



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Offices, Stornoway, on Thursday 29 March 2007 at 9.30am.

PRESENT

Mr Angus Campbell (Chairman)	
Mr Norman A MacDonald (Vice-Chairman)	
Mr Alexander A Macdonald	Mr Norman M Macleod
Mr Malcolm J Graham	Mrs Morag Munro
Mr Angus Nicolson	Mr Archie K Campbell
Mr Murdo Macleod	Mr Donald Maclean
Mr Norman L Macdonald	Mr Donald Manford

With reference to a point raised at the Environmental Services Committee of 22 March 2007 the Chairman provided an update in relation to the statutory role and legal duties of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the approach taken by SNH as a consultee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Chairman be authorised to write to the First Minister highlighting the Comhairle's concerns in relation to compliance by SNH with its statutory duty, in particular with regard to the approach SNH take in considering their 'Balancing Duty' relating to socio economic issues and secondly local accountability within the decision making structures of SNH.

The Chairman also indicated that the Gaelic Television Channel was now on course to be launched by the end of 2007 following on from two separate announcements of additional funding from the Minister for Culture and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The relevant Minister, Patricia Ferguson, had pledged an additional £3 million per year from the Scottish Executive towards the dedicated digital Gaelic Television Service. HIE had also announced a contribution of £250,000 towards upgrading the Tigh Shiphort (Seaforth House) Studio in Stornoway. It was understood that the department for Culture, Media and Sport would also contribute £250,000.

This digital television service which was being developed by GMS and the BBC would play a key role in revitalising and sustaining the Gàidhlig Language. Additional funding would enable new production and post production equipment to be purchased, new programmes to be commissioned and would allow the technical, artistic and editorial skills base to be enhanced and developed. In total GMS would spend £1.3 million upgrading the Stornoway facility and a number of new jobs would be created.

Although the Gàidhlig News Television Service would be based in Inverness. The new equipment would allow enhanced coverage of news, events and sport from the Stornoway studio. The transmission of programmes would be co-ordinated from the new BBC headquarters in Glasgow's Pacific Quay.

It was agreed to recommend that the update be noted.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2007

1(a) The Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2007 was **approved**.

Minute of Meeting of 15 February 2007	1(b)	The Minute of Meeting of 15 February 2007 was approved .
Declaration of Interest	2	<p>The Chairman declared an interest in item 39 and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.</p> <p>The Vice-Chairman declared an interest in items 28, 31 and 39 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Norman L Macdonald declared an interest in items 27 and 39 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in item 20, 27, 39, 42 and 43 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Murdo Macleod declared an interest in item 27 and item 42 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Archie Campbell declared an interest in item 17 and a non-pecuniary interest in item 13 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Angus Nicolson declared an interest in items 27 and 28 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Donald J Macsween declared an interest in items 30 and 43 and left the meeting during consideration of these items.</p> <p>Mr Alex A MacDonald declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.</p> <p>Mr Donald Maclean declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.</p> <p>Mr Iain Morrison declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.</p> <p>Mr George Lonie declared an interest in item 17 and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.</p>
Minute of Meeting of Local Government Employees Joint Consultative Committee of 15 December 2006	3	The Minute of Meeting of the Local Government Employees Joint Consultative Committee of 15 December 2006 was noted .
Minute of Meeting of Joint Future Committee of 1 February 2007	4	The Minute of Meeting of the Joint Future Committee of 1 February 2007 was noted .

Minute of Meeting of Human Resources Sub-Committee of 22 March 2007 5

The Minute of Meeting of the Human Resources Sub-Committee of 22 March 2007 was **noted** and item 10 thereof recommended for **approval**.

Arising out of consideration of this item it was agreed that the Report to be submitted in relation to Item 5 of the Minute would be circulated to all Members and would detail the procedures followed and delegations exercised.

CORPORATE STRATEGY

Corporate Strategy 2007 – 2011: Development Process SS04.01.01 6

The Chief Executive submitted a Report in respect of the framework and timetable for the development of the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy for 2007 - 2011. The Report indicated that the Corporate Strategy should set out a clear agenda of what the Comhairle wished to achieve over its term and should set targets and objectives, describe how they would be achieved and identify how progress and achievement would be monitored.

The Best Value Audit of the Comhairle in August 2006 had highlighted that the Corporate Strategy should contain clear outcome focused targets and the Report proposed a process and timescale for developing the new Corporate Strategy (including a specific development day in early June 2007) in advance of agreeing the capital programme for 2008-12 and revenue budgets and business plans for 2008/09. It was indicated in the Report that this process would enable the Corporate Strategy to be at the centre of the Comhairle's decision making processes and particularly in the allocation of capital and revenue.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the development process for the new Corporate Strategy, as outlined in paragraph 6.5 of the Report, that allowed the approval of the Strategy in September 2007 be approved;**
- (2) **the structure of the new Strategy document, as contained in paragraph 7.7, be approved as the basis on which the Strategy could be developed; and**
- (3) **if possible, the date for setting the Comhairle's Capital Programme be brought forward to December 2007 in order that PERs could be approved prior to the commencement of the programme on 1 April 2008.**

FINANCE

Business Plans and Budget 2007/08 PR33.01.04 7

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking approval of the Business Plans for 2007/2008 and the budget for 2007/2008. It stated in the Report that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Corporate Governance Framework advised that Local Authorities should maintain effective arrangements for explicit accountability to stakeholders for an authority's performance and its effectiveness in the delivery of services and the sustainable use of resources. It was stated in the Report that the preparation of Department Business Plans and Budgets had been brought together for 2007/08 with the result that the budget now included business plans alongside the planned expenditure for any given service. It was emphasised that possible targets and action points relating to 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 had also been included in the plans.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the Service Committees consider the terms of the draft Business Plans and propose any final amendments to the separately circulates Business Plans; and**
- (2) **the Business Plans (as amended) be approved.**

Treasury Policy Statement PR120.06 8 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 30 March 2006 the Director of Finance submitted a Report advising Members of the Policy Statement setting out the Comhairle's approach to all treasury operations.

