



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the
Council Offices, Stornoway,
on Thursday 18 December
2008 at 9.30am

PRESENT

Mr Angus Campbell (Chairman)	Mr John A Maciver
Mr Norman A MacDonald (Vice-Chairman)	Mr Norman M Macleod
Mr Alexander A MacDonald	Mr Roddie Mackay
Mrs Morag Munro	Mr Charlie Nicolson
Mr Archie K Campbell	Mrs Annie MacDonald
Mr Donald Manford (by videoconference)	

APOLOGIES

Mrs Agnes Rennie

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Final Report from the Scottish Government in relation to their "Economic and Community Benefit Study" had been forwarded to the Study Steering Group on Friday 12 December and would be concluded early in the New Year and be formally launched at that time. The Chairman stated that the Study would confirm that renewables energy was the main economic development opportunity open to the Outer Hebrides. The Study suggested that up to 50 turbines were achievable on the Stornoway Trust and that 18 turbines were achievable on the Galson Estate. The Chairman also stated that if Final Study was correct then the consultant's assessment was a disappointing outcome from an economic development perspective. The Chairman further stated that it was important to achieve some form of benefit from the renewables sector, which both the Government and the Comhairle agreed offered the Outer Hebrides its main economic opportunity.

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting of 30 October 2008 | 1 | <p>The Minute of Meeting of 30 October 2008 was approved subject to the inclusion of the following wording at Item 36 - Reports Outstanding.</p> <p>Arising out of consideration of this item it was agreed that a Report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in relation to community engagement in the Comhairle's decision making processes with particular reference to the involvement of young people in the Committee process.</p> |
| Declaration of Interest | 2 | <p>The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in Item 20 as they were engaged in the sale and supply of fuel and left the meeting during consideration of this matter.</p> <p>Mr Archie Campbell and Mr Charlie Nicolson declared an interest in Item 38 as Board Members of HHP and left the meeting during consideration of this matter.</p> <p>Mr John Mackay, Mr Alex A MacDonald and Mr Murdo Macleod declared an interest in Item 41 as owners of second homes and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.</p> |

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| Minute of Meeting of Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership of 17 September 2008 | 3 | The Minute of Meeting of Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership of 17 September 2008 was noted. |
| Minute of Meeting of Comataidh Buileachaidh Plana Cànan of 11 December 2008 | 4 | The Minute of Meeting of Comataidh Buileachaidh Plana Cànan of 11 December 2008 was recommended for approval. |
| Minute of Meeting of Human Resources Sub-Committee of 11 December 2008 | 5 | The Minute of Meeting of Human Resources Sub-Committee of 11 December 2008 was noted and item 6 recommended for approval at the February 2009 meeting of the Committee. |
| Minute of Meeting of ICT, Procurement and Asset Management Sub-Committee of 11 December 2008 | 6 | The Minute of Meeting of ICT, Procurement and Asset Management Sub-Committee of 11 December 2008 was recommended for approval subject to the time of the meeting being amended to 3.30pm. |
| | | The Chairman ruled that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 50(B) 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the following Minute be considered as matters of urgency in order to allow the Comhairle to consider the recommendations prior to the next series of Meetings. |
| Minute of Meeting of Joint Services Committee of 17 December 2008 | 7 | The Minute of Meeting of Joint Services of 17 December 2008 was recommended for approval. |

FINANCE

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| Report to Members and the Controller of Audit SS05.01 | 8 | The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report concerning the Audit on the 2006/07 Audit and the Action Plan which had been drawn up to address the issues raised. Mr Peter Tait, Assistant Director (Local Government), Audit Scotland gave a presentation on the Audit. A copy of the Report to Members and the Controller of Audit was appended to the Report. |
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In his presentation Mr Tait focussed on the lack of performance management information within the Comhairle and the agreed measures to address this. Members were afforded the opportunity of asking questions of Mr Tait. The Chairman thanked Mr Tait for his presentation.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Audit Report and Action Plan.

The Chairman ruled that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 50(B) 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the supplementary paper in relation to the following item be considered as a matter of urgency in order to allow the Comhairle to consider its terms in determining its budget strategy.

Budget Strategy 2009-11: Update PR100.02 9 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 30 October 2008 the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report which provided an update on the 2009-11 Budget Strategy. It was indicated in the Report that the Comhairle was currently considering options for improving service efficiency which had been identified through the use of the Improvement Service's Diagnostic Tool. The Report highlighted the importance of taking account of Concordat commitments in the forward budget strategy and the importance of applying the savings arising from any schools closures or discontinuation to the Western Isles School Project.

A supplementary paper was submitted to update Members on the 2009-11 Budget Strategy. The Report stated that the settlement announcement by the Scottish Government on 11 December 2008 provided detailed figures of funding for 2009/10 which was attached as Appendix 2 to the Report. The Report informed that for 2010/11 the Scottish Government, in consultation with COSLA, have deferred publishing figures until the Scottish consequences of the proposed £5bn budget reduction by the Treasury are known. The Report stated that the initial estimate for the share for Scotland was £500m and if the savings were allocated pro-rata to budget the Comhairle's share could be £1.7m or a further 2% saving. The updated budget strategy reflecting the latest position was appended at Appendix A to the Report and this did not include any additional savings that might be required to meet the Comhairle's share of the £500m.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) agree the updated strategy set out in Appendix A to the Report as the planning basis for the 2009/10 budget;**
- (3) continue to require Directors to prepare budgets within Cash Planning Limits; and**
- (4) engage with COSLA and the Scottish Government to minimise the impact of the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).**

