

AGENDA ITEM 3

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair)** held in the Chamber, Tigh na Sgire, Park Lane, Portree on Monday, 3 October, 2016 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr H Fraser
Mr J Gordon

Mr D Millar
Mr I Renwick

Non Member in attendance:-

Mrs M Davidson

In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager
Chief Inspector B MacKay, Police Scotland
Inspector L Allan, Police Scotland
Ms L Williams, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Ms A Clark, Acting Head of Policy, Chief Executive's Office
Mr K Macinnes, Principal Economy Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr A Danter, Area Business Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:-

Mr S MacPherson, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr N Macrae, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership

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

Business

Mr D Millar – Cathraiche (Chair)

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, item 9 on the agenda was taken at this point.

9. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 20 June 2016, which were approved by the Council on 29 June 2016.

3. Developing Local Priorities for Isle of Skye and Raasay A' Leasachadh Phrìomhachasan Ionadail airson an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair

There was circulated Report No SR/15/16 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which provided Members with an update on the local strategic priorities for Isle of Skye and Raasay.

In this regard, the Leader of the Council was in attendance at the meeting to discuss with the Committee their key issues and whether the Administration could help progress these issues. The Leader also discussed with the Committee their strategic priorities for the Isle of Skye and Raasay area in order to allow these to sit alongside the priorities in Highland First.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The Committee had a good broad range of priorities that were deliverable and it was important now to draw up an Action Plan for the short to medium term in order to progress them;
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) had recently announced proposed improvements to mobile phone coverage within the Ward and details would be forwarded to the Committee. It was suggested that the Committee invite HIE to a Ward Forum meeting to discuss how the proposed coverage compared with the Committee's own aspirations for mobile phone coverage. There were issues with the quality of service from mobile phone service providers and their response times to faults in the network. The Convention of the Highlands and Islands intended to meet with ofgem, the Government regulator to address these issues.
- Work towards achieving effective broadband was required and this issue would be raised at the next meeting of the Convention of the Highlands and Islands. It was advised that Schools were concerned that the Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) would not be ready in time for the Chromebook being rolled out to Schools from August, 2017;
- The Council was in the process of drawing up its capital programme and the Committee's local priorities should be submitted for consideration in the plan. In particular, it was advised that the Portree Link Road was already in the plan and it was hoped that the Council would see this as a priority given the building of new housing at Home Farm, Portree. It was imperative that priority should also be given in the plan to Broadford Primary School given the very poor condition of the School. The Leader confirmed that she was to visit the School later in the day. Members also requested that they be kept informed on plans for the new Uig Ferry Terminal.

- The Council was to launch a Community Visiting Fund. It would allow communities who had an interest in delivering their own home care, to cover for gaps in the existing provision, to visit other areas where communities were already providing this service. The Fund, amounting to £10k, would support the development of community care at home initiatives. It was advised that a presentation on Care at Home was to be made to the next Ward Forum meeting and Community Councils would be invited to this, and they would be advised of the successful provision of Care at Home in other rural communities, and the possibilities for them to deliver their own care at home services.
- There was a need to build more Council houses to meet demand. It was advised that the Scottish Government were keen to build more houses, and it was suggested that the Committee invite the Council's Head of Development and Regeneration to discuss the Council's housing investment programme.
- The Council was working with partners, including agencies, land owners, tourism groups and communities to identify and support solutions to address issues created by the growing number of visitors to the Ward. In particular, the Fairy Pools, Old Man of Storr, the Quiraing and the Coral beach were referred to.
- supporting the redesign of health & social care services to improve access to quality healthcare for all residents was stressed;
- An update on the Redesign of Council was provided. The redesign had been necessary due to the significant reduction in the Council's funding. It was anticipated that funding for the Council would continue to be challenging over the next few years and therefore the Council had to look at how it would deliver services. There were over one hundred functions of the Council to be reviewed and reviews had been prioritised and had now commenced. Discussion was now needed on the Council's Committee structure, whether more functions should be delegated to Local Committees, how the Council dealt with policy issues and consider the partnership agreement with the NHS. Reference was made to visits by Members of the Redesign Board to other Councils to look at their organisational structures and delivery of services. The aim was to have a recommendation on the Council structure in time for the new Council in May, 2017.
- In terms of engaging with communities as to what support the Council could offer to enable communities to provide services in their areas, it was suggested that this could form part of discussion at Ward Forum meetings with Community Councils and Community Groups. It was noted that discussions with some Community groups was already being progressed in terms of grass cutting and public toilet provision.
- While the Council was working to address tourism issues, such as toilet provision and car parks, there was a need for a tourism strategy for the area to address bigger issues such as infrastructure to support tourism. It was suggested that the Council along with HIE work with local businesses in the tourist industry to facilitate businesses in developing a tourism strategy. It was advised that the Loch Ness Business Improvement District was a good example of how businesses came together to promote tourism in that area.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the draft local priorities for Isle of Skye and Raasay; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the draft priorities would be further refined following discussion at a future meeting.

