

Services Committee
28 January 2005 Public Minutes

Services Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Friday 28 January 2005 at 10.30am

Present:

F B Grains	L Angus
B J Cheyne	A J Cluness
C B Eunson	R G Feather
B P Gregson	L G Groat
I J Hawkins	J H Henry
J C Irvine	E J Knight
Capt G G Mitchell	F A Robertson
J G Simpson	T W Stove
W N Stove	W Tait

Apologies:

J A Inkster	W H Manson
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In Attendance:

J Watt, Executive Director – Community Services
J Aaron Walker, Training Manager
C Ferguson, Community Care Manager
S Gray, Co-ordinator, Shetland Family Services
A Jamieson, Head of Education
C Medley, Head of Housing
A Nicol, Youth Development Officer
G Smith, Head of Community Development
H Tait, Management Accountant
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Mrs F B Grains, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 2 December 2004, having been circulated, was confirmed.

Members' Attendance at External Meetings

There was nothing to report.

01/05 **Scottish Social Services Council Registration Requirements**

The Committee considered a report by the Community Care Manager (Appendix 1).

The Community Care Manager summarised the main terms of the report, clarifying that it was hoped to have a Service Level Agreement with Shetland College for the employment and line

management of the assessor posts. She advised that a similar approach was being taken by many local authorities in Scotland in order to meet the need for all care staff to achieve qualifications to register with the Care Commission.

Mr L Angus referred to the Social Work Task Force that was being set up, and suggested that consideration of the recommendations should be deferred until this Task Force had had a chance to look at them.

The Community Care Manager said that the new SVQ courses were starting on 1 April, and it was hoped to proceed with the recommendations so that the QA system was in place as the new courses came in. Any significant delay would mean that there would have to be a transition period into the new QA system.

A Member said that whilst SVQ3 was a desirable target, he questioned how practically achievable it would be in the long-term. He also expressed concern that able, dedicated and long-serving workers may end up being excluded if they did not wish to, or were not in a position to, achieve this qualification.

(Mr A J Cluness attended the meeting)

The Community Care Manager said that there was evidence to suggest that it was achievable, and that the Church of Scotland had trained its staff to SVQ3 level successfully. The SVQ2 level would not be desirable, as it would limit staff in terms of their contribution to care plans. Efforts were being made to have flexible care services, and this could result in a two-tier system in terms of what could be delivered. It would be restricting in terms of how to rota staff. She said that she felt every effort should be made to attain SVQ3 level, and she had every reason to believe that staff could achieve this.

She went on to explain that the requirements of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 meant that people had to achieve the qualifications if they wished to practise. There was some leeway regarding the time allowed for training, and it was a vocational qualification that could be achieved 'on the job'. However anyone who did not meet the criteria set by the deadline would not be allowed to work as a social care worker.

A Member pointed out that training had been part of the agreement with social care workers in order to give them professional standing.

In response to a query regarding the lack of funding from the Scottish Executive for implementing this, the Executive Director said that efforts would continue to make this point nationally. The

costs involved were included in the Council's revenue estimates as a growth item.

It was noted that all local authorities were in the same position, and it was felt that COSLA could be lobbied on this issue.

Mr L G Groat said that the Council was responsible for training these staff, and that it should be done without delay. He moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr W Tait seconded.

Mr L Angus said that he felt more consideration should be given to the recommendation, particularly when efforts were being made by the Council to reduce staffing levels and expenditure. He did not feel that employing assessors was the preferred option as SVQ qualifications were vocational qualifications and assessment could be carried out in the workplace. He also suggested that it would have to be taken into account that SWT staff had had better training opportunities than Council staff.

He therefore moved, as an amendment, that the report should be deferred until the Social Work Task Force had had a chance to consider the recommendations.

Mr C B Eunson seconded.

Some Members expressed concern that the Social Work Task Group would be unable to consider this issue before the next meeting of the Services Committee.

After summing up, voting took place by show of hands and the result was as follows:

Amendment (Mr L Angus)	9
Motion (Mr L G Groat)	7

02/05 **Staffing and Dependency Levels in Residential Care for Older People**

The Committee considered a report by the Community Care Manager (Appendix 2).

The Community Care Manager summarised the main terms of the report, pointing out that a more detailed version had been made available in the Members' Room. Staffing levels required by national standards had been met, with the exception of Viewforth where some gaps had been highlighted. Efforts had been made to minimise the hours required, and the gap was currently being met through temporary and relief staff.

On the motion of Mr L Angus, seconded by Mrs B J Cheyne, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

03/05 **Direct Payments Support Service**

The Committee considered a report by the Community Care Manager (Appendix 3).

