

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 31 March 2021, 10:30.

Microsoft Teams.



Present

Councillors Gwenda M Shearer, Alexander G Cowie, Stephen G Clackson, Barbara Foulkes, Steven B Heddle, J Harvey Johnston, W Leslie Manson, John T Richards, John A R Scott, James W Stockan, Magnus O Thomson and Owen Tierney.

Jo Hill and Mary Maley.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Peter Diamond, Head of Education (Leisure, Culture and Inclusion).
- Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services.
- Graham Bevan, Service Improvement Officer.
- Keith Foubister, Works and Inspection Manager.
- Paul Kemp, Strategic Finance Manager.
- Peter Trodden, Solicitor.

Observing

- Carol McManus, Service Improvement Officer (for Items 1 to 3).
- Garry Burton, Sport and Leisure Manager (for Items 1 to 4).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing and Homelessness).
- Andrew Hamilton, Performance and Best Value Officer (for Item 1).
- Lorraine Stout, Press Officer.

Apology

- Hugh Halcro-Johnston.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Local Government Benchmarking Framework

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Noted:

1.1. That the Improvement Service, the national improvement service for local government in Scotland, had recently withdrawn the national attainment data as outlined on pages 5, 6 and 8 to 12 of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators 2019/20, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

The Committee scrutinised:

1.2. Performance of the Education, Leisure and Housing Service, against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators for 2019/20, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, with the exception of the national attainment data which had been withdrawn, and obtained assurance.

2. Orkney Schools Attainment 2019/20

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 Graham Bevan, Service Improvement Officer, the Committee:

Noted:

2.1. The circumstances and challenges presented by COVID-19, outlined in section 4 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which highlighted amendments to the method of gathering, and subsequent presentation of, attainment data.

2.2. The Orkney Schools Attainment Report for academic session 2019/20, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which outlined the level of success and achievement of young people in Orkney.

Mary Maley left the meeting during discussion of this item.

3. College Management Council Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 15 March 2021, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

3.1. On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, to approve the Minute of Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 15 March 2021 as a true record.

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

3.2. That the recommendation at paragraph 2 of the Minute of the Meeting of the College Management Council Sub-committee held on 15 March 2021, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

4. St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee held on 18 March 2021, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

4.1. On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor J Harvey Johnston, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee held on 18 March 2021 as a true record.

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

4.2. That the recommendation at paragraph 2.4 of the Minute of the Meeting of the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee held on 18 March 2021, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

Jo Hill left the meeting at this point.

5. Housing Services – Performance Monitoring

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:

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

5.2. Performance in relation to the undernoted range of service areas within Housing Services for the reporting period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of 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.

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

- High levels of customer satisfaction.
- Low levels of repairs reported as emergencies.
- Low levels of repairs per property.
- Low levels of abandonments/evictions.
- Reductions in re-let times.
- Improved void performance.
- Low levels of former tenant arrears written off.

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

- Slightly higher levels of properties recorded as being exemptions from the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Time to complete non-emergency repairs.
- High percentage of tenancies ending in arrears and rising debt.
- Rising rent arrears.

5.5. That, as part of the performance monitoring processes for 2019/20, the Annual Assurance Statement required by the Scottish Housing Regulator was approved by Council in October 2020.

The Committee scrutinised:

5.6. Performance in relation to the range of service areas within Housing Services for the reporting period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance.

6. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme – Proposed Programme for 2021/22

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 service revenue budget being made available, the undernoted programme of repairs and maintenance for the Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 be approved:

- Cyclical Maintenance – £60,000.
- Planned Maintenance – £641,000.
- Reactive Repairs – £233,900.
- Voids/Improvements/Adaptations – £328,000.
- In-House Professional Fees – £201,300.

7. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:11 the Chair declared meeting the concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.