

**The Highland Council  
No. 7 2015/2016**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 17 December 2015 at 10.35 am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence  
A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

**Present:**

Dr D Alston	Mrs L MacDonald
Mr R Balfour	Mr N MacDonald
Mrs J Barclay	Mr J McGillivray
Mr A Baxter	Mrs D Mackay
Mr D Bremner	Mr D Mackay
Mr I Brown	Mr W MacKay
Mrs C Caddick	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mr A Mackinnon
Miss J Campbell	Ms A MacLean
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr T MacLennan
Mr A Christie	Mr K MacLeod
Mr B Clark	Mrs B McAllister
Dr I Cockburn	Mrs I McCallum
Mrs G Coghill	Mr D Millar
Mr J Crawford	Mr H Morrison
Dr J Davis	Ms L Munro
Mrs M Davidson	Mr B Murphy
Mr N Donald	Mr F Parr
Ms J Douglas	Mrs M Paterson
Mr D Fallows	Mr G Phillips
Mr G Farlow	Mr T Prag
Mr B Fernie	Mr I Renwick
Mr M Finlayson	Mr M Reiss
Mr J Ford	Mr A Rhind
Mr C Fraser	Mr G Rimell
Mr H Fraser	Mrs F Robertson
Mr L Fraser	Mr J Rosie
Mr S Fuller	Ms G Ross
Mr J Gordon	Mr G Ross
Mr B Gormley	Mr R Saxon
Mr K Gowans	Dr A Sinclair
Mr A Graham	Mrs G Sinclair
Mr J Gray	Mrs J Slater
Mr M Green	Ms M Smith
Mr A Henderson	Ms K Stephen
Mr D Kerr	Mr J Stone
Mr R Laird	Mr B Thompson
Mr B Lobban	Mr H Wood

**In Attendance:**

Chief Executive	Director of Care & Learning
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development	Director of Finance
Director of Development & Infrastructure	Director of Community Services

## **Mrs I McCallum in the Chair**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Duffy, Mr R Greene, Mr M Rattray and Mrs C Wilson.

### **Preliminaries**

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Leader expressed her thanks, on behalf of the Council, to all staff who were now faced with extremely difficult and life changing decisions over the Christmas period arising from the current budget situation and specifically the implementation of the voluntary severance scheme.

In this regard, she stressed that this was an unprecedented position in which the Council found itself but all Members had a very high regard for staff and would strive to keep morale high and to deal with issues in a fair, decent and supportive way in the lead up to balancing a budget in February 2016.

This was an extremely challenging time for the Highland economy and the Council would ensure that as much help and advice as possible was provided for staff and for all other organisations across the Highland area as and when necessary.

## **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Council **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 3 – Dr D Alston (financial)

Item 11 – Ms A MacLean and Mr G Phillips (both non-financial)

Item 12 – Dr D Alston (financial)

Item 13 – Mrs H Carmichael, Mr J Douglas, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray, Mr M Green, Mr F Parr, Mr H Wood (all non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial)

Item 15ii – Mr H Fraser, Mr R Laird and Mr G Phillips (all financial)

Item 19 – Mr G Phillips (non-financial)

## **3. Presentation – Director of Public Health Taisbeanadh – Slàinte a’ Phobail**

### **Declaration of Interest**

**Dr D Alston declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.**

A presentation was undertaken by Dr Hugo Van Woerden, Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, on the Annual Report for 2015 which examined the societal and health effects of and the importance of having a balanced approach to alcohol consumption.

In this regard, and although the Highlands were doing better than the Scottish average, it was confirmed that Scotland was still consuming more alcohol than the rest of the UK with liver disease in women being the highest in Western Europe. Key to improvement was a focus on cultural change and the influence which people had on one another, particularly on children. Examples of positive initiatives were provided, including the promotion of non-alcoholic drinks by the drinks industry, and

the Highland Licensing Board was commended for efforts to impose shelf limitations for the sale of alcohol and further work in this area.

As such, a number of recommendations were proposed which would be drawn together into an Action Plan and taken forward in partnership with other organisations, particularly the Drug and Alcohol Partnership.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was disappointing that the whisky industry was not following minimum pricing recommendations as it required to share responsibility for the health of Highland residents;
- consideration should be given to the drink-driving implications of whisky-tasting sessions;
- all sectors of the economy, from the drinks industry to the public sector and tourism, should work towards creating a healthy culture in relation to alcohol use;
- there was concern for communities whose economies relied solely on one industry and there could be a role for Highlands & Islands Enterprise to encourage diversification;
- consideration should be given to structural limits on the sale of alcohol; and
- there was a need to recognise the high percentage of Accident and Emergency admissions that were the result of excessive alcohol consumption.

Thereafter, and having thanked Dr Van Woerden for his presentation, the Council otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the Annual Report as presented.

#### **4. Confirmation of Minutes Daingneachadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais**

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 29 October 2015 as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately - which were **APPROVED**.

#### **5. Minutes of Meetings of Committees Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan Chomataidhean**

There had been submitted for confirmation as correct records, for information as regards delegated business and for approval as appropriate, the Minutes of Meetings of Committees contained in Volume circulated separately as undernoted:-

Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee, 4 November  
Community Services Committee, 5 November  
Education, Children & Adult Services Committee, 11 November  
Gaelic Implementation Group, 12 November  
Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 17 November  
Skye, Ross & Cromarty Area Committee, 18 November  
Lochaber Area Committee, 24 November  
Resources Committee, 25 November  
City of Inverness Area Committee, 3 December  
Communities and Partnerships Committee, 10 December

The Minutes, having been moved and seconded were, except as undernoted, **APPROVED** – matters arising having been dealt with as follows :–

### **Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee, 4 November**

#### **\*Starred Item: 22: P 306: Highland Opportunity Limited**

It was **AGREED** to appoint Dr A Sinclair and Mr D Mackay as Directors of the Board of Highland Opportunity Limited.