4. Police – Area Performance Summary Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìre

There was circulated Report No SR/16/16 by the South Area Commander for Police Scotland which provided a local summary update to Committee Members on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

In discussion, the following points were raised by Members:-

- It was confirmed that Police Officers had visited Schools in the ward to speak to young people in respect of a road safety initiative called 'Driving Ambition';
- Reference was made to two fatal collisions in the Skye area during the period and the Committee's thoughts and condolences were expressed to the victim's families and friends. The professionalism, dedication and compassion shown by local Police Officers in these incidents was commended and was recognised by the local community.
- It was acknowledged that road accidents had to be thoroughly investigated and that there would be road closures as a result. It was advised that Police Officers now had access to Digital Mapping equipment in order to speed up the process of investigating road accidents, during which the road could be opened for short periods to allow traffic through. The location of this equipment was currently being considered by Police Scotland.
- The Council was now responsible for issuing penalty notices for illegally parked, waiting or loading vehicles, however there were no locally trained officers at present to undertake parking enforcement duties and this required to be addressed by the Council in time for the next summer season. There was also a requirement for more Police Traffic Officers to patrol the area to deal with driving infringements/dangerous driving, particularly during the summer season. It was confirmed that the Police would continue to act on road traffic offences and give advice to drivers on proper driving standards. An undertaking was given to highlight through the media the issue of illegal parking on payments, which was causing obstructions to pedestrians and people using mobility scooters.
- Incidents of crime in Highland had dropped and this was welcomed;
- Community policing was considered very important by Police Scotland and there was good local partnership working, particularly with licensed premises;
- The number of detections in the supply of drugs or being concerned in the supply of drugs had increased compared to last year, and the Police had targeted the individuals involved, charged them and custodial sentences had been imposed. The Police would welcome any intelligence from the public on drug use/supply.
- Reference was made to telephone scams and it was queried what information could be given to educate the public on this. It was advised that there had been education provided to the public on this type of crime through the media. An undertaking was given for the Intervention Prevention Officer to liaise with the local press to provide further education on this issue and also to send out information on social media. Further, presentations were to be given to local bank staff on the issue of scams and what to look out for, with a view to bank staff educating their customers on any suspicious activity.

Thereafter, the Committee having scrutinised the progress report and updates in relation to the three Priorities; Road Safety, Drug & Alcohol Abuse and Dishonesty, **NOTED:-**

- An undertaking by Police Scotland's Intervention Prevention Officer to provide further education to the public on scams through the local press and social media; and
- An undertaking was given to highlight through the media the issue of illegal parking on pavements.

5. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean 2016 gu 30 Ògmhios 2016

There was circulated Report No. SR/17/16 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 June 2016.

