

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 8 February 2023, 09:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

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

Religious Representatives:

Reverend Susan Kirkbride and Reverend Fraser Macnaughton.

Teacher Representative:

Mary Maley.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Stephen G Clackson.

Religious Representative:

Marie Locke.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- Oliver D Reid, Chief Executive.
- James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Peter Diamond, Head of Education.
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- David Brown, Service Manager (Resources).
- Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture) (for Items 1 to 4 and 6 to 17).
- Catherine Diamond, Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare) (for Items 1 to 14).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).
- Sheila Tulloch, Service Manager (Legal Services).
- Nick Hewitt, Team Manager (Culture) (Items 1 to 10).
- Nigel Fyffe, Senior Maintenance Surveyor (Items 1 to 4).

Observing

- Steve Arnold, Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion) (for Items 1 to 13).
- Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary Education) (for Items 1 to 13).
- Jane Partridge, Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education) (for Items 1 to 13).
- Stuart Bevan, Solicitor.

Observing via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability) (for Items 2 to 14).

Not Present

- Jo Hill, Teacher Representative.

Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Steven B Heddle – Item 8.
- Councillor James R Moar – Item 5.
- Reverend Fraser Macnaughton – Item 7.
- Mary Maley – Item 5.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Disclosure of Exempt Information

The Committee noted that, although it was proposed 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relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, Item 6 had been withdrawn.

2. 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:

2.1. The revenue financial summary statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 31 December 2022, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, which indicated the following:

- A net General Fund overspend of £385,700.
- A net Non-General Fund underspend of £273,000.

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 2022, attached as Annex 2 to the report by 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 report by 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 report by 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:

3.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 31 December 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:

3.2. 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.

4. Health and Wellbeing Census

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 Head of Education, the Committee:

Noted:

4.1. That, during academic year 2021/22, all local authorities across Scotland were asked to make a Health and Wellbeing Census available to Primary 5 to Secondary 6 pupils.

4.2. That, due to concerns over the survey tool being deployed, a management decision was taken to suspend work on the survey until such time as a wider and more inclusive consultative exercise could be conducted.

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

4.3. That a short-life member/officer working group, comprising the undernoted core membership, be established to design both the style and content of a Health and Wellbeing Survey for Orkney's children and young people:

- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Jean E Stevenson.
- 3 additional Elected Members of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- 1 Teacher Representative from Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Head of Education.
- Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion).
- Team Leader (Education Resources).
- 3 Additional Teachers/Head Teachers (1 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 1 Staff representative from Papdale Halls of Residence.
- 1 Staff representative from Community Learning and Development.
- 1 Representative from Orkney Health and Care (Social Work).
- 2 Representatives from NHS Orkney (eg Health Promotion).
- 2 Representatives from Orkney's Third Sector Organisations.

4.4. That the following representatives be appointed to the short-life member/officer working group referred to above:

- 3 additional Elected Members of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee:
 - Councillor Stephen G Clackson.
 - Councillor Rachael A King.
 - Councillor John A R Scott.
- 1 Teacher Representative from Education, Leisure and Housing Committee:
 - Mary Maley.

4.5. That the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in February 2024, advising of the outcome of the work of the short-life working group and presenting a draft survey for consideration.

5. Natwest International Island Games – Guernsey 2023

Orkney Island Games Association – Proposed Grant Funding

Councillor James R Moar declared an interest in this item, his connection being that a close family member would be participating in the Island Games 2023, but concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Mary Maley, Teacher Representative, declared an interest in this item, her connection being that a close family member would be participating in the Island Games 2023, but concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

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:

- 5.1. That Orkney Island Games Association was preparing for the 2023 NatWest International Island Games to be held in Guernsey from 8 to 14 July 2023.
- 5.2. That it was anticipated that 11 sports would be represented at the 2023 NatWest International Island Games, with 89 provisional Orkney participants.
- 5.3. That Orkney Island Games Association was seeking financial support from the Council in respect of two team officials as well as games participants.
- 5.4. That the cost of attending the 2023 NatWest International Island Games was estimated at £1,730 per competitor.
- 5.5. That, historically, the level of grant awarded by the Council was assessed on an individual basis for each NatWest International Island Games, depending on the location of the Games, and comprised a per capita grant of £100 per person, up to a maximum number of participants and officials.
- 5.6. That Orkney Island Games Association had sponsorship packages available to local businesses, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- 5.7. That, in advance of a service budget being established as part of the Council's annual budget setting process, any financial support to Orkney Island Games Association in 2023/24 would be subject to an adequate budget being made available.