The Report detailed the Comhairle's Treasury Policy Statement and set out the Comhairle's approach to all treasury operations and recommended the continuation of the approach first agreed in 2002.

It was agreed to recommend that the Treasury Policy originally adopted in February 2002, detailed at Appendix A to the Report, and revised in March 2006, detailed at Appendix B, be continued for 2007/08.

Treasury Strategy PR120.06 9 The Director of Finance submitted a Report proposing a borrowing and investment strategy and policies for 2007/08 and prudential indicators for 2007-10.

The Report detailed the Treasury Management Objectives, described the current position, reviewed the prospects for interest rates and, in light of these forecasts, considered strategy options for the financial year 2007/08. The Report indicated that the Director of Finance, in conjunction with treasury advisers, would monitor continually both the prevailing interest rates and market forces and respond accordingly.

The Report also detailed the prudential indicators the Comhairle was required to set for the following three years to ensure that total capital investment remained within sustainable limits and in particular that any impact on future council tax levels was acceptable.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the Prudential Indicators, detailed in paragraph 7 of the Report, be adopted;**
- (2) **the borrowing strategy, identified in paragraph 9 of the Report, be approved;**
- (3) **the investment strategy, identified in paragraph 10 of the Report, be approved; and**
- (4) **any changes to the treatment of premium on restructuring, currently out for consultation, be adopted when approved as Recommended Practice.**

Insurance Renewal 2007/08 PR120.05 10 The Director of Finance submitted a Report informing Members of the insurance renewal terms for 2007/08.

Details of the terms were provided in the Report together with a summary of the premiums for 2007/08. The Report indicated that the increase in premium was due to the increased sums insured which took account of updated property values, payroll and vehicle numbers.

The Report indicated that a reduced premium had been offered if the Comhairle were to accept increased excesses. Given the Comhairle's past experience particularly in relation to the extreme weather conditions in January 2005 this was not put forward as a recommendation.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the Insurance Renewal Terms for 2007/08 be noted; and**
- (2) **the existing levels of excess be retained.**

Additional
Capital Funding
PR110.00

11

The Director of Finance submitted a Report advising Members of the conditions attached to the additional £2.22 million Capital Grant being made available to the Comhairle for 2007/08 and requested that Members consider the projects being proposed to be funded by this grant. The Report indicated that following the decision of the Comhairle in February 2007 officers had put forward proposals in terms of the criteria set by the Scottish Executive which had been considered by Finance Working Party and the recommendations in the Report were now placed before Members. These recommendations also proposed variations on the agreed capital programme to enable the additional capital grant to be utilised flexibly to meet the Comhairle's agreed priorities.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the £110k allocated to Marybank depot and £140k of the sum allocated to Ardseileach from the capital programme 2004-08 be withdrawn;**
- (2) **the £250k in (a) above and the £2,220k capital grant be allocated to fund projects as detailed in Appendix C to the Report;**
- (3) **the balance of £200k in respect of the Voice Over IP project be found from prudential borrowing;**
- (4) **the relevant Directors be requested to bring forward proposals to implement the projects listed in Appendix C under prudential borrowing;**
- (5) **£50k of the £2m be re-allocated for road strengthening in February 2007 to turn the £25k loans to Storas Uibhist and Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn into grants;**
- (6) **£800k of the said £2m be allocated to Kallin Pier;**
- (7) **the outline approach to developing asset management be approved;**
- (8) **any receipt from the sale of the Rectory be utilised to reduce overall prudential borrowing; and**
- (9) **the Director of Social Work be requested to explore with Western Isles Health Board how the saving arising from (8) above might attract match funding to help develop Carloway Care Centre.**

Capital
Programme
2008-12
PR110.01

12

The Director of Finance submitted a Report proposing a process for setting the 2008-12 Capital Programme. The Report highlighted the importance of this capital programme following on from the Comhairle's agreed Corporate Strategy.

The importance of projects being accurately costed and revenue consequences of any project being addressed prior to its inclusion in the capital programme was highlighted.

It was agreed to recommend:

- (1) **approval of the framework set out in the Report for setting the 2008-12 Capital Programme; and**
- (2) **that, if possible, the date for setting the Comhairle's Capital Programme be brought forward to December 2007 in order that PERs could be approved prior to the commencement of the programme on 1 April 2008.**

CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

Mr Archie Campbell declared a non pecuniary interest in item 13 and remained in the meeting during consideration of the matter.

Building Maintenance Term Contract CB007 13

With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 12 October 2006 the Director of Technical Services submitted a Report seeking approval of the preferred option for the procurement of building maintenance works to Comhairle properties from 1 April 2008.

