

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 5 February 2025

MINUTE OF MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Sederunt:

Lord Provost David Cameron, Chairperson;
Depute Provost Steve Delaney; and

COUNCILLORS

GILLIAN AL-SAMARAI
NURUL HOQUE ALI
CHRISTIAN ALLARD
ALISON ALPHONSE
KATE BLAKE
JENNIFER BONSELL
MARIE BOULTON
DESMOND BOUSE
RICHARD BROOKS
HAZEL CAMERON
DONNA CLARK
JOHN COOKE
NEIL COPLAND
WILLIAM CORMIE
BARNEY CROCKETT
SARAH CROSS
DEREK DAVIDSON
LEE FAIRFULL
EMMA FARQUHAR
GORDON GRAHAM
ROSS GRANT
MARTIN GREIG

DELL HENRICKSON
RYAN HOUGHTON
MICHAEL HUTCHISON
MICHAEL KUSZNIR
GRAEME LAWRENCE
SANDRA MACDONALD
NEIL MacGREGOR
ALEXANDER McLELLAN
KEN McLEOD
CIARAN McRAE
M. TAUQEER MALIK
DUNCAN MASSEY
JESSICA MENNIE
ALEX NICOLL
MIRANDA RADLEY
MRS JENNIFER STEWART
KAIRIN VAN SWEEDEN
LYNN THOMSON
DEENA TISSERA
SIMON WATSON
and
IAN YUILL

Lord Provost David Cameron, in the Chair.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [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.

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TRIBUTES

1. (A) The Lord Provost led tributes to Denis Law CBE, Freeman of the City of Aberdeen, who sadly passed away on 17 January.

The Lord Provost highlighted that Denis was an iconic footballer, hero and inspiration to many people in Aberdeen and further afield in Manchester, Huddersfield and Italy - he was undoubtedly a role model and he never forgot his roots. The Lord Provost underlined Denis' passion and commitment to younger generations, which was epitomised by the creation of the Denis Law Legacy Trust, which had created so many opportunities for children and young people in Aberdeen and beyond.

The Lord Provost noted that the Trust would continue to be an enduring way to celebrate such a football hero and it was fitting that Denis was recognised by the Council today for all he had done in the city.

Councillors Malik, Brooks, Greig, Copland, Crockett and Macdonald echoed the words of the Lord Provost and paid their own tributes, particularly highlighting Denis' charity work, his love of his family, the statues of him within the city and further forthcoming tributes in Printfield where Denis had grown up.

The Council resolved:-

to concur with the remarks of the Lord Provost and the various Councillors; and to express condolences to Denis' family.

- (B) The Lord Provost led tributes to former Councillor Muriel Jaffrey, who sadly passed away on 21 January.

The Lord Provost advised that Muriel was first elected as a Councillor in 1999 and served continuously before "retiring" in May 2017, although he believed she never truly retired. In her 18 years representing Bridge of Don, Muriel had provided a passionate and consistent voice for her community but also Aberdeen as a whole. The Lord Provost noted that Muriel had been Convener of the Licensing Board from 2007 until 2012 and subsequently a Baillie. He added that he had served alongside Muriel from 2012 until 2017 and it had been a great privilege; she had provided him with very wise counsel upon first being elected.

The Lord Provost stated that Muriel was known for being forthright in her dealings with everybody and she would be sadly missed by all who knew her as a colleague and political adversaries. He emphasised that the city had lost a true Aberdonian who always wore her heart on her sleeve. The Lord Provost expressed his condolences to Muriel's family and close friends and thanked her for all that she had contributed to the city.

Councillors Malik, Greig, Brooks, Allard, Mennie, Boulton, Ali, Grant, the Depute Provost, Crockett, Macdonald, Al-Samarai and Clark each paid their own tributes to Muriel, recollecting many stories and time spent with her. The tributes recognised Muriel's passion, loyalty, strong public service, friendliness, commitment to the SNP and the independence movement, and strong advocacy for social values - she was a remarkable lady and a force of nature.

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Councillor Alphonse thanked the Lord Provost and colleagues for their kind words and stated Muriel (her Mum) would have been delighted with the tributes.

