



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON

Committee Members Present:

Provost J McMillan (Convener)
Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor L Bruce
Councillor S Currie
Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor N Gilbert
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor N Hampshire
Councillor J Henderson

Councillor W Innes
Councillor S Kempson
Councillor G Mackett
Councillor K Mackie
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor K McLeod
Councillor F O'Donnell
Councillor B Small
Councillor T Trotter
Councillor J Williamson

Council Officials Present:

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive
Ms A MacDonald, Acting Director of Health and Social Care
Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)
Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Mr T Reid, Head of Infrastructure
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr S Cooper, Team Manager – Communications
Ms E Denovan, Service Manager – Corporate Finance
Ms C Dora, Executive Officer
Mr P Forsyth, Team Manager – Assets and Regulatory
Ms S Fortune, Service Manager – Business Finance
Ms A-M Glancy, Principal Accountant (Financial)
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Legal and Procurement
Mr M Mackowiak, Planner
Mr I McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning
Mr A Stubbs, Service Manager – Road Services
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement

Visitors Present:

Ms E Scoburgh, Audit Scotland
Ms G Woolman, Audit Scotland

Clerk:

Mrs L Gillingwater

Apologies:

Councillor C McGinn

Declarations of Interest:

Councillor McLennan, Items 7-10, due to his employment status

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the Council meeting specified below were approved:

East Lothian Council – 28 August 2018

Special East Lothian Council – 11 September 2018

2. MINUTES FOR NOTING

The minutes of the Local Review Body (Planning) meeting of 30 August 2018 were noted.

3. 2017/18 ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

The Provost welcomed Gillian Woolman of Audit Scotland to the meeting.

Ms Woolman provided a detailed presentation of the 2017/18 Annual Audit Report, confirming that the Council's accounts had been signed off on 30 September and that the Council had been given an unqualified opinion on the accounts. She highlighted the key aspects of the report and directed Councillors to the Action Plan and the significant risks identified during the audit process.

In response to questions from Councillor Small, Ms Woolman explained that in assessing the Council's borrowing position, the auditors would refer to the Prudential Code, the Treasury Management Strategy and a range of indicators, and relate those to the Council's Capital Plan, as well as comparing the Council's position to that of other councils. She noted that if the prudential limits were breached, then this would be highlighted in the report. On the level of usable reserves, Jim Lamond, Head of Council Resources, advised that the Council currently had £4 million of uncommitted reserves, and that this met the requirement of the existing Reserves and Financial Strategies.

As Convener of the Audit & Governance Committee, Councillor Henderson welcomed the report and noted that the Committee would ensure the ongoing scrutiny of arms-length external organisations.

Councillor Innes commented that the report would reassure the public that the Council's finances were in good order and that the Council was performing well. He highlighted the key messages: that the Council had effective financial management and controls, that the budget and financial strategy were linked to priorities, that the financial position was sustainable, and that there was good governance. He referred to the Council's record on delivering savings and services. His comments were supported by Councillor Akhtar, who thanked staff for their input into the audit process and for their efforts in delivering services at the same time as delivering savings.

Councillor Currie warned of the impact of Universal Credit, particularly in relation to the level of rent arrears. He also highlighted that challenges facing the IJB as regards demographics

and financial pressures. He called for the matter of trust funds to be resolved in order that people could benefit from those funds.

In response to Councillor Currie's comment on rent arrears, Ms Woolman pointed out that the increase in arrears amounted to less than 1%, and that this did not have a significant impact on the financial results. However, she undertook to monitor this issue in future years.

The Provost concluded the debate by thanking Ms Woolman for her report and presentation.

Decision

The Council agreed to note the 2017/18 Annual Audit Report.

4. FINANCIAL PROSPECTS – 2019/20 AND BEYOND

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) providing the Council with an update on the financial outlook for 2019/20 to 2023/24, building upon the previous 5-year financial prospects report covering the financial planning period (2018 to 2023) and updating the financial forecasts of the Council's anticipated cost pressures and changes to funding over the medium term. The report also set out the budget development framework for 2019 to 2022.

