

The Highland Council
No. 2 2016/2017

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday, 29 June 2016 at 10.35 am.

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

Present:

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

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 Dr D Alston, Mr R Balfour, Mr D Bremner, Mr I Brown, Dr I Cockburn, Mr J Crawford, Mr A Graham, Mr W MacKay,

Mr T Prag, Mr A Rhind, Mr G Rimell, Mr J Rosie, Ms G Ross, Mrs G Sinclair, Mrs C Wilson and Mr H Wood.

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Convener paid tribute to the late Jo Cox, MP and confirmed that she had been a wonderful example to all, much admired, and would never be forgotten.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 3 – Ms J Douglas and Mr M Green (non-financial)

Item 10ii – Mr R Laird and Mrs B McAllister (non-financial)

Item 12 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial/financial)

3. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Gold Award Presentation Sgeama Duais Diùc Dhùn Èideann – Toirt Seachad Duais Òir

Declarations of Interest

Ms J Douglas declared a non-financial interest in this item as Leader of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and as a Board Member of the Highland Award Project 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 M Green also declared a non-financial interest as a Board Member of the Highland Award Project and, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, also concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.

The Council was advised that, as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, 24 young people from across the Highlands were due to receive their Gold Award this year.

In this regard, the Convener presented Gold Award badges to the following five recipients who were present at the meeting - Rory MacIver (Inverness Open Group), Bethan Rains (Inverness Royal Academy), Alexander Gregson-MacLeod (Inverness Royal Academy), Leah Docherty (Ullapool High School) and Louis McShane (Inverness Royal Academy).

Decision

Having congratulated all of the recipients, the Council otherwise **NOTED** the position.

4. Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 12 May 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 as contained in Volume circulated separately and as undernoted:-

Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee, 11 May
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, 18 May
Sutherland County Committee 24 May
Resources Committee, 25 May
Gaelic Implementation Group, 26 May
Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee, 31 May
City of Inverness Area Committee, 2 June
Communities and Partnerships Committee, 9 June
Lochaber Area Committee, 10 June
Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 16 June
Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee, 20 June

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

Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee, 11 May

***Starred Item: Item 19: PP. 126: Transition of Highland Opportunity Loan Fund Activity to the Highland Council**

AGREED the extension of HOIL Board membership as suggested meantime.

Education, Children and Adults Services Committee, 18 March

Item 6: Page 134: Revenue and Capital Budgets 2016/17

NOTED an update provided at the meeting that further details in relation to funding of the proposed Regional Sports Facility would form part of the Capital Programme Review Report in the Autumn.

Resources Committee, 25 May

***Starred Item: Item 8: PP. 160-161: Major Capital Projects Monitoring Report**

AGREED that the issues highlighted in relation to the Council's Financial Regulations should be forwarded to the Leader of the Council and included as part of the next review.

Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee, 31 May

AGREED the following correction to Page 187 (Item 11) – wording to be amended to clarify that Ms J Douglas (and not Mr B Lobban as stated) had declared a non-financial interest in this item.

Communities and Partnerships Committee, 9 June

***Starred Item: Item 8: PP. 211: Dementia Friendly Highland Working Group – Progress and Draft Action Plan**

AGREED the launch of the Dementia Friendly Action Plan at the full Council meeting on 8 September 2016.

Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 16 June

***Starred Item: Item 6: PP. 233-234: 6. Financial Regulations – Proposed Amendments**

AGREED the recommended revisions to the Council's Financial Regulations as detailed.

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 3 February 2016 – which were **NOTED**.

7. Appointments Panel – External Bodies/ALEOs Pannal Dhreuchdan – Buidhnean bhon Taobh A-muigh/Buidhnean Leth-eisimeileach bhon Taobh A-muigh

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Appointments Panel (External Bodies/Arms-Length External Organisations) held on Monday, 6 June 2016 – which were **APPROVED**.

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

It was **NOTED** that Mr A Duffy was now non-aligned and that the political make-up of the Council was therefore now as follows:-

Independent – 32/SNP – 18/Liberal Democrat – 12 /Labour – 8/Highland Alliance – 6/Non Aligned - 4

Also **NOTED** that the formula in respect of the number of places on Strategic Committees remained as 9/5/4/2/2.

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 Community Services Committee

“What meetings have representatives of the Council had with the Scottish Government to discuss the difficulty the Council faces in funding the maintenance of non-trunk roads in the Council area?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Stone queried as to what financial support the Scottish Government had offered the Council during the various discussions in view of the problems the Council faced with the shortfall in funding for non-trunk roads.

