



Shetland

Islands Council

MINUTE

A

Executive Committee
Lystina House, Lerwick
Tuesday, 3 February 2004 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

A J Cluness F B Grains
L Angus J A Inkster
W A Ratter W H Manson
W N Stove

Apologies:

J C Irvine

In attendance:

M Goodlad, Chief Executive
G Spall, Executive Director Infrastructure Services
J Watt, Executive Director Community Services
A Cooper, Head of Development Resources
G Smith, Head of Community Development
J Smith, Head of Organisational Development
D Lamb, Senior Special Projects Manager
E Perring, Policy and Development Assistant
W E Shannon, Colleges and Training Project Manager
A Cogle, Administration Manager

Chairperson

Mr A J Cluness, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minutes

The Minute of meeting held on 9 December 2003, was confirmed.

2/04 **Corporate Plan 2004/08 and Implementation – Community Planning Framework**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development (Appendix 1).

The Head of Organisational Development introduced the report, stating that the Plan had been updated with comments made at the last meeting of the Executive Committee, and by the Community Planning Board. He stated that the report sought authority to distribute and implement the Plan.

Mr W H Manson said that he saw little reference in the document to Education. He said that this was a large part of the Council's expenditure and service, and should feature more prominently in the Plan.

Mr L Angus said that the Plan did not identify the important links with other corporate organisations or other agencies outwith Shetland that were involved in developing Shetland educationally, socially or culturally. He said that the majority signatories to the framework had important links with other bodies, for example NHS Shetland and Grampian Hospital Trust.

The Head of Organisational Development said that the content of the document had been agreed with the local organisations concerned, although he agreed with the suggestion that he discuss with Mr Manson and Mr Angus as to the appropriate additions, and that this be reported to the Council on 12 February.

The Committee agreed, and the recommendations in the report were otherwise approved, on the motion of Mr W A Ratter, seconded by Mr A J Cluness.

3/04

Best Value Update

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development (Appendix 2).

Mr A Inkster said that the output from the Best Value Review of Education had improved quite considerably since getting additional support. However, he said that he thought that establishing the new terms of reference would have involved greater communication with stakeholders, as had been in the past, in particular Head Teachers and School Board Chairpersons. The Head of Organisational Development said it was expected that that would happen as the review proceeds to gather more evidence.

Mr L Angus referred to the benchmarking figures for staffing, and noted that Shetland had 160+ more Teachers than Orkney, for example. He said that it had be determined if best value was achieved in terms of the resources the Council already had. Mr Angus went on to say that the consultation phase had really only just started, and he believed that the timetable for reporting on secondary education by April, and primary education by June, would be hard to achieve, and may have to be revised.

The Committee noted that a report on staffing numbers was next on the agenda, but it was accepted that Teacher numbers would have to feature as part of the decision process relating to teacher:pupil ratios.

The Head of Organisational Development advised Committee that an initial visit by the external auditors in respect of the Council's Best Value

Audit would be held later this month, and would include an informal briefing with Executive Committee members. He confirmed that details would be provided to Members later.

The Committee otherwise endorsed and noted the terms of the report.

4/04

Staffing Levels

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Special Projects Officer (Appendix 3).

The Senior Special Projects Officer introduced the report, and stated that the report provided a snapshot of staffing levels as at September 2003, compared with December 1999. She added that the recent introduction of the new CHRIS system software would allow these figures to be produced on a regular basis if required.

Mr W A Ratter referred to the graph on page 8 of the report, and questioned the reasons for fluctuations in the number of full time equivalent posts since 1999.

The Chief Executive stated that one reason could be put down to the restraint shown at certain points over the years, but that overall the report indicated those shifts in pattern had had little impact on the main aim in reducing the burden on the General Fund.

The Committee noted that the figures for Social Care and Community Development did not include staff employed by the Shetland Welfare Trust or the Shetland Recreational Trust.

Mr W H Manson said that whilst the inadequacy of the CoSLA method had been mentioned, as long as the method used was consistent, it would still show trends and direction.

Mr W A Ratter said that it had to be noted that some posts attracted money from outwith Shetland, and that employment by the Council kept money flowing in the local economy.

Mr A Inkster said that between 1975 and 1995, Shetland's infrastructure had been rebuilt. He questioned what outputs had been achieved during those years, compared to between 1995 and now, particularly now that the Council was increasingly calling on outside organisations and individuals to assist as well. He said it was important to look at the overall picture.

