

Services Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Thursday 12 March 2009 at 10.00am

Present:

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

Apologies:

A G L Duncan	F A Robertson
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In Attendance:

H Sutherland, Executive Director – Education and Social Care
H Budge, Head of Schools
A Edwards, Quality Improvement Manager
S Morgan, Head of Children's Services
N Watt, Sport and Leisure Services Manager
M Duncan, Grants Co-ordinator
S Crook, Library and Information Services Manager
C Medley, Head of Housing
A Lyall, Project Manager
N Clubb, Contract Manager (Architectural)
H Tait, Management Accountancy Service Manager
J Thomason, Management Accountant
C Inkster, Senior Assistant Accountant
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Mr L Angus, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

Mrs E L Fullerton declared an interest in agenda item 21, as the Chair of NHS Shetland Board, and advised that she would not take part in any vote.

Mr A J Cluness declared an interest in agenda item 21, as a member of the NHS Shetland Board.

Mr G Robinson declared an interest in agenda item 1.

Mr R C Nickerson, Mr J H Henry and Mrs F B Grains declared an interest in agenda item 5 as members of Shetland Amenity Trust.

Mr W H Manson say that he may find it necessary to declare an interest in agenda item 13 as Chairperson of Shetland Charitable Trust.

Dr J W G Wills declared an interest as a family member is and education official.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2009, and the special meeting held on 12 February 2009, having been circulated, were confirmed.

Members' Attendance at External Meetings

Mr R C Nickerson

Centre for Nordic Studies Advisory Board –
Kirkwall, 20 February

The Chairperson advised that a number of Members had contacted him to express concern at the current ambulance situation in Shetland.

Mr R C Nickerson went on to say that there had been a disturbing incident recently where a casualty had to wait for two hours for an ambulance, as the ambulance was involved with another incident at the time. He felt that the provision of a second ambulance was a matter in which the Council should take an interest, and requested that the Convener write to the Scottish Ambulance Service on behalf of the Council to express concern at the current situation.

The Convener agreed to this request, and advised that he would also bring it to the attention of Scottish Ministers.

15/09 Natwest Island Games – Åland 2009

The Committee considered a report by the Sport & Leisure Service Manager (Appendix 1) and on the motion of Mr R C Nickerson, seconded by Mrs E L Fullerton, approved the recommendations contained therein.

16/09 Whalsay Golf Club – Support Grant

The Committee considered a report by the Sport and Leisure Services Manager (Appendix 2) and on the motion of Mr J G Simpson, seconded by Mr R C Nickerson, approved the recommendations contained therein.

17/09 Capital Grant to Voluntary Organisations – Provision of New Museum, Scalloway

The Committee considered a report by the Sport and Leisure Services Manager (Appendix 3), and on the motion of Mr R C Nickerson, seconded by Mrs I J Hawkins, approved the recommendations contained therein.

The Shetland Bus Friendship Society was commended for carrying out work to get to this stage.

Dr J W G Wills referred to the application of the current policy to smaller heritage centres and museums, and said that he had concerns that it was not equitable. He requested that this be drawn to the attention of Shetland Amenity Trust.

Mr R C Nickerson advised that Shetland Amenity Trust would be bringing forward a report on this matter.

18/09 Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer (Appendix 4) and on the motion of Mrs L F Baisley, seconded by Mrs E L Fullerton, approved the recommendations contained therein.

The Committee agreed to the Chairperson's suggestion that options for shared services with Orkney, or other areas, should be investigated.

In response to a query regarding the appointment of Council Officers, as referred to in recommendation 8.2 of the report, the Chairperson explained that the Chief Social Work Officer would have delegated authority to appoint Council Officers who had completed the appropriate training, and that paragraph 3.11 should accordingly read "The Chief Social Work Officer will be required to agree who can be "Council Officers"".

19/09

Shetland Museum and Archives Service Plan 2009/10

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 5) and approved the recommendations contained therein on the motion of Dr J W G Wills, seconded by Mr C L Smith.

Dr J W G Wills referred to his earlier comments, and said that there appeared to be considerable disquiet amongst some of the smaller museums and heritage centres regarding the application of policy, and that the grants they received did not reflect the size of premises and the associated running costs. He requested that, as part of agreeing the Service Level Agreement, Shetland Amenity Trust should be asked to meet with the Council and Shetland Heritage Association to see if these difficulties could be resolved.

The Committee agreed, and it was further suggested that the core strategic objectives referred to on page 7 of the appendix should include supporting the network of Shetland museums and heritage groups.

20/09

A Review of Services Committee's Four Year Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 6).

It was noted that specific reports would require to come forward to address any capital and revenue implications.