In response, the Chair of the Community Services Committee explained that, in addition to the meetings mentioned in the response, the Leader had met with the Transport Minister on various occasions and raised the issues of road funding. It was further explained that road funding came from the Scottish Government grant settlement which it was felt was not enough and therefore the Council had made a commitment to capitalise £25 million for the roads, piers and bridges budget over the next few years. Furthermore, the Chair confirmed that he had included his concerns in a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity and would join the Leader to speak to the Transport Minister on the following day.

(ii) Mr R Laird

To the Leader of the Council

“What progress has the Administration made towards the compilation of a comprehensive land, property, and asset register for the Council?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Laird highlighted that, at the previous meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, and as part of consideration of the follow-up audit on the Inspection of Equipment in Schools, it had been confirmed that it could not be established that accurate asset registers were maintained and it was not known what equipment was held by the Care and Learning Service. In this regard, Mr Laird queried as to how the Council could provide assurances that the policies in this paper would be applied in practice.

In response, the potential dangers of equipment which was not maintained, especially fitness equipment, were acknowledged and a commitment was given that the Council would undertake a much closer examination of assets held within Schools, with a particular focus on fitness equipment.

(iii) Mr G Phillips

To the Leader of the Council

“What progress has the Administration made towards the implementation of an effective project management system for the Council?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Phillips queried as to whether the Leader would agree, given that a report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 24 March 2016 had identified systemic control failures on projects below the value to which the policy was applied, that Members needed to have confidence of how many projects were currently undertaken at any one time and that SharePoint would be rolled out to cover all projects. In this regard, it was requested that a report be brought back to an early meeting of the Resources Committee explaining how this would be achieved.

In response, the Leader suggested that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Chair of the Resources Committee and Leader of the Opposition should meet with the Leader and Officers to discuss how best to deal with such projects and come back with recommendations in the Autumn.

(iv) Mrs G Sinclair

To the Leader of the Council

“How many equal pay claims against the Council remain outstanding and what is their combined value?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

(v) Ms M Smith

To the Chair of the Ross and Cromarty Committee

“Members at the last Ross and Cromarty Committee agreed that they wanted to see a breakdown to Ward level of the devolved area Community Services budget. Is it your intention to bring this to the next Area Committee?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Smith queried as to what criteria of framework would be put in place to deal with distribution of the budget when there were areas of massive social deprivation versus areas of sparse population.

In response, the Chair of the Ross and Cromarty Committee confirmed that a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Area Committee on 3 August 2016 in order to allow further consideration.

**10. Notices of Motion
Brathan Glusaid**

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

(i) Given this Administration’s commitment to strengthening local democracy and empowering communities, we would request that the number of observers on the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee is increased to five with that place being allocated to a representative of the Highland Parent Council Forum.

Signed: Mr D Millar Mrs F Robertson Mrs I Campbell

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was envisaged that the representative from the Highland Parent Council Forum would act in the same way as other non-voting members of the Committee i.e. advise on education matters on the agenda;
- this would allow representation from a large section of Parent Forums across the Highland area;

- in terms of meeting the Council's aspiration to engage with communities and residents, this proposal would give parents 'a voice' on their children's education;
- the representative could also act as a 'sounding board' for the Care & Learning Service;
- there was a slight concern about possibly blurring the lines between consultation/gathering of information and decision making and this needed to be closely considered;
- in addition to the terms of the Notice of Motion, there was also a need to undertake a full review of all Committee memberships and structures as part of the work of the Redesign Board and this should therefore be added if possible; and
- there was a need to seek continuous review and improvement of Committee structures and inclusion of a representative from the Highland Parent Council Forum would add value to future deliberations.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** that the number of observers on the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee be increased to five with that place being allocated to a representative of the Highland Parent Council Forum.

It was also **AGREED** that there should be a full review of all Committee memberships and structures and that this should be part of the work of the Re-Design Board.

Declarations of Interest

Mr R Laird and Mrs B McAllister declared non-financial interests in this item as Chair and Member of Merkinch Partnership respectively 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.

(ii) The Highland Council notes that the current programme for the Deprived Area Fund is in its final year and that the current criteria require projects to focus on employability aims.

The Council further notes that the details of the 2017-20 programme will be agreed later this year and agrees that the eligibility criteria should be expanded to include other forms of anti-poverty activity.

