

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND AREA COMMITTEE
DEPRIVED AREA FUND WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of meeting of the Deprived Area Fund Working Group held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick on Tuesday 1 September, 2015 at 1.00pm.

PRESENT

Mrs G Coghill	Mr D Mackay
Mr B Fernie (by telephone conference)	Ms G Ross
Mrs D Mackay	Mr W Mackay

Officials in attendance:-

Mr B Mackinnon, Employability Team Leader, Development and Infrastructure Service
Ms C Divine, Employment Support Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr D Sutherland, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in Attendance

Mr G Ramsay, Chairperson, Pultneytown People's Project (Item 7)
Mrs K McNab, Chief Executive, Pultneytown People's Project (Item 7)
Mr J Cassidy, Contracts Manager, Pultneytown People's Project (Item 7)

Mrs D Mackay in the Chair

1. Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr J Rosie.

2. Declaration of Interest

Ms G Ross declared a non-financial interest in the undernoted items on the basis that a family member attended a crèche run by the Pultneytown People's Project, 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 from taking part in the discussion.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Deprived Area Fund Working Group held on 26 May 2015.

5. Exclusion of the Public

The Board **AGREED** to resolve that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 & 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act

6. Deprived Area Fund

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. DAF/01/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which set out the background to the Deprived Area Fund, the use of the funding in Caithness and Sutherland and the need to sustain activity for which there was a continuing need.

In discussion, it was suggested that the Caithness District Partnership had a key role going forward in terms of tackling deprivation in the Area given its focus on joined up working and outcomes. It was suggested that referral to the District Partnership would allow the relevant agencies and community organisations to consider where there maybe overlaps or gaps in provision and also where opportunities existed, and ensure an appropriate spread of provision. This was particularly important in the context of the statutory requirement for Partnerships to develop Community Learning Development Plans and also the emphasis on empowering communities with the enactment of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill.

Discussion also followed on potential options for the future funding arrangements in respect of the Deprived Area Fund and the opportunities to enter into Service Level Agreements with organisations. It was also important to consider how sustainable organisations were going forward in terms of their business plans.

The Group **NOTED** the report.

Thereafter, the meeting adjourned at 1.50pm and reconvened at 3pm. The Chair advised that Mr B Fernie and Ms G Ross had submitted their apologies for the remainder of the meeting.

7. Deprived Area Fund – Pultneytown People’s Project

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. DAF/02/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which set out the history and background to the development of Pultneytown People’s Project (PPP). It set out areas for discussion with the Directors of the Company who had been invited to join the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Mr Ramsay, Mrs McNab and Ms Cassidy from the Pultneytown People’s Project to the meeting. Ms McNab proceeded to give a presentation in relation to the organisation’s updated Business Plan 2015-2020 and staffing structures, copies of which had been circulated to Members.

Thereafter, a wide ranging discussion followed which covered a number of points including the following:-

- that the meeting was the first step towards having a continuing dialogue between the Council Members and the PPP; in this regard it would be helpful for regular meetings to be held, the suggestion being twice yearly;

- discussion in regard to the Business Plan going forward;
- issues around reporting and awareness raising in regard to PPPs services and activities;
- that Members were welcome to visit the Pultney Centre and meet the staff at any time; and
- the opportunities through the Caithness District Partnership for the Council and PPP to work together and with other agencies to address the root causes of deprivation and meet community needs in the Area by delivering the required outcomes and solutions.

At the conclusion of this item, the Chair thanked the representatives of the Pultneytown People's Project for attending the meeting.

8. Report back to Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee

Discussion then followed on the recommendations to be made to the Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee in terms of the options for future funding arrangements in regard to the Deprived Area Fund. There was a consensus that at this stage this was a work in progress and that the submission of a final report to the Area Committee be deferred meantime to allow discussions to continue with the PPP and further information to be sought on the basis of which recommendations in terms of the Fund going forward would be made.

Thereafter, the Group **AGREED** that:-

- i. arrangements be made for Members and representatives of the Pultneytown People's Project to meet twice each year;
- ii. a report on the options around future funding arrangements be deferred to allow further ongoing discussions with the PPP and submission of further information on the basis of which final recommendations would be made to Members in December 2015; and
- iii. in the meantime a verbal update on progress be provided to the next meeting of the Area Committee on 16 September 2015.

The meeting ended at 4.20pm.