

MINUTE

‘A&B’

Infrastructure Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Tuesday 10 June 2008 at 10.00am

Present:

A S Wishart	L Angus
L F Baisley	J Budge
A T J Cooper	A T Doull
A G L Duncan	F B Grains
I J Hawkins	R S Henderson
J H Henry	A J Hughson
C H J Miller	R C Nickerson
F A Robertson	G Robinson
J G Simpson	C L Smith
J W G Wills	

Apologies

A J Cluness	E L Fullerton
W H Manson	

In Attendance (Officers):

G Spall, Executive Director Infrastructure Services
S Cooper, Head of Environment & Building Service
I Halcrow, Head of Roads
M Craigie, Head of Transport
R Beardsley, Maintenance Manager
K Duerden, Transport Development Manager
E Perring, Transport Strategy Officer
D Williamson, Building Services Manager
L Saunders, Policy and Development Assistant
B Robb, Senior Management Accountant
J Simpson, Energy Manager
A Cogle, Service Manager – Administration
L Gair, Committee Officer

Chairperson:

Mr A S Wishart, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interests

Dr J W G Wills declared an interest in agenda items 2, 5 and 6 as a resident of Bressay.

Mrs C H J Miller declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 6, as she had a registered interest in land in Bressay in the area identified for the project. Mrs Miller said she would take no part in the meeting and leave the Chamber. Mrs Miller asked that it be noted that she was confident that residents of Bressay would be fully represented by other Ward Members including the Convener, and Chairperson of the Committee.

Mrs F B Grains declared an interest in agenda item 5.

Mr J G Simpson expressed concern regarding the declarations of interest having to be made. However the Chairperson advised that declarations of interests at meetings were matters for each individual Member, upon which advice could be sought, if required.

Minute of Infrastructure Committee – 29 April 2008

The minute of the meeting held on 29 April 2008, having been circulated, was confirmed.

Members Attendance at External Meetings

The following Members provided details of attendance at external meetings relating to Council business, further details of which can be obtained from the Members concerned:

Mr F A Robertson - Sustainable Development Conference - Edinburgh

Mrs I J Hawkins - KIMO International - Copenhagen

38/08 Scord Quarry – Discount Arrangements

The Committee considered a report by the Maintenance Manager (Appendix 1).

Mr Beardsley briefly introduced the report. Mr G Robinson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, seconded by Mr F A Robertson.

Mr R S Henderson was of the opinion that discounts should not be given to the private sector, as that would impact on private quarry operators, and moved as an amendment that a decision be deferred until price lists could be compared with private operators. This received no seconder, and Members noted that the Scord Quarry was the only supplier of coated materials.

39/08 Ferry Fares Study

The Committee considered a report by the Transport Development Manager (Appendix 2).

The Transport Development Manager briefly introduced the report and advised that it had also been reported to the Inter Islands Ferries Board where it was recommended that the matter be looked at in conjunction with other related issues.

Mr J G Simpson commented that it was a good report and said that it had been a study he had been fighting to get for some time, however it had to be taken into consideration when looking at the ferries structure. Mr J G Simpson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mrs C H J Miller seconded.

Mr L Angus said that the matter had to be kept in constant review and it may be necessary to go back to a tariff principle again and argue that point. He said that ferries could not be isolated from fuel costs and that buses and other services encountered the same problems. Mr Angus referred to government assistance provided to the Western Isles and wondered about inter island services. The Chairperson advised that he had met with Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change and these points had been raised.

Mr A G L Duncan referred to the increased cost of oil being at \$139/barrell last week and said that the Council should consider giving higher priority to fixed links.

Shetland Population and Migration Study

The Committee considered a report by the Policy and Development Assistant (Appendix 3).

The Policy and Development Assistant briefly introduced the report and highlighted 3 key issues, which were – Education, Housing and Migration, and Members noted the information provided.

Mr A G L Duncan queried the figure 961 people on the housing waiting list and it was confirmed that this was a joint list between the Council and Hjaltsland Housing Association.

