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**The Highland Council**  
**No. 1 2018/2019**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 10 May 2018 at 10.35am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence**  
**A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

**Present:**

Mr G Adam	Mrs L MacDonald
Mr B Allan	Mr R MacDonald
Mr R Balfour	Mrs D Mackay
Mrs J Barclay	Mr D Mackay
Mr A Baxter	Mr W MacKay (V/C)
Mr B Boyd	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr R Bremner	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr I Brown	Mr S Mackie
Mr J Bruce	Mr A MacKinnon
Mrs C Caddick	Mr C MacLeod
Miss J Campbell	Mr D MacLeod
Mrs I Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr R MacWilliam
Mrs H Carmichael	Mrs B McAllister
Mr A Christie	Mr N McLean (V/C)
Dr I Cockburn	Mr H Morrison
Mrs M Cockburn	Ms L Munro
Mr G Cruickshank	Ms P Munro
Ms K Currie	Mrs M Paterson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr I Ramon
Mr M Finlayson	Mr M Reiss
Mr C Fraser	Mr A Rhind
Mr L Fraser	Mr D Rixson
Mr R Gale	Mrs F Robertson
Mr K Gowans	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Graham	Mr K Rosie
Mr J Gray	Mr G Ross
Mr T Heggie	Mr P Saggars
Mr A Henderson	Ms N Sinclair
Mr A Jarvie	Mr C Smith
Ms E Knox	Ms M Smith
Mr R Laird	Mrs K Stephen
Mr B Lobban	Mr B Thompson (V/C)
Mr D Louden	

**In Attendance:**

Chief Executive	Depute Chief Executive/Director of
Director of Development & Infrastructure	Corporate Resources
Director of Care & Learning	Director of Community Services

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Ms P Hadley, Ms A MacLean, Mr J McGillivray, Mr A Sinclair and Mrs C Wilson.

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

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

Item 15 – Mr A Christie (Non-Financial)

Item 15 – Mr A Christie and Mr I Brown (both Financial)

Item 15 – Mrs D MacKay (Dispensation)

Item 16 – Mr D Louden, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs C Caddick and Mr G Adam (all Non-Financial)

Prior to commencement of the formal business, the Convener made reference to recent rugby team successes whereby Highland had won National Division 3, Caithness had won Caledonian Division 1 and Ross Sutherland had won the National Bowl at Murrayfield.

The successful bid to bring the Celtic Media Festival to Aviemore in 2019 was also warmly welcomed, not least in terms of the considerable benefit which it would bring to the area.

## 3. **Membership of the Council** **Ballrachd na Comhairlie**

It was **NOTED** that, following the By-Election held on Thursday, 5 April 2018, Mr D Rixson, 8 Fank Brae, Mallaig, PH41 4RQ had been elected as a Member of Ward 11 (Caol and Mallaig).

In this regard, Mr Rixson was welcomed to the Council and responded accordingly.

## 4. **Confirmation of Minutes** **Daingneachadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais**

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 7 March and of the Meeting held on 8 March 2018 as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately – which were **APPROVED**.

## 5. **Minutes of Meetings of Committees** **Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan Chomataidhean**

There had been submitted for confirmation as correct records, for information as regards delegated business and for approval as appropriate, the Minutes of Meetings of Committees contained in the Volume and the Supplementary Paper circulated separately as undernoted:-

Nairnshire Committee, 14 March

\*Care, Learning & Housing Committee, 15 March

Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 28 March

\*Lochaber Area Committee, 11 April

\*Ross & Cromarty Committee, 2 May

The Minutes, having been moved and seconded were, except as undernoted, **APPROVED** – matters arising having been dealt with as follows:-

**Care, Learning & Housing Committee, 15 March****\*Starred Item: Item 8: PP. 37-38: Review of Statutory Consultation Exercise**

It was **AGREED** to create new Gaelic Medium catchments for the Portree Associated School Group as outlined on the map on the original consultation report.

**Lochaber Area Committee, 11 April****\*Starred Item: Item 7: PP 52-55: Car Parking in Lochaber**

It was **AGREED** - following confirmation from the Chair of the Committee – that the starred item as detailed in the Minutes was not now to be taken forward but instead reconsidered by the Lochaber Area Committee at the next meeting on 15 August when Local Members would have an opportunity to review and discuss issues in relation to local car park patterns of use during the interim 3 month period.

**Ross & Cromarty Committee, 2 May****\*Starred Item: Item 12: P.7: Fortrose**

It was **AGREED** that the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund should contribute funding towards the proposed works to a maximum of £137,000 (including £17,000 contingency).

**6. Community Planning Board  
Bord Dealbhadh Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Board held on 19 December 2017 (approved by the Board on 21 March 2018) which were **NOTED**.

**7. Health & Social Care Working Group  
Buidheann-obrach Slainte agus Curaim Shoisealta**

There had been circulated Minutes of the first Meeting of the Health & Social Care Working Group held on 19 April 2018 which were **APPROVED**.

It was also **AGREED** that Mrs D MacKay should join the membership of this Working Group.

**8. Membership of Committees, etc  
Ballrachd na Comhairle**

It was **NOTED** that, following the By-Election for Ward 11, the political make-up of the Council was now as follows:-

Independent – 28/SNP – 19/Scottish Conservatives – 10/Liberal Democrat – 10/Labour – 3/Green Party – 1/Sutherland Independent – 1/Non-Aligned – 2

It was also **NOTED** that the formula in respect of the number of places on Strategic Committees was now 10/7/3/3/1 – with 1 additional tied place which would be shared between the Scottish Conservatives Group and the Liberal Democrat Group.

The Council also **AGREED** the following:-

Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee – Mr I Ramon to replace Mrs I MacKenzie

Corporate Resources Committee – Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair to replace Mrs L MacDonald

Corporate Resources Committee – Mr G Adam to replace Ms L Munro

Corporate Resources Committee – Mr A Jarvie to come off this Committee and Mr D Rixson to be added

Care, Learning & Housing Committee – Mr A Sinclair to come off this Committee and Ms L Munro to be added

Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee – Mr D Rixson to replace Mr G Adam

Commercial Board – Mr R Gale to replace Mrs A MacLean

North Planning Applications Committee (Substitute – Ward 10) – Mr J Finlayson

North Planning Applications Committee (Substitute – Ward 9) – Mrs J Barclay

North Planning Applications Committee (Substitute – Ward 8) – Mr A MacKinnon

South Planning Applications Committee (Substitute – Ward 15) – Mr C Smith

Highland Football Academy Board – Mr D Macpherson to replace Mr G Ross

## **9. Question Time Am Ceiste**

The following Questions had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance in terms of Standing Order 42 –

### **(i) Mr A Jarvie**

#### **To the Leader of the Council**

“What are the details of the engagements your Administration have had with Her Majesty’s Government and the Devolved Scottish Administration since the last full Council?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Jarvie queried as to whether further detail could be provided in future on the engagements that the Administration had had with the UK and Scottish Governments and specifically ‘when’, ‘with who’ and ‘what had been discussed’.

In response, the Leader confirmed that currently much more information was provided in this regard than had been the case previously. However, an attempt would be made to provide more detailed information but it had to be accepted that this might only be able to be provided retrospectively in view of security considerations in some instances.

### **(ii) Ms M Smith**

#### **To the Chair of the Care, Learning & Housing Committee**

“Please explain in detail what provision you have put into place for ‘succession planning’ given the current vacancies of 5 Head Teachers in our academies?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Smith queried as to what measures were being taken to ensure that the right people with the right skills were being recruited to vacancies in light of recent revenue budget cuts to the teacher training budget.

In response, the Chair confirmed that this was a much wider issue than just training and was currently being addressed, including through the Northern Alliance where additional work was to be undertaken over the Summer with the arrangement of a Conference which would hopefully have the involvement of both the Minister for Child Care and Early Years and Highland MSPs.

