

MINUTE

‘B’

Services Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Thursday 26 January 2006 at 10.30am

Present:

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

Apologies:

A J Cluness	Capt G G Mitchell
T W Stove	

In Attendance:

L Bisset, Capital Projects Manager
H Budge, Quality Improvement Manager
B Doughty, Interim Head of Social Work
N Galbraith, Interim Head of Education
C Medley, Head of Housing
J Reyner, Acting Quality Improvement Manager
G Smith, Head of Community Development
L Adamson, 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 1 December 2005, having been circulated, was confirmed.

Members' Attendance at External Meetings

Mr E J Knight reported that he had recently attended the London Boat Show for the launch of the Round Britain and Ireland Race. The Shetland Stand had maintained a significant amount of interest throughout the event. Mr Knight suggested that for future years, it would be worthwhile to combine a Shetland and Orkney stand, as yachts visiting Shetland could also be visiting Orkney. The Committee agreed that

this was a very worthwhile exercise and Shetland should continue to be represented at the event.

01/06 **Fuel Poverty Strategy**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Housing Service and the Energy Manager – Infrastructure Services (Appendix 1).

The Head of Housing summarised the main terms of the report and advised that although the Fuel Poverty Strategy had been graded highly by the Scottish Executive, no money has been directly provided to implement the strategy.

Mr J P Nicolson referred to the Executive Summary where it was reported, “The Scottish House Condition Survey estimates that around 25% of households in Shetland are fuel poor” and enquired whether there was any indication of the overall cost for tackling fuel poverty in Shetland. The Head of Housing advised that the estimated cost is £31.1m, with the majority of need being in the private housing sector, rather than in social housing.

Some discussion took place regarding which sectors of the community would be most at risk of fuel poverty, and although it was decided that older people and pensioners would be those mainly at risk, people living in older houses, families with young children and those living in rural areas would also be included. The Head of Housing advised that grants were available through the SIC’s Environmental Health service to assist with installation of insulation and central heating. However, financial assistance to improve homes may not eradicate the problems.

Mrs I J Hawkins said that as the Fuel Poverty Strategy had been forced on Local Authorities, she suggested that the SIC’s representative at the CoSLA meetings should be making representation on this issue and fighting that funding be provided for Shetland.

Mr B P Gregson suggested that as the Government has not had to use the money it allocates for the cold weather scheme, when the temperature falls below a certain level, that money could be used to fund some of the Fuel Poverty Strategy. Mr J A Inkster said that as the fuel strategy is a government priority, it is imperative that the funding comes from central government. Pressure must be kept on the Scottish Executive to achieve as much funding as possible.

Mr L Angus suggested that the Council write to the Department for Work and Pensions outlining the points made and to suggest that when they carry out their review they include the wind chill factor as a base scheme. The Head of Housing advised that he would

speak to the Scottish Executive regarding lobbying for funding, as Shetland cannot implement the Strategy without funding.

In response to a query from a Member, the Head of Housing advised that Hjaltdland Housing Association had set up a "One-Stop-Shop" to provide advice on the grants available to householders.

Mr W H Manson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report and to incorporate the earlier suggestion by Mr L Angus to write to the Department for Work and Pensions. Mr L Angus seconded.

02/06

Education Service – Service Improvement Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Head of Education (Appendix 2).

The Quality Improvement Manager summarised the main terms of the report. She explained that the objectives have to be set annually in December, to allow schools to consider what to take forward in their plans for implementation in August.

Mr L Angus moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr W H Manson seconded.

Mr L Angus commented that he would like to see some assurance that budget preparation and monitoring would be included. The Quality Improvement Manager advised that the devolved school management scheme was currently being reviewed and during 2005, additional work had been undertaken to ensure that budgets were more closely monitored. The Quality Improvement Manager said it was envisaged that the Education service's budgets would be on target this year.

Referring to the Service Review for Community Services held earlier this week, Mr J P Nicolson said that resource management for the Education service had been well covered and there was evidence that progress was being made in terms of achievement.

A Member commented that there was no reference to alcohol in the Service Improvement Plan. The Quality Improvement Manager advised that health promotion in schools ensures there is a programme for health and social education and alcohol misuse forms part of that area. A Member stated that alcohol misuse is a reflection on the community of Scotland and Shetland, rather than on the Education service. The Interim Head of Education said people should be educated about the dangers of alcohol misuse, although alteration of behaviour was often very difficult. He added that the Education service would be continuing to make a drive to educate on alcohol misuse, in collaboration with other services.

The Interim Head of Education said that the Service Improvement Plan should allow schools to match exactly with inspection requirements, therefore the process should never be a surprise to the schools involved, the Education service or to Members. He reported that there had not been a poor inspection report on a Shetland school in the past two years. The Interim Head of Education added that with the updated Service Improvement Plan all future inspection results for Shetland schools should be good, very good or excellent.

In response to a query from a Member, the Interim Head of Education advised that the former Quarff school building would be implemented as an additional support base later this year.

