

Minute

Policy and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 18 February 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, Rachael A King, Kristopher D Leask, W Leslie Manson, James R Moar, Raymond S Peace, John A R Scott, Gwenda M Shearer, Gillian Skuse, Jean E Stevenson, Ivan A Taylor, Mellissa-Louise Thomson and Owen Tierney.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Councillors Steven B Heddle and Janette A Park.

Clerk

- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).

In Attendance

- Oliver D Reid, Chief Executive.
- Stephen Brown, Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership (for Items 1 to 19).
- Karen Greaves, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.
- Hayley Green, Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.
- Gareth Waterson, Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.
- James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Andrew Groundwater, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- Sweyn Johnston, Head of Enterprise and Economic Growth (for Items 2 to 4 and 7 to 12).
- Erik Knight, Head of Finance.
- Gavin Mitchell, Head of Legal and Governance.
- Kenny MacPherson, Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities (for Items 1 to 6 and 11 to 18).
- Darren Morrow, Head of Children, Families and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer (for Items 1 to 9).
- Alex Rodwell, Head of Improvement and Performance.
- Stuart Allison, Service Manager (Enterprise) (for Items 3 to 5 and 7 to 11).
- Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture) (for Items 9 and 10).
- Inga Burton, Service Manager (Sustainable Regeneration and Arctic) (for Items 8 to 12).
- Donna-Claire Hunter, Service Manager (Safety and Resilience) (for Items 2 to 6).
- Shonagh Merriman, Service Manager (Corporate Finance) (for Items 1 and 12 to 18).

- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting) (for Items 12 to 18).
- Christie Hartley, Team Manager (Sustainable Tourism) (for Items 2 to 4).
- Alistair Morton, Team Manager (Energy) (for Items 1 to 5).
- Alison Barclay, LEADER Development Officer (for Items 7 to 11).
- Paul Kesterton, Information Governance Officer (for Items 1 to 3).

In Attendance via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Nick Hewitt, Team Manager (Culture) (for Items 9 and 10).
- George Vickers, Community Planning Business Manager (for Items 11 to 19).
- Maya Tams-Gray, Committees Officer.

Observing

- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability) (for Items 9 to 12).
- Glen Thomson, Service Manager (Property and Capital Projects) (for Items 1 to 5 and 17.2 to 18).
- Fiona Ratter, Team Manager (Business Support/Elections) (for Items 1 and 2).
- Paul Olvhoj, Business Development Manager (for Items 1 to 4).
- Kirsty Groundwater, Communications Team Leader (for Items 9 to 20).

Observing via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Gemma Williams, Interim Service Manager (Children and Families Authority Wide Services) (for Items 5 to 7).

Apology

- Councillor Duncan A Tullock.

Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Graham A Bevan – Item 11.
- Councillor P Lindsay Hall – Item 11.
- Councillor Janette A Park – Item 11.
- Councillor John A R Scott – Item 5.
- Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson – Item 11.
- Councillor Heather N Woodbridge – Item 11.

Chair

- Councillor Heather N Woodbridge.

1. Treasury Management Strategy Statement

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, 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 (Corporate Finance), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

Councillor W Leslie Manson joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

2. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, together with an Equality Impact Assessment and an Island Communities Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Noted:

2.1. The comments received from the most recent compulsory review of polling districts and polling places, as set out in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively to the report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.

Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor John A R Scott, moved that the undernoted changes to polling places be agreed:

- The Pickaquoy Centre should be the new Polling Place for the Kirkwall East and Kirkwall West, and North and South Isles electorate.
- The Milestone Kirk in Dounby should be the new Polling Place for the Harray and Sandwick electorate.
- The Rendall Community Centre should be the new Polling Place for the Evie and Rendall electorate.
- The Cromarty Hall should be the new Polling Place for the South Ronaldsay and Burray electorate.

Councillor Stephen G Clackson, seconded by Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson, moved an amendment, that:

- The undernoted changes to polling places be agreed:
 - The Pickaquoy Centre should be the new Polling Place for the Kirkwall East and Kirkwall West, and North and South Isles electorate.
 - The Milestone Kirk in Dounby should be the new Polling Place for the Harray and Sandwick electorate.
 - The Rendall Community Centre should be the new Polling Place for the Evie and Rendall electorate.
 - The Cromarty Hall should be the new Polling Place for the South Ronaldsay and Burray electorate.
- A thorough review of restoring polling places in the isles should be undertaken.

