

# Minute

## General Meeting of the Council

Tuesday, 2 July 2024, 10:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



## Present

Councillors Graham A Bevan, Stephen G Clackson, Alexander G Cowie, David Dawson, P Lindsay Hall, Steven B Heddle, Rachael A King, Kristopher D Leask, W Leslie Manson, James R Moar, Janette A Park, Raymond S Peace, John A R Scott, Gwenda M Shearer, Gillian Skuse, Jean E Stevenson, Ivan A Taylor, Mellissa-Louise Thomson, Owen Tierney, Duncan A Tullock and Heather N Woodbridge.

## Clerk

- Gavin Mitchell, Head of Legal and Governance.

## In Attendance

- Oliver D Reid, Chief Executive.
- Karen Greaves, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.
- Hayley Green, Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.
- Gareth Waterson, Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.
- James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Andrew Groundwater, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- Erik Knight, Head of Finance.
- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).

## Observing

- Alex Rodwell, Head of Improvement and Performance.
- Kirsty Groundwater, Communications Team Leader.
- Maya Tams-Gray, Committees Officer.

## Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

## Chair

- Councillor Graham A Bevan, Convener.

## **1. General Meeting of the Council**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 30 April 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Graham A Bevan, seconded by Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the General Meeting of the Council held on 30 April 2024 as a true record.

## **2. Local Review Body**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 2 May 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Owen Tierney, seconded by Councillor Graham A Bevan, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Local Review Body held on 2 May 2024 as a true record.

## **3. Planning Committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 8 May 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Owen Tierney, seconded by Councillor Duncan A Tullock, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8 May 2024 as a true record.

## **4. Licensing Committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 9 May 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Duncan A Tullock, seconded by Councillor Owen Tierney, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 9 May 2024 as a true record.

## **5. Special General Meeting of the Council**

### **Minute of Special Meeting held on 14 May 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Graham A Bevan, seconded by Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Special General Meeting of the Council held on 14 May 2024 as a true record.

## **6. Policy and Resources Committee**

### **Minute of Special Meeting held on 14 May 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 14 May 2024 as a true record.

## **7. Special General Meeting of the Council**

### **Minute of Special Meeting held on 30 May 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Graham A Bevan, seconded by Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Special General Meeting of the Council held on 30 May 2024 as a true record.

## **8. Development and Infrastructure Committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 4 June 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Kristopher D Leask, seconded by Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 4 June 2024 as a true record.

The Council thereafter resolved to approve the recommendations contained in the Minute of the Meeting of the Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 4 June 2024.

## **9. Education, Leisure and Housing Committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 5 June 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Ivan A Taylor, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee held on 5 June 2024 as a true record.

The Council thereafter resolved to approve the recommendations contained in the Minute of the Meeting of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee held on 5 June 2024.

## **10. Monitoring and Audit Committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 6 June 2024**

On the motion of Councillor P Lindsay Hall, seconded by Councillor Gillian Skuse, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Monitoring and Audit Committee held on 6 June 2024 as a true record.

The Council thereafter resolved to approve the recommendations contained in the Minute of the Meeting of the Monitoring and Audit Committee held on 6 June 2024.

## **11. Policy and Resources Committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 18 June 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 June 2024 as a true record.

The Council thereafter resolved to approve the recommendations contained in the Minute of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 June 2024.

## **12. Community Development Fund Sub-committee**

### **Minute of Meeting held on 30 April 2024**

On the motion of Councillor Graham A Bevan, seconded by Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, the Council resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Community Development Fund Sub-committee held on 30 April 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, as a true record.

### **13. Financial Regulations**

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, the Council:

Resolved that the revised and updated Financial Regulations, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

### **14. Appointments and/or Nominations to Sub-committees, Working Groups and Other Bodies**

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, copies of which had been circulated, the Council:

Resolved to make the appointments and/or nominations to the various Sub-committees, groups and other bodies, referred to below.

#### **14.1. Community Development Fund Sub-committee**

The Council resolved that the following members be appointed to the Community Development Fund Sub-committee for the period to May 2027:

- Convener – Councillor Graham A Bevan.
- Chair, Policy and Resources Committee – Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.
- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Ivan A Taylor.
- Chair, Development and Infrastructure Committee – Councillor Kristopher D Leask.
- Vice Chair, Development and Infrastructure Committee – Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson.
- Two other members:
  - Councillor W Leslie Manson.
  - Councillor Gillian Skuse.