Some Members commented that the report was to be circulated to the 3 main committees as well as Council and it was noted that Members felt that this was an unnecessary cost and waste of resources. The Chairperson advised that the study had been circulated in that way following a request at the Council, and Mr J G Simpson added that it was an important document and it was better than not getting it to Committee at all.

Members commended the report and the staff for the work involved in creating the document. Members discussed at length the need to encourage young people to stay or return to Shetland, including the need for more places at the Shetland College and Mrs Hawkins suggested that Members speak to young people and find out what would encourage them to stay or bring them back. Mr F A Robertson noted that the information in the study would be useful to the long-term local development plan, which was being prepared to help sustain rural areas of Shetland. He added that there were not sufficient local tradesmen. He said that young entrepreneurs in Shetland should be encouraged and the Council should provide opportunities for them to develop ideas.

Some Members were of the view that the report recommendations were vague and required to be clearer and that action points be made with a mechanism in place to take forward what was important in the key priorities. Other Members felt that it was important to give guidance to Officers and that a seminar be held to allow Members to discuss the detail of the study.

Following further discussions, Mr R C Nickerson moved that the Committee recommend to Council that it discuss the way forward and it be referred to the Industry Panels and Forums with the ultimate ambition of having a Seminar. Dr J W G Wills seconded.

Mr A T J Cooper said that to get a clear picture it was important to speak with the relevant industries when discussing apprenticeship and local employment issues.

Forums and Industry Panels – Remits and Membership

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Administration (Appendix 4).

Mr F A Robertson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, seconded by Mr A S Wishart.

In response to a comment, the Service Manager – Administration drew attention to the third paragraph of page three of Appendix 4 to the report, and advised that

reports would be supported by the officers, under the direction of the Lead Officer, and that they need not form part of the core membership.

42/08

Effect of Fuel Price Change on Ferry Services Budget 2008/09

The Committee considered a report by the Ferry Services Manager (Appendix 5).

Mr L Angus asked where the £1.034m required would come from to cover this cost.

The Head of Transport advised that the matter had been debated at the Inter Island Ferries Board and said that there was nothing that could be done to resolve the global issue. He said that there had not been time to address the energy issue across the board or the energy cost to the Council as a whole. The Head of Transport said that the increase in budget was required to sustain the timetable and fares.

Mr R C Nickerson said that he had real concerns about providing a blank cheque as it was likely to be required again next year. Mr R C Nickerson moved that the Committee approve the recommendation contained in the report with the addition that in 2008/09 the Council consider the estimated shortfall and propose what options would be needed to address the problem and these be reported back by October 2008. Mrs L F Baisley seconded.

For clarification, the Executive Director – Infrastructure advised that the options to be considered by Officers would be raising costs, cutting services and identifying efficiency savings within services. Members were reminded that £2m had been identified as savings from the Ferry Operations budgets the previous year, and that there was little left for further savings to be made and therefore it was unlikely to yield what was required at this time.

Mrs C H Miller said that it was important to consider the impact on the island communities when looking at the options identified and following further discussion Mr R C Nickerson and his seconder agreed to include within the motion that Impact Assessments also be carried out.

Members discussed the matter of other services affected by the fuel costs increase and Mrs Baisley suggested that employees be asked to come forward with ideas on how to reduce fuel costs. She added that car sharing should be encouraged.

Mr G Robinson said that he was concerned that ferry users were being sheltered whilst others were not. He gave Walls as an example of a remote area also affected by the increase in fuel advising that residents were facing an increase of £60-£80/week, which was more than someone coming from Bressay. He said that it was a wider problem and there was no easy solution but it should be looked at in a fair manner.

(Mr C L Smith left and returned to the Chamber)

Following further lengthy discussions, the Chairperson said that Mr Nickerson's motion covered all options and impacts, and these would be reported on by October 2008.

(Mrs C H J Miller left the Chamber)

43/08

Bressay Link STAG Appraisal – Summary, Findings and Recommendations

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Transport (Appendix 6).

