

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, 27 February, 2017 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr H Fraser
Mr J Gordon

Mr D Millar
Mr I Renwick

In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager
Chief Inspector B Mackay, Police Scotland
Inspector L Allan, Police Scotland
Mr J Robertson, Programme Manager, City-Region Deal, Chief Executive's Office
Mr H Gardener, Amenity Services Manager, North, Community Services
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services
Ms N Young, Area Care & Learning Manager, West, Care and Learning Service
Mr D Esson, Quality Improvement Manager, West, Care and Learning Service
Mr M Macleod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development & Infrastructure Service (by Video Conference)
Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager North, Development & Infrastructure Service (by Video Conference)
Mr M Harvey, Team Leader, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Development & Infrastructure
Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mrs J Bain, Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service
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.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **APPROVED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 19 December, 2016.

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

9. Portree Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Farsaing air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Phort Rìgh

There was circulated Report No. SR/6/17 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update of key information in relation to the schools within the Portree Associated School Group (ASG), and provided useful updated links to further information in relation to these schools.

In particular reference was made to Scottish Government Pupil Equity Funding which would be used to tackle disadvantage by improving the attainment of pupils in the lower Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles. It was intended to close the attainment gap for these pupils over the next two years with the help of this funding, and it was encouraging to note these pupils were still gaining employment once they left school.

Further, in terms of the Management of Schools Programme which was looking at the Head Teacher management in schools across all the Associated School Groups in Highland, it was advised that there would shortly be one Head Teacher vacancy in Portree Primary which would be advertised and in the interim would be covered by an Acting Head Teacher. Also, the Head Teacher at MacDiarmid Primary was due to retire. Work would continue on the Pupil Equity Funding and Management of Schools Programme which included Health and Social Care Services input. Members would be briefed on progress on both these issues in June, 2017. Members also requested a briefing on the roll out of Early Learning in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area.

Reference was made to a careers event on the care sector held in Portree High School which highlighted the need for care workers and creating pathways for care workers. The event involved a number of care homes and the NHS as there was a specific need for more people to fill care sector jobs, particularly in rural areas. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the frequency and time of year when career events were held, as they should be held at a time most appropriate for when young people were considering career pathways.

Also in terms of the 16 plus agenda, there would be opportunities for young people to see pathways and opportunities across a variety of careers and there was more emphasis on the development of foundation apprenticeships and vocational pathways rather than young people going to college or university. There were also career events aimed at nursing and medicine for young people which included shadowing professionals and work experience.

The successes of schools and pupils highlighted in the report were commended by Members and in particular reference was made to work undertaken by the Portree

High School Learning Support Unit and staff there were congratulated for the valuable work undertaken in that unit.

Information in respect of exclusions at Broadford Primary School would be sent to Councillor Renwick.

Reference was also made to work being undertaken on an estates strategy in order to have the capacity levels and quality of accommodation in preparation for the roll out of Early Learning.

In relation to Bun-Sgoil Shleite, the building was rated C in terms of suitability and condition which was disappointing. It was advised that the condition of the Nursery at the school had affected the rating. Work was ongoing to plan for two new units being situated at the school or working in partnership with other agencies to improve the accommodation for Nursery provision at the school. Members requested a briefing on progress at the school as soon as this was available.

Following the completion of works at the Elgin Hostel, Portree, Members commended the upgrading to the building which now had first class facilities for young people.

The Committee having scrutinised the content of the report, **AGREED** that a briefing would be provided to Members in June, 2017 on progress with Pupil Equity Funding; the Management of Schools Programme, and the roll out of Early Learning in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area. A briefing was also requested on the improvements to Nursery accommodation at Bun-Sgoil Shleite when plans for this had been finalised.

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

There was circulated Report No SR/1/17 by the South Area Commander for Police which updated Members on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

In discussion the following points were raised:-

- The detection rate for drug dealing and misuse was encouraging, but it was disappointing that people were still being involved in this illegal activity. The Police did receive information from individuals in communities in relation to drug activity and the public could use the Crime Stoppers telephone number to report incidents;
- It was noted that domestic abuse and cyber crime were new priorities for Police Scotland. It was confirmed that domestic abuse on the Isle of Skye and Raasay area was dealt with robustly by the Police, although in rural areas it was harder to detect. The Police worked with Women's Aid and the Health and Social Care services on data sharing and staff were trained to deal with instances of domestic abuse. Nationally, there were 135 domestic abuse instances reported daily to Police Scotland, an increase of 26%. Information on domestic abuse instances in the Skye/Raasay area was requested for future reports.
- In terms of cyber crime and telephone scams, often the elderly and vulnerable were victims of such crime, and increasingly this crime was very lucrative to

- criminals. There was a need to raise public awareness of these crimes.
- The local Police were now up to full staffing complement which was good news and the Police hostel in Portree, which currently housed four Police Officers, would also be available for staff of other emergency services in the area.
 - it was advised that there were continuing problems with a flock of sheep wandering around Portree and the Police undertook to look into this again.
 - The local Access Panel had raised the problem of HGVs parking on pavements in Broadford and the Police undertook to look into this.
 - Members noted the 10 year programme (Policing 20126) to identify how policing needed to adapt and develop in order to tackle the emerging areas of threat, risk and harm while also meeting the needs of communities and their local priorities.
 - The support of Police Scotland was sought in requesting Transport Scotland to introduce 30mph repeater signs in Portree.