**(iii) Mr R Laird**

**To the Leader of the Council**

“How is the Mental Health Seminar convened on 21 March 2018 being followed up?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Laird queried as to when the next Mental Health Seminar was to be arranged and whether there would be a stronger focus on feedback from users of mental health services, including their perceptions of how services worked in practice.

In response, the Leader confirmed that this would be the case and that the next Seminar would be held before the Summer Recess.

**(iv) Ms M Smith**

**To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee**

“Given the Administration’s cuts to both the revenue and capital Play Parks budget, how will you replace broken, worn or damaged equipment in the Highland Council playparks?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Smith queried as to how communities could be expected to run Play Parks following recent cuts in the revenue and capital budgets which would impact on the future provision of equipment at those locations.

In response, the Chair confirmed that there were many examples of communities working together to access external funding in liaison with the Council to enable the continued use of local Play Parks.

**(v) Ms K Currie**

**To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee**

“Please provide a list of all ‘developer contributions’ agreed in Planning which have not been redeemed by the Highland Council over the past 3 years with the reasons for this?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Currie queried as to whether a report could be submitted to a future meeting of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee to allow greater scrutiny of issues in relation to developer contributions.

In response, the Chair confirmed that, although a detailed response had already been given in this regard, a further report could be submitted to the Committee in due course as requested.

**(vi) Mr G Cruickshank**

**To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee**

“Across the Highlands there are many pavements and roads which have a very undulating and dangerous surface due to tree roots. Can you tell me what the minimum distance is that a tree must be planted from a pavement if it is part of a planning application?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Cruickshank queried as to whether the Council had any powers which could be used in terms of forcing landowners to deal with overhanging trees which caused a problem on roads and pavements.

In response, the Chair confirmed that the Council could take action in this regard if necessary and recover costs from landowners in each instance.

**10. Notices of Motion  
Brathan Glusaid**

The following Notices of Motion had been received in accordance with Standing Order 10.1 –

(i) “Highland Council calls on the Scottish Government to review and revise the ‘Scottish Safety Camera Partnership Programme 2015’ with a view to devolving decision making to a Highland and Police Scotland N Division level. This will enable camera enforcement activity to be deployed at local schools, other locally identified areas of concern and thereby provide a more ‘local’ service, responding to local incidents regardless of past history of accidents or other criteria that do not always appear relevant to rural Highland situations.

In order to catalyse action, Highland Council would be a willing partner in a trial project to enable this change for the better to happen for the benefit of all”.

Signed: Mr M Reiss   Mr A MacKinnon   Mr B Lobban

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was felt that the current arrangements in relation to camera vans did not work well for the Highlands and that it would be beneficial for all concerned if discussion on this issue was undertaken with the Scottish Government with a view to instigating a trial project in the area;
- this should not be viewed as a revenue raising issue but rather as a safety measure in order to save lives;
- it would be advantageous to seek the views of Councillors, Community Councillors and members of the public on the placing of camera vans in local

areas;

- it had to be highlighted that prevention of accidents had to be paramount, particularly around schools where speeding was often a problem;
- ideally, there should be flexibility in the proposals for the siting of camera vans in order to take account of local knowledge; and
- there were many locally identified areas of concern already and adoption of this proposal would enable a more local service to be provided in future.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

(ii)“Highland Council, as the local authority area with the longest coastline in Scotland, agree to sign up to the aspiration for a plastic free coast line. We will do all that we can to reduce plastic usage by Highland Council and promote environmental awareness, as well as encouraging people to pick up three pieces of litter when visiting our beaches”.

Signed: Mrs L MacDonald Mr C Fraser Ms M Smith Mr B Boyd Mr D Louden  
Mr A Henderson Mrs T Robertson Mr J Gray

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the terms of the following Notice of Motion were also endorsed in respect of the damage caused by single use plastics;
- positive steps had already been taken by the Scottish Government in relation to this issue and many groups and individuals were now involved in helping to maintain plastic free coast lines and reducing plastic usage;
- it would be helpful if a report could be submitted to a future Council meeting on the plastic, polystyrene and non-biodegradable products currently used in Council offices and proposals for their replacement;
- it had to be highlighted that shore lines were particularly affected by waste plastics and there was a need to involve Local Committees wherever possible in proposals for prevention/clean up, as well as possible discussion with BEAR Scotland on the provision of signage in this regard;
- positive actions had already been undertaken by Marine Scotland which should perhaps be replicated wherever possible;
- there was a need for further action to be taken in terms of public awareness of this issue, particularly around beaches across the Highland area;
- there was a major problem with fishing debris and this had to be subject of sustained action in future;
- prevention was most certainly the key in addressing this problem and all members of the public had to be encouraged to get involved wherever possible; and
- consideration could perhaps be given to discussing labelling of products with manufacturers with a view to highlighting this message in future.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

In this regard, and with the specific intention of reducing plastic usage by the Council, it was also **AGREED** that a report should be submitted to a future Council

meeting on the plastic, polystyrene and non-biodegradable products currently used and proposals for replacement with biodegradable alternatives in future.

(iii)“This Council recognises the great environmental damage caused by single use plastics and the work by the UK Government to ban microbeads. There are many campaigns across the world and in this country to go further but we do not need to wait in order to take responsible action ourselves.

About 99 per cent of disposable coffee cups are not recyclable and every minute over one million cups end up in landfills globally, in the UK we use seven million each and every day. Even most paper coffee cups are coated with a plastic resin for durability which cannot be separated out in a standard recycling mill and since they are therefore likely to end up at best in landfill sites, or at worst littering our streets, rivers and seas, the impact to the environment and wild animals is horrendous.

### **Disposable coffee cups – in numbers**

The UK throws away 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups every year

Half a million cups are littered every day

Packaging producers only pay for 10 per cent of the cost of packaging disposal and recycling

Less than one percent of disposable coffee cups are recycled

It is clear to see why this cannot go on and why this council must take action itself. It is therefore agreed that we follow in the footsteps of Ullapool – a whole village where plastic straws in business premises were banned – and adopt a policy to ban the use of disposable cups, where practical, in council buildings.

Signed: Mrs I MacKenzie Mr A Jarvie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was now widely recognised that there was a significant problem caused by single use plastics and as such it was imperative that the Council took action to address this problem, with a particular focus on disposable coffee cups;
- in this regard, it had been confirmed that approximately 99% of disposable coffee cups were not recyclable and 2.5bn of those cups were thrown away every day in the UK;
- the Council could make a difference by adopting a policy on the use of these disposable cups where practical within its own buildings;
- whilst agreeing with the terms of the Notice of Motion, it was suggested that the reference to ‘banning’ the use of such cups should perhaps be amended to read ‘dissuading’ the use of the cups;
- it was felt that adults were largely to blame for this problem and examples from children, including in Ullapool where plastic straws had been banned, were particularly inspiring;
- consideration should be given to ways of attracting sponsorship for the provision of reusable water bottles to children in primary schools;
- the involvement of other external organisations from across the Highland area was vital in addressing this problem; and
- as a first measure, the use of plastic cups in the Foyer Area at Headquarters should be discontinued.



**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed – subject to a change to the wording in the final paragraph, penultimate sentence, to replace the word ‘ban’ with ‘dissuade’.

(iv)“This Council notes the Scottish Government pledge back in 2007 to make dualling the A9 from Perth to Inverness a priority and the very slow progress to date in achieving that target. To date there has only been a 3km extension of the dual carriageway at Ralia and a 7.5km stretch of new dual carriageway at Kincaig – that is 6.5 miles completed out of the 80 required. Whilst the order in which each stretch is being worked on is logical, we have concerns over the reality of it being completed by 2025.

Just this March a company announced on social media that they had won a contract for pre-preparation works along the route - the contract length for this advance work is four years. Assuming there are no delays, this will take up until 2022 at least. Bearing in mind that the construction of the shortest section at Kincaig took two years to complete, it is highly unlikely that sections which are two to three times longer than this will be completed by 2025. Furthermore, the final section at Slochd has only recently had the contract for ground investigations awarded.

