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**Environment and Transport Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Wednesday 21 January 2015 at 2.00pm**

Present:

S Coutts	R Henderson
G Robinson	D Sandison
G Smith	T Smith
M Stout	J Wills

Apologies:

M Bell	D Ratter
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In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Director of Infrastructure Services
D Coupe Executive Manager - Roads
M Craigie, Executive Manager – Transport Planning
C Symons, Executive Manager – Estate Operations
N Hutcheson, Team Leader - Roads
C Gair, Traffic and Road Safety Engineer
B Robb, Management Accountant
P Wishart, Solicitor
B Kerr, Communications Officer
L Gair, Committee Officer

Also:

B Fox

Chair:

Mr M Stout, 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 (i) 6 October 2014, was confirmed on the motion of Mr Coutts, seconded by Mr Henderson (ii) 17 November 2014 was confirmed on the motion of Mr G Smith, seconded by Mr T Smith and (iii) 25 November 2014 was confirmed on the motion of Mr Coutts seconded by Mr T Smith.

01/15 **Scottish Government Grant Scheme: Fuel Poverty/Carbon Reduction Home Energy Scotland Area Base Scheme 2015/16: Update**

The Committee noted a report by the Executive Manager – Estate Operations (EO-03-15-F), which informed of a further allocation by the Scottish Government of Home Energy Scotland Area Based Scheme (HESABS) core grant funding of £812,522 for 2015/16 to be used to tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions from domestic properties.

In introducing the report the Executive Manager – Estate Operations advised that a further exemption was being sought from the Scottish Government to waive the requirement for contractors to hold the Pass2040 qualification in order that local contractors may be used to carry out these works. He also confirmed that the administration costs in regard to this initiative were covered by the Scottish Government Grant.

In response to questions from Members, the Director of Infrastructure Services confirmed that although the funding allocation to Shetland is not as high as Orkney and the Western Isles, the Council has performed well having delivered the third highest energy improvement measures per 1000 population through the scheme. She explained that Orkney and the Western Isles have carried out a higher level of assessments on fuel poverty, but Officers were looking to collect better Shetland data following a survey that is to be issued to households. The Executive Manager – Estate Operations added that a report produced by the Scottish Government in December 2014 outlined the performance of all Local Authorities in regard to this initiative and given Shetland's uniqueness and that the scheme does not suit Shetland, the Council has done well. A Member acknowledged the good work so far and commented that it was important to ensure that officers quantify the total impact of fuel poverty in order to maximise the funding we receive and ascertain if it is possible to attract more funding.

Members also acknowledged the issues faced in attracting contractors to do the work during a vibrant period in the construction industry when the gains from this scheme are less attractive.

When questioning who can access the funding, a Member referred to a specific case where two separate tenants appear to be disadvantaged by living in a property at the top of a building where the roof needs to be improved but there is reluctance amongst the remaining tenants to incur the cost. The Director of Infrastructure Services advised that these situations were covered by a different piece of legislation and it was agreed that the Member would pass on the relevant information to Officers in order that this matter can be addressed.

The Executive Manager – Estate Operations responded to a query regarding the use of external insulated cladding and informed Members that the cost of this measure was likely to be more than the grant available. He said that in large housing schemes it may have been possible to keep the cost down but not for individual houses.

In terms of providing feedback to the Scottish Government on the issues faced, the Director of Infrastructure Services explained that the Scottish Government had been trying to find solutions but this has been more difficult when dealing with the National Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), however dialogue would continue.

Mr G Smith moved that the Committee approve the recommendation contained in the report, seconded by Mr T Smith.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the continuation of the disbursement strategy for energy efficiency grants.

Ferry Review Impact Assessment

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Transport Planning (TP-02-15-F), which provided an update on monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of the changes to Ferry Services.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning introduced the report and advised that each of the issues raised, in the appendix attached, has a path to being considered further and any solutions to be addressed under the Ferry Fares Review will be reported to Committee on 22 April 2015, which would be preceded by a seminar. He advised that there was now engagement with the Scottish Government on the responsibility of the Inter Island Ferry Services and the RSM (Routes and Services Methodology) was being used to establish a model level of service, and this would describe what the level of service should be. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning explained that this methodology was being applied across Scotland fundamentally to explore who should have responsibility for the service. The deadline for these issues to be understood and reported was the end of June 2015.

In responding to a question the Director of Environment and Transport advised that the budget savings realised, as a result of the drop in fuel prices, amounted to £110k which included an amount set as a contingency in the event that fuel prices went up. She said that this saving had been offset against this years budget overspend.