Signed: Mr R Laird Ms M Smith

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was now a need to expand the use of the Deprived Area Fund to include other forms of anti-poverty, particularly in terms of recognising community planning obligations and the national shift towards addressing the attainment gap;
- the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation currently used several different factors to identify deprivation within specific areas but it had to be highlighted that poverty could be found across all areas and was likely to worsen in the current financial climate;
- the inherited status of poverty had to be acknowledged and as such it was

- vital to try to break this cycle within communities;
- there had been a previous commitment to take forward the anti-poverty agenda within the Council through strategies, policies and the implications within reports and this now needed to be progressed;
 - there should be a report to a future meeting of the Communities and Partnerships Committee on how work on anti-poverty could also be taken forward with partners;
 - the involvement of Community Councils was required at a much earlier stage in terms of highlighting possibilities for the allocation of future funding;
 - statistical evidence often pointed to small pockets of deprivation within much larger areas and as such it was imperative that in future measurable outcomes were identified to ensure effective use of funding;
 - the spreading of poverty within small rural areas was a particular concern, particularly where it was not identified, and this should be targeted as part of future work;
 - the focus on employability had to be maintained as it remained one of the ways out of poverty and a factor in improving health and wellbeing; and
 - further consideration of issues surrounding the Deprived Area Fund would form the subject of a report to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee in November and as such all Members were invited to contribute to the identification of proposals to be taken forward.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** that the current programme for the Deprived Area Fund was in its final year and that the current criteria required projects to focus on employability aims.

The Council further **NOTED** that the details of the 2017-20 programme would be agreed later in the year and **AGREED** that the eligibility criteria should be expanded to include other forms of anti-poverty activity.

(iii) The Highland Council agrees to review which categories of planning application are determined by Officers using powers delegated by the Scheme of Delegation.

Signed: Mr B Lobban Mr B Clark Mr K Gowans

During discussion, it was suggested that the same conditions should apply to delegated approvals as currently applied to delegated refusals i.e. they should be brought to Local Members to allow consideration as to whether they should be referred to the relevant Committee. As such, it was considered imperative that a consistent standard was applied across all planning applications.

It was also suggested that a review was now required by the Scottish Government in relation to the principles of pre-determination in regard to planning issues.

In noting that there was currently an annual review of the Scheme of Delegation which included the delegation to Officers, and in acknowledging the excellent work currently being undertaken by Officers in this regard, it was further suggested that, as part of the current year's annual review, Members should have the opportunity to input at a Seminar with Planning Officials.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** to review which categories of planning application were determined by Officers using powers delegated by the Scheme of Delegation.

It was also **AGREED** that, as part of the current year's annual review, Members would have the opportunity to input at a Seminar with Planning Officials.

Additional Urgent Item - 10(a) - UK European Referendum and its implications for Highland

There had been circulated Joint Report No. HC/33/16 dated 27 June 2016 by the Chief Executive and the Director of Development and Infrastructure which attempted to identify some of the impacts which were likely to arise from the UK decision to leave the European Union and described a number of areas where Highland was supported financially by the UK's membership of the European Union.

In this regard, information was also provided on other key issues for Highland, including EU nationals living in the Highlands & the Highland workforce, inward investment, exports, tourism, procurement and the impact on partners.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was regrettable that UK now found itself in a period of national turmoil which many people considered to have been unnecessary;
- there were real concerns about the long term impact on young people and specifically in terms of encouraging them to remain in the Highland area;
- the message had to go out that it was 'business as usual' within the Council;
- the Scottish Government had been regarded as a beacon of stability over recent days and this was appreciated;
- it was expected that there would now be a considerable period of adjustment and it had to be highlighted that it was expected that the budget process within the Council would therefore be delayed, perhaps into the start of next year;
- scenario planning had to be undertaken as a matter of urgency within the Council, not least in terms of the budget process;
- the Council had a duty to promote confidence and be as positive as possible for the Highlands and this would include the identification of any opportunities as and when they arose;
- the population within Highland was known to be hard working, resilient, innovative, well-educated and welcoming and as such this had to be strongly conveyed to the EU nationals who lived and worked in the area;
- the Council would work strongly with the Scottish Government in the coming months to help to identify solutions and also with the Scottish Cities Alliance, CoSLA and community planning partners;
- there was need to respect the opinions of all who had voted in the EU Referendum and to try to understand the concerns of those who had voted to leave. In this respect, the Commission on Highland Democracy would have a vital role in the coming months;
- the Leader, Group Leaders and key Officers would now convene an early meeting to consider possible scenarios and initiate the development of contingency plans to mitigate the most significant risks, with follow-up meetings being convened on an ad-hoc basis;
- the potential detrimental impact on the Highlands, including issues in regard to capital investment, tourism, social deprivation, etc could not be

underestimated and it was essential that reassurances from the Council were conveyed to constituents;