General Fund Second Quarter Revenue Monitoring PR100.02 10 With reference to Item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 4 September 2008 the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report detailing the Comhairle's forecast revenue out-turn for 2008/09 and stated that, following the Budget Seminars in November, Departments had been involved in the preparation of draft budgets, which should be completed in December 2008 and that a number of pressure areas had already been identified. The Report further stated that some of the department overspends carried forward from 2007/08 were still being held centrally and departments were expected to report on how these would be offset at the February 2009 Committee Series of Meetings.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) agree that the £79k Finance and Corporate Resources carry forward be utilised as detailed in Appendix D to the Report.**

Write Off of Council Tax Debts PR100.03.01 11 The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report which recommended that debts totalling £11,046.24 in respect of Council Tax, as detailed in Appendix A to the Report be written off as they were considered to be irrecoverable.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle write off the debts listed in Appendix A to the Report, totalling £11,046.24.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the Appendix to the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 5 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of any particular child or relating to the supervision of residence of any particular child in accordance with a supervision requirement made in respect of that child under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 would be disclosed.

Specialist Mainland Placements for Children 2008/09 SW01 12 * The Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report which detailed the continuing pressures placed on the revenue budgets by the cost of Specialist Mainland Placements for Children and Young People. The Report detailed the current budgetary provision and it was indicated that, based on the current children's placement activity the forecast outturn was £967K which could give rise to a potential budget deficit for the Comhairle of £239K. The Appendix to the Report detailed the current Specialist Mainland Placements.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle note the forecasted costs for children's specialist mainland placements as detailed in the Report and Appendix 1 to the Report.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to any particular application for, or recipient or former recipient of, any service provided by the Comhairle, would be disclosed.

Mainland Placement Panel SW01 13 * The Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report advising of the decisions of the fourth meeting of the Mainland Placement Panel which had taken place on 11 November 2008 and advising of the current updated list of mainland placements.

The Report indicated that the Mainland Placement Panel had established a rigorous process which encompassed all mainland placement arrangements and this was seen as central to ensuring that the care package continued to meet the needs of the individual service user and to achieving and maintaining control of the financial costs in relation to mainland placements. The draft Minute of Meeting of the Mainland Placement Panel of 11 November 2008 was appended to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the decisions taken by the Mainland Placement Panel; and**
- (2) note the forecasted combined expenditure of £1.2m detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.**

Spend to Save Projects PR100.01 14 The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report to enable the Comhairle to consider the spend to save proposals submitted by Departments. The proposals were summarised in Appendix 1 to the Report. The Report stated that Finance and Strategy Working Group had recommended that the spend to save proposals be used to assist in balancing the budget over the next two years and that the Comhairle proceed on the basis of the recommendation in Appendix 1 to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle delegate to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Finance and Strategy Working Group, to allocate a maximum of £100k following receipt of detailed proposals in line with Appendix 1 to the Report subject to any Reports required in terms of the Scheme of Administration being submitted to the relevant Service Committee.

Western Isles
Schools Project
Budget
E01.02.15a

15

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report to formally confirm the planned budget for the Western Isles Schools Project. The Report stated that with the completion of a review of affordability and the decision by the Comhairle on 30 October 2008 to proceed with Option 6 for the Nicolson Institute , the project scope had been determined. It was stated in the Report that the affordability analysis carried out by PriceWaterhouseCoopers was expected to be finalised in December and it was recommended that this form the basis of the project budget. The Report further stated that Sgoiltean Ùra LLP were in the process of finalising the project timetable and this together with the project budget would form the basis for monitoring of the WISP by the Comhairle. The Report further stated that the final aspect to be considered was ensuring that adequate planning take place to enable the Director of Education to realise the balance of savings needed to fund the project and a report be considered at an early stage.

It was agreed to recommend, in principle, that the Comhairle:

- (1) agree that project budgets be based on affordability analysis, subject to any amendments in the final version of the Report;**
- (2) note the ongoing discussion in relation to the RSG profile;**
- (3) note that the Chief Executive was working with the Scottish Government to ensure the project comply with the formal funding award; and**
- (4) agree that the Director of Education, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, bring forward a Report detailing options to identify the balance of affordability funding.**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 20 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended namely 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 had been commenced or were in contemplation) would be disclosed.

Prudential
Borrowing to
Fund Increased
Waste Diversion
CH03.01

16 *

The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report seeking approval to progress a capital investment project to increase the diversion of waste from landfill thereby making a sustainable revenue saving. Details of the proposed project, the costs involved and the potential to achieve savings were detailed in the Report.

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

- (1) in principle, as a means of spending to save, to invest in a cost effective technological solution to enable greater diversion of mixed residual waste from landfill, thereby reducing Landfill Tax Liability;**
- (2) that it be delegated to the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, the Chairman of Environment and Protective Services Committee and Leader of the Comhairle to develop and procure a technological option to screen out, for diversion, the biodegradable fraction of the mixed residual waste stream; and**
- (3) any cost of the associated capital expenditure be funded from prudential borrowing.**

Capital Programme 2008-12: Homeless Units Improvements Project Initiation Document H05.10.21 17

The Chief Executive submitted a Report appending a copy of a Project Initiation Document for the upgrade of the Comhairle's Homeless Units. It was stated in the Report that the Comhairle had access to a number of temporary accommodation units for use by homeless clients and that the Comhairle's units required to be upgraded to ensure that they met National Recommended Standards for Temporary Accommodation and statutory requirements.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle approve the Project Initiation Document for the upgrade of the Comhairle's Homeless Units.