The Report indicated that an Officer Working Group had been set up to look at the future of the maintenance of the Comhairle's buildings and had considered a number of options in depth, consulted all relevant stakeholders and was putting forward as a preferred option which would enable the Comhairle to demonstrate best value, the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with the Comhairle's Commercial Operations Unit.

The Report indicated that any such agreement required to be able to demonstrate efficiencies, include appropriate performance management processes and ensure continuous improvement.

The Report indicated that consultation had also taken place with the Comhairle's external auditors on the proposed approach.

The Report stated that this was a challenging recommendation for both client and contractor and provided them with the opportunity to provide efficiencies and ensure continuous improvement in line with the Comhairle's duty to ensure best value.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with the Comhairle's Commercial Operations Unit for the carrying out of Building Maintenance works to Comhairle properties for a period of five years from 1 April 2008 be approved, in principle;**
- (2) **the detail of a Service Level Agreement, being based on the National Schedule of Rates and including appropriate performance management processes, be developed and brought for approval by the Comhairle in advance of March 2008;**
- (3) **recommendations (1) and (2) above be approved in terms of the Comhairle's Contract Regulations; and**
- (4) **a Report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to the Handyman Service.**

BUILDINGS

Programme and Progress PR33.01.12 14

The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report in relation to programme and progress on buildings held on the Policy and Resources account at pre-construction and construction stage.

It was agreed to recommend that the Report be noted.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 15 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 & 12 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle and any instructions to Counsel and any Opinion of Counsel (whether or not in connection with any proceedings) and any advice received, information obtained or action to be taken in connection with (a) any legal proceedings by or against the Comhairle; or (b) the determination of any matter affecting the Comhairle; (whether in either case proceedings have been commenced or are in contemplation would be disclosed.

Ionad Spòrs 15*
Leodhais
AL02.20

The Director of Technical Services and Director of Corporate Services submitted a joint Report providing Members with a progress update on various contractual issues associated with Ionad Spòrs Leodhais.

The Report provided an update on the ongoing legal matters and highlighted four issues which may be the subject of formal legal action. Some minor technical issues which still remained unresolved and were the subject of discussion with relevant parties were also detailed in the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Report be noted.

PPP Update 16
E01.02.15

The Director of Education submitted a Report updating Members in relation to progress of the PPP Project.

The Report indicated that further dialogue meetings had been arranged with each of the Private Sector Development Partner (PSDP) candidates and that a review had taken place of the anticipated resource requirements which had indicated that additional resources would be required and these resource implications would be reported and discussed in detail at the Project Board.

It was agreed to recommend that the Report be noted.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 17 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 & 12 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Mr Archie Campbell declared an interest in item 17 and a non-pecuniary interest in item 13 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr George Lonie declared an interest in item 17 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Disposal of 17*
Gibson Hostel
Site, Stornoway
LB06

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report concerning the disposal of the Gibson Hostel Site.

It was agreed to recommend that the whole site shown in Appendix 1 to the Report including both hatched and cross-hatched areas be offered for sale to Hebridean Housing Partnership Limited, at nil price for the construction of up to a maximum of 22 units subject to Scottish Ministers' consent and:

- (1) **subject to any building development of the site being one hundred per cent social rented housing; and**
- (2) **on condition of the retention of an open 'green space' or amenity area, as shown in the hatched area on the plan appended to the Report and such other terms and conditions as the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Director for Sustainable Communities should determine.**

Arising out of consideration of this matter it was agreed to recommend that the Chief Executive be authorised to explore with the Standards Commission the possibility of a Dispensation being obtained in relation to membership of Hebridean Housing Partnership Limited and similar registered social landlords in other authority areas.

Marybank
Depot,
Stornoway
CB001.01

18 The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report seeking approval of a number of amendments to the current financial, legal and operational aspects of Marybank Depot, Stornoway. The Report indicated that a number of issues existed with the current operation of Marybank Depot, including heavily contaminated ground, inadequate office and corporate storage, the lack of appropriate fleet parking areas and also highlighted possible opportunities arising from the establishment of the Waste Processing Plant at the Creed Enterprise Park.

The Report concluded that it was appropriate to bring Marybank Depot under central control and to charge out market rentals to Comhairle departments and indeed to any other occupier if these works and services were at any future date to be carried out by an external contractor.

It was requested at the meeting that the Director of Technical Services submit reports in relation to other facilities currently operated by the Comhairle's Significant Trading Operations (STOs) and Trading Operations (TOs) and the potential for them to be managed centrally.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the issues and constraints that exist for the operation of the Marybank Depot site be noted;**
- (2) **the transfer of the property from the budgetary responsibility of the Commercial Operations Unit to that of the Policy and Resources Committee be approved;**

- (3) **terms and conditions based on fair market value be agreed with occupiers of any and all accommodation and areas of ground within the site;**
- (4) **the current availability of internal and external funding to carry forward the delivery of a number of elements of the proposed programme of improvements detailed in para 9.2 of the Report be noted and the funding shortfall be considered in the context of the development of the Capital Programme 2008-2012;**
- (5) **the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with Director of Finance, the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Technical Services, be authorised to further consider the financial, legal and technical implications arising from a possible relocation of Environmental Services personnel and vehicle fleet from Marybank Depot to the Waste Recycling Plant at the Creed Enterprise Park and to present the findings of this consideration to a future meeting of the relevant Committee or Committees by December 2007; and**
- (6) **the Director of Technical Services be requested to submit reports to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to other facilities currently operated by STOs and TOs and the potential for them to be managed centrally.**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Ports of Entry 19
Scheme
CH01.01