Thereafter, having Scrutinised the report, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress report and updates in relation to the 3 Priorities: Road Safety, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Dishonesty; and
- ii. that information on domestic abuse instances in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area would be included in future reports.

5. Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal Cùmhnant Baile/Roinne Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd

There was circulated Report No. SR/2/17 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure which provided Members with an update on the City-Region Deal, to set out expected benefits of the programme and provided an overview of the governance arrangements. The City-Region Deal had been signed-off by the Scottish Government, United Kingdom Government and The Highland Council on 30 January, 2017.

Members welcomed the City-Region Deal projects that were pan Highland and would also deliver benefits to local areas outwith Inverness. In particular benefits such as extending digital coverage and digital capability, developing a network of STEM learning centres, affordable housing and tourism were highlighted and welcomed by Members. However, it was disappointing that Air Services in Skye had been taken out of the Deal as this may have accelerated the desire for air services on Skye. An Air Service would be important for tourism, businesses and the people of Skye and wider area. Skye was seen as a very desirable place to come to and it was important that people had the option of flying here. The Programme Manager undertook to raise these issues with the Air Access project lead.

In terms of when Skye would start to see the benefits of the various pan Highland projects, it was advised that once an implementation plan and final business cases had been approved by both Governments and the funding secured then progress could be made on implementing projects. It was important for local Members to do their best in attracting as much City-Region Deal funding as possible to the Skye and Raasay area for the benefit of the community.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report and the potential for Isle of Skye & Raasay to benefit from the City-Region Deal; and
- ii. that the Programme Manager would take forward the issues raised by Members on the importance of Air Services on Skye with the Air Access project lead.

In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, item 7 on the agenda was taken at this point.

7. In Sourcing of Grass Cutting Services Progress Report **Aithisg Adhartais mu Thoirt A-steach Seirbheisean Gearradh Feòir**

There was circulated Report No. SR/4/17 by the Director of Community Services which detailed actions taken for the delivery of grass cutting services, Grounds SLA work and Interments by in-house personnel from 1 April 2017.

In discussion, Members welcomed that with the new in-house operation, the Council had been able to employ full time personnel as well as seasonal employees who had been employed by previous contractors. Funding was being devolved to local areas so there would be flexibility for local Members to determine their own priorities for grass cutting. While grass cutting under the previous arrangements had been good, Members expressed the need for grass cutting and remedial works at burial grounds under the in-house operation to be more successful and brought up to a higher standard. A briefing on progress with the new in-house operation was requested at a Ward Business Meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the management actions taken to deliver grass cutting services from April 2017 and that a briefing on progress with the new in-house operation would be provided at a Ward Business Meeting.

6. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement **Cur-an-Sàs Parcaidh Dì-eucoirichte**

There was circulated Report No. SR/3/17 by the Director of Community Services which provided an update on the progress towards enforcement of waiting and loading regulations in townships in their area.

In addition to the information contained in the report, it was advised that a part time (21 hours) Council Parking Enforcement Officer post would be allocated to Skye, funded from within existing resources. Other avenues were being looked at to see if the level of funding could be increased for parking enforcement activity. Further, new parking ticket machines had been ordered to replace the current ticket machines and they should be operational in time for the start of the main tourist season. The requirements for relining of car parks and off road parking in the area was being progressed.

Members welcomed that the current parking ticket machines were to be replaced as they were unreliable and it was good news that a Parking Enforcement Officer was to be allocated to Skye all year round, which was particularly needed in Portree. In the interim it was noted that Parking Enforcement Officers from Fort William would make unannounced visits to Skye to enforce restrictions. It was requested that the Principal Traffic Officer provide a final update on the position at a Ward Business

Meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress towards delivery of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement in the Skye & Raasay area and that a final update on the position would be provided at a Ward Business Meeting.

8. Area Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges Prògram Càraidh Sgìreil airson Rathaidean agus Dhrochaidean

There was circulated Report No. SR/5/17 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve the proposed Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges for the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area for 2017/18.

In particular, it was advised that the under the Scottish Government Timber Transport Scheme, match funding would be provided for specific road improvements meeting the criteria of the scheme and it was intended to allocate £50k from the Area Maintenance Programme for the Glen Eynort Road on Skye. The benefit of this would be an improved road for the community, allowing the timber company to continue extracting timber, and taking lorries of a road near a major tourist attraction on Skye. If further funding could be identified other road improvements would be considered under this scheme.

In addition to the cattle grids listed in the report that were planned to be replaced in 2017/18, it was also intended to replace cattle grids at Neist Point, Breakish, Claigan and Borge Road. However, while this was the planned replacement list, if any cattle grid failed, this replacement would take priority, so there had to be flexibility in the cattle grid replacement programme.

