

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 10 November 2021, 10:30.

Microsoft Teams.



Present

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

Reverend Fraser Macnaughton.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Peter Diamond, Head of Education (for Items 1 to 6).
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Garry Burton, Leisure and Culture Service Manager.
- Paul Kemp, Strategic Finance Manager.
- Peter Trodden, Solicitor.
- Katell Roche, Team Leader (Sport and Leisure).

Observing

- Joanne Wallace, Acting Principal, Orkney College.
- Keith Foubister, Works and Inspections Manager (for Items 1 to 4).
- Sheila Tulloch, Solicitor.
- Rebecca McAuliffe, Press Officer (for Items 3 to 11).
- Lorraine Stout, Press Officer (for Items 1 to 3).

Apologies

- Councillor Steven B Heddle.
- Mary Maley, Teacher Representative.

Not Present

- Jo Hill, Teacher Representative.

Declarations of Interest

- Councillor John T Richards – Item 7.
- Councillor John A R Scott – Item 7.
- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer – Item 7.
- Fraser Macnaughton – Item 7.

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 Items 9 and 10 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 Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services 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 30 September 2021, attached as Annex 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, indicating the following:

- A net General Fund underspend of £143,200.
- A net Non-General Fund underspend of £956,500.

2.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 30 September 2021, attached as Annex 2 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services 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 Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

3. Performance Monitoring

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Scrutinised:

3.1. The performance of Education, Leisure and Housing for the reporting period 1 April to 30 September 2021, as set out in sections 3 to 5 and Annexes 1 and 2 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance.

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

3.2. That the following action, which had been progressed to completion, be removed from the Education, Leisure and Housing Service Plan:

- 02 – Early Learning and Childcare – Review and implement the Council’s Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan.

4. 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 Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

4.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 30 September 2021, 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:

4.2. 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.

5. National Improvement Framework

Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2021/22

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 Head of Education, the Committee:

Noted:

5.1. That, in December 2020, the Scottish Government published the latest update on progress in relation to the National Improvement Framework.

5.2. That, in 2019/20, the Orkney National Improvement Plan was suspended, with the 2020/21 plan focussing on supporting learning and recovery as a result of COVID-19.

5.3. That, in relation to the National Improvement Framework, a draft summary of progress made locally, as well as an outline of next steps, was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

5.4. That the National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2021/22, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

6. Review of Support for Learning

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, the Committee:

Noted:

6.1. That, on 5 June 2019, when considering a follow up survey in relation to support for learning provision in Orkney schools, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended:

- That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should review the overall staffing arrangements for Kirkwall Grammar School and Glaitness School and thereafter submit a report, to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee, regarding an appropriate staffing model for the Resource School components of both schools.
- That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to a meeting of the Committee no later than November 2019, on how the Pupil Equity Fund was being utilised in order to meet learners' needs.

6.2. That the closure of schools in March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in a dramatic refocussing on how best to support learners with additional support needs.

6.3. That, since 2017, the number of children with additional support needs, as a percentage of the total pupil population, had increased from 31% to 33% and, as schools continued with a focus on recovery, raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap, new pressures were emerging.

6.4. That, although the level of support in schools had increased to around the Scottish average, in relation to the other island authorities, the level of support in Orkney was lower, with specific pressures linked to the creation of highly bespoke programmes of support for a small but increasing number of children and young people.

6.5. That, as part of the review of the learning estate, the provision of accommodation for children with additional support needs was being prioritised.

6.6. That the review of the overall staffing arrangements for Kirkwall Grammar School and Glaitness School, referred to at paragraph 6.1 above, had been extended to include Pupil Support.

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

6.7. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the next meeting of the Committee, regarding the following:

- In addition to setting out a revised staffing model for the Resource School components of Kirkwall Grammar School and Glaitness School, referred to at paragraph 6.1 above, a revised staffing and structural model for the Pupil Support Team.
- Proposals for increasing the level of support across all schools for learners with additional support needs, including outlining associated costs.

7. Pickaquoy Centre Trust – End of Year Performance

Councillors John T Richards, John A R Scott and Gwenda M Shearer declared non-financial interests in this item, being Council-appointed trustees of the Pickaquoy Centre Trust, but concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

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 Leisure and Culture Service Manager, the Committee:

Noted:

7.1. That the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of the Pickaquoy Centre from 20 March to 2 November 2020.

7.2. That, during the closure of the Pickaquoy Centre, the Trust realised savings of £830,000.

7.3. That the Pickaquoy Centre Trust was successful in securing £1,046,842 of external funding.

7.4. That the Council paid the full annual management fee for 2020/21, amounting to £776,592, to the Trust.

7.5. That the Pickaquoy Centre Trust's audited annual accounts for 2020/21 had been submitted and indicated an operating surplus of £113,843.

7.6. The Pickaquoy Centre Trust's end of year usage figures and performance covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, indicating overall annual usage figures of 52,154, which represented a decrease of 86% in overall usage against the same period in 2019/20.

Fraser Macnaughton joined the meeting during discussion of this item and, at the earliest opportunity, declared a non-financial interest, being a trustee of the Pickaquoy Centre Trust.

8. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, the Committee resolved that the public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, as the business to be considered involved the 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.

9. College Management Council Sub-committee

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 25 October 2021, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

9.1. On the motion of Councillor Alexander G Cowie, seconded by Councillor J Harvey Johnston, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 25 October 2021 as a true record.

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

9.2. That the recommendation at paragraph 6.4 of the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 25 October 2021, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

10. Staffing Matters

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been 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 Act.

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 Leisure and Culture Service Manager, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to staffing matters.

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.

11. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:22 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.