Capital Programme 2008-12: Stornoway Heritage Projects DS01 18

The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing progress on the Stornoway Heritage Projects which included Lews Castle, Museum nan Eilean and Stornoway Town Hall and the Townscape Heritage Initiative and seeking approval for the release of £2m into the 2008-12 programme and the balance of £2.8m if and when the Comhairle removed the moratorium arising from the Western Isles Schools Project (WISP) and the outcome of the HLF funding application was known. A Project Initiation Document (PID) was attached as an Appendix to the Report. The Report concluded that there had been significant progress on the three Stornoway Heritage projects and potential for the full take-up of the £4.8m funding identified within the Capital Programme and that further Reports would be brought to the Comhairle once the outcome of critical funding applications were known.

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

- (1) to release £2 million from the approved capital project (Stornoway Heritage Projects) into the 2008-12 programme; and**
- (2) that further reports be brought to the Committee outlining progress and to allow consideration of the remaining funding being released into the capital programme once the outcome of the HLF funding application for Lews Castle is known.**

Capital Programme 2008-12: Stornoway Inner Harbour Regeneration Project DS02 19

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking approval of a Project Initiation Document for the Stornoway Inner Harbour Regeneration Feasibility Study and the release of £75K to allow the project to proceed to the next stage. The Report stated that the project which would include forty additional berths for the larger class of yachts and related services had been subject to a comprehensive feasibility study which indicated the potential benefits of expanding and improving marina leisure facilities within Stornoway Harbour.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle:

- (1) approve the Project Initiation Document for the Stornoway Inner Harbour Regeneration Feasibility Study; and**
- (2) agree to release the approved funding of £75k for the project into the live Capital Programme 2008-12.**

The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr Norman M Macleod declared an interest in Item 20 as they were engaged in the sale and supply of fuel and left the meeting.

The Convener chaired the meeting during consideration of this matter.

Stornoway West Harbour Bulk Cargo Project Update DS02 20 The Chief Executive submitted a Report providing an update on the Stornoway West Harbour Bulk Cargo Project and seeking agreement to rename the project *The Newton Area Regeneration Project* and that funding be released to prepare a revised strategy for a three to six month period with a view to reporting back to the Comhairle at the end of that period.

The Report stated that two studies had been undertaken by Consultants, Halcrow, to examine options and feasibility and the Bulk Goods Steering Group had met on four occasions since the Phase II study had been completed and it had been concluded that the project as previously costed and presented was unrealistic and unachievable in the current financial and economic climate and that an alternative development strategy was required to take the project forward. The Report further stated that whilst the relocation of oil and gas import and storage facilities remained a long term objective, a revised strategy focussing on utilising existing infrastructure at Arnish was recommended.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle:

- (1) **note the change in emphasis, economic conditions, and updates project drivers since the last report;**
- (2) **agree that the project be known henceforth as The Newton Area Regeneration Project;**
- (3) **agree that, in compliance with Capital Grant Rules, a portion of the allocation to the project under the Capital Programme be utilised in the preparation of a revised Strategy , for a period of up to six months; and**
- (4) **authorise the Chairman of Transportation Committee, Chairman of Sustainable Development Committee, Director of Technical Services and the Chief Executive, to explore opportunities to improve the cost competitiveness of island fuel supplies.**

Procurement of New Vehicles for Council Officers and Faire PR100.01 21 The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report seeking approval for the procurement of fleet vehicles used by Faire and Council Officers. The Report stated that the vehicles had been identified from current Excel framework agreements as suitable replacements. It was also stated in the Report that the procurement of the new Council car and the three light vans would be funded from Prudential Borrowing and the cost of the resultant loan charges would be met from the existing fleet management budget.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the purchase of a new council car and Faire vehicles by funding their purchase from Prudential Borrowing through the Excel framework agreement.

Review of Capital Programme 2008-12 PR100.02 22 With reference to Item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 30 October 2008 the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report providing a review of the progress of projects in the Capital Programme 2008-12. The Report stated that the Comhairle had agreed to undertake a review of the Capital Programme 2008-12 and details of progress of individual projects were shown in Appendix 1 to the Report. As part of this exercise, a comparison with the Capital Programme 2004-08 had also been carried out and was detailed in Appendix 2 to the Report.

The Director of Technical Services submitted a supplementary paper advising of the construction projects which would be competitively tendered the Comhairle over the next nine months. A summary of the building and roads projects which were currently programmed to be tendered by the end of August 2009 were detailed at Appendix 1 to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the status of all projects in the Capital Programme 2008-12;**
- (2) delegate to the Director of Technical Services to accelerate projects which would have a positive effect on the local economy;**
- (3) agree that a timetable for the Programme would be submitted to the February 2009 series of Meetings;**
- (4) agree that the £12m projects held as a contingency for WISP be progressed;**
- (5) agree that regular monitoring of the overall programme be considered by the Finance and Strategy Working Group and that progress continue to be reported to Committee at quarterly intervals; and**
- (6) note the terms of the supplementary Report by the Director of Technical Services in relation to projects to be tendered by the end of August 2009 and that the replacement bridge at Lacasdale, Isle of Harris would be tendered in February 2009.**

BUILDINGS

Capital Works: Programme and Progress PR33.01.12 23 The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report detailing programme and progress in respect of properties held on the Policy and Resources and Social Work accounts at pre-construction and construction stages.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

Repairs and Maintenance (Revenue) Programme 2008/2009: Quarterly Expenditure Report to 31 October 2008 PR100.01 24 The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report informing Members of the situation in respect of expenditure on repairs and maintenance of properties held on Policy and Resources and Social Work accounts to 31 October 2008.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report and note that further Reports on the repairs and maintenance of properties held on the Service and Policy and Resources Committee accounts would continue to be placed before Committee at quarterly intervals.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following three items 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.