Captain G G Mitchell and Mr W Tait declared an interest as Chair and Director of Shetland Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) respectively.

The Community Care Manager advised that this issue had been discussed at the Social Forum, where there had been support for establishing a support organisation to help people who opt for Direct Payments. No additional funding had been made available from the Scottish Executive, but there were indications that a small amount may be available for this purpose next year. Over the last 12 months there were people in Shetland who would have opted for Direct Payments, had a support organisation been in place.

A Member queried who would be responsible for care packages should a Direct Payment go wrong.

The Community Care Manager said that the Council had a certain level of responsibility, but not the same level as it would have if it was purchasing or commissioning the service. With Direct Payments, the Council's responsibility was to ensure the money was spent in accordance with the agreed care plan, and giving advice and guidance.

A Member said that he had assisted someone with a Direct Payment, and he acknowledged that it was very daunting. He said that it was important to bear in mind that it would be more expensive, as it was often for specialist types of care that were not practical or economical for the Council to provide. However people had a statutory right to access Direct Payments, and it was important that they had a choice and that there was a mechanism in place to help them if they chose Direct Payments.

Mr A J Cluness said that opting for Direct Payments could place additional burdens on families, and it was important that they were supported. He said that the proposal to commission a support service from the CAB would help take the burden away from families, and he accordingly moved that the recommendation in the report be approved.

Mr B P Gregson seconded.

Mr L G Groat pointed out that the Scottish Executive had not committed itself to fund this. He also expressed concern that

Direct Payments had, so far, resulted in an overspend in the budgets which would have to be met by savings/cuts elsewhere. He felt that the Social Work Task Force should therefore also consider this issue in more detail, and he went on to move, as an amendment, that the recommendations should be deferred until the Social Work Task Force had had a chance to consider them.

Mrs I J Hawkins seconded.

After summing up, voting took place by show of hands and the result was as follows:

Amendment (Mr L G Groat) 2
Motion (Mr A J Cluness) 13

04/05

'Hands Up for Childcare'

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Social Work (Appendix 4).

Captain G G Mitchell declared an interest as Chair of Ness 2000.

The Shetland Family Services Co-ordinator summarised the main terms of the report, saying that it provided an opportunity to recognise the importance of childcare for the future of the Shetland economy. Members were asked to note the progress to date, to support Shetland Family Services in ensuring that childcare was available, and in moving towards successful and sustainable provision therefore encouraging families to stay in Shetland.

A Member commented that she had had dealings with the Scalloway Out of School Club, and that it had been disappointing for the parents when it had folded. She requested that consideration was given to reopening an out-of-school club in Scalloway when funding became available. She went on to say that consideration should also be given to using schools for out-of-school clubs, and she suggested that the Shetland Development Trust surplus should be considered when considering how to address the shortfall referred to in paragraph 9.5, as childcare pertained to the economic life of Shetland.

In response to a query regarding the childcare voucher scheme referred to in paragraph 3.2, the Shetland Family Services Co-ordinator confirmed that the vouchers could be used against any type of registered childcare within the voluntary or private sector. Efforts were also being made to encourage people to access child tax credits.

Mr C B Eunson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr B P Gregson seconded.

05/05

Education Service – Service Improvement Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education (Appendix 5) and on the motion of Mr C B Eunson, seconded by Mrs I J Hawkins, approved the recommendation contained therein.

The Head of Education clarified that 'TEDEY' stood for 'Teaching Educational Development for Early Years' and that 'STACS' referred to data in tables or charts.

06/05 **Placement Request Procedures**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education (Appendix 6).

The Head of Education summarised the main terms of the report, pointing out that the Head of Education currently only had delegated authority to approve a placing request, but not to refuse one. He advised that there should be an addition to the proposals at paragraph 3.3, as follows:

"In order to ensure Elected Members keep an overview, the Head of Education will produce an annual report detailing the number of requests, and the areas they are from. The first full report will be produced in the September 2005 cycle".

A Member said that it was likely that most placement requests would relate to Lerwick schools, and that this would have to be taken account of when considering the long-term planning for primary education in Lerwick.

On the motion of Captain G G Mitchell, seconded by Mr B P Gregson, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report, as amended at paragraph 3.3.

07/05 **Education Service – Halls of Residence Places for Westside Pupils**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education (Appendix 7).

Mr E J Knight moved that the recommendation be approved. However his motion did not receive a seconder.

Mr F A Robertson outlined the background to the transport boundaries, and said that whilst he had no problems with the proposals for the Walls/Bridge of Walls pupils, the parents of Sandness pupils had advised him that they had not been consulted. He therefore moved that the consideration of the report be deferred until consultation had taken place directly with parents in Sandness and the School Board.