A Member referred to a specific piece of feedback already provided by Fetlar residents and questioned whether that feedback had been included in this stage of the review. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised that this review was taking place in 4 parts over 2 years with this being the second part. He informed Members that the process included meetings with the Community Councils that were open to the public as well as feedback through emails and written correspondence. He said that feedback was being recorded and a record of what issues were resolved and unresolved would be reported.

During further discussion the Executive Manager – Transport Planning confirmed that the impacts of fare income changes was being looked at and the ferry fares review, to be reported on in April, would also include research on other related impacts such as lack of tourist accommodation and other reasons that may not be solely related to the fares review.

A Member questioned whether any representation to the Scottish Government had taken place to discuss the financial position of the Council that cover the cost of ferry services and whether the Scottish Government would consider free links as has already taken place in some of the most affluent parts of Scotland. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning confirmed that discussions were already taking place, with the Scottish Government, around who is responsible for paying for the ferry services and what level of service is needed. This work is to explore “fair fares”, based on distance, economic and social related issues. The Chair added that the reason that the Officers have been successful in engaging with the Scottish Government is due to the imbalance of some ferry services being paid for by Scottish Government and the interest they have in ensuring that they are treating geographical areas equitably. The Chair advised that a meeting was held two weeks earlier on this matter but was happy to keep Members informed of progress.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning also confirmed that the RSM would be entirely undertaken by the Council, with the use of Consultants. He explained that the Consultants had already undertaken this same work in Orkney and already had a

good understanding of the process therefore the Council would see the benefit of that experience.

As a final comment a Member questioned what flexibility or delegated authority there was to allow Officers to react to unexpected or severe social and economic impacts. The Chair advised that the next piece of work was aimed at resolving any issues, however Members also had to consider the Council's financial position and Members acknowledged the need to ensure that resolutions did not negatively affect other services.

Decision:

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

03/15 **Scottish Freight Fares Review**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Transport Planning (TP-01-15-F) which provided draft responses to each of the questions for consideration which, subject to comments, will provide the Council's response to the consultation paper.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning introduced the report and drew attention to the General Points highlighted in Appendix 2.

(Mr Sandison left the Chamber)

A Member spoke in support of the response and commented that most ferry routes in Scotland would be considered as "inter Island" routes but Shetland and Orkney are different in that respect. Another Member cautioned that separating out the Aberdeen route as the ferries will be seen as expensive to run, more so from April when there is a need to comply with the EU Sulphur Directive. The Member said that a workable solution should be possible around cost per mile on longer distances. The Member also commented on the developments at Nigg Bay in terms of accessibility but noted the rise in harbour dues to offset the cost of the improvements.

Comment was made in respect of the subsidy received from the Scottish Government and it was the view of one Member that the Northern Isles Ferry Contracts was a national asset comparing it to the railway network. He said that it was of great importance to the UK as a whole as Shetland's contribution to the national economy is significant.

Mr Robinson moved that the Committee approve the recommendation contained in the report with the addition of the comments made above in regard to the ferry services being important to the national economy.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the Council's Executive Manager – Transport Planning to submit to Transport Scotland the points detailed in Appendix 2 to this report as the Council's consultation response with the addition that reference is made to the subsidy being important to the national economy as Shetland's contribution to the national economy is significant.

04/15 **Streetlighting Review: Approval of Proposed Lighting Reductions**

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Roads (F-059-F), which provided an update on the work that has already been done under the Policy to reduce Shetland's street lighting, details on future works which will be carried out under the approved Policy and sought approval for further lighting reductions where a community objection has been received.

The Team Leader – Roads introduced the report highlighting two street lighting areas where objections had been received. He advised that a solution for the Greenhead area would be to part-light the upper road and not change the lower road, allowing pedestrians lit access to the fish factories. In the Firth to Mossbank route he advised that the concerns had been in regard to the distance between the Hall and the Firth houses and that the proposal to part-light this area would mean that patrons of the hall would be walking home when the lights are out.

During discussions Officers responded to questions on the solution found for the Nesbister Road which had been proposed for removal but changed to part-night lighting, advising that this area was unique in that the parking for houses was on the opposite side of the road and also the extent of new developments in the area was taken into account.

In regard to the Mossbank to Firth route Members noted that the saving amounted to £873/year and were advised that once installed and certified by Scottish Energy it would not be possible to change the time set to accommodate individual events taking place at the hall.

