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Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

ABERDEEN, 26 November 2025. Minute of Meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Buchanan, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Blake, Brooks, Davidson, Kuszniir, Macdonald, Mennie and van Sweeden (as substitute for Councillor Hutchison).

External Advisers:- Kerry Gavin (CFINE), Donna Hutchison (Aberdeen Cyrenians), Dr Rachel Shanks (University of Aberdeen) 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 new External Adviser Dr Rachel Shanks from the University of Aberdeen, replacing Professor John Bone. Members were advised that Sophy Green had stepped down as External Adviser and that Graeme Robbie from CFINE would be joining as her replacement, representing the charitable sector in Aberdeen. The Committee also heard that this would be Kerry Gavin's last meeting as Lived Experience External Adviser.

The Convener expressed his thanks to Professor Bone, Sophy Green and Kerry Gavin for their valuable contributions.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. 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 the Convener advised he had a connection in respect of item 9.2 (Fairer Aberdeen Fund Annual Report 2024-25) as he was a member of the Fairer Aberdeen Board 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 discussions;
- (ii) to note that the Vice Convener advised he had a connection in respect of item 9.2 as he was a member of the Fairer Aberdeen Board 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 discussions; and
- (iii) to note that Councillor Macdonald advised that she had a connection in respect of item 9.1 (Aberdeen City Council Response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty) as she was Treasurer of Aberdeen

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Women's Alliance however, having applied the objective test she did not consider that her connections amounted to an interest which would prevent her from participating in the discussions.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 11 JUNE 2025

3. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 11 June 2025.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree to remove the item at line 26 (Memorandum of Understanding between Aberdeen City Council and the Department of Work and Pensions on preventing homeless);
- (ii) to note that the Committee Visit in January 2026 would be to the Tillydrone Community Flat and Campus; and
- (iii) to otherwise agree the Planner.

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES APPROACH - ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP STUDY ON GENDER INEQUALITY AND POVERTY - CORS/25/228

5. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the Strategic Lead - Prevention and Community Empowerment, presenting the Council's response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) note the Council's planned actions to be taken in response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen;
- (b) thank members of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group, Aberdeen Youth Movement and all other stakeholders who participated in the improvement action planning process; and
- (c) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to provide an update on the 52 improvement actions presented in the report by December 2026.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

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that the Committee approve the recommendations.

Councillor Blake, seconded by Councillor Macdonald, moved as an amendment:-
that the Committee:

- (1) note the Council's planned actions to be taken in response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen;
- (2) thank members of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group, Aberdeen Youth Movement and all other stakeholders who participated in improvement action planning process;
- (3) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning and Chief Officer – Data Insights, to review questions in future surveys on early learning and out of school care in order to ensure analysis by socio-economic status is possible, so that any variations can be identified and additional targeted measures can be introduced where required;
- (4) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to map women's groups across the city with a view to highlighting where support might be available;
- (5) note the importance of wrap around childcare to enable women to return to the workforce and to lifting children out of poverty. Notes the expansion of breakfast club provision in 2025/26 through the Bright Starts breakfast fund and instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to look at external funding opportunities to support expansion for the end of the school day provision; and
- (6) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to provide an update on the 52 improvement actions presented in this report by December 2026.

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

- (1) agree the recommendations, subject to the following two amendments of improvement actions:
 - a. deletion of "*translations into priority languages and*" from improvement action 30; and
 - b. deletion of "*clear, multilingual information and*" from improvement action 46;
- (2) recognise that English is the UK's primary language;
- (3) believe that government of all levels should prioritise integration by promoting learning English, not entrench disadvantage and damage social cohesion by making it easier to not learn the language while claiming state benefits;
- (4) note that the Scottish Government strongly promotes English learning as essential for integration, funding *English for Speakers of other Languages* classes to develop language skills for work and community life; and
- (5) welcome the comments from the Labour Home Secretary, The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, affirming that "*This country has always welcomed those who come to this country and contribute. But it is unacceptable for migrants to come here without learning our language, unable to contribute to our national life. If you come to this country, you must learn our language and play your part.*"

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

On a division, there voted:-

For the amendment by Councillor Blake (7) – Convener, Vice Convener and Councillors Blake, Davidson, Macdonald, Mennie and van Sweeden.

