (c) the considered impact of the spend on reducing poverty;
- (3) decline to allocate additional funds to (a) CFINE/Food Poverty Action Aberdeen and (b) SCARF (SC094819) until Committee considers their outcome reports, especially given funding was only approved by Council on 3 July 2024 and no assessment of the spend to date has been provided in the report;
- (4) note reported increase in staffing costs from 2022 to 2023 for both Community Food Initiatives North East Limited (SC262156) and SCARF within their Companies House filings; and
- (5) approve:
 - 5.1 £100,000 for funded work experience placements for long term unemployed individuals, the employing organisations to receive such funding to be determined by the Executive Director - Corporate Services, given the positive impact of supporting return to work and its impact on reducing poverty and improving social mobility; and
 - 5.2 the proposed allocations at 3.7, excluding those relating to (a) CFINE/Food Poverty Action Aberdeen and (b) SCARF.

Councillor Tissera, seconded by Councillor Watson, moved as a further amendment:-
that the Committee:

- (1) note the contents of the report;
- (2) note that the committee has not been provided with a detailed rationale for how the funds should be allocated between different areas of need, or how the specific organisations receiving funds have been identified. Little information has been provided about expectations around monitoring the spending of these funds;
- (3) note that each funded organisation must complete a monitoring report detailing how intended deliverables have been met and instruct the Executive Director – Corporate Services to prepare a report for the Anti-Poverty and Inequality

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

28 August 2024

- Committee, prior to the allocation of any potential future anti-poverty funds, to ensure that objectives and outcomes will be met; and
- (4) recognise the excellent anti-poverty work by Abernecessities and amend the proposed Abernecessities allocation at 3.7 to award them £140,300 and revise the allocation to CFINE to £142,038. Approve the allocation of other funding as identified in table 3.7.

There being a motion and two amendments, the Committee first divided between the amendment by Councillor Kuszniir and the amendment by Councillor Tissera.

On a division, there voted:-

For the amendment by Councillor Kuszniir (2) – Councillors Brooks and Kuszniir.

For the amendment by Councillor Tissera (2) – Councillors Tissera and Watson.

Declined to vote (5) - Convener, Vice Convener and Councillors Davidson, Hutchison and Mennie.

In accordance with Standing Order 32.7, the Convener exercised his casting vote in favour of the amendment by Councillor Tissera.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (5) – Convener, Vice Convener and Councillors Davidson, Hutchison and Mennie.

For the amendment by Councillor Tissera (2) – Councillors Tissera and Watson.

Declined to vote (2) – Councillors Brooks and Kuszniir.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Corporate Strategy and Community Planning Manager to include information on how CFINE procured and distributed food to partner organisations in the report on Supporting People through the Cost of Living Crisis scheduled for consideration at the next Committee meeting;
- (ii) to instruct the Corporate Strategy and Community Planning Manager to investigate the possibility of a Committee visit to Abernecessities; and
- (iii) to otherwise adopt the motion.

ACCESSING MONEY ADVICE AND ADVISORY SERVICES - CORS/24/230

8. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the Financial Inclusion Team Leader presenting work undertaken to determine issues faced by people in poverty in relation to accessing advice services and financial services.

The report recommended:-

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

28 August 2024

that the Committee:

- (a) approve the areas for improvement identified in section 3.39 of the report;
- (b) approve the initiation of an improvement project to test changes that will achieve an increase in awareness of services provided and address identified gaps; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – People & Citizen Services to report back to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in Q1 of 2025 on the findings of the survey and an update of the improvement actions.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-
that the Committee approve the recommendations.

Councillor Tissera, seconded by Councillor Watson, moved as an amendment:- that the Committee:

- (1) note the contents of the report;
- (2) note the Executive Director has brought a report to the Committee detailing what was asked for on 30 August 2023 despite the SNP voting against the Labour amendment at the last committee meeting as per the approved minutes;
- (3) note that the report does not specifically address the huge issues of in work poverty, and the benefits that fair work can bring to those facing poverty; and
- (4) agree to instruct the Chief Officer – People & Citizen Services to engage with local trade unions across a range of sectors to identify the support that they can offer those facing poverty pay in conjunction with the Council and other partners.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (7) – the Convener, Vice Convener and Councillors Brooks, Davidson, Hutchison, Kuszniir and Mennie; for the amendment (2) – Councillors Tissera and Watson.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

VALEDICTORY

9. The Convener paid tribute to Maggie Hepburn of ACVO who had been one of the External Advisers since the Committee started in October 2022. He advised that ACVO would be stepping back as an External Advisor to the Committee after today's meeting. The Convener stated that Maggie had brought a wealth of experience as one of the experts representing the charitable sector in the city. He thanked her and ACVO for their valued advice and support and wished them well. Furthermore, the Convener advised that expressions of interest for a replacement would be reported to Members in due course.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the Convener's remarks.

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

28 August 2024

COMMITTEE VISIT TO CAIRNCRY COMMUNITY CENTRE

10. The Committee resolved:-

to note that Members were invited to attend a visit to Cairncry Community Centre from 12.30-3.00pm.

- **COUNCILLOR CHRISTIAN ALLARD, Convener.**