In particular it was advised that re-let times in Skye had increased over the last quarter. This was largely due to one void which required structural work to be carried out.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In terms of re-letting properties, it was advised that if there was damage to a property caused by the previous tenant, then the cost of repairing this would be re-charged to that tenant. An undertaking was given to provide information on how successful the Council was in obtaining money from former tenants in the Ward as a result of damage caused to Council properties.
- With the roll out of Universal Credit it was expected that rent arrears would increase. It was advised that the most significant pressure with rent arrears was with temporary accommodation and Highland wide, 94% of tenants on Universal Credit who were in temporary accommodation were in rent arrears. Properties from the Council's housing stock were now being used for temporary accommodation in order to alleviate the problem. This enabled the Council to set rents at a level that people could afford.
- In terms of an increase in homeless presentations, it was queried if private landlords had been encouraged to make their properties available to people requiring accommodation. It was advised that the Rural Leasing Scheme did allow private landlords to lease their properties to the Council so that the Council could then sub-let the property to people needing housing. However, often private landlords wanted higher rents for the properties than was affordable. Providing temporary accommodation for homeless presentations was an increasing problem and currently half of those who had presented themselves as homeless could not be provided with accommodation. It was requested that a briefing on the circumstances that people were presenting themselves as homeless, how these cases were dealt with, and on the Housing Allocations Policy be provided at a future ward business meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:

i **Scrutinised** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016; and

ii **AGREED** that a briefing on Homeless Presentations be presented at a future ward business meeting.

**6. Business Development: Isle of Skye and Raasay Update
Leasachadh Gnothachais:**

There was circulated Report No. SR/18/16 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which updated Members on the performance of the Council's business development services in Isle of Skye and Raasay. It summarised the delivery of the Business Gateway over the first two quarters of 2016, and informed Members on progress with Council involvement in local business development activity in Isle of Skye and Raasay during the first two quarters of 2016/17.

It was noted that the Business Gateway Service, as well as access to finance services, was now being delivered directly by the Development and Infrastructure Service. The delivery of the Business Gateway Service was directly supportive of the Council's commitment to the Highland economy, and specifically helped prioritise and support the creation of jobs in Highland. The Council, through its Access to Finance schemes, was committed to the delivery of business development services aimed at supporting small businesses and Highland entrepreneurs with advice and finance.

In discussion, further information was sought on the proposal to conclude an agreement with Destination Skye and Lochalsh once that organisations plans had been finalised. It was requested that there be discussion with local Members prior to any agreement being finalised. Further, the point was made that there was no mention in the report in relation to an organisation called Skye and Lochalsh Marketing which had been very successful. It was important that all key partners got together to develop a tourism strategy for the area. In this respect, the Council's Principal Tourism and Film Officer would attend a future ward business meeting to discuss these and any other issues Members had in relation to tourism development on Skye and Raasay.

In terms of the EU referendum outcome which was for the UK to leave the European Union, an assurance had been given that all projects that had already been approved under the EU funded Local Growth Accelerator Programme, would continue to receive EU funding.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i **Scrutinised** the Business Development Service performance in Isle of Skye and Raasay for the first half of 2016/17.

ii **AGREED** that the Council's Principal Tourism and Film Officer would attend a future ward business meeting to discuss any issues Members had in relation to tourism development on Skye and Raasay, prior to a report on this being submitted to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, item 8 on the agenda was taken at this point.

**8. Skye Air Services Business Case 2016
Cùis Gnothachais Sheirbheisean Adhair an Eilein Sgitheanaich 2016**

There was circulated Report No. SR/20/16 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which presented the Final Draft Executive Summary of the Skye Air Services Business Case 2016 Report, sought the Committee's views on the findings, and advised that it was intended to present a further report to the Planning Development and Infrastructure Committee.

There was a presentation by the Transport Planning Manager which advised that Glasgow was the most likely connection that would be made from Skye. Updated forecast analysis estimated that the current unconstrained demand for air services from Skye to Glasgow was 23,400 customers. The aim was to use the existing runway and to start operating a service as soon as possible.