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report detailing the status of the Ports of Entry Capital Scheme and recommending a strategy for the scheme to the end of the current capital programme. The Report indicated that a small number of specific projects, which had been included in the Ports of Entry Capital Programme, may not now be considered feasible and that there was an uncommitted element in the programme. The Report further indicated that the current Capital Programme was now moving into its last year and it was considered necessary to review the Ports of Entry Programme and recommend a strategy for spend which could achieve the original objectives of the scheme and focus on projects which could be delivered in 2007/08. The strategy was appended to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the future spend strategy for the Ports of Entry Capital Scheme as presented at paragraph 6.1 and Appendix 2 to the Report be approved; and**
- (2) **the Ports of Entry capital programme be re-profiled accordingly.**

APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS

Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in item 20 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Stornoway 20
Regeneration
Capital
DS40.84

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report advising the Comhairle of the status of "Stornoway Regeneration" Capital and recommending a strategy to the end of the current capital programme 2004-08.

The Report stated that as the timing of the Township Heritage Initiative (THI) had now been confirmed and it was not considered necessary to allocate any further funding to the West Harbour Project as a result of the outcome of the Bulk Goods Study within the 2004-08 capital programme it was proposed that the remainder of the Stornoway Regeneration Capital of £170,000 be committed to essential external works to the Town Hall for delivery in 2007/08 in advance of further works in the future as part of the THI Project.

It was also indicated that it was understood that further bids would be required in relation to the Town Hall as part of the 2008 - 12 Capital Programme.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle agree that:

- (1) the remainder of the Stornoway Regeneration capital fund of £170k be committed to external works to the Town Hall in 2007/08; and**
- (2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to extend the appointment of Simpson and Brown, Architects and Morham and Brotchie, Quantity Surveyors to undertake professional design services in connection with this work and that the services be not tendered for in terms of Contract Regulation 7(f) for the reasons set out in paragraph 2.4 of the Report.**

Loch Steisevat – 21
Comhairle
Responsibilities
Under the
Reservoirs Act
DS65

The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report giving information on the legal responsibilities of Undertakers in terms of the Reservoirs Act 1975. It was intimated in the Report that in terms of the Reservoirs Act 1975 the Comhairle was the Enforcement Authority for reservoirs in the Outer Hebrides and had to ensure that any Undertaker complied with the requirements of the Act and that further where it was unclear as to who the Undertaker was for a particular reservoir, or where the Undertaker had failed to appoint an Inspecting or Supervising Engineer, in terms of the Reservoirs Act 1975, the Comhairle was required to appoint both a Supervising Engineer and an Inspecting Engineer and also for arranging the requisite inspections and supervisory visits. It was further stated in the Report that it had not yet been possible to determine who the Undertaker was for the Loch Steisevat Reservoir and that consequently both Inspecting and Supervising Engineers had been appointed in respect of this reservoir. It was further intimated that the Inspecting Engineer had recommended that emergency works be undertaken in relation to the rim of the reservoir at Loch Steisevat and that estimated cost of the works was £5,000.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that:

- (1) the Director of Corporate Services be authorised to investigate the ownership of Loch Steisevat and to ascertain who was the Undertaker, under the Reservoirs Act 1975;**
- (2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to commission the emergency works, detailed in the Report, to comply with the Inspecting Engineer's recommendation, with the cost of these works being allocated to the Undertaker;**
- (3) progress of the two actions listed above be reported at Environmental Services Committee via the Programme and Progress Report until a satisfactory solution has been achieved; and**
- (4) the appointment of W.A. Fairhurt and Partners by the Director of Technical Services to undertake the Supervising and Inspecting Engineer's duties under the Reservoirs Act 1975 be homologated.**

BEST VALUE AND SHARED SERVICES

Strategic Best 22
Value Review:
Grants
SS02.01

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking approval of the proposed timescale for the conclusion of the Best Value Review of Grants. The Report indicated that the following issues relating to grants had been identified as part of an analysis of the current situation in the context of the review:

- The amount of revenue and capital grants may change once the Comhairle had agreed a new set of priorities and programmes;
- The Chief Executive's Review of Structures together with the complementary departmental reviews would be completed during 2007; and

- The proposed new Customer Services function would be established during 2007 making it a more viable option for future service delivery.

As a result of these issues it was proposed that the conclusion of the Best Value Review of Grants be postponed until the end of 2007.

It was agreed to recommend that the conclusion of the best value review of grants be postponed until later in 2007 so that it may take account of current projects and developments within the Comhairle which it was considered may have an impact on the final outcome but that the review be concluded as soon as feasible and that the review specifically address the issue of a funding unit to assist community groups.

Integrated Services Project PR36 23

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking homologation of his action in submitting an application for funding to the National Shared Services Board and provided an update in relation to progress on the project. A copy of the application for funding was appended to the Report.

