

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 7 February 2018, 10:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

Councillors Robin W Crichton, John A R Scott, Alexander G Cowie, Steven B Heddle, J Harvey Johnston, W Leslie Manson, John T Richards, Stephen Sankey, James W Stockan and Owen Tierney.

Hugh Halcro-Johnston and Mary Maley.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- Wilfred Weir, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Peter Diamond, Head of Lifelong Learning and Inclusion (for Items 1 to 5).
- Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services.
- James Wylie, Head of Education and Improvement (for Items 1 to 5).
- Erin Boyd, Acting Head Teacher, Rousay Community School (for Items 1 to 4).
- Luke Fraser, Housing Manager (Policy and Planning) (for Items 1 to 11).
- Paul Kemp, Strategic Finance Manager.
- Carol McManus, Service Improvement Officer (for Items 1 to 4).
- Peter Trodden, Solicitor.
- Hazel Flett, Senior Committees Officer.

Observing

- William Ross, Principal, Orkney College (for Items 1 to 5).
- Keith Foubister, Works and Inspection Manager (for Items 1 to 8).
- Morag Miller, Service Improvement Officer (for Items 1 to 4).
- Marie Love, Community Planning Business Manager (for Items 9 to 13)
- Kerry Spence, Community Learning and Development Team Leader (for Items 1 to 4).
- Kirsty Groundwater, Press Officer.

Apologies

- Councillor Stephen G Clackson.
- Councillor Barbara Foulkes.

Not Present

- Jo Hill.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Robin W Crichton in the Chair.

1. Disclosure of Confidential Information

The Committee noted that Appendix 1 of Item 12 contained confidential information of the class described in Section 50A(3)(a) 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 Corporate 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 31 December 2017, attached as Annex 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Finance, indicating the following:

- A net General Fund underspend of £19,900.
- A net Non-General Fund overspend of £308,500.

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 2017, attached as Annex 2 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Finance.

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 Corporate Services and the Head of Finance.

3. Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate

Inspection of Rousay Community School

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 Carol McManus, Service Improvement Officer, the Committee:

Noted:

3.1. That Rousay Community School was jointly inspected by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate in November 2017.

3.2. That Education Scotland's evaluations for Rousay Community School focussed on the following four areas:

- Leadership of change.
- Learning, teaching and assessments.
- Raising attainment and assessment.
- Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

3.3. That the Care Inspectorate evaluations for the Nursery focussed on the following four areas:

- Quality of care and support.
- Quality of environment.
- Quality of staffing.
- Quality of management and leadership.

3.4. That, of the four areas inspected by Education Scotland, referred to at paragraph 3.2 above, for primary stages, all received a satisfactory grading and for the nursery class all received a good grading.

3.5. That, of the four areas inspected by the Care Inspectorate, referred to at paragraph 3.3 above, for the nursery class, one grading was good and three were very good.

3.6. The Inspection Report by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate and the letter to Parents/Carers, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

Mary Maley left the meeting at this point.

4. Education Scotland

Inspection of Community Learning and Development in Orkney

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 Lifelong Learning and Inclusion, the Committee:

Noted:

4.1. That, in late 2017, Education Scotland inspected Community Learning and Development in Orkney.

4.2. That Education Scotland's evaluation of Community Learning and Development in Orkney focused on the following four areas:

- Improvements in performance.
- Impact on the local community.
- Delivering the learning offer with learners.
- Leadership and direction.

4.3. That, of the four areas evaluated, one received a satisfactory grading, two received a good grading and one a very good grading.

4.4. That two areas for improvement were identified by Education Scotland, as outlined in section 5.2 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

4.5. That the Council must submit a progress report, to Education Scotland, one year from the inspection, following which Education Scotland would undertake a two day monitoring visit.

4.6. The Inspection Report by Education Scotland, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

4.7. That, as part of strengthened governance arrangements in relation to Community Learning and Development in Orkney, the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit an annual report, to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, regarding progress with the Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan.

5. College Management Council Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 29 January 2018, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

5.1. On the motion of Councillor John A R Scott, seconded by Councillor Robin W Crichton, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 29 January 2018 as a true record.

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

5.2. That the recommendation at paragraph 2.2 of the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 29 January 2018, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

Hugh Halcro-Johnston left the meeting at this point.

6. 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:

Noted:

6.1. That the Council was required to maintain a separate Housing Revenue Account, covering income and expenditure in respect of specified houses, buildings and land, which must be in balance at the end of each financial year.

6.2. The draft Housing Revenue Account budget for financial year 2018 to 2019, attached as Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, estimated at £3,721,400, being an increase of £107,700 or 3% over the budget for financial year 2017 to 2018.

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

6.3. That the draft revenue budget for the Housing Revenue Account for financial year 2018 to 2019, referred to at paragraph 6.2 above, be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration through the budget setting process.

7. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme

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 Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, the Committee:

Noted the summary position of expenditure incurred as at 31 December 2017, against the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account for financial year 2017 to 2018, together with explanations given in respect of significant budget variances, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Finance.

