

# MINUTES

## B – Public

**Development Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Tuesday 7 May 2019 at 10am**

### **Present:**

P Campbell	A Cooper
S Coutts	J Fraser
S Leask	A Priest
T Smith	

### **Apologies**

A Duncan	A Manson
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### **In Attendance (Officers):**

N Grant, Director of Development Services  
A Jamieson, Executive Manager – Housing  
J Manson, Executive Manager – Finance  
T Coutts, Team Leader – Business Development  
W Grant, Commercial Investment Officer  
K Nicolson, Commercial Investment Officer  
M Hodgson, Solicitor  
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer  
L Adamson, Committee Officer

### **Chair:**

Mr Cooper, Chair of the Committee, presided.

### **Circular:**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Mr T Smith advised in terms of Item 1, Allocation Policy Annual Performance Review, that he was a Board Member of Hjaltland Housing Association (HHA), however he did not intend to leave the meeting during the discussion.

Mr Fraser declared an interest in Item 1, Allocation Policy Annual Performance Review, as a tenant of Hjaltland Housing Association, and a representative on the HHA Scrutiny Panel, and also that his son was currently on the Council and HHA housing waiting lists. Mr Fraser said that having taken advice, he would take part in the discussion and debate.

### **Minutes**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019 on the motion of Mr T Smith, seconded by Mr Fraser.

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Housing (DV-14-19-F) that detailed annual performance review information on the housing allocation quota targets contained in the Council's Allocation Policy for the year 2018/19, and recommendations for 2019/20.

In introducing the report, the Executive Manager – Housing outlined an amendment required at Section 4.2, which should read, "The total number of applications on the Housing Register at the end of March 2019 was 587, a marginal decrease since March 2018...". She highlighted a number of quotas and targets, and gave an overview of performance during 2018/19. In terms of proposals for 2019/20, she advised that for Lerwick allocations the quota would remain unchanged, but for an adjustment on Landward allocations which should assist in the prevention of homelessness in rural areas. The Executive Manager – Housing also referred to the Housing Allocation Policy amendments following consultation during March 2019, which were detailed in Appendix 1.

In response to questions, the Executive Manager – Housing explained why it can often take a longer time to re-let some Council properties, where the age of the stock was the main factor. In terms of satisfaction rates, she said that while the Council can learn from the other main housing provider in Shetland, there were also standards to be achieved, and comparisons with other Local Authorities, as part of the Housing Charter, and through membership of the Scottish Housing Network.

During the discussion, reference was made to Appendix 1, where the proposal was noted for the removal of points from the "Fostering and Adoption" category. In that regard, comment was made on the efforts locally to recruit foster and long-term carers, to find permanence for vulnerable young people in Shetland. In making reference to the Council's duties as a Corporate Parent, it was stressed that the "Fostering and Adoption" points should continue to be reflected within the Allocations Policy. The Executive Manager – Housing however explained that the "Fostering & Adoption" category was no longer considered a direct need, and that such circumstances would now be taken account of elsewhere within the overall assessment and reflected within the allocation policy under the "Social Need" category. In response to questions, the Executive Manager – Housing advised on the historic inclusion of the "Fostering and Adoption" category within the Council's Allocations Policy, and as a result of changes to the Housing (Scotland) 2014 Act there has been a move to reduce the number of categories, making the Policy very much based on housing need, with specific requirements picked up elsewhere under other appropriate headings. She advised also on the proposal to reduce the "Social Need" points category to a two tier award of 50 and 100 points, adding that the "Fostering and Adoption" category was relatively low in comparison, as was not a category considered a true reflection of housing needs.

In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Housing said that the 20% response rate to the consultation was considered an acceptable level of return. She advised also on the separate guidance provided to applicants and tenants, and on the different means to return the surveys to encourage responses.

During debate, Mr Campbell referred to the difficulty within Children's Services to recruit foster and adoptive carers, and he said that the Council should not be deterring that path, but instead to support those willing to come forward to care for children. Mr Campbell said that the points for Fostering and Adoption should not get lost within the heading of Social Need, and he was of the view that the proposal to remove the points should be reversed. Mr Fraser moved that the Committee

approve Recommendation 1.1, and that recommendation 1.2, be amended to read, that the Committee approve the recommended amendments to the Allocations Policy as identified at 4.15 and in Appendix 1, but for the points to be retained for “Fostering and Adoption” over and above the “Social Need” category. Mr Campbell seconded, and there was no one otherwise minded.

**Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve:

- the performance reporting targets for 2019/20, as identified at 4.13, and
- the recommended amendments to the Allocations Policy as identified at 4.15 and in Appendix 1, but for the points to be retained for “Fostering and Adoption” over and above the “Social Need” category.

10/19

**Aquaculture and Fisheries Research Funding 2019/20**

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Business Development (DV-11-19-F), which sought approval of funding to the NAFC Marine Centre to provide ongoing development and maintenance of the Shetland Islands Marine Spatial Plan in the financial year 2019/20, and to enable match funding on a case-by-case basis for aquaculture and fisheries research projects that can demonstrate economic development outcomes.

The Team Leader – Business Development summarised the main terms of the report.

During the discussion, it was questioned whether more detail could be provided on the fisheries and aquaculture research projects that have received funding since 2016/17, in terms of outcomes and on the benefits to the community. The Team Leader advised however that some of the research projects were still ongoing, with the findings still to be passed to industry to inform scientific research. The Chair then suggested that following conclusion of the research projects, that a report is prepared later in the year, to inform on the outcomes from the research projects, the industry contributions towards the projects and economic benefits.

In referring to Sections 4.8 to 4.10 of the report, concern was expressed at the declining level of match funding contributions from industry and other funders towards the fisheries and aquaculture research projects during the financial years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19. In that regard, comment was made on the apparent unwillingness of industry to participate and support research, which could ultimately be to the industry’s benefit. In terms of industry contributions, the Director of Development Services advised on the difficulty to engage directly with industry on overarching research. He reported also on the importance to retain access to funding mechanisms particularly when European funding may not be available going forward. In referring to the research work undertaken through Marine Scotland, the Chair advised on the need for greater dialogue on how research can be jointly funded and to avoid duplication.

During debate, comment was made on the support for the allocation of funds towards fisheries and aquaculture research, but on the need for the projects to demonstrate best value and achieve positive economic outcomes for Shetland.

On the motion of Mr Cooper, seconded by Mr Campbell, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

**Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve:

- the commission of NAFC Marine Centre to undertake ongoing maintenance and development of the Shetland Islands Marine Spatial Plan in 2019/20, at a total cost of £47,372.27.
- a budget of £150,000 for the financial year 2019/20 to be used as match-funding for research projects in the aquaculture and fisheries sectors, to be considered by the Council's Economic Development Service on a case-by-case basis.

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

11/19     **Shetland Investment Fund Investment Activity 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report by the Commercial Investment Officers that presented a summary of Council investments in local businesses over the reporting period from 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

In introducing the report, the Commercial Investment Officer (W Grant) summarised the main areas of activity during the financial year. She responded to questions from Members, and the Committee noted the report.

**Decision:**

The Committee NOTED the content of the report and appendices.

The meeting concluded at 10.50am

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Chair