

**Environment and Transport Committee  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick  
Tuesday 21 January 2020 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

P Campbell	S Coutts
C Hughson	S Leask
A Manson	R McGregor
A Priest	D Sandison
G Smith	R Thomson

**Apologies:**

A Manson (for lateness)

**In Attendance (Officers):**

J Smith, Director of Infrastructure Services  
D Coupe, Executive Manager – Roads  
M Craigie, Executive Manager – Transport Planning  
J Manson, Executive Manager - Finance  
C Symons, Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations  
C Bragg, Team Leader – Waste Management  
N Hutcheson, Team Leader – Roads  
M Lisk, Team Leader – Carbon Management  
P Wishart, Solicitor  
Y Scott, Burial Services Officer  
B Kerr, Communications Officer  
L Malcolmson, Committee Officer

**Also in Attendance**

Mr Scott  
Mr T Smith

**Chair:**

Mr Thomson, Chair of the Committee, presided.

**Circular:**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

**Declarations of Interests**

None

**Minutes**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 on the motion of Mrs Hughson, seconded by Mr Priest.

**Petition – Speed Limit, Tresta**

The Chair drew attention to the terms of the petition at agenda Item E and read the following response from the Team Leader – Asset and Network:

“There have been a number of requests in recent years for a reduced speed limit on the A971 at Tresta. This petition, in common with the majority of these requests, cites excessive vehicle

speeds witnessed on the road as the main reason that a reduced limit is required. To date these requests have been refused as this length of road does not meet the criteria for a 50 mph given in the national guidance for the setting of local speed limits. However, the Roads Service have recently provided a bus layby at the Sandsound Junction to improve the safety of both bus and road users. Improved warning signage, road markings and verge markers are also to be installed in the near future”

Mr Thomson moved that a further report be presented to Committee in two meeting cycles of this Committee. Mr McGregor seconded.

During comments it was noted that the national guidance does not reflect the views of the local communities. It was requested therefore that the report to be presented consider the views of the residents in the area.

*(Ms Manson attended the meeting)*

The Convener said that he was content with the approach taken but acknowledged that drivers in the area have a responsibility to drive considerately.

**Decision:**

The Committee instructed officers to provide a report to Committee within two meeting cycles.

01/20 **Infrastructure Directorate Performance Report**  
**Environment & Transport Committee Performance Report;**  
**Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 to 31 December 2019**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-05-20-F) that summarised the activity and performance of the Infrastructure Directorate for Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 to December 2019.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the main terms of the report, and advised that the service had received an award for the most improved performance from the *Association for Public Service Excellence* (APSE) and the Committee viewed the award.

The Director of Infrastructure Services advised that a report would be brought to Committee to explain how close to capacity the Council is in maintaining existing services with the current fleet.

The Director of Infrastructure Services also advised that there would be a review and adjustments to be made in terms of Climate Change including any consequences.

The Chair congratulated the Fleet Management team on winning this National award and for their achievements over the last year and said that he looked forward to seeing that commitment continue into the future.

In responding to questions, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the upgrade to the furnace noted at paragraph 4.2.5 would mean that the replacement would burn the waste hotter and cleaner and although it would not make a huge difference to emission it would ensure compliance with the Council’s emissions obligations.

In terms of LED lanterns noted at paragraph 4.2.2, the Executive Manager – Roads anticipated a completion of the plan by March 2021.

Reference was made to paragraph 4.4.1 and an update was sought on the Scottish Government Fair Funding and what the Committee could do in terms of lobbying. The Leader advised that this was a recurring theme and in terms of corrective action there needs to be action in terms of unfairness Shetland suffers. He explained that all information in terms of revenue costs of continuing the service had been submitted in July 2019 which highlighted a revenue shortfall of £9.49m as the cost of running the service. The Leader said that full funding from the Government, in line with the Islands Plan, was expected and he could see no other option but full funding coming to Shetland. The Leader went on to advise that a priority was the Fair Isle ferry and information on the business case had been shared with the Government and that funding for the Fair Isle ferry is expected to be part of the funding solution. The Leader said that the issue of fair funding was ongoing and there were no unanswered questions from the Scottish Government, other than whether or not to treat Shetland fairly. The Vice-chair spoke in support of the Leader's comments and said that it was important that fair funding for ferries is received from the Scottish Government who are required to look after remote areas.