The Head of Council Resources, Jim Lamond, presented the report, highlighting the financial risks and challenges facing the Council, and the increasing importance of longer-term financial planning. He summarised the work undertaken on financial modelling and potential financial scenarios covering the next five years. He noted that a revised Financial Strategy would be presented to Council in December, and set out the proposed budget development process for 2019/22.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Lamond advised that an increase in the Council's contribution towards teachers' pensions would amount to approximately £2 million per annum; this increase was not currently reflected in the budget. On the Scottish Government's budget-setting process, Mr Lamond indicated that the Scottish Government could not set its budget until the UK Government's budget was concluded and that single year settlements for local government were likely to continue at least until the next spending review was completed. However, he anticipated that the revenue support grant would continue to decrease in real terms for the foreseeable future. He confirmed that the Council did not currently receive any funding from the Attainment Scotland Fund. As regards efficiencies achieved through the Transformation Programme, Mr Lamond highlighted the risks and challenges of not delivering the current plans. He reassured Members that the Council retained a level of reserves to cover any unforeseen circumstances; however, he stressed that these reserves were now at the minimum level required, and that in times of uncertainty it was important to plan for a variety of scenarios.

On the budget development process, Councillor Currie suggested that too much detail had been provided in previous years. Mr Lamond indicated that for short-term planning, the detail was important, but for longer-term planning less detail would be appropriate. He highlighted the timescales for the budget development process, noting that officers would consider the most effective ways of briefing Members.

Mr Lamond advised that the Council had not received news of its allocation as regards free personal care for the under-65s; it was possible that some information would be available as part of the annual finance settlement that was due in late December. He added that discussions were ongoing between CoSLA and the Scottish Government on this issue.

Councillor Hampshire highlighted the challenges facing the Council as regards decreasing funding and increasing population levels. He warned that the Council would need to take difficult decisions in the forthcoming budget.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the content of the report, including the updated financial prospects covering the financial period 2019/20 – 2023/24;
- ii. that advance work on budget development for 2019/22 onwards would commence in accordance with the potential scenarios outlined in the report; and
- iii. to approve the budget development process set out in Section 3.35 of the report.

5. LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive proposing an appropriate way of contributing to the Local Governance Review being carried out by the Scottish Government and CoSLA.

Paolo Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement, presented the report, advising Members of the review, which would focus on decentralisation of power and community empowerment. He proposed that a cross-party working group be established to formulate the Council's response to the review, the deadline for submission of which is 14 December.

The Provost sought nominations from each political group for the cross-party working group. The Labour Group nominated Councillors McMillan and Akhtar, the Conservative Group nominated Councillors Bruce and Findlay, and the SNP Group advised that they would put forward their nominations by 2 November.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to set up a cross-party working group to draft a response to the Local Governance Review. The draft response would be presented for agreement at the next scheduled Council meeting on 11 December 2018; and
- ii. that Councillors Akhtar, Bruce, Findlay, McMillan and two SNP Members (to be confirmed) would take part in the working group.

6. EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL PROPOSED LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) presenting a proposed Local Transport Strategy and associated plans for approval, advising Council of the outcome of the public consultation and changes recommended to be made to the Strategy and associated plans, and proposing a strategy that would enable Elected Members, officers and communities to shape the way transport is developed, planned and delivered across East Lothian.

Alan Stubbs, Service Manager – Roads, informing Members that the Local Transport Strategy reflected changes in Council policy and the Local Development Plan. He drew

attention to the main themes of the Strategy and the associated plans. He also highlighted the responses to the consultation, and resulting amendments to the Strategy documents.

Mr Stubbs responded to a number of questions from Members. He advised that, in relation to the financial implications, the level of funding from developer contributions would depend on Section 75 Agreements. He noted that having a local transport strategy was vital for the Council's ability to secure funding. On Parking Policy 5, he advised that proposals would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would come back to Council for approval. He pointed out that the views of communities and traders would be taken into account in considering proposals for parking charges, and that any surpluses from charges would be reinvested in facilities. On the assessment process, Mr Stubbs summarised what would be included, noting that the Council would have to comply with national standards. Councillor McLennan voiced his concern that the Council was being asked to approve the Strategy without having sufficient detail on the assessment process.

