

MINUTE

B - Public

Environment and Transport Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Tuesday 11 March 2014 at 10.00 am

Present:

M Bell	R Henderson
D Ratter	G Robinson
D Sandison	G Smith
T Smith	M Stout
J Wills	A Wishart

Apologies:

None

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Director - Infrastructure Services
K Duerden, Executive Manager – Ferries
D Coupe, Executive Manager - Roads
G Leask, Team Leader - Design
C Gair, Traffic and Road Safety Engineer
J MacLeod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
M Mullay, Performance and Improvement Officer
P Wishart, Solicitor
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
A Cogle, Team Leader - Administration
L Gair, Committee Officer

Also In Attendance (Members):

G Cleaver
S Coutts
B Fox

Chair:

Mr A Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interests

None.

Minutes

The minutes of the Environment and Transport Committee meetings held on 21 January 2014 were confirmed on the motion of Mr Bell, seconded by Mr Henderson; and 30 January 2014, were confirmed on the motion of Mr Bell seconded by Mr Sandison.

05/14 **Nine Month Performance Overview – Infrastructure Services Department**

The Committee noted a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-04-14-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Infrastructure Department for Quarter 3 of 2013/14, the 9 months up to December 2013.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report and updated Members on progress in relation to the Viking Bus Station and freight service, the bulky uplift scheme and the continuing work with community groups to find local solutions for waste collection. She also commented on the Service Plan highlighting the Staffing Indicators which showed a reduction in full time and temporary staff as well as the impact from the loss of skilled staff. The Director of Infrastructure Services also advised on the improving trend in sickness absence, mileage, incidents reported, carbon emissions, and waste collection.

The Director of Infrastructure Services advised Members on indicators relating to ferry availability, flight delay information and road traffic accidents, road closures, noise reports, dog complaints, dog fouling and antisocial behaviour complaints. The sickness trend is improving with seasonal variations to be expected.

In responding to questions, Officers explained that the red for the Ferry Operations at paragraph 3.4 related to the sale of advertising space on vessels and timetables. This had not been a high priority for the Service in the last year but more focus would be given to achieving the target of £10k in the next financial year.

In terms of the crewing issues experienced over the last year, the Director of Infrastructure Services said that since August 2013 it had been difficult to crew ferries during periods of sickness and annual leave. She commented on the work being done to provide flexible working across the Service but added that the Service was not currently experiencing the same level of turnover of staff than it had leading up to August last year.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to discuss the contents of the report and making relevant comments on progress against priorities to inform further activity within the remainder of this year, and the planning process for next and future years.

06/14

Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan 2014/15

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-05-14-F), which presented the Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan for 2014/15 which describes how the Directorate is going to deliver key actions, manage key risks and report and manage progress and performance across the coming year.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report and highlighted the key issues for the long-term and short-term planning provisions in Infrastructure and Ports and Harbours Operations. An area highlighted was preparing for the changes in staff and the need to fill skills gaps in order to maintain knowledge in certain areas. The Director of Infrastructure Services commented on the private sector housing grant which would help to ensure people can stay in their homes. She also advised on the ferry services ticket machines and smart cards as well as the ongoing ferries review and the work being done to ensure revenue security as well as the improvements to visibility required at the Tingwall Airport control tower. In referred to section 5 of the Directorate Plan the Director of Infrastructure Services stated that Officers continued to address fuel poverty. She added that the ECO packages promoted by the UK Government were less likely to come to Shetland, however the Scottish funding received would be used in the best way possible.

Members were advised that work continued on integrating Estate Management and Ground Maintenance Services with the NHS, and noted that it was important to work smartly with partners where possible as all agencies had similar issues in terms of retaining skilled workers.

The Director of Infrastructure Services stated that a report would be presented in due course on the Zero Waste Strategy and how Shetland would respond to changing demands on waste and recycling and on the Carbon Management Reductions requirements. She concluded by advising that most savings had been achieved in the current financial year however £400k is still to be found.

In responding to a question on roads maintenance and the cost of the investment required each year, the Executive Manager – Roads explained that a lot had been done to better understand figures and a national model had been developed. The expectation in regard to the current backlog of A Roads maintenance is that it would take £50m to bring all A Roads up to standard but £1m per annum to maintain the status quo. He also explained that the targets for renewing defective streetlights was done on a rolling programme but maintenance was carried out within 7 days. That target had not been met recently due to the shortage of electricians but Members were informed that Building Services and the Roads Service were cross training staff in order to utilise existing staff across both services.