An update was provided at the meeting to the effect that the National Shared Services Board had indicated that it intended to consider the three islands bids together. It was understood that the Board would meet again in early April to review the outstanding proposals and that individual decisions would be communicated immediately after that meeting.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the Comhairle homologate the action of the Chief Executive in submitting an application for funding from the National Shared Services Board;**
- (2) **the Comhairle note the negotiation process to take place between the Chief Executives of the Islands' Councils; and**
- (3) **further update reports be brought to the Committee as the project developed.**

LEGISLATION

Gender Equality Duty PR90.01 24

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report outlining the responsibilities of the Comhairle in relation to equality and diversity legislation. The Report highlighted that the gender equality duty would come into force in April 2007 which required the Comhairle to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. The Report stated that the Comhairle was required to prepare and publish a gender equality scheme on or before 20 June 2007 which would set out the overall objective set by the Comhairle to allow it to meet its general duty. It was hoped to finalise this scheme together with the Single Status Agreement as addressing equal pay issues was seen to be central to the gender equality scheme and duty.

A draft Gender Equality Scheme which had been approved as a basis for consultation at the Local Government Employees JCC on 23 March 2007 was appended to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that, subject to full stakeholder consultation and implementation of Single Status, the Gender Equality Scheme be the subject of a Report to the June 2007 meeting of the Committee.

Extreme
Weather
Conditions
PR13.05.23

25

A joint Report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services and Director of Technical Services providing an update on measures in place or proposed to manage extreme weather conditions and to seek approval for an action plan in respect of extreme weather conditions in the Uists.

A recent announcement by the Scottish Executive in relation to coast protection schemes was highlighted in the Report stating that the Scottish Executive had confirmed their approval in principle for funding for Coastal Protection Scheme Projects at Balivanich, Pol na Crann, Stoneybridge, Ludag Road and Craigston. While this announcement was very welcome it did not address the Gualan Island Project and work would continue with the Scottish Executive, the Uist Flood Action groups and other stakeholders to explore and take advantage of any and all other potential funding sources.

The Report also provided an update on measures in place or proposed to manage extreme weather conditions and sought approval of an action plan in respect of extreme weather conditions in the Uists which was appended to the Report. It was indicated that any slippage in the plan would be reported back to the Committee so that all developments could be monitored. The issue of communications was addressed in part five of the report and it was anticipated that a communication strategy would be in place and an information leaflet issued by October or November 2007 in good time for next winter.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) the improvements in the Emergency Planning response be noted and the Action Plan relating to the management of extreme weather events be agreed, specifically in relation to the Uists;**
- (2) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Technical Services, be authorised to negotiate, agree terms with and, if appropriate, appoint Mott Macdonald to progress the delivery of the coastal protection projects for Balivanich, Pol na Crann, Stoneybridge, Ludaig Road and Craigston;**
- (3) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to continue to work with the Scottish Executive, the Uist Flood Action Groups and other stakeholders to explore and take advantage of any and all other avenues for funding to enable the delivery of the Gualan Island coastal protection project; and**
- (4) the Chief Executive would provide information to elected members in relation to generator back up arrangements in Emergency Planning and Social Work establishments.**

HOUSING

Housing
Revenue
Account
Monitoring
Report
PR100.05

26

The Director of Finance submitted a Report providing an update on the forecast outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2006/07. A detailed breakdown of expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account was attached at Appendix 1 of the Report and Appendix 2 detailed the movements in HRA reserves and highlighted the resources remaining with the Comhairle.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) the forecast out-turn on the Housing Revenue Account for 2006/07 as detailed in the Report be approved; and**
- (2) the Housing Revenue Account would cease to operate from 1 April 2007 onwards.**

Mr Norman L Macdonald declared an interest in item 27 left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Murdo Macleod declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Angus Nicolson declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Alex MacDonald declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Donald Maclean declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Iain Morrison declared an interest in item 27 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Additional Council Income on Second Homes: Programme for 2007/08 H02

27

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report concerning the proposed allocation of funds as generated by Additional Council Tax on Second Homes for 2007/08. The Report gave details of those Registered Social Landlords Housing Projects which could be assisted by ACTISH funding and these included:

- (a) 57 Back, Isle of Lewis – provision of six units;
- (b) Galson Old School, Isle of Lewis – provision of six units;
- (c) The rental of property in Lewis and Harris – provision of two units
- (d) Berneray Old School – provision of four units;
- (e) Garynamonie, South Uist – provision of ten units
- (f) St Brendan Road, Castlebay – provision of four units

The Report also referred to the development work being undertaken by the Lewis and Harris Rural Community Housing Project which could also be an appropriate use for ACTISH funding. It was further stated in the Report that there was a need to prepare a Scheme of Administration for distributing ACTISH funds in order that funding could be utilised to best effect throughout the Western Isles.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve:

- (1) that the projects listed in Appendix 1 to the Report form the approved ACTISH elements of the Housing Development Programme for 2007/08; and**
- (2) that the allocation of any further ACTISH funds collected by the end of the financial year 2006/07 be delegated to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Director of Finance, towards the Garynamonie Housing Project.**

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 28 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle would be disclosed.

The Vice-Chairman declared an interest in item 28 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Angus Nicolson declared an interest in item 28 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Care and Repair 28*
Best Value
Review
H10.15

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report concerning the outcome of the Best Value Review of the Western Isles Care and Repair Service.

