

# MINUTES

## A&B - Public

**Education and Families Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Thursday 4 October 2018 at 10.00am**

### **Present:**

#### Councillors:

P Campbell	J Fraser
E Macdonald	R McGregor
D Sandison	G Smith
R Thomson	B Wishart

#### Religious Representatives:

M Tregonning

### **Apologies:**

S Coutts	C Hughson
T Macintyre	H Rankine
T Smith	

### **In Attendance:**

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services  
C Ferguson, Director – Corporate Services  
K Fraser, Executive Manager – Shetland Library  
M Nicolson, Executive Manager – Children and Families/Chief Social Work Officer  
R Sinclair, Executive Manager – Capital Programme  
S Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools  
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer  
J Johnston, Quality Improvement Officer  
K Johnston, Solicitor  
M Thomson, Management Accountant  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

### **Also:**

D Morrish, Member – Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)  
S Thomason, Member – Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)

### **Chairperson**

Mr G Smith, Chair of the Committee, presided.

### **Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

The Chair advised that he wished to pass on his thanks to Council staff, volunteers and the young people involved in the “Big Takeover”. He also thanked the partners involved – Shetland Arts Trust, Shetland Recreational Trust, Shetland Amenity Trust, Visit Scotland and Voluntary Action Shetland – and the media for their positive coverage of the event. It had

been a very busy weekend, with over 70 events organised and admissions in excess of ten thousand recorded, and he recorded his appreciation to those involved.

### **Declarations of Interest**

None

### **Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018 on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Fraser.

#### **23/18 – Proposed New Build Residential Children's Home**

The Chair noted that it had been expected that a Strategic Outline Case would be presented to the Committee at today's meeting. Work on the project had started in January 2017, and there was a need to get the project moving as it involved some of the most vulnerable young people in Shetland.

The Executive Manager – Capital Programme advised that there were a number of Strategic Outline cases that should have been presented during this cycle of meetings. However none of them were yet at the stage where they could be presented, and they would now be considered during the December cycle of meetings.

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2018 on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Ms Wishart.

#### **31/18      Chief Social Work Officer Report**

The Committee considered the Annual Report from the Chief Social Work Officer (CS-34-18-F).

The Chief Social Work Officer summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting performance, key developments and priorities. In particular, she outlined how significant progress had been made in the recording and collation of information for the Child Plan document which had made the process much simpler. The recommendations that had arisen as a result of the review of youth justice were now underway, and a programme of training and a new assessment framework was being worked through with social workers. The appointment of an interim Depute Executive Manager in Children and Families Social Work had helped to ensure a more appropriate distance from direct decision making, and had helped create capacity to lead on improvement work. There had been fewer child protection referrals and fewer children placed on the child protection register, and work was ongoing to better integrate Children and Families Social Work and Children's Resources.

She went on to say that the priorities for the next year were to build capacity to support care leavers in Shetland, as there was demand on services for appropriate accommodation and support. Staff were also looking at standby duty allowances for social workers, and at programmes and career planning. One of the key activities would also be to embed the performance governance framework into practice, to ensure that there was more robust governance and accountability.

Responding to questions, the Chief Social Work Officer advised it had been necessary to use agency staff, particularly in Children and Families, and there had been a number of gaps in the management team. It had been very challenging to

attract people into senior posts and specialist posts, so agency staff had been used to ensure continuity of service. There was a balance between managing cost and managing risk and it was likely that agency staff would have to be used until the end of the financial year, with a view to having a more senior established management team in place thereafter. The agency staff used had been very experienced and had been of real benefit to the team. Work was taking place to develop the social work team and give them broader experience so that they could step up to management roles in future. Work was also taking place to better integrate Children's Resources and Children and Families, and a number of options were being considered.

Members thanked the Chief Social Work Officer for the positive report.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the report.

32/18

**Shetland Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2017/18**

The Committee considered the Annual Report from the Lead Officer for Adult and Child Protection (CS-38-18-F).

