

MINUTE

AB - Public

Environment and Transport Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Wednesday 20 January 2016 at 2.00pm

Present:

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

Apologies:

None

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Director of Infrastructure Services
C Robertson, Executive Manager – Ferries
D Coupe, Executive Manager - Roads
S Thompson, Executive Manager – Schools
E Park, Transport Contracts and Operations Officer
C Gair, Traffic and Road Safety Engineer
P Wishart, Solicitor
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
L Gair, Committee Officer

Chair:

Mr M Stout, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read. The Chair welcomed the new Executive Manager – Ferries, Mr Craig Robertson, to the meeting.

Declarations of Interests

None

Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the meetings held on i) 5 October 2015 on the motion of Mr Henderson, seconded by Mr G Smith; and ii) 24 November 2015 on the motion of Mr Robinson seconded by Mr Bell.

01/16 Review: School Transport Policy 2016

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Schools (CS-02-16-F), which presented a reviewed and updated School Transport Policy.

The Executive Manager – Schools introduced the report and highlighted the key changes made to the Policy but emphasised that there were no changes to the entitlements.

In response to questions from Members, the Executive Manager – Schools confirmed that the winter transport arrangements are discretionary and advised that this is provided to 214 pupils across 19 winter months contracts; some of these

pupils will access vacant seats the rest of the year. She also provided statistics on the number of safety audits undertaken and those yet to be carried out.

At the request of a Member, the Transport Contracts and Operations Officer agreed to provide figures, following the meeting, on the pressure that safety audits have had on Development Services.

A Member referred to a recent meeting of the Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh Community Council where they discussed the measures in America whereby a person loses their driving license if they overtake a school bus. The Member said that he did not understand why this was not a measure adopted in this country. The Director of Infrastructure Services said that this would require a change in legislation and suggested that he would raise this matter at the next Community Safety and Resilience Board to seek promotion of this measure to the Scottish Government.

In response to a question the Executive Manager – Schools confirmed that there was no change to the transport system but this tightened up the policy and set out clear procedures for matters such as complaints etc. A Member referred to page 13 of the policy and the 17 points that pupils are supposed to remember, and held the view that this underlined his earlier argument that traffic should stop behind the school bus until it moves on.

Mr Stout moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, Mr G Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolve to approve the proposed updated School Transport Policy.

02/16

Policy for the Construction of Roads suitable for adding to the list of Public Roads Adoption of the Nation Roads Development Guide and Location Variations

The Committee considered a report by the Traffic and Road Safety Engineer (RD-02-16-F), which asked the Committee to change the Council's current design guidance document from the 'Strathclyde Design Guide' to the 'National Roads Development Guide' with 'Local Variations for the Shetland Islands Council Area'.

The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer introduced the report.

The Chair said that this matter had been discussed at the Development Committee during discussions on the Local Development Plan and said that this was seen as a step forward in providing better guidance and flexibility, where there had been some concerns about the limitations of the old guidance.

A Member asked whether this policy would make it more difficult and expensive for someone to have their road adopted to their house. The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer said that it would not and that this policy was about early engagement on developments so that the individual knows the targets required from the outset. The Chair added that when there is a call for sites the Planning Service will accept an application in principle without giving the access road a consideration but this policy would avoid someone going down a route that would not work or be too expensive.

The Traffic and Road Safety Engineer advised a Member that the local variations would enable rather than restrict development by bringing the national guidelines into a local context. He said that the variations were in line with what had been accepted locally over that last 10-15 years, but would make the process easier.

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

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council:

- RESOLVES to adopt the National Roads Development Guide as policy; and
- RESOLVES to approve the National Roads Development Guide: Local Variations for the Shetland Islands Area document as policy amendments to the National Roads Development Guide; and
- NOTES that the National Roads Development Guide is an evolving document that will be updated; and
- INSTRUCTS the Roads Service to update the National Roads Development Guide: Local Variations for the Shetland Islands Area document as amendments to the National Roads Development Guide as appropriate; and
- NOTES that the Roads Service will consult, where appropriate, with the Executive Manager – Planning Service and representatives of the local construction industry over any future amendments to the local variations to the National Roads Development Guide.

03/16

Exception from Contract Standing Orders including Emergency Work on Ferries

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-02-16-F), which requested noting of the works carried out under exception to the Council's Contract Standing Orders by Ferries Service in the last Committee Cycle.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report and in responding to questions she explained how the tendering process works and informed Members that work was being done to develop a framework for specialist works. She also confirmed that the day to day maintenance is carried out when the vessels are tied up however some emergency works cannot be done in house.

A Member commented that there was a lack of resilience in the fleet which saw Whalsay without cover. He said that this community, per head of population, contributed more to the Shetland economy than any other area and it was being strangled and questioned whether consideration had been given to acquiring another vessel on the second hand market. The Director of Infrastructure Services explained that there is one relief vessel that was being used to cover dry docking. She said that there were previously two vessels to provide cover but during the ferry review full consideration was given to keeping or selling the second vessel. She advised that the second vessel cost £150k/year on maintenance to keep it in the fleet and the decision was taken to sell the vessel rather than to lose a service from each

route. She further advised that the second vessel was only used 4 or 5 times per year.

The Chair said that he understood the frustration but reminded Members of the problems faced in terms of what could be afforded. He said that the ferry service is run on the edge of what is acceptable and in referring to current discussion with the Scottish Government he said that it was important to establish who has financial responsibility for the running of the service.

A Member asked, notwithstanding the specialist requirement for computer equipment, whether relevant spares are held by the department or by local contractors. The Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the department holds significant spares and this was a matter raised by external auditors every year. She said that a set of main spares is held and replaced as they are used as well as spares that are likely to become obsolete.

The Vice-Chair praised staff for minimising, as far as possible, the disruption caused as a result of the financial situation and said that as a Council, Members needed to support them.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee noted the exceptions applied.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm.

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Chair