

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 3 February 2021, 10:30.

Microsoft Teams.



Present

Councillors Gwenda M Shearer, Alexander G Cowie, Stephen G Clackson, Barbara Foulkes, Steven B Heddle, J Harvey Johnston, W Leslie Manson, John T Richards, John A R Scott, James W Stockan, Magnus O Thomson and Owen Tierney.

Mary Maley.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- Peter Diamond, Head of Education (Leisure, Culture and Inclusion).
- Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services.
- Edward Abbott-Halpin, Principal, Orkney College (for Items 1 to 8).
- Steven Burnett, Education Resources Manager (for Items 1 to 8).
- Paul Kemp, Strategic Finance Manager.
- Lesley Mulrairie, Service Manager (Housing and Homelessness) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Catherine Diamond, Early Years Lead Officer (for Items 1 to 8).
- Peter Trodden, Solicitor.
- Luke Fraser, Team Leader (Policy and Planning) (for Items 1 to 8).

Observing

- Hayley Green, Head of IT and Facilities (for Items 1 and 2).
- Keith Foubister, Works and Inspection Manager (for Items 1 to 5).
- Scott Pring, School Catering Manager (for Items 1 to 3).
- Lynn Proctor, Principal Teacher of Expressive Arts (for Items 9 and 10).
- Hazel Flett, Senior Committees Officer.
- Lorraine Stout, Press Officer.
- Beverly Clubley, Chair, College Management Council Sub-committee (for Items 1 to 8).

Apology

- Hugh Halcro-Johnston.

Not Present

- Jo Hill.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Disclosure of Exempt Information

The Committee noted the proposal that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Item 9, as the business to be discussed involved the potential disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

2. Revenue Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Strategic Finance Manager, the Committee:

Noted:

2.1. The revenue financial summary statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 31 December 2020, attached as Annex 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Head of Finance, indicating the following:

- A net General Fund overspend of £787,700.
- A net Non-General Fund underspend of £128,600.

2.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 31 December 2020, attached as Annex 2 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

2.3. The explanations given and actions proposed in respect of significant budget variances, as outlined in the Budget Action Plan, attached as Annex 3 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

3. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme – Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, the Committee:

Noted:

3.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 31 December 2020, against the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, as detailed in section 4.2 of the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

3.2. The explanations given in respect of significant budget variances, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance on progress being made with delivery of the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

4. Council House Rents

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Housing and Homelessness), the Committee:

Noted:

4.1. That a consultation, undertaken in December 2020, in relation to the annual increase for Council House rent levels to take effect from 1 April 2021, proposed an increase of 1.5% plus the Consumer Price Index as of September 2020, namely 0.5%, resulting in a proposed increase of 2.0%.

4.2. The results of the consultation on the annual increase for Council house rent levels, as detailed in section 4 of report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

4.3. That, with effect from 1 April 2021, Council house rents should increase by 2.0%.

5. Housing Revenue Account – Draft Budget

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the draft revenue budget for the Housing Revenue Account for financial year 2021/22, attached as Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration through the budget setting process.

6. School Rolls Forecast

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Team Leader (Policy and Planning), the Committee:

Noted the School Roll Forecasts, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which were based on information the Council had available in respect of the following matters:

- Current school rolls.
- Demographic forecasts and estimates.
- Births data.
- Migration data.
- School transfer requests.
- Housing development completion estimates.

7. College Management Council Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 18 January 2021, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 18 January 2021, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, as a true record.

8. Draft Assessment of School Walking Routes Policy

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Education Resources Manager, the Committee:

Noted:

8.1. That the Council assessed walking routes for school pupils where the journey was below statutory distance and that this activity was undertaken by Roads Services.

8.2. That, as the process had never been formally documented, this deficiency had resulted in otherwise avoidable challenge, with a consequent impact upon resource.

8.3. That the draft Assessment of School Walking Routes Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, sought to provide a proportionate, user-friendly documentation of the process and was based upon identified best-practice in Orkney and guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

8.4. That, subject to endorsement by the Orkney Road Safety Forum, the Assessment of School Walking Routes Policy, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

9. Instrumental Music Service

On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, the Committee resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Education (Leisure, Culture and Inclusion), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to the Instrumental Music Service.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

10. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:00 the Chair declared meeting the concluded.

Signed: G M Shearer.