8. Housing Revenue Account

Proposed Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme

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, subject to an adequate budget being made available, the undernoted Housing Revenue Account revenue repairs and maintenance programme for 2018 to 2019, be approved:

- Cyclical maintenance – £30,000.
- Planned maintenance – £405,000.
- Reactive repairs – £352,700.
- Voids, improvements and adaptations – £290,000.
- In-house professional fees (Development and Infrastructure) – £164,700.
- Contingency – £20,000.

9. Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes

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 Housing Manager (Policy and Planning), the Committee:

Noted:

9.1. That the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes was a Scottish Government scheme designed to improve the energy efficiency of private sector housing stock.

9.2. That the Council's contract with Firefly Energi (Orkney) Limited to deliver the programme expired on 31 March 2019.

9.3. Progress with the 2017 to 2018 programme, as detailed in section 4 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

9.4. That, due to the large volume of works undertaken over the three years of the programme to date, it was becoming harder to attract the required number of households in order to reach the spending target currently in excess of £1,000,000.

9.5. That, during the last three years, due to high levels of fuel poverty, Orkney had received significantly more funding per-head through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes than many of the larger councils in Scotland.

9.6. That the Council was successful in a bid to the Warm Homes Fund, receiving funding of £1,500,000 towards the installation of 200 new central heating systems over the 12 month period between November 2017 and November 2018.

9.7. That the Warm Homes Fund was being run alongside the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes programme in order to maximise the benefit of both schemes.

9.8. That the Scottish Government had not yet announced the level of grant funding for the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes for 2018 to 2019.

9.9. That, combining the Warm Homes Fund, referred to at paragraph 9.6 above, together with the Energy Company Obligation and Warm Zones funding also available, funding of approximately £3,000,000 could be available in respect of fuel poverty and energy efficiency works through the Council's Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes programme in 2018 to 2019.

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

9.10. That powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, to submit a bid for funding, not exceeding £1,000,000, from the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes for 2018 to 2019, together with any other fuel poverty or energy efficiency funding that may become available.

10. 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 Housing Manager (Policy and Planning), the Committee:

Noted:

10.1. That consultation, undertaken during November and December 2017, in relation to the annual rent increase for Council houses to take effect from 1 April 2018, proposed an increase of the Consumer Price Index as of September 2017, namely 3%.

10.2. The results of the consultation, referred to at paragraph 10.1 above, as detailed in section 5 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

10.3. That, with effect from 1 April 2018, Council house rents should increase by 3%.

11. Review of Rent Setting Policy

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 Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, the Committee:

Noted:

11.1. That, in June 2017, the Committee recommended that the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should undertake a consultation with Council tenants in respect of proposed amendments to the Rent Setting Policy.

11.2. That the consultation on proposed amendments to the Rent Setting Policy was undertaken during November and December 2017, the results of which were attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

11.3. That the consultation raised issues regarding the level of data held in respect of 41.4% of the Council's housing stock and the lack of Choice Based Letting.

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

11.4. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should arrange for further data to be collated in respect of property attributes for the remaining 41.4% of the Council's housing stock to ensure further clarity on the impact of the proposed changes to the Rent Setting Policy on both tenants and the Council's rental yield.

11.5. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should arrange for consultation to be undertaken in respect of Choice Based Lettings.

11.6. That, once the additional information referred to at paragraph 11.4 above had been ascertained, the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the next available meeting of the Committee, regarding proposed amendments to the Rent Setting Policy, together with consideration of choice based letting based on the outcome of the proposed consultation.

12. Syrian Resettlement Programme – Proposed Housing Options

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 Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, the Committee:

Noted:

12.1. That, in December 2017, the Council agreed that, subject to conditions, the Council should seek to take additional households through the Syrian Resettlement Programme, which would allow a greater humanitarian response, greater economies of scale and a positive impact on Orkney's demographic profile.

12.2. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee was requested to submit a report, to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, in respect of options for housing further households through the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

12.3. That, once arrangements in respect of housing Syrian refugees had been progressed, the Council would be in a position to contact the Home Office to formally offer to resettle further families under the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

12.4. Options for housing refugees, as outlined in section 7 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, with the preferred option being Option 1, namely that the Council should seek to identify two family sized properties on mainland Orkney, ideally in Kirkwall, Stromness or Finstown, to house two Syrian refugee families arriving in 2018.

12.5. Additional considerations in respect of housing Syrian refugees, as outlined in section 8 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

12.6. That, should further Syrian refugees be housed in Orkney, the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing would instigate processes to ensure the temporary provision of a housing support/interpretation officer as required.

On the motion of Councillor W Leslie Manson, seconded by Councillor Steven B Heddle, the Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

12.7. That, subject to the conditions agreed by Council in December 2017, the Council should seek to identify two family sized properties on mainland Orkney, preferably in Kirkwall, Stromness or Finstown, to house two Syrian refugee families arriving in 2018.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:35 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Rob Crichton.