

MINUTES

B - Public

Development Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 27 August 2018 at 11.30am

Present:

M Burgess	P Campbell
A Cooper	S Coutts
A Duncan	J Fraser
S Leask	A Manson
A Priest	T Smith

Apologies

None

In Attendance (Officers):

N Grant, Director of Development Services
D Irvine, Executive Manager – Economic Development
B Kerr, Communications Officer
I McDiarmid, Executive Manager – Planning
K Nicolson, Project Manager
J Macleod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
A Ross, Solicitor
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Chair:

Mr Cooper, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

The Chair ruled that in accordance with Section 43 (2) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the attendance of Councillor Mark Burgess during the proceedings was permitted by telephone link.

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2018 on the motion of Mr Fraser, seconded by Mr Priest.

21/18 **Development Services Directorate Performance Report – Three Month/First Quarter 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-27-18-F) summarising the activity and performance of the Development Directorate for the first quarter 2018/19.

The Director of Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, and outlined key areas of progress. He highlighted in particular the Council's key priority to attract more people to live and work in Shetland, and the work that had been taking place to increase the supply of housing across all tenures. He also advised that the Shetland Partnership Plan had recently been signed off by the key partners. There were still some governance issues to sort out, and a report would be presented to the Council. Work was currently taking place with partners to achieve a strong Islands Deal, and the resources committed to that would be increased so that everything was ready by the end of the year. The numbers accessing Business Gateway start up services had increased and the average time in temporary accommodation had decreased, although this figure remained high.

The Director of Development Services then responded to questions, and Members noted the following:

- There were a significant number of people on the housing waiting list, and all had points that prioritised their need. Therefore it would be difficult to set people coming into Shetland for work alongside those who had been identified as having a significant need for housing. The development of the mid-market rental market would be one way of meeting this need and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan - which looked at addressing the needs of private sector, social, and mid-market rentals - would be presented in the next two cycles.
- Investment in Shetland Telecom was aligned with what was going on nationally. A bid had been put together for the UK fibre network, but it had not been successful. Bidding for the second round was imminent and, if successful, a network would be put into the North Isles. If not successful, the Council would have to consider whether to invest directly, and the business case suggested that there was a good case for putting a fibre network into the North Isles.
- Work was taking place in Corporate Services to identify buildings that could be handed back or placed on the market and reduce estate costs. The move of Council staff back to the North Ness HQ would open up opportunities to do so.
- The resettlement of Syrian refugees locally was in its final stages, and should happen within the next few months.
- A full business case regarding the merger of tertiary education locally would be presented to the Council in October, but there was still work to be finalised before the business case could be completed.
- The Council was aware that the staffing profile at Sullom Voe Terminal was going through a period of change, and of the potential impact of this. Early discussions had taken place with the oil and gas industry to try and get more information so that an appraisal of the future could be carried out.
- Information was available regarding turnaround times for void properties, and this would be circulated to members.

Responding to a further question, the Executive Manager – Planning confirmed that the timescales for measuring the average days taken to obtain a building warrant did not take account of delays caused by agents. The average time would be reduced if this could be taken into account.

It was requested that consideration be given to presenting this information in two parts, so that the local authority aspect could be considered separately. It was understood that this was done in some other local authorities.

The Executive Manager – Planning agreed to look into this as it would present a more accurate picture, but he was not aware that it was done in other places. He understood that there was an issue with the systems involved being able to deliver the information, and it was something that was being discussed.

During the discussion that followed, it was commented that key worker accommodation had historically been provided across the Council, NHS and Police. It was felt that there was a need for it to be provided again, otherwise services that could be delivered to the community would be diminished. It was noted that there were schemes that could assist with the development of key worker accommodation, and it was something that was forming part of the considerations in the development of the Knab site. The shortage of housing was a recurring theme across Committees, but the Council did not have the resources to deal with it so would have to continue to make its case. It was pointed out that there had been a request at the Education and Families Committee for the relevant Committee Chairs and officers get together and explore creative solutions to provide housing for key workers so that posts could be filled. It was commented that it was heartening that the Scottish Housing Minister, during a recent visit to Shetland, had strongly hinted that more money could be made available for social housing in Shetland if other local authorities were unable to spend their full allocations. However it was an area of concern that the local building industry had indicated that they were experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff, so consideration would have to be given to including smaller contractors in projects.

It was also commented that it was vitally important that the Council was successful in its efforts to improve digital and mobile connectivity in Shetland, given the potential savings that could be made in the delivery of social care and health services. It had been estimated that the development of the fibre network in the North Isles could result in savings in the region of £100,000 to NHS Shetland.

It was requested that the Council take steps to express its displeasure to the Scottish Government regarding the reduction in national funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). As a result, there would be a negative impact on Shetland College, and on the opportunities for migrant workers to settle in Shetland. It was also requested that the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Shetland take place sensitively with minimum fuss and publicity, in order that the families involved could maintain their privacy.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the report.

22/18

Management Accounts for Development Committee: 2018/19 - Projected Outturn at Quarter 1

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-67-18-F) which presented the management accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

The Team Leader – Accountancy summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the projected revenue outturn position was an overspend of £241,000, and that the projected contribution from the Housing Repairs and Renewals Fund was £39,000 less than the budgeted amount.

Responding to questions, the Director of Development Services advised that the main reasons for variance related to the Vacancy Factor Target, and because the intended savings from the merger of tertiary education would not be met in the current financial year. The Scottish Funding Council was considering a request for project funding from the Council for the tertiary education merger project. It was something which was taking up a lot of officer time, but the Council had not claimed for the associated costs up until now.

Decision:

The Committee reviewed the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mr Cooper moved, Mr Coutts seconded, and the Committee agreed to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the following item of business.

(Mr Burgess left the meeting)

23/18 **Progress Report for Inshore Fisheries Management Support - Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order**

The Committee considered a progress report by the Project Manager – Economic Development.

The Project Manager – Economic Development summarised the main terms of the report and responded to questions from Members.

Decision:

The Development Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

The meeting concluded at 12.50pm.

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Chair