

Services Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Thursday 5 February 2009 at 10.00am

Present:

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| L Angus | L F Baisley |
| A J Cluness | A T Doull |
| A G L Duncan | E L Fullerton |
| F B Grains | I J Hawkins |
| R S Henderson | A J Hughson |
| W H Manson | C H J Miller |
| R C Nickerson | F A Robertson |
| G Robinson | J G Simpson |
| C L Smith | Dr J W G Wills |
| A S Wishart | |

Apologies:

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| J Budge | A T J Cooper |
| J H Henry | |

In Attendance:

H Sutherland, Executive Director – Education and Social Care
G Greenhill, Executive Director - Infrastructure
H Budge, Head of Schools
J Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer
S Crook, Library and Information Services Manager
C Ferguson, Head of Community Care
A Williamson, Chief Social Work Officer
E Weston, Service Manager – Learning Disability Services
C Russell, Manager – Eric Gray Resource Centre
C Medley, Head of Housing
A Jamieson, Service Manager – Housing Business Support
G Martin, Senior Housing Officer
V Simpson, Service Manager – Housing and Property
G Johnston, Head of Finance
J Thomason, Management Accountant
W Shannon, Assistant Chief Executive
M Finnie, Capital Programme Service Manager
K Foster, Accountancy Officer
R Sinclair, Senior Contract Manager
G Smith, Director – Shetland College/Train Shetland
B Hill, Acting Divisional Manager – Legal
A Cogle, Service Manager - Administration
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Also:

A Coutts, Robinson Low Francis LLP
S Malcolmson, Redman & Sutherland

Chairperson

Mr L Angus, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

Dr J W G Wills declared an interest due to a family member being an Education Officer.

Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 20 November 2008, having been circulated, was confirmed.

Members' Attendance at External Meetings

Mr R C Nickerson Young People Sports Conference, Stirling, 8-12 December

The Chairperson referred to agenda item 10 – “New Anderson High School Capital Project: Approval to Proceed with Submission of Planning Application” and said that he was recommending that the Committee defer consideration of the report until the Special Services Committee on 12 February. This was because he had received a number of queries and comments, many of a technical nature, which could be addressed by members of the Project Team who would be in Shetland next week. He therefore proposed that Members hold an informal meeting with the Project Team in order to address these queries, and that the report then be considered at the Special Services Committee.

The Committee agreed.

01/09 **Eric Gray Resource Centre Feasibility Study – Phase 1 Complex Needs Service**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Manager – Adult Services (Appendix 1).

Mr F A Robertson commented that he was familiar with the existing building, and that it had long outlived its usefulness and was unsuitable for the projected profile of future residents. He felt that the only option was for a new build and he therefore moved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Mr C L Smith seconded.

It was pointed out that the Council had, in the past, approached Shetland Charitable Trust to fund care homes and it was suggested that consideration should be given to seeking other sources of funding.

With the consent of his seconder, Mr Robertson agreed to incorporate into his motion that other funding avenues should be investigated.

02/09 **Long Term Care Provisional Work Programme 2009-2025**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Care (Appendix 2).

In response to queries, the Head of Community Care confirmed that additional resources would be required to fund the projects listed in paragraph 5.4. She went on to explain that the differences in the estimated capital costs between the mainland and island areas related to the additional building costs for island areas, and that the figures had been calculated on a formula used by the Capital Projects Team to calculate the additional costs based on their knowledge of projects. She went on to say that whilst there were economies of scale in operating care homes with over 40 beds, the Council had managed to reduce its management overheads by using a locality-based model, and that the management overheads of 3% were very low compared to national averages.

Some Members felt that it would be more economical to have fewer and larger care centres, and that it would not be a practical solution to extend the smaller facilities that currently existed. However others pointed out that it was Council policy to have localised care centres, and that this policy had been agreed in recognition of the fact that it would not be the most efficient solution, as it was felt it this was outweighed by the benefits of basing care centres in communities.

It was requested that consideration should be given to carrying out any works as one large contract, as this would probably reduce overall costs. It was also suggested that there could be scope for rationalisation in relation to the projects for the Lerwick area, and that this should be taken into consideration.

Mr C L Smith moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mrs L F Baisley seconded.

Dr J W G Wills referred to the recommendations in the report and pointed out that there was no indication in the report as to which projects should be prioritised, and which services should be reduced or cut to cover the additional costs, therefore approval of the report would mean that the Council would be committing itself when the money was not available. He accordingly moved, as an amendment, that officials come forward with another cheaper proposal, and Mr A G L Duncan seconded.

After summing up, voting took place by show of hands and the result was as follows:

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| Amendment (Dr J W G Wills) | 5 |
| Motion (Mr C L Smith) | 13 |

03/09

Proposed General Fund Capital Programme 2009/2010

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Appendix 3).

Members expressed concern that the layout of the report was very confusing, and requested that the layout be reviewed. It was felt that it would have been more appropriate to have the projects divided into those that related to the Services and the Infrastructure Committees, and for the costs of each project to be clearly stated. It was also pointed out that the report did not take account of the decision made at the previous Services Committee meeting in relation to capital priorities.

Dr J W G Wills expressed concern at the levels of overspend in the capital programme, and felt that information in the report required to be costed and prioritised in order for Members to be able to make a decision. He moved that consideration of the report be deferred, but this did not receive a seconder.

Following queries from Members, the Executive Director – Education and Social Care confirmed that it would be possible to combine the information in the appendices into a clearer list, as requested, before the report was presented to the Council.

Dr J W G Wills confirmed that, in light of the above, he was happy to withdraw his motion.