### **Community Services Committee, 5 November**

It was **NOTED** that Mrs B McAllister had been present at the meeting.

### **Education, Children & Adult Services Committee, 11 November**

#### **\*Starred Item: 12: P 336: Review of the Provision of Education at Inverasdale Primary School**

It was **AGREED** that education provision at Inverasdale Primary School should be discontinued and its catchment area re-assigned to that of Poolewe Primary School.

#### **6. Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board Co-Bhòrd Luachaidh na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean Siar**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Valuation Joint Board held on 17 September 2015 - which were **NOTED**.

#### **7. Appointment Panels (External Bodies/Arms-Length External Organisations) Pannalan Cur an Dreuchd (Buidhnean bhon Taobh A-muigh/Buidhnean Leth-eisimeileach bhon Taobh A-muigh)**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Appointments Panel held on Tuesday, 24 November 2015 - which were **APPROVED**.

#### **8. Membership of Committees, etc Ballrachd Chomataidhean, is eile**

The Council **APPROVED** the following revisions to memberships of Committees, Sub Committees, etc –

##### **Communities and Partnerships Committee –**

Mr L Fraser, Dr Audrey Sinclair, Mr D MacKay, Ms M Smith, Mr R Laird, Mr A Baxter and Mr T MacLennan to be added to the membership

Mrs L MacDonald to replace Mrs J Slater

Mr J Rosie to replace Mr L Fraser as the Independent Group Substitute

Dr J Davis to replace Dr D Alston

Ms K Stephen to replace Mr T Prag as the Liberal Democrat Group Substitute

##### **Audit & Scrutiny Committee**

Mrs G Sinclair to replace Mr A Duffy

Dr J Davis to replace Mrs A MacLean

Dr D Alston to replace Mr G Rimell

##### **Education, Children & Adult Services Committee**

Mr D Fallows to replace Mrs J Slater

Ms K Stephen to replace Dr D Alston

**Resources Committee**

Mr C Fraser to replace Mr B Gormley

Mr J Stone to replace Ms K Stephen

Mr G Phillips to replace Mr K Gowans as the SNP Substitute

**Community Services Committee**

Dr D Alston to replace Mr H Wood

**Pensions Committee**

Mr A Graham to replace Dr D Alston

It was **NOTED** that Mrs L MacDonald had resigned from Highland Opportunity Limited and consideration would be given to filling this vacancy in due course.

It was also **NOTED** that, despite previous confirmation, Mrs J Slater was now to remain on the Eden Court Board.

**9. Question Time  
Àm Ceiste**

The following Questions had been received by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development in terms of Standing Order 42 –

**(i) Mr J Stone**

**To the Chair of the Education, Children & Adult Services Committee**

“Could you inform me what action you have taken to resolve the failure of the Scottish Government to announce confirmation of funding for a new Academy for the town of Alness since the last Committee meeting on 11 November 2015?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Stone queried as to whether the Chair would seek a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary to establish the current situation.

The Chair confirmed that he would be seeking a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary in the New Year.

**(ii) Mr A Christie**

To the Leader of the Council

“What meetings have you attended (other than those internal to the Council), what apologies have been submitted and what meetings are planned for the next 3 month period?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Christie queried whether the current information on the Council's Web Page was correct in that it showed that the Leader had been to only four meetings since 5 November.

In response, the Leader Council confirmed that this information had now been updated and that she had been to many more than four meetings over this period.

**(iii) Mr A Christie**

**To the Depute Leader of the Council**

“What meetings have you attended (other than those internal to the Council), what apologies have been submitted and what meetings are planned for the next 3 month period?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

**(iv) Mrs L MacDonald**

**To the Chair of the Community Services Committee**

“How much has been allocated in the Housing Revenue Account budget for routine maintenance and for voids for each of the last five years in each of: Badenoch & Strathspey, Caithness, Inverness, Lochaber, Nairn, Ross & Cromarty, Skye and Sutherland and what has been the variance in the HRA budget for routine maintenance and voids in each area for the last five years?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mrs MacDonald queried whether the Chair would now ask for the Council's Housing Debt to be written off or at least reduced.

In response, the Chair confirmed that he would write to both the UK and Scottish Governments to ask for the Council's Housing Debt to be written off.

**(v) Mr T Prag**

**To the Leader of the Council**

“In the interests of public transparency, could you tell me whether any progress has been made towards making Members attendance records at Council meetings and related Committees easily available to the public on line?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Prag queried as to whether it would be possible to highlight the attendance of Members at meetings on the Council Website to make it easier for the public to access this information.

In response, the Leader confirmed that she would investigate the feasibility of this request and would meet with Councillor Prag thereafter to discuss this matter further.

## 10. Notices of Motion Brathan Gluasaid

The following Notices of Motion had been received in accordance with Standing Order 10.1 –

### Notice of Motion (i)

“The Highland Council recognises and supports a dementia friendly Highlands. However, it is often small changes by ourselves and other partners that can make a huge positive difference to the lives of those affected by dementia.

Therefore we ask that a small group of Members work with Officers and relevant bodies to produce an action plan to bring to a future Council meeting which makes recommendations on ways that we can achieve our goal of a dementia friendly Highlands”.