It was stated in the Report that it was proposed to monitor the performance of the Western Isles Care and Repair Service in terms of the Service Improvement Plan appended to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the findings of the Best Value Review of the Western Isles Care and Repair Service;**
- (2) approve a revised Service Level Agreement with Western Isles Care and Repair from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008, that set out the monitoring and performance standards to be met – with Notice of Termination reduced to two months;**
- (3) monitor the SLA for the next four months to determine the level of service performance and review this in August 2007, along with progress on the Comhairle's Business Plan tasks relating to Private Sector Housing Grant policy and procedures;**
- (4) require the Director for Sustainable Communities to monitor service performance and investigate alternative methods of providing the Care and Repair Service in the Western Isles, with support from the Chief Executive's Internal Strategy team, in consultation with Communities Scotland; and**
- (5) authority be delegated to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Head of Internal Strategy, to finalise the Service Improvement Plan for the Care and Repair Service by the end of March 2007; and**
- (6) an urgent meeting, to be chaired by the Chairman of the Social Work Committee, be sought with the Health Board and Care and Repair in relation to aids and adaptations and how processes could be streamlined to improve the service.**

Housing 29
Development
Funding:
Operational
Process
H05.01.01

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report concerning the management of the Comhairle's Development Funding Programme. It was intimated in the Report that the development of new affordable housing was a key objective of the Local Housing Strategy and that the Comhairle could utilise a number of sources of funding to meet this objective with the sum of approximately £7 million being available in the 2007/08 financial year for this purpose. The Report identified the principal sources of funding available to the Comhairle for new housing development including:

- (a) The Community Ownership Programme;
- (b) Community Scotland Housing Association Grant; and
- (c) Additional Council Tax Income on Second Homes

It was further intimated that it was possible that the Comhairle could also utilise some of the reserve generated by the Housing Revenue Account for Housing Development purposes. It was stated in the Report that at present there was no formal co-ordinating process between the organisations involved in housing development and it was suggested that a process with a set time frame for determining, approving and monitoring the various sources of housing development funding be introduced on the basis that the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy would be utilised as the key document in the development of a co-ordinated approach to the management of funding for new affordable housing which would encourage the continuation of partnership working between the Comhairle, the Hebridean Housing Partnership, Tighean Innse Gall and Communities Scotland.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) the process for managing the Comhairle's Housing Development Programme as detailed in Section 7 of this Report be approved by the Comhairle;
- (2) the Director for Sustainable Communities be given delegated authority to manage, monitor and report on the Housing Development Programme as specified in paragraph 7.15 of the Report;
- (3) a Scheme of Administration for ACTISH funding be developed and brought to the next meeting of the relevant Committee;
- (4) proposals for use of HRA Reserves be brought to a future meeting of the relevant Committee; and
- (5) the outline housing development funding programme for 2007/08 be noted.

HUMAN RESOURCES

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 30 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder or former office holder, or applicant to become an office holder under, the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Mr Donald J Macsween declared an interest in item 30 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Single Status
M12 30*

The Chief Executive submitted a Report outlining progress to date in relation to the Single Status Project. The Report indicated that the process was now nearing a conclusion and the Comhairle was being asked to agree in principle to a settlement on the basis that resources would be realised on staff turnover and by utilising the additional working hours due to the working week being increased by two hours enabling the Comhairle not to fill vacancies.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) the proposals for the new Single Status pay and grading model and terms and conditions package as outlined in the Report be approved, in principle, subject to a detailed Report on the implementation arrangements and financial implications being presented to the June 2007 meeting of the Committee by the Chief Executive, following consultation with Management Team; and
- (2) UNISON be invited again to participate in negotiations in order to reach a collective agreement.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 31 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder or former office holder, or applicant to become an office holder under, the Comhairle would be disclosed.

The Vice-Chairman declared an interest in item 31 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Equal Pay – 31
Home Carers
M03.05

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report providing information in relation to the offer made and agreement reached with employees in 2006 settlement of the Comhairle's equal pay liability to employees.

The Report indicated that offers had been made to employees as detailed in the Report which had been considered by the Comhairle on 22 June 2006. A number of individuals who had left the Comhairle's employment more than six months prior to that offer in June 2006 had approached the Comhairle seeking compensation. It was indicated that the Comhairle's legal advice was that there was no legal liability to make an equal pay offer to these former employees.

It was agreed to recommend that the Report be noted.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 32 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder or former office holder, or applicant to become an office holder under, the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Department for 32*
Sustainable
Communities:
Proposals for
Re-alignment of
Reporting Lines
M02.07

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report seeking approval for amendment of service team reporting lines to Heads of Service within the Department for Sustainable Communities to assist in meeting efficiency savings and seeking authority to adjust reporting lines to deliver service objectives and priorities. The proposals in the Report were based on the deletion of one Head of Service post and the re-assignment of services to other Heads of Service. It was also proposed that the common, financial and administration services including business planning report directly to the Director and not through a Head of Service.