Most people know and frustratingly now accept that this project will not be delivered on time. The people of the Highlands also deserve a better answer than the Transport Scotland line of “We are committed to dualling the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025”.

This Council therefore agrees to ask the Council Leader to write to the Ministers Fergus Ewing MSP, Keith Brown MSP and Humza Yousaf MSP detailing these points and ask that the people of the Highlands be given a more realistic date for completion”.

Signed: Mr A Jarvie Mr D MacLeod

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the dualling of the A9 from Perth to Inverness was one of the most important projects for the Highlands, not least in terms of the potential benefits for the area, and as such it was regretted that there had only been very slow progress to date in achieving the target for completion;
- as such, there were real concerns that the expected completion date of 2025 could not be met;
- the construction of the shortest section had taken two years to complete and it was therefore considered extremely unlikely that further sections could be completed within the timescale given;
- consultation should therefore be undertaken with the Ministers concerned in order to receive confirmation as to a more realistic timescale;
- as an alternative to the wording within the Notice of Motion, it was suggested that the Council should instead welcome the completion of works at Ralia and Kincaig and recognise the enormous scale of work yet to be undertaken. Also, there should be a commitment to work constructively with communities, Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government, contractors and other stakeholders to ensure successful completion of the project by 2025;
- the decision taken by the Scottish Government in relation to the provision of speed cameras had been proved to be successful in terms of the reduction of

- the number of accidents and fatalities;
- the efforts and campaigning which had been undertaken by the A9 Safety Group were highlighted and welcomed;
- it was felt that the tone of the Notice of Motion was not particularly constructive or accurate in parts;
- it had to be appreciated that there were good reasons for the time which had been taken in relation to this project as there were many factors involved and such projects often took longer in terms of the preparation required than in actual construction;
- it was essential that a spirit of co-operation existed between all parties involved with this project, including the Council, as any objections would only delay the whole process;
- it should be noted that Audit Scotland were to undertake an audit of the project later in the year to ensure that it was being managed satisfactorily;
- in any discussion on the project and its timescale, it was necessary to take account of the financial circumstances which had prevailed since 2008;
- constituents across the Highland area were frustrated with the lack of progress on this project and all that was being sought was clarity from the Scottish Government on the expected completion date;
- it had to be highlighted that the dualling of the A9 would save lives as statistics confirmed that there had actually been more road deaths in the Badenoch & Strathspey area over recent months; and
- the extremely positive effect on the Highland economy had to be taken into account in terms of seeking confirmation of the finalisation of this project.

Thereafter, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr D MacLeod, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr R MacWilliam, seconded by Mrs M Cockburn, moved that the Council should note the Scottish Government pledge back in 2007 to make dualling the A9 from Perth to Inverness a priority and welcome the completion of works at Ralia and Kincaig. In recognising the enormous scale of works yet to be undertaken, the Council should commit to working constructively with communities, Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government, contractors and other stakeholders to ensure successful completion of the project by 2025.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 38 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 19 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr G Adam, Mr A Baxter, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr R Gale, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mr D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mr H Morrison, Ms L Munro, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Mr P Saggars, Ms N Sinclair, Mr C Smith and Ms K Stephen.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr B Allan, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr K Gowans, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr D Loudon, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr N McLean (via VC), Ms P Munro, Mr K Rosie and Ms M Smith.

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

**11. Audit Scotland – Local Government in Scotland – Challenges and Performance 2018**

**Sgrudadh Alba – Riaghaltas Ionadail ann an Alba – Dubhlain agus Coileanadh 2018**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/9/18 dated 17 April 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in terms of current and future challenges, the extremely complex, changing and increasingly uncertain environment in which Local Government was operating had been highlighted within the Audit Scotland report;
- specifically, it had been stated that Brexit and the reviews of education and local governance were likely to have significant impact;
- there had also been a reduction in real terms of 9.6% in revenue funding between 2010/11 and 2018/19 and there remained a target to shift spending decisions for at least 1% of budgets to communities by 2022;
- the increasing amount of the funding settlement being ring-fenced to education and social care and the additional unfunded burdens (such as public sector pay, the apprenticeship levy and equal pay claims) were also highlighted;
- reference was also made to the extremely difficult decisions which had been made by the Administration as part of the budget process, not least in order to protect jobs, and it was confirmed that these proposals had been fully supported by the Trade Unions prior to submission to the Council in February;
- it was stressed that the Council had to become and was taking steps to be more commercially minded going forward;
- demographic challenges would be greatly exacerbated as a result of Brexit and it had been expected that there would be more mention of this within the Audit Scotland report than had been the case;
- the strategy for dealing with future issues as detailed in the report was welcomed but it was suggested that there was a need to include reference to the choices for Local Government in future in relation to service delivery and the need to have a budget based on Council priorities;
- the proposals for reviewing the system of budgeting across the Scotland were welcomed, including the collation of performance and financial data held by the Council to get a picture of the key outcomes and outputs from each service, the key performance statistics and benchmarking data, an overview of how the service was performing in relation to other Councils and the resources required to deliver the current level of services;
- reference was also made to the detail within the Audit Scotland report which highlighted that real transformation took time and in order to be successful Councils required to set priorities, conduct robust option appraisals, have a clear strategy and a realistic savings target which was properly monitored, have proportionate governance structures and assess the impact on equality of access and opportunity and whether change would have a disproportionate impact on more vulnerable or poorer communities or individuals;

- there would need to be an increased focus on the talent attraction proposals in future in terms of welcoming people to live and work in the Highlands and it was noted that this had to include partners and had to ensure that the right staff with the right skills were in the right places;
- it was noted that reference had been made in the report to the fact that the Council's reserves were low and this presented challenges. As such, rebuilding reserves was essential in the current climate and overall more robust long term financial planning and savings plans were needed to ensure sustainability, including the need to understand and set out the impact that budget reductions would have on service delivery;
- in terms of the timescale in relation to shifting spending decisions for at least 1% of budgets to communities by 2022, it was suggested that communities could be involved through Local Committees with a focus on localism which would allow the public a direct influence on future budgets;
- it was felt that the Scottish Government could in future take a priority decision to support local government and reference to this had in fact been made in the report;
- there had to be a continuous focus on workforce planning within a strong local government structure which delivered sustainable services;
- it had to be highlighted that there were currently powers to invest in local services which were not being used and this had to be addressed, particularly as part of making the Brexit situation work for the Highland area;
- it should be noted that Scotland was now the highest taxed area in the United Kingdom;
- there had been suggestions that the proposal to defer the budget considerations had not been helpful but these suggestions had been made mainly in light of the late receipt of budget papers at the time;
- the report from Audit Scotland had been very balanced and this was welcomed. However, it only focused on some of the many challenges which were facing local government in the coming years;
- along with the clear messages in financial terms within the report, there was a need to recognise that one of the biggest risks for the Highlands related to the future population and as such the focus had to be on policies which targeted population growth where it was most needed in the area;
- a new Programme for the Council would be brought forward shortly and it was hoped that this would have cross-party agreement;
- there was still a public misconception that there was significant funding available to the Council and it was important to make clear that this was not the case;
- it was especially important that all Members of the Council remained positive in their own communities;
- the geographic challenges faced by the Council in the Highlands were particularly acute and there was concern about the potential negative effect which Brexit would have on the Highland economy;
- this report very clearly set budget decisions in context and should be referenced in the following year when the next budget was being set;
- there would be major challenges with the future school populations and the variables in the attainment gap in Highland had to be addressed;
- multi-year budgets for local government would greatly help and this issue had to be raised as a priority again with the Scottish Government;
- the challenge of having to continue to deliver services to communities within decreasing budgets made it impossible to avoid very hard decisions in future;
- the negative and sometimes inaccurate comments, particularly on social media, following the budget decisions taken in February were regrettable and very unhelpful for the Council as a whole;

- further discussion should be undertaken with the UK Government if possible in terms of writing off the historical housing deficit figure;
- there had been reference in the Audit Scotland report to the significant amounts of training available to Councillors but also the evidence of poor attendance;
- a more honest approach at all levels of Government was needed, not least in the reporting of facts as opposed to opinions;
- focusing on creative solutions from the Audit Scotland and trying to work together for communities and staff was what was needed most of all; and
- there had to be a focus on trade possibilities with other countries after Brexit and this would be of major importance for the Highland economy.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** the national report in the local context and also the planned actions and key messages as outlined in Section 7 of the report.