Signed: Ms J Douglas, Mrs A MacLean, Mrs C Caddick, Mr G Rimell, Mr J Gray  
Ms K Stephen, Mrs B McAllister, Mr S Fuller, Mr J Stone

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Council could take the lead with private, public and voluntary partners in creating tangible actions and drawing on best practice to make the Highlands dementia friendly. As such, simple practical upgrades to public buildings and areas were achievable and would make significant improvements for those suffering from dementia;
- it was suggested that Ms J Douglas should lead the proposed group and that this group should include Members with specific interests in this area. In this regard, the group should report back with an action plan in the Spring;
- local communities, along with Local Committees and District Partnerships, should also consider how to implement initiatives;
- dementia training should also be provided for all Members within the Council;
- this matter had also been discussed at the Inverness East District Partnership and it had been suggested that the Provost of Inverness should hold a meeting with representatives from the Victorian Market to highlight the need to pursue dementia friendly projects in that location. In this respect, it was suggested that representatives from the Eastgate Centre and the Business Improvement District should also be invited; and
- the role of carers was essential to the development of the action plan and in view of the fact that Connecting Carers was represented on the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, it was suggested that the recommendations from the group should also be submitted to a future meeting of that Committee.

### Decision

The Council **AGREED** that a small group of Members, led by Ms J Douglas, should work with Officers and other relevant bodies to produce an action plan to bring to a future meeting which made recommendations on ways in which the goal of a dementia friendly Highlands could be achieved.

### Notice of Motion (ii)

“The Highland Council affirms its support for the Rails to Grantown project and calls

for partners to ensure it is completed as soon as possible”.

Signed: Ms J Douglas, Mr D Fallows, Mr B Lobban, Mr G Rimell

During discussion, Members reiterated support for this community led project which would bring significant economic benefits to Badenoch and Strathspey and particularly Grantown-on-Spey.

In this regard, it was stressed that it was important to indicate to the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland that all community leaders, as well as the Council, were in support of the project which would not only benefit tourism and visitors but would also provide a genuine contribution to public transport infrastructure in the area.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to affirm its support for the Rails to Grantown project and to call on partners to ensure that it was completed as soon as possible.

### **Notice of Motion (iii)**

“In December 2014, the Highland Council debated changing the policy regarding the display of election posters with a view to a total ban on the display of election posters on Council property, roadside verges and street furniture in line with the vast majority of other Councils in Scotland. This was following the many negative impacts this had during the Referendum but this was considered an exception by many and the policy remained in force.

Regrettably the situation during the General Election saw at least the same level of negative impacts, including criminal damage, threatening behaviour, intimidation, general abuse and wilful disregard of the regulations, resulting in multiple posters on single lamp posts and oversized posters. This resulted in what can only be described as a complete eyesore across the Highlands.

It is proposed that the current policy is changed and that the display of election posters on Council property, roadside verges and street furniture in direct ownership of the Council be banned for all future Elections”.

Signed: Mrs C Caddick, Ms K Stephen

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst it was accepted that this issue had been debated in 2010 and 2014, it had to be recognised that 66% of Scottish Councils had now agreed to ban election posters on Council property, roadside verges and street furniture and Highland Council should now consider taking the same approach;
- the proliferation of poster material was detrimental to the environment and off-putting for visitors to the area, particularly in conservation areas, and many posters were now oversized and could cause a distraction for motorists;
- there were health and safety issues associated with individuals climbing ladders to fix posters to lampposts;
- there was often damage to street furniture which needed to be maintained by the Council at a cost;
- making provision for election promotional activity on the Council's website could be an alternative way forward;
- many local residents objected to election posters which remained in place



both before and after the election period;

- while it was accepted that posters were not always removed in the given timeframe, it was considered that the Council's existing policy should prevail as nothing had changed since this policy had been previously debated and agreed;
- the banning of election posters could be considered to be detrimental to political parties and particularly independent candidates who might not have the financial resources for alternative forms of promotion;
- it was unclear as to whether the proposals for any potential ban had been costed, specifically in relation to who would implement and enforce it;
- making space available on the Council Website as an alternative would be costly and could create further difficulties; and
- it would be more appropriate for political party representatives to meet with Council Officers to establish basic rules of engagement in order to identify a workable and sensible solution for the long term.

Thereafter, Mrs C Caddick, seconded by Ms K Stephen, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

As a **FIRST AMENDMENT**, Mr R Laird, seconded by Ms M Smith, moved that the Council should re-affirm its existing policy on the display of election posters.

As a **SECOND AMENDMENT**, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr T Prag, moved that the Council should delete the first and second paragraphs of the motion and propose that the current policy on the display of election posters on Council property, roadside verges and street furniture in direct ownership of the Council be banned in conservation areas for all future Elections.

On a first vote being taken between the First Amendment and the Second Amendment, the **FIRST AMENDMENT** received 37 votes and the **SECOND AMENDMENT** received 28 votes, with 9 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:

**For the First Amendment:**

Mr A Baxter, Mr I Brown, Miss J Campbell, Mr B Clark, Dr I Cockburn, Mr J Crawford, Mrs M Davidson, Mr D Fallows, Mr G Farlow, Mr B Fernie, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr S Fuller, Mr J Gordon, Mr B Gormley, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mr A Henderson, Mr D Kerr, Mr R Laird, Mr B Lobban, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr J McGillivray, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mrs M Paterson, Mr G Phillips, Mr I Renwick, Mr A Rhind, Mr G Ross, Ms G Ross, Mrs G Sinclair, Mrs J Slater, Ms M Smith

**For the Second Amendment:**

Dr D Alston, Mrs J Barclay, Mr D Bremner, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs I Campbell, Mr A Christie, Dr J Davis, Mr J Ford, Mr H Fraser, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr N MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Ms A MacLean, Mr K MacLeod, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs I McCallum, Mr B Murphy, Mr F Parr, Mr T Prag, Mr G Rimell, Mrs F Robertson, Mr R Saxon, Dr A Sinclair, Ms K Stephen, Mr J Stone, Mr H Wood

