

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on Tuesday 5 September 2017 at 10.30 am

Present:

Mr 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
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Insp I Campbell, Local Policing Inspector for Lochaber, Police Scotland
Sgt Simon Foiler, Aviemore Police Station, Police Scotland
Mr D Kilday, Programme Manager, C3IR Programme, Police Scotland
Mr M Tate, Chief Executive Officer, Cairngorms Business 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.

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Chair advised that the press would be allowed to record the meeting since it was a public meeting and was not webcast.

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 6 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

Good News

The Committee **NOTED** the following Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) Award Winners from the Badenoch and Strathspey area:-

- Caberfeidh Horizons – Social Enterprise of 2017
- Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company and Contract for the Elderly – Reducing Vulnerability through 3rd Sector Activity
- Billy Boyle – Outstanding Achievement 2017
- Matthew Murphy, Strathspey Railway, and Craig MacDonald, Caberfeidh Horizons – Saltire Summit Award

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2017 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/05/17 dated 12 August 2017 by the South Highland Area Commander which provided a local summary update on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the number of drink/drug driving detections which, although small, had substantially increased caused serious concern that the public were not understanding the message that it was unacceptable;
- further information was sought in relation to drug detection methods at a local level and specifically the progress of introducing road side drug testing;
- concern was reiterated in relation to speeding in the approach to and through villages in the area particularly Dunlain Bridge, Carrbridge and Newtonmore; and
- figures showed that twice as much traffic had bypassed the A9 since the Kinncraig to Dalraddy section of dualling had started and there was concern regarding the potential impact on Kingussie of increased traffic when this section of A9 dualling commenced.

At this point, a presentation was undertaken by Mr D Kilday, Programme Manager of the C3IR (Contact, Command and Control Integration and Remodelling) Programme on the ongoing work to relocate control room functions for North Division from Inverness to Dundee as part of the remodelling of control rooms across Scotland during which he provided information on the background and reasons for the transition, the benefits to local communities, the retention of local knowledge, how the transition would be scrutinised and how it would be delivered in a safe and secure manner. In this regard, he advised that this option would be presented to the Board of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) on 28 September 2017 for approval. He also extended an invitation to Members to visit the new Service Centre in Dundee to view systems at first hand.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was appreciated that measures had been put in place to ensure that the new control room would not be detrimental to the Highlands when it was fully functioning but it was regrettable that it was not situated in Inverness or in the North area and that this decision was made without proper scrutiny;
- dissatisfaction was expressed in relation to the promise of a National Data Enquiry Unit being based in Inverness, which would now be shared with a similar unit in Govan and also that only one option was being presented to the SPA Board;
- in recognising the need for continuous development to monitor crime effectively in the modern age it was a positive that the Highlands would have access to a number of additional specialist skills and this would be well received by local police officers;
- concern was expressed that the level of detail of local knowledge in remote areas of Highland would be lost;
- a positive and negative experience of calling 101 were reported. In this regard, it was requested that callers be asked to state their regional police service instead of their local station to help direct their call; and
- a key problem was the loss of high paid jobs in Highlands.

Having thanked officers for their presentations, 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 an update on the progress of introducing road side drug testing be circulated to Members.

5. **Cairngorms Business Partnership – Cairngorms Snow Roads Scenic Route Com-pàirteachas Gnothachais a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh – Rathaidean Sneachda a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

A presentation was undertaken at the meeting by Mr Mark Tate, Chief Executive Officer, Cairngorms Business Partnership during which he provided an introduction to the work of the Cairngorms Business Partnership which was principally a destination marketing organisation and chamber of commerce; detailed the current issues experienced by Members, namely relating to housing, transport and digital connectivity; and outlined a number of partnership working initiatives. He then explained the proposals and benefits of the Cairngorm Snow Roads Scenic Route for the Badenoch and Strathspey area which was due to be completed by April 2019.

During discussion, Members expressed support for the project and raised the following issues:-

- it was queried why the route ended in Grantown and not Dalwhinnie which would provide huge benefits to communities in southern Badenoch and Strathspey that were suffering from major economic problems;
- confirmation was sought and received that the map of the route which was circulated was in development;
- it was suggested that the app being developed by David Watson, CNPA be linked to the app for the Snow Roads Scenic Route so that users were aware of the additional route;
- it was important that the app did not work while people were driving; and
- it was requested that the support expressed for the route to be extended as soon as practicable to include communities of Badenoch and Strathspey from

Grantown-on-Spey to Dalwhinnie be conveyed to HIE during discussions about funding.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** to support the extension of the Snow Roads Scenic Route to include communities of Badenoch and Strathspey from Grantown-on-Spey to Dalwhinnie and that this be conveyed to HIE.

6. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2017 gu 30 Òg mhios 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/06/17 dated 5 September 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the non-emergency repairs figure had doubled which, although it was recognised that the area operated differently to some other areas by using local contractors, was not acceptable;
- rent arrears were decreasing in the area in contrast to the trend in Highland which it was explained was due to a recent focus of resources on housing management to target this key area of work;
- confirmation was sought and received that Universal Credit had been fully rolled-out to the area;
- in relation to a report about a constituent who had experienced consistent problems with their biomass boiler it was suggested that the cost of maintenance be taken into consideration during the procurement process of future boiler systems;
- it was suggested that there was better communication with residents regarding the time frame for completion of repairs to alleviate their anxiety; and
- it was requested that a report on the issues relating to maintenance and repairs including biomass boilers be presented to the next meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017 and **AGREED** that a report on the issues relating to maintenance and repairs including biomass boilers be presented to the next meeting.

7. Winter Maintenance Plan for 2017/18
Plana Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh airson 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/07/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- confirmation was sought and received that the green lines over the red lines in the villages on the map in appendix b to the report represented all other roads which were not primary or secondary priority;

- clarification was sought in relation to the list of adopted roads which were Highland Council and which were Housing Associations;
- the requirement that vehicles for school transport services be fitted with snow tyres was welcomed;
- it was requested that a map of the priority footpaths be provided;
- confirmation was sought and received that arrangements were being made to use BEAR Scotland's snow blower if required and that in recognising that the Council's snow blower was due to be replaced consideration was being undertaken to purchase a Unimog machine which could have a snow blower attachment; and
- there was a need for earlier consultation on the Winter Maintenance Plan before being presented to the Area Committee for approval to allow for any changes to be made. In this regard, it was suggested that Members could provide input into the Winter Maintenance Plan for the following year at Ward Business Meetings.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Badenoch & Strathspey Area, which included the priority road maps presented in Appendix B and **AGREED** that a map of the priority footpaths be circulated to Members.

8. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for noting Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 16 June 2016, which were approved by the Council on 29 June 2017 – which were **NOTED** subject to correction of the typographical error whereby “Ms J Bruce” should be “Mr J Bruce”.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am