

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**14 DECEMBER 2023**

**PETITION – RENAMING OF CUMBERLAND CLOSE, KIRRIEMUIR DD8 4EF**

**REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE**

**ABSTRACT**

This Report provides details of a petition submitted to the Director of Legal, Governance and Change in connection with the re-naming of Cumberland Close, Kirriemuir DD8 4EF and the subsequent decision of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee to refer the matter to Council for debate.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Council: -

- (i) notes the decision of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee on 26 October 2023 to refer the matter to Council for debate and agrees one of the recommendations detailed at (ii)-(v) below;
- (ii) notes receipt of the petition and takes no further action;
- (iii) determines that appropriate action has already been taken or is planned and no further action is necessary;
- (iv) requests a fuller report from the relevant officer; or
- (v) undertakes a detailed scrutiny review, gathers evidence, and makes recommendations to a future meeting of the Council.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN**

This Report contributes to the achievement of our priority that the council is efficient and effective as detailed in our Council Plan for 2023 – 2028.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 17 August 2023 a petition signed by 956 people which included 629 signatories from outwith the Angus area, was lodged with Angus Council. In order for the petition to be put before the Scrutiny and Audit committee, there required to be more than 50 signatories from within the Angus area. This requirement was satisfied. Members noted that Standing Order 14 which detailed the requirements in terms of any petition received, provided that petitions would only be accepted where the name and address had been provided with all signatories requiring to be resident in Angus. More recently with the advent of e-petitions, the Scrutiny and Audit committee had accepted petitions when only postal codes of signatories were provided particularly in light of data protection considerations. All signatories within the Angus area had provided a postal code and there were 327 signatories from Angus.
- 3.2 This petition was reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee on 26 October 2023 (Report No 277/23) in accordance with Standing Order 14.
- 3.3 The Scrutiny & Audit Committee agreed to refer the matter to Council for debate without any discussion taking place on the detail of the matter.

**4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 The Petition is headed “Renaming of Cumberland Close, Kirriemuir DD8 4EF” and seeks permission to re-name Cumberland Close, Visocchi’s Close. A copy of the covering letter submitted with the petition along with details of its rationale which was also submitted with the

petition are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Also included is background information submitted with the petition.

- 4.2 Officers of the Council requested Angus Archives carry out some background research into this matter and their findings are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report. Beyond this detail provided by Angus Archives, officers are unable to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the petition or the veracity of any of the allegations made. If elected members wished to have further background detail regarding these matters officers would be obliged to pay to instruct an appropriate specialist historian.
- 4.3 Members may also wish to be aware that there is a contrary petition on the matter headed "Save our history - Don't change our street names". The contrary petition currently has 86 signatories and has not been submitted to the Council.
- 4.4 Members are asked to give consideration to this matter and determine what to do and the Council may agree one of the options as detailed in Standing Order 14 and as set out in the recommendations to this report.
- 4.5 Information on naming of new streets is available on the Council's [web site. https://www.angus.gov.uk/roads\\_parking\\_and\\_travel/roads\\_and\\_pavements/street\\_naming\\_and\\_house\\_numbering/naming\\_new\\_streets#:~:text=Local%20councillors%20decide%20on%20new,and%20the%20local%20delivery%20office](https://www.angus.gov.uk/roads_parking_and_travel/roads_and_pavements/street_naming_and_house_numbering/naming_new_streets#:~:text=Local%20councillors%20decide%20on%20new,and%20the%20local%20delivery%20office)
- 4.6 The process for re-naming a street or close would include officers preparing a site plan showing the affected addresses, updating of our own address gazetteer, contacting the Royal Mail and lettering all interested parties including emergency services and public utility providers. There are 6 separate addresses in Cumberland Close, five of which are dedicated to commercial units owned by the council. Currently, three businesses are operating within Cumberland Close, with plans for an additional business to occupy another commercial unit in the near future. Any renaming of the close will have an impact in different ways on current owners and occupiers. In terms of any decision of the council, it is advised that a rationale is provided for the decision.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications per se in terms of this report, specifically other than officers' time spent looking into matters to date. There may be additional financial implications depending on what Council decides to do with the petition. In particular, if members wish to instruct a specialist historian that will incur costs for which no specific budget provision exists. If members decide to recommend a change in the name of the Close that will incur costs (estimated at approx. £500) in providing the required new signage. There would also be the requirement for further officer time to carry out the process of re-naming the street/close as well as potentially dealing with any enquiries.

It is noted that it is detailed in the petition that the costs could be met from the Common Good Fund of Kirriemuir and Dean. This would require that the expenditure benefit the inhabitants of the Burgh of Kirriemuir. Although the Common Good policy guidelines do not define what "benefit the inhabitants" means, custom and practice is to consider that Common Good funding would only be appropriate where the spend would benefit a significant or substantial proportion of the Burgh. Local Kirriemuir members would be consulted on their views prior to any report going to committee.

## 6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct equality implications in terms of this report as its recommendations have no differential impact on those with protected characteristics.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Petition and background information

Appendix 2 – Angus Archives Background Research