

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Chamber, The Court House, High Street, Nairn on 11 June 2014 at 10.30 am

Present:

Ms J Douglas
Mr D Fallows
Mr B Lobban

Mr C Macaulay
Mrs L MacDonald
Mr G Rimell

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey
Ms M Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development
Mr B Mackinnon, Employability Team Leader, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr C Kemp, Area Community Services Manager, Community Services
Mr S Callan, Assistant Housing Manager, Community Services
Mr C Mackintosh, Area Education Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr A Maguire, Head of Property Partnerships, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mrs A MacNeill, Acting Public Relations Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Mr G Moir, Chief Executive, Cairngorms National Park Authority
Mr F Cardow, Highland Small Communities Housing Trust
Mr O Bray, Head Teacher, Kingussie High School

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Mrs L MacDonald in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr L Fraser and Mr M Green.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declarations of Interest:-

Item 3 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial)
Item 7 – Mr C Macaulay (financial)

Item 9 – Mr C Macaulay (financial)
Item 12 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial)

Mr D Fallows declared a non-financial interest in those items relating to the Cairngorms National Park as a Member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.

3. Presentation: Cairngorms National Park Authority Taisbeanadh: Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Declaration of Interest:

Ms J Douglas declared a non-financial interest in this item as a member of the Strengthening Communities Project Steering Group but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

Mr Grant Moir, Chief Executive, Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA), undertook a presentation on the work of the National Park, key challenges and opportunities for the future and the potential for further joint working with Highland Council.

He explained that the CNPA had an annual budget of £7m, around 60 members of staff, 19 Board members and was the Planning Authority for the CNPA area on a call-in basis shared with the relevant neighbouring Local Authorities. The Park was the UK's premier nature reserve, had 25% of the UK's endangered species, a high nature conservation designation of 49% and received around 1.5m visitors per year. With some fast growing settlements, a key challenge for the future was the balance between development and conservation.

Economic issues for consideration included low levels of unemployment, local salaries being below average but house prices being above average. Tourism provided 43% of all employment though only accounted for 30% of the economy. He advised that the £7m of capital investment in the previous ten years was expected to yield approximately £30m of income and continued investment was essential to ensure the CNPA could compete in a worldwide market.

Mr Moir outlined the management arrangements of the CNPA and the various organisations which had signed up to partnership agreements such as the Cairngorm Nature Action Plan. Heritage Lottery Fund bids had been submitted for various projects and work was ongoing to resolve the conflicting objectives of the different types of landowners within the Park area. In terms of rural development, Community Action Plans were being drawn up to help encourage self-sufficiency.

The need to balance housing needs with nature conservation was highlighted, as was the ongoing work to improve broadband coverage in the area. Challenges for the future included the impact of the A9 dualling, the need for long term capital investment in visitor infrastructure and the importance of increased co-operation between the Highland Council and CNPA on key priorities.

During discussion, Members commented as follows:-

- while acknowledging the growth of Aviemore, it was important to direct attention to the regeneration of surrounding towns, particularly Grantown, Kingussie and Newtonmore, to ensure their economies also flourished. Economic diversification projects could help these towns, and others in the wider vicinity of the Park, to benefit from the tourism generated by the CNPA;
- it was important to budget for the ongoing maintenance of the path network, especially the core path network and specific mention was made of the need for a footpath linking Dulnain Bridge with Grantown. The path network should be looked upon not only as a leisure activity but as part of the prevention agenda in terms of the long term health benefits of active travel choices. Long distance paths were also an important visitor attraction;
- although Aviemore had a high number of retired people, it also had a higher than average return rate for young people;
- the re-emergence of Community Action Plans (CPAs) was welcomed and it was vital that communities were provided with appropriate levels of support for development initiatives and CPAs, without too heavy a reliance on volunteers; and
- the issue of falling unemployment yet continued low wage levels should be considered as part of rural poverty initiatives.

The Committee thanked Mr Moir and **NOTED** his presentation.

4. Community Challenge Fund – Area Update Maoin Dùbhlàn Coimhearsnachd – Fios as Ùr airson na Sgìre

There had been circulated Report No NBS/09/14 dated 17 May 2014 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which explained that the Community Challenge Fund (CCF) was launched in January 2013. The report provided Members with an opportunity to consider interest in the fund at a local level and discuss how the fund could best be promoted and utilised within the local area.