**Abstentions:**

Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs G Coghill, Mr N Donald, Ms J Douglas, Mr L Fraser, Ms L Munro, Mr M Reiss, Mr J Rosie, Mr B Thompson

On a second vote being taken between the Motion and the Amendment, the **MOTION** received 27 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 40 votes, with 7 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:

**For the Motion:**

Dr D Alston, Mrs J Barclay, Mr D Bremner, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs I Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs G Coghill, Mrs M Davidson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr H Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr M Green, Mr N MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Ms A MacLean, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs I McCallum, Mr B Murphy, Mr F Parr, Mr A Rhind, Mr G Rimell, Mrs F Robertson, Mr R Saxon, Dr A Sinclair, Ms K Stephen, Mr H Wood.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr A Baxter, Mr I Brown, Miss J Campbell, Mr A Christie, Mr B Clark, Dr I Cockburn, Mr J Crawford, Dr J Davis, Mr N Donald, Mr D Fallows, Mr G Farlow, Mr J Ford, Mr C Fraser, Mr S Fuller, Mr J Gordon, Mr B Gormley, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr A Henderson, Mr R Laird, Mr B Lobban, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr J McGillivray, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mrs M Paterson, Mr G Phillips, Mr T Prag, Mr I Renwick, Ms G Ross, Mr G Ross, Mrs G Sinclair, Mrs J Slater, Ms M Smith, Mr J Stone, Mr B Thompson.

**Abstentions:**

Ms J Douglas, Mr B Fernie, Mr D Kerr, Mr K MacLeod, Ms L Munro, Mr M Reiss, Mr J Rosie

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to reaffirm its existing policy regarding the display of election posters.

**Notice of Motion (iv)**

“The Highland Council notes the ongoing negotiation between the European Union and the USA on the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) and expresses its disappointment that the negotiations are underway in secret and without input or oversight from representatives of Local Government.

The Council believes that TTIP would have a detrimental impact on public services, employment and suppliers and that the proposed Investor–State Dispute Settlement mechanism would be used to undermine the democratic decision making of local and national government.

The Council requests that the Leader writes to Scotland’s Members of the European Parliament, to the UK Government and Scottish Government expressing concerns about the possible detrimental effect of TTIP on Local Government and raises these concerns at COSLA”.

Signed: Mrs L MacDonald, Mr S Fuller, Ms M Smith, Mr R Laird, Dr I Cockburn

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- negotiations on the new trade deal were being held in private and it was a concern that TTIP could threaten local democracy and remove the Council’s freedom to make decisions on procurement;
- the Scottish Government had already raised concern about the potential impact of TTIP on NHS services;
- harmonisation of regulation and standards was the main motivation of negotiating TTIP but this could enable multi-national corporations to co-write future regulations and there was concern that this could lead to banned EU

- products coming into the country;
- several other UK Local Authorities had already voiced their concerns over TTIP and Highland Council should do likewise;
  - it was important that Local Authorities were able to choose suppliers without fear of being penalised. In this respect, TTIP could impact on services were provided;
  - there was no information on which to assess the impact on local jobs;
  - negotiations on TTIP had been ongoing for two years with no involvement at local or regional government levels and yet the impact would be felt at local levels in particular. Small businesses could perhaps be amongst the main beneficiaries and it was therefore important not to send out the message that the Council opposed free trade. In this respect, it was therefore agreed that it would be more appropriate to amend the wording in Paragraph 2 of the Notice of Motion by changing “would” to “could”.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** the ongoing negotiation between the European Union and the USA on the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) and expressed disappointment that the negotiations were underway in secret and without input or oversight from representatives of Local Government.

The Council believed that TTIP could have a detrimental impact on public services, employment and suppliers and that the proposed Investor–State Dispute Settlement mechanism could be used to undermine the democratic decision making of local and national government.

The Council **AGREED** that the Leader should write to Scotland’s Members of the European Parliament, to the UK Government and the Scottish Government expressing concerns about the possible detrimental effect of TTIP on Local Government and that these concerns should also be raised at COSLA.

### **Notice of Motion (v)**

“The Highland Council re-affirms its commitment to meet its agreed recycling targets to avoid increases in landfill tax and to assist in hitting the Council’s carbon emissions reductions targets”.

Signed: Ms M Smith, Mr G Phillips, Mr S Fuller, Mr C Fraser, Mrs G Sinclair, Mr K Gowans

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the potential of moving to fewer collections had been considered as a budget saving but it was important to note that this could impact negatively on the Council’s ability to meet recycling targets;
- there was a budget pressure of £700k against waste and it was now felt necessary to make a concerted effort to promote recycling activity and to communicate this message more strongly to the public;
- the Environmental and Regulatory Services should work closely with Corporate Communications in terms of issuing clear information to the general public and staff members should also be briefed and encouraged to reduce carbon emissions;
- the widening of the range of recyclable materials was welcomed although it was noted that some residents still opted not to recycle which proved the

- need for increased effort in education;
- it was hoped that there would be no reduction in collection cycles or closure of recycling centres without evidence in support of such action;
- the Waste Management Strategy should be submitted to an early meeting of the Community Services Committee for consideration;
- the capacity to recycle all plastics should be increased as many domestic heating systems now used wood pellets or biomass which were delivered in plastic packaging which currently went to landfill but which could be recycled;
- the terms of the Notice of Motion would be beneficial for the budget, communities and the future of the Highlands;
- it had been agreed to continue to develop plans to meet obligations as a result of the landfill ban for biodegradable municipal waste by 2021 although there required to be degree of realism as to what could be achieved;
- the education of children was essential as this would have a longer lasting impact;
- the intention to build a waste treatment plant in the Highlands was welcomed; and
- additional wording was agreed for the Notice of Motion in terms of urging the public to recycle as much as possible in order to avoid crippling landfill charges and to assist in reaching the Council's recycling and carbon emission reduction aspirations.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to re-affirm its commitment to meet its agreed recycling targets to avoid increases in landfill tax and to assist in hitting the carbon emissions reductions targets.

