

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 27 March 2024, 09:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

Councillors Gwenda M Shearer, Jean E Stevenson, Graham A Bevan, Stephen G Clackson, Alexander G Cowie, Steven B Heddle, Rachael A King, James R Moar, John A R Scott, Ivan A Taylor and Heather N Woodbridge.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- Peter Diamond, Head of Education.
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- David Brown, Service Manager (Resources) (for Items 3 to 7).
- Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).
- Nigel Fyffe, Team Manager (Maintenance and Heritage).
- Georgette Herd, Solicitor.

In Attendance via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Andrea Paterson, Director, Indigo House (for Items 1 to 4).

Observing

- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability).

Apologies

- Jo Hill, Teacher Representative.
- Reverend Susan Kirkbride, Religious Representative.
- Marie Locke, Religious Representative.
- Reverend Fraser Macnaughton, Religious Representative.
- Mary Maley, Teacher Representative.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme – Proposed Programme for 2024/25

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Resolved, in terms of delegated powers, that, subject to an adequate budget being made available, the undernoted programme of revenue repairs and maintenance in respect of the Council's housing stock for 2024/25, be approved:

- Cyclical Maintenance – £100,000.
- Planned Maintenance – £694,200.
- Reactive Repairs – £425,000.
- Voids/Improvements/Adaptations – £510,000.
- In-House Professional Fees – £225,000.

2. Provision of Sport and Leisure across Orkney

Proposed Establishment of Short-life Working Group

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

Noted:

2.1. That, in May 2023, Strategic Leisure Limited was appointed to carry out a review of sport and leisure services across Orkney and is due to submit its final report in March 2024.

2.2. That the objective was to review sport and leisure across Orkney within current constraints and to produce an options appraisal with recommendations for a sustainable and economically advantageous delivery model for sport and leisure across Orkney, both Trust and Local Authority offerings.

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

2.3. That a short-life member/officer working group, comprising the undernoted core membership, be established to consider the findings of the consultant-led review into the provision of sport and leisure services across Orkney:

- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Jean E Stevenson.
- 2 Additional Elected Members of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee:
 - Councillor Stephen G Clackson.
 - Councillor John A R Scott.
- Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing Service.
- Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Team Leader (Sport and Leisure).
- Senior Duty Officer (Swimming Pools).
- Senior Duty Officer (Facilities).
- Outdoor Education Advisor.
- Pickaquooy Centre Trust Managing Director.
- Sportscotland Partnership Manager and lead Partnership Manager.
- 1 representative from the Active Schools Team.
- 1 representative from NHS Orkney.
- 1 representative from Education Service – Orkney Islands Council.
- 1 representative from Orkney 2025.
- 1 representative from each of the Isles swimming pools.

2.4. That the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, no later than November 2024, advising on the outcome of the work of the short-life member/officer working group and presenting recommendations for consideration.

3. Sheltered Housing Service – Care Inspectorate Inspections

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

Noted:

3.1. That the Sheltered Housing Service was initially inspected by the Care Inspectorate during October 2023, with the report published on 13 December 2023.

3.2. That the Care Inspectorate's inspection focussed on the following four areas:

- How well do we support people's wellbeing?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?
- How well is our care and support planned?

3.3. That, of the four areas inspected, one received an Adequate grading and three received a Weak grading.

3.4. That the initial inspection report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, contained four requirements, together with five areas for improvement.

3.5. That the Council was required to submit to the Care Inspectorate an Action Plan for improvement, attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

3.6. That the Sheltered Housing Service was subject to a follow up inspection between 15 and 18 January 2024, to review progress made and focused on whether the initial requirements had been met.

3.7. That the follow up Care Inspectorate's inspection focussed on the following two areas:

- How good is our leadership?
- How well is our care and support planned?

3.8. That, of the two areas inspected, both received an Adequate grading.

3.9. That of the four requirements inspected, three were found to have been met and an extension, until 31 March 2024, was agreed for the fourth.

3.10. That the follow up inspection report, attached as Appendix 3 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, contained one remaining requirement with an extension to the deadline, now being 31 March 2024.

The Committee scrutinised:

3.11. The inspection reports in respect of the Sheltered Housing Service, attached as Appendices 1 and 3 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance that action had been taken or agreed where necessary.

4. Essential Workers Housing Strategy

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, 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. That, in summer 2022, the Council commissioned research and development of a strategy in respect of the housing needs of essential workers.

4.2. That the development process to create the strategy included in-depth research of housing supply and demand and had involved four widescale quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews involving key stakeholders.

4.3. That the Essential Workers Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, included consideration of the following housing needs:

- Keyworkers and other essential workers moving to Orkney permanently.
- Agency/interim staff working in Orkney, who were living temporarily on Orkney for work purposes, but who were permanent residents elsewhere.
- Students moving to Orkney for study.
- Workers required for potential infrastructure construction projects.

4.4. The funding business case in respect of delivering the Orkney Islands Essential Workers Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

4.5. The models for delivery of essential workers housing, as outlined in section 6 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, with the preferred model being Model 1, namely attracting an existing registered social landlord with a private subsidiary, or alternative mid-market rent provider, to Orkney.

4.6. That, should Model 1 not be successful, delivery models would be progressed in the following order, subject to affordability:

- Model 2 – direct investment by the Council.
- Model 3 – delivery by the Council through a special purpose vehicle.

4.7. That, should the Orkney Islands Essential Workers Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, be approved, the recommendations contained therein, and summarised in sections 4 to 6 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, would require:

- To be financially viable through a combination of government grants, internal resources and/or affordable borrowing.
- To be subject to separate approval through the relevant governance processes, which might include reports to Committees, should any additional resources, including financial, be required.

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

4.8. That the Orkney Islands Essential Workers Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved, in principle.

4.9. That the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Policy and Resources Committee no later than September 2024, setting out the financial implications to the Council in respect of progressing the options, including delivery models, as outlined in the Essential Workers Housing Strategy.

5. Review of Mid-Market Rent – Template Allocations Policy

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment and an Island Communities Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

5.1. That, on 8 June 2022, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended approval of a template allocations policy on mid-market rent to inform mid-market rental allocations within Orkney, which was intended to be used by private sector developers and other providers alike.

5.2. That, given the potential for expansion of the local programme on mid-market rent and in the context of the emerging Essential Workers Housing Strategy, a review of the template allocations policy had been undertaken.

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

5.3. That the revised template allocations policy to inform mid-market rent allocations within Orkney, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

Councillor Steven B Heddle joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

6. Strategic Housing Investment Plan

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Island Communities Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Resources), the Committee:

Noted:

6.1. That the Strategic Housing Investment Plan for the period 2024 to 2029, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, proposed the following:

- 183 potential social rented housing units to be approved and developed by the Council and Orkney Housing Association Limited, over the five-year lifetime of the Plan.
- 210 potential shared equity/subsidised housing units for sale to be developed in partnership with the private sector, the Council, Orkney Housing Association Limited and the Scottish Government, over the five-year lifetime of the Plan.

6.2. That, alongside the Council and Orkney Housing Association Limited's programme for 2024 to 2029, it was anticipated that up to 110 mid-market rental housing units would be supplied, some of which would be delivered by the private sector and partners, including development trusts, through the Rural and Islands Housing Fund.

6.3. That the Council projects outlined in the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 to 2029, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, would only be developed should funding available through Scottish Government grant and the Housing Revenue Account be sufficient to allow the projects to proceed.

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

6.4. That the Strategic Housing Investment Plan for the period 2024 to 2029, attached as Appendix 3 to this Minute, be approved for submission to the Scottish Government.

7. Conclusion of Meeting

At 11:20 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.