#### **14.2. Orkney Local Access Forum**

The Council resolved that Councillor John A R Scott be reappointed to the Orkney Local Access Forum for the period to May 2027.

#### **14.3. Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership**

On the motion of Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor W Leslie Manson, the Council resolved that the Chair of the Development and Infrastructure Committee be appointed as the Council's representative on the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership for the period to May 2027.

#### **14.4. Capital Programme Advisory Board**

The Council resolved that the following members be appointed to the Capital Programme Advisory Board for the period to May 2027:

- Chair, Policy and Resources Committee – Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.
- Vice Chair, Policy and Resources Committee – Councillor Alexander G Cowie.
- Chair, Development and Infrastructure Committee – Councillor Kristopher D Leask.
- Vice Chair, Development and Infrastructure Committee – Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson.
- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – Councillor Ivan A Taylor.
- Chair, Integration Joint Board – Councillor Rachael A King.

#### **14.5. Health and Wellbeing Survey Short-life Working Group**

The Council noted:

**14.5.1.** That, although the Health and Wellbeing Survey Short-Life Working Group, established in 2023, had not yet concluded its remit, it was expected to report its findings by the end of the calendar year 2024.

**14.5.2.** The proposal that, rather than amend membership to reflect recent appointments and existing constitutional arrangements, the existing individual members be reappointed to enable the Working Group to complete its remit.

The Council resolved:

**14.5.3.** That, notwithstanding existing constitutional arrangements, the following individual members be reappointed to the Health and Wellbeing Survey Short-life Working Group:

- Councillor Stephen G Clackson.
- Councillor Rachael A King.
- Councillor John A R Scott.
- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.
- Councillor Jean E Stevenson.

#### **14.6. UHI Partnership Forum**

The Council noted:

**14.6.1.** That the Council's representative on the UHI Partnership Forum was the Chair of the governing body of the local academic partner, namely the Chair of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.

The Council resolved:

**14.6.2.** That Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, Chair of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, be reappointed to the UHI Partnership Forum for the period to May 2027.

### **15. Accounts Commission Best Value Thematic Report 2022/23**

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, copies of which had been circulated, the Council:

Noted:

**15.1.** The Accounts Commission's key messages set out in section 4.1 of the report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.

**15.2.** That action points arising from the key messages and/or recommendations from the Report on Best Value for Orkney Islands Council would be placed within either the Council Delivery Plan or appropriate Directorate Delivery Plan for the purpose of performance monitoring, management and scrutiny.

The Council resolved:

**15.3.** To accept the Accounts Commission's findings in full, summarised on pages 4 and 5 of the report prepared by the Controller of Audit in January 2024, and reproduced below:

- The Commission welcomed the progress made by the Council since the Best Value Assurance Report in 2017, including completion of the actions it committed to following that report, and commend the Council for continuing to provide high-quality services that are appreciated by residents.
- The Council has effective strategic planning and performance reporting, with clear priorities set out in the Council Plan, supported by a Delivery Plan and subject to regular monitoring. The Council also shows good compliance with the Commission's Statutory Performance Information Direction.
- The Commission recognised that, as an islands authority, Orkney faces particular challenges, including in relation to staffing and capacity. At the same time, the Council has potential opportunities offered by its wide range of responsibilities, abundant natural resources, and its positive relationship with the local community.
- The Commission believes that there is a significant gap between the Council's future transformation plans and ambitions and its ability to deliver them. A greater sense of urgency is needed from the Council in a range of areas, including medium-term financial planning, management of capital projects, and its approach to tackling climate change.
- The Commission noted the scale of the Council's reserves and its stated intention to use those reserves in a sustainable manner. However, the Council is projecting a very large budget shortfall over the coming years and has relied on the use of its reserves rather than achieving significant savings to close previous budget gaps. The Council needs to develop and implement detailed operational service plans to put its finances in a more sustainable footing over the next three years. The Commission urges the Council to review its strategy for the sustainable use of its strategic reserve fund earlier than its target date of March 2025.
- The Commission noted that the Council has seen slippage in the delivery of capital projects over a number of years. Related to this, the Commission is not clear on whether the Council is on track to achieve its ambitious target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Council must provide more clarity on when it will publish a revised climate change strategy and action plan.
- While the Council's undertaking of a review of its community consultation and engagement is to be welcomed, the Commission would like to see this concluded sooner. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of this review, as well as any wider actions the Council intend to take to ensure it maintains regular structured engagement with residents throughout the year.

## **16. Conclusion of Meeting**

At 10:57 the Convener declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Graham A Bevan.