

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 15 November 2023, 09:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

Councillors Gwenda M Shearer, Jean E Stevenson, Graham A Bevan, Stephen G Clackson, Alexander G Cowie, Steven B Heddle, Rachael A King, James R Moar, John A R Scott, James W Stockan and Ivan A Taylor.

Religious Representative:

Reverend Fraser Macnaughton.

Teacher Representatives:

Jo Hill and Mary Maley.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.

Religious Representatives:

Reverend Susan Kirkbride and Marie Locke.

Clerk

- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).

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) (for Items 1 to 7).
- Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary Education) (for Items 1 to 7 and 13 to 16).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Jane Partridge, Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education) (for Items 1 to 8 and 13 to 16).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).
- Georgette Herd, Solicitor.
- Nigel Fyffe, Team Manager (Maintenance and Heritage) (for Items 1 to 9).
- Vikki Kerr, Team Leader (Libraries and Archives) (for Items 10 to 13).

Observing

- Andrew Groundwater, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development (for Items 1 to 7).
- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability) (for Items 1 to 7).
- Shaun Tulloch, Operational Manager (Early Learning and Childcare) (for Items 1 to 7).
- Ingrid Rendall, Head Teacher, Glaitness School (for Items 1 to 5).
- Michael Harvey, Senior Projects Officer, Sustrans Scotland (for Items 10 to 13).

Observing via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Avril Litts, Finance Manager, UHI Orkney (for Items 4 to 8).

Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Graham A Bevan – Item 2.
- Councillor Steven B Heddle – Item 2.
- Councillor Rachael A King – Item 2.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Disclosure of Exempt Information

The Committee noted the proposal that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Item 15, as the business to be discussed involved the potential 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. Revenue Expenditure Monitoring

Councillor Graham A Bevan declared an interest in this item, his connection being that a close family member was employed at Orkney College, but concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Councillor Steven B Heddle declared an interest in this item, his connection being that his wife was the Director of the Institute for Northern Studies and that he was a visiting professor for the University of the Highlands and Islands, but concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Councillor Rachael A King declared an interest in this item, her connection being that a close family member was employed at Orkney College, and was not present during discussion thereof.

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 revenue financial summary statement, in respect of service areas for which the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee was responsible, for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, indicating a budget overspend position of £1,186,600.

2.2. 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 30 September 2023, attached as Annex 2 to the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

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 report by the Head of Finance and obtained assurance that action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

3. Performance Monitoring

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

Scrutinised the performance of the Education, Leisure and Housing Service for the reporting period 1 April to 30 September 2023, as set out in sections 3 and 4 and Annex 1 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

4. Education Scotland – Inspection of Glaitness School

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 (Primary Education), the Committee:

Noted:

4.1. That, in May 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Glaitness School, being the first short model inspection of any of the schools in Orkney since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2. That, in a short model inspection, two key quality indicators from How Good is Our School were used, with the evaluations for Glaitness School as follows:

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment – satisfactory.
- Raising Attainment and Achievement – satisfactory.

4.3. That, as a result of the positive inspection visit, HM Inspectors were confident in the school's capacity to continue to improve and as such they would make no more visits to the school in connection with this inspection.

The Committee scrutinised:

4.4. The inspection letter in respect of Glaitness School, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, issued by Education Scotland on 29 August 2023, and obtained assurance.

5. Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate

Inspection of Glaitness 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:

Noted:

5.1. That, in May 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Glaitness Nursery to conduct inspections.

5.2. That two key quality indicators from How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare were used for a short model Education Scotland Inspection, with the evaluations for Glaitness Nursery as follows:

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment – good.
- Securing Children’s Progress – good.

5.3. That four key quality themes from the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework were used in the Care Inspectorate inspection, with the evaluations for Glaitness Nursery as follows:

- How good is our care, play and learning? Good.
- How good is our setting? Good.
- How good is our leadership? Good.
- How good is our staff team? Very Good.

The Committee scrutinised:

5.4. The inspection letter in respect of Glaitness Nursery, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, issued by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate on 19 September 2023, together with the next steps outlined in section 5 of the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, and obtained assurance.

6. National Improvement Framework

Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Education, the Committee:

Noted:

6.1. That, in December 2022, the Scottish Government published the latest update on progress in relation to the National Improvement Framework.

6.2. The draft summary of progress made locally in relation to the National Improvement Framework, as well as an outline of next steps, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

6.3. That the National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved for submission to the Scottish Government.

Reverend Susan Kirkbride and Reverend Fraser Macnaughton left the meeting at this point.

7. Collaborative Review of Secondary Broad General Education

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 (Secondary and Tertiary), the Committee:

Noted:

7.1. The findings of a Collaborative Improvement Review of Secondary Broad General Education in the three island authorities of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council, undertaken under the leadership of the Association of Directors of Education for Scotland and in partnership with Education Scotland, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

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

7.2. That the findings of the Collaborative Improvement Review of Secondary Broad General Education, referred to above, be used to inform a local review of the secondary Broad General Education in Orkney, to be undertaken in year three (2024/25) of the National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2023-2024.

