

MINUTE

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Services Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Wednesday 18 September 2002 at 10.30 am

Present:

P Malcolmson R J Anderson
Dr C M Begg R I Black
M U Colligan C B Eunson
F B Grains I J Hawkins
J C Irvine W H Manson
Captain G G Mitchell J P Nicolson
J M Ritch F A Robertson
J G Simpson T W Stove
W N Stove W Tait

Apologies:

L Angus A J Cluness

In Attendance (Officers):

J Watt, Executive Director – Community Services
A Jamieson, Head of Education Service
C Medley, Head of Housing Service
M Miller, Head of Social Care Service
G Smith, Head of Community Development Service
T Watt, Curator
M Thompson, Management Accountant
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Also:

A Watt, Shetland Arts Trust

Chairman:

Mr P Malcolmson, Chairman of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2002, having been circulated, were confirmed.

Attendance at External Meetings:

Mr J C Irvine gave a brief synopsis of a Scottish Licensing Conference he had attended in Dundee, along with Captain G G Mitchell.

Before the meeting commenced the Chairman advised that this was the last meeting for Michelle Miller, Head of Social Care Service, who would be leaving Shetland to take up a post with the Social Work Inspectorate in Edinburgh. On behalf of the Committee, he thanked her for her services to the community and wished her all the best for the future.

The Committee agreed with applause.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Alex Jamieson, Head of Education Service, to his first Services Committee meeting.

100/02 **Publication of Information on Complaints**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Social Care Service (Appendix 1).

The Chairman commented that it would be useful to roll out a complaints procedure throughout the Council.

In response, the Executive Director advised that work was being carried out on this, and it was hoped to bring forward a report on how to manage complaints in the next cycle.

101/02 **Partnership with the Independent Sector – Update Report**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director – Community Services (Appendix 2) and approved the recommendations contained therein on the motion of Mr J C Irvine, seconded by Mr J P Nicolson.

It was noted that the voluntary sector, in this particular instance, emphasised the care sector although the Open Day would be open to all to attend.

102/02 **Draft Policy for Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service (Appendix 3).

The Head of Education Service summarised the main terms of the report, pointing out that Education Officers would now be visiting schools once per term regarding quality issues.

Some Members commented that the document was quite weighty and enquired if it was necessary for all Members to receive the whole document when an Executive Summary may suffice. However others felt that, in this particular instance, it was necessary for the whole document to be circulated. It was noted that it would not be necessary for the whole document to be presented in the future.

A Member referred to page 21 of the appendix, and enquired whether the annual Parent's Conference and annual Pupil's Conference were taking place.

The Head of Education Service confirmed that all schools were entitled to send their school council representatives to the Pupil Conference, however the annual Parent's Conference did not operate at the moment.

(Mr W H Manson attended the meeting during the following discussion)

A Member referred to the recruitment and selection policy appended, and said that he was concerned to read that applicants from outwith Shetland applying for locally advertised posts would be rejected on the grounds of cost. He highlighted the fact that the local newspaper was now available worldwide, and that applicants may also be willing to pay their own costs. He felt that this was discriminatory, and he advised that he would be sending comments to Personnel. He also pointed out that CVs would not be accepted unless the applicant was visually impaired, and said that he felt this would have been acceptable provided that the appropriate application form was submitted as well. He advised that he would also raise this with Personnel. He added that these were corporate issues rather than committee issues.

The Head of Social Care Service advised that the Council's policy dated from 1999, and that the Scottish Executive had produced a Safer Recruitment Policy which may help address some of the points raised.

On the motion of Mr R J Anderson, seconded by Mr W N Stove, the Committee approved the recommendation contained in the report.

103/02 **Championing Culture in Scottish Schools (CCiSS)**

The Committee considered a report by the Heads of Community Development and Education Services (Appendix 4).

Some discussion took place with regard to the definition of culture, and concerns were expressed that the traditional culture of Shetland should be recognised and valued, and not become submerged into a national culture. Reference was also made to the role of community halls and volunteers who run them.

Mr A Watt explained that it was not the intention to subsume Shetland's culture into another, nor was it the intention to impose anything on the community. He went on to say that a wide range of organisations representing culture in Shetland would be

consulted during the consultation exercise, and that the exercise would be designed to allow cultural issues to come to the surface.

The Head of Community Development Service added that these concerns should be allayed when the Shetland Cultural Strategy was finalised. He pointed out that this initiative was running in parallel with the Shetland Cultural Strategy document, and ideally it would have been better to feed into the strategy. However this was outwith the Council's control.

On the motion of Dr C M Begg, seconded by Mr W H Manson, the Committee approved the recommendation contained therein.

104/02 **Shetland Schools' Music Festival**

The Committee considered a report by the Heads of Community Development and Education Services (Appendix 5).

The Head of Education Service advised that recommendation 6.2 should read "I recommend that the Services Committee recommend to Shetland Islands Council Charitable Trust a grant of up to £16,913 to Shetland Arts Trust for the purpose of funding the Shetland Schools Music Festival, subject to the standard Charitable Trust grant conditions".