## **12. Highland Council – Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19 Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd – Plana Sgrudadh Ionadail 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/10/18 dated 16 April 2018 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst it was welcomed that no additional scrutiny of the Council was required for 2018/19, there was a need to highlight the scrutiny risks and activity which had been detailed in the report, including the future financial pressures;
- in relation to the timeline for future scrutiny activity, it was considered that the redesign process would have a key role in delivering outcomes;
- it was noted that further detail could be provided on the reference to nine schools which were participating in the Schools Programme of the Scottish Attainment Challenge;
- the second recommendation of the report asked Members to note the positive comments which had been made about the Council's education provision. However, in light of the detail within Section 9 of the Scrutiny Risks section, it was suggested and subsequently agreed that the word 'positive' should be deleted from this recommendation; and
- with reference to the Best Value Assurance Report which was to be undertaken for the Council in 2019, it was highlighted that in previous years these reports had focused not just on performance level data but mainly on quality of decision making, political leadership, policy direction, relationships between Elected Members and relationships between Elected Members and Officers. As such, the clear evidence was that the interests of the public were best served by productive relationships and high standards of conduct.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** the Local Scrutiny Plan as attached as Appendix 1 to the report which highlighted that no additional scrutiny of the Council was required for 2018/19.

Members also **NOTED** the comments made that the Council's education provision was well organised and well led and there was a renewed drive for quality improvement in education, the areas where monitoring was planned as outlined in Paragraph 4.2 of the report and the areas of scheduled audit and inspection activity

identified which contributed to national audit reports as outlined in Paragraph 4.4 of the report.

### **13. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation – Consultation Response Cruth-atharrachadh SFRS – Freagairt Cho-chomhairle**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/11/18 dated 27 April 2018 by the Acting Head of Policy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there had been concerns raised in previous years over levels of service in the Highlands, not least in relation to health and safety, and these proposals for changes to the service were therefore warmly welcomed;
- there was also a need to highlight the creation of new full-time jobs in local areas which would also help to build community resilience, especially in rural areas;
- the proposed changes to appliances would also make a significant difference in future and particular reference was made to the availability of defibrillators which would help to save lives;
- these proposals demonstrated that the Service was listening to local communities and willing to manage change which was greatly appreciated;
- there should perhaps also be consideration given to the use of specific fire crews in some rural areas, including Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge, as currently some firefighters in those locations were only able to attend wildfires or road traffic collisions and it was felt that this could be changed/improved;
- the retention of firefighters in rural areas, with associated levels of upskilling, would be of enormous benefit to those areas in future; and
- thanks should be conveyed to the trade unions concerned for their support of these proposals.

#### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the final response to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation consultation as circulated.

### **14. Redesign of Highland Council Ath-dhealbhadh Chomhairle na Gaidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/12/18 dated 1 May 2018 by the Chief Executive.

In this regard, there had also been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Redesign Board held on Tuesday, 1 May 2018.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- following reference to the decision made in relation to the introduction of car parking charges in Dingwall (which it was felt would have a detrimental effect on traders in the area and as such should be reconsidered prior to implementation), it was confirmed that the Redesign Board could not change a decision which had already been made by the full Council during the budget process;

- it was suggested and agreed that, in relation to recommendation (v) within the report, the reference to the 'Board's savings target for 2018/19' should be replaced with the 'Council's savings target for 2018/19';
- in regard to car parking charges, it was felt that there was not a traffic management problem in Dingwall at present and that the area should have been involved in consultation on this issue prior to any proposal coming forward in respect of implementation. As such, reference was made to the petition which had been handed over that morning from Dingwall Community Council which contained approximately 1100 signatures asking the Council to reconsider this proposal;
- whilst it was accepted that the Council had had to take a difficult decision on the implementation of car parking charges at the recent budget meeting in February, this had to be viewed in the context of other charges which had been implemented in previous years in other locations within the Highlands;
- consideration should be given to any other alternative savings proposals (as opposed to the implementation of car parking charges) which were not able to be considered within the budget process but might now be viable;
- discussion should also be undertaken with the Scottish Government and CoSLA on the possibility of town centre car parks being treated in the same way as large out-of-town retail car parks;
- there was widespread condemnation of the abuse of certain Councillors on social media in relation to this issue which it was hoped would never be repeated;
- there was concern now in other areas of the Highlands in relation to the potential implications arising from future car parking charges and as such it was imperative that consultation was undertaken with local communities and traders on this issue in the first instance;
- work on this issue was currently in progress by the Redesign Board but it had to be accepted that there was a need for fairness and equity across all areas in relation to the final decisions taken; and
- the work of the Redesign Board to date across a range of issue had been very successful, not least in terms of the Peer Reviews which had been undertaken and the close co-operation between Members and staff across the Council.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** that the Board recommendations agreed so far in the current year were being implemented, that work was continuing on three peer reviews underway on commissioned preventative services for children, car parking and building trade services and that the Lean programme continued to provide good results from staff on how to change processes for the better with more staff to be trained as facilitators.

It was also **NOTED** that that one further session with the Board should conclude its Communications Plan and that the two workshops scheduled by the end of June would deal with the issues set out in the work plan on engaging communities in redesign and support for organisation change and how to achieve the Council's savings target for 2018/19 through reviews. There would also be a stock-take of the Board's work since it was established in June 2017.

The Council also **AGREED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Redesign Board held on Tuesday, 1 May 2018 as circulated.

## 15. Review of Partnership Arrangements between NHS Highland and Highland Council

**Ath-sgrudadh air Ullachaidhean Com-pairteach eadar NHS na Gaidheatachd agus Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd**

### **Declarations of Interest –**

**Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of the Highland Third Sector Interface but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

**Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

**Mr I Brown declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of NHS Highland and confirmed that he would leave the Chamber during discussion.**

**Mrs D MacKay declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland but, on the basis of having a dispensation and having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, confirmed that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/13/18 dated 1 May 2018 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the proposals within the report were welcomed in terms of delivering a modified lead agency model and taking a major step forward in addressing and improving issues previously raised by Elected Members;
- particular emphasis had to be placed on the provision of a joint plan, better governance, reform of the NHS Health and Social Care Committee, clearer financial statements from NHS Highland and improved communication to an acceptable standard across all areas in future;
- it would perhaps be useful to liaise with NHS Highland almost immediately in order to suggest avenues of improvement and in this regard reference was made to recent discussion undertaken at the new Health and Social Care Working Group within the Council;
- it had to be highlighted that one of the most important issues in future years would be social care of people within communities across the Highlands;
- there was a need for more regular joint meetings to be arranged and particularly for strenuous efforts to be made to keep all Elected Members fully informed at all times;
- one of the proposed features of the reviewed arrangements was for each organisation to commit to public statements which reflected the agreed strategic plan and whilst this was welcomed it could not restrict the role of Local Members in raising local issues where required;
- it was also proposed that NHS Managers would have opportunities for direct and regular contact with Elected Members about local matters in Districts/Wards, including at local community planning partnerships and where appropriate at Ward or Area level meeting and this was also



welcomed. It was also felt that Area Chairs would have a role in making sure that invitations for attendance were issued to NHS Officers as and when necessary;

- thanks should be conveyed to the Leader of the Council for bringing these proposals forward at this time, particularly in relation to the proposal for issues to be discussed and debated at a Strategic Committee level in future;
- it had to be noted that the quality of professional relationships would be crucial in determining the success of these proposals and that there would perhaps be a need for a change in tone and rhetoric from Elected Members and Officers from both organisations around issues concerning health and social care in future; and
- as had been stated in the proposals for the reviewed arrangements, it was critical that this involved a joint strategic plan for integrated adult services which reflected the term of each Highland Council and included the finance and cash-flow required to deliver that plan.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the proposals for revised partnership arrangements with NHS Highland as detailed in the report.

