



MINUTES

B - Public

Policy and Resources Committee
Council Chamber, Lower Hillhead, Lerwick
Monday 4 December 2023 at 10.00am

Present:

J Fraser	C Hughson
D Leask	M Lyall
E Macdonald	R McGregor
L Peterson	G Robinson

Present via Remote Link

D Anderson	R W Thomson
D Sandison	

Also:

A Wenger

Apologies:

None

In Attendance (Officers):

M Sandison Chief Executive
C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services
T Coutts, Executive Manager – Economic Development
J Cunningham, Executive Manager – ICT
P Fraser, Executive Manager – Finance
N Hutcheson, Executive Manager - Roads
A Inkster, Executive Manager – Ferry and Air Operations and Port Infrastructure
D Morgan, Chief Social Work Officer
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
L Simpson, Executive Manager - Inclusion
V Simpson, Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development
R Sinclair, Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement
J Sutherland, Executive Manager – Children’s Social Work
E Perring, Team Leader – Community Planning
C Flaws, Community Justice Officer
L Gear, Partnership Officer
M Keith, Community Justice Officer
L Geddes, Committee Officer
L Adamson, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance (Remotely):

J Campbell, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Glasgow

Chairperson

Mrs E Macdonald, Leader of the Council, 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, remote attendance and participation by Committee members during the meeting was permitted. She also advised that the meeting was being recorded and would be published online for public access afterwards.

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023 were approved on the motion of Mr Robinson, seconded by Mr Fraser.

60/23 Corporate Services – Quarter 2 Performance Report 2023-24

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Change Programme (CRP-35-23-F) that presented the Corporate Services Quarter 2 Performance Report 2023-2024.

In introducing the report, the Director of Corporate Services referred to the continuing pressure on staff across the services, which had impacted on progress on a number of actions and projects. She went on to advise on the areas where progress had been made, including procurement, and on the improved staffing situation within the Change Programme.

In response to a request for an update on Project OA133, the Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) Review, the Director of Corporate Services advised on the close working relationship between the Council and SAT on the review and further meetings were to be arranged. She went on to advise that while no significant change was being proposed at this time, she would present a report to Members in due course, to inform on progress on the review.

During debate, concern was expressed regarding the number of Projects and Actions listed in Appendix 1 where no progress had been made, and that in each subsequent presentation of the report there were more Red rankings, rather than fewer. In that regard, it was hoped that the improved staffing situation, as reported, would help to address the situation. It was further commented that the Health and Safety Arrangement recommendations, shown as Red rankings, were important areas and required continuity.

Reference was made to Sections 4.7.4 and 4.7.5 of the report, and concern was raised where it was recognised that Corporate Services was likely to fail to support all services to the level required, and struggle to deal with the current change programme, projects and recommendations for improvement. In commenting on the need to address the current situation, reference was made to the “Corporate Services Staffing Matters” report to be considered during the exempt part of the meeting, where it was hoped solutions could be found.

While recognising the significant challenges within the Directorate, comment was made on the need for projects to move forward and it was hoped that progress would be evident in the near future. It was however acknowledged that staff continued to work incredibly hard to achieve “Our Ambition”, and that the Council is an organisation where people strive and want to work.

There was no further debate, and the Committee noted the report.

Decision:

The Committee:

- DISCUSSED the contents of this report;
- COMMENTED on the achievements of Corporate Services during Quarter 2 of 2023-2024;
- NOTED the issues facing Corporate Services in terms of competing priorities and the constraints on resources; and
- ADVISED managers of their views.

61/23

SIC Overall Management Accounts 2023/24 - Projected Outturn at Quarter 2

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-36-23-F) that presented the overall Council projected financial position as at Quarter 2.

The Executive Manager - Finance introduced the report and advised on the content and key message from each of the appendices, including the addition of Appendix 9, that provided information on Full Time Staff Equivalents and the costs of vacancies, overtime and agency staff.

The Executive Manager - Finance commented on the revenue and capital position of the Harbour Account, at Appendix 2, advising on an error in the third last line, where the figure of 2883, should read 3.