Mr Watt advised Members of the background to the report, and said that it would give the Council the opportunity to indicate the importance and value placed on the Music Festival as a means of developing education in schools. This would also give an indication of how to develop the planning process.

A Member commented on the very high standards that had been apparent at the last Music Festival, which had also been commented on by the adjudicator.

On the motion of Mr J P Nicolson, seconded by Dr C M Begg, the Committee approved the recommendations contained in the report.

105/02 **Change of Name: Gott Primary School**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service (Appendix 6).

Mr J C Irvine moved the recommendation contained in the report with the addition of 5.2 "that the full Council also be appraised when the sign will be changed". Mr J P Nicolson seconded.

Concern was expressed at the length of time it had taken for the matter to reach this stage and it was noted that the letters appended had been written a year ago.

106/02 **Local Joint Negotiating Committee**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service (Appendix 7).

The Head of Education Service advised Members of the changes that had been made since the report was last presented.

Concern was expressed at the level of delegated authority, and that other staff groups were not moving towards a negotiating body. It was felt that disparity would therefore exist between the LJNC and the other JCCs.

It was noted that setting up a LJNC was a requirement of the McCrone Report, and that the delegated authority only extended to matters within Council policy.

A Member expressed concern that as there was officer representation only, there would be no official route where teachers and councillors could exchange views.

The Executive Director explained that the LJNC did not have any powers to make decisions on behalf of the Council. It would enable officers to have negotiations and take any proposals through normal channels for negotiation, and Members would get a say at the point where proposals were coming in. She added that LJNCs were being set up in this way throughout Scotland. However she acknowledged the fact that there would not be any consultative mechanism for teachers, and that this may have to be looked at.

A Member commented that there would be a strong onus on officials to keep Members appraised in advance, and there was a need for Members involved with education to be kept in touch.

A Member pointed out that CoSLA no longer negotiated on behalf of local authorities on a number of issues, including conditions of service, and that these negotiations should be happening locally. He advised that he had been writing to Personnel for some time to point out that there was a need to set up machinery to negotiate on these issues. However nothing appeared to be happening at the moment.

The Chairman advised that this could be addressed in the appropriate quarter through the minute of the meeting.

On the motion of Mr F A Robertson, seconded by Captain G G Mitchell, the Committee approved the recommendations contained in the report.

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services (Appendix 8).

On the motion of Mrs M U Colligan, seconded by Mr J C Irvine, the Committee approved the recommendations contained therein and appointed Dr C M Begg to the Shetland Childcare Partnership.

In response to a query as to why there had been a request for Member representation, Mr J C Irvine said that he understood that, as with other external organisations, it was useful to have an elected member involved so that they could be identified with the organisation and would be able to speak for them in the Chamber.

108/02 **Best Value Service Review – Education Service**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Education Service (Appendix 9).

The Head of Education Service updated Members as to the latest developments, and said that it was hoped to have a report ready for the Special Services Committee on 8 November.

A Member commented on the good work that had been carried out, and said that this was recognised by all Members.

A Member advised that she had attended a School Board meeting where it had been felt that some of what had been noted from the public meeting did not reflect the views that had been expressed. She added that she hoped that this would be corrected at the consultation feedback meeting that evening.

109/02 **HMI Action Plan: Update on Progress**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Social Care Service (Appendix 10).

The Head of Education Service summarised the main terms of the report and pointed out that, whilst the current workload of the Education Service was phenomenal, it was important that the Action Plan was not disregarded. It was on target, and there would be a visit from two HMI staff next week to discuss how it was being taken forward.

110/02 **Note of Culture and Recreation Forum – 22 August 2002**

The Committee noted the above (Appendix 11).

Mr W N Stove referred to the penultimate paragraph, and said that he understood that the wider review of the music industry referred to was being addressed and would be taken forward very soon.

In response to a query, the Head of Community Development Services advised that no confirmation had yet been received from the Faroese government regarding taking forward the cultural links.

111/02 **Note of Education Forum – 23 August 2002**

The Committee noted the above (Appendix 12).

Mrs M U Colligan pointed out that the final sentence should read that there were nine vacancies rather than 11.

112/02 **Note of Community Care Forum – 28 August 2002**

The Committee noted the above (Appendix 13).

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mr P Malcolmson moved, Captain G G Mitchell seconded and the Committee agreed to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of agenda items 14-16.

(Representatives of the media left the meeting)

113/02 **The Shetland Museums Collection: Offer**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Development Service.

On the motion of Mr J G Simpson, seconded by Mr J P Nicolson, the Committee approved the recommendation contained in the report.

114/02 **Housing Strategy Duties Imposed by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services and on the motion of Mr R J Anderson, seconded by Mr R I Black, the Committee approved the recommendations contained therein.

In response to a query, the Head of Housing Service confirmed that the staff referred to in paragraph 3.3 were additional staff that would be employed on short-term secondments which were being externally funded. As well as dealing with strategy work, they would also be contributing to the work of the department.

115/02 **Teachers Early Retirements – August/October 2002**

The Committee noted a report by the Executive Director – Community Services.

The Head of Education Service advised Members that a primary teacher had been omitted from the list of early retirements.

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