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

- 5.8. That the Council offer to be a Gold sponsor, at a cost of £10,000, of Orkney Island Games Association in respect of the Orkney Team attending the 2023 Natwest International Island Games, to be held in Guernsey from 8 to 14 July 2023.
- 5.9. That, subject to an adequate budget being made available in 2023/24, the Gold sponsorship, referred to at paragraph 5.8 above, should be payable equally over each of the two financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, up to a maximum sum of £5,000 each year.

6. Proposed Facility Development

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn.

7. Pickaquoy Centre Trust – End of Year Performance

Reverend Fraser Macnaughton declared an interest in this item, his connection being that he was a Trustee of the Pickaquoy Centre Trust, but concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

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:

7.1. That recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was the main focus for the Pickaquooy Centre Trust in 2021/22.

7.2. That staff retention was the biggest challenge faced by the Pickaquooy Centre Trust in 2021/22.

7.3. That the Pickaquooy Centre Trust was successful in securing £660,358 of external funding during 2021/22.

7.4. That the Council paid the full annual management fee for 2021/22, amounting to £776,592, to the Trust.

7.5. That Pickaquooy Centre Trust's audited annual accounts for 2021/22 had been submitted and indicated an operating deficit of £52,651.

7.6. That the Pickaquooy Centre Trust's end of year usage figures and performance covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, indicated overall annual usage of 266,009, which represented an increase of 213,855 in overall usage against the same period in 2020/21.

The Committee scrutinised:

7.7. The Pickaquooy Centre Trust's end of year usage figures and performance covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance that the aims and priorities as detailed in the Service Agreement 2019-22 were being met.

8. Orkney Creative Future – A 10 Year Strategy for the Arts – Review

Councillor Steven B Heddle declared an interest in this item, his connection being that he was on the committee of Orkney Livewire which ran the Orkney Rock Festival, but concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

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:

8.1. That, on 7 June 2017, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended approval of Orkney's Creative Future – A 10 Year Strategy for the Arts, accompanied by a policy document, Sector Aims and Ambitions, which was to be kept under regular internal review during the ten-year lifespan of the Strategy.

8.2. Activity delivered during the period 2019 to 2022, as detailed in the Sector Aims and Ambitions Progress Report, attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

8.3. The updated Action Plan, attached as Appendix 3 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, which incorporated measurable delivery metrics for the period 2023 to 2027.

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

8.4. That the updated Arts Strategy Action Plan for the period 2023 to 2027, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

9. Phase 4 Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan

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 Education, the Committee:

Noted:

9.1. That the Northern Alliance, which had a shared vision to improve the educational and life chances of children and young people, was a Regional Improvement Collaborative between eight local authorities across the North and West of Scotland.

9.2. That each Regional Improvement Collaborative was required by a joint Steering Group, comprising representation from the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and local government, to produce a Regional Improvement Plan.

9.3. The Northern Alliance Progress and Impact Report 2021-22, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, which set out the work achieved over the final year of the Regional Improvement Collaborative Phase 3 Plan.

9.4. That, on 7 September 2022, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended that the National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2022/23 be approved for submission to the Scottish Government.

9.5. The Regional Improvement Collaborative Phase 4 Plan 2022-2025, attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

9.6. The illustrative relationship between the National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2022/23 and the Regional Improvement Collaborative Phase 4 Plan 2022-2025, as set out in section 6 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

9.7. That, from 1 January 2023, James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, took on the role of Regional Improvement Lead for a two-year period until 31 December 2024.

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

9.8. That the Regional Improvement Collaborative Phase 4 Plan 2022-2025, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved in so far as it related to the work of the Council.

10. Care Inspectorate – Eday Primary School Nursery

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 (Early Learning and Childcare), the Committee:

Noted:

10.1. That, in April 2022, the Care Inspectorate adopted a new inspection framework, applying to nursery, child-minding and out of school care settings, which had introduced new scrutiny aspects.

10.2. That, consequently, Care Inspectorate evaluations focused on the following four areas:

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

10.3. That Eday Primary School Nursery was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in November 2022.

10.4. That, of the four areas inspected, one received a very good grading, two received good gradings and one received an adequate grading.