03/06

Shared Management Guidelines for Shetland's Schools

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Head of Education (Appendix 3).

The Quality Improvement Manager summarised the main terms of the report. She advised that the guidelines would allow the Education Service to consult widely with the communities involved, gather all the information and either recommend approval or refusal of shared management. However the final decision on shared management of the schools would be made at Services Committee and SIC.

Mr B P Gregson referred to the shared management guidelines and the reference to the involvement of school boards. Mr Gregson advised that he was aware that there were uncertainties relating to the future of school boards in their existing format. Mr Gregson said that as school boards had played an important role in the future of schools, he asked for some assurance that there would continue to be a large involvement from the local community in the shared management process. The Interim Head of Education gave his absolute assurance that school boards would not discontinue if the school so chose. The intention is to include a wider community group, including teachers, parents with children at school, and members of the community whose children no longer attend that particular school.

Mr B P Gregson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mrs I J Hawkins seconded.

(Mr J C Irvine attended the meeting).

It was reported that the shared management pilot for three schools in the Westside had been a success. The Head Teacher was effectively the manager, with responsibility for the management aspects of the schools and policy development for learning and

teaching. In the absence of the Head Teacher at a particular school, the Principal Teacher would take responsibility for the school. This arrangement allows teaching staff to concentrate on teaching the pupils and this benefits the children in the schools.

04/06 **Distribution of Additional Funding for Class Contact Reduction, Class Size Reduction and Additional Teachers**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Head of Education (Appendix 4)

The Quality Improvement Manager advised that the funding allocation is over a two-year period. The first year funding is to achieve further class-contact reduction time. She referred Members to paragraph 10 in Appendix A, to the other areas of teaching that have to be taken into consideration by 2007. The second year funding is to ensure that Primary 1 and Secondary 1 and 2 are at the required levels and ensure that a certain level of art and support teachers are employed.

In response to a query from a Member, the Interim Head of Education advised that it was difficult to establish the current number of teaching staff in Shetland covered by the circular since it included a range of support staff. However he assured Members that the target of 430 teaching staff would be met by 2007.

On the motion of Mr L Angus, seconded by Mr J P Nicolson, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

05/06 **Shetland Museums Service – Collection Management Policy 2005-2008**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 5).

The Head of Community Development advised that Shetland Amenity Trust manage the Shetland museum on a day to day basis, however the collection remains in the ownership of the Council.

Mr L G Groat moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr L Angus seconded.

06/06 **Capital Grants to Voluntary Organisations – Delting Boating Club Marina Users Association**

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

The Head of Community Development advised that this was the first application for funding for a marina project, following the report to Committee in September on "Additional Resources for Water Based Facilities".

Mrs B J Cheyne advised that Busta Voe, where the proposed marina would be located, was where all the Island Games sailing events had been held. She advised that the voe had been designated for recreational purposes. Mrs Cheyne said that this was a big project that residents of Brae and neighbouring villages would use and would also encourage yachts to visit Shetland. Mr E J Knight said that the provision of visitor berths in any marina development was crucial. It was suggested, to encourage visiting yachts, facilities such as piped water and electricity should be provided on the pontoons.

Mrs B J Cheyne moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr E J Knight seconded.

07/06 **Support for Tall Ships' Race 2006**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 7).

The Head of Community Development advised that he had been in discussion with C.O.P.E. Ltd to get them involved in the selection process, with the possibility of an individual with a disability taking part in the 2006 event.

08/06 **Cinema and Music Venue – An Update**

The Committee noted a report by the Head of Community Development (Appendix 8).

Mr J P Nicolson said that the feasibility study indicated that the project would be very vulnerable should audience participation figures fall below the suggested benchmark. There were also many questions still to be answered. The Head of Community Development said that nobody would want the project to proceed should there be continual financial problems. He advised that experts have been commissioned to look at the Business Plan for the Cinema and Music Venue project and their findings will be presented in a report to Services Committee on 16 March.

Mr W Tait reported that a cinema and music venue had recently opened in the Western Isles. He suggested that the Western Isles be asked to provide some statistics on the facility. A Member suggested that the Orkney Cinema also be approached to provide statistics, to gauge comparisons.

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mrs F B Grains moved, and Mr W N Stove seconded, to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of agenda item 9.

(Representatives of the media left the meeting)

09/06 **Childcare Services Provided by Firth and Mossbank Enterprise (FAME)**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Head of Social Work.

(Mr L Angus declared a non-pecuniary interest and left the meeting).

The Interim Head of Social Work advised that this was very much a holding report to allow more work to continue with the new Board of Directors appointed to FAME. To date the new Board have met all the funding conditions to allow the provision of childcare in the area to continue until the end of this financial year. A further report on the proposals for childcare provision in Firth and Mossbank and for childcare services throughout Shetland will be presented to the Services Committee in March.

Mr W H Manson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Mr L G Groat seconded.

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F B Grains
Chairperson