In relation to the problem of potholes, the Council had acquired a Jetpatcher and a Multihog mini tractor which could undertake various tasks with different attachments. These significantly improved the performance and quality of the repair of potholes and they would be used on the Skye and Raasay area on a regular basis. In particular, pot holes at Kilmuir, Staffin and Neist Point were highlighted as needing repaired prior to the start of the main tourist season.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges for the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area for 2017/18.

At this point the meeting was adjourned for a lunch break, and the meeting resumed at 1.20p.m.

10. Planning Performance Review Skye and Lochalsh Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanaidh Dealbhaidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Loch Aillse

There was circulated Report No. SR/7/17 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure which advised on the performance of the Development Management (Planning Applications) Service for the Skye & Lochalsh area.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In relation to the delegated planning applications that Members did not see, it was queried if Members could see Officers proposed approvals before they

were approved. It was advised that this had been looked at, but as the Service was required to meet certain performance levels and timescales on processing and considering planning applications, building in a referral system for proposed approvals for Members would cause a significant delay in the process and administratively it would be very complex. The Service processed 2500 planning applications a year the vast majority of which were delegated to Officials and were uncontroversial. Members were sent a weekly list of planning applications received and they were able to speak to a Planning Official about any application. It was therefore felt that the current system of processing planning applications worked well.

- In terms of the weekly list of planning applications sent to Members, it would be helpful to Members if the list could indicate which applications were for approval or refusal. It was advised that at the time the weekly list was prepared, the decision on applications was not known. Therefore a new list would have to be drawn up advising of Officials recommendations on applications and time built into the process to allow Members to comment on it. The Scheme of Delegation for Planning applications generally worked well and there were concerns about adding another layer of administration which would cause delays to the process.
- an issue that had been raised by members of the public in the past had been that a significant amount of money was paid to submit a planning application and often the response was from a Business Support Officer and not a Planning Officer which should be changed. Members were advised that it was a Professional Support Officer who dealt with the smaller, less contentious planning applications and not a Business Support Officer. Planning Officers dealt with the more contentious applications. All planning application reports were checked by senior staff before issue and senior staff were always available to assist Professional Support Officers with advice on applications.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the performance update for the Development Management Service.

11. West Highland & Islands Proposed Local Development Plan Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd an Iar is nan Eilean

There was circulated Report No SR/8/17 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which set out the key elements of the West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan for approval. This followed consultation on a Main Issues Report and an Additional Sites consultation held in 2016. Members were asked to give approval for officers to assemble these elements of the Plan to form the Proposed Plan to be published for public consultation and used as a factor in planning decisions and advice.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In terms of the recent planning permission granted to the fish farming company Marine Harvest for a fish feed factory on the site of the old quarry in Kyleakin, the plan should be changed to extend the boundary of Site KAI1 to match the planning permission granted, as the permission included an extension to the pier;
- Members agreed that site PTH6 in Portree North be allocated as a short term housing site, subject to developer requirements to fund/undertake road improvements to Staffin Road within the allocation boundary, to

fund/undertake extension of the existing footway on Staffin Road so it connects the site and existing houses at the eastern Achachork road end to the rest of the village and a developer contribution to the Portree Link Road.

- In terms of site PTC5 in Portree, there were current discussions regarding using this site for Community use and Members were in agreement that this site should be allocated for Community uses, subject to suitable road access arrangements which should not impinge on the playability of the shinty pitch and efficient Club access to it.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the following to enable officers to assemble and consult upon the West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan:-

- i. noted the issues raised on place-based issues, and agreed the recommended Council responses, as set out in Appendix 1A and 1B, to form the Settlement sections of the Proposed Plan, subject to the following amendments following consideration by Members at the meeting:-
 - Kyleakin – the plan be changed to extend the boundary of Site KAI1 to match the planning permission granted for this site;
 - Portree North - that site PTH6 be allocated as a short term housing site, subject to developer requirements to fund/undertake road improvements to Staffin Road within the allocation boundary, to fund/undertake extension of the existing footway on Staffin Road so it connects the site and existing houses at the eastern Achachork road end to the rest of the village and a developer contribution to the Portree Link Road.
 - Portree South – agreed to allocate site PTC5 for Community uses, subject to suitable road access arrangements which should not impinge on the playability of the shinty pitch and efficient Club access to it.
- ii. noted the issues raised on the plan outcomes, spatial strategy, general policies and other non-spatial plan content, and agreed the recommended Council response, as set out in Appendix 2, and agreed the resultant outcomes, spatial strategy and general policies for the Proposed Plan set out in Appendix 3;
- iii. noted that minor presentational, typographical and factual updates and changes would be made by officers, with any material changes to be agreed in consultation and agreement with the Chair of the Committee prior to publication;
- iv. noted that additional supporting documents would accompany the publication of the Plan, specifically an action programme, a revised environmental report, a Habitats Regulations Appraisal record and a schedule of land owned by the Highland Council;
- v. in line with government guidance agreed for the published West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan to be treated as a material planning consideration in making planning decisions and providing advice; and
- vi. agreed the approach to public consultation on the Plan as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

The meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.