

MINUTE

‘A’ & ‘B’

Special Services Committee
Main Hall, Town Hall, Lerwick
Tuesday 7 December 2010 at 10 a.m.

Present:

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

In Attendance:

A Buchan, Chief Executive
H Sutherland, Executive Director of Education and Social Care
G Greenhill, Executive Director Infrastructure
H Budge, Head of Schools
M Craigie, Head of Transport
G Johnston, Head of Finance
J Smith, Head of Organisational Development
R Sinclair, Head of Capital Programming
A Edwards, Quality Improvement Manager
M Moss, Quality Improvement Manager
L Roberts, Quality Improvement Manager
B Thompson, Service Manager – Transport
J Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer
M Gordon, Communications Assistant, Blueprint
K Johnston, Solicitor
T Morton, Communications Consultant
E Park, Transport Strategy Officer
P Peterson, Project Manager – Communications
R Sim, Quality Improvement Officer
M Spence, Quality Improvement Officer
J Thomason, Management Accountant
M Thompson, Senior Assistant Accountant
D Warrilow, Clerical Assistant
L Gair, Committee Officer
A Cogle, Service Manager – Administration

Chairperson

Mr L Angus, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

Dr J Wills declared an interest as his wife is an officer in the Schools Service, but stated that she was not directly involved in the three reports on the agenda today.

Mrs B Fullerton declared a non-pecuniary interest as she had a relative who worked in the Scalloway School, but that their job was not affected by the proposals today, and therefore she saw no reason by she should not take part in the discussion and vote.

Mr A Duncan declared a non-pecuniary interest as his wife worked in the Schools Service.

107/10 **Blueprint for Education in Shetland – Decision on Scalloway School Secondary Department**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 1) which sought approval to close the Secondary Department of the Scalloway Junior High School.

The Committee heard introductions from the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, relating to the background for the proposal and to the issues and concerns which were taken into consideration by all parties as part of the informal and formal consultation processes.

The Head of Schools outlined the terms of the report, highlighting the the responses made during the formal consultation, and the key conclusions from the Consultation Report, including the views of HMIE and the financial and educational impacts.

The Committee acknowledged the work put into this by everyone – staff, parents, pupils, Members and others - and also acknowledged that this would be a difficult decision, and Members were required to weigh up the balance of evidence, including the community, educational and financial consequences. It was noted that there was a need to consider equality of educational provision across Shetland and provide an effective, efficient and sustainable model of delivery, which also met the legal and statutory obligations.

Mr W H Manson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr A Duncan seconded.

Mrs I J Hawkins moved as an amendment that the Council continue education provision at Scalloway Junior High School secondary department. Mr A Hughson seconded.

Various points were noted and considered in support of the motion, summarised as follows:

- Representations made during the formal consultation stages had been analysed and addressed in the response
- Need to address the concerns of the Accounts Commission in relation to strategic and corporate responsibility as well as establishing a long term financial strategy
- Previous school closures in other areas in previous years had not been detrimental to the pupils or communities concerned
- Further efficiencies in Schools would be required if the closures did not progress
- Would be the start of a process for establishing a new, effective and efficient education service
- No option but to make this efficiency due to budgetary constraints and pupil forecasts
- Having 2 secondaries 7 miles apart was not cost effective
- Decentralisation should apply to remote and rural areas – Scalloway was neither and would not be in danger of de-population
- Concern at impact and effects on existing schools if Scalloway was not to close
- S5 and S6 pupils already attend the AHS
- Disagreement that AHS lacks space for additional pupils
- Condition of AHS building has improved over the years with increased maintenance
- Consultation process has been properly followed
- Representations during the consultation process has helped Members to focus on the issues, but consideration also to be given to the strategic challenges facing the Council and in terms of Best Value and Value for Money
- Failure to close would result in further savings having to be found from within the operational budget and through a reduction in staffing

Various points were also noted and considered in support of the amendment, summarised as follows:

- Figures demonstrate a substantial increase in the long term within the catchment area in terms of population and development of new industry, rather than a decline
- Continuing the Secondary department would support the Council's policy on Decentralisation
- Placing requests were directly affected by the uncertainty caused by earlier reviews and proposals to close
- Need to encourage and retain population and families
- Increased economic activity in the coming years illustrates potential for growth
- A future Council will decide the future details in relation to the Anderson High School, and to close the Scalloway Secondary may be premature
- Educational benefits had not been fully explained and had not been fully supported by HMIE
- Deployment of Teachers and other staff within Schools should be looked at before any decision is made to close, including the staff:pupil ratio
- Additional transport costs would be incurred for pupils travelling from within the whole catchment area
- Other means of making efficiency savings should be found without affecting the community
- Concern that the AHS does not have the capacity and space to accommodate additional pupils
- Scalloway is a modern school that supports the Council's corporate priorities in relation to health and well-being, including proximity of local amenities such as the Leisure Centre and the NAFC Marine Centre

- Closing the Secondary would remove parental choice, and would increase transport and environmental costs

After summing up, Mrs B Fullerton gave notice of a further amendment.

The Committee agreed by 19 votes to 1 to vote by Roll Call. Accordingly, voting took place by Roll Call, and the result was as follows:

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

Motion – 13

Amendment – 9

Mrs B Fullerton moved as a further amendment that the Scalloway Junior High School Secondary remains open until this Council takes a strategic decision on how secondary education will be delivered over the next two decades, bearing in mind the financial decisions to be taken in the next two months as to the financial future. Mrs I J Hawkins seconded.

After summing up, voting again took place by Roll Call, and the result was as follows:

W H Manson	Motion
C Miller	Motion
R Nickerson	Motion
F Robertson	Motion
G Robinson	Motion
J G Simpson	Further Amendment
C Smith	Motion
J W G Wills	Motion
A Wishart	Motion
L Angus	Motion
L Baisley	Further Amendment

J Budge	Motion
A J Cluness	Further Amendment
A Cooper	Motion
A Doull	Further Amendment
A Duncan	Motion
B Fullerton	Further Amendment
F B Grains	Motion
I J Hawkins	Further Amendment
R Henderson	Further Amendment
J Henry	Further Amendment
A Hughson	Further Amendment

Motion – 13

Further Amendment – 9

Accordingly, the motion by Mr Manson was declared the finding of the meeting.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to **RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL** that:

- (a) Education provision at Scalloway Junior High School secondary department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- (b) the pupils of Scalloway Junior High School secondary department continue their education at the Anderson High School, from 17 August 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter, and
- (c) note that the Scottish Ministers have a six week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal so no action can be taken regarding implementation; and
- (d) the Head of Schools would work with pupils, parents and staff in Scalloway Junior High School secondary department and the Anderson High School to develop a transition plan that would ensure an effective transition for pupils to the Anderson High School.

The Committee adjourned at 11.40 a.m.

The Committee reconvened at 11.50 a.m.

Present:

L Angus	L Baisley
J Budge	A J Cluness
A Cooper	A Doull
A Duncan	B Fullerton
F B Grains	I J Hawkins

R Henderson	J Henry
A Hughson	W H Manson
C Miller	R Nickerson
F Robertson	G Robinson
J G Simpson	C Smith
J Wills	A Wishart

108/10 **Blueprint for Education in Shetland – Decision on Skerries School Secondary Department**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 2) which sought approval to close the Secondary Department of the Skerries School.

The Head of Schools outlined the terms of the report, highlighting the the responses made during the formal consultation, and the key conclusions from the Consultation Report, including the views of HMIE and the financial and educational impacts.

The Committee acknowledged the work put into this by everyone – staff, parents, pupils, Members and others.

Mr J G Simpson moved that the Skerries School Secondary Department be kept open. Mr R Henderson seconded.

Mr W H Manson moved as an amendment that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr R Nickerson seconded.