The Council also **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Monitoring Committee held on 25 April 2018.

#### **16. Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited Cothrom dhan Gahidhealtachd (Tasgaidhean) Earranta**

**Declarations of Interest - Mr D Louden, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs C Caddick and Mr G Adam declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.**

The Council was advised that there was currently 1 vacant place on Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited – a company which created and sustained employment in the Highlands through investment in businesses and community enterprises. There were six meetings held during the year and the role of Directors was to consider individual investment proposals and decide on their merit and set out the strategic policy of the company.

It was considered desirable for Directors to have appropriate business orientated experience and in this regard the Role Profile and Skills Set had also been circulated.

In this regard, nominations were received as follows –

Mr D Rixson  
Mr B Boyd

On a vote being taken, Mr Rixson received 32 votes and Mr Boyd received 19 votes, with 3 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows –

#### **Votes for Mr D Rixson**

Mr G Adam, Mr A Baxter, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs I Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr

R Gale, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr P Sagers, Mr C Smith and Ms K Stephen.

#### **Votes for Mr B Boyd**

Mr B Allan, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Dr I Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr K Gowans, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Ms P Munro, Mr K Rosie and Ms M Smith.

#### **Abstentions**

Mr D Mackay, Mr H Morrison and Ms N Sinclair.

#### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr D Rixson to Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited as detailed.

### **17. Review of Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings Ath-sgrudadh air Ordughan Seasmhach a' Buntainn ri Cumail Choinneamhan**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/14/18 dated 26 February 2018 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

In this regard, amendments were proposed in relation to wording within Standing Order 8.2 (Notice of Special Meetings of the Council), Standing Order 10.1 (Notices of Motion) and Standing Order 42 (Question Time).

#### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the proposed amendments to wording within the specific Standing Orders as detailed in the report.

### **18. Amendment to the Flag Protocol Atharrachadh do Phrotocal na Brataich**

Members were asked to agree the following amendment to the Council's Flag Flying Protocol:-

Local Committees may choose to fly an approved local flag on non-specified days, where one exists.

To be approved, the flag must be registered with the Flag Institute as the official flag of the area or county. Specified days are those listed in the Council's Flag Flying Protocol which can be accessed on the Council's website: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12542/flag\\_flying\\_protocol](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12542/flag_flying_protocol)

#### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the amendment to the Flag Flying Protocol as detailed.

**19. Deeds Executed**  
**Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh**

It was **NOTED** that a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 8 March 2018 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

**20. Exclusion of the Public**

The Council **AGREED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**21. Proposed Civic Recognition**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. HC/15/18 dated 25 April 2018 by the City Area Manager.

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the recommendation as detailed in the report.

It was also **AGREED** that, during the forthcoming review of Standing Orders, consideration should be given to the submission of civic recognition proposals to Local Committees in future.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm.

**The Highland Council  
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick, on Wednesday, 16 May 2018 at 10.00am.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr D Mackay  
Mr W Mackay  
Mr S Mackie

Mr M Reiss  
Mr K Rosie  
Ms N Sinclair

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr A Macmanus, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service  
Mr G Mackenzie, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services  
Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North), Community Services  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

**Also in Attendance:**

Mr S Sheridan, Skills Planning Manager, Skills Development Scotland  
Group Manager M Loynd, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**1. Appointment of Chair of Caithness Committee  
Cur Cathraiche Chomataidh Ghallaibh an Dreuchd**

The Ward Manager reported that Councillor D Mackay had intimated he wished to stand down as Chair of the Caithness Committee. Nominations were therefore invited for the position of Chair.

Mr W Mackay seconded by Ms N Sinclair proposed that Mr M Reiss be appointed as Chair.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr M Reiss to the position of Chair of the Caithness Committee.

The Chair thanked Members for his appointment and Mr D Mackay for his fairness and courtesy during his time as Chair. He referred to both the challenges and opportunities for Caithness now and into the future, and advised he would seek to do his best for the area in his role as Chair going forward.

**2. Apology for Absence  
Liesgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr A Sinclair.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Caithness and North Sutherland Skills Investment Plan – Presentation by Skills Development Scotland  
Plana Tasgadh Sgilean Ghallaibh agus Chataibh a Tuath – Taisbeanadh le Leasachadh Sgilean na h-Alba**

Mr Stephen Sheridan, Skills Planning Manager, Skills Development Scotland was in attendance to give a presentation on the development of the Caithness and North Sutherland Investment Plan. He reported on the rationale for developing the Plan, the research objectives and aims and the method and findings of the study work undertaken by EKOS, which included survey work, workshops and consultation with pupils and students, parent/guardians, employers, strategic partners and stakeholders. He also provided details of the action plan which had been developed and provided a summary of the five key themes contained therein and proposed governance structure. Thereafter, he outlined the next steps in terms of taking the implementation plan forward.

During discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- there was a need to create more apprenticeships for school leavers in the traditional skills and clarity was sought on whether there were cash incentives available to support small employers to engage and retain apprentices. The Manager confirmed that he would provide Members with details of the different types of funding support available;
- a point in relation to the role of the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre. The Manager confirmed he would provide Members with further information in this regard;
- the potential for a joined up approach and incentives to encourage young people into higher education but thereafter to return to Caithness to take up skilled jobs;
- there should also be a focus on educating young people to graduate level locally on the basis it was more likely they would then remain in the area;
- information was sought and provided on the programmes and initiatives being taken forward by SDS and in partnership to solidify the base for graduate opportunities in the area;
- there were also issues around attracting and retaining recruits to public sector posts in the area, and therefore it was important to create courses for example through the UHI by which to 'grow your own' skills;
- a specific point in regard to the extent SDS was involved with NHS Highland and the Council in regard to the health and social care sector;
- there was also an important role for educational establishments outwith the Highlands and reference was made to the opportunities to do a combination of residential and remote learning;
- a point as to whether the public sector employment numbers referred to in the presentation included Dounreay. The Manager advised he would seek to clarify this point;
- more detailed information was sought on the Highland Economic and Recovery Development Plan referred to in the presentation. The Manager confirmed he would provide Members further details in relation to the Plan;
- the potential to organise a seminar for businesses in Caithness with a focus on specific sectors such as the energy, renewables, tourism, and micro business sectors, to improve the awareness of employers and young people of the opportunities across these areas. The Manager advised that he would be keen to work with Members to take this forward; and

- in terms of attracting and retaining people in the area, the fact that survey results showed that a high proportion of people felt safe living in the area and other factors such as the natural environment should be used to better promote and market the area.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that a copy be circulated to Members.

**5. Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership – Advisory Board  
Com-pàirteachas Ath-bheothachaidh Ghallaibh agus Chataibh a Tuath – Bòrd  
Comhairleachaidh**

The Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership – Advisory Board required 3 Members to be appointed – 2 Members from the Caithness Wards and 1 Member from the North West & Central Sutherland Ward.

Cllr Donnie Mackay who was appointed by Members on 16 June 2017 now wished to relinquish this appointment. The Committee was therefore asked to appoint 1 Member as detailed as his replacement.

Mr D Mackay seconded by Mr R Bremner moved that Mr K Rosie be appointed.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr K Rosie to the Advisory Board of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership.

**6. Caithness and North Sutherland Fund  
Maoin Ghallaibh & Chataibh a Tuath**

The Caithness and North Sutherland Fund was established by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd to distribute funding to community organisations for projects that would increase the attractiveness of Caithness and North Sutherland as a place to live, work and invest with particular emphasis on achieving environment, social, culture and infrastructure improvements. The Fund required 3 Members to be appointed – 2 Members from the Caithness Wards and 1 Member from the North West & Central Sutherland Ward.

