



MINUTES

A&B - Public

**Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 10.00am**

Present:

Councillors:

P Campbell	G Cleaver
B Fox	A Manson
G Robinson	G Smith
V Wishart	

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	R MacKay
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Apologies:

F Robertson	D Sandison
M Stout	M Tregonning

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director of Children's Services
N Grant, Director of Development Services
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Ms Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

None

04/14 **Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2014 on the motion of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Campbell.

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the special meeting held on 30 January 2014 on the motion of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Fox.

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the special meeting held on 10 February 2014 on the motion of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Campbell.

05/14 **Development Directorate Plan 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (Report No: DV016-F), which described how the Directorate was going to deliver

key actions, manage key risks, and report and manage progress and performance across the coming year.

The Director of Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, pointing out that the areas in the report that related to the remit of the Committee were Shetland College, Train Shetland, adult learning and community work. He referred in particular to the projects that would be included in the Council's Change Programme, the achievements over the past year, and the key risks and key actions for the Directorate. He also pointed out that there was an omission on page 19 of the Plan relating to the proposal to "investigate participatory budgeting", and that the target outcome should read "Proposal paper presented to members. Participatory budgeting could be used to help the 2015/16 budgeting process".

The Director of Development Services then responded to queries from Members, and Members noted the following:

- Participatory budgeting related to various processes used by other local authorities involving the community in the budgeting process. There were various ways this could be done, and these would be explored.
- The Digital Shetland Strategy would have influence in other areas, such as the schools estate. It would identify existing provision in Shetland, and what required to be done to join everything up to provide a level of coverage that was appropriate.
- The Shetland Partnership Finance Team was part of the Community Planning Partnership. It had been tasked with finding out more about the resources available across the Partnership to help deliver its key priorities.

Some discussion took place regarding strategic responsibility for Shetland College and Train Shetland, and it was felt that there was some confusion as to where this responsibility lay. It was pointed out that there were key reports presented to the College Board which were not presented elsewhere to Members, and that the Chair of the College Board was not a member of the Executive Committee. It was felt that given the College's financial position and the potential changes resulting from the review of tertiary education, there was a need for reports to come before this Committee. It was requested that a report be presented to the Committee which outlined the governance arrangements for Shetland College and Train Shetland, and where strategic reports should be presented to Members for discussion.

The Director of Development Services agreed to present a report to the Committee. He pointed out that Train Shetland did not report to the Shetland College Board, so Train Shetland's performance information should be presented to this Committee. He also agreed to supply further information to a Member regarding the running costs of youth organisations, and any external funding received in respect of youth organisations.

Ms Wishart moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee:

- reviewed and discussed the contents of the Directorate Plan; and
- delegated authority to the Director of Development 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.
- recommended that the Council resolve to approve the actions, risks and measures in the Plan.

06/14

Nine-Month Performance Overview – Development Services

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (Report No: DV017-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for Quarter 3 of 2013/14.

The Director of Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising again that only certain areas of the report came under the remit of the Committee. He highlighted in particular the budget savings that had been achieved over the Directorate, the positive projected outturn variance, the restructure that had taken place in Community Planning and Development, and the review of tertiary education that was currently taking place. He pointed out that Shetland College was predicting a significant variance for the current academic year, and work was taking place to address this. The business plan for Train Shetland was also being re-established and temporary posts were being recruited to, so this should assist its business development.

In response to queries, the Director of Development Services confirmed that the Directorate could carry forward 50% of its underspend, and the current projected underspend figure was £900,000. He also confirmed that there were a number of large programmes that staff in the Directorate would have carry out, at a time when resources were being reduced. So there would probably be a need to apply for Change Funds in order to ensure that there were sufficient resources to carry out some of these projects.