The Executive Manager - Finance concluded his introduction with reference to the table at Section 4.4, and the proposed spend in Quarters 3 and 4 with possible carry forwards. He also noted the expectation that the outturn position would be closer to, or below, budget.

In responding to questions relating to the information provided in Appendix 9, the Executive Manager – Finance provided explanation on the inclusion of Full Time Equivalent posts externally funded, the savings associated with posts not filled, and the spend on overtime and agency staff. It was acknowledged that the ferry funding had been included within Appendix 9 which resulted in the data providing a misleading position. In that regard, the Executive Manager - Finance suggested it would be more useful to work on a better format with presentation of the relevant information to each of the functional Committees.

In response to questions, the Executive Manager – Finance said that he would provide Members with an overview of the Nature Restoration Fund, as referred to in

the “Use of Reserves” table at Appendix 2. He would also advise whether coastal erosion projects could be eligible for support through that funding.

During debate, reference was made to the Nature Restoration Funding that has not been spent. It was commented that a priority theme of the grant included coastal and marine initiatives, which it was hoped could support coastal erosion projects around Shetland.

On the motion of Mrs Macdonald, seconded by Mr Robinson, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES to:

- NOTE the Management Accounts showing the overall projected outturn position at Quarter 2 as set out in Appendices 1-9
- NOTE the financial progress on Service Reviews, Vacancy Factor and 1% Savings, details set out in Appendices 1,4 and 5;
- APPROVE the virements and re-profiling of budgets in line with the variance analysis set out in Appendix 4 to cover over/underspends as identified and re-profiling of budgets for expenditure due only to occur in future years in line with the process as set out in paragraph 4.14; and
- APPROVE the adjustments to the 2023/24 budget to reflect the additional funding offered to the Council, as set out in Appendices 6 and 8.

(Mr Sandison attended the meeting).

62/23 Council Investments 2023/24 Mid-Year Performance Review Report

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-44-23-F) that presented the mid-year investment position and performance of the Council’s long term external investments, managed on its behalf by Fund Managers.

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report.

During questions, reference was made to the ongoing conflicts and volatility, which has created uncertainty in the investments markets and to the disappointing reduction in terms of the Council’s investments as reported over the first six months of 2023/24. The Executive Manager - Finance referred to the dialogue with Fund Managers and on the resilience and contingency in place within the Council’s portfolio and he said that going forward, while more uncertainty and volatility could be expected, there may not necessarily be further reductions in the investment value.

In responding to a comment on Fund Manager performance in regard to the long term investments, the Executive Manager – Finance agreed that over a 5-10 year period fluctuations were to be expected, however overall, although the current

position was lower than earlier this year, there had been an increase in the value of the Fund compared to previous years. He reminded Members however that withdrawals were made from the Fund, which would impact on the overall performance of the fund.

While it was acknowledged that the Council does not take short-term views when investing, it was questioned whether the Council should take more advantage of the current bank interest rates. The Executive Manager – Finance said that while there would be some attraction to do that, he advised on the need to seek sustainable expenditure through the higher returns achieved from the Council's investments, which over the longer-term had done well and better than would have been the case with the bank.

In response to questions, the Executive Manager – Finance provided an explanation on the direct lending investment with Partners and how, in practice, the returns back to the Council are achieved and thereafter reinvested again with Partners. He advised that Officers continue to engage on the reinvestment to ensure its funds achieve the best returns, but he said that the bank interest rates were currently favourable in the meantime until the funds are reinvested.

Comment was made on the mixed picture of volatility and on the investment returns compared to benchmarks. It was noted there was no mention of any immediate action proposed, and in that regard, it was questioned how long performance would continue at that level before some action should be taken. In responding, the Executive Manager – Finance advised that the Investment Strategy was reviewed and refreshed on a five year cycle, with an independent consultancy that makes recommendations on the way forward. He said that if there was a sense that early withdrawal was needed that could be done, but equally it could be the time to hold firm in anticipation of market improvements. He acknowledged however the concern raised regarding the reduction in the Council's investments at a time when the Council was struggling to balance its budget.