WISP Update
E01.02.15a 25*

The Chief Executive submitted a Report providing an update on the Western Isles Schools Project (WISP). A summary of the current position was provided at paragraph 2.1 of the Report. The Report stated that the Comhairle was very close to being able to identify a preferred site for Balivanich School and that the Risk Register would be finalised following the risk workshop which had been rescheduled to 9 January 2009.

An update was provided at the Meeting into a proposed extension of the appointment of DSA Educational Consultancy to provide technical Educational input to the work being carried out by the Design Team and to carry out consultation management. It was suggested that the Comhairle agree in the particular circumstances to extend the remit to this extent without seeking competitive tenders but that any further specialist educational input required following conclusion of these elements be competitively procured.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the current status of the Western Isles Schools Project; and**
- (2) agree to authorise the Chief Executive to appoint DSA Educational Consultancy to provide technical educational input to the work being carried out by the Design Team and to carry out consultation management in terms of Contract Regulation 4.2.(i) (n) notwithstanding that the cumulative cost of the engagement would exceed £25k due to the detailed knowledge of the project within the consultancy team.**

Stornoway
Town Hall
Fabric Phase 3
– Contractor in
Liquidation
LB35.01 26*

The Chief Executive submitted a Report informing Members that the Contractor who had been awarded the contract to refurbish the South elevation of Stornoway Town Hall had gone into liquidation and seeking authorisation for the Director of Technical Services to take the necessary steps to ensure that the works were completed. The Report stated that there were, at present, no legal, financial or other constraints but, should the Comhairle ultimately have to arrange for the works to be completed by another Contractor, it was likely that there may be some limited legal and financial implications; until such time as the Contractor's Liquidators' intentions were clear, it was not possible to fully assess these issues.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to take such steps as were necessary to arrange for the Works to be completed.**

CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

Standing
Approved Lists
of Contractors
Construction
Skills
Certification
Scheme (CSCS)
– Progress
PR31.07 27*

With reference to item 31 of the Minute of Meeting of 4 September 2008 the Director of Technical Services submitted a Report which detailed progress in securing contractor compliance with the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS). It was indicated in the Report that assessment of contractors had been delayed due to resource issues. Priority was being given to assessing local contractors and contractors currently working on or who regularly worked on Comhairle sites. Spot checks were also taking place

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

HUMAN RESOURCES

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 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.

Results of 28*
Employee Survey
M06.01

The Chief Executive submitted a Report to enable the Comhairle to consider the initial results of the Employee Survey undertaken by IPSOS MORI on its behalf during October 2008.

Mr Robert Cumming of IPSOS MORI gave a presentation on the results of the survey. Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Cumming and the Chairman thanked Mr Cumming for his presentation.

It was agreed to recommend that the results of the Employee Opinion Survey be noted.

Policy on 29
Recruitment –
Resettlement
Allowances
Scheme.
M05.01

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking to amend the Policy on Recruitment in relation to the Resettlement Allowance Scheme. The Report highlighted the pressure on the central provision for recruitment costs by the increasing cost of relocation and suggested a mechanism to deal with this situation. The Report recommended that interview expenses only be reimbursed where it was not expected that the skills available to the post would be available locally. The Report further stated that it was also intended to carry out a review of the policy on relocation with the possibility of introducing a relocation grant as a one off payment.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle in respect of recruitment agree that

- (1) the corporate cost centre cover the cost of local advertising and the COSLA National Portal;**
- (2) all other recruitment costs including national advertising, interview expenses and relocation be met from department budgets;**
- (3) the balance of the central budget be allocated to Departments on a formula agreed by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources;**
- (4) interview expenses be only paid for posts for which the skills were not expected to be available locally and was approved through the release of post procedure; and**
- (5) the Policy on relocation be reviewed with the possibility of introducing a relocation grant as a one-off payment to cover some of the allowances.**

Consultation on
Guidance on the
Role of the
Chief Social
Work Officer
SW01

30 The Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report seeking approval of the Comhairle's response to the Scottish Government Consultation entitled "Consultation on Guidance on the Role of the Chief Social Work Officer". The Report stated that the new draft Guidance detailed the role of the Chief Social Work Officer as:

- (1) assisting local authorities in the discharge of social work responsibilities;
- (2) helping local authorities maximise the added value of the Chief Social Work Officer – both at a corporate and professional level;
- (3) acknowledging that local authorities operate with very different management and organisational structures;
- (4) providing advice on how best to locate the Chief Social Work Officer role within operational structures to maximise its effectiveness; and
- (5) being sufficiently generic to remain relevant in the event of future management or organisational structural change.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle welcome the consultation document on Guidance of the role of the Chief Social Work Officer and endorse the proposals contained therein on the role, function, competencies, access, accountability and reporting arrangements.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 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.