8. UHI Orkney – Capital Funding Expenditure Plan

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 (Secondary and Tertiary), the Committee:

Noted:

8.1. That capital funding was allocated from the Scottish Funding Council to UHI with each of the academic partners receiving an annual allocation.

8.2. That UHI Orkney was required to submit reports to UHI on the capital funding, with a spend plan by September/October and final capital spend by July.

8.3. The UHI Capital Funding Expenditure Plan for UHI Orkney for financial year 2023/24, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, which indicated an allocation of £153,381, with expenditure as at 30 September 2023 of £26,779.

9. 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 Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

9.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 30 September 2023, against the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, as detailed in section 4.2 of the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

9.2. The explanations given in respect of significant budget variances, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance with regard to progress being made with delivery of the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme for 2023/24 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

10. Papdale Halls of Residence Allocations Policy – Review

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 (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation), the Committee:

Noted:

10.1. That, on 5 March 2013, the Council adopted an allocations policy setting out isles pupils' entitlement to a place in Papdale Halls of Residence.

10.2. That the prioritisation of entitlement had been reviewed, with the following changes proposed:

- Pupils resident in Hoy and Flotta added to the Priority 1 category.
- Orkney Offer pupils added as a Priority 5 category.
- The Norway exchange scheme removed from the priorities.

On the motion of Councillor Steven B Heddle, seconded by Councillor John A R Scott, the Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

10.3. That the revised Papdale Halls of Residence Allocations Policy, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved, with the changes in respect of the Priority 1 category taking effect from the next academic year, namely from August 2024.

Marie Locke and Mary Maley left the meeting at this point.

11. Pickaquooy Centre Trust – End of Year Performance

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 (Leisure and Culture), the Committee:

Noted:

11.1. That the main focus of the Pickaquooy Centre Trust throughout 2022/23 was its ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

11.2. That the Pickaquooy Centre Trust secured £32,009 of external funding during 2022/23.

11.3. That, during 2022/23, the Council carried out repairs and maintenance on the Pickaquooy Centre totalling £200,000.

11.4. That the Council paid the full annual management fee for 2022/23 to the Trust, amounting to £792,200.

11.5. That the Pickaquooy Centre Trust's audited annual accounts for 2022/23 had been submitted and indicated an operating deficit of £628,484.

11.6. The Pickaquooy Centre Trust end of year usage figures and performance covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, which indicated an overall annual usage of 428,461 visits, which represented an increase of 46% in overall usage against the same period in 2021/22.

The Committee scrutinised:

11.7. The Pickaquooy Centre Trust end of year usage figures and performance covering period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing and obtained assurance that the aims and priorities, as detailed in the Service Agreement 2019-22, were being met.

12. Orkney Library and Archive – Stock Management 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 Team Manager (Libraries and Culture), the Committee:

Noted:

12.1. That the Stock Management Policy was a core document for the Library and Archive Service to evidence what resources were purchased and displayed in the libraries and on the mobile library van.

12.2. That Orkney Library and Archive was committed to stocking a wide range of materials in a variety of formats to meet the needs of those living and/or working in Orkney.

12.3. That Orkney Library and Archive would not place restrictions on, or censor materials, unless at risk of damage or loss, as it aimed to promote the diversity of society and communities.

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

12.4. That the revised Orkney Library and Archive Stock Management Policy, attached as Appendix 3 to this report, be approved.

13. Weyland Bay Coastal Path

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 (Leisure and Culture), the Committee:

Noted:

13.1. That the Weyland Bay coastal path project was part of the Your Kirkwall Place Plan 2018.

13.2. The Stage 1 Capital Project Appraisal in respect of the proposed development of a walking and cycling path through the Weyland Bay green space, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

13.3. That the cost of developing the Stage 2 Capital Project Appraisal, estimated at £10,000, could be funded from the remaining balance of an allocation from HITRANS granted in 2022/23 in respect of the design and preparation of the project.

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

13.4. That, as an exception to the Capital Project Appraisal process, in order to maximise time limited external funding, the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, should submit, to the Policy and Resources Committee, a Stage 2 Capital Project Appraisal in respect of the proposed development of a walking and cycling path through the Weyland Bay green space.

14. Support for Learning Strategy

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Education, the Committee:

Noted:

14.1. That the existing level of support provided to children and young people with Additional Support Needs left a level of unmet need across schools and nurseries.

14.2. That a Support for Learning Strategy, which set out a clear approach to mitigating the level of unmet need, had been drafted.

14.3. That the aims and ambition of the draft Support for Learning Strategy could not be implemented in full without additional resources.

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

14.4. That the Support for Learning Strategy 2023-2028, attached as Appendix 4 to this Minute, be approved.

Jo Hill left the meeting during discussion of this item.

15. Support for Learning – Funding

On the motion of Councillor Gwenda M Shearer, seconded by Councillor Jean E Stevenson, the Committee resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

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 Head of Education, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

15.1. That the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Policy and Resources Committee, requesting additional funding in respect of the provision of Support for Learning until the end of the current financial year.

15.2. That a base line service provision increase in respect of support for learning be considered as part of the budget setting process for financial year 2024/25.

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.

16. Conclusion of Meeting

At 15:20 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.