In responding to a further question, the Executive Manager – Finance said that he would look into whether there could be benefit to the Council from investing in the Secured Overnight Financing Rate.

During debate, comment was made on the need not to panic at this time and not make any changes to the Strategy, but to take the longer-term approach and allow the Fund Managers to continue with their mandates to the end of the five-year cycle.

There was no further debate, and the Committee noted the report.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the outcome of this Mid-Year Performance Review.

63/23

Asset Investment Plan - Progress Report

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement (ACP-13-23-F) that provided an update on the Asset Investment Plan.

In introducing the report, the Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement referred Members to the detail on the capital budget adjustments at Section 4.7, for decision.

The Executive Manager – Finance advised on a project to be added to Section 4.7 of the report, namely “Integra2 to Centros Migration” and that would also be included as part of the recommendation at Section 1.2. The Executive Manager – Finance provided an explanation on the terms of the project and the budget requirement. He apologised for the omission, and said that the report would be updated with details of the project for the Council agenda and the associated business case would also be presented.

In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Roads confirmed that the budget of £598,800 for the Cullivoe Road Improvements, included the costs associated with the Environmental Impact Assessment.

In responding to a question relating to Regional Active Travel Projects, as referred to in Section 4.7.4 of the report, it was advised that the £46k reduction in funding related only to the current year, due to changes to the programme and the difficulty of implementing the work in the current year, but that adjustment did not affect the budget for the overall programme.

Responding to questions, further information was provided on the “Land/Property Acquisition” project, whereby the Council purchased a 3-bed property at Sandveien, funded from Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply programme and 2nd homes Council tax reserve. The Executive Manager – Finance advised that the purchase of the property had been good value for money, utilising the funding opportunity for that purpose.

In responding to a question regarding the Knab Site Redevelopment project, it was advised that £3.8m is the current approved budget for the work undertaken to date and to the point where infrastructure design and demolition works are complete. The Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement said that further progress on the project would be subject to a report to Members early in 2024.

During debate, reference was made to the purchase of the social housing property at Sandveien, where it was suggested that the Council should instead be building more homes.

Comment was made that the local housing situation is such a major issue. In that regard, it was noted that the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) had not been presented to this Committee nor to the Full Council and it was hoped that as part of the constitutional review the SHIP would come for discussion to a wider membership.

In referring again to the housing situation, positive comment was made that progress was now underway on the Staneyhill site.

In noting from the report, the removal of the budget from the AIP for the “Energy Efficiency in Scottish Social Housing – Design/Strategy and Pilot project”, comment was made that it was important for the Scottish Government to allocate funding in order for projects to progress and for the Scottish Government’s own targets, on social housing, to be met.

In responding to concern raised on the need for dialogue to take place with the local building industry to expedite local housing development, Mr Leask advised that arrangements for a meeting during January 2024 had been made.

On the motion of Mr Robinson, seconded by Mr Leask, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report, with the inclusion of the additional capital costs relating to a new project “Integra2 to Centros Migration” in section 4.7 of the report.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- NOTES the progress of the projects within the Asset Investment Plan; and
- APPROVES the additional capital budget requirements for updated projected outturn spend in 2023/24 since approval of the 5 Year Asset Investment Plan 2023-28 described at section 4.7.

64/23

Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-43-23-F) that sought approval of an updated Discretionary Rural Rates Relief Policy.

The Executive Manager - Finance summarised the main terms of the report.

There were no questions, or debate.

On the motion of Mr Leask, seconded by Mr McGregor, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES that, the Shetland Islands Council Discretionary Rural Rates Relief Policy be APPROVED as outlined in section 4.12.

65/23

Chief Social Work Officer Report 2022/23

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer (CS-31-23-F) that presented the annual Chief Social Work Officer Report 2022/23.

The Chief Social Work Officer introduced the report and provided Members with an overview from the Annual Report, at Appendix 1.

There were no questions.