- there was real concern across the country in relation to some of the messages which had been highlighted during the Referendum and which it was felt had instigated instances of racism and intimidation and it was imperative that this was not tolerated in the Highland area which remained a welcoming place for all;
- there were many underlying political, financial and economic factors which it was considered had led to the result of the Referendum and it was clear that many areas of the United Kingdom had felt a large degree of discontent and disengagement;
- there was a need to include additional wording to any potential Motion arising from the meeting in order to endorse and support the endeavours of the Scottish Parliament to maintain Highland and Scotland's position within the European Union;
- there should be a strong message that, as part of 'business as usual' for the Council, applications for the LEADER project were still able to be received; and
- a short adjournment should now be taken in order to allow Members to come together to agree a statement to be issued on behalf of the Council to encompass the issues which had been raised during the debate.

Thereafter, the Leader of the Council, seconded by the Convener, **MOVED** that statement should be issued to read as follows – "Highland Council believes that the Highlands is a well-educated, innovative and resilient area and are open to business and new business opportunities. We will carefully monitor developments as the withdrawal from Europe begins and will demonstrate leadership for our communities as we plan and prepare for the future. Highland Council wish to reassure everyone of all cultures, races and communities that they are valued members of our community and we will continue to welcome migrants into Highland".

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr B Clark, seconded by Mr K Gowans, moved that the following wording should be added to this statement – "This Council will endorse and support the endeavours of the Scottish Parliament to maintain Highland and Scotland's position within the European Union".

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 24 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 32 votes, with 1 abstention, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs J Barclay, Mr A Baxter, Mrs I Campbell, Miss J Campbell, Mrs G Coghill, Mrs M Davidson, Ms J Douglas, Mr M Finlayson, Mr H Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr M Green, Mr R Greene, Mr A Henderson, Mr A Mackinnon, Mrs I McCallum, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr B Murphy, Mr M Rattray, Mr M Reiss, Ms F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Dr A Sinclair

For the Amendment:

Mrs C Caddick, Mr A Christie, Mr B Clark, Dr J Davis, Mr A Duffy, Mr D Fallows, Mr G Farlow, Mr B Fernie, Mr J Ford, Mr C Fraser, Mr S Fuller, Mr B Gormley, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray, Mr R Laird, Mr B Lobban, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr N MacDonald, Mr J McGillivray, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr K MacLeod, Mrs B McAllister, Ms L Munro, Mr F Parr, Mrs M Paterson, Mr G Phillips, Mr I Renwick, Mr R Saxon, Mrs J Slater, Ms M Smith, Ms K Stephen, Mr J Stone

Abstention:
Mr T MacLennan

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the expected implications for Highland of the UK decision to leave the European Union and **AGREED** to meet as appropriate to consider possible scenarios and initiate contingency planning.

The Council also **AGREED** the following statement –

“Highland Council believes that the Highlands is a well-educated, innovative and resilient area and are open to business and new business opportunities.

We will carefully monitor developments as the withdrawal from Europe begins and will demonstrate leadership for our communities as we plan and prepare for the future.

Highland Council wish to reassure everyone of all cultures, races and communities that they are valued members of our community and we will continue to welcome migrants into Highland.

This Council will endorse and support the endeavours of the Scottish Parliament to maintain Highland and Scotland’s position within the European Union”.

11. Redesign of the Highland Council Ath-dhealbhadh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No. HC/26/16 dated 21 June 2016 by the Chief Executive which provided an update of the work of the Redesign Board to complete Phase 1 of its work.