The CCF aimed to allow local communities to take direct control of services currently provided by the Council, or take ownership of buildings or other assets owned by the Council where there was worthwhile community benefit to be achieved. The report detailed the four types of project which were eligible and the costs which could be supported by the CCF. As part of the summary of the first year of the CCF, it was explained that of the 47 expressions of interest received, seven had met the criteria and three had been put on hold pending further discussion. Of the seven eligible projects, three had been successful and four were working on their business cases. The report also detailed the various changes that had been made to improve the operation of the CCF, including improvements to the flexibility of the criteria, promotion initiatives and capacity building.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the increased flexibility of the fund criteria was welcomed, as was the invitation that had been issued to all previous applicants to re-apply in light of the amended criteria;
- Members were encouraged to promote the CCF to community councils and other local groups. Options for the sourcing of ideas included the use of consultants and feasibility studies but these could be costly and it was thought there would be local sources with a better knowledge of their community's needs who could

be provided with support to draw up the necessary business cases. Linkage of projects to poverty action and employability was useful;

- it was clarified that the definition of 'community' was wide-ranging and could refer to any organisation which could manage a project that met the criteria;
- complex projects, for example in the caring services, could be considered by the CCF following consultation with the relevant partner organisations; and
- frustration was expressed that the CCF criteria did not permit applications to fund the expansion of existing projects and it was clarified that the CCF was aimed at providing start-up funding for sustainable service delivery.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the take up of the fund to date in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey; and
- ii. **NOTED** the changes made to the fund and the approach to promoting the fund agreed by the Council in March 2014; and
- iii. **AGREED** that Members' comments in relation to other potential services communities could take on and how best to promote the Community Challenge Fund be taken into consideration.

5. Rural Poverty – Research Briefing Bochdainn Dùthchail – Brath Rannsachaidh

There had been circulated Report No NBS/10/14 dated 10 May 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform which explained that, in 2013, two papers considering rural poverty had been published and a summary was provided of their methodology and findings.

In the first paper, *A Minimum Income Standard (MIS) for Remote Rural Scotland*, the MIS was defined as 'the income people need in order to reach a minimum socially acceptable standard of living in the UK, based on what members of the public think'. Research had been carried out in the Highlands to take account of the different needs of various rural settlements and the key findings were outlined. No single factor had raised the overall cost of living but a combination of factors had led to a higher minimum income requirement than other parts of the UK.

The *Local Incomes and Poverty in Scotland* study had been carried out in 2012 by the Improvement Service acting on behalf of four Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government to improve measures of local incomes and poverty in Scotland. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) had provided valuable information but sometimes resulted in a lack of local level data. The report went on to summarise the methodology and key findings of this study which would assist in understanding the needs of the population for developing appropriate policies and plans, including a 'rural proofing' tool to consider the potential impacts of any new policy or service on rural areas. It was clarified that while the rural proofing tool might highlight particular impacts which could allow mitigation to be incorporated into service delivery options, it would not necessarily prevent projects from going ahead.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concern was expressed that people living in rural areas were less likely to claim the benefits they were entitled to and further information on this was sought. It

was pointed out that the Citizen's Advice Bureau undertook home visits to encourage uptake of benefits in rural areas;

- the 'rural proofing' tool was welcomed given that there were pockets of people living in abject poverty beside otherwise affluent settlements and this was not being picked up by the SIMD;
- the relatively high cost in rural areas of petrol and housing, especially private rented accommodation, was a key issue to be tackled, along with the widening health gap between the affluent and those living in poverty. The possibility of a linked project with NHS Highland tackling poverty was suggested, especially in light of the recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation report which predicted that in the 2020s, one in seven adults would be living in poverty; and
- the detail of the 'rural proofing' tool was still to be finalised and was proposed to be the subject of a Members' workshop, the date of which would be issued in due course.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the findings of both research papers;
- ii. **NOTED** that a rural proofing tool had been drafted, assisted by the findings of the research studies, and there would be opportunities to use it in 2014; and
- iii. **AGREED** that further information on the reasons why individuals in rural areas were less likely to claim benefits, despite entitlement, be provided to Members of the Committee.

6. Update on Nairn Town Centre Action Plan Fios às Ùr mu Phlana-gnìomh Meadhan Baile Inbhir Narann

Members were reminded that, in late 2013, the Council had been successful in a bid to the Scottish Government for grant funding towards the undertaking of design workshop events aimed at the regeneration of Town Centres and, in particular, the steps required to increase footfall and investment in the town. Nairn was one of three towns in Highland that comprised the funding bid, the other two being Tain and Fort William.

