

Minute

Policy and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 17 June 2025, 09:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

Councillors Heather N Woodbridge, Alexander G Cowie, Graham A Bevan, Stephen G Clackson, 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 and Duncan A Tullock.

Clerk

- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).

In Attendance

- Oliver D Reid, Chief Executive.
- Hayley Green, Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.
- Gareth Waterson, Director of Enterprise and Resources.
- James Wylie, Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
- James Buck, Head of Marine Services, Transportation and Harbour Master (for Items 1 to 3).
- Sweyn Johnston, Head of Enterprise and Economic Growth (for Items 4 to 6).
- Erik Knight, Head of Finance.
- Andrew Groundwater, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- Gavin Mitchell, Head of Corporate Governance.
- Alex Rodwell, Head of Performance and Business Support (for Items 14 to 21).
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing (for Items 10 to 18).
- Inga Burton, Service Manager (Sustainable Regeneration and Arctic) (for Items 5 and 6).
- Andrew Hamilton, Service Manager (Resources) (for Items 10 to 27).
- Shonagh Merriman, Service Manager (Corporate Finance) (for Items 1 to 3).
- William Moore, Service Manager (Improvement and Performance) (for Items 10 to 18).
- Jane Partridge, Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education) (for Items 10 to 14).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting) (for Items 1 to 3).
- Seonaidh McDonald, Principal, UHI Orkney (for Items 10 to 14).
- Christine Scott, Finance Manager, UHI Orkney (for Items 10 to 14).

- Laura Baillie, Team Manager (Housing Strategy, Development and Data) (for Items 10 to 14).
- Paul Kesterton, Information Governance Officer (for Items 5 to 7).

In Attendance via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Stephen Brown, Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.
- Darren Morrow, Head of Children, Families and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer (for Items 6 to 27).

Observing

- Peter Diamond, Head of Education (for Items 6 to 27).
- Kenny MacPherson, Head of Property and Asset Management (for Items 12 to 18).
- Ross Cunningham, Service Manager (Communications and Policy) (for Items 1 to 14).
- Glen Thomson, Service Manager (Property and Capital Projects) (for Items 15 to 18).
- Kirsty Groundwater, Communications Team Leader (for Items 15 to 27).
- George Vickers, Community Planning Business Manager (for Items 3 and 4).
- Stevie Garriock, Improvement and Performance Trainee (for Items 10 to 18).

Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Steven B Heddle – Item 14.
- Councillor Gillian Skuse – Item 4.

Chair

- Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.

1. Detailed Revenue Budgets

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:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the final detailed revenue budgets for financial year 2025/26, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

2. Medium Term Financial Strategy

After consideration of a joint report by the Director of Enterprise and Resources and the Head of Finance, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy, for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

Councillor Steven B Heddle joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

3. Miscellaneous Piers and Harbours – Minor Capital Improvement Programme

After consideration of a report by the Director of Enterprise and Resources, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Transportation, Marine Services and Harbour Master, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the allocation within the Non-General Fund capital programme for 2025/26 in respect of minor capital improvement works within Miscellaneous Piers and Harbours be increased from £300,000 to £1,615,500.

4. Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund

Councillor Gillian Skuse declared an interest in this item, in that she was the Chief Executive Officer of Age Scotland Orkney, which had previously benefitted from the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund and might benefit from a future allocation, and was not present during discussion thereof.

After consideration of a joint report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, and the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

4.1. That the Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Cost of Living Task Force should be invited to make recommendations to the Council on the local distribution of Orkney's allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2025/26, and to action their recommendations once approved.

4.2. That powers be delegated to the Director of Enterprise and Resources to scrutinise and approve the recommendations made by the Cost of Living Task Force on the local distribution of Orkney's allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2025/26.

5. Orkney Islands Council Offshore Energy Development Strategy

After consideration of a report by the Director of Enterprise and Resources, 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 Enterprise and Economic Growth, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

5.1. That the Orkney Islands Council Offshore Energy Development Strategy, attached as Appendix 3 to this Minute, should be approved.

5.2. That the Director of Enterprise and Resources should submit an update to the Policy and Resources Committee, in due course, on the Orkney Islands Council Offshore Energy Development Strategy, following expiration of the approved funding timeline in 2027.

6. International Engagement

After consideration of a report by the Director of Enterprise and Resources, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Sustainable Regeneration and Arctic), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

6.1. That development and enhancement of international relationships, with a specific focus on engagement across the North Atlantic and Arctic, in line with the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding and the Twinning agreement with Vestland, should continue to be supported.