The result of a recorded vote was as follows:

For the Amendment:

Councillors Stephen G Clackson, David Dawson, Kristopher D Leask, James R Moar, Janette A Park, Mellissa-Louise Thomson and Owen Tierney (7).

For the Motion:

Councillors Graham A Bevan, Alexander G Cowie, P Lindsay Hall, Steven B Heddle, Rachael A King, W Leslie Manson, Raymond S Peace, John A R Scott, Gwenda M Shearer, Gillian Skuse, Jean E Stevenson, Ivan A Taylor and Heather N Woodbridge (13).

The Motion was therefore carried and the Committee thereafter:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

2.2. That the undernoted changes to polling places be approved:

- The Pickaquoy Centre should be the new Polling Place for the Kirkwall East, Kirkwall West and North and South Isles electorate.
- The Milestone Kirk in Dounby should be the new Polling Place for the Harray and Sandwick electorate.
- The Rendall Community Centre should be the new Polling Place for the Evie and Rendall electorate.
- The Cromarty Hall should be the new Polling Place for the South Ronaldsay and Burray electorate.

3. Council Publication Scheme

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Information Governance Officer, the Committee:

Noted:

3.1. The updated Publication Scheme, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.

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

3.2. That powers be delegated to the Head of Legal and Governance to keep the Publication Scheme under regular review and up to date as far as possible, and to continue to add appropriate additional information to the Scheme as and when that became available.

Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson left the meeting during discussion of this item.

4. Cruise Ship Levy Consultation

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Team Manager (Sustainable Tourism), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

4.1. That the draft response to the upcoming consultation by the Scottish Government in respect of a cruise ship levy, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

4.2. That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader, Chair and Vice Chair of the Development and Infrastructure Committee, to amend the Council's final consultation response, should any variations to the draft response be required following the launch of the consultation.

4.3. That the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration be authorised to submit the response in relation to the consultation on a cruise ship levy to the Scottish Government, on behalf of the Council, by the consultation deadline.

Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson rejoined the meeting, left the meeting and rejoined the meeting via remote link (Microsoft Teams) during discussion of this item.

5. Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Councillor John A R Scott declared an interest in this item, his connection being that he was a member of the THAW Orkney Board and had recent involvement with Warmworks, and was not present during discussion thereof.

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, 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 (Energy), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan, attached as Appendices 3 and 4 respectively to this Minute, be adopted in so far as they related to the Council.

Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson rejoined the meeting, in person, at this point.

6. Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Policy

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, 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 (Safety and Resilience), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the updated Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, attached as Appendix 5 to this Minute, be approved.

7. Fostering, Adoption and Kinship Care Allowances and Fees

After consideration of a report by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, 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 Children, Families and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

7.1. That the Financial Policy and Procedure for Foster Carers and Kinship Carers, attached as Appendix 6 to this Minute, be approved.

7.2. That the Adoption Allowance Scheme, attached as Appendix 7 to this Minute, be approved.

7.3. That the Intensive Fostering Scheme be discontinued following the natural end of current placements within the Scheme.

8. 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 Items 9 to 12 inclusive, 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.

9. Strategic Investment

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 4 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, 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** what action should be taken with regard to a strategic 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.

10. North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme

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 1 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

After consideration of a joint report by the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration and the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Enterprise), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** what action should be taken with regard to the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme programme.

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.

11. Community Development Trusts

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 4 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Councillor Graham A Bevan declared an interest in this item, his connection being that he was a Director of Stromness Community Development Trust, and was not present during discussion thereof.

Councillor Stephen G Clackson declared a connection to this item, his connection being that he was a member of Sanday Development Trust, but, as he was not a Director of the Trust, he considered that his connection was not so significant as to constitute an interest that required to be declared.

Councillor P Lindsay Hall declared an interest in this item, his connection being that he was a Director of the Island of Hoy Development Trust, and was not present during discussion thereof.

Councillor Janette A Park declared an interest in this item, her connection being that she was a Director of Stromness Community Development Trust, and was not present during discussion thereof.

Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson declared an interest in this item, her connection being that she was a Director of the Eday Partnership, and was not present during discussion thereof.

Councillor Heather N Woodbridge declared an interest in this item, her connection being that she was a co-Vice Chair of The North Ronaldsay Trust, and was not present during discussion thereof.

Signed: Heather N Woodbridge.

As the Chair, Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, had declared an interest and left the meeting, Councillor Alexander G Cowie, Vice Chair, took the Chair for this item.