The Nairn Town Centre Action Plan Event took place on 30 April and 1 May 2014 in the Court House, Nairn and featured a number of different sessions aimed improving the Town Centre. The event was well attended, with the format giving people the opportunity to drop in and out of sessions as they pleased. The availability of the online questionnaire allowed those who could not attend in person the ability to contribute to the outcomes. Suggested proposals were assessed for viability and deliverability and, through a collective assessment, refined for inclusion in the Action Plan. A pamphlet was prepared and distributed that highlighted the preferred main proposals which would guide the preparation of the Action Plan. A full draft Action Plan which would update, inform and supplement existing work would be presented to the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee on 25 September 2014.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

7. Workskills and Development - Update Sgilean-obrach agus Leasachadh – Fios às Ùr

Declaration of Interest:

Mr C Macaulay declared a financial interest in this item as his wife was a member of the Senior Management Team at Nairn Academy but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest was remote and insignificant in this context and did not preclude his participation in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No NBS/11/14 dated 28 May 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which summarised recent employability related activity in the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area and asked Members to comment on the priorities identified for development in the current year. Members were also asked to confirm the award of three grants from the Deprived Area Fund (DAF) and agree to the delegation of decisions for the balance of funds in 2014/15 to the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair.

The report explained that the administration of the DAF had been delegated to the Area Committee for 2014/15 and summarised the three applications from the Nairn and District Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Nairn River Community Council and Nairn Academy. Appendix 1 of the report provided information about the provision of Employability Services, with attention being drawn to two particular examples of innovative partnership working with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) and the Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) which provided training and work experience opportunities tailored to the specific geography and economy of the area. Following on from a meeting of the Development and Infrastructure Committee on 14 May 2014, the priorities for the Employability Services were highlighted.

During discussion, Members commented as follows:-

- while welcoming the benefits to Nairn, it was pointed out that the delivery of the DAF had not been 'rural proofed' given its restriction to urban areas;
- the £5,000 Nairn River Community Council Social Enterprise feasibility study was more of a capacity building exercise to develop a business case and this was welcomed;
- in relation to Employability Services, support was voiced for the work of HSCHT and COAT in meeting the challenge of providing training for young people in rural areas. The key measure of such projects was the number of young people who obtained employment as a result and an estimate of 85% was given. It was hoped that, in future, Employability Services could be brought together under one umbrella-type service;
- the sustainability of funding for projects required ongoing attention;
- it would be helpful to know, although difficult to pin down accurately, the extent to which the DAF monies had impacted on the two areas of Nairn which had been the reason for Nairn's Deprived Area status, namely Tradespark and Queenspark; and
- the Area Committee Chair (Area Leader) was asked to report the award of the balance of funds to Ward Business meetings in due course.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the award of Deprived Area Funds as follows:-
 - Nairn & District Citizens Advice Bureau – £5,000

- Nairn River Community Council - up to £5,000
 - Nairn Academy – £5,000; and
- ii. that the award of the balance of funds for 2014/15 be delegated to the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Area Leader.

8. Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges Prògram Gleidhidh airson Rathaidean agus Dhrochaidean

There had been circulated Report No NBS/12/14 dated 16 May 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve the Maintenance Programmes for Roads and Bridges for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area for 2014/15.

The report explained the reduction in the overall road maintenance budget as a result of budget pressures of £1.966m. However, this had been largely mitigated by the Road Innovation Fund of £1.250m and by a further £0.500m which had been included in the Area allocation for road maintenance as a result of winter salt underspend in 2013/14. The report also outlined the distribution of the road maintenance budget and provided further information on the road maintenance programme, with specific figures for Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey included in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- an update was sought in relation to the Ruthven Bridge and whether it would be repairable;
- information was requested on when the surface dressing works at Park Street/Union Street, Nairn would take place;
- in relation to the Howford Bridge, information was requested as to when the repairs would be carried out and an assurance was sought that the Council would be pursuing an insurance claim against the driver that caused the damage; and
- with regard to the surface dressing works at Haughs of Cromdale, it was suggested that consideration be given to a holistic project to address some of the issues surrounding the footpaths in the area at the same time.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Maintenance Programmes for Roads and Bridges for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area for 2014/15.

9. Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Programme Prògram Rothaireachd, Coiseachd agus Sràidean nas Sàbhailte

Declaration of Interest:

Mr C Macaulay declared a financial interest in this item as his wife was a member of the Senior Management Team at Nairn Academy but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest was remote and insignificant in this context and did not preclude his participation in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No NBS/13/14 dated 22 May 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve the projects delivered through the Scottish Government funding for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets

(CWSS) for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey area, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The report explained the background to the CWSS Programme which aimed to encourage sustainable and active travel to school. The Council's Road Safety Unit worked with schools to produce School Travel Plans which encouraged pupils, parents and staff to consider 'active' travel choices, to change behaviour and to make routes safer for pupils. The CWSS had a Scottish Government provided budget of £348,000 for 2014/15, an increase of £111,000 over the 2013/14 budget, of which 36% (preferably 50%) had to be spent on cycling related projects. Schools could bid for up to £30,000 in any one year, with projects below £3,000 able to be approved by the Road Safety Unit allowing immediate implementation. In exceptional circumstances, bids over £30,000 could be considered with additional costs referred to Members. Projects seeking Members' approval were detailed in the report at Appendix 1.

Having welcomed the continued provision of CWSS projects in Nairn, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Safer Routes to School Project set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the Road Safety Unit would continue to work with schools to develop further Safer Routes to School Projects for future years.

10. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2013 gu 31 Màrt 2014

There had been circulated Report No NBS/14/14 dated 20 May 2014 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on housing performance indicators during the year 2013/14.

The report explained the background to the new performance indicators set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator to form part of its scrutiny of landlords from April 2013. The Council would make its first Annual Return on the Charter at the end of May 2014, with an annual report to tenants later in the year. Most of the indicators were not directly comparable with previous statutory performance indicators and it was therefore not possible to obtain data retrospectively to allow reporting of trends. Statistics were provided on repairs, tenancy management, rent arrears and homelessness/homeless prevention. Members had requested information in a more straightforward format to allow comparison of trends and a number of other indicators for housing management performance were presented in tabular format in Appendix 1 of the report.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- the length of time taken to complete emergency repairs in Nairn was well below the Highland average and appreciation was expressed to local housing staff and tradesmen for their efforts;
- the review of the void process was welcomed and Members looked forward to the outcome;
- the arrears figures appeared to be below the Highland average and the continued reduction was welcomed;

- information was sought in relation to the increasing number of Homeless Prevention Team cases and whether the upward trend was continuing;
- the improvements in the average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs and the average re-let time in Badenoch and Strathspey were welcomed. Thanks were expressed to staff for their efforts and it was hoped the improvements would be sustained. However, the average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs was still considerably higher than in Nairn and focused work was required to bring it down to at least the Highland average;
- the average re-let time had dropped significantly and information was sought as to whether this was a statistical anomaly or a true reduction;
- it was requested that the additional information contained in Appendix 1 of the report be separated by Ward in the future; and
- the percentage of court actions that resulted in eviction was significantly lower than the national target of 36% and Members commended housing staff for their success in preventing evictions wherever possible.

In responding to the issues raised, the Assistant Housing Manager confirmed that up-to-date figures in relation to the number of Homeless Prevention Team cases would be provided to Mr C Macaulay.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014; and
- AGREED** that the additional information contained in Appendix 1 of the report be separated by Ward in the future.

11. Nairn Common Good Fund – Update Report Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann – Aithisg Ùrachaidh

At the previous meeting of the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee, Members had been asked to note the ongoing review of the Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF).

In that regard, there had been circulated joint Report No NBS/15/14 dated 29 May 2014 by the Director of Finance and the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which sought to update on the review process and on progress made to date.

The report explained the background to the review and the measures being implemented with immediate effect to ensure improved governance. Steady progress was being made on updating the NCGF Asset Register and sources of anticipated revenue included the former links shelter, Sandown Fields and the putting green kiosk, details of which were provided. Operational management issues were summarised and, in terms of next steps, an outturn monitoring report, a report on an Investment Strategy and update reports on the ongoing review would be presented to future meetings of the Committee.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- appreciation was expressed to all staff involved in the review of the NCGF, particularly the Ward Manager, and the suite of actions that had been implemented was welcomed;
- an assurance was sought that all possible steps would be taken to ensure that adequate safeguards and procedures were in place to deliver effective management of the NCGF in the future;
- thanks were expressed to Mr C Macaulay for his efforts in relation to the management agreement with the Scottish Agricultural College in respect of the Sandown Fields;
- Rates still had to be paid in respect of vacant properties and the importance of utilising all Common Good assets was emphasised. If any were not being used it was necessary to bring forward a property strategy to deal with them;
- the putting green kiosk was a minor development but it was important to the people of Nairn and, if the expression of interest reached a successful conclusion, it would bring a much loved building back to productive life;
- it was important that Members received a comprehensive report on the issues surrounding the lease review process for the caravan site at Lochloy; and
- having an Area Committee had galvanised the review of the NCGF and the position had significantly improved since the first meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** progress with the ongoing review of the Nairn Common Good Fund;
- NOTED** the conclusion of the lease for the former Links Shelter;
- AGREED** that the rental increase for the Lochloy Caravan Park be implemented from October 2013; and
- NOTED** the next steps and **AGREED** that further update reports be brought back to the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.