The Council resolved:-

to concur with the remarks of the Lord Provost and the various Councillors; and to express condolences to Muriel's family.

ADMISSION OF BURGESSES

2. The persons undermentioned were admitted into the presence of the Council and passed as Burgesses of Guild in respect of their respective Acts of Admission in the Guild Burgess Book:-

Robert John Leslie, Retired Chartered Surveyor, Aberdeen
Allan McKimmie, Chairman AFC Community Trust, Aberdeen
Graham Mountford, Solicitor, Aberdeen
Syed Abdur Razzak, Director, Aberdeen

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3. The Lord Provost and Councillor Alphonse advised that they had a connection in relation to item 9.3 (Governance Review of Trusts) as Council appointed Directors of Glover House Trustees Ltd, however having applied the objective test they did not consider that they had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Greig advised that he had connections in relation to item 9.3 as a Council appointed Trustee to the Marguerite McBey Trust and as a member of the Macdonald Art Committee, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Cooke advised that he had a connection in relation to item 9.2 (North East Scotland Investment Zone) by reason of his wife being an unpaid adviser to the Board of the Robert Gordon University, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Kusznir advised that he had connections in relation to item 9.3 as a result of the law firm he worked for acting as legal agent for a Trust referred to in the report; and as a Council appointed Trustee to the Marguerite McBey Trust, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Grant declared an interest in relation to item 9.1 (Committee Places) by reason of his employment by Aberdeen Inspired, which was referred to in the amendment submitted for that item, and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate juncture.

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Councillor MacGregor advised that he had a connection in relation to item 9.3 as a Council appointed Trustee to the Aberdeen Endowments Trust, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Allard advised that he had a connection in relation to item 9.2 as a Council appointed Director to the Board of Opportunity North East, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Brooks advised that he had connections in relation to item 9.2 by reason of his employer being involved in energy transition and as a member of Oil UK, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Watson advised that he had a connection in relation to item 9.2 as a member of Aberdeen TUC, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor van Sweeden advised that she had a connection in relation to item 9.2 as a Council appointed Trustee to the Proctor's Orphanage Trust, however having applied the objective test she did not consider that she had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor McRae advised that he had a connection in relation to item 10.1 (Notice of Motion by Councillor Ali) by reason of his position as a shop steward with Unite the Union, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

DEPUTATIONS

4. The Council received a deputation from Wilson Chowdhry in relation to agenda item 9.5 - February 2025 RAAC Update.

Mr Chowdhry advised that he was Chair of the UK RAAC Campaign Group and he had recently met senior Council officers to discuss the situation. He believed that the voluntary acquisition process was stalling, homeowners were receiving insultingly low offers and only four homeowners were currently in discussions with the Council. He emphasised that compulsory purchase orders could not proceed without secured funding for a regeneration project, nor without clear evidence of structural risk, and this simply did not exist. Mr Chowdhry felt that the report clarified this, and he was glad the Council had finally come to this realisation, although it should never have taken so long.

Mr Chowdhry stated that many homeowners felt they were being pressurised into selling their homes at low values and there was real reputational damage to the Council. He underlined that not a single property had been acquired which demonstrated that voluntary acquisition was failing.

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Mr Chowdhry referred to suggestions that had been put forward by residents and homeowners such as a roof replacement scheme and home swap scheme, however these had not been properly considered by the Council, which he felt proved there was a pre-determined agenda. Mr Chowdhry proposed a direct grant scheme for roof replacement, which he believed would pass all checks and balances apart from financial viability, and therefore urged the Council to redouble their efforts to secure funding from the Scottish Government.

Mr Chowdhry concluded by asking the Council if they would guarantee that the financial discussions were not being used to bypass proper procedures to push forward compulsory purchase orders. He emphasised that homeowners could not afford further delays - the UK RAAC Campaign Group was ready to work with the Council, however if the Council chose the wrong path, the group would not hesitate to challenge them at every level.