In this regard, there had also been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Redesign Board held on 10 May and 24 May 2016 which had been approved by the Board.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the work of the Redesign Board had progressed very well and in this regard thanks should be conveyed to the Head of Policy and Reform. The Board would now continue to consult widely and to consider the comments of the public, stakeholders, other interested parties and staff;
- this was an opportunity to focus on how the Council communicated with the wider public and as such the draft statements should be re-drafted into Plain English in order to make them as accessible as possible;
- it was suggested that the words “and internationally” should be added to the end of the first sentence of the second paragraph of Paragraph 3.6 and to include the words “and learn” to the first sentence of the third paragraph of Paragraph 3.11 in order to recognise the importance of education for young people as well as life-long learning and development of skills for people in Highland which would improve the economy;
- the proposed local focus group to consult with staff had not yet taken place in Nairn and reassurance was sought and received that all staff would be consulted in this respect; and
- in acknowledging the value of consultation with staff across the Council, it was stressed that there also had to be increased participation with the public in terms of gathering their opinions and taking account of their aspirations.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the content of the draft statements proposed by the Board on the Council's purpose (Paragraph 3.6), the Council's values (Paragraph 3.8) and outcomes for the Council to achieve (Paragraph 3.11) – subject to the following proposals being submitted to the next meeting of the Board –

- that the statements should be re-drafted in Plain English;
- Para 3.6 – second paragraph - first sentence – add the words 'and internationally' to the end of this sentence; and
- Para 3.11 – third paragraph – first sentence – include the following words as underlined - "Highland is an attractive place to live, work and learn..."

It was also **AGREED** that the statements should be agreed in draft to enable the next phases of the Board's work to continue while allowing scope for amendment arising from further feedback from staff and partners, the Scottish Government's programme to be announced and public engagement when the Board's work was progressed, expected from September 2016.

It was **NOTED** that the Board intended to continue to meet fortnightly during July and August on Phases 2 and 3 of its work. In this respect, Members could attend meetings and workshops. A further update would be provided to the Council meeting in September which would focus on re-prioritisation of Council functions.

12. Taking Forward Local Community Planning A' Toirt Dealbhadh Coimhearsnachd Air Adhart

Declarations of Interest

Ms J Douglas declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board Member of Inverness College/UHI and a financial interest 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/27/16 dated 13 June 2016 by the Acting Head of Policy which considered the proposals for developing local community planning arrangements within the context of the new duties contained within the Community Empowerment Act but also other local planning responsibilities contained within the Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014 and the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to the Acting Head of Policy for meeting with all Members to agree a position at an area level;
- there was now a statutory obligation for the five key partners to carry out duties in relation to community planning which required a strategic overview and the preparation of action plans;
- the proposals for the sharing of the responsibility for resourcing the partnerships across the five public bodies were welcomed and in this respect it was suggested that each partnership should appoint their own Chair;

- there was a need for clarification in terms of Third Sector representation on each Local Partnership;
- Community Council representation should be included in Local Partnerships wherever possible;
- in order to fully engage with communities, consideration would need to be given to the arrangement of meetings at alternative times wherever possible; and
- there was already a strong culture of partnership throughout Highland and the inclusion of the right people, support and communication were key to the success of the Local Partnerships.

Decision

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** the new duties for community planning as detailed and **AGREED** the proposals as set out in Section 3 of the report to take forward community planning and local partnerships, including that there should be 9 local partnerships for Highland; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the Community Planning Partnership Board would make the final decision on how to take forward the new duties at its meeting on 30 June 2016.

13. Audit Scotland and Accounts Commission National Reports: (a) Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2016 and (b) Annual Report 2015/16
Aithisgean Nàiseanta Sgrùdadh Alba agus Choimisean nan Cunntasan: (a) Sealladh Farsaing air Riaghaltas Ionadail ann an Alba 2016 agus (b) Aithisg Bhliadhnaile 2015/16

There had been circulated Report No. HC/28/16 dated 20 June 2016 by the Director of Finance which presented two national reports applying to Local Government in Scotland, highlighted the key messages and considered how the Council is responding to these reports.

In this regard, the national reports had been circulated separately.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the two national reports had emphasised the current financial challenges and the requirement to improve medium to long term planning whilst also recognising the difficulties of this when the budget settlement was unknown;
- there was a need to link revenue and capital budgets to the Single Outcome Agreement in future in order to clearly reflect the position of the Council;
- there was a need for clarification on the combined value of the outstanding equal pay claims against the Council and in this regard it was suggested that a briefing should be arranged for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, the Leader of the Opposition and Mrs G Sinclair and that a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Resources Committee;
- the review of the Council had increased the awareness of options for delivering services and this needed to continue;
- the different circumstances within Highland, particularly in terms of the choice of the Lead Agency Model for Health and Social Care Integration, had to be recognised; and
- in terms of the delivery of services, very detailed consideration had to be given as to whether it was best to deliver specific services in-house or to consider options for outsourcing in future.

