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Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

ABERDEEN, 11 June 2025. Minute of Meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Buchanan, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Blake, Bonsell (as substitute for Councillor Macdonald), Brooks, Davidson, Hutchison, Kuszniir and van Sweeden (as substitute for Councillor Mennie).

External Advisers:- Professor John Bone (University of Aberdeen)(from article 7), Kerry Gavin (CFINE), Sophy Green (Instant Neighbour), Donna Hutchison (Aberdeen Cyrenians), Edward Obi and Dr Paul Southworth (NHS Grampian).

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 Dr Paul Southworth as the new Public Health, NHS Grampian External Adviser who had replaced Dr Marjorie Johnston on the Committee. The Convener expressed his thanks to Dr Johnston for her contributions.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the Convener's remarks.

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 Blake advised that she was a Friend of Aberdeen Performing Arts however, having applied the objective test she did not consider that her connection amounted to an interest which would prevent her from participating in the discussions at items 9.2 and 9.3 of the agenda;

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- (ii) to note that the Convener advised that he was the Council appointed representative on the Real Living Wage Action Group 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 discussions at item 9.5;
- (iii) to note that Sophy Green advised that she was a member of Food Poverty Action Aberdeen however, having applied the objective test she did not consider that her connection amounted to an interest which would prevent her from participating in the discussions; and
- (iv) to note that Councillor Brooks advised that he was the emergency cover Chairman of the TLC Charity which was part of the Trussell Trust family of food banks however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in any of the discussions.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 25 MARCH 2025

5. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 25 March 2025.

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:-

- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Data Insights, to provide a report on the Aberdeen Collaboration for Health Equity (CHES) between Professor Sir Michael Marmot, the London Institute of Health Equity, Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian; and
- (ii) to otherwise agree the Planner.

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES APPROACH - FINAL REPORT ON THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP STUDY ON GENDER INEQUALITY AND POVERTY - CORS/25/133

7. The Committee had before it a report presenting the findings and recommendations of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen.

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Heather Williams – Training Lead, Scottish Women's Budget Group, introduced the report and handed over to Steering Group members Natasha Franklin, Arantxa Garcia de sola and Jacquie Westland who presented the findings and responded to questions from Committee Members.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) note the findings of the final report on the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen;
- (b) thank all those that participated in the project;
- (c) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to bring a response to the findings and recommendations of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty to the Committee meeting on 26 November 2025;
- (d) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to share the report and recommendations for action with Scottish Government, UK Government, Police Scotland and Financial Services Ombudsman; and
- (e) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to bring an evaluation report on the process to the Committee meeting in January 2026.

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 the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty and expresses its gratitude to participants for their valuable engagement on issues of concern to the Council and its citizens;
- (2) welcome the holistic approach to the report, which acknowledges the diverse causes of inequality and relative poverty;
- (3) believe the report would have benefited from detailed explanations and case studies for concepts referenced and praised but not explained in detail such as recommendations #9 (community navigator role), #36 (feminist urban planning), #47 (Confident Conversations training), and #58 (community diner project);
- (4) recognise the challenges to the Council in implementing all 96 recommendations due to financial and resources constraints, which therefore means prioritisation is key;
- (5) agree not to pursue:
 - a. the translation element of recommendation #45;
 - b. recommendation #44 due to the importance of tackling illegal immigration through the UK Government, including the so called 'hostile environment' policies; and
 - c. recommendation #77, given the significant costs and complexities of publicly operated bus services.
- (6) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to:

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- a. focus on high impact, feasible recommendations on (a) childcare and education (recommendations such as #1, #4, #6, #17, #27); (b) welfare access (#45, #51, #52, #53); (c) safety and community (#37, #48); and (d) data and transparency (#3, 26, #49, #55); and
- b. bring an evaluation report on the process to the Committee meeting in January 2026.

Councillor Blake, seconded by Councillor Bonsell, moved as a further amendment:-
that the Committee:

- (1) note the findings of the final report on the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen;
- (2) thank all those that participated in the project;
- (3) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to bring a response to the findings and recommendations of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty, including those for the Health and Social Care Partnership, to the Committee meeting on 26 November 2025;
- (4) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to share the report with the Scottish Government, UK Government, Police Scotland and Financial Services Ombudsman and ask them to respond to the recommendations which they can take forward; and
- (5) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to bring an evaluation report on the process to the Committee meeting in January 2026.

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

On a division, there voted:-

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

For the amendment by Councillor Blake (2) – Councillors Blake and Bonsell.

