

# MINUTE

‘A&B’

**Infrastructure Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Tuesday 7 October 2008 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

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

**Apologies**

L Angus	A J Cluness
E L Fullerton	R S Henderson
A J Hughson	

**In Attendance (Officers):**

S Cooper, Head of Environment & Building Services  
I Halcrow, Head of Roads  
M Craigie, Head of Transport  
J Simpson, Energy Manager  
J Smith, Head of Organisational Development  
C Medley, Head of Housing and Capital Programmes  
S Pearson, Safety & Risk Manager  
B Robb, Management Accountant  
L Geddes, 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**

Mrs C H J Miller declared an interest in agenda item 6 and advised that she would leave the Chamber during any discussion.

Dr J W G Wills declared an interest in agenda item 6 as a resident of Bressay.

**Minute of Infrastructure Committee – 26 August 2008**

Except as undernoted, the minute of the meeting held on 26 August 2008, having been circulated, was confirmed.

**Members Attendance at External Meetings**

Mr J H Henry	KIMO Meeting, Dunoon – 19 September
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Mr R C Nickerson Nuclear Free Local Authorities (Scotland) Forum, Stornoway – 29 August

Mrs I J Hawkins KIMO Meeting, Denmark – 2-6 October

Mr A G L Duncan Association of Visiting Committee Annual Conference, Stirling – 3-4 October

Mr F A Robertson Summer Planning School, St Andrews – 29 August – 3 September

61/08 **Road Safety Advisory Panel Minutes**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Manager – Safety and Risk (Appendix 1).

The Safety and Risk Manager summarised the main terms of the report, advising that it was proposed that future minutes of the Road Safety Advisory Panel (RSAP) were presented to the Infrastructure Committee for information. There was currently no clear path for the minutes to be presented to the Committee or the Council, and therefore the RSAP effectively acted in isolation.

On the motion of Mr R C Nickerson, seconded by Mrs I J Hawkins, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

In response to a query regarding whether any progress had been made in finding a suitable area in Shetland to enable people to sit large vehicle and motorbike driving tests, the Chairperson advised that there were ongoing discussions between Alastair Carmichael, MP, and the Driving Standards Agency, and that there were one or two areas which may prove to be suitable. However it was an area of concern and it was hoped that a solution would be found before March next year when the new regulations came into effect.

Some discussion took place with regard to the introduction of 20mph zones at schools, and the Committee agreed that it was important that this programme was implemented as quickly as possible. It was also requested that more use was made of speed activated signs throughout Shetland, as it was felt that these had a positive effect on drivers.

The Head of Roads explained that the Roads Service's current priority with regard to speed limits was the introduction of 20mph limits outside schools, and it was about one-third of the way through this programme. Once the programme had been completed, it would be possible to look at other options. He confirmed that, working within existing resources, he would expect the programme to be completed in the next three years.

He went on to say that the speed activated signs had been shown to be quite effective. There were some portable ones that had been placed in various locations throughout Shetland, although this was often quite labour intensive. However he said that Members should get in touch with him if they wished to suggest locations for the signs.

Concern was expressed that it would take up to three years to complete the programme, and the Chairman agreed to a request that a report should be

presented to the next Committee meeting with regard to the programme and timescales for the introduction of 20mph zones at schools.

In response to a query, the Head of Roads confirmed that an additional sign warning of the 20mph limit would be placed on the Stromfirth road near the first housing scheme, but that there was no budget to enable this to be carried out immediately.

In response to a further query regarding the Oversund roundabout, the Head of Roads explained that there were two reasons for the red area near the centre of the roundabout. It kept driver speeds down by ensuring that drivers did not have a clear path through the roundabout, and it also provided an area for buses and large vehicles to mount if there was a shortage of space. It was not a pavement so there should not be any pedestrians in the area, and it was not a safety risk if used properly. However he accepted that there were safety concerns, and pointed out that it had been agreed at the RSAP meeting that the roundabout would be monitored. It was also requested that the junction into Murrayston was monitored at the same time.

It was questioned if work was progressing on the issues relating to the Haggersta to Cova road. The Head of Roads confirmed that this was being progressed as far as possible, and he agreed to present a report on progress to the next meeting of the Infrastructure Committee.

It was noted that a request had been received for a Member to attend Scottish Accident Prevention Council Road Safety Committee meetings, and the Committee agreed that Mrs I J Hawkins should attend as a representative of the Council, with Mrs F B Grains acting as a substitute.

62/08

### **Road Safety Plan 2008-2010**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Manager – Safety and Risk (Appendix 2), and moved the recommendation contained therein on the motion of Mr J G Simpson, seconded by Mrs C H J Miller.