Dr J W G Wills moved that the Committee do not approve the tunnel and that a shuttle ferry service be adopted, that the STAG appraisal not be adopted as policy, formally delete the bridge as an option and that no more money be spent on it, re-engine the Leirna, provide segregated vehicle and pedestrian access, revised timetable with shuttle operating and consider reducing crewing. This motion received no seconder.

Mr R C Nickerson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report and that recommendation 13.1 be amended to include an economic impact study be carried out to include the affects on rural Shetland. Dr J W G Wills seconded.

The Head of Transport advised that all STAG appraisals are carried out on the whole Shetland economy and that the work had already been carried out and was contained in the STAG Report that had been provided in the Members room. Mr Nickerson said that his motion remained and that he would like to see a report at a future meeting.

Dr J W G Wills, as seconder, withdrew his support of the motion.

Mr G Robinson said that he was concerned that the Council's polarised thinking towards the bridge was now happening with the tunnel and moved that the Committee approve that the policy delete the bridge and retain the ferry service until the funding issue at 13.2 became clearer. Dr J W G Wills seconded.

The Executive Director advised that the reality was that the ferry service would remain until such time as an alternative was in place. The Head of Transport advised that the recommendations sought authority to progress to the next stage of exploration which would then be presented to the Council. He confirmed that the status quo would remain.

Dr Wills provided Members with a list of reasons why the Bressay Link STAG Appraisal should not be approved as policy. Mr A S Wishart said that the points raised was getting into the detail of the appraisal and that the issues should have been addressed through the Bressay Link Group or during the extensive consultation that had been carried out. The Head of Transport said that he was sure that the points made had been addressed in the STAG and suggested that he meet with Dr Wills to resolve any concerns he still had.

Mr F A Robertson said that the STAG process was very thorough and he would not wish to see the project set back particularly after hearing about the cost to run ferries. He said the policy was trying to reduce cost and a fixed link would do this in the long-term. Mr Robertson said that the visit to Faroe last year had shown that the fixed link would initially result in out migration but that had lasted for one year and the reverse occurred and the link encouraged people to settle.

Mr F A Robertson moved as an amendment that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report as they stood, Mrs I J Hawkins seconded.

Some Members spoke in support of the recommendations and the STAG process and in response to a query from Mr L Angus, the Head of Transport advised that the

next stage would be complete by the end of the financial year and reported to Committee on the funding and risk involved.

(Dr J W G Wills left the Chamber)

In response to a query from Mr R C Nickerson, the Head of Transport referred to paragraph 7.1.1 of the following report and advised that the fixed links to Whalsay, Bressay, Unst and Yell would be prioritised together but would be approved one to one. He added that he was seeking approval to take Whalsay and Bressay to the next stage in parallel.

(Dr J W G Wills returned to the Chamber)

(Mrs I J Hawkins left the Chamber and returned to the Chamber)

After summing up, voting took place with a show of hands and the results were as follows:

Amendment (Mr F A Robertson)	15
Motion (Mr G Robinson)	2

(Mrs C H J Miller returned to the Chamber)

44/08 **Whalsay STAG 2 Appraisal – Summary, Findings and Recommendations**
The Committee considered a report by the Head of Transport (Appendix 7).

(Mr J Budge left the Chamber)

In response to a query the Chairperson confirmed that there was no money available to take the project to the next stage.

Mr J G Simpson said that the project had been very well debated through the appraisal but he said that it was important to see a model tank test and be sure that it was right. He said he understood that the tank test would cost approx. £100,000 but that it was worth it to be sure. Mr Simpson said that time was not on the Council's side and it was important to progress to the next stage and to have it on the capital programme due to size of the existing ferry terminals and the age of the Hendra.

(Mr J Budge returned to the Chamber)

The Head of Transport advised that the cost of a physical model to be built would be £120,000.

Mr F A Robertson advised that considerable discussion had taken place in Whalsay and various options were looked at. He said there was an obvious concern at North Voe and that a tank model was essential. Mr Robertson added that the fixed link was some time away and the existing ferry terminal was designed for smaller vessels and would not accommodate a larger ferry.

