

Monthly Meeting, 13th September 2022

Elgin Town Hall

Attending:

Alastair Kennedy, Steve Christie, David Chapman (Associate), Brian Irvine, Richard Dyce, Graham Jarvis, Joyce Bremner, Alison Stockley, Katherine Bowditch, Gordie Wells, Jo Mullen, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Sandra McCallum, Gordon Ruddiman, Simon Bokor-Ingram, Jenny McNicol, Sarah Duncan, Pam Dudek, PC Graham, PC Donna

Apologies:

Eddie Wallace, James Wiseman, Douglas Clark, Neil Alexander, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Peter Bloomfield

Minutes:

1. Welcome & Apologies
 1. AK Record Council condolences
2. Police
 3. PC Donna gave the ECC an update on local crime figures over the last month: 22 reported incidents of vandalism, 27 reported assaults, 18 drug related incidents (12 cannabis, 3 heroin, 2 cocaine), 27 incidents of theft. They have recently been concentration on driving enforcements. GJ noted that parking in the West End has improved, but there had been an increase in Pedestrian precinct parking, notably outside Hightland Bikes, with vehicles coming through the No Entry sign. At the east end of the High St the bollards will be removed, and there had been occasions when Glover St to Lossie Wynd traffic had been stopped. Cameras need to be used for extended periods to affect behaviour. Traffic creates an issue in Pedestrian Precinct, and is highly dangerous. PC Graham will speak to Highland Bikes, and noted that ticketing is down to staffing. AK Council signs at bottom of Batchen Street will be reviewed. BI raised the issue of Friday last of a blue BMW revving engine on Batchen st opposite Post Office. BI was aware that ticketing was taking place. PC Graham discussed the issue of there being no double yellow lines on Batchen St. GJ noted the parking obstructions on Batchen St, as mentioned previous comments from Inspector were still causing obstruction. BI worried that emergency service and wheelchair access was affected. PC Graham will speak to Inspector, but that it was currently a grey area. AK asked if anti-social behaviour improved? PC Graham said yes, mainly due to the schools being back. Again, this was subject to staffing issues.
3. Moray Maternity Services
 3. AK welcomed Sarah Duncan – NHS Grampian Secretary. Jenny McNichol, Executive lead for integrated, and Simon Bokor-Ingram, Chief Officer for Health & Social Care Moray.
 4. SB discussed the approach to midwifery in the NE of Scotland. It is a Network Model based on travel times for expectant Mothers. There is no compromise on patient safety. There is an appetite for faster change, but it has to be a sustainable model. NHS Highland currently has 6-700 mothers going to Aberdeen each year.
 5. SB Appointed by Moray Council & NHS Grampian. The current task is to present the results of the consultation to the Scottish Government by the end of November. Both ECC and JCC input were important. What can be achieved will be dependent on capital and staffing. There remain delays in recruitment of staff, but there is currently a marketing campaign about living in Moray and NE of

Scotland. Any plan will be linked to general improvements in Dr Grays. There is plenty of investment, e.g. the £5-6M MRI Scanner project.

6. AK was concerned with the 10 year timescale. SB said that they were not aiming to take 10 years, but that there were difficulties with capital and staffing, especially of Midwives etc. in Highland region particularly. The Training pipeline important, and the phasing of jobs. AK wondered if there was a shortage of staff? Had staff been lost or was it simply that more staff were needed? SB replied that the population was not expected to grow, and that a reduction after 2035 was expected. The problem was retaining staff in rural areas, and there was a background of vacancies. There were issues with the availability of appropriate accommodation to buy or rent. There were also factors re families: jobs for spouses, education, accommodation. DC noted that 10 years ago there had been a plan to improve Dr Grays, with the MRI scanner, and seemingly nothing has happened. He raised several further questions: Hadn't there been staff recruited from Australia? Were resources being channelled to the new Woman's hospital in ARI? If we can't we recruit, what is the problem? SB noted that there was a National Treatment programme at Dr Gray's, including MRI. SB understood the frustration, but noted that medical careers have changed in last 10 years. Dr Gray's is the smallest District General Hospital on Scottish Mainland, and there is a difference in what specialisms can do in small hospitals compared with larger. It was a North of Scotland issue rather than an Elgin issue.
7. JM pointed out that the Australian initiatives were 2 year contracts, and the Pandemic hadn't helped. Moray was not experiencing a shortage of midwives, but employment standards have changed. There are more medical staff on a rota, and a focus regarding work-life balance. Obstetrics services need Dr Gray's infrastructure need to be enhanced. Change is being driven by staffing issues within North East of Scotland, and not just Moray. Highland women are currently travelling to Aberdeen to give birth. Moray ante-natal care would benefit them. This will be done as quickly as can be done safely and sustainably. Between Aug 2021 – Jul 2022 there had been 2,050 journeys for Moray women.
8. JM had personal anecdotal evidence re Dr Gray's – of women arriving at 10cm dilation so as not to be forced to go to Aberdeen. PD felt that a Top Down approach was wrong, and wondered if the "Keep Mum Campaign" had been included in the co-design? Recruitment campaign should start by looking at why aren't people coming. New builds will have families. PD felt that there was no joined up thinking in management of Dr Gray's.
9. SB countered that the same issues applied in the armed forces: 80% people in armed forces initially won't come to Moray, and then once here won't leave. Co-design is not a Top Down approach at all. But the NHS needed to get things done. JM would have been pleased if the "Keep Mum Campaign" had been here. GJ had meeting with Senior Housing people. He noted for example that Rebecca Russell had never been asked about housing for nursing staff. The Council had an agreement with Springfield for teachers. Had anyone spoken to housing associations, landowners, Scottish Special Housing Association regarding the need?
10. GJ had to drive to Aberdeen in October with a pregnant woman, and had not been offered a choice. JG this was normal practice in Grampian, and that a Conversation would have been happening throughout pregnancy. However the medical suitability of a patient may change. She will raise it with the team again. SB will take it on.