It was pointed out that Community Councils, Parent Councils and local service delivery groups had not been consulted, and it was suggested that the report should only be presented to the Council for approval when this had been carried out. The mover and seconder of motion agreed to include this in the motion.

It was questioned whether the Council should have a more ambitious target in relation to casualty reduction, and instead adopt a “zero tolerance” approach.

The Chairperson explained that it was important to have a realistic target that people felt was achievable, although a more ambitious target was something that should be worked towards.

The Safety and Risk Service Manager added that work was ongoing to achieve more ambitious targets than those set by the Government and referred to throughout the document.

It was pointed out that there were sometimes problems in collecting statistics relating to accident ‘blackspots’ as the police did not keep records when there were no injuries. It was felt that there was a need for some sort of mechanism to record these accidents.

It was noted that there were still many drivers who did not use dipped headlights when driving in rain or poor visibility, and it was suggested that all Council drivers should be reminded to use their headlights in those conditions as this may set an example for others. It was also suggested that there should be greater emphasis on improving general driving standards for adults in addition to the good work being carried out in schools.

The Head of Roads confirmed that it would not be a problem to issue a reminder to all Council drivers, and that he understood that there was an EU proposal to introduce lower powered lights in cars that would have to remain on all the time. He went on to say that the Council had done some work on driver development training that had been very useful.

In response to a query regarding the prioritisation of schools for the introduction of 20pmh zones, the Head of Roads advised that the prioritisation had earlier been considered and agreed by the RSAP. There were a number of factors considered in the prioritisation including the number of pupils walking to school and existing speed limits in the area. Therefore it did not necessarily follow that schools with a larger roll would be prioritised.

The Chairperson said that prioritisation of schools could be included in the report requested earlier relating to the programme of introduction of 20mph limits, and it was further requested that this report should include the costs relating to the programme and whether it would be possible for this programme to be completed within the next year.

The Chairperson commented that whilst it had been useful to have discussion of road safety issues at today's meeting, it would be a better use of both Members' and Officers time if specific issues relating to particular areas could be raised at RSAP and the Roads Member/Officer Working Group meetings and dealt with there.

63/08

### **Energy Supply Contract Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Energy Manager (Appendix 3).

The Energy Manager summarised the main terms of the report, advising Members of the problems experienced in tendering exercises, particularly in relation to complying with the Council's stated principles concerning radioactive waste and membership of Nuclear Free Local Authorities. The proposal to enter into an agreement with Procurement Scotland would probably be a best value exercise for the Council but it would still be difficult to meet the Council's stated principles. If it was agreed to enter into an agreement with Procurement Scotland, there would be a six-month gap before a national contract commenced, and therefore delegated authority was being sought to enter into negotiations to ensure that electricity continued to be supplied to the Council during this period.

In response to a query regarding a "spend to save budget" as referred to in paragraph 7.1 of the report, the Energy Manager confirmed this would refer to a whole range of projects such as replacing lighting with low energy bulbs, and installing District Heating or other energy efficient systems.

It was commented that whilst the Council had a stated principle relating to ethical purchasing, which it could not implement, it did not have a policy relating to ethical investments.

It was questioned if consideration had been given to combining with another major user of electricity, such as Shetland Charitable Trust or NHS Shetland, in order to achieve economies of scale.

The Energy Manager advised that this would be one of the benefits of entering into an agreement with Procurement Scotland, and that the Council would also receive the benefit of market analysis expertise that it did not have at the moment.

On the motion of Mrs C H J Miller, seconded by Mr A T J Cooper, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

The Chairperson advised that he intended to consider agenda item 8 next as it was for decision rather than noting, and Members agreed.

64/08

### **Energy Prices and Effect on Budgets**

The Committee noted a report by the Energy Manager (Appendix 4).

The Energy Manager summarised the main terms of the report, advising that there was no realistic way to achieve the savings within a one –year timescale, although the estimated increases could be offset by using the underspend on salary costs. A number of proposals to achieve savings had been appended to the report. Whilst some would be easy to implement, others would require significant capital investment.

Members pointed out that consideration would have to be given to energy efficiency when planning new Council buildings such as the Anderson High School. It was noted that if energy reduction measures were built in to buildings, it would result in massive savings over the life of the building.

