

MINUTE

AB - Public

Environment and Transport Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 23 May 2016 at 2.00pm

Present:

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

Apologies:

M Bell

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Director of Infrastructure Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
M Craigie, Executive Manager – Transport Planning
S Brunton, Team Leader – Legal
J MacLeod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
L Gair, 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

12/16 **Management Accounts for Environment & Transport Committee:**
2015/16 - Draft Outturn Quarter 4

The Committee noted a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-021-F), which presented the financial performance of services within the Committee's remit.

The Executive Manager – Finance introduced the report and in response to a question regarding recurring savings, he explained that there is guaranteed additional income this year from SHEAP, in addition there is likely to be savings on vehicle maintenance again. The Committee were also advised that the new gritters had provided a saving on maintenance which offset the cost of bus maintenance, it could be assumed that the saving would be delivered again next year without the need to spend it on the buses. The Director of Infrastructure Services confirmed that in making the decision to purchase the vehicles, a financial analysis looked at whether leasing or purchasing would be the better option for the Council and it was considered that in purchasing the vehicles the Council would retain the residual value of the vehicles which can offset the repurchase price when the vehicle needs to be replaced.

Decision:

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

- Note the Management Accounts showing the draft outturn position; and
- Note the proposed budget carry forwards which will be included in the overall Draft Outturn Report to be presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 24 May 2016.

13/16

Infrastructure Directorate Performance Report
12 Month / 4th Quarter 2015/16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-06-16-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Infrastructure Directorate for Quarter 4 of 2015/16, the twelve months up to the end of March 2016.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report and informed the Committee that one of Infrastructure Services staff Peter MacKay, Cleansing Supervisor, received an Environmental Services bronze award, for driving down the overtime bill, reducing sickness and coming up with a way in which staff could be off over the Christmas Shutdown. She explained that Mr MacKay had been nominated by the department for the award which he received last week.

In response to a question regarding catering inspections and the standard of premises that had been inspected, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the degree of compliance with food hygiene of all eating establishments could be found on the Food Standards Agency website.

In terms of the number of Freedom of Information Requests made to the Council the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the Infrastructure Services did not receive the highest number but it amounted to about 100 per quarter. She explained that the number of requests received fluctuated and can be influenced by what is in the press at the time but there are also a number of standard requests, where the information is routinely made available.

The Director of Infrastructure Services, in responding to a question, explained that comparisons on the cost of ferries versus fixed links would not be carried out under the carbon management plan but an update would be provided on fixed links as part of the Shetland Inter Islands Transport Study.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee discussed the contents of the report as appropriate to their remit and made relevant comments on progress against priorities to inform further activity within the remainder of this year, and the planning process for next and future years.

14/16

Development Services Directorate Performance Report
12 Month/4th Quarter 2015/16

The Committee noted a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-29-16-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for the reporting period above.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning introduced the Transport Planning performance elements from the Director of Development Services report.

Reference was made to smart card ticketing and the Executive Manager – Transport Planning provided a summary of the issues experienced with regard to the equipment. He said that unlike other locations where tickets are sold onshore or in the passenger saloons, the equipment for Shetland has to work on deck in the wet and corrosive marine environment. He said that he was confident that solutions would be found.

The Executive Manager – Transport Planning was asked whether, in offering online payments, consideration had been given to commercial traffic paying up front/prepaid at a discounted rate. He explained that the difficulty in offering any discounted rates would mean less income for the council and it has been made clear that income is not an area that can be changed as any revenue loss is not to be considered at the moment. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning said that if discounted fares become an option in the future, the technology has to be able to handle more complex fare structures. The Committee noted that there were ongoing concerns regarding fare levels and their effect on retaining populations, to which the Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised that it is not in his scope of work to introduce fare products at this time, but he said that the Council can revisit this policy at any time.

In response to a comment on the overtime percentages in regard to the Infrastructure Services and Infrastructure Services directorates, the Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised that as the service now had a full complement of staff since March there was a resultant reduction in overtime. The Director of Infrastructure Services explained that work had been done within Infrastructure Services to look at reducing overtime, but as previously reported there had been problems recruiting to certain posts resulting in this gap being covered by overtime. She advised that paying a certain level of overtime is cheaper than employing full time employees therefore two posts have been converted to overtime for when extra hours are required to cover peaks in work, leave and sickness. The Committee acknowledged that the Council has 300 less employees than it did three years ago. The Executive Manager – Finance advised that the flexibility and availability of staff had been impacted this year but the overtime budget had allowed services to be maintained.

During debate Members discussed the need to have ongoing dialogue around sustainable transport issues for Isles residents as the Council is embarking on the building better business cases methodology in the summer. The Committee also noted that the Planning Team are leading on Building Place Standards for Scotland. The Committee agreed that there is a need for better ways of engaging with communities and be able to demonstrate that the Council is heading in a better direction. In this regard, comment was made in connection with discussions at the Association of Community Councils whereby some Community Councils feel they are not being listened to.

The Vice-Chair said that he commended the Transport Planning Service regarding the Inter Islands Transport Study and fixed links and said that Members are listening to communities concerns and extra work is being done to get consultations right. He said that the process may take longer but it is on the right track.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee discussed the contents of the report as appropriate to their remit and made relevant comments on progress against priorities

to inform further activity within the remainder of this year, and the planning process for next and future years.

15/16 **Environment and Transport Committee Business Programme 2016/17**

The Committee noted a report by the Team Leader – Administration (GL-23-16-F), which informed of the planned business to be presented to Committee for the remaining quarters of the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and sought discussion with Officers regarding any changes or additions required to that programme.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report and the Committee were informed that changes would be made to accommodate the Referendum in June.

Decision:

The Environment and Transport Committee considered its planned business for the remaining quarters of the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and **RESOLVED** to approve any changes or additions to the Business Programme.

The meeting concluded at 3.55pm.

.....
Chair