It was also **AGREED** to urge the public to recycle as much as possible in order to avoid crippling landfill charges and to assist in reaching the Council's recycling and carbon emission reduction aspirations.

**The Council adjourned at 1.10 p.m. and resumed at 2.00 p.m.**

## **11. Capital Programme Review: Capital Plan 2015/16 to 2024/25 Prògram Calpa**

### **Declarations of Interest**

**Ms A MacLean declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Ross and Cromarty Citizens Advice Bureau 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 from taking part in the discussion.**

**Mr G Phillips declared a non-financial interest in this item on the basis of having previously provided professional services to two projects but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. HC/55/15 dated 8 December 2015 by the Director of Finance and the Director of Development & Infrastructure which set out the long term General Fund Capital Plan for the financial years 2015/16 to 2024/25.

In this regard, Annex 2 to the report had been circulated separately and an additional Annex 8 had also been tabled.

During a summary of the report, it was confirmed that the Plan had been extended by one year (to ten years) but incorporated additional resource in the form of the General Fund Capital Grant only and no new borrowing or other income had been assumed. Revised profiling had also been undertaken to better match the annual funding available and these changes had been summarised within the Annexes to the report. As such, the plan now contained all the projects previously prioritised, an additional £24.520m for Roads, Bridges and Piers and an additional provision of £1.6m for Minor Flood Works.

In this regard, it was highlighted that the Plan, even after re-profiling, was still heavily front loaded due to the West Link project and only achieved financial balance across the ten year period. However, this position would be kept under review and might require adjustment whereby the additional loan charge might be required to match the advanced borrowing.

The Plan would now form the basis of the future rolling ten year programme and would be updated at least annually to allow for new projects to be considered in later years. There would also be scope to add additional schemes which offered revenue savings.

Further more detailed information was also provided in regard to the economic context and funding position, proposals for and future changes to the Plan, the City/Region Deal, the financial (and other) implications and risks and assumptions.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- one of the main aims had been to incorporate the capital budget which had been set up by the previous Administration and this had been achieved, as well as including (through re-profiling) enhanced spending on roads which was welcomed (with thanks being conveyed to the Officers for the work which had been undertaken in this regard);
- the economic downturn which was expected across Local Authorities nationally was expected to be substantial and it was therefore essential to ensure the continuation of the Capital Programme in order to continue to contribute to employment and job creation across the Highland area;
- Members could not be parochial at a time when the financial constraints for the Council were potentially catastrophic and it was therefore essential that flexibility was built into the Capital Programme wherever possible and that it was considered alongside the Revenue Budget as one entity in order to ensure that it was truly affordable;
- thanks should be conveyed to the Leaders of the Opposition Groups for the discussions which had been undertaken with the Administration in relation to the Capital Programme and for the ideas which had been brought forward;
- detailed discussion should be undertaken at the next Resources Committee meeting in February on how to take forward the Capital Programme without any additional revenue impact if at all possible;
- in terms of the report and the risks which had been identified, it was suggested that the final recommendation should be amended to read 'note the risks identified in the report' as opposed to only making specific reference to the Scottish Government General Capital Grant in isolation;
- as part of the regular monitoring of the Capital Programme, cognisance

should be taken of the potential risks of inflation within the construction industry and the resultant effect on the submission of tenders;

- further clarification was required in terms of the references to 'lifeline roads' in future reports;
- it was imperative that future consideration of budget savings had to also take account of the Capital Programme;
- it had to be made clear that the capital projects which were to go ahead had to meet the strategic aims of the Council; and
- there was a need to re-categorise the Capital Programme in order to identify particular types of projects, including 'spend to save' projects.

### **Decision**

The Council:-

- (i) **APPROVED** the Capital Plan 2015/16 to 2024/25;
- (ii) **NOTED** the relationship between the Capital Plan and the Revenue Budget which requires additional loan charges of £2.5m per annum (except financial year 2024/25) to fund the level of capital investment contained within the Plan;
- (iii) **NOTED** the risks identified within the report and the need to monitor the Plan's affordability on a regular basis; and
- (iv) **AGREED** that the Director of Finance should bring a report to the Resources Committee in February/March to update the Council on the final Capital Settlement and that discussion be undertaken on possible ways to mitigate the revenue consequences of the Capital Programme.

## **12. Revenue Budget Buidseat Teachd-a-steach**

### **Declaration of Interest**

**Dr D Alston declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/56/15 dated 8 December 2015 by the Director of Finance which provided an update on the latest developments regarding the budget forecast position for 2016/17 and highlighted the scale of the budget deficit.

Prior to discussion, and with reference to the Local Government Grant Settlement, the Chief Executive highlighted the huge challenges ahead for Local Authorities across Scotland and specifically for Highland Council which now faced a 4.31% cut in revenue grant. This came on top of the pressures which had been identified within the report of £14m which effectively represented an additional 3% reduction in the resources available to the Council. In addition, it had also now been confirmed that the constraints in terms of Teacher Numbers and Council Tax were to continue for at least the next financial year.

It was stressed that this situation was unprecedented and would by necessity lead not just to a reduction of services but the discontinuation of some services which could no longer be provided by the Council. It therefore had to be recognised that this would have considerable impact on those affected across the Highlands. The Council would also have less capacity to step up and play a part when problems appeared in the area.

