

MINUTE

A&B - Public

Environment and Transport Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 17 August 2015 at 3.30pm

Present:

M Stout	M Bell
S Coutts	R Henderson
G Smith	D Ratter
G Robinson	

Apologies:

D Sandison	T Smith
J Wills	

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Director of Infrastructure Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
M Craigie, Executive Manager - Transport Planning
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
M Mullan, Performance and Improvement Officer
L Adamson, Committee Officer

Chair:

Mr M Stout, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interests

None

30/15 **Infrastructure Directorate Performance Report:**
3 Month/1st Quarter 2015/16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-23-15-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Infrastructure Directorate for the reporting period above.

In introducing the report, the Director of Infrastructure Service advised that she would welcome feedback from Members on the new Covalent style of reporting.

The Director of Infrastructure Services then provided updates on a number of the Actions from Appendix 1. In referring to the Waste Strategy, she advised on a meeting to take place before the end of September involving the Scottish Government, and that an update would be given at the next PPMF meeting. In reporting from the Directorate Indicators, she advised that the significant increase in lost sailings in the first quarter was mainly as a result of problems with the Bigga's gearbox. She confirmed that the specific part has been ordered, and should be delivered in early September. The Director of Infrastructure highlighted the increase in sickness absence across the Directorate, which she said could be a consequence of an aging workforce. She advised that a number of the absences were long-term, and were all genuine reasons, with dialogue taking place to support employees to

return to work. In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Infrastructure Services said that where possible lighter duties are offered in efforts to maximise attendance, however there are not opportunities for lighter duties in all areas of the service.

The Director of Infrastructure Services referred Members to the Building Services and Environmental Health benchmarking report at Appendix 6, which informed on how the Council compares with other similar services across the UK. The Director of Infrastructure Services also highlighted the CAA Audit report at Appendix 7, which she advised gave a very positive report on the quality of safety management systems at Tingwall airport. The findings were a real indication of the efforts made by the team at the airport in all aspects of their work. In that regard, the Chair commended the work of the Director of Infrastructure Services and all the staff at Tingwall airport. The Committee concurred.

In referring to the new style of reporting, the Chair said that the Covalent system was an improvement on previous reports, while another Member suggested that the reports would benefit from the inclusion of more analytical information.

In response to questions, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised Members that the new reporting system is not particularly helpful to provide a comparison between Quarter 4 of 2014/15, and Quarter 1 of 2015/16, where she suggested that a truer comparison could be achieved by comparing with Quarter 1 from 2014/15. She went on to explain that the increase in overtime activity during Quarter 1 would mainly be as a result of additional work being carried out during the better weather. She reported on the work done to ensure that overtime working is beneficial for both the Council and for each employee. She explained that for each service area consideration is given to how best the service can be delivered. As an example, the Director of Infrastructure Services explained that the Roads Service has an establishment of 52 employees, however there is the equivalent of two posts left vacant which is converted into overtime. She said that as overtime can be offered by other employers, being able to make overtime available is a means to retain staff. In response to questions, the Director of Infrastructure Service reassured Members that staff are never pressured to work overtime. There are some staff who work no overtime, while other employees pursue any overtime. She said it is important to have dialogue with the employee on what level of overtime is appropriate.

A Member made reference to the Carbon Management Plan (CMP), where he advised on the reduction to the carbon footprint by replacing certain ferry routes with fixed link options. In her response, the Director of Infrastructure Services acknowledged that reducing fuel is a driver for the CMP, however she said that the carbon calculation would take account of the construction costs of the larger terminals that would be required for fixed links. She went on to confirm that all options will be considered as part of the ferry replacement programme. In response to a question, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the Bigga life extension project would be completed by the end of this financial year.

In responding to questions relating to the Quarter 1 increase of household waste collected, , the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that while there has been a reduction in household waste recycled, household waste collected has increased year on year due to the growing population. She added that the reduction in recycling could relate to the ending of the kerbside collection service. She went on to provide an update on household recycling with multiple containers, and advised that different options for collections are being explored.

In response to questions, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that over the next 3 years, the Council's entire fleet of refuse lorries will be fitted with equipment to lift wheelie bins. She reported on the significant increase in commercial waste due to the increased oil and gas construction activities, however she anticipated this to decline. The Council no longer imports from Highland Council, and Orkney are recycling more of their own waste. She said however, that any decline should be compensated by the waste generated by the increasing population in Shetland. The Director of Infrastructure Service advised that the vast majority of feedback on the communal bins has been very positive and it is proving to be an efficient system in terms of recycling. She added that where there have been complaints, which have generally been about noise/location or that there are not enough bins, these issues have all been resolved.