Members discussed whether retaining the current lighting arrangements at Mossbank would set a precedent for other areas and agreed that each area and its proposals would be considered on its own merits and in terms of the distance between the Mossbank Hall and Firth, Members agreed that this was a unique situation.

Dr Wills moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report with amendment, namely, that the Lerwick North – Upper Greenhead Road be part-night lit; that the Lower Greenhead Road current lighting arrangements will be retained; and that the North Mainland – Firth to Mossbank Road, Delting current lighting arrangements will be retained. Mr Henderson seconded.

Decision:

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

- Note the physical removal of columns, lanterns and other lighting apparatus from the street lit areas listed in Appendix 1 to the report as and when replacement becomes necessary with part-night lighting in the meantime;
- Note the switching-off of streetlights between midnight to 6am (part-night lighting) in the areas listed in Appendix 2 to the report where no community objection has been received;
- Approve that the Lerwick North – Upper Greenhead Road be part-night lit;
- Approve that the Lower Greenhead Road current lighting arrangements will be retained.

- Approve that the North Mainland – Firth to Mossbank Road, Delting current lighting arrangements will be retained

05/15 **Traffic Regulations Orders, etc – Annual Progress Report**

The Committee noted a report by the Traffic and Road Safety Engineer (RD-01-15-F), which informed of the Traffic Orders, etc. made in the past year and provided an overview of the progress of those that are currently being promoted.

The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer introduced the report and in response to questions he confirmed that for residential streets disabled parking spaces are provided for badge holders when requested, in line with legislation. In terms of car parks normally 5% of the spaces are set aside for disabled parking and in Lerwick he confirmed that the Council meets that 5% requirement for its off-street car parks.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee NOTED the contents of the report.

06/15 **Policy for the Provision of Pedestrian Crossings – Review of Existing Pelican Crossings**

The Committee considered a report by the Traffic and Road Safety Engineer (RD-02-15-F), which introduced a proposed Policy for the Provision of Pedestrian Crossings and detailed how our existing Pelican crossing sites correspond to that Policy.

The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer introduced the report and highlighted that if adopted, the policy did not commit any budget other than for consulting on the removal of two crossing points. Any future proposals would be reported to Committee.

A Member questioned whether the previous report on 20mph consultation at the esplanade would change as a result of this report where Zebra crossing had been proposed. The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer said that this policy would guide the selection of an appropriate crossing, based on the circumstances in a particular area. He drew attention to the proposal to remove two crossings, stating that the evaluation had determined no requirement for any crossing type at these locations. The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer said that the two reports did not contradict each other. He added that the primary purpose of the first report was to address the accident history in the area and the proposals presented in that report sought to reduce traffic speeds. He said that it was unfortunate that the issues surrounding the pelican crossings not working effectively had been included in discussions at that time.

Mr Coutts moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, seconded by Mr Robinson

Decision:

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

- adopt the proposed Policy for the Provision of Pedestrian Crossings;
- note the assessments of the existing Pelican crossings in Lerwick;

- proceed with consultation on the removal of the Pelican crossings at A969 Esplanade (Albert Building) and A969 Commercial Road (Viking Bus Station); and
- approve that the existing pelican crossings at A969 Church Road and A970 South Road (Sound Service Station) will be reviewed following the opening of the new secondary school at Staneyhill.

07/15 **Prioritised Road Improvement Schemes**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Roads (RD-04-15-F), which informed of the outcome of the exercise to prioritise the list of road improvement requests that Roads had received over the years.

The Executive Manager – Roads introduced the report. A Member pointed out that the numbered table in Appendix B was missing numbers 119.

During discussion Members referred to a number of schemes that they believed should have achieved a higher ranking, such as Stunken Brae in Gulberwick on safety grounds, and questioned what chance there was of any of the projects happening. The Executive Manager – Roads explained that all projects had been scored using the same criteria so the list was fair and equitable with no human input. He said that the criteria used allows for accident scores, community and Council scores with the overall score being procedure to help Members make decisions in the future. The Director of Infrastructure Services added that the Council's long term financial plan indicated that the Council does not have sufficient funding to maintain its Roads assets and the list provided were all road improvements. She said however that the list provided a tool allowing officers to target their efforts in attracting external funding to undertake some of these matters in the same way as the Clickimin Path had been able to progress.