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, 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** what action should be taken with regard to Community Development Trusts.

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.

Signed: Alexander G Cowie.

Councillor Steven B Heddle left the meeting at this point.

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12. UK Shared Prosperity Fund

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 Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, 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:**

12.1. That an allocation of £210,000 from the revenue element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2025/26 be approved.

12.2. That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader and Depute Leader, to allocate the remainder of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for 2025/26, taking into account:

- The requirement to comply with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Guidance, including the ability to deliver within financial year 2025/26.
- That the funding was a continuation of the previous fund, and allocations should align/build on the original investment plan.
- Alignment with Council priorities as well as the desire to offset costs that would otherwise fall to the Council.

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. Police and Fire Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Police and Fire Sub-committee held on 19 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor David Dawson, seconded by Councillor Mellissa-Louise Thomson, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Police and Fire Sub-committee held on 19 November 2024, attached as Appendix 8 to this Minute, as a true record.

14. 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 20 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor Kristopher D Leask, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Pension Fund Sub-committee, together with the Pension Board, held on 20 November 2024, attached as Appendix 9 to this Minute, as a true record.

15. Investments Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Investments Sub-committee held on 21 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Heather N Woodbridge, seconded by Councillor Rachael A King, to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Investments Sub-committee held on 21 November 2024, attached as Appendix 10 to this Minute, as a true record.

16. Asset Management Sub-committee

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Asset Management Sub-committee held on 28 January 2025, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Resolved:

16.1. 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 28 January 2025 as a true record.

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

16.2. That the recommendations contained at paragraph 4 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Asset Management Sub-committee held on 28 January 2025, attached as Appendix 11 to this Minute, be approved.

17. Revenue Expenditure Monitoring

17.1. Policy and Resources

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:

17.1.1. The revenue expenditure monitoring statement in respect of service areas for which the Policy and Resources 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 budget underspend position of £1,070,700.

17.1.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement in respect of service areas for which the Policy and Resources 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:

17.1.3. 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.

17.2. Orkney Health and Care

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:

17.2.1. The revenue expenditure monitoring statement in respect of service areas within the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, for which the Council 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 budget overspend position of £2,044,700.

17.2.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement in respect of service areas within the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, for which the Council 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:

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

Councillor P Lindsay Hall left the meeting at this point.

17.3. Summary

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:

17.3.1. The summary revenue expenditure monitoring statement for the period 1 April to 31 December 2024, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, indicating the following:

- A total General Fund overspend of £2,817,800.
- A deficit in Sources of Funding of £503,600.
- A net Non-General Fund surplus of £5,393,200.

17.3.2. The sources of funding statement for the period 1 April to 31 December 2024, attached as Annex 2 to the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

17.3.3. 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.

18. Capital 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 (Corporate Finance), the Committee:

Noted:

18.1. The summary financial position as at 31 December 2024, in respect of the General Fund and Non-General Fund capital programmes, as detailed in section 1.6 of the report by the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

18.2. The detailed analysis of expenditure figures and project 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 General Fund and Non-General Fund capital programmes.

19. Orkney Community Plan, incorporating Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, 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 Improvement and Performance, the Committee:

Noted the Orkney Community Plan 2025 to 2030, incorporating the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, insofar as it applied to the Council.

20. Accounts Commission – Transformation in Councils

After consideration of a report by the Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, copies of which had been circulated, the Committee:

Noted the key messages arising from the Accounts Commission's report, Transformation in councils, as follows:

- As financial and service demand challenges continue to deepen, all Councils need to urgently transform how they deliver services. Councils are however facing barriers to transformation and progress has been slow, but reform is vital and must happen at a greater pace to protect the sustainability of public services.
- A sector-led Transformation Programme has been put in place by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) and the Improvement Service, but this is at an early stage and more clarity is needed on timescales for achieving outcomes and there are risks around workforce capacity and skills to realise ambitions.
- Councils cannot deliver transformation alone and it is essential that the Scottish Government, Community Planning and third sector partners support the transformation of local services through effective collaboration. Achieving consensus on the longer-term vision for local services is crucial.
- Public and political support is critical. Effective public engagement and communication is required to gain the backing from communities and prevent this from becoming a barrier to transformation. Councils should prioritise both capacity and capability in their workforces to match the ambition and pace needed to transform.

21. Conclusion of Meeting

At 17:00 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Heather N Woodbridge.