The Council asked questions of Mr Chowdhry and thanked him for his deputation.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL OF 11 DECEMBER 2024

5. The Council had before it the minute of meeting of Aberdeen City Council of 11 December 2024.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

MINUTE OF RECONVENED MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL OF 12 DECEMBER 2024

6. The Council had before it the minute of the reconvened meeting of Aberdeen City Council of 12 December 2024.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE OF 18 DECEMBER 2024

7. The Council had before it the minute of meeting of the Urgent Business Committee of 18 December 2024.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

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MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL OF 3 JANUARY 2025

8. The Council had before it the minute of the special meeting of Aberdeen City Council of 3 January 2025.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL OF 3 JANUARY 2025

9. The Council had before it the minute of the special meeting of Aberdeen City Council of 3 January 2025.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

MINUTE OF RECONVENED SPECIAL MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL OF 16 JANUARY 2025

10. The Council had before it the minute of the reconvened special meeting of Aberdeen City Council of 16 January 2025.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL OF 16 JANUARY 2025

11. The Council had before it the minute of the special meeting of Aberdeen City Council of 16 January 2025.

The Council resolved:-
to approve the minute.

ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP - COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE OF 21 NOVEMBER 2024

12. With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee of 21 November 2024, the Council had before it, by way of remit, a recommendation that the Council approve the establishment of an Elected Member Working Group for the target locality(ies) with regard to the Library and Information Service and the aligned Future Libraries Plan.

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The Council resolved:-

to approve the establishment of an elected member working group for the target locality(ies).

COUNCIL BUSINESS PLANNER

13. The Council had before it the business planner as prepared by the Chief Officer - Governance.

At this juncture, Councillor Yuill advised that he had a connection in relation to item 7 on the business planner as the Council's appointed member of the Board of NHS Grampian, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

The Council resolved:-

- (i) to remove item 7 (Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland MoU) from the business planner; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the business planner.

In accordance with Article 3 of the minute, Councillor Grant left the meeting for the following item having declared an interest.

COMMITTEE PLACES - CORS/24/353

14. With reference to Article 11 of the minute of its meeting of 11 December 2024, the Council had before it a report by the Chief Officer - Governance which considered the allocation of committee places following the resignation of Councillor Nicoll from the SNP group and the Partnership.

Councillor Allard moved, seconded by Councillor Greig:-

That the Council:-

- (1) note the contents of the report; and
- (2) agree the attached committee places (below):-

Committee	Partnership	Labour	Conservative	Independent (x5)	Total
Anti-Poverty and Inequality	5	2	2	0	9
Audit, Risk and Scrutiny	5	2	2	0	9
Communities, Housing and Public Protection	5	2	1	1	9
Education and Children's	8	2	2	1	13

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Committee	Partnership	Labour	Conservative	Independent (x5)	Total
Services					
Finance and Resources	5	2	2	0	9
Licensing Committee	5	2	1	1	9
Net Zero, Environment and Transport	5	2	1	1	9
Pensions	5	2	1	1	9
Planning Development Management	5	2	1	1	9
Staff Governance	5	2	1	1	9
Urgent Business	4	2	1	0	7
Integration Joint Board	3 (plus 2 subs)	1 (plus 1 sub)	0 (plus 1 sub)	0	4 (plus 4 subs)
Total:	60 (plus 2 subs)	23 (plus 1 sub)	15 (plus 1 sub)	7	105 (plus 4 subs)

Councillor Malik moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Brooks:-

That the Council -

- (1) note the wording of Standing Order 47.9 and, following consideration and conclusion of the matter, invite the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee to consider if this report gives regard to that Standing Order when the Administration are in minority yet receive 60 places, the equivalent of 57% of the places on Committees, subject to remit 6.1 of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee;
- (2) note the Liberal Democrats, despite having only 4 members, receive more places on Committees than the 5 independent members;
- (3) agree the following composition:-
 SNP 18/45 44 places
 Labour 11/45 25 places
 Conservative 7/45 17 places
 Independent 5/45 10 places
 Liberal Democrats 4/45 9 places