6.2. That the International Engagement Plan, attached as Appendix 4 to this Minute, be approved, noting that international engagement would be included within any future updates of the Council's Political Engagement Strategy.

6.3. That a budget of up to a total of £50,000 be established, in order to support international engagement over a period of three years to March 2028, enabling attendance at the Arctic Circle Assembly in 2025, 2026 and 2027 and attendance at/hosting of international related events.

6.4. That a budget of up to a total of £20,000 to March 2027 be established, to enable continuation and development of the Council's Nordic Atlantic Fund aligned with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation, extending the region to include Canada, a strategic partner of the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation.

6.5. That powers be delegated to the Director of Enterprise and Resources to identify a source for the budgets, referred to at paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 above, from within existing resources over three financial years to March 2028.

7. Unacceptable Actions and Challenging Behaviour Policy

After consideration of a report by the Chief Executive, 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 (Governance), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the revised Policy on Unacceptable Actions and Challenging Behaviour by Service Users and Complainants, attached as Appendix 5 to this Minute, be approved.

8. Alternative Models of Governance

After consideration of a report by the Chief Executive, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Corporate Governance, the Committee:

Noted:

8.1. Progress made by officers to date in undertaking the scope of work set out in Stage 1 of the project to explore Alternative Models of Governance and that officers were continuing to explore opportunities to utilise the powers and duties contained within the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to maximise benefit to address island issues.

8.2. That none of the alternative models of governance, set out in Appendix 2 to the report by the Chief Executive, were currently available to Orkney or were in Orkney's gift.

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

8.3. That the Council should focus on engagement with the Scottish Government, COSLA and NHS Orkney in advancing the Single Authority Model agenda as set out in the current Programme for Government and supported by specific grant funding as the most likely option to ultimately progress to Stage 2 of the project.

9. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor Alexander G Cowie, the Committee resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Items 10 to 14, 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.

Councillor Steven B Heddle left the meeting at this point.

10. Capital Investment Proposals

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, 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of a report by the Director of Enterprise and Resources, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to proposals for capital investment.

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.

Councillor Steven B Heddle rejoined the meeting during discussion of this item.

11. Proposed Housing 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 8 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 (Housing Strategy, Development and Data), the Committee:

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

12. Proposed Housing 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 6, 8 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 Service Manager (Resources), the Committee:

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

13. Strategic Housing Investment Plan

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn.

14. UHI Orkney – Draft Budget

Councillor Steven B Heddle declared an interest in this item, in that his wife was employed by UHI Orkney, and was not present during discussion thereof.

Councillor Rachael A King stated for transparency reasons that she had a connection to this item, in that her husband was employed by UHI Orkney, but considered, having applied the objective test, that the connection did not amount to a declarable interest.

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 Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to the draft budget for UHI Orkney for 2025/26.

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.

15. Performance Monitoring – Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions

After consideration of a joint report by the Chief Executive, the Director of Education, Communities and Housing and the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Performance and Business Support, the Committee:

Noted:

15.1. The performance of Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions for the reporting period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, in respect of directorate priorities and performance indicators, as set out in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively to the joint report by the Chief Executive, the Director of Education, Communities and Housing and the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

15.2. The complaints and compliments made to Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions in the six-month period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, and for the two preceding six-month periods, as set out in section 4 of the joint report by the Chief Executive, the Director of Education, Communities and Housing and the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

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

15.3. That the following actions, which had been progressed to completion, be removed from the Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions' Directorate Delivery Plan:

- 1a Process improvement – Human Resources and Organisational Development – review of internal processes to identify opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness, eliminate unnecessary processes or steps, and integrate with other Council electronic systems where possible.
- 1b Process improvement – Legal and Governance – review of internal processes to identify opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness, eliminate unnecessary processes or steps, and integrate with other Council electronic systems where possible.
- 1c Process improvement – Improvement and Performance – review of internal processes to identify opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness, eliminate unnecessary processes or steps, and integrate with other Council electronic systems where possible.
- 7 Equality, fairness and inclusion – review and revise equality outcomes, creation of an equality outcomes delivery plan and implement equality outcomes.
- 11a External communication – develop Communications Strategy 2023-2028.
- 12a Internal communication – develop Communications Strategy 2023-2028.
- 13 Council publication scheme – expand Council's existing Publication Scheme to enable information commonly requested under Freedom of Information legislation to be publicly available.
- 14a Supporting local business through procurement – improve communication with suppliers and ensure that support to access procurement opportunities is publicised and promoted.
- 14c Supporting local business through procurement – encourage all tenderers to develop a commitment to net zero policies in parallel to the Council's policies when these are in place.
- 15b Programme of and approach to improvement – develop and implement plan to embed the Scottish Approach to Service Design.
- 16 Electronic Document and Records Management System – complete architecture and pathfinding phases and thereafter implement the Electronic Document and Records Management System across Council services.