It was indicated that this Report and its recommendation was not in conflict of the Chief Executive's review of organisational structures.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the structure set out in Appendix 2 to the Report for the Department for Sustainable Communities be approved;**
- (2) **it be noted that Heads of Service would require to present further reports setting out any adjustments to their establishment required to manage additional responsibilities;**
- (3) **an extension of secondment of the Principal Officer Management Services to Principal Officer Environmental Management until 1 July 2007 be approved; and**
- (4) **the post of Head of Policy and Management Services be deleted and the post holder be matched to the post of Head of Community Services.**

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 33 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder or former office holder, or applicant to become an office holder under, the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Review of 33*
Organisational
Structures
M01.01

With reference to Item 5 of the Minute of the Comhairle in November 2005. The Chief Executive submitted a Report in relation to his ongoing review of the organisational structures of the Comhairle.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the Comhairle, with effect from 1 May 2007, consist of six Departments, as set out in paragraph 10.1 of the Report;**
- (2) **the following posts be dis-established-**

Head of Central Services
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Head of Strategy (Internal)

and the postholders matched to the posts of-

Head of Customer and Central Services
Head of Executive Office
Head of Continuous Improvement
respectively
- (3) **the post of Head of Asset Management and Planning be established;**
- (4) **the Commercial Operations Unit be located in the immediate term within the Department of Finance and Corporate Resources pending submission of a Report to a future meeting of the Committee on the eventual location of the Unit;**
- (5) **the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submit reports to future meetings of the Human Resources Sub-Committee regarding the staffing structure below Head of Service level, within a framework of no overall increase to the Comhairle's staffing budget; and**
- (6) **the savings accruing from the redundancy of the post of Director of Corporate Services be committed to the funding of new posts required within the Continuous Improvement, Legal and Democratic Services, and Corporate Policy Functions.**

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 34 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Recruitment
Advertising
M01.01

34*

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report in relation to the future direction of recruitment advertising. The Report indicated that recruitment costs had exceeded the available budget for a number of years and indicated that this budget would be monitored closely and a series of measures to reduce overall expenditure were proposed in the Report. The Report indicated that it was also hoped to make greater use of the Comhairle's internet site for recruitment advertising and to move towards signpost advertising as the website developed in 2007/08.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **it be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services to allocate local advertising between the Stornoway Gazette and West Highland Free Press on the basis that a similar financial amount to that currently committed to local advertising would be expended;**
- (2) **all recruitment advertisement be reduced in size both in copy and layout;**

- (3) **the work to be undertaken in relation to enhancing the Comhairle's website and the development of online forms be noted;**
- (4) **the initial results of the recruitment freeze be noted;**
- (5) **the additional challenges of satisfying the Comhairle's equality duty in relation of recruitment advertising be noted; and**
- (6) **the costs of recruitment advertising be reviewed by March 2008.**

RELATED MATTERS

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 35 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6, 8 & 9 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle, information relating to the amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Comhairle under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services and relating to any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Comhairle in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services would be disclosed.

Consumer Direct Scotland – Update on TUPE Transfer CH02 35*

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report providing an update in relation to the proposed transfer of Consumer Direct Scotland to the Comhairle. The Report confirmed that no issues had emerged during discussions with Telecom Services Centre regarding the transfer of the operation and that the completion of the transfer remained the most financially and operationally viable option for the future delivery of the service.

The Report further indicated that the two management posts required to deliver this service had been recommended for approval by Human Resources Sub-Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) **the progress of the transfer of the Consumer Direct Scotland management and operation (including staff) to the Comhairle be noted; and**
- (2) **the Chief Executive determine the most appropriate internal reporting mechanisms for the service in light of the current review of organisational structures and service delivery.**

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 36 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Stornoway CCTV System CH02.06 36*

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report in relation to the operation of the Stornoway Town Centre CCTV system. Details of the effectiveness of the current CCTV system, practices elsewhere in Scotland and system management issues were outlined in the Report as well as funding details. The Report indicated that a number of local authorities throughout Scotland had been placed in the position in which the Comhairle now found itself and it was recommended that in all circumstances the Comhairle on behalf of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership take on the management of and responsibility for the system with a view to funding this through anti-social behaviour finance. The Report further stated that the day to day management of the system would continue to be carried out by Northern Constabulary.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) the Comhairle take over the responsibility for and the operation of the Stornoway CCTV system on behalf of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership;
- (2) maintenance of the system be funded from the provision for Antisocial Behaviour for 2007/08 and from that for subsequent years, if available; and
- (3) when replacement or refurbishment of the system is required, consideration be given to funding this from the capital programme or alternatively through a leasing agreement.

Energy Efficient 37
Light Fittings
T08.05.01

The Director of Technical Service submitted a Report providing details of a proposal to replace incandescent light fittings with more energy efficient fluorescent fittings across the Comhairle's estate in a cost effective manner.

It was highlighted that the Committee had already recommended the allocation of £140,000 to energy efficiency measures across the Comhairle's estate not already covered by specific energy efficiency budgets. This funding would enable surveys to be commissioned and the subsequent findings to be implemented in a structured and prioritised way.

The Report stated that the intervention appeared to be timely in that the European Union had indicated its intention to outlaw incandescent fittings from 2010 and it was also understood that Phillips, one of the major manufacturers, was phasing out the manufacture of incandescent fittings.

It was agreed to recommend that the Report be noted.

Planning Gain 38
Supplement
DS21.01

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report in relation to a UK Government consultation on a proposed planning gain supplement. This supplement would be a levy on landowners to help finance the infrastructure needed to stimulate and service proposed housing growth and ensure that local communities better shared in the benefit that growth brought. While the Comhairle would endorse these aims particularly as they related to ensuring the necessary infrastructure was in place, concern was expressed in relation to the lack of clarity as to when an indeed if the gain levied would be returned to the communities concerned. Local authorities themselves would also be liable for such a tax which could mean that less money would be available to reinvest in capital or revenue projects. Remote rural areas, high regeneration areas and small scale developments may be particularly affected.

