

Minute

Education, Communities and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 1 April 2026, 09:30.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

Councillors 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, Jean E Stevenson and Heather N Woodbridge.

Teacher Representatives:

Jo Hill and Mary Maley.

Present via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

Religious Representative:

Fraser Macnaughton.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
- Wendy Bowen, Head of Education.
- Garry Burton, Head of Active Communities.
- Frances Troup, Head of Strategic Housing, Housing Operations and Homelessness.
- Seonaidh McDonald, Principal, UHI Orkney (for Items 1 to 3).
- Kate Lucas, Quality Improvement Officer (Attainment and Achievement) (for Items 6 to 10).
- Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary Education).
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Pat Robinson, Service Manager (Accounting).
- 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 to 3).

In Attendance via remote link (Microsoft Teams)

- Georgette Herd, Principal Solicitor.

Observing

- Alex Rodwell, Head of Performance and Business Support.
- Andrew Hamilton, Service Manager (Resources).
- Petra Mclay, Acting Service Manager (Secondary and Tertiary Education).
- Nigel Fyffe, Team Manager (Maintenance and Heritage) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Elaine Harcus, Team Manager (Sport and Leisure) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Carolynn Leslie, Team Manager (Sport and Leisure) (for Items 1 to 8).
- Ashleigh Gillespie, Senior Human Resources Advisor.

Apologies

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.
- Reverend Susan Kirkbride, Religious Representative.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Ivan A Taylor, Vice Chair.

1. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of Councillor Ivan A Taylor, seconded by Councillor Jean E Stevenson, the Committee resolved that the public be excluded for Item 2, as the business to be considered involved the disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

2. UHI Orkney Task Force

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:

Noted the continuing work being carried out by the UHI Orkney Task Force towards reducing the loan required to balance the UHI Orkney budget, as set out in sections 3 to 5 of the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

3. UHI Orkney – Draft Budget

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 Finance Manager, UHI Orkney, the Committee:

Noted:

3.1. That an advance, up to a maximum of £1,266,000, from the loans fund was approved in order to set a balanced budget for UHI Orkney for 2025/26.

3.2. That the forecasted outturn position for 2025/26 was predicting that the full advance of £1,266,000 from the loans fund might not be required.

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

3.3. That the Director of Education, Communities and Housing should submit a report, to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee to be held on 21 April 2026, requesting a further advance from the loans fund, up to a maximum of £994,500, in order to set a balanced budget for UHI Orkney for 2026/27.

3.4. That, subject to the further advance of up to £994,500 referred to at paragraph 3.3 above being approved, the draft revenue budget for UHI Orkney for financial year 2026/27, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

Mary Maley left the meeting at this point.

4. Housing Revenue Account – Draft Budget

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 Strategic Housing, Housing Operations and Homelessness, the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the draft revenue budget for the Housing Revenue Account for financial year 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved.

5. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme

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 Strategic Housing, Housing Operations and Homelessness, the Committee:

Resolved, in terms of delegated powers, that, subject to an adequate budget being made available, the undernoted programme of revenue repairs and maintenance for the Housing Revenue Account for 2026/27, totalling £2,055,100, be approved:

- Cyclical Maintenance – £98,900.
- Planned Maintenance – £697,400.
- Reactive Repairs – £444,700.

- Voids/Improvements/Adaptations – £538,500.
- In-House Professional Fees – £275,600.

6. Tenant Participation Strategy

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

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Tenant Participation Strategy 2026-2031, attached as Appendix 3 to this Minute, be approved.

Mary Maley rejoined the meeting at this point.

7. Raising Attainment Strategy

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 (Primary Education), the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council** that the Raising Attainment Strategy 2026-2029, attached as Appendix 4 to this Minute, be approved.

8. Orkney School Attainment

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 Orkney Schools Attainment Report for academic session 2024/25, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing, which provided assurance on the levels of success and achievement of children and young people in Orkney.

Mary Maley left the meeting at this point.

9. Community Learning, Development and Employability – Annual Report

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 (Community Learning, Development and Employability), the Committee:

Noted the Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report 2024-25, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

10. Conclusion of Meeting

At 11:36 the Vice Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: Ivan A Taylor.