Technical
Services
Department

31* The Chief Executive submitted a Report in relation to the Technical Services Department Mr Stewart Gilchrist, Consultant, SOLACE Enterprise had been commissioned to provide guidance on the integration of the Commercial Operations Unit into Technical Services Department. The Report, which was at first draft stage made a significant number of observations and recommendations but required further work with the Consultant. The Report stated that improvements in relation to management systems could be achieved through the Corporate Investors in People programme which was currently underway. It was suggested in the Report that the model was used as a framework to evidence improvements.

It was agreed to recommend -

- (1) **in relation to management systems that -**
 - (i) **a Sub Group of the Corporate IIP Team be set up which would be extended to include a Senior Representative from each Service Area of Technical Services Department;**
 - (ii) **the revised Appraisal System, with specific reference to competency levels, be piloted in Technical Services Department with effect from 1 April 2009;**
 - (iii) **staff development appraisals/personal development plans specifying training needs would be in place for all Technical Services Department staff within the next twelve months, and**
 - (iv) **a monitoring report would be submitted quarterly to Human Resources Sub Committee on the progress achieved.**

- (2) in relation to management structures that -
 - (i) the Facilities Management function continue to be shared meantime between Technical Services and Finance and Corporate Resources Departments, with agreements being reached on fire safety and building security; and
 - (ii) Catering and Building Cleaning contracts remain within the existing structure in the Education and Children's Services Department.
- (3) the following areas be subject to Best Value Reviews, assisted, where appropriate, by the Internal Audit Section -
 - (i) Stores Function, and
 - (ii) Use of I.T systems in relation to duplication of administrative tasks.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Outer Hebrides Community Planning (OHCPP): Single Outcome Agreement 2009-12 M12 32

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking to update the Comhairle on the new guidance on the preparation of the second Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for the Outer Hebrides 2009-2012 and to recommend a mechanism for the development of this SOA. The Report stated that the guidance had been provided jointly by COSLA, Scottish Government, SOLACE, Audit Scotland and the Improvement Service to assist the CPP in the development of the second phase SOAs. It was also stated in the Report that at its last meeting the Community Planning Partnership had agreed to set up a short life high level Single Outcome Agreement Steering Group to lead the process and a Thinking Day had been arranged on Wednesday 14 January 2009 to assist this process. The Report further stated that the draft SOA would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report and that a Members' seminar be arranged to consider the terms of the draft Agreement prior to its formal agreement on behalf of the Comhairle at the next meeting of the Committee.

Harris Tweed Investment Plan PR100.01 33

The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report seeking financial and administrative support from the Comhairle for a Harris Tweed Investment Fund. The Report represented the culmination of that work by the establishment of a fund which would enable the mills to maintain production on a year round basis reducing the problems currently associated with seasonality such as workforce retention. The Report stated that a Business Plan for the fund had been put in place and all industry partners were supportive of the concept.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree:

- (1) if deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive, to support the establishment of a Harris Tweed Weavers Co-operative and to provide in kind support to that co-operative by the provision of business, legal and financial advice;
- (2) to delegate to the Chief Executive to provide a loan to the Harris Tweed Investment Fund on such terms and conditions as the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the Director of Development, should deem appropriate, including, without prejudice to the foregoing generality, that the final structure of the Investment Fund did not breach State Aid guidelines;
- (3) that any costs in 2008/09 be met from the Development Department and that provision be made in the revenue estimates for future years; and

- (4) that the Director of Development be authorised to make representations to the Department of Works and Pensions in relation to the application of the benefits system to weavers.

Arising out of consideration of this item it was agreed to seek to address similar issues facing the salmon industry, that this be addressed as a matter of urgency and that the Director of Development submit a Report to the next meeting of the appropriate Committee.

Changing
Economic
Climate
DS61

34

The Chief Executive submitted a Report to update the Committee on the present economic climate in the Outer Hebrides and to bring forward recommendations in regard to co-ordinated public sector response. The Report had also been considered by the Community Planning Partnership which had endorsed its terms. The Report stated that the global economy was going through a period of turmoil and that these issues had a very real impact at a local level for the Outer Hebrides. The Report suggested that the following actions be taken forward by the Comhairle and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership

- a) as cash flow will be critical for businesses, protocols should be put in place to ensure that invoices, from local businesses, were paid in full, if practicable, within seven days of receipt of invoice.
- b) where appropriate, the front-loading of activity and the acceleration of capital programmes should be considered. There was a short-term imperative to accelerate activity to ensure continuity of work over the next 12-month period. Any programme would, however, require to be carefully co-ordinated and phased to prevent a "glut" of activity, with a subsequent downturn.
- c) work to be undertaken with the local construction sector to explore avenues for partnerships in relation to larger contracts.
- d) development of tendering and procurement procedures which, within legal constraints, were sympathetic to the needs of the local business community.
- e) consideration be given to the establishment of a "Keep Business Local" campaign encouraging consumers to utilise local businesses; local shops; local produce and products, etc.
- f) consideration be given to the establishment of short-term loan guarantee programme to assist otherwise sustainable businesses over short to medium term credit and cash-flow challenges.
- g) consideration be given to the provision of support for local businesses falling below HIE's minimum grant thresholds.
- h) consideration be given to the provision of additional support to the Western Isles Credit Union to boost marketing its range of services.
- i) a "summit meeting", followed by on-going dialogue, with local banking officials to ensure their support for the local business community
- j) consideration be given to the establishment of a "taskforce" to monitor and take forward the above actions in a co-ordinated manner. The "taskforce" should include representatives from both the public and private sectors.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to support the actions detailed in the Report.