The Report indicated that these proposals continued to reflect a lack of understanding of the planning system in Scotland and the open and transparent use of Section 75 Agreements to achieve legitimate planning gain. There was no clarity provided as to the "modest rate" of planning gain supplement and that ability for a local authority to take into account all of the relevant circumstances to achieve the best result in planning terms for the community as a whole would be removed which would again be contrary to the rationale behind the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006. It was also unclear what impact this would have on the ability of developer to resource their expected contributions to new connections to water and sewerage schemes.

It was suggested that the Comhairle support the stance taken by COSLA in relation to this matter.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle support the stance taken by COSLA on the proposals for the Planning Gain Supplement.

The Chairman declared an interest in item 39 and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.

The Vice-Chairman declared an interest in item 39 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Alex A MacDonald chaired the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Norman L Macdonald declared an interest in item 39 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in item 39 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Procurement of 39
Fuel
CH02.04

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report providing an update in relation to procurement of fuel and suggesting that it would not be prudent at this time to investigate the potential of the Comhairle storing and distributing its own fuel due to the pending implementation of the McClelland Report into Public Procurement. It was understood that there may well be movement at Scottish Executive level over the next year in relation to collaborative procurement of commodities which may be of more benefit to the Comhairle.

In the meantime the discounts available in terms of fuel cards were considered to represent a reasonable solution.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) the Report be noted; and**
- (2) the Chief Executive provide information to all Members in relation to:**
 - (i) the legal requirements in relation to taxation of fuel on supply and the practice of not taxing at the point of supply at harbours in the Highland area, and**
 - (ii) levels of fuel reserves in the Western Isles.**

Social Work – 40
2006-07
Specialist
Mainland
Placements
SW01

The Director of Social Work submitted a Report advising the Comhairle of the continuing pressures placed on Social Work Revenue Budgets by the cost of Specialist Mainland Placements and advising the Comhairle of the current budgetary position relating to these specialist mainland placements for adults and children.

The Report highlighted that there was a potential budget deficit of £126,000 in 2006/07 based on the current placement activity bringing Social Work expenditure in this area to £1,011,000 in the said financial year. The budget deficit had increased by £3,000 since reported at the February series and overall represented at £52,000 reduction on the first quarter monitoring forecasted figure.

It was agreed to recommend to that the forecasted Social Work costs for specialist mainland placements, as detailed in Appendix 1 be noted as follows;

- (i) £65k for Adult Community Care; and**
- (ii) £358k for Child Care.**

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports
Outstanding
PR33.01.12

41

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report in relation to matters outstanding arising from issues from within the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Report be noted.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in item 42 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Murdo Macleod declared an interest in item 42 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Chairman ruled that in accordance with the provision of Section 50B(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, that the following three items be considered as a matter of urgency in order to allow the Committee to take a view on these matters.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 42 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Comhairle would be disclosed.

Request to 42*
Impose Burdens: Land
at Church
Street,
Stornoway
LB06

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a Report in relation to a request from the Deacons Court of Stornoway Free Church that the Comhairle impose burdens on land owned by the Comhairle at Church Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. The Report indicated that members of the Deacons Court had been in discussion with officers in relation to land and property behind Stornoway Museum currently leased by the Comhairle and a right of access thereto over land owned by Stornoway Free Church and had requested that the terms and conditions of any future leases of the land and property in question would be subject to the agreement of the Deacons Court.

The Report concluded that taking into account that a future use of the Museum building was undecided it would not be advisable to prejudice any future plans which may come forward for either building and it was recommended that the Comhairle did not accede to the request.

It was highlighted in the Report that the Comhairle would always comply with any legal requirements and seek to act as a good neighbour.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle did not accede to the request by the Deacons Court of the Stornoway Congregation of the Free Church to impose burdens on the land and property, behind Stornoway Museum, currently leased by the Comhairle.

Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in item 43 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Mr Donald J Macsween declared an interest in item 43 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Homelessness Task Force Funding Allocation of Grant H05.10.21 43

The Director for Sustainable Communities submitted a Report seeking the Comhairle's approval to allocate £20,000 underspent homeless task force funding to the Sgailean (Western Isles Foyer Project). The Report detailed that there had been an underspend of £20,000 in homelessness taskforce funding which the Scottish Executive may not consent to carry forward to 2007/08.

It was therefore proposed that further financial assistance be provided to Sgailean on a one-off basis to assist ongoing difficulties they were experiencing in securing core revenue funding.

It was agreed to recommend that

- (1) the allocation of Homelessness Task Force Grant funding underspend as outlined at paragraph 2.6 of the Report be approved; and**
- (2) a further Report be submitted to a future meeting of the relevant Committee detailing the outcomes achieved by the Sgailean project and its role in terms of the Comhairle's homelessness strategy.**

Letting of School Premises 44

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Comhairle of 8 February 2007 the Chairman provided a verbal update in relation to unexpected consequences of the Comhairle's decision to achieve efficiency savings by limiting school lets to two evenings per week. It was suggested that a full review of this decision was required to identify how the proposed efficiencies would be achieved while continuing to provide an accessible service to the communities concerned.

It was agreed to recommend that implementation of the decision of the Comhairle to restrict school lets to two evenings per week be delayed to allow a comprehensive Report on the financial and operational implications of that decision to be submitted to the June 2007 series of meetings and that the costs of delay in implementation be funded from an underspend in 2006/07 on insurance premiums.