During debate, Mr Sandison advised that the report had been well received at Education and Families Committee and he commended the report to Committee.

There was no further debate, and the Committee noted the report.

Decision:

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the Annual Report from the Chief Social Work Officer.

66/23

Scottish Recommended Allowance – Kinship Care and Foster Care

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Children's Social Work (CS-34-23-F) that sought approval of the implementation of the Scottish Recommended Allowance for kinship and foster carers.

In introducing the report, the Executive Manager - Children's Social Work advised on the implementation of the national recommended allowance. He advised on the support for the recommendation in the report at Education and Families Committee and said that should the recommendation be approved by Policy and Resources Committee and the Council, the backdated sums would be paid to carers in the next pay run.

In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Children's Social Work advised that references to 'young people' in the report, covered those young adults, aged 18 to 26, who had experienced care.

During debate, Mr Sandison advised from the discussion on the report at Education and Families Committee, where it was concluded that despite the fact the rates had not been reviewed for some years, the rates currently paid in Shetland were quite well matched to what was recommended. Mr Sandison moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Mr Fraser seconded.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES to:

- APPROVE the implementation of the Scottish Recommended Allowance for kinship and foster carers, as set out at Section 4.6 and 4.7 of this report and
- NOTE that future Fostering and Kinship Allowance rates will be agreed via the Council's budget setting process.

(Mr Robinson declared an interest for transparency, as Chair of NHS Shetland, in the following 4 items on the agenda).

67/23

Annual Local Child Poverty Action Report

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Inclusion and the Team Leader - Community Planning (CS-32-23-F) that sought approval for the publication of Shetland's fifth Annual Local Child Poverty Action Report.

The Team Leader - Community Planning summarised the main terms of the report and introduced the Poverty Action Report, at Appendix 1.

There were no questions.

During debate, reference was made to the findings of the report that one in every 7 children in Shetland was living in poverty and concern was expressed in that

regard. Comment was made on the need for the actions within the report to be progressed to improve the situation.

Members were reminded that Shetland Islands Council was not the only Local Authority in Scotland to experience rates of children in poverty, however Shetland would be one of the lower rated authorities, but that did not make the local situation acceptable. It was recognised that the actions, as detailed in the report, were for all areas of the Council to tackle, not just for services reporting to Education and Families Committee, and that it was important to make people's lives better, to improve children's outcomes, and for the Government to help in terms of delivering on those actions.

It was commented that both child poverty and fuel poverty go hand in hand. A comment was made on the need for dialogue to take place with the local district heating company, who had proven technology to deliver cheaper heating solutions. There was a need to work across the different organisations in Shetland to try to solve the problems of child poverty and fuel poverty.

The officers involved in preparing the Poverty Action Report were congratulated. Reference was made to the mitigations to be put in place in regard to the initiatives and on the willingness to work outside the box and across all partnerships in Shetland. It was noted in the report, the references to the success of the Anchor project, in helping to take away stigmatisation and bureaucracy to help families, and working in partnership with schools. It was stated that should be the way to resource the initiatives, through working in partnership for the best of the communities.

Mr Sandison referred to the thorough report and advised from the discussion at Education and Families Committee in terms of the partnership working to tackle child poverty and fuel poverty in Shetland. Mr Sandison moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. In seconding, Mr Fraser commended officers on the informative report. He further commented on the significant workload on officers to compile the statutory reporting requirements, and suggested that the time would be better used to get on with tackling poverty.

Decision:

The Committee APPROVED Shetland's fifth Annual Local Child Poverty Action Report, at Appendix 1, for publication.

(There was a short break, and the meeting reconvened at 11.30am).

68/23

Shetland Community Justice Plan 2023-2028

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development (DV-47-23-F) that presented the Shetland Community Justice Plan 2023-2028.

The Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development introduced the report and provided an overview of the updated Shetland Community Justice Plan, at Appendix 1.

