MINUTE   B – Public

Development Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 17 November 2014 at 2.00pm

Present:

M Burgess   A Cooper
B Fox   R Henderson
A Manson   F Robertson
G Robinson   T Smith
M Stout   A Westlake

Apologies
None

In Attendance (Officers):
N Grant, Director of Development Services
W Grant, Project Manager
L Gair, Committee Officer

Also:
G Smith

Chair:
Mr A Cooper, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular:
The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest
Mr Burgess declared an interest in items 1 "Development Services Directorate Performance Report - 6 Month/2nd Quarter 2014/15" and 2 "Committee Business Programme 2014/15", due to his involvement with the Shetland College.

40/14   **Development Services Directorate Performance Report**
          6 Month/2nd Quarter 2014/15
          The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV046-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for the reporting period above.

          The Director of Development Services introduced the report, highlighting the significant worked carried out on the public and school bus network; Shetland Telecom; Shetland Development Trust Transfer, adoption of the LDP; and the ongoing work on a Community Benefit policy framework. The Director of Development Services commented on the departmental performance indicators highlighting the need to recruit to a number of vacancies in both the Planning service and the Transport Planning Service. The Director of Development Services also referred to the Scottish Government website comparing the performance of Planning Services across all 32 Local Authorities and confirmed that Shetland performs well for the percentage of planning applications process in 2 months. Also, compared to Orkney and the Western Isles, Shetland had performed better than both in regard to positive outcomes, and time taken to reach decisions.

In responding to a query regarding progress on improving staffing resources within Transport Planning, the Director of Development Services explained that the service had a large project programme with twelve projects being resource intensive. He said that the Executive Manager – Transport Planning had prepared a staffing model and that was being considered through internal processes. The Direct of Development Services said that in addition there was the continuing work to embed the bus network and ensure that the income is maximised from ticket sales and providing a flexible community focused service.

During discussion regarding community benefit and planning gain the Director of Development Services said that these were separate issues and although Shetland as a Local Authority, previously had not used planning gain it would look to use it going forward, as separate policy. Members stressed the need for early implementation of a policy on planning gain or community benefit prior to forthcoming projects, such as a new hotel in Brae and power station in Lerwick, in order that a clear indication can be provided to developers on what the community and the Council expects. The Director of Development Services said that for these projects it would be more straight forward progress with a policy on planning gain as this is in the remit of the authority and it is more accepted and the norm elsewhere in Scotland. He said that it would be a quicker process to implement as community benefit would require significant consultation with community stakeholders. The Director of Development Services advised that he would review the timescales and advise Members.

A Member advised that he had been made aware that Vodafone are investing in its UK assets and it was suggested that they would provide high speed network in Scalloway by 2016, offering a wireless broadband router. He said that given the parallel in activity with Shetland Telecom he wondered if there was an opportunity to work with Vodafone rather than providing separate coverage. The Director of Development Services said that he would follow this matter up.

The Director of Development Services responded to a query on the timing of the card chip and pin equipment on the ferries by confirming that the deadline of 31 March 2015 was likely to be delayed. Members questioned whether any of the other deadlines would not be met, the Director of Development Services advised that he had met with Executive Manager's since writing the report and was content that all other targets were achievable.

During discussion regarding Shetland Telecom, the Director of Development Services confirmed that BT are using some of Shetland Telecom's infrastructure but they were not working 100% as a shared system. He also advised that BT purchase their bandwith from Føroya Tel who get capacity from Shetland Telecom. A Member commented on the provision of broadband and the £200k income achieved through sales of services. He said however he would be interested in understanding the invisible earnings referring to the free services provided to the Council. The Member commented particularly on the supply of broadband to the Scalloway harbour and stated that, had a fibre cable not have been provided the accommodation barges may not have berthed there.

In response to a question at page 13, the Director of Development Services explained that the Business Register was used to provide information for the Education review. He agreed to circulate the register for Members to see its content.

In terms of partnership working, the Director of Development Services advised that the Council were on an improvement journey and were ahead of other Local Authorities in this area. He said that the Council needs to start early on its next steps to make the community planning partnership more effective, though he was not sure how much of that would involve pooling resources but said there were high level challenges ahead.

Members commented on the reporting of the development plan to 5 committees and the need to streamline the reporting process.

Decision:

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

41/14   **Committee Business Programme 2014/15**
The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Administration (GL-19-DC-F), which informed of the planned business to be presented to Committee over the remaining quarters of the current financial year to 31 March 2015 and sought discussion with Officers regarding any changes or additions required to that Programme.

The Chair advised that he and the Leader would be away at the time of the meeting in January 2015 noted that there were items on the business programme that they both had been heavily involved in. He suggested that the meeting date be changed to Wednesday 14 January 2015 if that was possible. The Committee concurred and unanimously approved the recommendations contained in the report.

Decision:

The Development Committee **RESOLVED** to approve any changes or additions to the Business Programme.

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mr Cooper moved, Mr Smith seconded, and the Committee agreed to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the following item of business.

42/14   **Economic Development Investment Update**
The Committee considered a report by the Project Manager (W Grant), which provided an update on recent activities concerning specific investments and initiatives which are of a confidential nature.

The Project Manager and the Director of Development Services introduced the report and responded to questions for Members.

Decision:

The Development Committee **RESOLVED** that the Executive Manager – Economic Development and the staff of the Economic Development Service continue to act on behalf of the Council accordingly regarding current and future business activities.

The meeting concluded at 3.20pm.

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Chair