

**Environment and Transport Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 5 March 2018 at 2pm**

Present:

S Coutts	S Leask
R McGregor	A Priest
D Sandison	R Thomson

Apologies:

P Campbell
A Manson
G Smith

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison, Chief Executive
N Grant, Director of Development Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
M Craigie, Executive Manager – Transport Planning
V Simpson, Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development
J Smith, Acting Executive Manager – Ports and Harbours
J MacLeod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
P Wishart, Solicitor
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
L Malcolmson, Committee Officer

Also:

A Duncan
J Fraser
I Scott
D Simpson

Chair:

Mr Thomson, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interests

None

3/18 Infrastructure Directorate Performance Report Quarter 3 – 2017/18

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (*ISD-01-18-F*) which summarised the activity and performance of the Infrastructure Directorate in 2017/18 quarter 3 up to 31 December 2017.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and highlighted a number of specific activities that had not met their targets, namely the Ferry Service due to the impact of the severe weather in October and December 2017; and the Foods Standards Agency (FSA) concerns regarding staffing levels, which was recognised as an issue nationally. The Chief Executive said that she was delighted to advise that the APSE Apprentice of the

Year was an apprentice from with Estate Operations. In addition she commented on staff shortages in the Roads Service, the viewpoint survey and the waste strategy pilot that had been advertised and followed up by visits to every household in the pilot area.

In responding to a question regarding the FSA Concerns, the Chief Executive explained that a current recruitment process would conclude on Friday. The first career graded postholder would complete training by the summer, to be followed by a twelve month log book exercise to evidence their competence at work. She added that there were no shortcuts to this process.

Reference was made to the 20mph at the Esplanade, Lerwick, and it was suggested that, as in Edinburgh, consideration should be given to the 20mph zone to be extended to the whole of Lerwick so that there was no ambiguity for drivers in Lerwick or need for any traffic calming measures or enforcement in particular areas. An explanation was provided in terms of the use of statistics and incident reporting that are used in determining the need for reduced speed limits. In responding to a comment around the need for a reduced speed limit in Quarff, it was acknowledged that having studied that area there was no such statistics to support the change in speed limit.

The Chief Executive responded to a question relating to DP210 “Make a Difference” staff training, and advised that all staff had been encouraged to undertake this training to make them aware of the mental health and wellbeing of each other and customers. She confirmed that the figure provided did not include staff who had received training in the workplace, as a number of teams at ports and environmental services and undertaken training in the workplace.

During debate, there was further discussion on the 20mph zone at the Esplanade and it was agreed for the Road Safety Advisory Panel to give further consideration to what can be done around educating drivers in terms of the 20mph measures at the Esplanade, following concerns around driver behaviour. The Chief Executive confirmed that enforcement would be the responsibility of the Police and advised that since implementation in June, there had been no reported injury accidents in the 20mph zone.

The Chair took the opportunity to congratulate the Chief Executive for her success at interview last week and said that he looked forward to working with her in her new role. The Committee concurred.

The Chair, and the Committee, recorded their congratulations to the APSE Apprentice of the year.

Decision

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

4/18 Development Services Directorate Performance Report – 9 Month/3rd Quarter 2017/18

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-02-18-F) which highlighted progress against Council priorities from the Council’s Corporate Plan by the Development Services Directorate as set out in Appendix 1.

The Director of Development Services introduced the report and referred to the items that relate to the areas within the Environment and Transport Committee remit, namely:

- Inter Island Ferry Funding success and future discussions
- External Transport discussion with Transport Scotland on passenger and freight vessels.
- Transport Strategy Refresh
- Smart Ticketing for Public Bus Services

During discussion reference was made to the business cases for the nine island routes and the resource implications involved. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised that he would meet with Transport Scotland on 15 March 2018 and that there was a need to carry out the business cases to support the Scottish Government to establish the requirements are for these island routes.

Concern was expressed on the drop in passenger numbers across Shetland ferry routes and the Committee were advised that there are seasonal variations every year. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning advised on the public's behaviour in responding slowly to change, and although the quarterly performance information is helpful there is a need to look at these figures in the longer term.

The Chair referred to the success in securing revenue funding for the Inter Island Ferry Service and commented that this was as a result of the hard work from Officers over the last 5 years. In terms of going forward, he advised that he was hopeful that the Scottish Government were now listening but there was still a lot of work to do not least in terms of ongoing external passenger and freight transport. In addition, the Chair acknowledged that at paragraph 4.9 of the report the Council had submitted a funding bid for a fibre network connection to Unst and Yell.

Decision

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

5/18 Management Accounts for Environment & Transport Committee: 2017/18 – Projected Outturn at Quarter 3

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-026-F) which enabled the Committee to monitor the financial performance of services within its remit.