In response to a question raised from paragraph 4.6.1, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the Linkspan repair and life extension programme would be circulated, together with an update, to Members following the meeting.

Comment was made in regard to the road to the recycling point and the school in Fair Isle. The Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the Road Condition Inspection from July 2019 would be reviewed and discussions would also be undertaken with the Fair Isle Community to see what could be done in regard to any specific issues.

Comment was made in regard to paragraph 4.7, in terms of the delay in completing the recycling shed resulting in no income. In that regard, the Director of Infrastructure Services was asked what lessons had been learned. He advised that overall planning should have been done earlier and officers had not anticipated the time it would take to organise the complementary activities. He said that key projects tended to progress well where others took longer but the whole exercise for the recycling shed had taken longer than anticipated. The Director of Infrastructure Services said there needed to be more effective partnership working to avoid delays. He added that there had been complexities with the contractor that would have been avoided had the project started earlier.

In responding to a question in regard to paragraph 4.7, and the lower than budgeted income from Scord Quarry, the Executive Manager – Roads advised that the income depended upon the private sector and on activity in the construction industry. He said that it was expected that this position would recover next year.

During debate, staff were congratulated for the progress reported at paragraph 4.4.2 in regard to the LED street lighting programme. Reference was also made in regard to the level of work carried out on the Cullivoe Road, however it was noted that Members were keen to see progress on other projects and a further request was made that the report requested in November, on the Strategic Roads network priority list, would be brought to the next meeting on 10 March 2020.

Comment was made in regard to the positive developments that contribute to the Council becoming ever more efficient but despite progress the Infrastructure Department's targets on climate change continue to be hindered by the issue of ferries which is not likely to be resolved quickly. The Chair said that the statistics were clear

and that the ferry fleet contributed to half of the Council's emissions and although there was excellent work going forward on climate change Shetland remained an Island community that depended on the lifeline ferries. The Chair remarked that fixed links would be one solution.

The Leader said that what was clearly needed was the acknowledgement from the Government for full and fair funding, adding that the problem could go away in a hurry with the necessary funding from the Government.

The Leader and the Chair were commended on their handling of the fair funding for ferries matter. The approach with the Government had been done in a practical manner having identified costs agreed by Transport Scotland. There had been no antagonism and Officers and the Leader had worked well together with Transport Scotland and Ministers gaining mutual trust. Comment was made that the wider community of Shetland need to understand that this had been the approach of the Council should there be any indication by the Government Ministers not to fund.

**Decision:**

The Committee **NOTED** the;

- plans and progress in 2019/20 and
- proposals for 2020/21 activity and priorities

02/20 **Grounds Maintenance Provision - Burial Grounds & Amenity Areas**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations (EO-01-20-F) that presented an overview of the current provision and standards of grounds maintenance across Shetland's burial grounds and amenity grass areas.

The Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations introduced the report referring to the detail provided in Section 4. The Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations responded to a number of technical questions regarding the impact of the weather conditions last year on the growth of the grass and how increased cuts this year should improve mulching. He advised however that he would report next year on the matter of grass collection.

Reference was made in regard to the cutting of some amenity areas such as Wormadale view point and the Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations agreed to consider if there are amenity areas that do not require to be cut if they are not the Council's responsibility.

In terms of safety implications, it had previously been agreed that safety implications would not have an impact on current service levels, the Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations agreed to advise Members on what impact safety implications are having and why.

It was acknowledged that the Grounds Maintenance Provision was reducing from five to one contract and concern was expressed that there may be some issues geographically. The Executive Manager – Environmental Services and Estate Operations explained that the contracts had been tendered separately in the past but had been won by one contractor.

Further reassurance was given to the Committee that the report set out that all graveyards, used and unused would be included within the grass cutting programme.

Comment was made that the visual appearance of amenity areas was very important and that the Council was setting standards and conditions in that regard. It was suggested that there should be an expectation that Council housing scheme amenity areas should also meet the standards set out in paragraph 4.8 category 4 and the Executive Manager - Environmental Services and Estate Operations was asked what resources could be put to that. The Executive Manager - Environmental Services and Estate Operations commented on the cost implications but said he was happy to take a recommendation but additional costs would require an increase in budget or the costs would have to be balanced out across the other services.

Following further discussion and debate, the Chair moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Sandison seconded.

**Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve:

- That the cutting frequency of Burial Grounds grassed areas is harmonised with Amenity Areas and classified as Category 2 across all yards. This means that grass shall be mown to maintain a mean height between a maximum growth height of 15 cm and a minimum mower setting of 7.5 cm. Any shortfall in resource will be contracted out on a flexible basis;
- That the current area based contracts for grounds maintenance to Amenity Areas is merged into one Shetland-wide contract to maximise the economies of scale, thus easing contract management and administration; and
- That the collection of mown grass be reviewed by Committee after this year's growing season for both Burial Grounds and Amenity Areas. This will allow evaluation on the impact of more frequent cuts across Burial Grounds on the basis that it will result in better and less visually obtrusive mulching, thus offsetting the need to collect grass at considerable expense; and

**RECOMMENDED** that the Policy and Resources Committee and Shetland Islands Council approve the budget increase, to implement the measures described in 1.1, of approximately £41,453.

03/20 **Winter Maintenance Review 2020**

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Asset and Network (RD-01-20-F) that provided information on the Winter Maintenance Review 2020.

The Executive Manager – Roads introduced the report.

During questions, comment was made that the report had taken into account the concerns raised. It was noted that 50km of roads were not treated prior to schools starting and pupils would be travelling on untreated roads. The Executive Manager – Roads advised that since writing the report the untreated roads had been reduced to 35km. He agreed to provide the detail on the 35km not covered in the measures set out in the report. He went on to explain that this would only be an issue on a small number of days and that Officers would continue to reassess any given situation on a permanent basis. Members were reassured that the information sought was in

order to be better informed and that it was acknowledged that on some days some people would be concerned that pupils would be travelling to school on certain sections of untreated road.

In response to a question on the salt/grit use, the Executive Manager – Roads drew attention to section 4.4 which looks at when the use of salt will be required. He also explained the salt/grit mix ratios and advised that there was clear guidance on what should be used. During further discussion the consequences of using more of one or the other was highlighted and that the more use of grit there is the more there is to clean up to avoid drainage blockages. The Executive Manager – Roads advised that the national guidance used had included highland areas where there is more snowfall and where winter maintenance crews are well experienced.

There followed some discussion in regard to employers responsibility for essential staff travel but it was noted that individuals were responsible for their personal safety and welfare. Members welcomed the formalised measures that addressed concerns raised last year by staff and the Chair commented on the flexibility within the budget set and said that it was important to work together with services to achieve the best outcomes.

Mr Thomson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, Mr G Smith seconded.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee **APPROVED** the:

- measures detailed in section 4.1.3 of this report that are intended to address concerns raised in previous winter service seasons and to improve the efficiency of winter service operations;
- the measures detailed in section 4.4 intended to incorporate the relevant aspects of the new national guidance into the Council's winter service; and
- **RECOMMENDED** that the Policy and Resources Committee and the Council approves:
  - the allocation of an additional £103,000 to the "Winter Service" revenue budget to meet the estimated cost of implementing these measures, as set out in paragraph 6.5 of this report.

#### 04/20 **Climate Change - Strategic Outline Programme**

The Committee considered a report by the Director Infrastructure Services (ISD-01-20-F) that provided an overview of the Climate Change Strategic Outline programme and sought approval of a funding requirement from the Council's Change Fund.

The Director Infrastructure Services introduced the report, and in responding to questions he advised on the level of activity required across the Council and partner organisations. He explained that the first stage would be to gather information but that a concerted effort would be needed across Shetland to emphasise the need to effectively move together on this matter. He said that the basic willingness to help understanding was a starting point.

Reference was made to the shipping of fish farm waste for processing and the Director of Infrastructure Services was asked if consideration had been given to an anaerobic digestion processing plant that would produce fertiliser and biodiesel to pump into the waste to energy plant. There was also concern that wood could be better recycled rather than wood being dumped in skips. The Director of Infrastructure Services said that both of these matters were being considered and that in terms of the anaerobic digestion plant this required further consideration and that it may be a matter better progressed through a partnership approach. He said that it was important to find the right people to progress this but there was also consideration needed as to the commercial aspects and whether there would be funding available. It was noted that the processing of fish waste had been discussed for many years but that it was only dead fish that makes such a process viable. It was suggested the answer was not quite clear at this time, but that the correct business case methodology would help.