Finally, there was now a very short timescale in which to address the budget shortfall and as such the changes which would be required to be made had to be undertaken immediately. In this regard, action had had to be taken in relation to staff redundancies and to this end a decision had been taken at an operational level to implement a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme in conjunction with a Scheme for staff to come forward with requests for reduced hours. There would also require to be decisions taken in January in relation to a recruitment freeze, limits on overtime and a reduction in agency staff.

During a summary of the report, the Director of Finance confirmed that since the last budget forecast in June, considerable work had been undertaken by Services to provide a range of savings options for consideration and this information had been shared with Councillors, trade unions and the media. A consultation with the Citizens Panel had also commenced as well as a number of Facebook chat sessions. However, there had now been a number of events which had led to a material change to the budget forecasts and the options for budget savings and the report therefore highlighted these events and assessed their financial impact.

It was highlighted that previous budget reports had taken a longer term view of the Revenue Budget up until 2018/19 with longer term financial planning being key to the future planning of service delivery. However, with the anticipation of single year grant settlement for 2016/17 and the scale of the financial challenge, the focus of attention now had to be on the next financial year. Subsequent reports would restore a three budget forecast but it had to be recognised that it was expected that financial challenges would continue for the foreseeable future.

In this regard, detailed information was provided in relation to the Local Government Grant Settlement, the proposed 25 Hour School Week, Additional Budget Pressures and NHS Highland Adult Care Commissioned Services.

It was also advised that, in addition to the approximate base budget funding gap which was in excess of £40m, this did not include £10.185m of savings which had been agreed in the previous year and which still had to be delivered for 2016/17. If this figure was added to the current funding gap, the Council was facing a potential real terms reduction in its budget of over £50m which represented over 9% of the budget in the current financial year.

It was further advised that it had been confirmed that a penalty would be imposed if there was any agreement by Highland Council to raise the Council Tax in the following year.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to the Director of Finance and his team for the considerable work which had been undertaken over recent weeks and months;
- this was the worst budget which the Highland Council had ever faced and an unprecedented situation and addressing the current budget gap would be incredibly difficult within the very short timescale available;
- it remained to be seen as to whether voluntary redundancies would be adequate in terms of dealing with this situation and if not then it was likely that consideration would have to be given to compulsory redundancies;
- the budget team had been studying the situation within other Councils and it was clear that they were facing the same if not a worse position in terms of budget cuts;
- in terms of redundancies, it had to be recognised that losing hundreds of jobs

from the Council would have severe economic consequences for the whole of the Highlands;

- the budget team were undertaking a 'root and branch' review of all activities across the Council and all Members were invited to become involved in and to contribute to this review if they so wished;
- the youngest children in Highland Schools (P1-3) should be exempt from the proposals for a 25 hour school week, not least in terms of the geography of the area and the road safety concerns which would arise from the considerable distances to be travelled in the winter months especially;
- in terms of the additional budget pressures which had been highlighted in the report, it was imperative that in future all budget proposals being brought forward for Members consideration were achievable;
- evidence from other Councils had shown that in situations where voluntary redundancy had been implemented, the commitment and loyalty shown by the remaining staff members in terms of continuing service delivery had meant that performance had not fallen as far as had previously been expected and this was very encouraging;
- there was a need for clarification as to whether the Council Tax freeze was fully funded and for the recommendations within the report to also include reference to the impact of this continued freeze;
- there was real concern about the constraints being placed on the Council and the potential impact on the most vulnerable people within society as a result of the cuts to services which would require to be made as a direct result of the current budget situation;
- from consultation with the general public through Facebook 'chats', the statistics showed that a majority did not support an increase to the Council Tax as it was recognised that this would not in itself solve the current budget position;
- this was a dire situation in that national decisions, which had the effect of radically downsizing the size of the public sector and public spending, left the Council in an unprecedented position of having to consider not what to cut from services but what to save;
- there was a need, within a very short timescale, to review all services provided across the Council;
- the current position with the Council Tax freeze was not sustainable and should be changed. In this regard, it was suggested that consideration should be given to legal challenge if feasible;
- the increasing constraints being placed on the provision of education were not acceptable and continued to cause problems locally;
- all Members within the Council needed to take collective responsibility for the budget decisions which were to be made in order to help people to adapt to new circumstances, including members of staff;
- there was need, first and foremost, to concentrate on the continuation of statutory duties and to make the best use of the resources available thereafter for the people of the Highlands;
- previously identified savings and efficiencies had not been achieved in all cases and this situation could not continue in the future;
- consideration should be given to working with budget teams within other Local Authorities in order to share proposals and ideas for budget efficiencies;
- there should be protection for the lowest paid members of staff wherever possible as part of the 'root and branch' review of Services;
- it was imperative that the Council made the best of the opportunity to meet with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss the budget position in the New Year;
- it was hoped that all Members within the Council could openly engage with the Budget Team in order to be able to set a balanced budget in February;



- liaison should be undertaken with Highlands & Islands Enterprise and other agencies within the Highlands, perhaps through the setting up of a Task Force, to help and assist Highland communities wherever required in the months ahead; and
- an additional recommendation should be added to the report to note the impact of the continued freeze on the Council Tax for the Highlands.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** the impact of:-

- (i) a 25 hour school week for all primary school children (as per Section 2);
- (ii) a significant cut in the Council's grant (as per Section 3);
- (iii) the Additional Budget Pressures (as per Section 4);
- (iv) Adult Care Commissioned Services as outlined in Section 5;
- (v) the Resource Implications as per Paragraph 6.1 of the report; and
- (vi) the continued freeze on the Council Tax.

### **13. Update on Rationalisation of Leisure Management Amaladh Sheirbheisean Cur-seachad**

#### **Declarations of Interest**

**Mrs H Carmichael, Mr J Gray and Mr H Wood declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of Inverness Leisure but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.**

**Ms J Douglas, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green and Mr F Parr declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors 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 their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.**

**Mr K Gowans also declared a financial interest on the grounds of a family member being an employee 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 his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/57/15 dated 7 December 2015 by the Chief Executive which highlighted the good progress towards the rationalisation of Leisure Services in the Highlands.