The Director of Infrastructure responded to a query regarding the net income, excluding clerical costs, achieved from ferry fares and advised that information would be collated and provided to Members in due course.

The Executive Manager – Ferry Operations advised that the “other” causes referred to in terms of lost sailings related to a commercial vehicle breakdown blocking the linkspan, which had affected 3 return sailings.

In referring to page 22, a Member questioned whether there was an error in the report. The Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the figures provided had not been audited and therefore it is not clear if each authority has provided the same information which makes it difficult to make comparisons. It was noted that a similar problem existed with statistics provided for Audit and Standards Committee but a Member said that they believed there is to be a change in how Scottish benchmarking indicators are collated.

In response to a question regarding the provision of energy efficiency, the Director of Infrastructure Services explained that funding for next year, from the Scottish Government, had been allocated to improve insulation and heating systems for 40 houses. This had been publicised through a press release two weeks ago and assistance was being targeted with the help of the Citizen’s Advice Bureau in order to reach the most vulnerable households within the privately owned or rented accommodation. Members noted that the funding received falls short of what had been promised because the ECO scheme had proved more challenging to draw down in Shetland. Energy Suppliers were looking for schemes where they could retrofit energy efficiency measures across large estates rather than schemes targeting individual houses.

Mr Robinson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr G Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Review and discuss the contents of the Directorate Plan; and
- Delegated authority to the Director of Infrastructure Services to make any necessary adjustments to the plan to ensure it is fully aligned with the final version of the Corporate Plan approved by Council.

The Environment and Transport Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council approve the actions, risks and measures in the Plan.

07/14

Prioritisation of Road Improvement Schemes

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Roads (RD-04-14-F), which informed of the list on improvement requests received by the Roads Service over the years and proposes a methodology of prioritisation for future schemes.

The Executive Manager – Roads introduced the report and provided a presentation on the practical application of the prioritisation methodology. He stated clearly however, that no budget existed for these schemes and once prioritised any future scheme would be presented to Members through the Gateway process and assessed against other Council priorities.

During discussions, the Executive Manager – Roads provided more detail on the role of Community Councils who would have a subjective view over the schemes. He confirmed that training would be provided to the Community Council members to ensure that a consistent approach is taken by each Community Council and confirmed that due to the level of interest in this area he anticipated full engagement by them.

Some Members spoke in support of the methodology as a fair system of prioritising the schemes that have been presented to the Council by Communities over a number of years. However some Members questioned the scoring in the methodology and held the view that this would not take the schemes any further forward and until a budget was in place this process could cause more concern in the community. Further explanation was provided on the scoring system, and Members were advised that this process meant that the Council was prepared for the future and any funding that may become available. He said that Officers are continually contacted by the public for an understanding of where their particular scheme is sitting and how likely it is to be taken forward. This prioritisation list would provide the reality check required. Taking that point forward a Member stated that the Community Councils already have an expectation that their scheme will be delivered and it is important to make the public aware that it may be many years before it will progress.

The Director of Infrastructure Services added that if the methodology is approved by Committee, Community Councils will be asked to submit a score for their schemes for prioritisation and this will be brought before Members for a decision. At that time Members may decide if a “cut off” is required and that some of the schemes be removed, based on the findings presented.

Dr Wills moved that that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the prioritisation methodology.

08/14 **Traffic Regulation Orders etc. – Annual Progress Report**

The Committee noted a report by the Traffic and Road Safety Engineer (RD-03-14-F) which informed of the Traffic Orders etc. made in the past year.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

09/14 **Esplanade, Lerwick 20mph Zone**

The Committee considered a report by the Traffic and Road Safety Engineer (RD-02-14-F), which addressed concerns raised at the Committee meeting on 21 January 2014 (Min. Ref: 03/14).

The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer introduced the report and highlighted the three items where Members had requested more information on at the last meeting of the Committee. Having summarised the report, he concluded that the recommendations did not commit the Council to the scheme of works but carrying out consultation met the Council's statutory obligations, and any other actions would be presented to Members through the Gateway process to secure funding.

During discussion, some Members took the view that this matter should proceed to consultation, whilst other Members believed that the proposals presented were excessive.

In response to questions, the Traffic and Road Safety Engineer explained the timeline of the consultation process and advised that the findings would be reported back to Committee in the late Autumn, and if progressed and approved through the gateway process no changes would be implemented until next year.

