

# MINUTES

## B - Public

**Policy and Resources Committee**  
**Main Hall, Town Hall, Lerwick and**  
**Remote Link via MS Teams**  
**Monday 7 September 2020 at 10am**

### **Present (Main Hall):**

S Coutts	S Leask
E Macdonald	R McGregor
I Scott	C Smith
G Smith	R Thomson

### **Present (MS Teams):**

A Cooper	A Duncan
T Smith	

### **Apologies:**

None

### **In Attendance:**

H Budge, Director of Children's Services  
C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services  
N Grant, Director of Development Services  
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Change Programme  
A Jamieson, Executive Manager - Housing  
J Manson, Executive Manager – Finance  
P McDonnell, Executive Manager – Adult Social Work  
S Msalila, Executive Manager - ICT  
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law  
R Sinclair, Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement  
V Simpson, Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development  
A Cogle, Team Leader - Administration  
K Adam, Solicitor  
J Belford, Trainee Solicitor  
L Robertson, Community Safety Officer  
B Kerr, Communications Officer  
L Malcolmson, Committee Officer

### **Also in Attendance:**

C.I. L Tulloch, Police Scotland

### **Chairperson**

Mr Coutts, Leader of the Council, presided.

### **Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

### **Declarations of Interest**

None.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 were approved on the motion of Mr Leask, seconded by Mr G Smith.

25/20

### **Corporate Services – Quarter 1 Performance Report 2020/2021**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (CRP-25-F) that summarised the activity and performance of Corporate Services during Quarter 1 of 2020/2021.

In introducing the report, the Director of Corporate Services referred to section 4 of the report and commented on the main points under each heading.

During discussions the Leader asked that his thanks be passed on to all staff for their work during COVID-19, whilst focussing on existing activities such as the College Merger.

Further appreciation was expressed in regard to the College Merger and for the staff involved in moving the project forward. It was noted that the Council had now done its part but concern remained in regard to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Scottish Government's slippage on their timescales. The Director of Corporate Services was asked to impress upon the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science on the importance for getting the merger on track. The Director of Corporate Services explained that Officers were still in discussion with the SFC who were meeting with the Transition Board on Wednesday. She said that the SFC were to give a verbal report at that meeting and once that had taken place she would update Members.

In referring to the support provided by the Human Resources (HR) team to staff within the Council, the question was asked as to who supports the HR team. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the Executive Manager – Human Resources keeps in close contact with her team and Executive Manager had also taken leave. The Director of Corporate Services said that evidence showed that staff in HR had done well to adapt, were dealing with an increase in recruitment, and had worked to make workplaces safe. She said that they continued to work well and felt well supported.

In terms of lessons learned and changes to working patterns, the Director of Corporate Services explained that Corporate Management Team (CMT) had looked at lessons learned and it was important to look again at the Workforce Development Plan to see what roles need to change. She said that the Working from Home Policy would need to be flexible and look more at partial working in office and/or return to office, if needed. Comment was made that the Human Resources Partnership Group had been active during the last few months and hopefully this work would soon be reported at Employees JCC.

Reference was made to the Change Programme and the question was asked if anything was being done to address the challenges for home working in terms of connectivity and VPN connections. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the Development Department were working with ICT on proposals that would be presented to the next Council meeting to provide an understanding of the gaps and to consider all options for high speed connectivity. In terms of VPN connection, she advised on the importance to get that right and that it was likely to change given the different technology and devices available. She added that this could not be fixed

by the Council in isolation and depends on national bodies and security legislation so that the Council can fulfil its obligations.

There being no debate, the Leader thanked ICT, Committee Services and Town Hall staff for arranging the recording and publication of meetings so quickly.

**Decision:**

The Committee:

- DISCUSSED the contents of this report;
- COMMENTED on the achievements of Corporate Services during Quarter 1 of 2020/2021;
- COMMENTED on the anticipated Risks and Service challenges of Corporate Services; and
- ADVISED managers of their views.

26/20

**SIC Overall Management Accounts 2020/21: Projected Outturn at Quarter 1**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-037-F) that set out the overall Council projected financial position as at Quarter 1.

The Executive Manager – Finance provided an overview of each account described in Section 4 of the report in terms of projected outturn, and highlighted key variances for each service area. He commented on the impact that the pandemic and restrictions had on the Council's activity in the first quarter. He said that Appendix 5 was a supplementary document that attempted to identify additional financial costs, lost income and savings in responding to the pandemic. In conclusion, he referred to Appendices 4 and 5 which set out the amounts of carry forwards required for works normally completed but require to be carried forward due to the restrictions placed on services.