Decision:

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

31/15

**Development Services Directorate Performance Report:
3 Month/1st Quarter 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-43-15-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for the reporting period above.

In introducing the report, the Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised on the reduced travel on all ferry routes by both passengers and vehicles, where further understanding on the reasons for this decline is required. In that regard, he suggested that the work being done on the ticketing system may help to give an indication on travel patterns, and highlight areas to be addressed. He also advised on the significant risk of underachieving on bus income, and said that some initial work undertaken illustrates less young people are travelling by bus. In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Transport Planning confirmed that there is capacity within the bus network to adjust the nature and timings of the service. He said that further work will be done to explore the reasons for the reduction in use of the bus service when the Transport Planning Service is fully resourced. In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised that the Transport Planning Service should be fully resourced by the end of October

In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised on the work taking place on the ferry fares review project, and that the final report will be presented to Committee in October.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning provided an update on a number of projects that are progressing well. He advised that consultants are soon to be engaged to define the work on the internal ferries that is required by February 2016, which will involve the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland and include air, ferry and fixed links. Reporting on the external ferry provision, he advised that the Transport Minister announced a commitment to undertake a STAG study into the North Isles Ferry Service. He said that this approach is very welcomed and he was pleased that the work done to date has supported such an approach. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked officers for their efforts, and noted the importance of linking the principles applied to the Northern Isles Ferry contract to the discussions over the internal ferries.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning reported that the Smart Cards, Chip and Pin Project has been finalised, and that a pilot on the Bressay Ferry and on some bus routes will run until the end of the year. A report will then be presented to Committee on a proposed approach and associated costs.

In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised that the total cost of reducing ferry fares by 50% on all routes would be £389,000, where he advised that approximately 85% of that total amount would be attributed to the main routes to Yell, Unst and Whalsay. During the discussion, a Member referred to the current timetable of the South Mainland bus service, which he explained does not fit in well for young people attending events in Lerwick, or for young people to travel to Sandwick to attend the youth centre. He said that as there could be similar issues on other routes, it is important to better understand the needs of passengers who would use the bus service, and to take into account the need to link with ferry timetables. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised on the wealth of feedback that is received from passengers, however he stressed the importance to have up to date and constant feedback, and said that social media could have a big part to play.

Decision:

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

(Mr Henderson and Mr Robinson left the meeting).

32/15

**Management Accounts for Environment and Transport Committee:
2015/16 – Draft Outturn at Quarter 1**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-035-F) which enabled monitoring of the financial performance of services within its remit to ensure Members are aware of the forecast income and expenditure and the impact that this will have with regard to delivering the approved budget.

The Executive Manager – Finance introduced the report. In advising on the projected underspend of approximately £1.5m on both revenue and capital, he advised that underspend in the Road Service related to when supplies for supplies of roadstone to the Gas Plant had been delayed resulting in income budgeted for last year now being realised in the current year.

The Chair made reference to the savings of £63k, achieved through the application of the Spend to Save scheme to change the fuel for Scord Quarry to kerosene. He said he would welcome the application of the scheme to other projects, and in that regard he was aware that the criteria of the scheme are being reviewed to maximise its use across the Council.

In referring to the underachievement of ferry fare income of £242k, Members were informed on the work being undertaken in regard to revenue security in order to evidence receipt of income, and the need for data to be analysed on a more regular basis.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RESOLVED** to review the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

(Mr Ratter left the meeting).

33/15 **Environment and Transport Committee Business Programme 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Administration (GL-30-15-F) which informed of the planned business to be presented to Committee for the financial year to 31 March 2016 and sought discussion with Officers regarding any changes or additions required to that programme.

In introducing the report, the Executive Manager – Governance and Law made reference to the fairly extensive list of reports still to be scheduled into the Business Programme, and on the assurance given at today's meeting in regard to reporting to Committee. He suggested that the Executive Manager – Transport Planning liaise with Committee Services to allocate the reports to specific Committee dates. The updated Business Programme would then be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee noted the Business Programme to 31 March 2016 as presented.

The meeting concluded at 4.35pm.

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Chair