

**The Highland Council**  
**Lochaber Committee - 19 October 2016**

Agenda Item	<b>3</b>
Report No	<b>LA/19/16</b>

**Developing Local Priorities for Lochaber**

**Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development**

**Summary**

This report provides Members with an update on the local strategic priorities for Lochaber.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Building on the localism agenda and increased delegation of decision making to local committees Lochaber Members considered that it was important to establish priorities for the area.
- 1.2 It is important to note that these are Council priorities although they are based on knowledge of and involvement with delivering priorities of partners as well.

**2. Developing the Local Priorities for Lochaber**

- 2.1 After Highland Council confirmed its Programme and Priorities within '*Highland First*', Lochaber Members considered it was important that each area should also establish its own priorities. After a series of conversations at ward business meetings in late 2015, the priorities set out at Appendix A were agreed.
- 2.2 While these are Council priorities, most have been based on the knowledge of discussions which have taken place through community planning partnership meetings including the Lochaber District Partnership and the Lochaber Economic Development and Employability Forum.
- 2.3 It is the intention that these priorities will be reviewed at least annually via the various Lochaber Community Planning structures.

**3. Implications**

- 3.1 There are no immediate Resource, Legal, Equalities, Climate/Carbon Clever, Gaelic or Rural Implications in the report. However, delivery of the priorities is likely to have a positive impact on many of these themes.

**Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- I. Consider and confirm these as the local priorities for Lochaber and
- II. Agree that these priorities will be further considered within the Lochaber Community Planning structures

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Director of Corporate Development

Date: 3 October 2016

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Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Lochaber Priorities

## HIGHLAND FIRST - LOCHABER PRIORITIES

Lochaber looks forward and sees an area which offers an increasingly attractive place to live, learn and work. This ongoing commitment to a growing and sustainable area is demonstrated by our determination to see the following priorities delivered:

- **A830 relief road** – construction of this road will remove around 60% of traffic from a recognised A82 choke point, delivering more effective traffic movement and freeing up land for commercial use
- **Transport infrastructure** – working with the public and private sector we will deliver a more efficient and joined up transport system. This will provide a trunk road network fit for purpose and the infrastructure to create a multi-modal hub allowing sea, rail and road transport to work seamlessly and offering a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. A long-term sustainable solution for crossing the Corran Narrows will also be investigated.
- **Marine infrastructure** – providing appropriate infrastructure such as pontoons and a breakwater combined with effective management structure (eg a harbour authority) will maximise the potential from marine tourism, including cruise ships
- **STEM Centre**– supporting West Highland College UHI’s ambition to develop a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Centre will ensure that Lochaber continues to strengthen and diversify its education provision, making it well-placed to serve the economy
- **“University Town” status for Fort William** – with partners we will pursue development and delivery of services and facilities which support our growing student population which will in turn help grow the economic and cultural diversity of the area.
- **New Belford Hospital** – replacing the existing 1960s Belford Hospital with a state of the art facility which will deliver outstanding health care for the next 50 years will ensure the well-being of the residents and visitors to the area
- **Health and wellbeing** – working with community planning partners we will develop and deliver the Lochaber Community Learning and Development plan which aims to improve the skills and well-being of people living and working in Lochaber, including the most vulnerable
- **Increase housing and specialist support provision** – we will work with partners to provide the mechanism to deliver suitable housing with the most appropriate support in areas of identified need. This will deliver for our most vulnerable communities as well as increasing social confidence
- **Indoor Training Centre** – assisting the delivery of an Indoor Training Centre will reduce the demands on local pitches which suffer from the extreme wet-weather conditions allowing a greater range of sports to be enjoyed with the resulting health and social benefits
- **Multi-use indoor centre** – extending visitors’ length of stay and increasing the social well-being of the area can be delivered by developing all weather visitor attractions offering a range of uses for residents and visitors
- **Participatory budgeting** – we will build on the success of the Lochaber pilot and will strengthen and empower communities to decide together how public monies should be spent
- **Lochaber Common Good Fund** – establishing a Common Good Fund will enable appropriate projects to be funded via a mechanism which will have direct community input