Cllr Nicola Sinclair who was appointed by Members on 16 June 2017 now wished to relinquish this appointment. The Committee was therefore asked to appoint 1 Member as detailed as her replacement.

Ms N Sinclair seconded by Mr D Mackay moved that Mr A Sinclair be appointed.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr A Sinclair to the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund.

**7. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report  
Aithisg Dèanadais Sgìreil na Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No CC/05/18 dated 26 April 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed at the number of residential properties which had no smoke detection equipment. The Local Senior Officer advised that in addition to this being a condition of the current building regulations, the Scottish Government was considering how this could be enforced for all premises;
- a query in relation to the number of false alarms from commercial premises over the reporting period. The Local Senior Officer confirmed that the Services was working with premises and as a result of a reduction in the number was being observed;
- it was important that fire stations were suitable to accommodate female fire fighters; and
- the need in particular for Thurso Fire Station to be upgraded and the fact this issue had been raised repeatedly by Members. The Local Senior Officer advised that the Service was actively working with NHS Highland and the Council to provide a joint facility in Wick and Thurso, incorporating a fire station.

Thereafter, the Local Senior Officer also provided an update on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation. As a result of the decentralisation of resources from the central belt, the Service would be introducing additional full time high value posts to support retained fire stations, the intention being to recruit locally from existing retained staff. More work would also be undertaken in communities, including with schools, elderly people, and through fire cadet schemes. In addition, a new type of fire appliance and fire-fighting technology was to be introduced details of which he provided. This would reduce the minimum crewing levels and therefore increase availability across the area. The Service also proposed to offer more medical support to the Scottish Ambulance Service, in a first responder role.

Members welcomed the update and the decentralisation of resources from the central belt and investment in the north on the basis it represented good news for Caithness. The new type of fire appliance was more suited to rural areas and single track roads. The prospect of joined up working with the Scottish Ambulance Service was also welcomed as a pragmatic approach and good use of fire fighter skills. The Service and its staff should also be commended on its commitment to the Highlands and on how the transformation process had been taken forward.

The Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the Area Performance Report.

## **8. Thurso Associated School Group Overview** **Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte**

There had been circulated Report No CC/06/18 dated 4 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Arising from the report, the Education Quality Improvement Manager provided an update on the actions being taken by the Service in response to the challenges around recruitment within the ASG. This included the interviewing and placing of probationary teachers and recruitment of a number of teachers from Canada through TimePlan. She advised that there had been a positive response to adverts for vacant posts within the ASG, and provided further details in this regard. In addition, there was also work ongoing to ensure that Gaelic medium education was sustainable through secondary school, including the deployment of a Gaelic probation teacher.

The Education Quality Improvement Manager also provided of a summary on the initial consultation meetings held on the management of schools review. The next steps would be to establish a structure which would include appointing a chair with the appropriate skills, terms of reference, parameters, and timescales.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- a query in relation to the area of Canada which had been chosen to identify potential recruits and the reasons for that choice; the Manager confirmed that she would respond directly to Mr K Rosie on this matter;
- it was recognised that the work around the management of schools was challenging, however the Service be commended on the approach and consultation undertaken to date;
- the outcome of the assessments in respect of early years centres within the ASG be welcomed;
- information was sought and provided in relation to the number of unique applicants applying for the vacant posts across the ASG;
- a request that clarification be provided in regard to the relevance of the cost per pupil statistic detailed under the 'funding' section of the report and how this information was used in financial planning; and
- it was confirmed that the definitions in relation to 'buildings' had changed and further details were provided in this regard.

Thereafter, discussion followed on the issues associated around the transition of Gaelic medium education from primary school to secondary school within the ASG and how this was to be funded. In this regard, reference was made to the need for the Council to have a planned strategy for Gaelic medium education and to consider how this would be resourced. It had been requested that this matter be considered through the Council's Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group. It was confirmed that Mr R Bremner and Mr S Mackie would have a more detailed discussion on this matter outwith the meeting.

The Chair reported on a recent visit by the Council's Chief Executive to Thurso High School during which had had commented positively on the behaviour and diligence of the pupils the fact that the buildings had been well looked after and maintained which was a credit to the staff. Thereafter, an update was provided on progress with improving road safety at the school, with particular reference to the transfer of ownership of the adjacent land at the old mart site. Further issues related to the need for a lift in one block which did not benefit from disabled access and measures to improve security, including entrance doors and provision of a perimeter fence.

The Chair also confirmed that he would write to Ms K Mackay, the outgoing Head of Thurso High School, extending the Committee's thanks for her hard work and exceptional contribution to the School over the period of her long service.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that further information be provided in regard to the relevance of the cost per pupil statistic detailed under the 'funding' section of the report and how this information was used in financial planning.

## 9. Road Structural Maintenance 2018-19 Càradh Structarail Rathaidean 2018-19



There had been circulated Report No CC/07/18 dated 26 April 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Roads Operations Manager tabled a revised version of the Road Structural Maintenance Programme for 2018-19, which also included outstanding schemes from the previous year. He indicated that as a result of the winter conditions a large number of pot hole repairs were required, and that capital monies would be used to supplement the revenue budget to carry out those repairs which would in turn have an impact on the Programme for 2018/19. It was not possible at this stage to quantify the total cost of the pot hole repairs required, although it was hoped this could be provided later in the year. In addition, some roads had deteriorated more significantly than others and therefore the following projects had been identified as the top four priorities within the programme: (i) A836 – Reay School; (ii) C1006 – Wester Bridge to Greenland at Reaster Farm; (iii) U3618 – Newton Road from Kenneth Street junction to the new High School; and (iv) C1093 – Keiss Harbour Road from junction to Hall

The Manager explained that this was a 'live' list of works and was subject to change throughout the year and therefore the intention was to provide quarterly progress reports to Members on all roads matters in Caithness.

The Chair recorded the Committee's support and thanks to the Manager and his staff on doing their best in extremely challenging circumstances.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern that Healthfield Road, Thurso had not been included in the programme. The Manager explained that the priority list had been determined on the basis of the engineering analysis of the road conditions;
- It was important for Members to trust the roads engineering analysis carried out and support officers in identifying priorities on this basis;
- a request that the quarterly updates to be provided to Members on progress with the programme include details of the capital monies being used to repair pot holes and the impact this would have on the rest of the programme;
- an assurance was sought and provided that the quarterly update would include information on the quantity of materials used over the quarter and the estimated cost of lay as against actual costs;
- it was requested that Members be circulated with the programmes for the Jetpatcher and extruded white lining;
- in relation to the priority capital works to be undertaken the A836 at Reay School, the potential also to prioritise repairs to pot holes in the vicinity as part of a joined up approach. The Manager confirmed this type approach was to be considered going forward;
- it was noted that local Members would have further discussions with the Manger outwith the meeting in relation to a specific wind farm in Caithness and the issues around a road being returned to grass;
- the need for white lining to be undertaken at the give way at TESCO's in Wick. The Manager confirmed this work was scheduled to be undertaken; and
- it was noted that ultra violet light had a detrimental effect on road surfaces, and that was a particular source of wear and tear in northern areas with such as Caithness.

The Committee:-

- I. **APPROVED** the tabled prioritised programme of Maintenance for Roads for the Caithness Local Committee Area commencing in 2018/19;
- II. **AGREED** that the quarterly updates to be provided to Members on progress with the programme include details of the capital monies being used to repair pot holes; and
- III. **AGREED** that Members be circulated with the programmes for the Jetpatcher and extruded white lining.

**10. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018**  
**Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2017 to 31 Am Mart 2018**

There had been circulated Report No CC/08/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Housing Manager (North) advised that the Committee had previously requested a briefing on the impacts of universal credit. He confirmed that he would circulate Members with an update provided to the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group in February 2018 on this issue, together with subsequent reports to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee (formerly the People Committee).

