

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 9 November 2022, 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, John A R Scott, James W Stockan and Ivan A Taylor.

Church Representative:

Reverend Susan Kirkbride.

Teacher Representatives:

Jo Hill and Mary Maley.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Church Representative:

Marie Locke.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Claire Meakin, Interim Head of Education.
- Edward Abbott-Halpin, Principal, Orkney College.
- Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).
- Jane Partridge, Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).
- Sheila Tulloch, Service Manager (Legal Services).
- Nick Hewitt, Team Leader (Culture) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Nigel Fyffe, Senior Maintenance Surveyor.
- Emma Gee, Arts Officer (for Items 1 to 8).

Observing

- Peter Diamond, Head of Education.
- Catherine Diamond, Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare).
- Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary Education) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Kirsty Groundwater, Team Manager (Communications).
- Sarah Johnston, Team Manager (Sport and Leisure) (for Items 1 to 8).

Apologies

- Councillor Rachael A King.
- Councillor James R Moar.
- Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.
- Reverend Fraser Macnaughton, Religious Representative.

Declaration of Interest

- Councillor Graham A Bevan – Item 6.

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 Appendix 1 of Item 6 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. Performance Monitoring

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

Scrutinised the performance of Education, Leisure and Housing for the reporting period 1 April to 30 September 2022, as set out in sections 3 to 5 and Annexes 1 and 2 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance.

Councillor James W Stockan left the meeting during discussion of this item.

3. Revenue Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Accounting), the Committee:

Noted:

3.1. The revenue financial summary statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, indicating the following:

- A net General Fund underspend of £469,100.
- A net Non-General Fund underspend of £62,400.

3.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement, in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022, attached as Annex 2 to the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

3.3. 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 report by the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

Mary Maley left the meeting at this point.

4. Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund

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

Noted:

4.1. That the Council had responsibility for 47 play areas across Orkney.

4.2. That, due to there being no budget for repairs and maintenance, the majority of play areas had deteriorated significantly, resulting in the removal of unsafe equipment.

4.3. That, on 21 December 2021, when considering the allocation of one-off funding towards a series of projects considered to provide excellent recovery prospects from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Policy and Resources Committee recommended the allocation of funding to a series of recovery projects, which included a one-off allocation of £500,000 towards a Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund.

4.4. The draft Guidance and Application Form in respect of the proposed Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

4.5. That, in order to encourage an inclusive and equal opportunity to all communities, any project eligible for assistance from the Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund should be funded at a rate of 50% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £25,000.

4.6. That an advisory panel, comprising the undernoted membership, be established to consider applications to the Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund:

- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Team Manager (Sport and Leisure).

4.7. That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing to determine applications for funding from the Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund.

Jo Hill left the meeting at this point.

5. Covid Recovery Fund for Culture

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 Team Manager (Culture), the Committee:

Noted:

5.1. That the Council supported arts and culture through two grant schemes, the Visual Arts and Crafts Makers Award Scheme (VACMA) and the Culture Fund.

5.2. That the arts and culture sector was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3. That, on 21 December 2021, when considering the allocation of one-off funding towards a series of projects considered to provide excellent recovery prospects from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Policy and Resources Committee recommended the allocation of funding to a series of recovery projects, which included a one-off allocation of £300,000 towards Cultural Fund Recovery Funding.

5.4. The draft Guidance, Monitoring and Application Forms in respect of the proposed Covid Recovery Fund for Culture, attached as Appendices 1 to 3 to the report by the Corporate Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

5.5. That a Covid Recovery Fund for Culture, funded by the one-off allocation of £300,000 referred to at paragraph 5.3 above, be established with the following aims:

- To supplement funding provided to organisations that receive priority funding through the Culture Fund by allowing the Key Clients to apply for additional support through the Covid Recovery Fund.
- To increase the Open Pot element of the Culture Fund.
- To provide wider assistance to community arts and performance groups.

5.6. That an advisory panel, comprising the undernoted membership, be established to consider applications to the Covid Recovery Fund for Culture:

- Orkney Islands Council:
 - Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
 - Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
 - Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
 - Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
 - Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
 - Team Manager (Culture).
 - Arts Development Officer.
- External Advisers:
 - Two representatives from Voluntary Action Orkney.
 - Two representatives from Creative Scotland.
 - One representative from Museums Galleries Scotland.

5.7. That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing to determine applications for funding from the Covid Recovery Fund for Culture.

Councillor James W Stockan rejoined the meeting during discussion of this item.

6. Culture Fund – Review

Councillor Graham A Bevan declared a non-financial interest in this item, in that a close family member was on the Board of the Pier Arts Centre, and was not present during discussion thereof.

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

Noted:

6.1. That, following a review of Council funding for cultural activity, the Culture Fund was established in 2011, with the aim to improve the Council's support for cultural activity by giving longer term funding commitments to key cultural organisations alongside providing wider access to cultural funding for projects and small independent organisations.

6.2. That the Culture Fund supported activity in the areas of arts, heritage and language, such as Orcadian dialect.

6.3. That, since its establishment in 2011, the Culture Fund had been reviewed every three years, to ensure that it continued to achieve its aims.

6.4. That reviews undertaken in 2013, 2016 and 2019 concluded that the Culture Fund continued to be successful in achieving many of its aims, with the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee subsequently recommending that the Culture Fund continue in its current form, as well as continuing to be reviewed every three years.

6.5. That, on 7 September 2022, when discussing proposed administrative changes to the Culture Fund, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee noted:

- That, in 2021, an internal review of the Culture Fund was undertaken to ensure that the fund continued to be fit for purpose.
- The key recommendations arising from the internal review of the Culture Fund, namely to adopt national best practice in the culture, heritage, and arts sectors via:
 - Widening membership of the assessment panel to include external sector experts.
 - Operating assessment systems and review cycles amended to be in line with national frameworks recommended by Creative Scotland, the public body supporting the arts, screen and creative industries across the country.

6.6. That the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee subsequently recommended:

- That, to align the Culture Fund Open Pot with national recognised best practise, the delivery timetable for the Culture Fund be moved from a January to March process to a June to October process, with grants being dispersed at the beginning of the following financial year rather than retrospectively.
- That membership of the assessment panel be extended to include the following:
 - One representative from Voluntary Action Orkney.
 - One representative from Creative Scotland.
 - One representative from Museums Galleries Scotland.

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

6.7. That, subject to funding being made available from 2023/24 onwards, the Culture Fund should continue in its current form and continue to be reviewed every three years.

7. College Management Council Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 24 October 2022, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Jean E Stevenson, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 24 October 2022, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, as a true record.

8. St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee held on 25 October 2022, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

8.1. On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Jean E Stevenson, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee held on 25 October 2022 as a true record.

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

8.2. That the recommendations at paragraphs 1.5 and 2.3 of the Minute of the Meeting of the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee held on 25 October 2022, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

Reverend Susan Kirkbride left the meeting at this point.

9. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme – Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Accounting), the Committee:

Noted:

9.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 30 September 2022, against the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, as detailed in section 4.2 of the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

9.2. The explanations given in respect of significant budget variances, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by 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.

10. Conclusion of Meeting

At 10:54 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.