The Executive Manager – Finance introduced the report and commented on the small underspend forecast for 2017/18.

In responding to a question, the Executive Manager – Finance explained that the underspend at 1.4 of the Appendix for transport planning was associated with the bus contracts that have a contractual uplift annually. He said that in 2017/18 the costs had been lower than anticipated.

In terms of the cost associated with winter weather disruption, the Executive Manager – Finance advised on the steps taken to estimate for the winter period and said that he hoped any variance would be modest. The Chief Executive added that during bad weather the cost of using salt and providing the gritter service goes up, but this is offset

by not being able to carry out planned road maintenance so there is a switching of budgets which helps. In responding to a further question on funding available from the Government to assist with the recent weather disruption, the Chief Executive explained that this funding is provided under the Belwin Scheme. A local authority would however have to spend over a certain threshold to qualify for funding, and the Council would not spend to that level. The Executive Manager added that local authorities would be expected to pay a proportion of the overall cost under the Belwin Scheme.

In referring to the fuel cost allocation set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report, the Chief Executive advised that the Council paid more during the period between when the budget was set and the fixed term contract being arranged. The Chair added that for every 1p the fuel price increases, the cost to the Council goes up by £45k.

Decision

The Environment & Transport Committee NOTED the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 3.

6/18 Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan 2018-2021

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-02-18-F) that presented the Directorate Plan for Infrastructure Services to set out the strategic action to be taken between 2018 and 2021 to deliver both the Council's Corporate Plan and the Shetland Partnership Plan strategic priorities.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and commented on the planned business for 2018-21. She advised that the adjusted template allows for consideration of maximising the Directorate's contribution to delivering the shared priorities of the Shetland Partnership Plan. She said that Infrastructure Services provides services to help other services to provide their services to the wider Shetland. She gave as an example the Roads Service, that not only maintains roads but provide work placements/employment pathways and help to provide more access to services for the more vulnerable residents across Shetland. She said that in taking a wider view of each service much more is done than just the basic function. In that regard, she said that the Directorate Plan should not focus on the number of ferries run, but provide information about the apprenticeships and ferry cadets and so on. She said that feedback was welcome but the strategic actions were to demonstrate that Shetland is a better place to live, work and study. Comment was made in support of that approach and for staff to look at what activity is provided to the Shetland Community, and that should be embedded across the Council not just in the Directorate Plan.

Mr Sandison moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, seconded by Mr Leask.

Decision

The Environment & Transport Committee ENDORSED the Directorate Plan, and recognising that the Director of Infrastructure Services will make any necessary adjustments to the plan to take on board the views of the Committee.

7/18 Development Services Directorate Plan 2018-2021

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Director of Development Services (DV-04-18-F) which presented Development Services Directorate Plan for 2018-21 that sets out the strategic action to be taken to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan, and Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Director of Development Services introduced the report and referred to page 5 of the Directorate Plan, he advised that he set similar activities to that of the Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan in terms of creating a 10 year plan to attract young people to live, work, study and invest in Shetland, and commented that to balance Shetland's demographics with the Scottish average there needs to be 1500 more young people staying in Shetland. He commented on the challenges faced by all Scottish Island Communities in terms of recruitment and that it was important to "grow our own" staff. He advised on the need to ensure that there is the best level of transport internally with bus and other forms of Inter Island transport and also to make sure improvements are made to the way ticket prices are allocated. He acknowledged that Inter Island and external transport links are two big factors for consideration.

In responding to a question on the need to include fixed links, the Director of Development Services advised that when discussing internal transport links, fixed links forms part of that discussions but he agreed for specific reference to be made in the Directorate Plan under Transport Planning work. During further discussion on the costs of fixed links Officers were asked if the quote received by Whalsay residents could be incorporated to complement the Shetland Inter Islands Transport Study. The Executive Manager – Transport Planning explained that it was worth noting that there were no issues with the quote in terms of the geology which is broadly similar across Shetland but there were issues around procurement and appetite for risk. He said that the detail would be followed up by the Scottish Government as the body taking fixed links forward as an option. It was also noted that the type of tunnel may differ between the islands and although the methodology would be the same there may be different linings.

The Chair commented that fixed links was the long term strategy of the Council from the environmental, economic and social aspects that make it essential going forward but that it needs to be more engrained into Council's policies. In that regard it was also noted that the business case would bear out all issues, but that analysis has to be based in fact. In that regard, a plea as made for the correct information to be provided to the decision makers.

Mr McGregor moved that the Committee approve the recommendation contained in the report. Mr Sandison seconded.

Decision

The Environment & Transport Committee ENDORSED the Directorate Plan, recognising that the Director of Development Services will make any adjustments required to ensure it is fully aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan, including specific reference to fixed links within the directorate plan within Transport Planning work.

The meeting concluded at 3.05pm.

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Chair