(Dr Wills left the Chamber)

In referring to the recent accident at Levenwick, a Member said that the public would like to understand how this score compares to other projects and that it needs to be explained in a way that people can appreciate and understand. The Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the list had been prepared before the recent accident but explained that after any accident an investigation is carried out that would allow Officers to look at the safety scores. She said that this was a live document and it would be possible to change the score if it was merited. The Director of Infrastructure Services confirmed that this would be looked at again once the investigation has been carried out. The report will be presented to a future Committee meeting to enable Members to consider the conclusions of the accident investigation.

A Member commented that the Haggersta to Cova road was similar to the Levenwick road and expressed concern that both these roads were scored below kerbing in Lerwick. Members were advised however that kerbing in Lerwick was in response to a legal requirement and accident numbers. Discussion took place around perception versus fact and what may be perceived as bad may not be so in terms of data. It was also pointed out that where smaller amounts of funding may be identified in end of year reallocation of capital funding it was unlikely to cover a larger improvement project but may cover one or two smaller improvements such as kerbing.

During further discussion Members highlighted the following items that required correcting and/or recalculating and added to the list.

- 13. Sandwich School – amend to the Shetland South Ward
- 43. Sandwich Rompa Junction – description did not reflect the real issue which involved the blind spot on that road – recalculate.
- 12. Haggersta to Cova – recalculate as this is similar to the Levenwick Road

Add - Bridge alignment at Mid Yell near Isleshavn Care Centre.

Amend the descriptions provided so that this is more meaningful to the public.

A Member was advised that item 95 was a separate scheme from the bus pick up point which would not be included on this list as it is a Transport Planning funded scheme.

The Executive Manager – Roads informed Members that the list had been drawn up from a number of sources including historical concerns raised by members of the public and Community Councils. He said that he welcomed feedback on this document with any further additions or amendments should be highlighted to Officers.

Members noted that Community Council had been consulted on the process but questioned the level of consistency applied. Following some discussion it was agreed that the whole list be sent back to Community Councils to see where their schemes lie in the overall table with oversight from the Association of Community Councils ensure that the scoring across all Community Councils is being applied consistently. The Director of Infrastructure Services said that colour coding could be used to show the reason for the financial score weighting.

In referring to the Bends at Kalliness a request was made for the crash barriers to be addressed as an urgent need in order to mitigate risk. The Executive Manager – Roads advised that this would be separated from this list as crash barriers are replaced under a separate process.

In referring again to the A970 Levenwick Road a Member said that this was a national asset as it provided access from Aberdeen through the Sumburgh Airport to Sullom Voe and compared it to the lifeline ferry service from Aberdeen to Lerwick. The Member questioned whether, when the investigation is carried out, consideration would be given to updating the design works, and asked if that could be a recommendation from the accident investigation that the design be made ready to put out to tender. The Executive Manager – Roads advised that if there was money to do the work it could be a recommendation to look at the design. The Member stated that if there was an undertaking he would not change the recommendation. Another Member questioned whether the Scottish Government should be asked to contribute in the same way as it pays for bypass projects. Members were advised that trunk roads are centrally funded and all 32 Councils could be asking for similar recognition and it is extremely unlikely that this would be effective.

The Chair reminded Members that there was an ongoing issue with the road asset's deterioration and noted that the Council was behind on maintenance as well as road improvements.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to note the prioritised list of requested road improvement schemes and the comments made by Members above.

(Members of the Media and Mr Fox left the Chamber)

Mr Stout 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 Coutts seconded.

08/15 **Foula Electricity Trust: Charges for Foula School**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Estate Operations which advised of the ongoing situation with regard to the electricity charges levied by Foula Electricity Trust for the supply of electricity to Foula Primary School.

In moving the recommendations contained in the report, Mr T Smith commented that the help offered by the Executive Manager – Estate Operations and his team was much appreciated. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

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

- note the issue with the electricity charges for Foula Primary School;
- instruct officers to seek to secure a fair and equitable contractual agreement with the Foula Electricity Trust if possible and take any proposed steps to manage the energy costs at Foula Primary School; and
- instruct officers to fully investigate the generation of the School's electricity through a standalone system should an agreement not be put in place.

09/15 **Compliance with Standing Orders for Work on Ferries**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which concerned the emergency repair work carried out on the inter island ferry m.v. "Linga" without being tendered.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report and advised that the cost involved was recoverable on the Council's insurance policy.

Mr Henderson moved that the Committee approve the recommendation contained in the report, seconded by Mr Stout

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to note an exception from Standing Orders for emergency repair work carried out on Shetland Islands Council ferry m.v. "Linga".

The meeting concluded at 16.05pm.

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