11. RD felt that points being raised by the ECC were being discounted as anecdotal. He therefore asked if it was possible to have the statistics regarding the number of Women able to have the first choice delivery methods, and the reasons behind any changes? With the statistics it would be possible to prove if things had indeed declined.
12. SB any concerns raised will be investigated, and he will follow up leads.
13. JB felt that the plan would provide a good opportunity to have an excellent service across the whole of the NE Scotland. BI wondered about career changers – could they be better targeted, and perhaps target local communities in General?
14. JB wanted to make clear that women should go back to Community Midwife for feedback, if even some time had elapsed after the birth.
15. SB will come back to talk to the ECC about that. AK suggest this would be most useful before the end of the consultation. GJ felt that a separate meeting was required.
16. JB The Consultation Questionnaire closed on the 31st October. Link to questionnaire: <https://pcocomplaints.limequery.com/767415?lang=en>
4. Apologies
5. Minutes of last meeting
 0. SC proposed, BI seconded
 1. KB asked about the ‘Square Building’.
6. Matters arising
 0. AK has booked the Town Hall for the next 2 years.
 1. AK Re-cycling Centre booking Elgin now changed.
7. Policing:
 0. AS discussed a questionnaire.
 1. JoyceB Had found a tourist’s wallet containing a large amount of cash at the Cathedral, had handed it in to the Police, but had not received a receipt or a Crime Report number.
8. Gulls update: JD had spoken to NatureScot. The Elgin strategy had to be in place by the end of this month (September.)
9. Planning update: No update
10. Draft Social Media Consultation: There were no objections from ECC
11. Bus Revolution Project: AK Seek views from good Burghers on missing busses. JD noted that the project was starting in Speyside. SK had spoken to Nicola Moss & Donald MacRae. Stage 1 will be Speyside, Buckie, Keith, and that this was a 4 stage plan. DC wondered if Moray Council would apply for a Bus Operators licence. SK was now part of conversation. JD not yet. AK will need a licence.
12. Warm Banks / District Heating / Resilience / Just Transition
 0. BI asked about the provision of Warm Banks in Elgin. JD noted that there was a meeting with group leaders about opening up, meeting all options over coming months. BI noted that Winter was on its way. JD noted that there were difficult topics involved. JB volunteer at CAB – The Salvation Army had organised a Warm Bank at the Job Center Plus in Buckie. JD discussed the use of Swimming pools. BI asked about issues surrounding Covid.
 1. BI asked about the resilience plan. AK suggested we wait to hear from Gordon Ruddiman & Bill Napier.
 2. AK wondered about the SSE fund that had been available following the recent storm. BI was concerned with resilience for households, especially for older people not in care system. Gordon Ruddiman had written a post covid resilience

plan Elgin resilience plan, and there was a Template from Rhona. The Scouts have refurbished food van for use around Moray.

3. JM asked if another meeting was appropriate? AK wondered if we could invite an energy group? JM mentioned pursuing a Community Energy Project on the UHI Net Zero Masters Course, looking into a Study on geothermal energy.
13. AK Noted that the Just Transition scheme provided £500m over next 10 years for transitioning to Net Zero. £1/3M was available this year as part of the Participatory Budget – Money For Moray & TSI – exercise for community groups. Launch postponed for a couple of weeks. All welcome. Richard Lohead to speak on Just Transition.
14. Banking: SC Current balance stands at £6311. Positive Action Group funds had now been transferred! AK discussed the Letter from bank about second bank account. Hopefully can be sorted, with the money held there being due to Elgin BID.
15. Website: RD apologised again, and hoped to have a demo ready for the next meeting.
16. Elected members update
 0. AD – first Council Meeting was postponed, special Council meeting on Wednesday. No papers for next week. She raised this issue of Post Office parking with the Police.
 1. SK – Discussed the Findrassie School consultation. GJ felt that this was critical, as there had not been enough effort to ask parents, whose children will be going. SK noted that the design is well on.
 2. GJ wondered when the legendary “Moray Council Closed” annexe would be opening? JD replied that services were being moved to Library, and should be opening Monday. Consultation with unions about number staff working from home were on-going. GJ felt that receptionists must need to be in the office, and not working from home. JD works in Forres.
 3. JF discussed the Cost of living working group, looking at poverty crisis about to hit Moray. The aim was not step on the toes of the CAB or the foodbanks.
17. AOCB
 0. AK noted that the Corporate Plan had been postponed. There was discussion about speed limit at Findrassie. JD pointed out that this was not the case in Elgin South.
 1. AK confirmed that ECC had been contacted regarding Elgin hosting the Tug of War championships.
 2. JB asked about the housing, and the boarded up properties in Pinefield. JD confirmed that these were MOD houses, and that the Council dealing with it. Discussions are currently confidential.
 3. SC noted that there was a Friday Anti-social Behaviour Meeting at 5pm. JM to forward invites.
 4. DC noted that SSE has presentation in Moray College. DC to forward invites.
 5. JM had not received an Agenda. RD apologised.
18. Next meeting: 11th October