

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 4 June 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, Janette A Park, John A R Scott and Jean E Stevenson.

Religious Representative:

Reverend Fraser Macnaughton.

Teacher Representative:

Jo Hill.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
- Peter Diamond, Head of Education.
- Erik Knight, Head of Finance (for Items 1 to 3).
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Seonaidh McDonald, Principal, UHI Orkney (for Items 1 to 5).
- Paul Barber, Head Teacher, Stromness Academy (for Items 4 to 12).
- Karen Bevilacqua, Service Manager (Legal Services).
- Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Catherine Diamond, Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare) (for Items 1 to 12).
- Andrew Hamilton, Service Manager (Resources).
- Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary) (for Items 4 to 12).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Jane Partridge, Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).

- Laura Baillie, Team Manager (Housing Strategy, Development and Data) (for Items 1 to 4).
- Nick Hewitt, Team Manager (Culture) (for Items 2, 3 and 7).
- Rachel Scarth, Project Manager, DYW Orkney (for Items 1 to 12).
- Ashleigh Gillespie, Senior Human Resources Adviser.
- Emma Gee, Arts Officer (for Item 7).

Observing

- Wendy Bowen, Quality Improvement Officer (Attainment and Achievement) (for Items 4 to 15).
- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability).
- Siobhan Wilks, Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion).
- Christine Scott, Finance Manager, UHI Orkney (for Items 1 and 2).
- Kirsty Groundwater, Team Leader (Communications) (for Items 1 to 4).
- Katell Roche, Team Manager (Sport and Leisure) (for Items 7 and 8).

Apologies

- Reverend Susan Kirkbride, Religious Representative.
- Mary Maley, Teacher Representative.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Ivan A Taylor, the Committee resolved that the public be excluded for Items 2 to 4, as the business to be considered involved the 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. UHI Orkney – Draft Revenue Budget

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Principal, UHI Orkney, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the draft revenue budget for UHI Orkney for financial year 2025/26, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

3. Proposed Transfer of Property

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Team Manager (Culture), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to the proposed transfer of property.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

4. Property Development

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2, 3 and 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Team Manager (Housing Strategy, Development and Data), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to a proposed property development.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

5. Performance Monitoring – Education, Leisure and Housing

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Resources), the Committee:

Noted:

5.1. The performance of Education, Leisure and Housing for the reporting period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, in respect of directorate priorities and performance indicators, as detailed in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

5.2. The complaints and compliments made to Education, Leisure and Housing in the six-month period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, and for the two preceding six-month periods, as detailed in section 5 of the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

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

5.3. That the following actions, which had been progressed to completion, be removed from the Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan:

- 1.1 Budget Management – In line with Council approved Budget Management Strategy, follow this process by allocating each service area budget saving targets.
- 1.2 Budget Management – Heads of Service and Service Managers to evaluate service budgets and delivery and identify budget saving options.
- 1.3 Budget Management – Service Managers to present suggested budget management options to the Extended Directorate Management Team meeting to agree options to be progressed to Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) for consideration.
- 1.4 Budget Management – Corporate Director to present strategy position and budget management options to CLT for consideration.

- 1.5 Budget Management – Corporate Director to present strategy and budget management options agreed by CLT to elected members at a members' seminar for indication on next steps.
- 1.6 Budget Management – Extended Directorate Management Team to progress work as guided by members' seminar to collate further detail for the proposed budget management proposals.
- 1.7 Budget Management – Detailed proposals with risk assessments to be brought to Extended Directorate Management Team meeting for consultation.
- 1.8 Budget Management – Corporate Director to update CLT outlining risks and shortfall if there are any.
- 1.9 Budget Management – Extended Directorate Management Team to present detailed budget management plans to elected members at a second members' seminar.
- 1.10 Budget Management – Recommendations from the Member Officer Working Group and suggestions from the member seminar to be presented to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee through a Committee Report.
- 1.11 Budget Management – Extended Directorate Management Team to action consultation where required and implementation of the plan.
- 2.1 Service Reviews – Following established governance from Council, commission external consultants to review both the Culture Service and the Sport and Leisure Service to identify future operating models to establish financially sustainable, quality service provision.

5.4. That the following action be amended as indicated and thereafter incorporated within the Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan:

- 2.3 Service Reviews – Member Officer Working Groups to present recommendations to members through member seminars – target date extended from 28 February 2025 to 31 December 2026.

5.5. That the revised Education, Leisure and Housing Risk Register, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

6. Empty Homes Support Scheme

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities 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 Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

6.1. That the Empty Homes Support Scheme, attached as Appendix 3 to this Minute, be approved.

6.2. That the Director of Education, Communities and Housing should submit a report, to the Policy and Resources Committee, no later than September 2025, regarding the provision of assistance from the Strategic Reserve Fund to enable the Empty Homes Support Scheme to be implemented.

7. Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards Scheme

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities 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 Arts Officer, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards Scheme, with a maximum budget of £9,000 to be disbursed annually, be continued for a further period of three years, from 2025/26 to 2027/28, subject to:

- External funding being secured from Creative Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Adequate service revenue budgets for 2026/27 and 2027/28 being established.

8. Orkney Physical Activity and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities 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 (Leisure and Culture), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Orkney Physical Activity and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan, attached as Appendices 4 and 5 respectively to this Minute, be approved insofar as they related to the remit of the Council.

9. National Thematic Inspection

Local Authority Approaches to Supporting Self-evaluation

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Education, the Committee:

Noted the National Thematic Inspection: Local Authority Approaches to Supporting School Improvement Summarised Findings report, in respect of Orkney Islands Council, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

Reverend Fraser Macnaughton left the meeting at this point

10. Care Inspectorate – Willow Tree Nursery

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare), the Committee:

Noted the report published by the Care Inspectorate in respect of Willow Tree Nursery, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

11. Education Scotland Inspection – Stromness Academy

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education), the Committee:

Noted the inspection letter in respect of Stromness Academy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, issued by Education Scotland on 3 June 2025.

12. Developing the Young Workforce

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Project Manager, DYW Orkney, the Committee:

Noted the key activities of Developing the Young Workforce Orkney during 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

Jo Hill left the meeting at this point.

13. Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Resources), the Committee:

Noted the level of progress made towards meeting the initial Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing target, as detailed in section 3 of the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

14. Homelessness in Orkney

After consideration of a report by the Director of Education, Communities 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 the Statistical and Performance Information on Homelessness for 2024/25, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

15. Conclusion of Meeting

At 14:45 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.