Various points were noted and considered in support of the motion, summarised as follows:

- Concern regarding the fragility of Skerries and its economy
- Economic impact on local industries and services need to be considered carefully, given the small population
- Closure may encourage young people to drift away from the community
- Skerries will end up being forced into a situation of depopulation and the Council would face increased costs in trying to revitalise the community
- Education has not suffered, illustrated by achievements of past and present pupils
- Interaction between pupils of different ages would be lost in a larger school
- Skerries was a unique and self-sufficient community and could not be directly compared with other islands
- Increased use of IT should be considered to enhance the educational experience
- Travel and time away from home for long periods by children aged 11 and 12 was difficult to support

Various points were noted and considered in support of the amendment, summarised as follows:

- The educational benefit and equality of provision must be considered, not only the financial reasons
- Whilst recognising community concerns, the value of the existing quality of education would be difficult to sustain given legislative requirements
- Difficult and rising cost for providing specialist teacher support

- Other islands such as Fair Isle and Fetlar continued without a secondary department
- Systems were in place to deal with transport delays
- Need to ensure a Shetland-wide quality and standard of education
- Educational experience would be enhanced in a larger school

The Committee agreed by 19 votes to 0 to vote by Roll Call. After summing up, voting again took place by Roll Call, and the result was as follows:

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

Motion – 12

Amendment – 10

Decision:

The Committee agreed to **RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL** that education provision at the Skerries School Secondary Department be continued.

109/10 **Decision on Relocation of Anderson High School**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Schools (Appendix 3) which sought approval that the Lower Staney Hill site is the preferred location for the new school, subject to a Service Need case under the Gateway process to determine that the proposal is also best value.

The Head of Schools summarised the terms of the report, including the outcome of responses to the consultation, the financial implications and the process required in taking forward the recommended proposals.

Mr W H Manson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr C Smith seconded.

Some concern was raised by Members that the Gateway Process would result in a duplication of effort in terms of service need analysis that had already been carried out, and that the inclusion of the Hostel may be lost in the process and that the full costs and implications of relocating may not be fully addressed.

Dr J Wills moved as an amendment that:

- (a) The AHS is relocated to a greenfield site at lower Staney Hill;
- (b) Note that extensive consultation has raised financial issues; and
- (c) instruct the Head of Schools, Head of Capital Programming and the Head of Finance to review the financing of the project and to bring forward detailed recommendations to the next Services Committee.

Mr G Robinson seconded.

Mr W H Manson said that whilst discussion had been held that the project may seek funding from the Shetland Charitable Trust, this had not been formally addressed, or agreed, and that his interest in this matter be noted.

During further discussion, the Committee noted that the project had to proceed to a Service Need Case as part of Council policy, but that part of that process would require a detailed brief, and consideration of some of the outstanding matters, including design time, procurement process, infrastructure and costs, and therefore a proper technical as well as a financial examination and input to the process was required. The Committee also noted that this process would take some 6 to 8 months before officers would be in a position to provide detailed costings.

With the consent of his seconder, Dr Wills agreed to withdraw his amendment, subject to the only requirement for a best value assessment being as part of the Service Need Case for relocating to the Lower Staney Hill. Mr Manson agreed, with the consent of his seconder, and the Committee concurred.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to **RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL** that:

- (a) the Anderson High School is relocated from its current location at the Knab, Lerwick and a new fit for purpose, community school be built on a greenfield site at Lower Staney Hill, Lerwick; and
- (b) note that the consultation process has highlighted issues of a financial nature which are best addressed through a full Option Appraisal in line with the Gateway approach; and
- (c) note that it is Council policy for all capital projects to be subject to the Gateway approach; and
- (d) therefore ask the Head of Schools and the Head of Capital Programming to complete a Service Need Case, in line with the Gateway policy, including a Best Value assessment, in order to progress the project to the next stage.

The meeting concluded at 13.10 p.m.

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L Angus
Chairperson