In noting from the Plan, the references to “Trauma-informed”, it was questioned whether those working in the services were in a position to identify a trauma response and adequately equipped to respond. The Chief Social Work Officer advised that Social Work took a trauma-informed lens to their services last year, working with a group of individuals to make recommendations. Staff within Justice Social Work and Youth Justice Social Workers had received training and the trauma-informed approach to working was being monitored. The Chief Social Work Officer said that the Council was a Trauma Champion, and an interest group was to be set up to strategically plan training and approaches to be taken forward. She advised also that a briefing report would be prepared to inform Members on the up to date position.

In responding to a question, the Chief Social Worker Officer advised that there was a relatively low number of cases whereby people from Shetland, that spend time in prison, have children. She went on to advise however, that in such situations, support would be provided through Children’s Social Work, which included ensuring contact between the parent and children was maintained.

The Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development provided an update on the development of a Delivery Plan, referred to in Section 4.8 of the report, and advised that the document had been drafted based on the key activities within the Plan. Work was still to be undertaken to identify lead agencies or services, and it was suggested the document would be finalised soon.

During debate, positive comment was made regarding the discussion at meetings and Seminars about community justice in Shetland, and it was recognised as an area that was held in very high regard and was a leader in its way of thinking and actions. Mr Leask moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Ms Lyall seconded.

Decision:

The Committee APPROVED the ‘Shetland Community Justice Plan 2023-28’ as set out in Appendix 1 for publication.

69/23

Shetland’s Islands with Small Populations: Second Locality Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive (DV-45-23-F) that sought approval of Shetland’s Second Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan.

The Chief Executive summarised the main terms of the report.

The Team Leader – Community Planning provided an overview of the Second Locality Plan, at Appendix 1.

In noting from the report, that despite all the efforts of the first Locality Plan, the populations of all the islands had reduced, and none of the islands had grown their population during that time. It was questioned what actions in the second version of the Plan would overcome the challenges in terms of population growth. In responding, the Team Leader – Community Planning advised that it was not possible to determine how the populations would have been impacted without the implementation of initiatives from the first Plan. She said that it was however hoped

that many of the service issues that had hampered population growth may now have been resolved. She confirmed that the second Plan included focus on increasing the populations.

Reference was made to the recommendation at Section 1.1.2 of the report, namely “to contribute the necessary resources, along with other partners, in order to achieve the outcomes”. In responding to a comment, the Chief Executive advised on the resources in place to respond to the needs of the islands. She gave, as an example, the support given to help the communities to access external funding, allowing them to take forward their development plans, rather than the Council or other planning partners contributing new funding.

Reference was made to the benefits to the Island communities from the first Locality Plan and a suggestion was made that the Locality Plan be rolled out to benefit some of the rural communities on the mainland of Shetland. The Chief Executive advised that the Management and Leadership Team of the Shetland Partnership had already considered whether it would be appropriate to develop locality plans for other areas and it was concluded there was no particular community that experienced significant disadvantage beyond the islands. The Chief Executive however reported that locality profiles had been developed for other areas of Shetland and the Council would work with individual communities on how to respond to issues raised in their locality.

In referring to the Islands Survey Data, on page 6 of the Locality Plan, the statistic given that “16% of respondents are able to access to super-fast broadband of 300MBps+” was questioned in terms of whether anyone in any of the islands could receive that level of broadband. The Team Leader – Community Planning acknowledged that her team were now realising that the indicator was not useful, and were looking to find a more appropriate indicator.

Reference was made to the ongoing connectivity issues in regard to remote access for meetings, particularly in Skerries, and the Team Leader – Community Planning advised that the community was working on resolving that issue.

During debate, reference was made to the comments relating to the reduction in the populations of the islands. It was however commented that in terms of Fair Isle, the opening of the new Bird Observatory would see an increase in the population and it was suggested that the owner of the island, namely the National Trust for Scotland, should be encouraged to make more accommodation available or to build more homes.

Mrs Lyall said that while she was hugely supportive of the aspirations in the Second Locality Plan she did have concern regarding the wording of Section 1.1.2. Mrs Lyall moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report, with a change to the wording at 1.1.2, to read “agrees to contribute the necessary resources, along with other partners, in order to make progress on the outcomes”. Mr McGregor seconded.

