

Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

ABERDEEN, 30 August 2023. Minute of Meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Blake (as substitute for Councillor Tissera), Bonsell (as substitute for Councillor Graham), Brooks, Clark, Davidson, Greig, Hutchison, Kuszniir, Lawrence (as substitute for Councillor Crockett), Mennie and Watson.

External Advisers: - Dr John Bone (University of Aberdeen), Sophy Green (Chief Executive of Instant Neighbour); Maggie Hepburn (Chief Executive of Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations); and Phil Mackie (NHS Grampian)(from Article 8).

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.

URGENT BUSINESS

1. There was no Urgent Business.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

2. There was no Exempt Business.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3. 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 that he had a connection in relation to all of the agenda items as he was a Council appointed representative to Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) Board, Aberdeen Foyer and Fairer Aberdeen Fund Board and was Chair of the Granite City Good Food Steering Group, 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 items;
- (ii) to note that Councillor Brooks advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda items 9.4 (Family Wellbeing Fund and Fuel Poverty) and 9.5 (Initiatives to support bringing people out of poverty) as he was founder and 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 the discussion on the items; and

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- (iii) to note that Dr John Bone advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda items 9.4 and 9.5 as he was a Board member of C-FINE, 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.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 21 JUNE 2023

4. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 21 June 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the comments from the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal) in respect of article 4(i) with regard to Integrated Impact Assessments; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the minute.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

to note the Planner.

VIDEO PRESENTATION BY DR FLORA DOUGLAS - INFANT FOOD INSECURITY RESEARCH

6. The Committee received a video presentation from Professor Flora Douglas - Research Professor of Public Health at the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice at the Robert Gordon University.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that a longer version of the video presentation would be circulated to members;
- (ii) to instruct the Locality Manager to issue a Service Update in respect of the Infant Food Security Pilot Improvement Project;
- (iii) to thank Professor Douglas for the presentation; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the content of the video presentation.

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS - CUS/23/251

7. The Committee had before it an update report prepared by the Locality Inclusion Manager on work agreed through the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Department of Work and Pensions.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree the recommendation.

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES - CUS/23/252

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Locality Inclusion Manager regarding detailed plans and costs for a Citizens' Assembly - while noting that budget approval would require to be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) approve the approach to deliver an assembly on poverty and gender inequality in Aberdeen; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to give authority to conduct a procurement exercise, where the estimated Contract Value is below £50,000 (supplies/ services).

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

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

- (1) note progress on plans to facilitate Citizens' Assemblies on Poverty and Inequality;
- (2) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, and Chief Officer - Customer Experience, to cease further work on Citizens' Assemblies in light of the complexity, cost and risks regarding the effectiveness of Citizens' Assemblies; and
- (3) requests that the Finance and Resources Committee reallocate any funds previously committed to Citizens Assemblies to increasing available crisis grants.

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On a division, there voted:- for the motion (7) – the Convener, Vice Convener and Councillors Clark, Davidson, Greig, Hutchison, and Mennie; for the amendment (6) – Councillors Blake, Bonsell, Brooks, Kuszniir, Lawrence and Watson.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

In terms of Standing Order 34.1, Councillor Kuszniir indicated that he wished to refer this matter to Council for a final decision and he was supported by Councillors Blake, Bonsell, Brooks, Lawrence and Watson.

FAMILY WELLBEING FUND AND FUEL POVERTY - CUS/23/253

9. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the Locality Inclusion Manager regarding the review and uptake of the Family Wellbeing Fund, which included an update on the uptake of insulation measures in support of fuel poverty.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the re-allocation of funding option recommended at 3.8 of the report.

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

Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Bonsell, moved as an amendment:- that the Committee approve the re-allocation of funding option recommended at 3.8, except with the reduction of fuel vouchers to £20,000 and allocation of a grant of £27,494 to Abernecessities for the provision of winter clothing for families at risk of being unable to buy their school age children gloves, hats, winter jackets, socks etc, with a requirement to report back on the use of these funds.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (7) – the Convener, Vice Convener and Councillors Clark, Davidson, Greig, Hutchison and Mennie; for the amendment (6) – Councillors Blake, Bonsell, Brooks, Kuszniir, Lawrence and Watson.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Locality Manager to issue a Service Update in respect of a breakdown of the distribution of funds for the provision of winter clothing for families at risk of being unable to buy their school age children appropriate winter clothing; and
- (ii) to otherwise adopt the motion.

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INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT BRINGING PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY - CUS/23/254

10. The Committee had before it a report prepared by the External Advisers and the Locality Inclusion Manager in respect of initiatives to support bringing people out of poverty.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report.

At this juncture, Councillor Kusznir advised that he had a connection in relation to the item as he was a Board Member of Citizens' Advice Aberdeen, 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.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that should the bid for the Cash-First Fund be unsuccessful, the External Advisers would report back to Committee on the background work undertaken and provide Committee with further information for discussion;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Customer Services, to issue a Service Update advising Members of the process for proposing External Advisers to join the Committee;
- (iii) to note the update from the Locality Inclusion Manager that a report would be submitted to Council regarding the appointment of an External Adviser following a name having been put forward;
- (iv) to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, in partnership with the External Advisers, to report back to a future meeting of the Committee, no later than summer 2024, on the issues faced by people in poverty in relation to accessing advice services and financial services and the impact this had:- on the services available in Aberdeen; on the unmet need; and specific recommendations for Council services and other organisations to address this unmet need; and
- (v) to otherwise note the report from the External Advisers.

REPORT ON VISIT TO ABERDEEN FOYER - CUS/23/267

11. The Committee had before it a report provided by Aberdeen Foyer following the Members' visit on 21 June 2023.

The Locality Inclusion Manager and Team Leader – Employability and Skills, responded to the Key Questions and Challenges for the Committee section on pages 60 and 61 of the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) note the report at Appendix 1 provided by Aberdeen Foyer; and

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- (b) thank all those at Aberdeen Foyer, including the many staff, volunteers and participants, who welcomed the Committee and provided an informative and interesting afternoon.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree the recommendations.

VALEDICTORY

12. The Convener paid tribute to Evan Adamson who had recently stood down as an External Adviser and noted his valuable contributions during his time on the Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that the Convener would write to Evan Adamson on behalf of the Committee to thank him for his contributions during his time as External Adviser.

- **COUNCILLOR CHRISTIAN ALLARD, Convener.**