

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 Sgìre, Park Lane, Portree on Monday, 19 December, 2016 at 10.40 am.

Present:

Mr H Fraser
Mr J Gordon

Mr D Millar
Mr I Renwick

In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager
Station Manager, G Nicholl, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms L Williams, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr D Esson, Quality Improvement Manager, West
Mr A Bryce, Road Safety & Safer Routes to School Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service (by telephone conference)
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to 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 7 on the agenda was taken at this point.

**7. Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Update
Cunntas às Ùr mu Rothaireachd, Coiseachd agus Sràidean nas Sàbhailte**

There was circulated Report No. SR/25/16 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure Services which invited Members to approve the projects delivered through the Scottish Government funding for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets for the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee, as set out in **Appendix 1** to the report.

It was queried if the Road Safety Unit would be liaising with the Care and Learning Service to produce a School Travel Plan for the new Gaelic School in Portree. It

was confirmed that a meeting would be arranged with the Care and Learning Service with a view to completing a School Travel Plan as soon as possible.

It was queried if the Road Safety Unit had been contacted by Broadford Primary School about a School Travel Plan as there was a change in the designated pick up/drop off point for the School. It was advised that the Road Safety Unit had not been contacted by the School, but an undertaking was given to contact the Care and Learning Service about this issue.

The Committee:-

i **APPROVED** the Cycling Walking and Safer Streets/ Safer Routes to School project detailed in **Appendix 1**;

ii **NOTED** that the Road Safety Unit would continue to work with schools to develop further Safer Routes to School Projects for future years; and

iii **NOTED** that the Road Safety and Safer Routes to School Officer would contact the Care and Learning Service regarding School Travel Plans for the new Gaelic School, Portree and Broadford Primary School.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 3 October, 2016, which were approved by the Council on 27 October, 2016.

4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Committee Performance Report for 2015-16 Aithisg Dèanadais Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson 2015-16

There was circulated Report No SR/22/16 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland providing an update to Committee Members on the progress against the priorities outlined in the Local Committee Plan for Isle of Skye and Raasay 2015 - 2016. Priority areas were identified through a range of Intervention, Prevention and Protection activities delivered in partnership to reduce risk to the communities of Skye and Raasay. The report also contained previously agreed information and performance as requested by Committee Members.

In discussion the following points were raised:-

- It was confirmed that the main cause of accidental dwelling fires was cooking being left unattended;
- The work undertaken on free home fire safety visits was welcomed and given the reduction in dwelling house fires Highland wide, they were clearly worthwhile. It was advised that in Quarter 2 of 2016, there had been 44 (20 being high risk, 14 medium risk and 10 low risk) home fire safety visits in the Skye and Raasay area, and overall in Highland there were 1044 visits during the Quarter, which was commended.

- In relation to home safety fire visits, residents were given a scoring rating (High/Medium/Low risk) depending on their age, lifestyle etc. The aim would be to reduce the risk of fire and harm to householders and their property;
- It was queried how home fire safety visits were delivered in conjunction with partner agencies. It was advised that there was a Community Safety Engagement referral system, where a partner agency, such as Social Work, could visit an individual and submit a referral to the Fire Service on the individual's behalf.
- While there was a welcome reduction in the number of False Fire Alarms, it was suggested that owners/occupiers of premises carrying out tests of their Fire Alarms should notify the Fire and Rescue Service beforehand to reduce the number of call outs. Other simple measures such as moving toasters away from Fire Alarms would also help reduce the number of call outs. Further, continually educating the public on fire safety measures they could take, would help reduce the number of call outs.
- The new retained duty system recruitment process was welcomed and it would target key stations and communities across Highland including The Isle of Skye and Raasay. The new system of recruitment would allow for more flexibility in training and availability for Retained Staff. The Fire and Rescue Service recognised the challenges faced by Retained Duty System Staff when combining primary employment and their operational availability. It was hoped that this flexibility would encourage more people in communities across the Highlands to apply to join the Service. It was also noted that a new recruitment portal would allow District Staff to manage applicants locally as they apply and throughout the process.
- In terms of false alarms through equipment failure, this wasted valuable time and resources for the Fire and Rescue Service, and had a detrimental effect on employers when retained duty system staff were called away from their primary employment to attend such incidents. It was queried if any consideration had been given to charging for persistent False Alarms due to equipment failure. It was advised that a new policy had been implemented in December, 2014 to deal with unwanted fire alarm signals, (mainly due to automated fire alarm systems) in order to reduce the number of these events. Members were provided with details of the stages in this process, which included engaging and educating the owner/occupier of the premises, and a reduced response to commercial premises (by way of clarity it was confirmed that the reduced response would mean only one fire appliance attending to investigate the fire alarm).
- It was queried how new health and safety legislation affected Fire personnel training, when they could no longer use schools for example, to practice training on the use of ladders. It was advised that due to insurance constraints, Fire crews were not able to undergo training on buildings they previously used, in case any damage was caused to the buildings. Instead Fire Crews would regularly attend Broadford Fire Station to undertake fire tower training.