In response to a question, the Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement explained that the overspend on the Scatsta Airport was due to the early setting of the budget which had been based on the best assessments for the full year. He said that the operator's move came as a surprise and it had not been possible to make a lease arrangement beyond June 2020. The lease had been operated on a month by month arrangement until its conclusion. The Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement advised that having received expressions of interest for the use of the airport, none of which are aviation related, it was hoped that the loss would be mitigated by alternative uses being established.

The Leader responded to a question and advised that the Scottish Government had not given any commitment to fully fund the additional costs that local authorities incur as a result of COVID-19.

There being no debate, the Leader referred to Appendix 5, which laid out the challenges for the local authority and its response to COVID-19. He said that the Council had set a challenging budget before COVID-19 for frontline services and COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the Council and the community. He

stated that the Council would continue to seek funding from the Scottish Government as the Council has limited powers to raise income itself.

Mr Coutts moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr McGregor seconded.

**Decision:**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council RESOLVE to:

- NOTE the Management Accounts showing the overall projected outturn position at Quarter 1; and
- APPROVE the re-profiling of budgets on revenue and capital projects for inclusion in the 2021/22 budget exercise as set out in Appendix 1.

27/20

**Council Investment Review for Quarter to June 2020**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-039-F) that presented a review of the Council's external investments over the quarter to June 2020.

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report and advised that the value of investments had exceeded the position in January 2020 following a decline in the market due to COVID-19. He explained that the value at the end of July 2020 had risen to £378m. In referring to section 4 of the report, the Executive Manager – Finance advised that with the restriction of travel any review of fund managers would now need to be by remote link. It was agreed thereafter that one Fund Manager would be invited to present at the next Committee meeting.

In responding to a query regarding the Government's furlough scheme coming to an end, the Executive Manager – Finance advised on the expectation that there will be an impact on employment rates once the scheme ends, and in turn there will be an impact on wider market conditions. He said that in time there will be an impact on investments as unemployment increases which economic forecasters suggest will be towards the end of the year. He said however that there would not be a direct link to the end of the furlough scheme and the investments on 1 November 2020, as there will be a lag in time. The Executive Manager – Finance added however that this may be offset by any positive performance experienced in that time.

There being no debate, the Committee noted the report.

**Decision:**

The Committee NOTED the outcome of this quarterly review.

28/20

**Chief Social Work Officer Report 2019-20**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Chief Social Work Officer (CS-17-F) that presented the annual Chief Social Work Officer Report on the role and delivery of local authority social work services functions.

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report on behalf of the Interim Chief Social Work Officer, and commented on each of the five main areas within the report, namely: Governance and Accountability, Service Quality and Performance, Resources, Workforce and COVID-19. She drew attention to the registered services inspected by the Care Inspectorate and advised that the grades, of mainly very good for quality of care and support, were included in Appendix 2.. The Director of Children's Services also commented on Adult and Child Protection and the Committee acknowledged the success in supporting older people in their own homes. She also advised on key work during the year, including the positive feedback on the Festival of Care, the Public Protection Development Day and the Community Led Support Sessions. In terms of finance and workforce, the Director of Children's Services said that there continues to be difficulty with recruitment to social work and mental health officer posts but Officers continue to address this.

In response to a query regarding Adult Day Care and a return of this service, particularly the Walter and Joan Gray facility, the Executive Manager – Adult Social Work advised that the guidance, last week, from the Scottish Government on remobilisation of day care and respite services had taken some time to come through. He advised that staff had worked closely with families, since June 2020, by offering adapted services for those with critical need. He said this work was ongoing to ensure that those most in need get additional support as equitably as possible, with awareness of the impact on carers. In terms of Walter and Joan Gray specifically, the Executive Manager – Adult Social Work explained that he was aware that the works had halted as far as the extension of day care support in Edward Thomason House and Taing House. He explained that colleagues in management and assets had a piece of work across all care centres to replace carpets in the day care centres with vinyl to improve cleaning to reduce the risk of infection. The Executive Manager – Adult Social Work concluded that there had been a lot of halting of services but he was aware that Community Care Resources staff have provided outreach and additional support and care boxes to families and meals on wheels. He added staff would continue to give as much support as possible under the current restrictions.

In response to a further question on the Walter and Joan Gray care home, the Leader advised that the Executive Manager – Adult Social Work had given a commitment to provide an update to Councillor Scott.

During debate, comments were made on the importance and value of these areas of work. It was noted that developments such as the Assertive Transition Service will produce expenditure in the future whilst providing better outcomes for people, and that by working collaboratively across departments and agencies demonstrates how good these services are and how local decision making can give the best results for the community.