COMMITTEE	SNP	LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	INDEPENDENT	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS	TOT
ANTI POVERTY	4	2	1	1 (van Sweeden)	1	9
AUDIT	4	2	1	1 (Nicoll)	1	9
COMMUNITIES	4	2	2		1	9
EDUCATION	6	3	2	1 (Mrs Stewart)	1	13
FINANCE	3	2	2	1 (Nicoll)	1	9

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LICENSING	3	2	2	2 (Mrs Stewart and Crockett)		9
NET ZERO	4	2	2		1	9
PENSIONS	4	2	1	2 (van Sweeden and Boulton)		9
PLANNING	4	2	1	1 (Boulton)	1	9
STAFF GOVERNANCE	4	2	2		1	9
URGENT BUSINESS	2	2	1	1 (Crockett)	1	7
IJB	2	2	0			4
total	44	25	17	10	9	

- (4) instruct the Chief Officer - Governance to report to the April meeting of Council on the potential establishment of a City Centre Masterplan Committee including giving consideration to the following proposals for such a Committee:
- Purpose of Committee which will be to work in partnership with partners to enhance the City Centre
 - Remit of Committee to include all aspects of the City Centre Masterplan excluding spending arrangements which are reserved for Finance and Resources Committee.
 - Membership of Committee to be 9 in total, to include 6 Elected Members (3 from the SNP, 1 from the Liberal Democrats, 1 from Aberdeen Labour and 1 from the Conservatives) alongside 3 External Members as per section 57 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended - to include 1 from Aberdeen Inspired, 1 from Our Union Street and 1 from the Chamber of Commerce.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (23) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Fairfull, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment (21) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Boulton, Brooks, Crockett, Cross, Farquhar, Graham, Houghton, Kuszniir, Lawrence, Macdonald, McLeod, Malik, Massey, Nicoll, Mrs Stewart, Thomson, Tissera and Watson.

Absent from the division (1) - Councillor Grant.

The Council resolved:-
to adopt the motion.

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND INVESTMENT ZONE - CR&E/24/355

15. With reference to Article 11 of the minute of its meeting of 11 December 2024, the Council had before it a report by the Chief Officer - City Development and Regeneration which provided an update on the allocation of Investment Zone status to

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the North East of Scotland (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council administrative areas) and progression through the Gateway Process, and sought approval of a proposed governance structure.

The report recommended:-

that the Council -

- (a) agree to Establish a Joint Committee in terms of sections 56 and 57 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 with Aberdeenshire Council, to be known as the North East Scotland Investment Zone Joint Committee and to be effective following submission of Gateway 4 (February 2025);
- (b) note the Investment Zone Steering Group endorsement for a North East Scotland Investment Zone was Option C, the Joint Committee Members being the co-signatories plus ETZ Ltd. At the Steering Group meeting the Aberdeen City Council representative abstained from the vote as Council had not yet had the option to review the models;
- (c) approve the Joint Committee's Terms of Reference contained within Appendix 3 to the report, which are based on Option B, the Investment Zone Co-signatories being the members of the Joint Committee;
- (d) approve the Joint Committee's Standing Orders contained within Appendix 3 to the report;
- (e) approve the proposed membership of the North East Scotland Investment Zone Joint Committee to be Aberdeen City Council (x3), Aberdeenshire Council (x3), Opportunity North East, University of Aberdeen and The Robert Gordon University. This is illustrated at Option B;
- (f) agree that a North East Scotland Investment Zone Programme Board should be established to support the Joint Committee and agree its Terms of Reference in Appendix 4;
- (g) approve the initial proposed membership of the North East Scotland Investment Zone Programme Board as contained within Appendix 4; Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Opportunity North East, University of Aberdeen, The Robert Gordon University, Scottish Enterprise and Energy Transition Zone Ltd;
- (h) appoint three named members and up to three named substitute members to the North East Scotland Investment Zone Joint Committee; and
- (i) agree that Aberdeenshire Council will act as the Accountable Body for the Investment Zone as they have done for the City Region Deal.