Decision

The Council **NOTED**:-

- i. the national reports from the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland;
- ii. the main issues highlighted in Section 2 of the report; and
- iii. the implications and actions currently being taken by the Council as per Section 3 of the report.

14. Annual Accounts for the Year to 31 March 2016 Cunntasan Bliadhna airson

There had been circulated Report No. HC/29/16 dated 21 June 2016 by the Director of Finance which presented the Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2016 for Highland Council, Highland Charities Trust, Highland Council Charitable Trusts and the Highland Council Pension Fund.

This report also considered the Council's level of balances held in the non-earmarked General Fund in the context of the financial position for the next three years.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to the relevant staff within the Finance Service for the preparation of the Annual Accounts during challenging circumstances;
- all Members should study the Annual Accounts in order to gain additional information on the provision of all Council services. In this regard, it was also suggested that the Management Commentary at the beginning of the Accounts should be circulated with the report in future;
- currently, reserves were at a very low level compared with previous years and detailed consideration was therefore required in this regard, not least in terms of the current risks and uncertainties in relation to interest rates and the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union;
- the Management Commentary was an excellent example of how documents could be presented in Plain English;
- the risks and uncertainties identified within the Annual Accounts had to be the subject of detailed consideration; and
- further information was required on how the voluntary redundancy process had affected the Council's Pensions liability.

Decision

The Council:-

- i. **APPROVED** the unaudited Annual Accounts for Highland Council, Highland Charities Trust, Highland Council Charitable Trust and the Highland Council Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2016 and noted that they would be presented to the appointed Auditor by the prescribed date of 30 June 2016;
- ii. **NOTED** that reports on the detail of Service outturns and variances would be presented to the next round of Strategic Committee meetings; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the drawdown of £0.377m from earmarked reserves in 2016/17 for costs associated with Decriminalised Parking Enforcement as detailed at Paragraph 4.2 of the report.

**15. Decision of Standards Commission for Scotland – Hearing
Coimisean nan Inbhean**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/30/16 dated 14 June 2016 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which fulfilled the statutory duty placed on the Council under Section 18 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 following a Hearing.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the decision of the Standards Commission of Scotland and also that training in relation to the Code of Conduct would continue to be offered to Councillors and would be included in the Induction Programme for new Councillors who were elected in May 2017.

**16. Scheme of Delegation – Community Services – Amendments
Sgeama Tiomnaidh – Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – Atharrachaidhean**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/31/16 dated 17 June 2016 by the Director of Community Services which outlined proposals for amendment to the Council's Scheme of Delegation for powers delegated to Officers.

Decision

The Council **APPROVED** the proposed amendments as detailed in the report.

**17. Church Representative - Education, Children & Adult Services Committee
Riochdaire Eaglaise, Comataidh Seirbheisean an Fhoghlaim, na Cloinne & nan Inbheach**

It was confirmed that the Council was required, in terms of Section 31 of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994, to have a minimum of three Church representatives on the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, two of whom were to be appointed on direct nomination (by the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church) and the third involving discretionary procedures.

In this regard, and on the basis of the rota system previously agreed by the Council, Mr Alexander MacLean had been nominated by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland as its new representative to sit on the Committee.

Decision

The Council **APPROVED** the nomination of Mr Alexander MacLean as detailed.

**18. Timetable of Meetings
Clàr-ama Choinneamhan**

It was **AGREED** that, if necessary, an additional meeting of the full Council in September should be arranged to allow consideration of a National Planning Application.

In this regard, it was **NOTED** that specific details of the date and time would follow as soon as possible.

**19. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Council **AGREED** that, during the recess period, powers should be granted to the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and Directors, in consultation with the Convener, Leader of the Council, Depute Leader of the Council, relevant Chair and the Leader of the Opposition, to deal with issues arising during that time and that a report should be prepared for the first meeting of the Council or relevant Committee following the period where these powers had been exercised.

**20. 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 12 May 2016 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

**21. Exclusion of the Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobaill**

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

**22. Voluntary Redundancy Scheme – Workforce Implications
Sgeama Call-dreuchd Saor-thoileach – Seaghan san Àite-obrach**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. HC/32/16 dated 13 June 2016 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development on the workforce implications of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

Decision

Following discussion, the Council **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

The meeting ended at 3.40pm.