Ms Peterson moved, as an amendment, that the Committee approve the recommendations as set out in the report. In seconding, Mr Robinson referred the Committee to Section 6.5 of the report, which he said made it clear that the Second Locality Plan would be delivered from existing resources.

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

Amendment (Ms Peterson)	7
Motion (Mrs Lyall)	3

Decision:

The Committee:

- APPROVED Shetland's Second Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan; and
- AGREED to contribute the necessary resources, along with other partners, in order to achieve the outcomes; and
- NOTED that the Management and Leadership Team of the Shetland Partnership are responsible for ensuring delivery on the outcomes and priorities, and continues to involve the island communities.

70/23

Shetland's Partnership Plan Delivery Plan 2023/28

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive (DV-44-23-F) that sought approval of the Shetland Partnership Plan Delivery Plan 2023-2028.

The Chief Executive summarised the main terms of the report.

The Team Leader – Community Planning provided an overview of the second Delivery Plan, at Appendix 1.

There were no questions.

During debate, the Leader commented that as Chair of the Management and Leadership Team of the Shetland Partnership, meeting with partners across Shetland had given her a sense of how committed everyone was to make the changes that Shetland needs and that it was the role of everyone and every area to play their part. She referred to the strength in the staff teams within the Council and in the other organisations and their desire to make Shetland better. She acknowledged the challenges ahead, particularly in terms of resourcing.

Comment was made on the importance of the Delivery Plan, both at a local and national level, in order to negotiate with Government on how to best support local authorities.

On the motion of Mr Leask, seconded by Mrs Macdonald, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

Decision:

The Committee:

- APPROVED the Shetland Partnership Plan Delivery Plan 2023-2028;

- AGREED to contribute the necessary resources, along with other partners, in order to achieve the outcomes as set out within the Shetland Partnership Plan Delivery Plan 2023/2028; and
- NOTED that the Management and Leadership Team of the Shetland Partnership are responsible for ensuring delivery on the outcomes and priorities.

71/23

Shetland Museum Service Collections Policy 2023-2028

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Economic Development (DV-34-23-F) that presented the Collections Policy for the Shetland Museum Service for the period 2023-2028.

The Executive Manager – Economic Development introduced the report and provided an overview of the Collections Policy 2023-2028, at Appendix 1. He advised that the Development Committee had supported the recommendation in the report, for approval by Committee and onward recommendation to the Council.

During questions, the Executive Manager – Economic Development referred to the recommendation at Section 1.1.2 of the report for delegated approval to the Director of Development Services for approval of any acquisition over £5k, which he advised would be in consultation with the Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) and the Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement. He referred also to particular storage requirements for any future items acquired and on the potential need for a new Museum store.

In referring to the information provided regarding the potential purchase of further items, it was however noted that Section 6.5 of the report stated that there was “no financial implications arising directly from this report”. The Executive Manager – Economic Development confirmed that while there were no financial implications associated with approval of the report itself, any future addition to the collection would be based on the Collections Policy and the requirement for storage that new acquisitions may come with.

Referring to future financial implications, the Director of Corporate Services referred to the Council’s Policies and procurement and contractual arrangements in place, and advised that should any additional funding be needed to make a purchase, such a proposal would have to come to Council.

The Executive Manager – Economic Development also advised that SAT had a small budget to purchase items, however he said that additions to the collection were more likely to be from bequests or donations that may exceed the value referred to in Section 1.1.2.

During the discussion, clarity was sought on the implications should the Committee approve the recommendation at Section 1.1.1 but disregard the recommendation at Section 1.1.2. The Executive Manager – Economic Development advised that there would be the potential for considerable delays to the decisions made on acquisitions by SAT, and on the additional reports to Members for approval of day to day items and acquisitions purchased by SAT.