The Chair of Education and Families Committee advised that this report had also been presented to Education and Families Committee. He wished to highlight the positive work that had been going on in Children's Services with a number of new innovative pieces of work including the first festival of care, and participation in the independent care review in terms of the implantation of the stop and go proposals. He said that equally important was the work of the Anchor project and it was hoped that would roll out across Shetland given the success of the pilot. Looking forward, he said that the agreed restructuring needs to progress at speed to maximise the benefits that have been accrued through the bringing together of Children's Resources and Children's Services. The Chair of Education of Families

Committee said that he looked forward to the completion of the residential child care facility at Tingwall. In concluding, he added that the report presents a very positive year in Children's Services whilst keeping our young people safe.

The Leader drew attention to the grades of services across Shetland, which he said demonstrates the high quality of care provided. He took the opportunity to highlight how critical and important staff are in providing care for the most vulnerable in our community.

#### **Decision:**

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

29/20

#### **Approval of Local Police Plan 2020-23**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Community Planning and Development (DV-24-F), that sought approval of the Local Police Plan 2020-23 (LLP).

The Executive Manager - Community Planning and Development summarised the main terms of the report, and confirmed that the Community Safety and Resilience Board had approved the Plan for presentation to the Committee. She advised that C.I. Tulloch was present to answer any specific questions.

In responding to a query in regard to the priorities and why the use of illicit narcotics was not listed, C.I. Tulloch advised that drugs are identified as a priority under the banner of serious crime. He added that Shetland is targeted by organised crime groups so drugs was very much a priority.

In regard to Road Policing, C.I. Tulloch confirmed that there would be a specific drive to educate older drivers within the Police's national campaign, and this would include the use of media and written materials.

C.I. Tulloch was asked to expand on the partnership working to tackle domestic abuse. He said that the key was prevention and to be aware of domestic abuse and to provide support to allow people to report such cases. He explained that there was a very robust MARAC process where high level domestic abuse cases are discussed to ensure victims are identified and supported and to ensure perpetrators are detected and reported to Court to be dealt with appropriately.

Comment was made that the report was strong. Comment was also made that there needs to be a good workforce with a broad knowledge. C.I. Tulloch was asked what progress there had been in terms of recruitment and he advised that the wellbeing and welfare of staff relied on the right numbers of staff to carry out the job safely. He advised that two local people had recently been successful in the November recruitment process and two new officers would start at the end of this year. He said that posts are advertised across Scotland to ensure that their experience base is there to share with younger officers. C.I. Tulloch said that staffing levels are good and that transfers are replaced with mainland staff to ensure the skills required in Shetland are maintained.

It was noted that there was no aspect of COVID-19 reported in the paper, but concern was expressed that the recent incidents at the Market Cross would impact

on Police Resources. C.I. Tulloch explained that in line with other agencies, Police Scotland had adapted to protect staff from COVID-19 or from spreading the virus. He said that staff were trained in using personal protective equipment and new legislation to deal with issues during lockdown. C.I. Tulloch added that Police Scotland had pulled together with other agencies and have adapted quickly to these issues in recent months.

Moving into debate, Mr Cooper, Chair of the Community Safety and Resilience Board advised that the Board had debated the Plan, and they found that the strongest aspect in the Plan was the links to the Shetland Partnership Plan and the fact that it is well integrated. He reported that the Police's senior management team works well with all agencies in Shetland and should be commended. He added that he was confident that Police Scotland would respond to Shetland's needs going forward. Mr Cooper moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report.

In seconding, Mr Duncan, Vice-chair of the Community Safety and Resilience Board, concurred with Mr Cooper's comments, adding that there was a very good relationship in place with the Police here in Shetland and long may that continue.

During debate comment was made in regard to the Anchor Project, and this was noted as a key example of local Police involvement and credit was given to partnership working in that regard.

Further reference was made to the priorities listed, and it was noted that drug use was a main priority for the NHS with cases on the rise. It was suggested that this should be highlighted as a specific priority being an area that requires specific resources. However, it was acknowledged that drug use was not an issue exclusive to Shetland and that approval of the Plan was welcomed.

Comment was made on the layout of the Plan as it relates to work on the ground and was well laid out in a succinct and very real way. It was also praised as an example of a good plan in terms of its delivery.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee RESOLVED to approve the Local Police Plan 2020-23.

30/20

#### **Strategic Property Acquisition**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager- Housing (DV-19-F) that sought approval of the policy framework for strategic property acquisitions linked to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), and delegated authority to carry out identified acquisition opportunities.