Robust discussion was held around the speed plots and references made to excessive speeds reported by the public in the Church Road area and witnessed by one Member near the Esplanade. Some Members held the view that if excessive speeds had been recorded they should have been reported. The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer said that although excessive speeds were not the norm they do occur and are not confined to these areas. He advised however that this report deals with average speeds collected over a specific period of 1-2 weeks.

The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer explained that he was unable to comment on whether the incidents recorded led to prosecution as the Council are not involved in that process.

The Director of Infrastructure Services advised Members that together with the Police, Officers recognise that there is a problem with culture and attitudes in respect of driving and this is a priority for both agencies. She confirmed that a joint press campaign is to be undertaken.

One Member stated that accidents statistics had always been reported in this way and from the report it states that 15% of traffic is travelling too fast and 5% is breaking the law. The question was asked whether there was evidence of who the individuals involved are, and whether they could be visitors to Shetland, and the point was also made that there is a risk to be considered following the influx of workers living in the area. The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer confirmed that a postcode is a recordable piece of data however it is not always completed on the necessary paperwork and is not part of the statistics provided. He confirmed that there was no apparent pattern identified from the information held.

Dr Wills moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Approve proceeding to consultation on a 20mph Zone scheme with traffic calming along the Esplanade and Commercial Road between Annsbrae and North Ness following the normal statutory public consultation and advertising process; and
- Approve proceeding to consultation with vulnerable and other user groups on the replacement of some Pelican crossings with Zebra crossings; and
- Noted that following consultations recommendations will be brought back to the Committee for a decision; and
- Noted that any future funding requirement for works will require to be addressed in line with the normal capital programme budgeting procedures under the Council's Gateway Process.

10/14 **Impact Assessment of Ferry Review**

The Committee considered a report by the Improvement and Performance Adviser (IP-03-14-F), which covered the impact on ferry users, staff and operations since the changes were fully implemented six months ago.

The Performance and Improvement Adviser introduced the report and drew attention to the summary of changes, the impacts on the users of the Ferry Service and sought Members comments on what other measures need to be considered.

A Member commented that the need for robust data had been highlighted and stressed the need to find ways of picking up on those individuals who are affected by the increase of ferry fares and find solutions to help them. In response to a query regarding the timescale for this review, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the Development Committee would identify the timescales. The Performance and Improvement Adviser explained that some information on usage would be surveyed during the summer months that would capture data on tourist travel. It was noted that this had not been carried out during the previous summer due to staffing shortages and low morale. A Member stressed the importance of keeping the public informed as the outcome of the review had been expected sooner.

The Director of Infrastructure Services said that it became clear that the decision on Fare Structures could not be made on imperfect data as changing fares is known to impact on travelling behaviour. She added that the information was still required for developing the fare structure and that included tourist data collected between spring and October.

A Member advised on the difficulties for individuals travelling for appointments on mainland Shetland. He said that his plea was to look at resident car use and suggested that residents travel at half price with no ticket required. He commented on the specific impact on individuals and their ability to remain in Unst and Fetlar.

The Director of Infrastructure Services said that modelling can be done in terms of income and what residents can afford to pay and look at supporting those on low income and benefits. This may mean that more timetable changes would be required to meet the savings required if income on ferries was reduced.

In response to a comment on how income appears for the next year set against projections, the Executive Manager – Ferry Operations advised that income was expected to be lower than budgeted but this had improved by Petrofac workers being transported to the isles.

Further discussion was held on fare modelling and fare collection. It was noted that fare collection was an issue with reduced crew numbers and the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that online booking and self validation had been looked at but the service was not in a position allow self swiping as staff were required to supervise the safety of passengers. She added that the change of machines had provided difficult to some crews. When considering fare structures, Officers confirmed that comparisons were made with Calmac's summer/winter fares and with Orkney's system for providing free trips each month for those on benefits.

Mr Robinson, on moving the recommendations contained in the report, expressed his concern that work was needed to take account of the socio economic benefit or disbenefits. It was noted that the same report would be presented to the Development Committee on 12 March 2014, and it was agreed that the recommendations include a paragraph asking that the Development Committee note the discussion at today's meeting regarding issues surrounding fares structures in terms of affordability, equality and other socio economic impacts. Mr Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Review the impact that the ferry changes have had on staff and operations; and
- Agree to commission a comprehensive study of ferry usage in order to identify patterns of travel for locals and numbers of tourists travelling.

The Committee also agreed that the Development Committee be asked to note the discussion at today's Committee with regard to issues surrounding the fares structure in terms of affordability, equality and other socio economic impacts.