SOCIAL WORK

Day Support Service: West Side, Lewis SW01.17 35 With reference to Item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of Joint Services Committee of 29 August 2008 the Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report advising of the outcomes of the recent consultation on the consolidation of Day Services on the west side of Lewis and recommended a way forward. The Report stated that the consultation had taken place with professional groups and service users with a stake in the present and future delivery of day services on the west side of Lewis. A Best Value approach had been taken to the consultation and it was considered that the most effective and economic option was to have a consolidated service at one centre namely, Carloway. The Report identified that Westside day care provision could be increased to a four day week by locating day services at Carloway Care Centre.

It was agreed to recommend that:

- (1) a four day service be developed at the Carloway Care Centre; and**
- (2) the three day lunch club provision currently made at the Bragar Centre be discontinued from 31 March 2009.**

Care Units: Options for Future Service Delivery SW01 36 The Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report detailing a range of options for a sustainable Care Unit Service. The Report provided detailed analysis of the future options for the Care Unit Service on the basis of the available budget, demographic factors and the known and projected demand for the service. The Report proposed that an Area Care Unit Service be established which would offer residents a 24 hour staffed service with a maximum ratio of staff to residents. The Report further detailed an Action Plan outlining a phased process to implement an Area Care Unit Service.

The Report detailed the following recommendations for approval:

- (a) Garrabost, Carloway, Crowlista and lochdar units should be the basis of the future Care Unit Service through the model of Area Care Units, and the remaining five care units be closed by 31 March 2009 namely, Back, South Dell, Gravir, Scalpay and Dun Innes;
- (b) that the level of weekly charge for a Care Unit placement be considered from year to year alongside Comhairle Residential Care Homes and be at a rate equal to that set by the Comhairle for a placement in a Comhairle Residential Care Home and (ii) that the statutory assessment regime applicable to assessing a Residential Care Home resident's ability to meet the cost of their care (including the ability to place a security upon heritable assets owned by the resident to secure payment of the charges set), be adopted and applied in relation to assessing the means of a Care Unit resident's ability to meet the cost of their care and determining the level of charges they should pay;
- (c) lochdar Unit remain open for a further twelve months until March 2010 and a report on this unit to be submitted to the February 2010 Committee series;
- (d) a report on the potential for a 'stepping down' facility at Back Care Unit as detailed at para 6.19 be submitted to the February 2009 Committee series by the General Manager, CHaSCP;
- (e) the sheltered housing complexes as shown in table 8 which are adjacent to the existing care units and free-standing sheltered schemes be de-sheltered, and support offered to tenants through the Faire Carline Service;
- (f) the surplus Care Unit and Tigh Ceilidh facilities be disposed of according to the terms of the Comhairle's Contract Regulations. The capital receipts accruing from the disposal of Care Unit and Tigh Ceilidh provision to meet the one year only shortfall in repair and maintenance revenue costs for the remaining care units;

- (g) Warden staff in care units and sheltered housing affected by these changes be offered re-deployment within the Comhairle Home Care Service or to appropriate vacancies within Care Homes in line with Comhairle policy and in consultation with the relevant Trade Unions.

The Committee considered the terms of the recommendations from Joint Services Committee of 17 December 2008.

It was agreed to recommend that the terms of the Report be noted and that consideration of the recommendations be deferred to the February 2009 series of meeting to allow the Chief Social Work Officer to endeavour to identify resources during the Budget setting process to allow the care unit provision to continue over this period in such a way as to enable him to carry out the consultation with residents, those using the respite care services, their relatives and carers and the members of the local community, all as recommended by ODS Consulting in their Report on Options Appraisal for the future of the care unit service.

Arising out of consideration of this item it was noted that the Chief Social Work Officer would liaise with the Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles, in relation to the Report to be submitted in April 2009 in relation to Back Care Unit to ensure that it considered the adjacent Tigh Ceilidh.

Delayed Discharges SW01

- 37 The Chief Social Work Officer, CnES and General Manager CHaSCP submitted a Report informing the Members of recent national and local developments and requirements for the management of delayed discharges. The Report

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle transfer £218k from the Comhairle central balances to the Social and Community Services Department to reduce the charge to NHS Western Isles in respect of delayed discharges.

HOUSING

The Chairman ruled that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 50(B) 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the supplementary paper in relation to the following item be considered as a matter of urgency in order to enable the Committee to take an view on the matter.

Mr Archie Campbell and Mr Charlie Nicolson declared an interest in the following item as Board Members of HHP and left the meeting during consideration of this matter.

Use of Strategic Housing Reserves PR100.02

- 38 The Chief Executive submitted a Report to enable the Comhairle to determine the use of the Strategic Housing Reserves. The Report states that the provision of Homeless accommodation, including the possibility of developing a Homeless Persons Hostel has been considered.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a supplementary Report to recommend proposals to assist HHP in addressing some outstanding issues following stock transfer. The Report proposed that the Comhairle allocate £50K of the £1 million set aside to meet calls on indemnity under the Stock Transfer Agreement to enable some issues which were not been considered at that time to be addressed to meet HHP tenant priorities. The allocation would be on the basis of not admitting any liability in relation to these issues and that the allocation would be matched by HHP.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle approve in principle the use of the Comhairle's Strategic Housing Reserve for the provision of Homeless accommodation.