At this juncture, Councillors Yuill, Radley and Allard advised that they had a connection by reason of being members of the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee, however having applied the objective test they did not consider that they had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor McLellan advised that he had a connection by reason of being a substitute member of the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

Councillor Allard moved, seconded by Councillor Greig:-

That the Council agree the recommendations; and

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- (h) appoint 3 Partnership members (Councillors Allard, Yuill and McLellan), 1 Partnership sub (Councillor Radley) and 1 Labour and 1 Conservative sub (names to be confirmed).

Councillor Malik moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Watson:-

That the Council -

- (1) note the recommendations contained within the report;
- (2) note with disappointment that, at the Steering Group meeting on 27th November 2024, the Aberdeen City Council representative abstained from the vote, thus embarrassing the Council as it had not yet had the option to review the models. Noting the report does not confirm the determination of the vote or who voted for which option;
- (3) agree Option C which all other Steering Group Members attending the meeting, including the Aberdeenshire Council representative, agreed was the preferred option;
- (4) agree that, if Option B (and not Option C) is agreed by this Council and not Option C, we are at an impasse with Aberdeenshire Council supporting model C and Aberdeen City Council voting model B, meaning the work required to bring about investment to the North East is put on hold until such time as the governance arrangements are agreed; and
- (5) agree to instruct the Chief Executive to ask the North East Scotland Investment Zone Programme Board, once formed, to give serious consideration to inviting one of the Trade Unions to be an active participant without voting rights on the Programme Board.

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

That the Council -

- (1) notes the report, containing three options: A (Council led JC), B (IZ signatories led JC) or C (IZ Signatories Plus ETZ Ltd);
- (2) notes the strong brand of public and private partnership-working which has always served the North East well;
- (3) notes that Aberdeenshire Council, in September 2024, approved a Regional Partner Joint Committee model with delegation on the composition of the Joint Committee delegated to the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council Group Leaders;
- (4) notes that all stakeholders voted in favour of Option C at the Investment Zone Steering group on 27th November and that the Aberdeen City Council Co-Leader did not vote, noting that this was a decision for Aberdeen City Council to vote on. The remaining members of the Steering Group unanimously preferred option was C;
- (5) notes that embarrassingly, this item will not be determined by full council until today (5 February 2025);
- (6) notes that there is no indication or justification in the report as to why members should vote contrary to all the other partners in the Investment Zone Steering Group; and
- (7) agrees Option C, as per all other Steering Group stakeholders, as the option to be progressed thus yielding a unanimous endorsement by the Steering Group.

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There being a motion and two amendments, the Council first divided between the amendment by Councillor Malik and the amendment by Councillor Brooks.

On a division, there voted:-

For the amendment by Councillor Malik (12) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Graham, Grant, Lawrence, Macdonald, Malik, Mrs Stewart, Thomson, Tissera and Watson.

For the amendment by Councillor Brooks (9) - Councillors Boulton, Brooks, Crockett, Cross, Farquhar, Kuszniir, McLeod, Massey and Nicoll.

Declined to vote (23) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Fairfull, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

Absent from the division (1) - Councillor Houghton.

The Council then divided between the motion and the amendment by Councillor Malik.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (23) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Fairfull, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment by Councillor Malik (15) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Boulton, Bonsell, Crockett, Graham, Grant, Lawrence, Macdonald, Malik, Nicoll, Mrs Stewart, Thomson, Tissera and Watson.

Declined to vote (6) - Councillors Brooks, Cross, Farquhar, Kuszniir, McLeod and Massey.

Absent from the division (1) - Councillor Houghton.

The Council resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the motion;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer - City Development and Regeneration would ensure access was provided to letters of support regarding ownership of relevant land in the Aberdeen area;
- (iii) to note that the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord would circulate details in terms of land owned by the Lands of Torry Trust and land owned by other Council accounts; and
- (iv) to note that officers were considering the matter of Investment Zone Steering Group minutes and whether they could be shared with elected members and would confirm the position in due course.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

16. The Lord Provost noted that the meeting was approaching the 6 hour mark and that a number of items had still to be considered, therefore he was adjourning the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 40.3, and that it would re-convene on a date to be confirmed within the next two weeks.

- DAVID CAMERON, Lord Provost.