Members noted that:

- It would have to borne in mind that, in relation to Shetland College, the accommodation for Train Shetland and the hospitality section would be directly affected by the proposals for the new Anderson High School.
- The extension of community care provision in Whalsay and Unst had been omitted from the appendix
- The increase of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations, referred to on page seven of the appendix, would link into a specific piece of work being done in relation to 16+ learning choices, and it would also be taken forward as part of the Blueprint for Education

- There were a lack of youth workers in some of the landward areas, but the current review of youth work should address these issues.

On the motion of Mr W H Manson, seconded by Mr C L Smith, the Committee approved recommendations 7.1 (a) and (b)(i).

21/09 **Children's Rights Service**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Children's Services (Appendix 7).

It was noted that because children's rights tended to be tied in with Council services, it would not be appropriate for the Council to deliver the Children's Rights Service.

Mr W H Manson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr J G Simpson seconded.

22/09 **Blueprint for Education in Shetland - Timetable**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 8).

It was commented that the recommendations to the Council, as a result of the Blueprint for Education, would hopefully result in an enhanced education for Shetland's children and illustrate value for money.

It was also suggested that comparisons with Orkney and the Western Isles were not always useful, although it was noted that these comparisons had been included at the request of Members.

In response to a query relating to whether all the information relating to the new qualifications framework would be available in time, the Head of Schools explained that the new framework would not affect Secondary 1-3, which had been timetabled in earlier, and that the information would be available in time for consideration of the senior schooling phase.

In response to a further query as to when it would be necessary for the Council to consider economies in relation to the Blueprint, the Head of Schools explained that it would be necessary to be clear about any economies by the end of this year. The Council was required to fund additional pre-school provision and free school meals for Primary 1-3 in 2010 and 2011, and efficiencies would have to be found to fund this.

It was questioned if the Curriculum for Excellence requirements regarding teaching space would be sufficiently clear in time for the current Anderson High School design to be modified, if necessary, to fit with these requirements.

The Head of Schools explained that the requirements were already available, and were being trialled within schools at the moment. Indications were that it would be possible to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence requirements locally.

On the motion of Mr W H Manson, seconded by Mr J H Henry, the Committee approved the recommendations contained in the report.

23/09 **Scottish Government Consultation – Investing in Affordable Housing**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing (Appendix 9) and on the motion of Mrs L F Baisley, seconded by Mrs E L Fullerton, the Committee approved the recommendations contained therein.

With regard to Appendix 2 of the report, the following amendment was suggested:

Page 4: Answer 9a – “*We would suggest using Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) and NEC fixed price contracts as examples*”.

24/09 **Short Break Services for Children with Additional Support Needs (Laburnum House) Feasibility Study**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Care (Appendix 10) and on the motion of Mr A J Cluness, seconded by Mr A T J Cooper, approved the recommendations contained therein.

25/09 **Central Library Provision in Shetland**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 11) and on the motion of Mr A J Cluness, seconded by Mrs L F Baisley, approved the recommendations contained therein.

26/09 **A Skills and Learning Strategy and Partnership**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 12).

It was noted that whilst the North Atlantic Fisheries College had not been referred to in paragraph 3.3 of the report, and it was requested that this was included.

The Executive Director – Education and Social Care explained that this paragraph related to providers within the Education and Social Care Services, but that it was intended to use all providers and the North Atlantic Fisheries College would be part of this.

It was also commented that, in relation to page 3 of the appendix, it was hoped that a distinctively Shetland approach would be developed to complement the Scottish approach referred to.

The Executive Director – Education and Social Care confirmed that this would be taken account of, and would tie in with the Curriculum for Excellence requirements to provide vocational learning and employability skills needed for work and skills development throughout life.

On the motion of Mr C L Smith, seconded by Mr W H Manson, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

27/09 **New Anderson High School Capital Project Progress Report and Funding Arrangement**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 13).

In response to a query as to whether the Council would be using its cash reserves or cashing in stocks and shares to meet the budget costs referred to in recommendation 8.1(c), and the potential implications of having to sell stocks and shares, the Management Accountancy Service Manager confirmed that the costs would be met from both, but that this process was no different to any other activity

funded by the Council. It would not be possible to comment on the impact of selling the stocks and shares until the cash was actually drawn down, and she would not expect the full £15 million to be drawn down at one time.

Mr G Robinson moved that that Committee approve recommendations 8.1(a) and (b), and that recommendation 8.1(c) be deferred until there had been tacit approval from Shetland Charitable Trust (SCT).

In seconding Mr Robinson, Dr J W G Wills expressed concern that the options appraisals had not been carried out, that the educational impact assessment was not sufficiently flexible, that there would be a long-term detrimental affect on budgets that had yet to be identified, and that the costs for the project had been accounted for outwith the capital mechanism. He also questioned if the Council had a policy in relation to selling shares at a price that was less than had been paid for them.

It was pointed out that SCT would not be funding the actual building project, but that instead discussions had taken place regarding the possibility of selling the building to SCT, and then leasing it back.