12. Kingussie High School Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Àrd-sgoil Cheann a' Ghiùthsaidh

Declaration of Interest:

Ms J Douglas declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No NBS/16/14 dated 28 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided an update of key information in relation to the schools within the Kingussie High School Associated School Group (ASG) and useful updated links to further information in relation to these schools.

The report explained that the primary schools in the ASG served over 500 pupils with the secondary school serving 419 young people. In relation to Kingussie High School, detailed information was provided on attainment and details of wider achievement and notable successes were provided for all schools within the ASG. In addition, the report contained statistics on school leavers, school rolls, attendance/absence/exclusions, staffing and funding. With regard to school buildings, information was provided on suitability, condition and occupancy as well as

current/future investment. Statistics were also provided in relation to High Life Highland facilities and services within the ASG.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- the partnership work being developed by Kingussie High School was welcomed and further information was requested in that regard;
- there had been a significant change in the outlook of Kingussie High School and Members commended the management team and staff for their efforts as well as parents and pupils;
- concern was expressed that the percentage of positive destinations had dropped significantly in 2012/13 and an assurance was sought that this would return to an upward trajectory;
- the percentage of school leavers classed as “unemployed seeking” was unexpectedly high given that only 1.5% of the total population was unemployed and an explanation was sought in that regard;
- the wide range of activities being carried out, not only in the High School but in primary schools, was welcomed. In particular, it was important to acknowledge the volunteering work taking place and be proud that young people recognised that they had a role to play in supporting and improving communities, both locally and worldwide;
- in relation to school leavers without a positive destination, it was suggested that consideration be given to tracking them and providing additional support to enable them to access the opportunities that were available;
- concern was expressed regarding the lower level of attainment by girls and the additional support, including the proposed girls’ support group, was welcomed. It was important that the situation was closely monitored and it was suggested that progress be reported to the Ward Business Meeting. In addition, reference was made to the work of the Workers Educational Association in terms of resilience, aspiration and empowerment of women and it was suggested that opportunities for a partnership project be explored;
- information was sought in relation to Continuing Professional Development and whether the Council was doing enough to encourage and support teachers to undertake further training;
- more pupils were staying on for S5 and S6 and information was requested as to whether this put pressure on learning support provision;
- the 100% uptake in free school meals in Alvie and Newtonmore Primary Schools and Kingussie High School was welcomed. However, concern was expressed regarding the low uptake in Gergask and Aviemore Primary Schools. Whilst Gergask Primary was a small school and the number of pupils involved was very low, the situation in Aviemore Primary was more significant and it was suggested that the reasons for the low uptake be investigated. It was essential to make it easier for people to claim the benefits they were entitled to and it was suggested that there might be opportunities for partnership working with the local Citizens Advice Bureau to maximise uptake;
- the zero exclusion rate in primary schools and the below average rate in Kingussie High School were commended;
- roll projections for the next academic year were requested for all schools in the ASG. In relation to Aviemore Primary School in particular, concern was expressed that it was nearing capacity and occupancy information was sought;

- in relation to primary schools, particularly those with teaching Heads, information was requested as to whether there were any staffing situations that required to be resolved before the next school session; and
- with regard to High Life Highland facilities within the ASG, the substantial increase in numbers at Aviemore Library in a short space of time was welcomed and appreciation was expressed to staff.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the content of the report;
- AGREED** that the reasons behind the low uptake in free meals in Aviemore Primary School be investigated and reported to Members of the Committee; and
- AGREED** that up-to-date roll projections for schools in Kingussie High School Associated School Group be provided to Members of the Committee.

13. Minutes

Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 19 March 2014, as approved by the Council on 8 May 2014.

14. Exclusion of Public

Às-dùnadh a'Phobail

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

15. Request for Sale of Land at Balmakeith Industrial Estate, Nairn

Larrtas airson Fearann a Reic aig Àrainn Gnìomhachais Bhaile Mac Càidh, Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated to Members only Report No NBS/17/14 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure in relation to a request for sale of land at Balmakeith Industrial Estate, Nairn.

Having considered the proposal and the issues raised in the report, the Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Resources Committee that Council policy be upheld and the request refused.

The meeting concluded 1.05 pm.