*(Mr G Smith left the meeting).*

There followed some discussion on the ZetTrans Transport Strategy and the need to ensure that electric charging points infrastructure is in place to encourage a transition to electric vehicles. It was suggested that there needed to be a plan in place. I was acknowledged that the technology was still under development and that more clarity was needed in regard to electricity networks in Shetland as Sullom Voe and Lerwick Power Stations “drop off” and the Shetland distribution grid needs to be overhauled. The Committee were further informed that using electric vehicles still uses hydro carbons produced by power stations therefore the 2025 target had been transferred to 2040. The point was made however that the Council still has to enable the community to contribute therefore the opportunities have to be put in place to achieve that. In that regard, the further discussion covered biodegradable waste, landfill, waste to energy, inter island flights, the use of broadband, penalties, peatland restoration, forestry and planting trees, marine activities, land management and agriculture and many other challenges.

The Director of Infrastructure Services said it was important for the Committee to move forward to the next level of detail and advised that an action plan would be developed.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their contributions on this very important topic and moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr Macgregor seconded.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that Shetland Islands Council:

- **NOTES** the actions taken to date in respect of Shetland Islands Council’s response to Climate Change, through the existing Carbon Management Plan, and associated activity.
- **CONSIDERS** the information provided in the Climate Change, Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1) and the Climate Change Programme Initiation Documentation (Appendix 2) and **COMMENTS** on any aspects of these documents.

- **ENDORSES** the objectives and Critical Success Factors set out in the Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1) and Programme Initiation Documentation (Appendix 2), and in particular confirm:
  - The need for shared action across all levels of government, businesses, communities and individuals to address the risks presented by Climate Change;
  - That Shetland Islands Council will adopt a proactive and collaborative approach to Climate Change, emphasising planned partnership action, with the Council providing leadership on behalf of the Shetland community;
  - The critical need for all plans and actions to recognise current inequalities, which result in Shetland residents experiencing some of the highest levels of fuel poverty and transport costs in the United Kingdom; and to ensure Just Transition solutions address these energy affordability problems, as well as reducing emissions;
  - The significant number of jobs in Shetland involved in the energy sector; and the importance that Just Transition solutions also recognise the need for employment transition in communities such as ours, as well as reducing emissions;
- **ENDORSES** the initial governance arrangements set out in that Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1) and Programme Initiation Document (Appendix 2); through the Chief Executive, the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Council's senior political office bearers.
- **ENDORSES** that the continuing work of the Carbon Management Plan should be built upon through:
  - the continuation, and where possible, the acceleration of current energy efficiency, energy conversion, waste reduction and waste reuse initiatives, internally within the Council, and across the Shetland community;
  - the review and analysis of key Council and Partnership Plans and strategies for recommended critical path Climate Change actions;
  - the further development of an integrated Shetland Climate Change Action Plan which co-ordinates activity; and
  - the reporting of recommendations from the Shetland Climate Change Action Plan to Shetland Islands Council in line with the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan which is anticipated in March / April 2020, and periodically thereafter.
- **ENDORSES** a review of guidance for the Environmental Implications section of committee reports to clarify the need to report Climate Change implications clearly.
- **APPROVES** the funding requirement at paragraph 6.5 from the Council's Change Fund and **ENDORSES** a review of the arrangements for the Council's



Change Fund to understand how the Change Fund can best be utilised to support this matter.

- **THANKS** Shetland Climate Action for their petition lodged with the Council on 3 October 2019 (pages 1 – 4 attached as Appendix 3 - full petition listing all signatories is available to Members upon request.). The Council has also had informal representations on this issue, particularly from young people and environmental groups, but also from individual constituents and community councils. The content of the petition, and other representations, align with much of the Climate Change work that the Council has embarked on, and the further actions recommended in this Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1). Further information on that alignment is set out in 4.12 – 4.17 of this report.
- **NOTES** that local emission reduction targets, for the Council estate and services, and for Shetland as a whole, will be evaluated as an early activity within the Programme, and be reported to Shetland Islands Council. This review and establishment.

05/20

**Infrastructure Services Business Programme - 2019/20**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-03-20-F) that provided information on the Business Programme of the Committee for the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report. The Committee noted the addition of the Tresta Speed Limit Review to be added to 2020/21 business programme for 5 May 2020, and the Road Network Prioritisation List report to be added the next meeting.

**Decision:**

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm.

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Chair