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 12.45pm

Present:

M Bell	R Henderson
D Sandison	G Smith
T Smith	M Stout
A Wishart	

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Director - Infrastructure Services
K Duerden, Executive Manager – Ferries
D Coupe, Executive Manager - Roads
G Leask, Team Leader - Design
C Gair, Traffic and Road Safety Engineer
J MacLeod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
M Mullay, Performance and Improvement Officer
P Wishart, Solicitor
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
A Cogle, Team Leader - Administration
L Gair, Committee Officer

Also In Attendance (Members):

G Cleaver

11/14 **Ferry Services on Public Holidays**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Manager – Ferry Operations and the Executive Manager – Transport Planning (FO-01-14-F), which requested clarity on a decision taken as part of the Ferry Review regarding the ferry service to be operated on the Lerwick Up Helly Aa (UHA) Wednesday and Easter Monday Public Holidays.

The Executive Manager – Ferries introduced the report.

During discussion, concern was expressed regarding the loss of the Skerries sailing to Lerwick. In response to suggestions for alternative sailings, Members were advised that the savings would not be achieved as any solution would involve overtime rates being applied. Members were informed that alternative solutions were in place to facilitate the supply of goods on the Vidlin sailing earlier that week. Members were also advised on the level of consultation with the Community Councils and commercial interested parties.

In terms of the Papa Stour sailings Members were informed on the level of consultation and the contingency planning being discussed with the communities to ensure sufficient supplies are provided in advance of these dates.

(Mr Fox attended the meeting)

Following further discussion, Mr T Smith stated that this was an unacceptable position for Papa Stour and moved that Papa Stour maintain the Wednesday service on the Up-Helly-Aa week. No seconder was received.

Mr Stout said that he was reassured that there was a clear willingness from Officers to work with the communities affected to ensure provisions are in place for island

residents, and moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Bell seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- On Lerwick UHA Wednesday and Easter Monday Public holidays there will only be a single vessel service on Bluemull, Yell, Whalsay and Bressay routes.
- There will be no scheduled service to Skerries or Papa Stour on either of these days.
- That efforts are made to work with communities to find other ways to alleviate the impact of losing these runs.

12/14 **Public Toilets Review Progress Report**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-06-14-F), which sought a decision on the final phase of the implementation of the review of rural public toilets. The report also sought a decision about reducing the opening hours at the Esplanade toilets at weekends.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report.

Mr Sandison moved that the recommendations include a paragraph 2.1.3, that should the decision be taken to dispose of the Hamnavoe toilet an offer of an assisted transfer be made to Burra and Trondra Development Group. Mr G Smith seconded.

It was also agreed that the Hamnavoe toilets be made available during the Burra Regatta.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Open the Bigton toilet from 1 April 2014 recognising that a transfer of ownership to a community group is still being pursued and the ownership will be reviewed in 2015/16;
- Open the Burra Meal Toilet from 1 April 2014 and continue discussions with the Burra and Trondra Development Group with the aim to achieve an asset transfer in 2015/16;
- Dispose of the Hamnavoe Toilet by sale or demolition, but that before a decision is taken to dispose of the Hamnavoe Toilet it be offered for an asset transfer to the Burra and Trondra Development Group.
- Maintain the Knab toilets open.
- Close the toilets at the Esplanade at 10pm throughout the week to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the toilet attendant staff who are lone workers.

Mr Wishart moved that in order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, the Committee resolve to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the following items of business. Mr Bell seconded.

13/14 **Effirth Bridge Replacement**

The Committee noted a report by the Team Leader – Roads Design which advised on the outcome of the tendering exercise for the replacement of the Effirth Bridge works and the steps taken to progress the works.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to note the awarding of a contract for some of the works in order to comply with the exemption process set out in the standing orders for urgent and emergency works.

14/14 **Compliance with Standing Orders for Work on Ferries and Terminals**

The Committee noted a report by the Executive Manager – Ferry Operations, which requested that the Environment and Transport Committee note the non-compliance with Contract Standing Orders regarding work carried out on the inter island ferries and ferry terminals.

The Executive Manager – Ferries introduced the report.

Mr T Smith moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Stout seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to

- note an exception would normally be required from Standing Orders for work carried out on Shetland Islands Council ferries and ferry terminals, this report is for noting only; and
- note that actions required to ensure future compliance with contract standing orders are being put in place.

The meeting concluded at 1.40pm

.....
Chair