Mr A S Wishart moved that the recommendations in the report be approved, and Mr C L Smith seconded.

With the consent of his seconder, Mr A S Wishart also agreed to include in his motion the suggestion of the Chairperson to recommend to the Council that early dialogue should be entered into with Shetland Charitable Trust to see if alternative sources of funding could be available in order to fund some of the Services Committee's capital project aspirations.

Mr W H Manson declared an interest as Chairperson of Shetland Charitable Trust.

Dr J W G Wills requested that his abstention be minuted, although the Chairperson pointed out that there had been no vote.

04/09

Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP) Commissioning Strategy

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Care (Appendix 4).

Mr L Angus moved that the recommendations be approved, with the addition of the following amendments to the Strategy:

Paragraph 4.11 – “The Principal Social Work Officer should determine whether prospective contractors are equipped to deliver services according to specification”

Paragraph 4.12 - The insertion of the words “where appropriate” after “...multi-agency team”.

Mr C L Smith seconded and the Committee agreed.

05/09

Sheltered Housing Review – Final Report

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

Members congratulated those involved with the Review, and said that they would also like to record their appreciation of the work carried out, often beyond the call of duty, by Housing Support Workers.

Members spoke in support of the proposals and commented that they felt that sheltered housing was valuable to the community and that the pilot schemes would be welcomed. It was also suggested that the mobile Housing Support Service should be extended so that it was available irrespective of housing tenure, as referred to in 10.6 of the report. It was also acknowledged that the high quality of community care services played a large role in enabling people to stay in their own homes for longer, and this had led to a reduction in demand for sheltered houses.

Some concern was expressed relating to the lettings of houses to general needs applicants in sheltered housing schemes, and it was felt that this was an area which had to be dealt with sensitively. It was also noted that Housing Support Workers felt that they were not regarded as fellow professionals in their role, and it was hoped this would be dealt with.

Mrs L F Baisley moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr F A Robertson seconded.

With the consent of her seconder, Mrs Baisley agreed to incorporate into her motion a suggestion from Mr W H Manson that the recommendations are subject to the appropriate consultations taking place.

She also agreed, with the consent of her seconder, to incorporate a suggestion from the Chairperson that an appropriate mechanism is found to allow the allocation of supported accommodation strictly in accordance with assessed social care needs, including any properties which have been specially adapted to meet special needs, and that the pilot projects are reviewed within two cycles with regular reporting thereafter.

06/09

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing (Appendix 6) and on the motion of Mr A J Cluness, seconded by Mr A G L Duncan, approved the recommendation contained therein.

It was commented that research had been carried out in other local authority areas which had indicated that not everyone on the housing waiting list would accept a Council house if offered one, and it was felt that it would be necessary for the Council to identify exactly what would be required in terms of the number of houses.

The Head of Housing explained that the fact there were around 900 people on the waiting list did not mean that 900 houses were required. He went on to explain that the Housing Service was currently close to completing a housing need and demand analysis that would indicate how many houses were required, and that there was no risk that houses would be standing empty if the Council was to proceed with the proposals in the report.

Members requested that the results of the analysis were shared with the Planning Service as it was currently drafting the Local Plan.

07/09

Provision of Affordable Housing – Discussion Report

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing (Appendix 7).

The Head of Housing explained that the Scottish Government was expecting all local authorities to ensure that all homeless applicants were housed, and he expected that in future most allocations would be made to people on the homeless list rather than the general needs list. In response to queries, he went on to say that some other areas had now substantially increased their Council house rents in order to pay for new houses, and that it would be a decision for the Council as to how to fund this. It would also be for the Council to decide what proportion of the capital costs they would wish to recover through rents, and over which period of time they wished to recover this.

In response to a further query, the Head of Housing explained that it was the case that all new builds should be adaptable, and that criteria was being applied to design processes so that houses could be adapted for use by families or elderly people.

Members commented that they welcomed the creation of a member/officer working team to consider and develop ideas for funding, and spoke of the need for additional housing in their areas. Some Members expressed concern at the suggestion to explore options to develop 'arms length' organisations, and it was further suggested that rationalisation of some of the existing member/officer groups dealing with housing could take place to look at the options rather than setting up a new group.

Mr A J Cluness moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr F A Robertson seconded.

Mr A G L Duncan moved that a Housing Committee be formed in order that Members from each constituency could have more input into housing, and Mr A D Doull seconded.

The Chairperson advised that this would require a recommendation to Council and, with the consent of his seconder, Mr A G L Duncan later withdrew this motion.

The Committee further agreed that a Member from each area should be represented on the member/officer working team referred to in paragraph 7.1 of the report, and that the Members from each area would nominate their representative.

(Mr G Robinson declared an interest in the following item as Chair of Shetland Childcare Partnership).

08/09 **Developing a Childcare Strategy – Emerging Themes and Principles**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Education and Social Care (Appendix 8) and on the motion of Mrs E L Fullerton, seconded by Mrs L F Baisley, the Committee approved the recommendation contained therein.

09/09 **Allocation Policy Review 2008-09**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing (Appendix 9) and on the motion of Mr A G L Duncan, seconded by Dr J W G Wills, the Committee approved the recommendation contained therein.

10/09 **Community Services Forum Meetings**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Community Care (Appendix 10).

11/09 **Note of Community Services Forum Meeting – 27 November 2008**

The Committee noted the above (Appendix 11).

12/09 **Note of Shetland College Board of Management Meeting – 15 January 2009**

The Committee noted the above (Appendix 12).

The meeting concluded at 11.40am.