- 17b The Orkney Partnership – develop dynamic delivery group plans in accordance with the three strategic priorities in the Orkney Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) for 2023-30.

15.4. That the following actions be amended as indicated and thereafter incorporated within the appropriate Directorate Delivery Plan:

- 3b Performance – review and update corporate performance framework – target date extended to 31 March 2026.
- 11b External communication – develop supporting external communications delivery plan – target date extended to 31 December 2025.
- 12b Internal communication – develop supporting internal communications delivery plan – target date extended to 31 December 2025.
- 12c Internal communication – convene multi-service working group – target date extended to 30 September 2025.
- 15a Programme of and approach to improvement – Corporate Leadership Team prioritised rolling programme of improvement priorities for “Improvement and Performance” and “Customer Services and Administration” prioritised and agreed – target date extended to 31 March 2026.

16. Performance Monitoring – Orkney Health and Care

After consideration of a report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Noted:

16.1. The performance of Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership services delivered by the Council, for the reporting period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.

16.2. The complaints and compliments made to the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, in the six-month period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, and for the two preceding six-month periods, as set out in section 4 of the report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.

17. Performance Monitoring – Council Delivery Plan

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 (Improvement and Performance), the Committee:

Noted progress made in respect of the Council’s priorities and performance measures detailed within the Council Plan and Delivery Plan 2023 to 2028, for the reporting period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, as set out in Annex 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

Councillor Stephen G Clackson left the meeting at this point.

18. Performance Monitoring – Local Government Benchmarking Framework

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 (Improvement and Performance), the Committee:

Noted:

18.1. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework's National Benchmarking Overview Report 2023-24, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, which set out all councils' performance at a national level.

18.2. The Council's performance against Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators, as set out in Annexes 2 and 3 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

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

19. People Plan – Progress Update

After consideration of a report by the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, the Committee:

Noted:

19.1. Progress made against the Delivery Plan priorities of the People Plan 2022-26, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

19.2. The update on progress with review of the People Plan, as set out in section 3 of the report by the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

20. Registered Services within Orkney Health and Care

After consideration of a report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Children, Families and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer, the Committee:

Noted the inspection activity for registered services within Orkney Health and Care, for the period 22 October 2024 to date, as detailed in section 3 of the report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.

21. Children's Services Plan – Annual Report

After consideration of a joint report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing and the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Suspended Standing Orders in order to continue the meeting beyond 17:00.

The Committee thereafter noted the Children's Services Plan Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing and the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, which provided an overview of the work completed by Children's Services during 2024/25, and the work of the Children's Services Strategic Group, insofar as it related to the remit of the Council.

22. Police and Fire Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Police and Fire Sub-committee held on 20 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor David Dawson, seconded by Councillor Duncan A Tullock, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Police and Fire Sub-committee held on 20 May 2025, attached as Appendix 6 to this Minute, as a true record.

23. Pension Fund Sub-committee, together with Pension Board

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Pension Fund Sub-committee, together with the Pension Board, held on 21 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Kristopher D Leask, seconded by Councillor Rachael A King, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Pension Fund Sub-committee, together with the Pension Board, held on 21 May 2025, attached as Appendix 7 to this Minute, as a true record.

24. Investments Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Investments Sub-committee held on 22 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Alexander G Cowie, seconded by Councillor Kristopher D Leask, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Investments Sub-committee held on 22 May 2025, attached as Appendix 8 to this Minute, as a true record.

25. Asset Management Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Asset Management Sub-committee held on 27 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Alexander G Cowie, seconded by Councillor Kristopher D Leask, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Asset Management Sub-committee held on 27 May 2025, attached as Appendix 9 to this Minute, as a true record.

26. Human Resources Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Human Resources Sub-committee held on 27 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Alexander G Cowie, seconded by Councillor John A R Scott, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Human Resources Sub-committee held on 27 May 2025, attached as Appendix 10 to this Minute, as a true record.

27. Staff Appeals Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Staff Appeals Sub-committee held on 9 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Alexander G Cowie, seconded by Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Staff Appeals Sub-committee held on 9 May 2025, attached as Appendix 11 to this Minute, as a true record.

28. Conclusion of Meeting

At 17:04 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Heather N Woodbridge.