In referring again to the recommendation at 1.1.2, clarity was sought on the implications should a ceiling be included on the value of acquisitions that can be

approved by the Director of Development Services. In responding, the Executive Manager – Governance and Law advised that creating boundaries around delegated authority was difficult. In that regard, he advised on the limiting factors in terms of the delegated scheme, and should the delegated officer be in any doubt, a report would be presented to Members. He further referred to the appropriate consideration of the matter by Members, and said that by indicating that the limitations are in place, the Committee may approve the recommendation at 1.1.2.

During the discussion, it was noted that 98% of the collection was not on public view but instead in storage, however the Policy allowed for the purchase of further items and the options for disposal were quite limited. In that regard, it was questioned when a decision would be taken to purchase no further items. The Executive Manager – Economic Development advised that the rationale of the recommendation at 1.1.2 was not to take on any items where there was no suitable storage options. He explained that the Collections Policy includes the procedures for disposal of items, and that disposal is not necessarily throwing items away, but the items could be passed on to another collection or to a community museum, for example.

During debate, reference was made to the discussion on the report at Development Committee, regarding the limited storage space and on the ability to stay within that storage limit. Members had also discussed the possibility that the Lerwick museum would pass items on to community and specialist museums around Shetland.

Comment was made that the questions raised had been adequately responded to, however there was real concern regarding the storage space available. Mr Robinson moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Mr Leask seconded.

Comment was again made regarding the amount of the collection currently being held in storage, rather than on public display. Reference was made to a report to be presented to Members regarding the Museum storage, and that would provide another opportunity for Members to discuss the matter further.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- RESOLVES to APPROVE the draft Shetland Museum Service Collections Policy 2023-2028; and
- In respect of section 10.3 of the Collections Policy, DELEGATES authority to the Director of Development Services, or his nominee, to approve any acquisitions which have specific storage requirements or are of a value exceeding £5k, in consultation with Shetland Amenity Trust and the Executive Manager – Assets Commissioning and Procurement, or his nominee.

72/23

Whistleblowing Arrangements

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Internal Auditor (CRP-30-23-F) that presented the draft Whistleblowing and Response Policy.

The Senior Audit Manager, Audit Glasgow, introduced the report and provided an overview of the Whistleblowing and Response Policy, at Appendix 1. She advised

that the Policy was open to both staff and the general public to raise concerns, and that while it would be preferable for concerns raised to include the individual's name and contact details, concerns could be raised anonymously. Members were also advised that the Policy was in addition to other Council Policies where concerns can be raised and that updates on whistleblowing information would be reported to Audit Committee going forward.

The Senior Audit Manager agreed with an opinion given on the importance of gathering intelligence and said that could be looked at as part of an audit or to discuss a particular concern with management. She also agreed that it was important that protection was put in place for the individuals who raised the concern.

In response to a comment, the Senior Audit Manager explained that where evidence exists it was better to receive that evidence as part of the complaint, rather than having to seek that following receipt of the complaint. She confirmed however that all concerns would be investigated.

The Executive Manager – Governance and Law advised on the natural justice element, where he referred to the other Council Policies that provide specific protection, for example, Reporting Concerns at Work, which he said picks up on the statutory protection for people who whistle blow. He advised that the Whistleblowing and Response policy would not impact negatively in any way on the protections that are in place.

Reference was made to questions raised during 2018, regarding whistleblowing, when assurance had been given that whistleblowing provision was adequate. At that time, a suggestion had been made on the need for a confidential telephone line, but that was considered not necessary, citing that adequate provision was in place through line management and above, and there were no concerns in that regard.

The Director of Corporate Services referred to the comprehensive set of policies and procedures in place for staff to raise concerns, however she advised that the Whistleblowing and Response Policy was also open to both staff and the general public to raise concerns, and provided another route and an independent route to raise a concern of any kind that guaranteed an investigation.

In responding to a question regarding the investigation process, the Senior Audit Manager advised that in the first instance each concern raised would be reviewed by Audit Glasgow. Depending on the nature of the allegation or concern raised, the matter would be investigated by either Audit Glasgow, using their expertise in the area, or by Council management. She went on to advise that Audit Glasgow would be made aware of the outcome and conclusion of all concerns raised.