On the feasibility study on a Tranent bypass, Peter Forsyth, Team Manager – Assets and Regulatory, informed Members that the Council had funding to look at an access study from Haddington to Edinburgh, which would cover the Tranent area, and that a consultation on this would take place before the end of 2018.

In response to a question from Councillor Williamson as regards additional parking provision, Mr Stubbs pointed out that approval of the Strategy would allow officers to look at all the options in relation to parking, including access to funding, enforcement and monitoring methods.

Councillor Currie questioned whether the funding levels indicated were sufficient, and also the inclusion of proposals for on/off-street parking in the Strategy. Mr Stubbs noted that the £69 million outlined in Section 6.1 of the report was based on capital and revenue budgets for the next five years, and also covered Section 75 funding. Regarding on/off-street parking charges, he reiterated that approval of the Strategy would allow the Council to look at this issue in future.

The Provost noted that the Conservative Group had submitted an amendment in relation to Parking Policy 5, and invited Councillor Henderson to present her amendment, which stated:

The Council will assess the demand on town centre parking supply and appraise on an individual town-by-town basis, taking into account the views of local people and, where appropriate, the Council will introduce charging for off-street car parks and/or on-street parking places. All proposals for the introduction of charging for off-street car parks and/or on-street parking places will be brought to a meeting of East Lothian Council for approval.

The primary view of the Council is not to charge for off-street car parks and/or on-street parking places; however, schemes will be permitted on an individual basis if need and local support for such a proposal can be demonstrated. All parking regimes would require regular monitoring.

Councillor Henderson welcomed the inclusion of the Local Transport Strategy on the agenda for this meeting. She indicated that her group were largely supportive of the Strategy, but with the inclusion of the amendment (set out above). She believed that the Strategy should be more explicit on the introduction of on/off-street parking charges and, that recognising the differences among the various communities, each proposal for the introduction of such charges should be considered on its own merit, and there should be a presumption of no such charges unless there was a clear demonstrable case to charge.

Councillor Mackett seconded the amendment.

Councillor Kempson referred to a recent survey on parking charges carried out by Dunbar traders, the result of which was that 2000 respondents had indicated they were not supportive of parking charges in Dunbar. She believed that charges in Dunbar would be detrimental to high street businesses. Her comments were supported by Councillor McLennan.

Councillor Hampshire stressed the importance of the Council having an approved Local Transport Strategy, due to the significant growth in population and the impact of that growth on town centres. He noted that the parking strategy was only one element of the overall Strategy. He declared that on/off-street parking charges would only be introduced with the support of communities. He added that any income derived from parking charges would be used to deliver new and improved parking facilities.

Councillor Findlay expressed concern about the Strategy on rural areas, where people had to rely on cars due to poor public transport links.

Councillor Currie stated that the SNP Group would not support a strategy which included the possibility of introducing parking charges. He remarked that town centres were struggling and that charges would have an adverse impact. He also questioned the Conservative Group's 2017 manifesto, which had opposed parking charges, whereas their amendment would allow for such charges.

In response to comments made by SNP Members, Councillor Bruce emphasised that the position of the Council should be against charges, but that communities should be allowed to have the opportunity to consider them for their own area.

Councillor O'Donnell and Councillor Akhtar advised that they would support the amendment, on the basis that it was important to engage with communities on this matter.

Councillor Innes echoed Councillor Hampshire's comments as regards the impact of an increasing population on town centres and the road infrastructure, and the need to have a robust strategy to address such issues. He spoke in favour of different solutions for different communities, noting that the Local Transport Strategy would allow for this to be delivered. He declared that he would support the amendment.

Councillor Gilbert voiced his opposition to parking charges, but was supportive of increased enforcement. He was advised by Councillor Goodfellow that the only way to do this was through an increase in traffic wardens, which had to be funded by parking charges revenue.