It was further agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to allocate £50k from the provision for former HRA liabilities to enable HHP to address tenants' priorities in areas not covered by HHP's business plan and that it be delegated to the Chief Executive to enter into an agreement with HHP on the basis:

- (1) that the allocation was a one off contribution;
- (2) that in providing the funding the Comhairle did not accept any liability;
- (3) that the allocation was subject to HHP matching the contribution;
- (4) that HHP would manage the funds and use them to meet tenant priorities; and
- (5) of any other terms and conditions that the Chief Executive deemed appropriate.

Homeless
Hostel: Action
Plan
H05.10.21

39 The Chief Executive submitted a Report concerning the main findings of the Homelessness Hostel Feasibility Study. The Report gave background information in relation to the preparation of the Study and intimated that the Housing Strategy Member Officer Working Group had been given a presentation by the Consultant who had undertaken the Feasibility Study and agreed to support further investigation of the detailed implications of providing a homelessness hostel as part of a range of temporary accommodation issues. The main findings were summarised in the Report together with an Action Plan associated with the provision of a homeless hostel. The Report emphasised that the Action Plan, which would cover the period January – June 2009 recognised the complexity of this potential project and the need to ensure robust financial analysis and cost comparisons of alternative service models.

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the main findings of the Homeless Hostel Feasibility Study;
- (2) note the recommendation of the Housing Strategy Member Officer Working Group to undertake further detailed considerations relating to the provision of a Homeless Hostel; and
- (3) authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Housing Strategy Member Officer Working Group to progress this work as detailed in the Action Plan at Appendix 1 to the Report.

Council House
Building
Initiative
H01

40 The Chief Executive submitted a Report to inform the Comhairle of the new Scottish Government initiative to encourage new council housing building. It was stated in the Report that the Scottish Government had announced proposals to make £25m available nationally to encourage new council housing building and had worked together with COSLA to produce the detailed principles and procedures for the initiative. The detailed proposals had been made available to local authorities for consideration. The Report stated that the amount of subsidy provided per unit was not sufficient to make the initiative viable in the Western Isles. It was stated in the Report that the Comhairle would monitor the initiative to see how it was working in other parts of the country and consider the issue further in the event that any amendment to the criteria could be achieved.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the details of the Scottish Government's new council house building initiative; and
- (2) authorise the Chief Executive to advise Scottish Government and COSLA that the current scheme was viable in the Western isles and to seek amendment to the criteria in future years.

Mr John Mackay, Mr Alex A MacDonald and Mr Murdo Macleod declared an interest in the following item as owners of second homes and left the meeting during consideration of the matter.

Redistribution of Additional Council Tax Income from Second Homes H02 41

The Chief Executive submitted a Report concerning a proposal to redistribute £48,100 of additional Council Tax Income from Second Homes (ACTISH) Funding to two projects which had previously received approval for assistance on terms of the ACTISH Programme. The Report referred to the delays which had occurred in relation to a number of Hebridean Housing Partnership Projects, which had previously been allocated ACTISH Funding and further intimated that the Partnership had been able to acquire 3 houses under the "Rent of the Shelf" Scheme and stated that these properties which required upgrading works which could not be funded from the Scottish Government to the value of £48,100. The Report stated that funding could be available as result of delays on the following projects Allt na Broige, Marybank, Eoligarry Phase 3 Barra, Perceval Road Site 2 Stornoway. The Report further referred to an allocation of ACTISH funds for the Hebrides Alpha project, and for which additional funding in the sum of £18,000 had been requested to complete the development of a site in Coll. It was suggested in the Report that this sum could be made available by the sum of £18,000 out of the Perceval Road Site 2 project. It was further stated in the Report that the scope of ACTISH Funding had now been widened to enable Local Authorities to use these funds for :

- a) new Council house building
- b) bringing empty properties back into housing use
- c) land acquisition for affordable housing

The Report concluded that the ACTISH Funding system had been successful in proving additional houses in areas of housing need throughout the Western Isles and which were in compliance with the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy and that changes relating to the way ACTISH Funds could be invested in the future would give the Comhairle more options on housing investment and would also allow the Comhairle to strengthen its strategic role. It was therefore appropriate for a full review of ACTISH Funding Priorities to be carried out before setting allocations for the 2009-10 financial year.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle's ACTISH programme be amended as follows:

- (1) £48.1K be allocated to the improvement of three properties purchased by the Hebridean Housing Partnership under the "Rent off the Shelf" scheme; and**
- (2) a further £18K be allocated to the Hebrides Alpha project; and**
- (3) a review of all ACTISH expenditure and future priorities be brought to the April 2009 series of Comhairle meetings.**

Strategic Housing Investment Plan PR100.02 42

The Chief Executive submitted a Report to inform the Comhairle of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan submission for 2009-2014. The Report states that the Comhairle is required to submit a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to the Scottish Government on an annual basis and the purpose of the SHIP is to set out the Comhairle's housing investment priorities over a five year period.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan submission for 2009-2014 as at Appendix 1 of the Report.

BEST VALUE

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely, 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.