In response to a request regarding reporting to Audit Committee, the Senior Audit Manager said that the information provided would include a breakdown of the concerns raised that had been investigated by the Council management and how many by Audit Glasgow.

In responding to questions, the Senior Audit Manager explained that depending on the nature of the concern raised, some could be investigated through the Bullying and Harassment Policy, rather than the Whistleblowing and Response Policy. In responding to a further question, she suggested that the wording of the

Whistleblowing and Response Policy could be reviewed to ensure it is clear on third party reporting on bullying and harassment.

During debate, comment was made regarding the emphasis of the Policy being on the intelligence gathering aspect, rather than on evidence gathering. It was however stated that confidentiality had to be maintained at all times.

Mrs Hughson advised on the support for the Policy at Audit Committee, whereby the expertise in Audit Glasgow to provide the service was seen as a positive being independent of the Council. Mrs Hughson moved that the Committee approve the recommendation at Section 1.2 of the report. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Committee

- CONSIDERED the information presented in this report and the draft Whistleblowing and Response Policy attached at Appendix 1;
- CONSIDERED the views and decision of the Audit Committee in this regard; and
- RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES to APPROVE the Whistleblowing and Response Policy at Appendix 1.

73/23

ICT and Digital Strategy 2023-28

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - ICT (CRP-32-23-F) that presented the Council's ICT and Digital Strategy for 2023-28.

The Executive Manager - ICT introduced the report and provided an overview of the Council's ICT and Digital Strategy, at Appendix 1.

In responding to a question, the Executive Manager – ICT advised on the intention to investigate Cloud based computing as a storage solution on a case by case basis. Positive comment was made on the pragmatic approach being taken.

On the motion of Mr Thomson, seconded by Mrs Lyall, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES to approve the ICT and Digital Strategy 2023-28.

Mrs Macdonald moved that in order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, the Committee resolve to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the following items of business. Mr Robinson seconded.

(The recording of the meeting was stopped. Officers not required for the Exempt session left the meeting).

Members online confirmed to the Chair that there were no other persons present able to hear or record the proceedings.

The Chair advised on a change to the order of the agenda, and the report at item 18 would be taken next.

74/23 **Tingwall Airport Staffing**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Ferry and Airport Operations and Port Infrastructure .

The Executive Manager - Ferry and Airport Operations and Port Infrastructure summarised the main terms of the report.

During debate, Mrs Lyall moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Mrs Hughson seconded.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council APPROVES recommendation in the report.

(The meeting adjourned at 12.55pm and reconvened at 1.30pm)

Present:

J Fraser	C Hughson
D Leask	M Lyall
E Macdonald	R McGregor
L Peterson	G Robinson
D Sandison	

Present via Remote Link

D Anderson	R W Thomson
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Also:

A Wenger

Apologies:

None

In Attendance (Officers):

C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services
J Cunningham, Executive Manager – ICT
P Fraser, Executive Manager – Finance
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
L Geddes, Committee Officer
L Adamson, Committee Officer

75/23 **Office Productivity and Collaboration Suite Business Justification Case**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - ICT that presented the Office Productivity and Collaboration Suite Business Justification Case.

The Executive Manager – ICT introduced the report and provided an overview of the Business Case.

Mrs Lyall moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES to approve the recommendation in the report.

(Mr Sandison left the meeting).

76/23

Gigabit Fibre to slow-link School Sites Business Justification Case

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager ICT that outlined the Business Justification Case for Gigabit Fibre to slow-link School Sites.

The Executive Manager – ICT introduced the report and provided an overview of the Business Case.

The Executive Manager – ICT responded to questions from Members.

During debate, Mr Leask moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVES to approve to approve the recommendation in the report.

77/23

Corporate Services Staffing Matters

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services.

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report and responded to questions from Members.

Mr Robinson moved that the Committee approve the recommendation in the report. Mrs Macdonald seconded

Decision:

The Committee APPROVED the recommendation in the report.

The meeting concluded at 2.20pm.

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Chair