Councillor Mackie concluded the debate by making reference to a recent event in Musselburgh where residents had spoken in opposition to parking charges, but wanted more action taken in respect of speeding, road safety and congestion on the High Street.

The Provost then moved to the vote on the amendment as submitted by the Conservative Group:

For: 15
Against: 6

The amendment was carried. The Provost then moved to the vote on the Recommendations, as amended:

For: 15
Against: 6

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the outcome of the consultation and recommended changes to the Local Transport Strategy following the consultation process;
- ii. to note that the Local Transport Strategy sets out the policy framework and provides the necessary tools to enable development of appropriately justified interventions; all projects would require further public consultation and be financially viable; and
- iii. to approve the adoption of the proposed Local Transport Strategy and associated plans (available in the Members' Library, Refs: 140/18 – 145/18, October 2018 Bulletin), as amended.

Declaration of Interest: having declared an interest in Items 7-10, due to his employment status, Councillor McLennan withdrew from the meeting.

7. EAST Lothian LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018: SCOTTISH MINISTERS' RESPONSE AND ADOPTION

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) informing the Council of the adoption of the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 on 27 September 2018.

Iain McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning, presented the report, confirming that Scottish Ministers had not issued any directions in respect of the Local Development Plan, and that the Local Development Plan had now been adopted. He noted that there was now a six-week period (effective from 12 October 2018) to allow for legal challenges; however, he believed that the Plan was robust and that the Council was in a good position to defend any such challenges. Mr McFarlane thanked everyone involved in the process.

Councillor Goodfellow asked if there was an agreed timescale for bringing forward the conservation area appraisal. Mr McFarlane advised that this had not yet been determined, noting that officers were now involved in the consideration of the next Strategic Development Plan. He indicated that the conservation area appraisal was likely to be reported in phases.

Councillor Hampshire welcomed the adoption of the Local Development Plan and the benefits that it would bring to communities in East Lothian, including enhancements to town centres and an improved school estate.

Sederunt: Councillor O'Donnell left the meeting.

Councillor Small spoke in support of the Plan, but called on the Council to be proactive as regards the monitoring of housing developments, in order to minimise any adverse impacts on local residents. He also mentioned the importance of the Plan benefiting younger people and first-time home buyers. Councillor Findlay added that the conditions set out in construction method statements should be enforced.

Councillor Currie paid tribute to Council officers involved in producing the Local Development Plan, but warned that changing economic conditions could have an impact on its delivery.

Decision

The Council agreed to note the adoption of the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 and that this plan would form part of the up-to-date development plan for East Lothian.

8. ADOPTED EAST LOTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018 STATUTORY SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE: REPORT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO THE DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS FRAMEWORK

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking approval of the Developer Contributions Framework (DCF) as formal supplementary guidance that the Council intends to adopt. Approval was also sought to submit the DCF to Scottish Ministers for review, as required by Section 22 (6) of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The report also sought approval that should Scottish Ministers give clearance to the Council that their review of the DCF is complete, or if no response is received within 28 days of submission to Scottish Ministers, then the Council may adopt the DCF without any further modification and it would become constituted as adopted supplementary guidance. This would provide the Council with an adopted DCF as quickly as possible as part of the up-to-date development plan.

Iain McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning, presented the report, drawing Members' attention to the responses received to the consultation on the DCF. He noted that, as statutory supplementary guidance, the DCF was subject to ministerial approval, and that they would have 28 days to respond.

Councillor Hampshire highlighted the importance of the DCF, noting that £177 million of infrastructure developments were required in order to deliver the Local Development Plan, £110 million of which would come from developer contributions.