In response to a query regarding the use of salary savings to offset estimated increases in energy costs, also proposed in the report relating to the Fuel Study, the Management Accountant confirmed that the budget was set up taking account of a full establishment of staff, and salary costs were profiled evenly through the year. However there was always a vacancy factor, and this meant that there were savings of approximately £360,000 per month which could be used to offset the estimated increases. The Finance Service felt that, on the basis of previous experience, this was a fairly stable underspend which could be relied on. In response to a query regarding whether pay rises and backdated pay rises had been taken into account, she went on to explain that employee underspends had been highlighted as they were considered to be more stable, but that there were also underspends on operating costs. Even taking the cost of pay rises into consideration, there would appear to be some leeway regarding underspends. The Head of Finance would be presenting a report to the next Council meeting which would fully detail the budget situation up to Period 5.

It was queried if there was any way to avoid inclusion in the mandatory Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) scheme being introduced by the Government.

The Energy Manager said that he had yet to receive full details of the Scheme, but that the Council would currently be included under the scheme because its annual electricity consumption fell within the Scheme's limits. However he had queried whether the Waste to Energy Plant's meter should be included, as it could be argued that if emissions from landfill (the main method of waste disposal nationally) aren't included under the CRC, then should energy use at the Waste to Energy Plant (the main method of waste disposal in Shetland) be included. He was awaiting a response on this matter.

On the motion of Mr R C Nickerson, seconded by Mr A T J Cooper, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

65/08

#### **Fuel Study – Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Transport (Appendix 5).

The Head of Transport summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the proposals to minimise the impact of rising fuel costs had been categorised. They ranged from those that would be easy to implement and have no effect on services or staff, to those that would have substantial implications on service levels. The proposals had been presented to the Transport Focus Group and it had been agreed that Category 1 proposals should be implemented, and that Category 2 and 3 proposals should be held in abeyance depending on wider political decisions on savings and on consultations with staff and communities.

In response to a query, the Chairperson confirmed that the MP and MSP had been approached to make representations about the high fuel prices in Shetland in comparison to the mainland. A response had just been received but officers had not yet had a chance to consider it. However it would be circulated to Members as soon as possible.

It was suggested that the Council may wish to give consideration in future to bringing in a tanker and storing fuel at the vacant facility at Sella Ness, as it may be possible to achieve a better deal on fuel prices in this way.

In response to a comment that some Members would have liked to be made aware of what the Category 2 and 3 options were, the Head of Transport said that he could make this information available to Members on request. It had not been included in the report as it was important that the options were not taken out of context and that consultation was carried out. Otherwise there was a risk that communities may feel under threat, as some of the options would have an effect on them.

66/08

#### **Bluemull STAG Appraisal – Summary and Emerging Findings**

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

It was emphasised that it was vital that the final conclusions of the three STAG appraisals should be considered together in order to get an overall picture of transport to the islands, and to work out the best way to take it forward.

The Head of Transport confirmed that all three would be considered together, and that he would bring a report to the Council in March next year.

Some discussion took place with regard to the safety aspects relating to a single bore tunnel.

The Chairperson pointed out that further information on the safety, operational and financial aspects had still to be received and considered before the option could be justified or otherwise.

The Head of Transport added that, in terms of safety standards, this type of tunnel had been classified as acceptable in the UK. In response to a query, he went on to say that the issue of fares did not relate to the STAG appraisals, but that fares were being considered in relation to the provision of public transport in Shetland.

On the motion of Mrs L F Baisley, seconded by Mr A T J Cooper, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

67/08 **Bressay Link STAG Appraisal – Progress Report**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Transport (Appendix 7).

68/08 **Whalsay Link - Progress Report**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Transport (Appendix 8).

With regard to paragraph 4.1 of the report, Mr J G Simpson expressed concern at the findings of the mathematical modelling. He said that he disagreed with the findings and that it was vital that studies took account of surface motion in addition to wind.

The Chairperson agreed that it was important that studies did take account of local experience and observations.

69/08 **Defective Blockwork**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Environment and Building Services (Appendix 9).

Mr A T J Cooper advised that he had had a number of representations regarding this problem. Whilst the report dealt with the implications for the Council, it also affected the private sector, and he felt that the scale of the problem would only become more apparent in the future when people decided to do work on their properties.

It was noted that this was a complex legal issue and it was suggested that although the Council had no obligations in relation to private properties, any investigations carried out by the Council in relation to its own properties would possibly give an indication to private property owners as to whether they would be in a position to make claims.

In response to a query as to how many Council properties were affected, the Head of Housing and Capital Programme said that he did not have this information to hand, but would arrange to circulate it to Members.

70/08 **Minutes of ZetTrans – 22 September 2008**

The Committee noted the above minutes (Appendix 10).

71/08 **Minutes of Inter Island Ferries Board – 26 September 2008**

The Committee noted the above minutes (Appendix 11).

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.

A Wishart  
Chairperson