The Chairperson added that the type of financial package had yet to be agreed, and that a detailed debate on how to finance the project had yet to take place. However it had been agreed that the construction phase would be financed by the SIC from reserves, with the long-term financial package still to be considered.

Mr A J Cluness moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, pointing out that all local authorities in Scotland had to face the problem of how to finance new schools, and that he was happy to leave it to the financial advisors to come forward with proposals.

Mr A T J Cooper seconded.

Further discussion took place in relation to funding. It was suggested that there would be an implication on the budgets that had just been agreed by the Council, should the money be required quicker than anticipated. Some Members were of the view that the Council should borrow from its own reserves to finance the project, as this would have a lesser effect on revenue budgets. Other Members spoke about the urgency to get the project moving, pointing out that a new school was urgently required.

(Mrs C H J Miller requested that it be noted that she is a Director of SLAP)

In response to a query regarding recommendation 8.1(b), the Executive Director – Education and Social Care confirmed that the £100,000 referred to related to scheduling rather than an additional cost.

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

Amendment (Mr A J Cluness)	17
Motion (Mr G Robinson)	2

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 14) and on the motion of Mrs E L Fullerton, seconded by Mr A T J Cooper, approved the recommendation contained therein.

With regard to working with partners, as referred to on page eight of the Policy, it was requested that the Schools Service should meet with the Shetland Licensing Board at least once a year.

29/09 **Reports by HM Inspectorate of Education: Whalsay School and Nursery Class, Brae High School and Nursery Class and Mossbank Primary School and Nursery Class**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 15).

30/09 **Mid Yell Junior High School New Build Project Update**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 16).

The Chairperson referred to a letter received from the Chair of the Parent Council expressing concern that the school would not be fit for purpose.

Mr W H Manson, Spokesperson for Education, Children and Young People, advised that he had undertaken to meet with the Parent Council and would report back to Members.

Mr R S Henderson advised that teachers were concerned at the proposed reduction in building size and storage areas, and were concerned that the building would end up having to be extended because of lack of space.

The Chairperson pointed out that officials had been asked to bring the project back within budget, and Members had been assured that this could be done whilst ensuring the integrity of the project.

The Head of Schools added that she was happy that the school would be fit for purpose and would take account of the requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence. She also pointed out that whilst the building had been reduced in size, it would still offer 20% more space than the existing facilities. In response to queries relating to the design, the Head of Schools also confirmed that the building did have a pitched roof, and that bike parking provision would be considered at a later stage.

In response to a query regarding whether the size of the school would be sufficient to accommodate other schools should there be school closures in the future, the Head of Schools advised that the Council had requested that the ability to add on to the school, should it be required in future, be incorporated into the design, and this had been taken into account.

Members commented that the meeting with the Spokesperson for Education, Children and Young People, should take place as soon as possible, and that staff could be given the opportunity to suggest ways that economies could be made in order to maintain the space.

31/09 **Capital Projects Update**

The Committee noted a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 17).

The Chairperson noted that the Shetland College Board of Management had drawn to Members' attention to the fact that the decision taken in relation to the AHS project would have an impact on Shetland College facilities. He felt that it would be necessary to ask the CPMT to review the Shetland College extension in light of this.

With regard to the Council's decision relating to Capital Grants to Water Based Facilities, Mr A T J Cooper advised that he intended to raise this matter again in future. The Chairperson added that the decision may lead to an inequality of provision across Shetland, and that there were some modest projects that it may be possible for the Council to support, or where communities could be supported to secure external funding.

32/09 **Summary of Services and Costs**

The Committee noted a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care (Appendix 18).

33/09 **Note of Meeting of Shetland College Board of Management – 25 February 2009**

The Committee noted the above (Appendix 19).

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mr L Angus moved, and Mr C L Smith seconded, to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of agenda items 20-23.

(Mr G Robinson declared an interest in the following item and left the meeting)

34/09 **Extension of Existing Heating, Kitchen and Bathroom Contract**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing and on the motion of Mr C L Smith, seconded by Mrs C H J Miller, approved the recommendation contained therein.

(Mr G Robinson returned to the meeting)

35/09 **Funding for Interim Placement Unit at Montfield Hospital**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care and on the motion of Mr A S Wishart, seconded by Mr G Robinson, approved the recommendation contained therein.

36/09 **Midden Court, Whalsay – Purchase of Property**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care and on the motion of Mrs L F Baisley, seconded by Mr J G Simpson, approved the recommendations contained therein.

37/09 **Potential Property Acquisition**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Education and Social Care.

After some discussion, Mr G Robinson moved that the Committee approve recommendations 8.1(a) and (c) only. However this did not receive a seconder.

Mr A J Cluness moved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Mr W H Manson seconded, and the Committee agreed.

Members commended the Project Team for the consultations they had carried out with individual householders in the area.

The meeting concluded at 11.50am.