

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in Talla nan Ros, King Street, Kingussie on Friday 16 June 2017 at 10.30 am

Present:

Ms J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Ms P Hadley
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager (Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey), Chief Executive's Office
Mrs R Cleland, Corporate Communications Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Ms J Menabney, Principal Cultural Manager, High Life Highland
Chief Inspector B MacKay, South Highland Area Commander, Police Scotland
Mr R MacDougall, Station Manager, Highland Central – Aviemore, Scottish Fire and Rescue 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.

Ms L Cowie in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Chair called for a time of reflection in respect of colleagues in the public service affected by and the people involved in the Grenfell Tower fire in London.

Business

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

Item 8 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaìdh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 9 March 2017 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.

4. Appointment of Chair Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd

Having been nominated by Mr J Bruce and seconded by Ms P Hadley, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr B Lobban as Chair.

Mr Lobban then took the Chair.

In reference to the time of reflection, the Chair shared his thoughts and thanks for the emergency services.

5. Presentation – Highland Folk Museum Taisbeanadh – Taigh-tasgaidh Sluagh na Gàidhealtachd

A presentation was undertaken at the meeting by Ms J Menabney, Principal Cultural Manager, High Life Highland on the long term vision for the Highland Folk Museum. She began by outlining the development to date, including the number of exhibits, visitor numbers and income, and also the reputation and renown of the Highland Folk Museum. She then introduced the vision, that the Highland Folk Museum be a world renowned “Must See” in Scotland, which would ensure strategic, coherent development. It comprised eight broad and outcome focussed ambitions and related actions, which the Principal Cultural Manager outlined, and would be underpinned by a rolling, detailed action plan. Lastly, the Principal Cultural Manager explained how the immediate priorities, which were to continue to improve financial sustainability and enhance international reputation, would be achieved.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the success of the museum was welcomed however there were a number of concerns in relation to the potential impact on businesses elsewhere in Badenoch and Strathspey on the proposals for more retail points and on-site accommodation, and in particular how visitors to the museum could be encouraged to also visit Newtonmore and Kingussie. In response, it was confirmed that as part of the long term version it was planned to create another entrance to integrate the site with the village;
- confirmation was sought and received that the Scottish Agricultural Museum in Ingliston was still open and that it had a relationship with the Highland Folk Museum;
- information was sought on how much of the current income from visitors covered the running costs of the museum and in response it was explained that it covered the cost of seasonal staff when open during the summer but not the cost of the visitor attractions;
- congratulations were conveyed to the museum for gaining positive recognition on Trip Advisor;

- many cafes in the area were seasonal and closed during the winter so the proposal to open the museum all year round was welcomed as it would provide local people with an alternative place to visit and would support the development of Badenoch and Strathspey as an all seasons visitor destination; and
- in contrast to the concern expressed about the impact of the proposed expansion of the visitor services it was commented that a lot of local people used the café and that a previous employee had recognised an opportunity for business growth and had opened a coffee shop in Newtonmore.

Having thanked Ms J Menabney for her presentation, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

6. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/01/17 dated 9 June 2017 by the South Highland Area Commander.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in relation to a locally reported issue regarding anti-social behaviour, it was queried what could be done to deal with a succession of people causing problems in one location. In response, it was suggested that this issue be discussed following the meeting; and
- it was requested that a breakdown of the total number of vehicles stopped in relation to the number of drink driving detections be provided.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the progress report and updates in relation to the three Priorities - Road Safety; Antisocial Behaviour; and Dishonesty and **AGREED** that a breakdown of the total number of vehicles stopped in relation to the number of drink driving detections be provided.

7. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report for 2015-16 Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson 2015-16

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/02/17 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in view of the recent events in London it was important that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service gave priority to the suitable assessment of the scheduled refurbishment of the multi-storey Four Seasons Hotel;
- praise was given to the dedicated staff in the local stations;
- consideration needed to be given to the increasing trend towards planning permission for higher buildings in Aviemore which could present difficulties for local response units without assistance from Inverness, especially in winter;
- confirmation was sought and received that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would carry out an assessment of the new developments in the Aviemore area, specifically the new hospital;

- concern was expressed in relation to whether the current level of resources was appropriate for the development and expansion in the area. In this regard, it was requested that these concerns be feedback to management to ensure that resources were targeted for the best possible use; and
- confirmation was sought and received that the new Premier Inn when built would have a sprinkler system.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the Performance Report and **AGREED** that the concern expressed at the meeting in relation to whether the current level of resources was appropriate for development and expansion, particularly in the Aviemore area, be fed back to management.

8. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 31 March 2017 Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 31 Màrt 2017

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council House tenant but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/03/17 dated 16 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks were expressed to the Housing Manager (South) for her prompt reply and assistance which was particularly helpful for new Members;
- clarification was sought and received that the percentage of lettable houses becoming vacant was linked to the void turnaround for the current quarter. In this regard, it was confirmed that a briefing on housing issues and how to deal with certain aspects could be provided at a Ward Business Meeting;
- confirmation was sought and received that there was currently a full staff complement and no absence. In addition, a new Housing Management Assistant post covering Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey had recently been recruited;
- an explanation was sought and received of where the performance indicators showed the figures for Badenoch and Strathspey compared to the rest of the Highlands; and
- that there was a continual decline in the number of homeless presentations.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 **AGREED** that the Housing Manager (South) attend a future Ward Business Meeting to discuss housing issues in more detail.

9. Badenoch and Strathspey Roads Maintenance Programme for 2017/18 Prògram Càradh Rathaidean Bhàideanach agus Shrath Spè airson 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/04/17 dated 31 May 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- a concern which had been expressed by all Community Councils was the lack of appropriate white lining particularly at junctions. In this regard, it was requested that priority be given to addressing the backlog of white lining with a focus on junctions instead of car parking;
- clarification was sought and received in relation to the Road Markings budget allocated for South Badenoch and Strathspey;
- confirmation was sought and received that it was intended to carry out white lining in the area fortnightly and would include the edge of roads where appropriate;
- the reconsideration of work required in the centre of Grantown was welcomed;
- it was felt that the area was due a substantial share of the Timber Transport Fund to compensate for the impacts including having to rebuild a major bridge; and
- it was important that preparations were in place to ensure that as much work as possible could be carried out when the conditions were suitable.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Badenoch and Strathspey Roads Maintenance Programme for 2017/18.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for noting Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 16 November 2016, which were approved by the Council on 15 December 2016, which were **NOTED**.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair stressed the importance of encouraging the public to engage with the Area Committee and provided assurance that future reports would be more substantial. In this regard, it was the responsibility of Local Members to bring forward business that was important locally. Discussion then took place on various ideas to increase public participation at meetings.

The Ward Manager took this opportunity to highlight the Local Strategic Priorities for the area which were agreed by Members during the previous Council term and would require to be reviewed.

The meeting concluded at 11.51 am