Diagnostic Pathways – Update Report

43*

The Chief Executive submitted a Report to update the Comhairle in relation to current progress with the Comhairle's Diagnostic Pathways project. The Report stated that the proposal from PWC had now been received. There were two main strands to be progressed – the development of an integrated plan and the development of a project team. It was suggested that it would be appropriate at this stage to take forward the integrated plan which could be progressed during January 2009 and reported to the next meeting of the Committee. A revised proposal was awaited but it was anticipated that it would amount to approximately twenty days consultancy work which could be funded from vacancy savings and recharging within the Executive Office. Of the four key outcomes being sought in relation to making progress this would enable the Comhairle to

- have in place a five year transformation plan
- have a deeper understanding of the design phase; and
- sustain the momentum of the project.

This would leave the final element of developing an in-house capacity to take forward this and other projects which could then be progressed as a spend to save as part of the In-house Project Management business case.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle

- (1) **note the Report; and**
- (2) **delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive to agree a mutually acceptable price with PWC to enable an implementation plan to be produced for the Comhairle's Diagnostic Pathway Project in terms of Contract Regulation 4.2 (i) (n) due to PWC's prior involvement in the project.**

Implementation of Balanced Scorecard SS02

44

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking to ensure that the Balanced Scorecard approach was integrated into departmental Business Plans 2009/10 and that it be applied consistently across all Comhairle services. The Report stated the need to implement the Balanced Scorecard approach was one of the projects identified through the diagnostic pathway process that the Comhairle agreed to take forward separately as it had previously agreed to implement the balanced scorecard.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Comhairle's Management Team, to agree timescales for submitting draft Balanced Scorecards for each Comhairle service, with a view to finalising these by 31 January 2009, for inclusion in departmental business plans, prior to these being presented at the February 2009 Committee series.

RELATED MATTERS

Genealogy and Archives Study Visit
PR36 45

The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking approval for two Comhairle Members to participate in a Genealogy Study Visit. The Report stated that the Comhairle had agreed to extend the remit of the MOWG to include archiving and that the wider implications of the service should be considered with genealogy, culture and tourism linking together. A research study on Archives and Records Management, commissioned as part of the Lews Castle & Museum nan Eilean Project, was being carried out by the University of Dundee and the outcomes would be reported back to the Committee in early 2009. The Report proposed that following the visit and the conclusion of the Western Isles Archives Study, a seminar be arranged to consider the development of archive and genealogy services.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the participation of the two Comhairle Members nominated by the Genealogy Member Officer Working Group, Councillors Kenneth Maciver and Angus McCormack, in a Genealogy Study Visit as detailed in the body of the Report.

Update on EU Life+ Project - Conservation Management of the Machair Partner Funding Proposal
DS61 46

With reference to Item 21 of the Minute of Meeting of 30 October 2008 the Chief Executive submitted a Report clarifying the Comhairle's support of the EU LIFE+ Machair Project and to ensure that the Comhairle's financial support to the project would be dependent upon reaching agreement with the RSPB and SNH on the issues summarised in Section 2 and as detailed within the body of the Report. The Report stated that the Report had been previously considered by the Comhairle in October 2008 and it had been agreed that the Comhairle's financial support to the project would be dependent on the following:-

- the level of additional budget allocated to goose management in the Uists;
- amendment of the project governance structure to include elected Members and community representation;
- the final drafting of the overall bid; and
- agreement between the Comhairle, SNH and RSPB on the forward strategy for goose management and significant goose population reduction in the Western Isles

It was agreed to recommend, in so far as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle:

- (1) **continue to support the overall aims and objectives of the Project and contribute £35K per annum to the project from the Revenue Match Fund in each of the four years 2010-14 subject to:**
 - (i) **receipt and consideration of a final report on the greylag goose predictive population modelling research project; and**
 - (ii) **receipt of confirmation from the Scottish Crofters Foundation that it was satisfied with the Project in regard to any economic or social impacts that may arise;**
- (2) **approve the draft Agreement on a Forward Strategy for Goose Population Management as set out at Appendix 2 to the Report and nominate the Chairman of Sustainable Development Committee (or the Vice-Chairman of Sustainable Development Committee as a substitute) to lead the Comhairle's interests in the Forward Strategy for Goose Population Management in the Western Isles;**
- (3) **agree that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Sustainable Development Committee engage with RSPB and SNH during the period to July 2009 to further consider the detailed project actions and in particular to ensure that the economic and social aspects of the project were fully addressed; and**
- (4) **approve that a future progress Report would deal with final clarification of the Comhairle's financial support and appointments to the Project Advisory Group if the Bid was successful.**

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Reports Outstanding: Progress Pr33.01.12 47 The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing the Reports outstanding arising for the decisions of the Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report subject to the inclusion of the Report in relation to public participation in decision making.

ADDITIONAL ITEM

The Chairman ruled that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 50(B) 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, that the following item be considered as matters of urgency in order to make Members of the Comhairle aware of the final position of the Commercial Operators Unit prior to the next series of Meetings.

It was agreed that the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely, 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.

Commercial Operations Unit – Second Quarter Monitoring Report 1 April 2008-30 September 2008 CB011 48* The Director of Technical Services submitted a Report advising Members of the trading performance of the Commercial Operations Unit as at 30 September 2008. The Report stated that the COU was showing an overall deficit of £102k at the end of the second quarter and the reasons were detailed in Report. An analysis of income and expenditure was given in Appendix 1 to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) approve the management actions outlined in paragraph 7.3 of the Report.**