Concern was expressed, particularly in relation to Shetland College, regarding the pressure that was being put on staff across the Council in carrying out change projects, and it was felt that there was a need to access as much support for staff as possible. It was suggested that there was a need to adjust timescales or make short-term fixed appointments to carry out some of these projects, otherwise staff would be unable to carry out their day-to-day tasks. It was felt that it would be useful for Members to have an update on how well the Change Fund had been utilised so far. It was pointed out that external assistance had already been sought to carry out some change projects, and that it was important to work to keep to the timescales set in order to minimise the impact on reserves.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee discussed the contents of the report and commented on progress against priorities to inform further activity within the remainder of this year, and the planning process for next and future years.

07/14

Children's Services Directorate Plan 2014/15

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (Report No: CS-04-14-F), which presented the Children's Services Directorate Plan for 2014/15, describing how the Directorate will deliver key actions, manage key risks and report and manage progress and performance across the coming year.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting in particular the achievements over the past year and the key objectives for 2014-15. She pointed out that the self evaluation was carried out using a previous HMI Scotland report as a benchmark. This benchmarking data had been compiled using Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) data, and it would be updated when the 2012/13 data was available. She also pointed out that there was an error on page 16 of the appendix, where the figures relating to overtime costs should read "per annum" rather than "per quarter".

Responding to a query, she advised that there were a number of targets that still had to be fully established by the Integrated Children and Young People's Strategic Planning Group (ICYPSPG), and these would also be reported back when available. These were the targets out of the Single Outcome Agreement that the ICYPSPG had felt would be most useful to monitor, although it was felt that it was unlikely that there would be any difference in these targets for a few years.

It was noted that the figures relating to the costs for children looked after in residential based services, as referred to on page 12 of the appendix, had come from SOLACE data. It appeared that the figure quoted was for the whole residential budget, split into costs per child. However there were other areas of Children's Services across that budget that were included in this particular budget. This had been raised with SOLACE and it would be checked and corrected in future, as would the figures relating to allowances that were paid in line with national recommendations as it was felt that this data was similarly affected.

It was commented that the data contained in the report was now more meaningful than it had been in the past. However it was suggested that it would be useful to have more quantitative information available alongside the qualitative information, so that Members could have a deeper understanding. For example, it was felt it would be useful to have a wider picture of the reasons behind some of the statistics, such as exam results for various schools, school attendance rates and teacher/pupil ratios.

The Director of Children's Services said that this would be taken into account. It was recognised that there was not much qualitative detail in the Plan, and it was intended to improve this for future reports. It was further suggested that there was a need to clarify the difference between aims and objectives, and to link the objectives in the report directly to the aims. The Director of Children's Services said that she would also take this on board.

Ms Wishart moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee:

- reviewed and discussed the contents of the Directorate Plan; and
- delegated authority to the Director of Children's 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 Education and Families Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolve to approve the actions, risks and measures in the Plan.

08/14

Nine-Month Performance Overview – Children’s Services Department

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services (Report No: CS-03-14-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Children’s Services for Quarter 3 of 2013/14, the nine months up to the end of December 2013.

The Director of Children’s Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Directorate measures would be replaced by the ones in the Directorate Plan for the next quarter. She pointed out that a review of governance changes to free school meals still had to be undertaken, but the review of clothing grants had been completed.

Ms Wishart moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** to discuss the contents of the report and made 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.

09/14

Blueprint for Education 2012-17: Change of Date for Statutory Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Burravoe Primary School

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services (Report No: CS-05-14-F), which requested a change to the timing of the planned statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Burravoe Primary School from 2014 to 2015.

The Director of Children’s Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the change had been requested due to the timing now agreed for the statutory consultation on the removal of Secondary 3 and 4 from Mid Yell Junior High School, which was the proposed receiving school for pupils from Burravoe Primary School. The Head Teachers of both schools and the Chair of the Parent Council had been consulted, and they had no difficulty with the proposal.

Mr Campbell moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr Fox seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolve to approve a change to the timing of statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Burravoe Primary School from 2014 to 2015. This is to ensure that statutory consultation only commences once the future of Mid Yell Junior High School, the proposed receiving school, has been determined.

The meeting concluded at 11.10am.

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Chair