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the progress being made in meeting the target for non-emergency repairs was welcomed, and an update was sought and provided on the reasons for the improving trend;
- concern at the continuing impact of universal credit on rent arrears and on longer term trends as it continued to be rolled out;
- a point that local Members were keen for the former Janitor's house at Thurso High School to be let as low or no cost accommodation to attract teaching staff to the area.. The Housing Manager confirmed that he was meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss the opportunities and challenges with letting the property;
- in regard to the above, it was suggested there may also be other Council properties in the area which potentially could be used for the same purpose; and
- information was sought and provided in relation to the processes and funding available for adaptations to both private and Council properties, and ongoing discussions with NHS Highland on this matter.

The Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

**11. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 21 February 2018, which were approved by the Council on 8 March 2018.

The meeting ended at 12.40pm.

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## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 17 May 2018 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr R Balfour	Ms A MacLean
Miss J Campbell	Mr D MacLeod
Dr I Cockburn	Mr R MacWilliam
Ms K Currie	Mr H Morrison
Mr C Fraser	Mr M Paterson (Substitute)
Mr J Gray	Mr I Ramon
Mr A Henderson	Mr A Rhind
Mr A Jarvie (Substitute by video-conferencing)	Mr D Rixson
Mr R Laird	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs L MacDonald	Mr C Smith
Mr D MacKay	Ms M Smith
Mr W MacKay (by video-conferencing)	

### Non-Members also present:

Mrs C Caddick	Mr B Lobban
Mr K Gowans	Mr D MacPherson
Mr T Heggie	

### In attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure  
 Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services  
 Ms C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources, Community Services  
 Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services  
 Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr F MacDonald, Head of Property Services, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Services  
 Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services, Community Services  
 Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport, Community Services  
 Mr S Duncan, Property Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr G Bull, Corporate Property Asset Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr A McCann, Economy and Regeneration Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Care and Learning Services  
 Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager (Community Services/Development and Infrastructure), Corporate Resources  
 Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Ms N Drummond, Area Planning Manager – South/Major Developments  
 Ms M MacDonald-Dawson, Programme Manager-Alternatives to Out of Area Placements  
 Care and Learning Services  
 Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager  
 Mr D Mudie, Planning Team Leader, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr K McCorquodale, Principal Planner, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr A Puls, Principal Officer – Building Conservation and Environment, Development and

Infrastructure Service

Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services

Mr A Bentley, Principal Waste Management Officer, Community Services

Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer, Chief Executive's Office

Mr S Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance, Chief Executive's Office

Mrs K Lyons, Principal Solicitor (Planning), Chief Executive's Office

Miss J Maclennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Mrs C MacIver, Committee and Elections Officer, Chief Executive's Office

Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

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

**Mr A Henderson in the Chair**

**Business**

**Preliminaries**

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs J Barclay, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon and Mr A Sinclair.

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

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

Item 4 – Mr K Gowans (non-financial)

Item 7 – Mrs L MacDonald (financial)

Item 9 – Miss J Campbell, Mr G Gray, Mr R Laird and Mr R MacWilliam (all non-financial)

Item 10 – Mr R MacWilliam (non-financial)

**3. Good News  
Naidheachdan Matha**

The Committee **NOTED** the items of Good News.

**4. Notice of Amendment (Planning) – Planning Application (17/03396/FUL)  
Brath Atharrachaidh (Dealbhadh) – Iarrtas Dealbhaidh (17/03396/FUL)**

**Mr K Gowans declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds that he had made public statements expressing his view regarding the application and left the chamber during determination of this item.**

Application for Planning Permission for Discharge of Planning Conditions attached to planning consent Ref 11/04653/FUL, including those relating to house design, infrastructure and landscaping, proposed development of 16 houses.

At its meeting on 13 March 2018, the South Planning Applications Committee (SPAC) approved planning permission for the above application. The following Notice of Amendment had then been lodged on 14 March 2018:

“We the undersigned, being Elected Members of the Highland Council, hereby declare our wish that the decision of the South Planning Applications Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2018 on the above application (Agenda Item 5.2) be reviewed at a Special Meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee (to be convened as soon as possible).

Signed: Mr G Cruickshank, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr R Balfour, Mr A Jarvie, Mr K Gowans, Mr R Laird, Mr B Allan and Mr B Boyd.”

In this context, there had been circulated Report No EDI/16/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure recommending that Members consider the Notice of Amendment (Planning) and thereafter determine planning application 17/03396/FUL. The case officer’s assessment of the planning application was contained in the South Planning Applications Committee reports attached as Appendix 2 (a) and (b) to the report and the plans contained in Appendix 3.

The Chair reminded Members that, in order to take part in the decision, they required to be present for the whole of the item.

During presentation of the report and recommendation, it was confirmed that Plans 1 – 10, 16 and 17 contained within Appendix 3 of the report were recommended for approval. It was also confirmed that a separate planning application (17/03395/FUL) for the upgrading of the access road had been approved by the South Planning Applications Committee and included a suspensive condition preventing commencement of the road works until planning permission for the design of the houses had been granted.

In response to a question, clarification was provided as to why the application was considered to be a local scale development and had not been determined as a major development. The Clerk explained that the application had previously been submitted to the South Planning Applications Committee for determination at the discretion of the Area Planning Manager (South) and sought approval of the design details of houses on plots which had already been granted planning permission through a previous application submitted under the major applications process. The application was considered to be a local scale development as, in terms of the Scottish Government Hierarchy of Developments in relation to housing, major developments were considered to comprise of 50 or more dwellings or the application site exceeded 2 hectares. Whilst the applicant had provided an indication that the entire application site exceeded 2 hectares, under the terms of the area threshold, only the area subject to the construction of building, structures or erections should be taken into account; therefore, the proposed development fell below the 2 hectare threshold and the application had been processed as a local scale development. It was emphasised that irrespective of whether the proposed development had been considered a major or local scale application, it had always been to the South Planning Applications Committee for determination and had not been determined under delegated powers.

In response to further questions, the following was confirmed:-

- the amendments to the original design of the affordable units which had been presented to the South Planning Applications Committee in March 2018 included:-
  - a reduction in the size of the soffits to reduce overhang; and
  - an enhanced design on the porch roof to help the units fit in with the rest of the development.
- whilst it was considered that the proposed affordable housing presented a variety of different styles, these would fit in with the rest of the site.

During discussion, Members' comments included the following:-

- in emphasising the number of representations which had been received opposing the proposed development, it was highlighted that these referred to the decision taken by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) in 2014 to permit planning consent for 16 houses following refusal of the original planning application by the South Planning Applications Committee in 2013;
- whilst it was acknowledged that the proposed houses could be of high quality build, concern was expressed that the proposed designs of the houses were not in keeping with the surrounding landscape;
- the proposed design resembled a standard suburban street and was not considered to be appropriate in the context of the nearby Culloden battlefield site;
- whilst the potential legal cost to the Council had previously been highlighted as a potential consequence should the application be refused and subsequently appealed, it was considered that this should not be an issue in the Committee's determination of the application;
- in response to further comments regarding the original application for planning permission for 16 houses including how subsequent changes to the boundary for potential developments would have seen the application determined against different policy, it was emphasised that this had no relevance on the Committee's determination as the application before Members was for the details of the houses and not the principle of development on this location;
- in welcoming the proposed upgrading of the access road should planning permission be granted, it was emphasised that the recommendation contained a number of conditions which could satisfy concerns raised;
- the principle of development in this location had already been approved and the proposed designs were considered acceptable;
- the agricultural buildings which had subsequently been demolished had been erected prior to planning regulations coming into force and should not be used as a guideline for the height of the proposed houses; and
- the building line was considered to be unsympathetic in the context of the surrounding area.

No consensus having been reached by the Members, Mr J Gray, seconded by the Chair, then moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions recommended in the report.

Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr R MacWilliam, moved as an amendment that the application be refused on the grounds that:-

- the proposed development does not conserve and enhance the character of the Highland area, nor does it ensure harmony with the surrounding

natural landscape of the Conservation Area and furthermore, it compromises the natural environment and heritage resource in which it is located.

