

**DRAFT**

**ENTERPRISE, PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

**15 November, 2011**

**MOTION BY COUNCILLOR KEVIN STEWART MSP – REFERENDUM ON  
THE FUTURE OF UNION TERRACE GARDENS**

1. (A) In terms of Standing Order 10(2), and as agreed at the beginning of the meeting (see article 1 above), the Committee received a deputation from Mr. Shepherd of Friends of Union Terrace Gardens, in relation to the above-named report.

Mr. Shepherd expressed Friends of Union Terrace Gardens support for a referendum being held in relation to the future of Union Terrace Gardens. He also recommended that should a referendum be held, that this be conducted by an independent body and advised that a question with only a yes/no answer option was unacceptable to Friends of Union Terrace Gardens. Mr. Shepherd emphasised the importance of a referendum being independent, fair and binding. Finally, he highlighted that a number of issues still required to be resolved, most notably the land ownership issue, and suggested that the option to hold an opinion poll, instead of a referendum, would be vastly unpopular.

(B) With reference to article 9 of the minute of the meeting of the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee of 13 September, 2011, the Committee had before it a report regarding the following motion which had been submitted by Councillor Kevin Stewart, MSP:-

“That this Council agrees, in principle, that a referendum on the future of Union Terrace Gardens be held after the City Garden Design

competition was completed, calls on officers to produce a report about the practicalities and costings of holding a postal ballot of all Aberdeen electors and asked officers to investigate sourcing funding for the referendum from bodies other than the Council.”

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) agree to:-
  - (i) hold a public referendum in accordance with Section 5.3(i)-(xxi) of the report, to gauge public support for the City Garden Project, and
  - (ii) instruct officers to produce a further report for submission to the Finance and Resources Committee requesting that a budget of up to £250,000 be allocated, from the Council's contingencies budget, to pay for the referendum; and
- (c) instruct officers to produce a report for submission to Council at its meeting on 14 December, 2011, seeking approval for the wording of any referendum question, should the Finance and Resources Committee agree to allocate the necessary funding for the referendum.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note the contents of the report, and to thank officers for the considerable work which had gone into its preparation;
- (ii) to agree to refer the report to Council on 14 December, 2011 for consideration;

- (iii) to instruct officers to report to Council on 14 December, 2011, detailing the cost and feasibility of an independently conducted, statistically significant opinion poll as an alternative way of judging the level of public support for the project. This report should include the feasibility of including young people over the age of 16 in the sample, as well as information on the feasibility of holding a separate stand alone referendum for secondary school children;
- (iv) to instruct officers to produce a report for submission to Council on 14 December, 2011, seeking approval for the wording of the question(s) to be included in any opinion poll or referendum, and that this report be the subject of consultation with Aberdeen City Gardens Trust Ltd and the Friends of Union Terrace Gardens; and
- (v) to recommend to Council that should Mr Mike Shepherd, submit a further request for deputation to Council on 14 December, 2011, regarding this matter, that Council should agree to hear the request.