Mr F A Robertson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report subject to a guarantee that tank testing would be done. Mrs L F Baisley seconded.

(Dr J W G Wills left the Chamber to attend another meeting).

Members spoke in support of the motion and the need for tank testing. Mr A T J Cooper requested that the Vidlin Road be considered in line with the upgrade and that they happen in tandem. The Executive Director said that he had asked the Head of Transport and the Head of Roads to ensure that the road was kept in mind with the terminal.

Mr J G Simpson asked that he be invited to attend the tank testing and the Chairperson said he also hoped he would be present.

45/08

SIC Carbon Management Strategy

The Committee noted a report by the Energy Manager (Appendix 8).

Mr L Angus moved that the Committee note the report and requested that in future Members receive charts and graphs in colour. Mrs L F Baisley seconded.

Mrs I J Hawkins added that it would be useful to have a sheet of colour paper between each agenda item.

Mr J H Henry asked the Committee to note the situation with regard to fuel poverty and advised that a report would be coming to a future meeting on the matter.

46/08

Strategic Overview of Building Maintenance

The Committee noted a report by the Building Services Manager (Appendix 9).

(Mr J H Henry left the Chamber)

The Building Services Manager introduced the report and Members noted the information provided on the 4 key factors noted at paragraph 3.4.

(Mr J H Henry returned to the Chamber)

Mr F A Robertson said that the Council's real estate was worth into the second hundred million and said that a good job was being done on the management of real estate. He said one area that required assistance was management of the capital works which would help reduce responsive maintenance.

In response to a query from Mr A G L Duncan, the Building Services Manager advised that the water treatment, noted at paragraph 4.16, was to test for Legionella and it was a Health and Safety Requirement. He added that the new computer system holding the condition information would be in place by the end of the calendar year.

In response to a query from Mr A T J Cooper, the Building Services Manager confirmed that some Council owned buildings and Council houses had been affected by the poor quality concrete blocks that had been used in the past. He added that the condition survey would not include the problem of structurally unsound buildings. Mr A T J Cooper asked that in addition to the condition survey, a report on defective blocks in Council buildings and the wider issues, be presented to Committee in two cycles.

Following comments from Mr L Angus, the Chairperson asked that the condition survey report also include schools.

The Building Services Manager advised that there was a duplication of figures in Appendix A on page 3 of 3, and this would be amended.

Members briefly discussed the need for centralised Council offices and Mrs I J Hawkins said that issues regarding decentralisation should also be considered and that a study was required before a centralised building was addressed.

Mrs C H J Miller advised that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee were considering terms of reference for Council buildings and there could be recommendations from that in October.

The Chairperson said that costs comparing the buildings against a corporate headquarters would be required. The Head of Environment and Building Services said that in response to the comments made the condition survey report would include options and incorporate an appendix providing a brief for a study into a campus. The Committee agreed.

47/08 **Minutes of ZetTrans – 26 May 2008**

The Committee noted the Minutes of the ZetTrans meeting on 26 May 2008 (Appendix 10).

The Transport Development Manager advised that a verbal approach from Orkney Transport had been received to look at the future of the Inter Island Air Service and to consider joint working. He sought approval from the Committee to open discussions to look at the future of the Inter Islands Air Service. The Committee agreed.

48/08 **Note of Infrastructure and Environment Forum – 3 June 2008**

The Committee noted the minute of the Infrastructure and Environment Forum on 3 June 2008 (Appendix 11).

Members and the Chairperson of the Forum expressed their disappointment regarding the poor attendance of stakeholders at the meeting. Mrs I J Hawkins advised that the Forum planned to have an away day once a year and said it was particularly disappointing that an item had been requested for the agenda and the relevant stakeholder was not present for the discussion.

49/08 **Minute of Inter Island Ferries Board – 4 June 2008**

The Committee noted the minute of the Inter Island Ferries Board on 4 June 2008 (Appendix 12).

The meeting concluded at 12.35 p.m.

A Wishart
Chairperson