In this regard, it was confirmed that the Boards of High Life Highland and Inverness Leisure had confirmed their intention to transfer the Inverness Leisure business to High Life Highland and to work together to design and deliver this result by April 2016.

During discussion, the support from and work undertaken by both High Life Highland and Inverness Leisure, and their respective Chief Executives, in reaching this position was welcomed and it was agreed that the thanks of the Council should be conveyed to both organisations and a letter of appreciation should be sent in this regard.

Whilst it was acknowledged that there would still be challenges to be faced, it was envisaged that the provision of leisure facilities in Highland would now be in a much stronger position in future.

### **Decision**

The Council:-

- (i) **NOTED** that the Boards of Inverness Leisure and High Life Highland had agreed to work together to form a single organisation;
- (ii) **NOTED** that the best option to achieve this involved the transfer of business from Inverness Leisure to High Life Highland by April 16;
- (iii) **AGREED** that this process should be led by High Life Highland and Inverness Leisure in accordance with the Rationalisation Plan at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (iv) **AGREED** that a letter of appreciation be sent to both organisations in recognition of their support and hard work in the amalgamation process.

#### **14. Consultation on Provisions for a Future Islands Bill Co-chomhairle mu Sholar airson Bile Eileanan san Àm ri Teachd**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/58/15 dated 8 December 2015 by the Chief Executive which sought approval of the draft response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Provisions for a Future Islands Bill which had sought views on five separate but connected issues, namely Island Proofing, Empowering Island Communities, National Islands Plan, Statutory Protection for the Na h-Eileanan an Iar Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Boundary and Local Government Electoral Wards.

In this regard, the proposed draft response had been circulated as Appendix 1 to the report.

### **Decision**

The Council **APPROVED** the draft response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Provisions for a Future Islands Bill as circulated.

#### **15. Scheme of Delegation and Administration to Strategic Committees and Sub Committees and to Officers Raòn Ùghdarras agus Rianachd gu Comataidhean Ro-innleachdail agus Fochomataidhean agus gu Oifigearan**

##### **(i) Local Committees**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/59/15 dated 1 December 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform which sought early revisions to the Scheme of Delegation to establish the new Local Committees in six localities.

During a summary of the report, it was confirmed that further revisions to the Scheme would be brought to future Council meetings as work progressed to localise Council decision making, notably for local decision making and resources for Community Services with effect from 1 April 2016.

In this regard, it was confirmed that a Ross & Cromarty Local Committee was now to be established, including Wards 6-10.

In addition, all partners had now confirmed support for new local community planning experiments although further work on establishing and resourcing them would be required, along with a view on how they could be evaluated from the outset.

The resource implications for the new Local Committees had also been set out in Section 3 of the report.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in regard to the webcasting of the new Local Committee meetings, it should be delegated to each Local Committee to consider the costs involved and to decide as to whether they wished to provide webcasting and how this would be financed;
- consideration of other options for the broadcasting of Local Committee meetings should also be considered;
- there were concerns about the resourcing of the new Local Committees, including the time and travel required by Officers, and this needed to be closely examined in the first instance;
- it was essential that detailed liaison was undertaken with partners in order that everyone involved was clear from the outset about the expectations arising from these new Committees;
- there was perhaps a need for more examination of the proposed timescales for implementation as it was essential that every possible measure was taken to ensure that these Committees were successful;
- it needed to be recognised that there would be considerable responsibilities placed on the new Chairs of these Committees;
- it was essential that the Scheme of Delegation was appropriate and in this regard it was acknowledged that further consideration was required in terms of overlap within the current version in relation to the delegation in place for the Cairngorms National Park;
- it was questionable as to whether it could be predicted that the new Local Committee meetings would be shorter and that there would be no requirement for lunches in future;
- the financial constraints currently facing the Council had to be recognised within the proposals for these new Committees;
- there was concern about the capacity of Ward Managers to service the new Committees in some localities as they already had a considerable workload;
- although it had been agreed locally by a majority, there was still concern about the size of the new Ross & Cromarty Local Committee and it would perhaps be appropriate to review the composition of this particular Committee after a period of one year; and
- in terms of webcasting, it was suggested that a reduction in the Ward Discretionary Budget for all areas could be used to meet future costs.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** that this was the initial revision proposed to the Scheme of Delegation to establish the new Local Committees in six new localities plus Lochaber. Further revisions would be proposed as work was done to devolve Community Services budgets for 1 April 2016 and as the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act was developed.

The Council **AGREED** the revised Scheme of Delegation for Local Committees as set out in Appendix 2 which would apply to the six new Local Committees agreed to date, including the Lochaber Committee and the Ross & Cromarty Committee – on

the basis that amendments would be made where necessary to take account of issues raised by Members at the meeting. For those Areas unchanged, the current Scheme of Delegation to City/Area Committees would continue.

The Council also **NOTED** that all community planning partners had agreed to support the local experiments in the localities identified so far.

The Council **AGREED** that the new local partnerships should not be convened before the end of March 2016.

The Council also **AGREED**:-

- (i) that each Local Committee should now consider whether they wished to webcast future meetings and if so how they wished to meet the costs involved;
- (ii) that as Local Committee meetings would be shorter, no lunches would be required or provided;
- (iii) the additional costs relating to staff time in Committee Services of approximately £20,000 are part of the 2016/17 budget. While the work required could be absorbed within the teams affected, it was a real cost as without this workload savings would be taken;
- (iv) that any other additional costs would be monitored in 2015/16; and
- (v) that costs would be contained by avoiding the need for additional staff travel to participate in Local Committees by using video conferencing and by the local Ward Management Team providing Lead Officer support.