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

In responding to a question in regard to plans for building Council houses, the Executive Manager – Housing advised that this would be reported in the next Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to be presented in either December 2020 or January 2021.

In questioning paragraph 4.3, whereby the Council will not be in competition with other purchasers, the Executive Manager – Housing was asked how the Council

would intend to purchase properties. The Executive Manager – Housing said that purchases would be through negotiation. She explained that the Strategic acquisition gives the Council the ability to identify gaps and not compete on the open market. In terms of the limit of 4 purchases per year, the Executive Manager – Housing confirmed that should a fifth or sixth opportunity arise in the same year, a report would be presented to Development Committee for consideration. She said that it was important to try this arrangement. The importance of having a way around the limit was acknowledged Members and a further report seemed a sensible way forward.

Comment was made that the Scottish Government supports this proposal across all local authority areas, encouraging acquisition of existing properties to increase housing stock to rent. It was noted that there is a mismatch in the current housing stock in terms of one and two bed properties and the need for four and five bed accommodation. Mr Cooper said that the strategy allowed the acquisition for specific needs giving the capacity to acquire houses. Mr Cooper moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Leask seconded.

During debate the comment was again main in regard to the flexibility within the strategy to give discretion should another opportunity to purchase arise. Mr Cooper agreed that should a situation arise he would be happy to see a report to Development Committee in that regard. In addition Mr Cooper agreed that special meetings could be called should a potential acquisition be time sensitive.

Concern was expressed in regard to the lack of one and two bed homes and the need for those properties to be increased within the housing stock. It was acknowledged that Hjaltland Housing Association were progressing with plans in the Staney Hill area and it was noted that the development would include one and two bed properties. Further comment was made in this regard that stressed the importance of working together with social housing providers to ensure the adequate provision is available.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- APPROVED the policy framework for strategic property acquisitions linked to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP); and
- DELEGATED authority to carry out identified acquisition opportunities be granted to the Director of Development, or his nominee.

31/20

#### **Policy and Resources Committee Business Programme – 2020/21**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (CRP-24-F) that presented the Business Programme for 2020/21.

In introducing the report, the Director of Corporate Services advised on the disruption due to COVID-19. For the remainder of the year, she advised that in addition to quarterly reporting in November 2020, Members would see reports on the Change Programme, Medium Term Financial Plan and the Digital Strategy and said that these reports would complement one another bringing together the first iteration of the Change Programme. She advised that the Crown Estate Income



Distribution report may in fact be reported directly to the Council meeting. The Director of Corporate Services added that the College Merger update listed would be a comprehensive update summarising progress and highlighting detailed programmes. She said that in terms of the timescale there would hopefully be more clarity provided following Wednesday's Transition Board meeting. She referred to the items of business to be scheduled and said that the Fair Food Strategy would be reported following resolution of a technical issue and that discussions with Members around the New Corporate Plan had resumed and would be reported in due course.

The Leader confirmed that the Crown Estate Income Distribution would be presented to Council in terms of the funding applications under the pilot scheme and a further piece of work would be undertaken on a permanent scheme.

In responding to questions, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the "SIC Digital Strategy" report was in regard to the Council rather than the wider community and would be reflecting on ICT operations, lessons learned from COVID-19 and the changing digital world. She added that depending on Wednesday's Council decision, the report will inform on speed and connectivity and what plans will be going forward. In regard to the "Contract Matter", she confirmed that the timescale given was appropriate.

Comment was made on the "Working from Home Policy" and whether the report needs to be referred to in the Change Programme report given how closely the two are linked. The Director of Corporate Services said however that it may be a two stage piece of work given some elements may require negotiations with staff and unions, with the first part coming forward in the November cycle.

There being no further questions, the Committee approved the report.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- CONSIDERED the business planned for Policy and Resources Committee for the remainder of the financial year 2020/21;
- ADVISED the Director of Corporate Services of any changes required including new items where the timescale will be confirmed at a later date; and
- RESOLVED to approve any changes or additions to the Business Programme.

32/20

#### **Corporate Risk Register Report**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (CRP-22-20-F) that presented the current Corporate Risk Register.

The Director of Corporate Services summarised the main terms of the report. She referred to an update of the Register that had been provided last minute, which she said demonstrates that it is used as a living document. She said that although there are no longer dedicated performance meetings, it was important to note that risks are always reported in section 6 of every report. Risk Registers would however be presented more frequently should there be significant changes., She said that given the new COVID-19 world we are living in, and with Brexit looming, the Council will

be actively reviewing its strategic risks over the next while. In referring to the new “very high” risk rating, the Director of Corporate Services reported that there are a number of items using that rating including Climate Change, Carbon reduction measures, the COVID pandemic and Brexit, as well as the Council’s ever present ageing infrastructure.