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

At this juncture, the Convener indicated that he was willing to accept Councillor Blake's amendment.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning and Chief Officer – Data Insights, to review questions in future surveys on early learning and out of school care in order to ensure analysis by socio-economic status is possible, so that any variations can be identified and additional targeted measures can be introduced where required;
- (ii) to instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to map women's groups across the city with a view to highlighting where support might be available;
- (iii) to note the importance of wrap around childcare to enable women to return to the workforce and to lifting children out of poverty. Notes the expansion of breakfast club provision in 2025/26 through the Bright Starts breakfast fund and instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to look at external funding opportunities to support expansion for the end of the school day provision; and
- (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained within the report.

FAIRER ABERDEEN FUND ANNUAL REPORT - CORS/25/229

6. The Committee had before it the Fairer Aberdeen Fund Annual Report for 2024-25 prepared by the Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) note the Fairer Aberdeen Fund Annual Report for 2024-25, at Appendix 1 of the report and the positive impact that has been made to lives of people in Aberdeen; and
- (b) instruct the Executive Director of Corporate Services to thank all the Fairer Aberdeen Board members, funded partners, and volunteers for the work they have done and their many successes.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that the Service Manager – Early Years, confirm whether or not the mapping of child care provision across the city included after school care that was

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- provided by community groups such as those funded by Fairer Aberdeen Fund;
and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

SERVICE PROVIDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2025-2029 - CORS/25/226

7. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the Interim Diversity and Inclusion Lead presenting Aberdeen City Council's Service Provider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Service Provider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Community Action Plan 2025-2029.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendation contained in the report;
- (ii) to note that the Interim Diversity and Inclusion Lead would take an action to explore accessibility of committee documents;
- (iii) to note the Hate Crime Awareness Workshop held in the Town House on 17 October 2025 that brought together community members, local authorities, educators, and third sector organisations to raise awareness of hate crimes, share lived experiences and develop strategies to improve prevention and response;
- (iv) to note the Civic Prayer Breakfast which took place on the 26 September 2025, that brought together a range of partners and speakers, who reiterated the need for tolerance and community cohesion in our city;
- (v) to welcome the joint statement from the Co-Leaders and Labour Group Leader, attached to the addendum;
- (vi) to condemn the verbal abuse and intimidation towards staff removing flags from lampposts; and
- (vii) to agree that all who came to Aberdeen to visit, study, work and live were welcome.

COLLABORATION FOR HEALTH EQUITY IN SCOTLAND - CORS/25/230

8. The Committee had before it an update report prepared by the Chief Officer -Data Insights (HDRCA) on the work of the Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) instruct the Chief Officer - Data Insights (HDRCA) to report to the Committee at the conclusion of the Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland; and
- (b) otherwise note the report.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH THE COST OF LIVING 2025/26 – UPDATE ON PROGRESS AND SPEND - CORS/25/231

9. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager providing an update on the outcomes achieved to date from the Cost of Living Funding allocated for 2025-26.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) note the Supporting People with the Cost of Living Crisis 2025-26 Update Report;
- (b) note that it was expected that allocations would be fully spent by April 2026; and
- (c) agree to reallocate £27,600 underspend in funding awarded to Aberdeen Health And Social Care Partnership for Telecare equipment and Power of Attorney in 2024-25 to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree the recommendations.

REPORT ON VISIT TO THE FOUNTAIN OF LOVE CHURCH - CORS/25/256

10. The Committee had before it report prepared by the Anti-Poverty Officer following the Committee visit to the Fountain of Love Church on 10 September 2025.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) approve the report; and
- (b) thank all those at Fountain of Love Church who welcomed the Committee and provided an informative and interesting visit.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR CHRISTIAN ALLARD, Convener.**