10.5. That one area of improvement was identified by the Care Inspectorate, as outlined in section 4.4 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

The Committee scrutinised:

10.6. The inspection report by the Care Inspectorate in respect of Eday Primary School Nursery, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance that action had been taken or agreed as necessary.

11. Care Inspectorate – Papdale Primary School Nursery

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 (Early Learning and Childcare), the Committee:

Noted:

11.1. That, in April 2022, the Care Inspectorate adopted a new inspection framework, applying to nursery, child-minding and out of school care settings, which had introduced new scrutiny aspects.

11.2. That, consequently, Care Inspectorate evaluations focused on the following four areas:

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

11.3. That Papdale Primary School Nursery was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in June 2022.

11.4. That, of the four areas inspected, one received an excellent grading and three received a very good grading.

The Committee scrutinised:

11.5. The inspection report by the Care Inspectorate in respect of Papdale Primary School Nursery, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance that action had been taken or agreed as necessary.

12. Care Inspectorate – Firth Primary School Nursery

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 (Early Learning and Childcare), the Committee:

Noted:

12.1. That, in April 2022, the Care Inspectorate adopted a new inspection framework, applying to nursery, child-minding and out of school care settings, which had introduced new scrutiny aspects.

12.2. That, consequently, Care Inspectorate evaluations focused on the following four areas:

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

12.3. That Firth Primary School Nursery was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in November 2022.

12.4. That of the four areas inspected, one received an adequate grading and three received a good grading.

12.5. That one area of improvement was identified by the Care Inspectorate, as outlined in section 4.3 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

The Committee scrutinised:

12.6. The inspection report by the Care Inspectorate in respect of Firth Primary School Nursery, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance that action had been taken or agreed as necessary.

Reverend Susan Kirkbride and Mary Maley left the meeting at this point.

13. College Management Council Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 24 January 2023, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

13.1. On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Stephen G Clackson, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 24 January 2023 as a true record.

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

13.2. That the recommendation at paragraph 2 of the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 24 January 2023, attached as Appendix 3 to this Minute, be approved.

14. Housing Services – Performance Monitoring

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:

14.1. That housing organisations were required to report performance against a number of service areas and indicators within the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

14.2. Performance in relation to the undernoted range of service areas within Housing Services for the reporting period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing:

- Customer Satisfaction.
- Housing Quality and Maintenance.
- Access to Housing and Support.
- Homelessness.
- Neighbourhood and Community.
- Getting Good Value from Rents.
- Re-lets and Voids.
- Customer/Landlord Relationship.

14.3. Areas of positive performance within Housing Services for the reporting period, as follows:

- Time to complete non-emergency repairs.
- Level of stock meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.
- Low levels of tenancy offers refused.
- Good levels of tenancy sustainment.
- Reduction in void relet times.
- Low levels of abandonments/evictions.
- Reduction in time taken to assess a homeless application.
- No repeat homelessness presentations.
- Positive tenancy outcomes for homeless households, including the average time to close a case and the limited time spent in temporary accommodation.
- Reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation.
- Low levels of former tenant arrears written off.
- Overall percentage of rent collected higher than in previous years.

14.4. Areas where performance within Housing Services could potentially be improved or continue to be improved, as follows:

- Customer Satisfaction.
- Opportunities to participate in landlord decision making.
- Level of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Time taken to complete a medical adaptation.
- Time to complete emergency repairs.
- High percentage of tenancies ending in arrears.
- Rent arrears remaining high.

14.5. That, as part of the performance monitoring processes for 2021/22, the Annual Assurance Statement required by the Scottish Housing Regulator was approved by Council in October 2022.

The Committee scrutinised:

14.6. Performance in relation to the range of service areas within Housing Services for the reporting period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance.

Reverend Fraser Macnaughton left the meeting during discussion of this item.

15. Council House Rents

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:

15.1. That a consultation, undertaken in December 2022, in relation to the annual increase for Council House rent levels to take effect from 1 April 2023, proposed the following three options, which were all below the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 10.1% at September 2022:

- Rental freeze.
- 3% increase.
- 5% increase (capped at £5 per week).

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

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

15.3. That, with effect from 1 April 2023, Council house rents should increase by 3%, in recognition that the cost of living was having a significant impact on households.

16. Housing Revenue Account – Draft Revenue Budget

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 to **recommend to the Council** that the draft revenue budget for the Housing Revenue Account for financial year 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration through the budget setting process.

17. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:26 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.