The Chief Social Work Officer summarised the main terms of the report, outlining the activity that had taken place over the last year, particularly in respect of prevention, awareness raising and education. She assured the Committee that when children were on the Child Protection Register for over one year, there would always be clear reasons as to why this was the case. Moving forward into 2018/19, the Shetland Child Protection Committee would be working to better align Adult Protection and Child Protection, and a Convener had been appointed to both Committees.

The Chief Social Work Officer then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- In child abuse cases, there was always an element of emotional abuse. When recording information, it was usually the main cause of abuse that was recorded rather than the details which would usually include emotional abuse.
- The reduction in numbers of children on the Child Protection Register over the last three years could be as a result of early intervention work that had been taking place, although there was not yet evidence to confirm this.
- When children who had been on the Child Protection Register moved into Shetland, staff would be aware of this, but it could sometimes be challenging to get all the information relating to them from other local authorities.
- Grandparents were considered as part of the wider family network, and were very often keen to support their family.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the report.

33/18

**Lerwick Library Refurbishment – Project Update**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Capital Programme (CPS-09-18-F) presenting an update on the status of the Lerwick Library Refurbishment project, an updated business case in line with the Council's Gateway Process for the Management of Capital Projects, and a revised scope and programme for approval by the Council.

The Executive Manager – Capital Programme summarised the main terms of the report, advising that since the original decision to approve the refurbishment project in 2015, costs had risen in excess of the budget. The project had been significantly delayed due to the decant of Council staff into the building. Alternatives were now being explored to the original proposal to move staff from the Knab site to St Rangan's were now being explored, so the need for re-use of this building was now less clear. The revised business case proposed focused on maintenance to the outer fabric of the building only, but the covering report highlighted the option to revert to the scope in the original project that had been agreed in 2015.

The Chair said that he was disappointed that the report had been written from a landlord perspective rather than a service perspective, as there would be service implications depending on which proposal was agreed. He invited the Executive Manager – Shetland Library to speak to the meeting regarding the service implications, as it was important for the Committee to also hear that perspective. The original project had been a victim of circumstances and would have commenced by now if it had been possible to stick to the original plan.

The Executive Manager – Shetland Library advised that the service was currently delivered over three buildings, and this meant that a lot of time was spent managing these buildings and dealing with building issues such as fire alarms and risk assessments. As the three buildings were open to the public, they also required to be appropriately staffed. This made staff timetabling more complex and lone working issues had to be considered. Staff spent a lot of time moving things around the buildings and dealing with stock management, when their time could be used more productively. The staffing complement had been reduced by 25% in recent years, and efforts had been made to cut out inefficient working. It was also the case that the types of service delivered by the library had changed. Customers wanted to see more books on display, and there was a demand for more study space and a better children's area. Having to deliver the service from three buildings led to inefficient working, and impacted on the ability to deliver a better service.

Responding to questions, she said that proceeding with the original project would mean that staff were better able to maintain the service that was currently being provided. Budgets were under pressure, and it was getting more difficult to staff the library in the way it was currently done. It would be possible to have staff working on other tasks – such as outreach – if they were not having to fetch books for people so often. It was also the case that the services provided by the library had changed in recent years, and there was now more ICT and children and families usage. One of the biggest developments had been the introduction of the "Bookbug" programme which was very popular. There were a lot of outreach activities that did take place outwith Lerwick in school libraries, and communities had access to some of these. However in other areas it had been difficult to justify the staff, as numbers had been low.