Thereafter, the Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the Local Performance Report.

**5. Education Scotland Report – Kyleakin Primary School and Nursery Class
Aithisg Foghlam Alba – Bun-Sgoil agus Clas Sgoil-Àraich Chaol Acain**

There was circulated Report No.SR/23/16 by the Area Care & Learning Manager (West) which provided details on Education Scotland's report of Kyleakin Primary School and Nursery Class of 10th May 2016.

In discussion, Members commended the report on Kyleakin Primary School and Nursery Class which showed the strong performance in the quality of education provision at the school. The report also acknowledged the efforts of parents at the school. The Head Teacher and staff at the School were congratulated for this encouraging performance and a letter would be sent to the Head Teacher expressing the Committee's appreciation. This strong performance report also showed the success of the Council's cluster primary school management model.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the content of the report.

**6. Housing Performance Report – 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016
Aithisg Deanadais Taigheadais – 1 Iuchar 2016 gu 30 Sultain 2016**

There was circulated Report No. SR/24/16 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 September, 2016.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In relation to rent arrears levels increasing Highland-wide, the main reason for this was that under Universal Credit, payments were paid direct to individuals rather than landlords. A working group had been set up to review the arrears policy and adjust the policy to take account of Universal Credit. The Council worked very closely with Citizens Advice Bureau and referred individuals to Money Advice Services.
- It was noted that homeless presentations were increasing and clarification was sought on the process for dealing with them. It was advised that in the first instance, the aim was to prevent homelessness happening by engaging with the landlord to try and resolve the issues. For individuals from outwith Highland, unless they were re-locating to avoid abuse or had a local connection e.g. work or family, the Council were not obliged to provide them with accommodation. However, the vast majority of homeless presentations were from local people.
- There were a number of local people who had been on the housing waiting list for a significant period of time and as the housing allocations policy gave priority to housing need, rather than the length of time someone was on the waiting list, these people had to be given some hope that one day they could have a house of their own, particularly young people. It was acknowledged that people in emergency situations were treated as a priority for housing.
- The number of new social houses to be built in the area over the next year and how this compared with the number of people on the housing waiting list was queried. It was advised that there were 26 homeless presentations received in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area in Quarter 2 of 2016 and there were eight homes being built in Dunvegan Road, Portree, which were scheduled to be completed by the end of January, 2017. There were also

some homes to be built in Broadford in 2017. However, the Council or the Housing Association would never be able to build enough homes to match the number of people on the housing waiting list. It was requested that a report be submitted to the next meeting on the overall position of social housing in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area to include the number of homeless presentations, the number of homes planned to be built by the Council and the Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association, and a comparison of the housing waiting list against the number of properties that become available.

- When building social housing there was a need to take into account the needs of the community and in particular the needs of young people/adults with special needs. Social Housing should be fit for purpose so that those with special needs could stay in the community independently or with their families and the Council should work with partner agencies to ensure this happened. It was confirmed that the Council had worked with partner agencies to provide supported accommodation in a development of new houses in Portree and this partnership working would continue. In particular, it was requested that in relation to the new social housing being built in Broadford, it be checked that the future needs of young people/adults with special needs had been taken into consideration in the planning for this housing development.
- Further information would be sent to Members on the performance indicator relating to 'Tenancy offers refused in the Isle of Skye area'.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i Scrutinised and **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 July, 2016 to 30 September, 2016;

ii **AGREED** that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the overall position of social housing in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area; and

iii **AGREED** that in relation to the new social housing being built in Broadford, it would be checked that the future needs of young people/adults with special needs had been taken into consideration in the planning for this housing development.

8. Street Naming – Development at Portree, Skye Ainmeachadh Sràide

There was circulated Report No SR/26/16 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development which invited the Committee to determine the name for a new development of 11 properties in Portree as Pat Gordon Place - Ceàrn Pat Ghòrdain.

The Committee **AGREED** the naming of the development in Portree as Pat Gordon Place - Ceàrn Pat Ghòrdain.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.