

The Highland Council

Minutes of Special Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 22 October 2015 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mrs H Carmichael	Mr J Gray
Mr R Balfour	Mr D Kerr
Mrs C Caddick	Mr R Laird
Miss J Campbell	Mrs E McAllister
Mr A Christie	Mr K MacLeod
Mr J Crawford	Mr F Parr
Mrs M Davidson	Mr T Prag
Dr J Davis	Mr G Ross
Mr N Donald	Mrs G Sinclair
Mr J Ford	Mrs J Slater
Mr K Gowans	Ms K Stephen
Mr A Graham	Mr H Wood

Officials in Attendance:

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Ms T Urry, Area Community Services Manager, Community Services
Mr J Taylor, Assistant Area Manager (Inverness), Community Services
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Development Service

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

Mrs H Carmichael in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Provost & City Leader, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Dr Jean Davis to her first meeting.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown and Mr A Duffy.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Winter Maintenance Priority Network – 2015/16 Lìonra Prìomhachais Obair-gleidhidh a' Gheamhraidh – 2015/16

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/55/15 dated 12 October 2015 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on the proposed revised priority network of Primary and Secondary roads within the Inverness Area following further consultation at Ward Business Meetings.

There had been tabled Revised Map in relation to the Winter Service Gritting Routes for the Inverness Area (West).

It was also advised that a correction should be made to Paragraph 5.3 within the report whereby the current wording of 'certain roads across all priorities receive a lesser treatment' should be amended to read 'certain roads across all priorities receive a later treatment'.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the unqualified assurance which had been sought (and which was provided by Officers at the meeting) in regard to the Council maintaining a reasonable standard of winter road maintenance was welcomed;
- the confirmation that those roads which had been categorised as 'Other' would still be treated after the 'Primary' and 'Secondary' routes was also welcomed;
- clarification was sought (and provided by Officers at the meeting) that discussion had been undertaken with Bus Operators as it appeared that, in relation to certain routes, the only stretch of road not classed as a 'Primary' route was through the Carse area;
- Lochalsh Road and Telford Road within Inverness City had been moved from 'Primary' to 'Secondary' but these were important routes and there should be a focus on ensuring that they were treated as early as possible during the winter period, most especially Telford Road which was on a School route;
- the reference to 'Dulnain' Road within the report should be corrected to read 'Dunain' Road;
- there was concern that part of Fairfield Road had been moved from 'Secondary' to 'Other' and this could cause confusion for motorists although it was accepted that the bus route would not be affected by this particular section of the road;
- it was imperative that details of the locations of all Salt Bins were supplied for Members in order that communities could be advised accordingly and residents encouraged to assist elderly neighbours where possible during particularly harsh winter conditions. In this regard, it was confirmed at the meeting that this information would be provided;
- the Towerhill and Inshes Wood areas could be particularly challenging in terms of their geography during winter weather and it was important that this was highlighted;
- diminishing resources and an increasing road network would continue to present problems for the Council and there was therefore a need to continue to prioritise road maintenance for future years;
- a number of Ward meetings had been held since the last Committee meeting and thanks were conveyed to the Officers concerned for the

liaison and consultation which had been undertaken with Local Members;

- in terms of acknowledging that gritting of roads throughout the Highlands remained a high priority for the Council, there was a need to consult with communities whenever and wherever possible in order to identify and highlight local priorities;
- thanks should be conveyed to local communities throughout the Highlands for their continuing assistance during periods of extreme weather which was invaluable and much appreciated by all;
- the commitment which had been given for a full and thorough review of the Winter Maintenance policy, following confirmation of the budgetary/financial position at the end of the year, was welcomed. In this regard, it was confirmed that a report would be submitted to the Community Services Committee in April 2016;
- there was perhaps a need to consider different arrangements in future for different areas as part of a review of the policy;
- the geography of the Highlands represented particular problems and as such it was important that this was highlighted in terms of future funding for the area;
- there were particular issues for Inverness City as well as the surrounding areas and this needed to be taken account of as part of the review of the policy;
- consideration should be given to the use of more multi-purpose vehicles in future, as well as the secondment of staff to winter maintenance duties as and when this was feasible; and
- there should be a focus also on cycleways and pathways with more information being provided for Members, particularly in relation to Secondary School routes.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the Winter Maintenance priority network of Primary and Secondary roads as presented in Appendix C to the report for the 2015/16 Winter Service period.

It was also **AGREED** that the locations of Salt Bins within all areas should be provided for Members.

4. Inverness Common Good Fund – Grants and Capital Projects Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis – Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/56/15 dated 12 October 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which set out a current application for grant funding to be determined in relation to subsidised parking at Rose Street Car Park, Inverness and the current status of capital projects.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it would have been preferable for a financial contribution to have come from some other sources, such as the Business Improvement District (BID) or Highland Council, as opposed to the Inverness Common Good Fund being asked to meet the full cost of the application;
- the software reconfiguration cost of £1500 for the Saturday and Sunday tariffs should be met from elsewhere if possible;

- this should be treated as a 'one off' grant application with consideration being given as to whether this was an appropriate use of the Common Good Fund in advance of any further proposals being submitted for future years;
- there was a need to closely monitor the impact of this arrangement in the current year whilst at the same time giving consideration to examples of best practice elsewhere;
- as part of the monitoring of the arrangement, and if the proposal was to come forward again for future years, there should be a focus on perhaps subsidising parking during the months of January and February instead; and
- there was ongoing concern in regard to the impact on local businesses following the fire at Eastgate and it was suggested that an update should be provided for Members, including a focus on the situation in relation to business rates.

In this regard, the City Area Manager confirmed that the application was competent as the formula to be used in calculating the compensation payable to the Council ensured that the Council would not 'profit'. Further, it was also stated that the Council had agreed the level of car parking charges and that it was not possible for Community Services to support this application financially as it could compromise that decision.

Thereafter, Mr D Kerr, seconded by Mrs G Sinclair, **MOVED** the approval of the application for grant funding but with the exception of the cost of the software reconfiguration for the Saturday and Sunday tariffs in the sum of £1500 on the basis that this cost should be met from another source.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mrs B McAllister, seconded by Mr N Donald, moved that the application for funding in the total sum of £8,119 should be approved.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 12 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 12 votes, with no abstentions.

Upon the casting vote of the Provost/Chair, the **AMENDMENT** was **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr R Balfour, Mrs C Caddick, Mr A Christie, Mr J Crawford, Mr J Ford, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr D Kerr, Mr R Laird, Mrs G Sinclair, Ms Kate Stephen and Mr H Wood.

For the Amendment:

Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs B McAllister, Ms J Slater, Miss J Campbell, Mrs M Davidson, Dr J Davis, Mr N Donald, Mr J Gray, Mr K MacLeod, Mr F Parr, Mr T Prag and Mr G Ross.

The Committee therefore **APPROVED** the application for grant funding in relation to subsidised parking at Rose Street Car Park, Inverness as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 11.45am.