The Executive Manager – Capital Programme then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- Operational efficiencies for the library service did not form part of this report. The report had been written, and the recommendation arrived at, from an estates point of view.
- The Old Library building was at a stage where it was past the point of normal routine maintenance, and it required some major work.
- The reprioritisation of the Council's maintenance programme had been discussed with the Executive Manager – Estate Operations who understood that the programme would need to be reprofiled. The impact on services would be mitigated by prioritising those projects with the most pressing need. However there would be a significant effect on the programme as it would effectively mean that £100,000 was being removed from it every year if the option to carry out the internal works was chosen.
- The original report had been written with the need to find alternative accommodation for the Bruce Family Centre in mind, but there were now other options. The decision to proceed with repairs to the Old Library did not preclude future use. The condition of the building was very poor and it was strongly recommended that at a minimum, maintenance works were undertaken. If the building was used for any purpose in future, it was likely that elements of the £1.541million anticipated refurbishment and adaption costs would have to be made available.
- The St Ringan's building was owned by the Council, and information as to its listing status would be circulated to Members.
- The table at paragraph 4.9 in the report illustrated how the project costs had increased since 2015. A large proportion of these related to internal recharges and fees, which also included management of the contract and external consultants. It was not possible to say at the moment how much of the £900,000 budget would be left once fees, building warrants etc had been taken account of. The costs set out in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 of Appendix B to the report were the current estimates.
- The repair works to the Old Library were something that would have to be done. Proceeding with the original project would cost more and release the two buildings for other use, but their future use was unclear. The Council could choose to sell the properties and while it was unlikely that this would realise significant capital, the Council would no longer be responsible for maintenance.
- In principle, there would be no issue transferring any capital receipt from the sale of St Ringan's to the refurbishment of the Old Library building. However it was important to note that it tended to be the case that it could be difficult to sell this type of property, and buildings which had previously been residential realised higher capital receipts. The site had not been valued as a vacant site, but there was a healthy demand for town centre sites.
- The Old Library building had been designed for a particular purpose and the current layout was appropriate for a library. It had been considered whether it could be used for office accommodation, but the layout made it more challenging.

During the discussion that followed, Members commented that the report did not sufficiently equip them with the information they required in order to make a decision. It was questioned what the wider implications would be for the Council's overall asset and maintenance programmes, and commented that it was disappointing that the report did not take into account the service needs relating to the provision of the library service. This had formed part of the earlier business case that had been presented, and it was felt that it was disappointing that this had not been taken into account in the report being presented today as it would have given those who had not been on the Committee when the previous report was presented a much better understanding of the debate.

It was commented that the way the library service was delivered currently appeared to be quite adequate. However other Committee members were of the view that the service could be delivered much more efficiently if it was all on one site, and that the additional funding required for all the works should be approved rather than just carrying out temporary measures at the moment.

It was pointed out that all costs would just go up over time, and it was likely that more maintenance would be required in the future due if the external fabric only was dealt with at the moment. It was commented that refurbishment of the Old Library building would enable the St Ringan's building to be sold, and it may achieve a good price. However the report did not contain enough information about the costs relating to all the options, including resale of the site.

Mr Sandison said that given concerns about the lack of information provided in the report, and the information provided at the meeting regarding the importance of the service, he would move that a decision be deferred today pending the presentation of a refocused report which takes account of (a) the service needs overall of the library service and (b) how the refurbishment fits into the wider context of the SIC Asset Strategy and the knock-on effects on other Council users and services.

Mr Smith seconded, with the proviso that the report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee, and Mr Sandison agreed to incorporate this into his motion.

It was noted that the recommendation from the Committee would be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Resources Committee that a decision be deferred pending the presentation of a refocused report to the next meeting of the Committee which takes account of (a) the service needs overall of the library service and (b) how the refurbishment fits into the wider context of the SIC Asset Strategy and the knock-on effects on other Council users and services.

**External Audit Report: Educational Psychology Service**

The Committee considered a report by the Principal Educational Psychologist (CS-35-18-F) presenting the validated self-evaluation of the Educational Psychology Service carried out by Education Scotland.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Principal Educational Psychologist had previously been the sole practitioner, but there was now another member of staff in place. The self-evaluation had been validated by HM Inspectorate of Education Scotland, and there was no action plan or return visit required.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the report.