The report considered two options for the provision of air services and detailed the wider benefits for both options. It was advised that feedback from Transport Scotland was still required before the report could be finalised. The report, along with options for how the project can be moved forward, would be presented to a future meeting of the Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee. It was anticipated that dialogue with Hitrans and Highlands and Islands Enterprise would continue with a view to engaging with Transport Scotland and Highlands and Islands Airports (HIAL). If all funding and approvals were received air services from Skye could commence in 2018.

In discussion, Members welcomed the report and fully supported air services from Skye, which was great news for the Skye, Raasay, Lochalsh and Wester Ross areas. It was felt the service would be very popular amongst locals, business travellers and the tourist industry and there was a strong economic case for it. Once air services were operating there would be potential for wider benefits such as other routes to be added, mail services, freight services and the airport could be used by the NHS. There would also be opportunities for service providers e.g. bus, taxi operators, and it would strengthen the fire-fighting capabilities in the area. These wider benefits would be stressed in the final report.

A request was made that local Members should be briefed on the final report prior to it being submitted to the Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee. The level of the Public Service Obligation subsidy was queried and also who would operate the air service and where would the capital and revenue support come from. It was advised that the values in the report were based on 2016 costs and on the basis that air services would commence in 2018. The operational costs were based over a 30 year period. The subsidy costs were the best estimate at this time, they had been included in the 30 year programme and would require Government funding. Therefore the Council would require to lobby the Government for this subsidy and as part of these negotiations, there may be a case for the Council transferring its ownership of the airstrip to the operator of the air services, as part of the Council's contribution to the re-introduction of air services to Skye. However, a decision on what to do with the airstrip was for the Council to make.

It was confirmed that there had been constructive discussions with Transport Scotland and HIAL on this project. In terms of next steps, Highland Council's Planning Development and Infrastructure Committee would consider the final report at its meeting on 2 November, 2016. Thereafter, subject to the Committee's approval of the report's recommendations, Transport Scotland and HIAL would be asked to formally consider the report.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i **Supported** the contents of the Final Draft Skye Air Services Business Case 2016 Executive Summary Report (appendix 1);

ii **APPROVED** the report findings and supported the case for the re-introduction of scheduled air services to Broadford Airstrip;

iii **NOTED** that the wider benefits of air services from Skye would be detailed in the covering report to the Business Case; and

iv **NOTED** that a further report would be presented to the Planning Development and Infrastructure Committee in due course, and that local Members would be briefed on this report prior to it being submitted.

7. Taking Forward Community Partnerships Com-pàirteachasan Coimhearsnachd

There was circulated Report No SR/19/16 by the Acting Head of Policy which provided Members with an update on the next steps for taking forward a Community Partnership for the Isle of Skye and Raasay.

In discussion, reference was made to the existing partnership arrangements in the Isle of Skye and Raasay i.e. the Local Committee and Ward Forum, which worked very well for the area. In particular it was hoped that Ward Forums would continue as it allowed community councils to be in attendance when discussing community planning matters. It may be that the Ward Forum format could evolve into a Community Partnership and this could be discussed with partners.

The Committee **AGREED** the next steps for taking forward a Community Partnership for the Isle of Skye and Raasay.

10. Winter Maintenance Plan for 2016/17 Plana Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh airson 2016/17

There was circulated Report No. SR/21/16 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on winter maintenance preparations and arrangements for the 2016/17 winter period and invited the Committee to approve the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Isle of Skye and Raasay.

It was suggested that there should be a public communication advising what service the public could expect from the Winter Maintenance Plan. Also, it was requested that consideration be given to providing more Grit/Salt Bins for use by the public and that they be collected for storing after the winter period.

Thereafter, the Committee:

i **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Isle of Skye and Raasay, which included the priority road lists and maps presented in Appendix B & C of the report; and

ii **AGREED** that there would be a public communication advising of the service that could be expected from the Winter Maintenance Plan.

The meeting concluded at 1.40 p.m.