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

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

On a division, there voted:-

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

For the amendment by Councillor Blake (2) – Councillors Blake and Bonsell.

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Strategic Lead, Prevention and Community Empowerment to provide further information in respect of new childminder provision in the previously identified blackspot areas; and
- (ii) to adopt the motion.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS 2024/25 – FULL YEAR EVALUATION - CORS/25/131

8. The Committee had before it report prepared by the Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager providing a full year evaluation of the outcomes achieved from the Cost of Living Funding allocated for 2024/25.

The Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager introduced the report and responded to questions from Members.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the outputs and outcomes of the Cost of Living Fund 2024/25.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager to provide an update in respect of participation in the Creative Engagement Programme;
- (ii) to instruct the Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager to add information in respect of underspends to the LOGIC table (at Figure 4 of the report) and circulate this as a Service Update to Elected Members; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the information provided.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR ABERDEEN - SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH THE COST OF LIVING 2025/26 - CORS/25/132

9. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the External Advisers, the Strategic Lead - Prevention and Community Empowerment, and the Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager, seeking approval for the allocation of the £1million provided by Council to support people with the cost of living during 2025/26.

On behalf of the External Advisers, Phil Mackie introduced the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) approve the proposed allocation of funds from the £1million provided by the Council to support people with the cost of living crisis during 2025/26 as detailed in paragraph 3.9 of the report; and

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- (b) to instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to bring an update on spend, progress, any reallocation of resources and further proposals for the balance of funding to the meeting of the Committee on 26 November 2025.

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 the recommendations outlined in the report;
- (2) agree that Aberdeen City Council should prioritise direct assistance to tackling relative poverty over subsidising staffing costs through grant funding;
- (3) acknowledge that Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Councillors previously raised concerns regarding 2024/25 funding of staffing costs, highlighting the risk of dependency on Council subsidy and the need to direct taxpayers' money towards support for residents not pay packets; and
- (4) approve the proposed allocation of the £1 million fund, provided by Council, to address the cost-of-living crisis in 2025/26, as detailed in paragraph 3.9, subject to limiting the Council's contribution to staffing costs to a maximum of 25%.

Councillor Blake, seconded by Councillor Bonsell, moved as a further amendment:-
that the Committee:

- (1) note the increased focus on prevention;
- (2) note with concern that despite the principles in 3.5, two of the awards involve a significant proportion of staff costs and ask the Executive Director of Corporate Services to seek reassurance of the sustainability of these posts going forward;
- (3) recognise the excellent panto and creative learning programme at Aberdeen Arts Centre and the share of the award of the Christmas panto package between Aberdeen Performing Arts and Castlegate Arts;
- (4) subject to sharing the proposal for a Christmas panto provision between Aberdeen Performing Arts and Castlegate Arts and the reassurance in (2), approve the proposed allocation of funds from the £1million provided by Council to support people with the cost of living crisis during 2025/26 as detailed in paragraph 3.9 below; and
- (5) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to bring an update on spend, progress, any reallocation of resources and further proposals for the balance of funding to the meeting of the Committee on 26 November 2025.

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

On a division, there voted:-

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

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For the amendment by Councillor Blake (2) – Councillors Blake and Bonsell.

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

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

On a division, there voted:-

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

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

Declined to vote (2) – Councillors Blake and Bonsell.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the motion.

MAPPING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY SERVICES AND SUPPORT - CORS/25/134

10. The Committee had before it report prepared by the Strategic Lead - Prevention and Community Empowerment, presenting an overview of anti-poverty and inequality services and supports being delivered by the Council, and in partnership with public services, third sector and community organisations across Aberdeen.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the breadth of anti-poverty and inequality services and supports currently available from the Council and partner organisations to people in need across Aberdeen.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Strategic Lead, Prevention and Community Empowerment to share information on active community groups at locality level; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

DRAFT ABERDEEN AND ABERDEENSHIRE LIVING WAGE PLACE ACTION PLAN 2025-2028 - CORS/25/135

11. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the Engagement Partner - Scottish Enterprise, presenting the Regional Living Wage Place Action Plan 2025-2028.

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The Strategic Lead - Prevention and Community Empowerment responded to questions from Members.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Draft Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Living Wage Place Action Plan 2025-2028.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Strategic Lead, Prevention and Community Empowerment to provide a Service Update in respect of the employer accreditation aspects of the Real Living Wage Action Plan; and
 - (ii) to otherwise agree the recommendation.
- **COUNCILLOR CHRISTIAN ALLARD, Convener.**