The Chief Executive said that by far the most staffing flow had been due to the development of the Education provision, and other areas within Community Services. He went on to say, in relation to the points made by Mr W A Ratter, that the balance was not yet there between the money received annually from the Scottish Executive and what the Council spent on provision of services. He said that the General Fund

Budget was again going to show a deficit this year, and the Council could find itself in a precarious situation unless some fundamental changes were made.

Mr W H Manson said that whilst he accepted there were increases in staffing in certain areas such as Social Care and Education, it was also the case that those were also high profile areas where there were staffing shortages. He said it would be difficult to recruit to those posts without compensating by the removal of posts somewhere else.

In terms of expenditure and budgets, and with particular regard to Education, Mr L Angus said that there was a substantial cost involved by the network of Junior High Schools in rural areas. He said that whilst there could be socio-economic grounds for retaining that network, such provision had to be reflected in Lerwick in order to achieve the same facilities for pupils as those in the rural areas. He said that this aspect had to be researched to ensure that the communities were substantially benefiting from this aspect.

Whilst it was noted that many of the issues raised in terms of Education would be brought out in the Best Value Review, the Committee concurred that a Best Value Review across the Council would show the connections between the number of staff in services and the outcomes achieved.

The Committee otherwise noted the terms of the report.

5/04 **Cultural Strategy for Shetland**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 4).

The Committee accepted that although there was lack of specific mention of music within the Strategy, this was intended to be an overarching Strategy, and specific areas would be developed through the Action Plan.

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report, on the motion of Mr W H Manson, seconded by Mrs F B Grains.

6/04 **Calor Scottish Community of the Year Award**

The Committee noted the terms of the report, and agreed that the Convener sends a letter of congratulations to Yell Community Council on their achievement.

The Committee considered a report by the Community Learning and Development Officer (North Isles) (Appendix 5).

7/04 **Shetland Renewable Energy Forum – Shetland Strategy for Renewable Energy Development**

The Committee considered a report by the Development Officer (Appendix 6).

Mr W A Ratter moved that the recommendations in the report be approved. Mr W H Manson seconded, subject to (a) the wording in section 2.0 being changed to the aim of the "Forum" rather than the Strategy, as the current wording conflicted with the statement in section 5.0; and (b) that the endorsing bodies for amendments to the Strategy by submission or by motion at the AGM be made clear. The Head of Development Resources agreed to consult with the Forum on that point. Mr Ratter agreed. The Committee concurred, and noted the good progress made so far.

8/04 **Minutes of Meeting of Shetland College/Train Shetland Board of Management – 4 December 2003**

The Committee noted the minutes of the aforementioned meeting (Appendix 7).

In respect of staff training, the Committee noted that a report on this matter would be presented to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

9/04 **Minutes of Meeting of the Shetland College/Training Shetland Board of Management – 20 January 2004**

The Committee noted the minutes of the aforementioned meeting (Appendix 8).

The Committee recorded its appreciation of the contribution made by the Board of Management to date.

10/04 **Notes of Forums**

The Committee noted the note of (a) the Environment Forum held on 13 January 2004; and (b) the Social Forum held on 20 November 2003 (Appendix 9).

The Committee requested that notes of future Forum meetings be submitted to the Committee within the same cycle.

Although the following had been marked as containing exempt information, the Committee agreed to hold the report and discussion in public.

11/04 **North Atlantic Fisheries College Budget Proposals 2004/05**

The Committee considered a report by the Colleges and Training Project Manager (Appendix 10).

The Colleges and Training Project Manager advised that it was proposed that 2 members of staff would transfer under TUPE regulations from the Council to the NAFC. He added that these staff

had been employed as Training Development Officers, but due to good progress and development, they would now transfer as Development Officers.

Mr A Inkster said he was quite staggered at how much grant aid this College required. He said that the situation was not getting any better, and that this had to be addressed soon. Mr A J Cluness said that those concerns were shared, and this was a reason for the proposals in the report. He said that radical changes would have to take place, after which a much clearer picture would be seen next year. Mr A Inkster said he would like to see the College being successful and the problems sorted out within the year.

The Committee agreed, on the motion of Mr L Angus, seconded by Mr A J Cluness, to note the concerns and support for the proposals and approve the recommendations in the report, including the transfer of two Development Officers from the Council under TUPE transfer regulations, with a view to the funding issues being addressed during the coming year.