During questions, reference was made to paragraph 4.3, and the Director of Corporate Services agreed to provide an update to Members on when CoSLA’s revised planning assumptions will be ready. The Leader added that the EU Exit had been discussed for some time at the CoSLA Leaders group and he referred to his earlier comments on decisions being very far removed from local government in Scotland. He said that EU Exit is a risk with very limited control measures that the Council can implement at a local level. The Leader said that, as alluded to in earlier comments, the Council has to make sure it understands the implications as best it can in terms of making representations to those whom need to hear it, however whether they listen was another aspect.

In terms of distance away from negotiations in regard to Brexit, in practical terms it was noted that Shetland is at the end of the supply chain and there were reports of concern in terms of readiness of the UK for goods coming in and out of the Country in the South of England. In regard to reassurance, given this Council’s limited involvement, it was emphasised that there is a need to put pressure on the UK Government was highlighted, to ensure Shetland is not even worse affected by any situations that might arise in terms of supply chains.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that at Officer level earlier work had been done on Brexit, when it had been anticipated the process would be much earlier. That work was now being reviewed as it looked at supply chains in particular as one of the key risks. She said that the Business Resilience Forum, had been put together to support COVID-19, where supply chains were also a concern in regard to transport links albeit not to the same level, gives added support and information going forward. However in terms of raising concerns at a more national level the CoSLA route was helpful but there was still a lot more to be discussed and considered but that will come in time.

The Director of Development Services added that two weeks ago the terms of reference for the Business Resilience Forum had been changed to also include the European Exit. He advised that as members of that Forum there are Serco NorthLink, sometimes Transport Scotland and certainly ZetTrans. In terms of assurance sought, the Business Resilience Forum would be the right place for pressure to be put on the UK Government. The Director of Development Services added that the Forum meets every two weeks so he would ensure that the matter is raised as a discussion item at the next meeting.

Mr Cooper, as the Chair of the Business Resilience Forum advised that this had been on the agenda at the last meeting but poor attendance meant that there had not been much discussion. He said that the biggest concern for Shetland was in terms of European seafood exports of salmon and fresh fish and issues of delays at Dover would mean there would be no product to sell. He said there needs to be more engagement with the seafood sector and the Business Resilience Forum is the proper place to discuss that. Mr Cooper went on to say that preparatory work has been done with fishing boats to have the health certificates required so that produce can be exported into Europe and there has been a good uptake in Shetland. In that regard, he understood that all the local boats inspected so far by

the Environmental Health Officers had passed their inspections so he did not envisage any problems. It was hoped that by November 2020 all boats would have the necessary certificates in order to export what they catch. He added that the issues will be very significant should there be a no deal Brexit and there ends up being tariffs for produce going across to the continent. He said that the seafood sector contribution amounted to 40% of the Shetland economy so there has to be due cognisance of what is happening.

During further discussion it was noted that the Business Resilience Forum had been set up to cover the COVID-19 situation, but comment was made that it was right for Councillor Cooper and the Director of Development to change the terms of reference to include Brexit but at the same time there are many businesses significantly geared up to the significant problems to come from export and import areas with Europe. It was reported that the significant implications of a no deal Brexit on the Agriculture sector has been discussed at the agriculture forum and this was a matter that the Business Resilience Forum has to keep an eye on.

In acknowledging the agriculture industry, it was noted that if there is a no deal the industry would still be subject to tariff control which means that the tariff on Shetland Lamb would be 48%. If that were to come to fruition it would be devastating to the Shetland hill lamb as the majority of lambs exported out of Shetland are hill lambs. In referring to Councillor Cooper's comments, it was stated that priority has to be given to the fishing industry as there will be devastation for that sector as well and an impact on jobs locally.. The importance of keeping pressure on MP's in Westminster was stressed.

**Decision:**

The Committee:

- CONSIDERED the content of this report and of the Corporate Risk Register attached as Appendix 1;
- ADVISED the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team of their views; and
- ENDORSED the actions being taken by management to mitigate the risks described in Appendix 1.

**Mr Coutts 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 item of business. Mr Thomson seconded.**

*(The public session concluded and resumed shortly thereafter in private.)*

**33/20      Confidential Corporate Risk Register**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services that presented the current Confidential Corporate Risk Register.

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

**Decision:**

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the content of this report and of the Confidential Corporate Risk Register.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

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Chair