

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

25 JULY 2013

HAUDAGAIN UPGRADE – A WAY FORWARD (MIDDLEFIELD) (H&E/13/046)

3. With reference to article 15 of the minute of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee of 13 June 2013 the Committee had before it (1) a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which advised of the outcomes of the first meeting of Council and NESTRANS officers with Transport Scotland on the future progress and delivery of the Haudagain Junction Improvements by the Scottish Government and the Council's regeneration proposals for the wider Middlefield area, taking into account the instructions of this Committee of 13 June 2013, which were subsequently approved by Full Council on 26 June 2013; and (2) an addendum to appendix 2 contained in the report.

The report recommended –

that the Committee -

- (a) note the minutes contained at appendix 1 of the report of the meeting held by officers of the Council, NESTRANS, Transport Scotland and their consultants on 28 June 2013;
- (b) acknowledge that Transport Scotland had agreed to arrange a meeting with the District Valuer and Aberdeen City Council to discuss financial compensation arrangements for Council assets as soon as possible;
- (c) note the Council's proposed plan to start the regeneration project within the next two years contained at appendix 2;
- (d) note that a further Equality Human Rights Impact Assessment was required in light of the Council's proposal to shorten the project timescales and that this was currently being developed, and
- (e) note that officers in the project team were developing a communications strategy for local residents that would provide regular updates on progress as the project develops.

The Convener moved, seconded by Councillor Thomson:-

That the Committee:

- (1) agree (a), (b) and (d) of the recommendations contained within the report;
- (2) note the decision of the Council on 26 June 2013 and instruct officers to continue to work to that timescale;
- (3) instruct Councillor Crockett, Leader of the Council, to write to all council tax payers within the Middlefield regeneration area setting out the Council's objectives for regeneration, taking into consideration the fact that the Scottish Government had not yet agreed a compensation package despite this matter being discussed by Council on 25 June 2008 as an emergency item in order that the decision of Council could be referred to the Scottish Government at the earliest opportunity;

- (4) note the complete failure of the previous SNP/Liberal Democrat administration and its own two Lead Councillors for Regeneration, Councillor Jackie Dunbar and Kevin Stewart MSP, who, despite both representing the area did absolutely nothing to implement regeneration;
- (5) note that the policy of the SNP was to allow the good people of Middlefield to continue to be treated as second class citizens given their failure to deliver new kitchens and bathrooms despite the Scottish Housing Quality Standard to be met by 2015;
- (6) instruct officers to continue to push the Scottish Government to enter into a legally binding contract with the Council to fully fund the project noting the decision of the previous administration on 19 November 2009 at the Housing and Environment Committee, which included the then Vice Convener of that Committee, Councillor Mark McDonald now MSP and ward Councillors Kevin Stewart now MSP and Jackie Dunbar, “to suggest that the Scottish Government fully fund replacement facilities for the Middlefield Community Project, Middlefield Youth Project, Pathways and the Healthy Hoose, reporting back to the December meeting of the Finance and Resources on its progress”;
- (7) instruct officers to carry out a feasibility study on how best to proceed with Middlefield regeneration should the Scottish Government renege on its verbal promise to fund the construction of the road improvements, including all compensation costs for the delivery of the Haudagain Scheme, reporting back to the December meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee; and
- (8) request a comprehensive risk assessment covering political, business and finance risks to be considered in the form of the Corporate Risk Register, reporting back to the December meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

At this juncture, Councillor McCaig declared an interest by virtue of his employment by Kevin Stewart MSP. Councillor McCaig explained that the subject detailed in the Convener’s motion related to before Mr Stewart was a MSP and therefore he considered that the nature of his interest did not require him to leave the meeting.

Councillor McCaig moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Yuill:-
That the Committee:

- (1) note with concern the contents of the report;
- (2) note the impact of the Council’s proposed plan to begin work within two years would not allow for sufficient time to meet the commitments previously given by the Council to the Middlefield community; and
- (3) revert to the original timescale for redevelopment as agreed by the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting in May 2013.

Further to the motion and amendment above being moved and seconded, the Committee received advice regarding the competency of number (3) of the amendment detailed above.

Following the advice, Councillor McCaig, seconded by Councillor Noble, moved a procedural motion that Standing Order 22 be suspended in order for the Committee to consider number (3) of the amendment.

On a division, there voted:-

For the procedural motion (7) – Councillors Cormie, Jackie Dunbar, Greig, McCaig, Noble, Stuart, and Yuill; Against the procedural motion (8) – the Convener; and Councillors Graham, Ironside, Laing, Milne, Jean Morrison, Reynolds and Thomson.

The amendment having been ruled incompetent, Councillor McCaig then moved a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Noble:-

That the Committee:

- (1) note with concern the contents of the report;
- (2) instruct officers to urgently carry out an Equality and Human Rights Impact assessment in light of the administration's proposals to shorten the timescales for the redevelopment of the Haudagain;
- (3) instruct the Director of Housing and Environment and the Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure to hold an urgent meeting with the Middlefield community to consult with them on the proposals contained within the report;
- (4) request that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee detailing the outcome of (2) and (3) above with recommendations on how to progress the Haudagain whilst respecting the rights and aspirations of the Middlefield community.

The Committee then divided on the motion and the second amendment by Councillor McCaig.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion by the Convener (8) – the Convener; and Councillors Graham, Ironside, Laing, Milne, Jean Morrison, Reynolds and Thomson; For the amendment by Councillor McCaig (7) – Councillors Cormie, Jackie Dunbar, Greig, McCaig, Noble, Stuart, and Yuill.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the motion; and
- (ii) to request the Director of Housing and Environment to circulate the full programme for the two year programme to all members, by email.

In terms of Standing Order 36(3), Councillor McCaig intimated he would like this matter to be referred to full Council in order for a final decision to be taken. Councillor McCaig was supported by Councillors Cormie, Jackie Dunbar, Greig, Noble, Stuart and Yuill.