## **(ii) Remuneration of Senior Councillors**

### **Declarations of Interest**

**Mr H Fraser, Mr R Laird and Mr G Philips declared financial interests in this item as Chair of the Communities and Partnerships Committee, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and Vice Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee respectively and left the room.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/60/15 dated 8 December 2015 by the Director of Finance which reviewed and sought approval for a revised list of Senior Councillor posts.

During discussion, it was suggested that there was a need for further consideration to be given to the list of Senior Councillor posts, specifically in relation to remuneration for Chairs of Local Committees in view of the responsibilities of these positions at a local level.

Thereafter, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr D Kerr, **MOVED** that this item should be deferred until the Special Meeting of the Council in January.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mrs M Davidson, seconded by Ms M Smith, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 26 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 24 votes, with 4 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Dr D Alston, Mrs C Caddick, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs G Coghill, Dr J Davis, Ms J Douglas, Mr G Farlow, Mr J Ford, Mr C Fraser, Mr B Gormley, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr D Kerr, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr N MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Ms A MacLean, Mrs B McAllister, Ms L Munro, Mr B Murphy, Mr F Parr, Mr T Prag, Mr G Rimell, Mr J Rosie

**For the Amendment:**

Mrs J Barclay, Mr I Brown, Mrs I Campbell, Miss J Campbell, Mrs M Davidson, Mr B Fernie, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Henderson, Mr B Lobban, Mr A Mackinnon, Mrs I McCallum, Mr J McGillivray, Mr H Morrison, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Dr A Sinclair, Mrs J Slater, Ms M Smith, Mr B Thompson

**Abstentions:**

Mr D Fallows, Mr S Fuller, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr I Renwick

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED TO DEFER** further consideration of the proposed list of Senior Councillor posts as detailed in Annex 1 to the report until the Special Meeting of the Council in January 2016.

**At this point, Mr H Fraser, Mr R Laird and Mr G Phillips returned to the meeting.**

**16. Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings  
Gnath-riaghailtean co-cheangailte ri GiulanChoinneamhan**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/61/15 dated 20 November 2015 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which outlined an amendment to the Council's Standing Orders in regard to Standing Order 28 (Right of Reply) as part of the annual review which was a requirement of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

During discussion, attention was drawn to a typographical error in Paragraph 1.1 of the report (Proposed Version) whereby the word "confirm" required to be changed to "confine".

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the proposed amendment to Standing Orders as detailed, subject to correction of the typographical error as detailed and on the basis that an amended copy would be circulated to all Members in due course.

**17. Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Update  
Cunradh nan Seann Ghaisgeach**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. HC/62/15 dated 4 December 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform which outlined the work carried out by the partners to the Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant in the last twelve months and set out future priorities.

Specific reference was made and thanks conveyed to all those involved with the work which had been undertaken in relation to health and housing, education and

employment and through the presentation of a Silver Award which had demonstrated excellent partnership working.

Reference was also made to the Freedom of the Highlands which had been granted to the Royal Regiment of Scotland and in regard to the World War 1 commemorative events which had taken place throughout the year. Future proposals included closer engagement with the private sector and the development of formal processes for partnership working.

In this regard, special thanks were conveyed at the meeting to Mrs C Caddick for the work which had been undertaken.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to welcome the work of the Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership which had been undertaken to date, to support the ongoing work which had been outlined at Paragraph 5.8 to further develop partnership working with other Local Authorities and to endorse the future priorities which had been outlined at Section 6 of the report.

## **18. Veterans Champion Curaidh nan Seann-ghaisgeach**

It was advised that Mr A Duffy was currently on a leave of absence from his Council duties and would therefore not be able to undertake his duties as Veterans Champion.

In this regard, it was proposed to appoint a new Veterans Champion at the next available meeting of the Council in order to ensure continuity and that the duties associated with this position were undertaken.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to appoint a new Veterans Champion at the next available meeting as detailed.

## **19. Dornoch Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich**

### **Declaration of Interest**

**Mr G Phillips declared a non-financial interest in this item on the basis of having previously provided professional services to two projects but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. HC/63/15 dated 8 December 2015 by the Director of Finance and the Head of Policy and Reform which requested consideration of an application of £100,000 over three years to the Dornoch Common Good Fund from Dornoch and District Community Association.

In this regard, it was confirmed that this application was for funding to support the development and construction of a new Community Centre at the Meadows, Dornoch.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to grant £100,000 from the Dornoch Common Good Fund to Dornoch and District Community Association as a contribution towards the costs of the new Social Club build over three years, subject to the group getting permission to purchase the land and a full funding package being in place.

**20. Board of Trustees of Dornoch Meadows Trust  
Bòrd Urrasairean airson Urras Chluaintean Dhòrnaich**

It was **NOTED** that the Trustees of the Meadows Playing Fields in Dornoch were responsible for the management of the Recreation Ground in Dornoch known as 'The Meadows'.

In this regard, Mr J McGillivray had been appointed as a Trustee in 2013 but had resigned from this position.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr G Phillips to the Board of Trustees of Dornoch Meadows Trust.

**21. Timetable of Meetings for 2016  
Clàr-ama Choinneamhan airson 2016**

The Council **AGREED** the following additional meetings for 2016 –

Highland Council (Special Meeting) – Thursday, 21 January  
City of Inverness Area Committee (Extra Meeting) – Thursday, 28 January

The Council also **AGREED** the following revised dates for meetings in Caithness –

13 January  
25 April  
31 August  
22 November

**22. Deeds Executed  
Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh**

It was **NOTED** that a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 3 September 2015 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

The meeting ended at 4.45pm.