Councillor Currie commented that without developer contributions, the Local Development Plan could not be delivered, and that his group would therefore be supporting the DCF.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to approve the responses to the representations received during the June and July 2018 consultation on the updated Developer Contributions Framework, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. to give its intention to adopt the Developer Contributions Framework as statutory Supplementary Guidance (available in the Members' Library, Ref: 147/18, October 2018 Bulletin);
- iii. to submit the Developer Contributions Framework to Scottish Ministers for a minimum 28-day review period, as required by Section 22 (6) of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended);
- iv. that, subsequent to no changes being directed by Scottish Ministers, or no response being received from Scottish Ministers at the end of the 28-day period, that the Council would adopt the Developer Contributions Framework as statutory supplementary guidance for the assessment of financial contributions as required in the determination of planning applications; and

- v. to delegate authority to the Head of Development to make non-material amendments to the Developer Contributions Framework, Consultation Responses and accompanying Technical Note, and to approve a summary of the consultation and engagement on the Developer Contributions Framework to be submitted to Scottish Ministers alongside the Developer Contributions Framework.

9. ADOPTED EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: REPORT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES (DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, FARM STEADINGS DESIGN GUIDANCE, SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS AND ACTION PROGRAMME

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) informing Council of the results of the public consultation on supplementary planning guidance and the Action Programme to the East Lothian Local Development Plan. The report sought approval for amendments to the supplementary planning guidance and the Action programme arising from the consultation responses received, and approval to adopt the supplementary planning guidance and Action Programme, as amended.

Iain McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning, presented the report, noting that the consultation responses as regards affordable housing would be presented to the Council meeting of 11 December. Mr McFarlane pointed out that the guidance documents relating to this report were not subject to ministerial approval.

In response to a question from Councillor Hampshire as regards the access at Lochend Kennels, Dunbar, Mr McFarlane advised that as this was a private access it would be difficult for the Council to pursue closure of it; however, action would be taken to ensure that the design and layout of the road is improved.

On development briefs, Councillor Findlay asked if the Council would have to approve any amendments to these documents. Mr McFarlane advised that changes to supplementary guidance was subject to consultation and Member approval.

Councillor Goodfellow asked a question in relation to landscape and visual analysis. Mr McFarlane stated that applicants were required to include these aspects in their submission, and that they would be assessed by officers in line with the design briefs.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to approve the amendments proposed to the supplementary planning guidance and the Action Programme arising from the consultation responses received; and
- ii. to adopt the Action Programme (available in the Members' Library, Ref: 151/18, October 2018 Bulletin) and the following documents as non-statutory supplementary planning guidance to the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018: Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment (MLS Ref: 152/18), Farm Steading Design Guide (MLS Ref: 153/18), Development Briefs (MLS Ref: 154/18), and Special Landscape Areas (MLS Ref: 144/18).

10. ADOPTED EAST LOTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018 DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE FOR CONSULTATION (TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES) AND DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING AREAS; GREEN NETWORKS)

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking Council approval for consultation on draft statutory supplementary guidance and draft non-statutory supplementary planning guidance associated with the adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (ELLDP 2018), namely:

- A draft of statutory supplementary guidance: Town Centre Strategies (available in the Members' Library, Ref: 156/18, October 2018 Bulletin);
- A draft of non-statutory supplementary planning guidance: Design Standards for New Housing Areas (available in the Members' Library, Ref: 157/18, October 2018 Bulletin);
- A draft of non-statutory supplementary planning guidance: Green Networks (available in the Members' Library, Ref: 158/18, October 2018 Bulletin)

A revised documents relating to Green Networks was tabled to Members. Members were advised that the replacement pages referred to pp. 25-40 of the original document.

Iain McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning, presented the report, noting that the documents outlined in the report were subject to consultation, and would be brought back to Council for approval following the conclusion of the consultation.

Councillor Currie and the Provost welcomed the consultation on these issues and looked forward to receiving the responses.

Decision

The Council agreed to approve for consultation the following draft documents:

- draft statutory supplementary guidance: Town Centre Strategies;
- draft non-statutory supplementary planning guidance: Design Standards for New Housing Areas;
- draft non-statutory supplementary planning guidance: Green Networks.

Sederunt: Councillor McLennan returned to the meeting.

11. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) seeking approval of the following appointments:

- Councillor Williamson to the Planning Committee (replacing Councillor Currie)
- Councillor Gilbert to the East Lothian Integrated Joint Board (replacing Councillor Currie)
- Councillor Innes to the East Lothian Licensing Board (replacing Councillor McGinn)

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the following appointments:

- i. Councillor Williamson to the Planning Committee;

- ii. Councillor Gilbert to the East Lothian Integrated Joint Board; and
- iii. Councillor Innes to the East Lothian Licensing Board.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION – PRIMARY 1 TESTING

A motion was submitted by the Conservative Group, stating:

That the Council believes that although good-quality pupil assessment is an essential component of the drive to raise educational standards in Scotland's schools, it acknowledges the will of the recent Parliamentary vote; notes the level of concern which has been raised by teachers, education professionals, parents and MSPs regarding the introduction and delivery of new testing arrangements for Primary 1 pupils; acknowledges that although formal, standardised testing is essential in Primary 4 and Primary 7, it should not happen in Primary 1 where it cannot deliver the same meaningful results; considers the Scottish Parliamentary vote against this testing in Primary 1 and the subsequent will of MSPs who questioned, based on clear and concise evidence, as to whether the new Primary 1 tests are in line with the play-based learning philosophy of the early years provision in the Curriculum for Excellence; urges councillors to call on the Scottish Government to heed the will of the majority of MSPs and halt the Primary 1 tests which have been condemned by teachers and parents alike, and to subsequently reconsider the evidence as well as its entire approach to evaluating the progress of Primary 1 pupils.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Mackie, who was of the view that the motion was still relevant despite the recent announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, John Swinney, that there would be an independent review of Primary 1 testing. Councillor Mackie pointed out that concerns had been raised by parents and the EIS about the tests, claiming that they were causing stress and upset to some children. She accepted that assessing children at key stages of their education was important, but believed that it was not appropriate to test children in Primary 1, and that at that stage play-based learning was more important. She noted that, pending the outcome of the review, testing would continue for 2018/19. Councillor Mackie urged councillors to call on the Scottish Government to halt Primary 1 testing.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Henderson.

Councillor Kempson opened the debate, arguing that testing children of four or five years old was fundamentally flawed and such tests did not actually assess the knowledge of the children. She also claimed that testing over the course of the year meant that the tests were not standardised and that the resulting data was unreliable. She was concerned that the Scottish Government was looking to use this data for political purposes.

Councillor Currie disputed Councillor Kempson's comments. He also questioned why this motion had come forward, given that the Scottish Conservatives' 2016 manifesto had declared support for Primary 1 testing.

Councillor Akhtar expressed concern that the will of the Scottish Parliament was not being carried out.

Referring to academic research which indicated that testing of pupils at such an early age was not in the best interest of the children, Councillor Innes advised that he would support

the motion. His views were echoed by Councillor Hampshire, who also alluded to an increase in mental health issues and stress among children.

Councillor Williamson recalled comments made by the Head of Education at a meeting of the Education Committee, pointing out that the children would not be aware that they were being assessed, and that a positive aspect of the assessment would mean that problems could be identified and addressed at an earlier stage.

Summing up, Councillor Mackie stated that this motion was concerned with the impact of testing on children, and suggested that the tests should be halted pending the outcome of the review.

The Provost then moved to the vote on the motion:

For: 14
Against: 6

The motion was carried.

Decision

The Council agreed to call on the Scottish Government to heed the will of the majority of MSPs and halt Primary 1 testing.

13. SUBMISSIONS TO THE MEMBERS' LIBRARY, 17 AUGUST - 19 OCTOBER 2018

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) advising Members of the reports submitted to the Members' Library since the last meeting of the Council.

With reference to reports relating to the awarding of Council contracts, Councillor Currie asked if there was an update on action being taken in relation to sub-contracts being awarded to local firms, noting that Councillor Innes had undertaken to look into this matter.

The Chief Executive advised that she would respond to Councillor Currie on this issue.

Councillor Innes suggested that the benefit to the local economy should be given greater weight in the procurement framework, which would be advantageous to local firms. Councillor Hampshire added that the Council had made considerable efforts to encourage local firms to bid for contracts.

Decision

The Council agreed to note the reports submitted to the Members' Library Services between 17 August and 19 October 2018, as listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Signed

Provost John McMillan
Convener of the Council