Mr J C Irvine seconded.

The Head of Education pointed out that Sandness parents had been invited to the meeting referred to in paragraph 3.1, and there had been no further representations.

08/05 **Support for Learning Budget – 2004/2005**

The Chairperson advised that this report had been withdrawn in order for further information to be supplied, and that it would be presented to the next Council meeting.

09/05 **Proposed Staffing Structure for the New Gressy Loan Unit**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education (Appendix 9).

The Head of Education advised that the building work was on schedule to open in August 2005. He referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report, and clarified that the overall increase stated was within ASN provision at the AHS, not new staff. There would be no additional staff costs incurred.

On the motion of Mr C B Eunson, seconded by Mr W Tait, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

10/05 **Dialogue Youth – Involving Young People**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 10).

The Head of Community Development summarised the main terms of the report saying that whilst a very good start had been made in Shetland, the proposal would make a difference in terms of improving opportunities for young people and involving them in the decision-making process.

On the motion of Mr B P Gregson, seconded by Mr F A Robertson, the Committee approved the recommendations contained therein.

In response to a query regarding the request for a skate park from young people, the Head of Community Development said that consideration was being given to more appropriate sites in the town.

11/05 **New Shetlander Support Grant 2005/06**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 11).

Mrs B J Cheyne referred to the figures appended, and said that the return on the sales of the magazine was lower than she would have expected. Based on the number of copies sold, she would have expected the income to be £8,512 per annum, rather than £5,000 as stated. She also referred to the £7,000 agency fees to SCSS and said that this could be considered as double funding.

Whilst she appreciated the free contributions, the work of the Committee and the contribution to the Shetland dialect, she felt that it was important that clear figures were presented to the Council.

She therefore moved that the report be deferred until more appropriate figures could be supplied.

Mr T W Stove seconded.

Mr J C Irvine said that SCSS staff did spend time working on the New Shetlander and he moved, as an amendment, that the recommendations be approved.

Mr A J Cluness seconded, and pointed out that all contributions and the work done by the Committee were voluntary. He added that the magazine made a valuable contribution to Shetland literary life.

A Member commented that officers of the Council had financially appraised the magazine some years ago, and they had come to the conclusion that this was the cheapest option available if it were to continue.

After summing up, voting took place by show of hands and the result was as follows:

Amendment (Mr J C Irvine)	11
Motion (Mrs B J Cheyne)	4

12/05

Shetland Council of Social Service – Support Grant

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 12).

The Head of Community Development pointed out that the proposal was that SCSS should be supported to the level of the current year plus an inflationary increase, in accordance with the Council's budgetary targets. Therefore the request for additional grant assistance to part fund the cost of a receptionist post was not being recommended.

A Member said that he would like to see a mechanism in place so that SCSS could be put on a firmer footing, and not have to approach the Council for a grant every year.

Another Member pointed out that it had been proposed to offer three-year funding, but that this had never happened. It was also commented that the Council were asking SCSS to take more responsibility for service delivery, and that it was therefore important that the organisation was on a sound footing.

Other Members commented that the onus should be on the voluntary organisations to provide reception cover, and that officials were following instructions by not recommending growth budgets.

Mr W Tait moved that the recommendations in the report be approved, and Mr F A Robertson seconded.

Mr J C Irvine said that it was important for the new Voluntary Resource Centre to have full-time reception cover, and that this growth item should be treated consistently with earlier growth items on the agenda. He added that the SCSS had been in a position to give £600,000 back to SCT, as they had been successful in securing lottery funding.

He accordingly moved, as an amendment, that the recommendations in the report be approved with the addition that the Committee recommend that the shortfall for the receptionist post should be included in the revenue estimates to be considered by the Council at its meeting in February.

Mr L Angus seconded, pointing out the financial advantages to the Council of having these organisations located in one building.

After summing up, voting took place by show of hands and the result was as follows:

Amendment (Mr J C Irvine)	10
Motion (Mr W Tait)	6

13/05 **Service Developments for People with Learning Disabilities – Update Report**

The Committee noted a report by the Community Care Manager (Appendix 13).

14/05 **Community Learning and Development in the South Mainland of Shetland – Follow-Up Visit by HM Inspectors**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 14).

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mrs F B Grains moved, and Mr B P Gregson seconded, to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the appendices of agenda item 15.

(Members of the public and representatives of the media left the meeting)

15/05 **Land at Fullaburn, Bressay**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing.

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The Head of Housing summarised the main terms of the report and the outcome of the consultations that had taken place with the community.

Mr E J Knight said that he felt a compromise had been reached, and therefore moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report.

Mrs B J Cheyne seconded.