

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 5 February 2025, 09:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

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

Teacher Representative:

Jo Hill.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Janette A Park.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Peter Diamond, Head of Education.
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Catherine Diamond, Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare).
- Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary Education).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).
- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability).
- Nigel Fyffe, Team Manager (Maintenance and Heritage) (for Items 1 to 5).
- Katell Roche, Team Manager (Sport and Leisure) (for Items 5 to 9).
- Georgette Herd, Solicitor.

In Attendance via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Seonaidh McDonald, Principal, UHI Orkney (for Item 1).

Observing

- Jane Partridge, Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education).
- Siobhan Wilks, Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion).
- Ashleigh Gillespie, Senior Human Resources Adviser.

Apologies

- Reverend Susan Kirkbride, 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. 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:

1.1. The revenue expenditure monitoring statement in respect of service areas for which the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee was responsible, for the period 1 April to 31 December 2024, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, indicating a net budget overspend position of £265,100, comprising the following:

- Underspend of £464,400 against General Fund services.
- Overspend of £729,500 against Non-General Fund services.

1.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement in respect of service areas for which the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee was responsible, for the period 1 April to 31 December 2024, attached as Annex 2 to the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

1.3. 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 appropriate action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

2. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programmes – 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 summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 31 December 2024, against the approved Housing Revenue Account revenue repairs and maintenance programme for 2024/25, as detailed in section 1.4 of the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

2.2. The detailed analysis of expenditure figures and programme updates, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance regarding significant budget variances and progress being made with delivery of the approved Housing Revenue Account revenue repairs and maintenance programme.

3. Housing Service – 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:

Scrutinised the Housing Service's benchmarked performance in relation to other councils and Housing Associations within its peer group, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance with regard to the performance of the Housing Service.

Councillor Stephen G Clackson joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

4. Care Inspectorate – Stromness 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:

Scrutinised the inspection report in respect of Stromness Primary School Nursery, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance.

5. Papdale Halls of Residence – Inspection Report

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:

Scrutinised the inspection of the School Care Accommodation Services at Papdale Halls of Residence undertaken by the Care Inspectorate, together with the Action Plan, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance that action had been agreed and/or taken where appropriate.

6. Composite Class 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 Service Manager (Primary Education), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Composite Class Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

7. COVID-19 Play Park Equipment Renewal Funding

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 (Sport and Leisure), the Committee:

Noted:

7.1. That an unallocated balance of £129,087 remained within the Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund established in 2021.

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

7.2. That the following allocations be made from the unallocated balance in the Play Park Equipment Renewal Fund:

- £50,000 towards establishing a Play Park and Open Space annual maintenance budget of £10,000 per year for five years.
- The remaining unallocated balance, amounting to £79,087, to be used to upgrade equipment in Council play areas and open spaces in line with the Council's Play Area Strategy.

7.3. That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing to determine spend from the remaining unallocated balance of £79,097, referred to above, on Council play areas and open spaces.

8. 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:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that, in recognition that the cost of living was continuing to have a significant impact on households and therefore there was a need to keep rents affordable, Council house rents for the undernoted three-year period should increase with effect from 1 April annually as follows:

- 2025/26 – 4% increase.
- 2026/27 – 4% increase.
- 2027/28 – 2.5% increase.

Please refer to the Minute of the Special General Meeting of the Council held on 24 February 2025.

9. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:02 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.