35/18

**External Audit Reports: Education Scotland – Sandness and Cunningsburgh Primary Schools**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-37-18-F) presenting two recent reports from HM Inspectorate of Education Scotland in relation to Sandness Primary School and Cunningsburgh Primary School.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that all areas for development in respect of Sandness Primary School were being taken forward within the school's normal improvement process. In respect of Cunningsburgh Primary School, a further inspection of the nursery class would be carried out within the next year, as it had been judged that additional support, resources and time was required to make improvements in some areas. Education Scotland would be carrying out the training pedagogy to ensure that what was delivered was up to date.

In response to a question regarding whether there were resourcing issues, the Director of Children's Services advised that resources were something that were being considered all the time and all relevant staff, not just those in Cunningsburgh Primary School, would be having the training.

The Chair commented that there had been some anxiety expressed at the Parent Council meeting regarding the role of teaching Head Teachers, and the expectations that were placed on them, particularly when they were responsible for primary, nursery and additional support needs provision. He was of the view that it was something that required to be reviewed, and he requested that Children's Services carry out a review relating to the deployment of teaching Head Teachers and non-teaching Head Teachers, given that some teaching Head Teachers will have additional responsibilities in some schools.

It was commented that it should be recognised that teaching Head Teachers, particularly those who were also responsible for early years units, had a tremendous amount of responsibility and it may be that too much was being asked of these individuals.

The Committee passed on its thanks and appreciation to staff for the positive reports that had been received.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the report.

36/18

**Addendum to School Transport Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Schools (CS-33-18-F) that presented an addendum to the recently approved School Transport Policy 2018.

The Executive Manager - Schools summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Council required to make a policy commitment in respect of those pupils who live on the remote isles and require transport by air to attend secondary school.

Mr McGregor moved that the recommendation in the report be approved, and Mr G Smith seconded.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED that the Policy and Resources Committee RECOMMENDS that the Council approve the proposed addendum to the School Transport Policy 2018.

37/18

**National Improvement Framework**

The Committee considered a report by the Quality Improvement Officer (CS-36-18-F) presenting information on the National Improvement Framework.

The Quality Improvement Officer summarised the main terms of the report, advising that good progress was being made in the four areas that had been identified as key priorities for action, and it was worth noting that there had been particularly strong performance in secondary numeracy. Work had taken place in partnership with other local authority areas, and a number of Head Teacher training events had been held to support schools to revise their plans for Pupil Equity funding. The seven local authorities in the Northern Alliance had also worked in partnership to help ensure a consistency of approach in planning for the Pupil Equity Fund, and had developed a number of key improvement agendas linked to raising attainment. He also advised that some typographical and grammatical errors had been identified in the reports appended, and these would be corrected prior to final submission to the Scottish Government.

In response to a query regarding correlation with ACEL data, the Quality Improvement Officer said that there was an area of achievement based on teacher judgement in the Curriculum for Excellence, and the data was lower for that. The reasons behind this would be explored.

Responding to a question relating to the use of free school meals uptake as a means of allocating funding, the Chair advised that he had again taken the opportunity to discuss this with the Cabinet Secretary – Education and Skills during his recent visit to Shetland. There was recognition that the data was not an ideal measure for rural local authorities, and the Cabinet Secretary was open to the Council coming forward with a better measure. The Northern Alliance would be looking at this issue, and work had also taken place with Community Planning which required to be pulled together.

He went on to say that during the budget-setting process, he also intended to ensure that the necessary resources were made available to the Committee to carry out its work. He was heartened to see that the Plan was rigorous, and set out clearly the way in which it was intended to carry out the work required.



**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee

- NOTED the key steps being taken to address the national Excellence and Equity agenda
- NOTED the National Improvement Report 2017/18
- NOTED the National Improvement Framework Plan 2018/19

The meeting concluded at 12.05pm.

.....  
Chair