- these are not met due to inappropriate building proportions which fail to reflect and preserve the traditional character by reason of the disproportionate relationship of roof and massing to the height to wall head, insufficient use of traditional materials including only limited use of natural stone and use of non-traditional timber cladding, which as a result fails to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- Thus it is contrary to policy 10 of the Culloden Muir Conservation Area and accordingly policies 29 and 57 of the Highland wide local development plan.

On a vote being taken, twelve votes were cast in favour of the motion and eight votes in favour of the amendment, with no abstentions as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Miss J Campbell; Mr J Gray; Mr A Henderson; Mrs L MacDonald; Mr D MacKay; Ms A MacLean; Mr D MacLeod; Mr H Morrison; Mr M Paterson; Mr A Rhind; Mrs T Robertson and Ms M Smith

**For the Amendment:**

Dr I Cockburn; Ms K Currie; Mr C Fraser; Mr A Jarvie; Mr R Laird; Mr W MacKay; Mr R MacWilliam and Mr C Smith

**Decision**

The Committee **AGREED** to **GRANT** planning permission in accordance with the recommendation set out in as set out in section 11 of the 30 January 2018 South Planning Applications Committee report (Appendix 2 (b)) and subject to Plans 1 – 10, 16 and 17 contained in Appendix 3.

**5. Development and Infrastructure Service Revenue Budget – Near Final Outturn 2017/18**

**Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun-structair – Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/17/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in highlighting a shortfall in income in catering, cleaning and facilities management, clarification was sought, and received, on what initiatives were being considered by the Service to address this income gap, such as enabling pupils to purchase food within school premises and addressing a drop-off in pupils taking up school meals when going from free meals in Primary 1-3 into paid meals from Primary 4 onwards;
- following a request for information in relation to support for Council renewable projects, it was confirmed that a number of small scale wind energy developments had been considered unfeasible; however, significant investment in solar panels was proposed and it was anticipated that this could help address savings targets; and
- following a request for information on how an overspend on schools snow clearing would be managed, it was confirmed that discussions would take

place between Services to address the general need to reduce pressures in the revenue budget and that proposals for the management of this would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue budget near final outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2018.

## 6. Capital Expenditure – Final Outturn 2017/18 Sgrùdadh Caiteachais Chalpa

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/18/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- confirmation was sought, and received, that the Tain 3-18 Campus project had been included within the expenditure monitoring figures as the report reflected accumulative spending up to March 2018 and that capital expenditure for 2018/19 would reflect the newly approved Council capital programme which had been approved by the Council. The 2018/19 capital programme will be reported to the next Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee;
- in highlighting variances within the HRA Capital Programme, concern was expressed regarding the poor conditions some council house tenants were living in. Reassurance was sought, and received, that the concerns raised regarding living conditions would be investigated and that a process for monitoring maintenance contracts was in place to help minimise slippage in the Programme;
- disappointment was expressed that the River Nairn and Auldearn Burn Flood Protection schemes would not be completed until 2024. In response, it was suggested that the Head of Infrastructure attend a Ward Business Meeting to provide information on potential ways of moving these schemes forward and to look at the budget for them in more detail;
- concern was expressed that the review of slippage in Care and Learning would not be reported until the next meeting of the Committee in August;
- reassurance was sought, and received, that the new traffic impact assessment in Dingwall would be used to establish whether other potential road improvements in Dingwall could be grouped together with the Kinnairdie Link Road project or whether the impact to the road network would necessitate these traffic improvements to be undertaken individually;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that the accepted estimated date for the refurbishment project of Inverness High School was March 2020;
- confirmation was sought, and received that the Council's Capital Programme would deliver a consistent and acceptable level of street lighting following the installation of LED lighting; and
- a request was made for information to be provided to Members on the Council's Active Travel scheme.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the capital expenditure near final monitoring position for the year ended 31 March 2018;



- ii. **APPROVED** the allocation of the roads improvement match funding for 2018 to 2023 to the South Loch Ness Road Improvement Scheme; and
- iii. **AGREED** to investigate how information on Active Travel schemes could be provided to Members.

**7. Development and Infrastructure Service Plan 2017-22  
Plana Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun-structair 2017-22**

**Mrs L MacDonald declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds that she owned an area of land which had been earmarked for development of affordable housing in Nairn and left the room during discussion of the item.**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/19/18 dated 4 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- a request was made for an update regarding the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund resources at Tank Farm, Invergordon;
- in highlighting the need to closely monitor the overall skills base available within the Highlands, it was suggested that there could be an opportunity for organisations to provide apprenticeships to young people during periods of development;
- with regard to future house building in Sutherland, confirmation was sought, and received, that any specific proposals suggested by local Members could be taken forward with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust; and
- a request was made for an update regarding the proposed construction of a new care home in North West Sutherland in conjunction with NHS Highland.

The Committee **APPROVED** the draft Service Plan for 2017-22.

**8. Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 4 Performance Review  
Frèam Coileanadh Dealbhaidh agus Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanadh Cairteal 4**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/20/18 dated 3 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- confirmation was sought, and received, that not all enforcement activity required notices to be served as a satisfactory outcome could be achieved either by the submission of a planning application or through negotiations with the developer to resolve any issues; and
- a request was made for further information to be included in future reports on the number retrospective planning applications submitted to the planning service.

The Committee **NOTED** the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards and Development Plans teams.

## 9. Economy and Regeneration Eaconamaidh agus Ath-ùrachadh

**Declarations of Interest – Miss J Campbell and Mr R MacWilliam (as Members of Inverness City Heritage Trust and the Academy Townscape Heritage Project) Mr J Gray (as a member of Inverness City Heritage Trust) and Mr R Laird (as Chair of the Academy Street Townscape Heritage Project) declared non-financial interests in respect of this item as detailed but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/21/18 dated 1 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- following a request for further information regarding the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF), it was confirmed that there was a time-limit for organisations to apply for funding and that it was important for organisations to be mindful of what other partnership funding could be sought when submitting their application;
- in commending the work currently being undertaken by the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project, in particular in relation to Academy Street, it was emphasised that the condition of the surrounding built environment could influence how people felt about their locality and it was important to seek further opportunities for funding, including through Historic Environment Scotland, to improve the appearance and condition of buildings in the Highlands;
- a request was made for further detail regarding the 12 projects which had submitted applications for funding from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund;
- following a request for information on whether there was a clearer pathway for groups to seek access to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, it was confirmed that community or third sector organisations could seek assistance from the Council on the best approach to securing regeneration funding;
- clarification was sought, and received, that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund provided an opportunity for projects to apply for capital funding to help support infrastructure and maintain facilities;
- in commending the work undertaken by the Economy and Regeneration team, the importance of creating employment in rural areas and how the Council engaged with third sector groups when seeking funding was emphasised;
- whilst the approval of grant funding for a number of projects under the RCGF was welcomed, concern was expressed regarding the introduction of car parking charges and the detrimental impact this could have on local businesses;
- concern was expressed that the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project might not reach its full potential due to the attitude of some property owners on Academy Street who had been reluctant to engage with the Council to discuss potential improvements to buildings; and
- in response to a request for further information, it was confirmed that the Service Plan sought to develop opportunities within Inverness City Centre

and that dangerous and defective building notices could be served on properties to improve their appearance; however, there was an element of risk to this as any works undertaken by the Council would be charged to the owner and there was potential that the owner would not pay up.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report and the key developments highlighted during quarter 4 and emerging activity; and
- ii. the increasing workload and the financial and reputational risks to the Council when securing and managing Scottish Government funding, on behalf of community and third sector organisations.

## 10. Housing Investment Report Iomairtean Leasachaidh Taigheadais

**Mr R MacWilliam declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Highland Small Communities Housing Trust but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/22/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in highlighting increased pressure on the Council's housing estates and the constraints encountered in obtaining suitable land for housing development in Inverness, confirmation was sought, and received that, other than compulsory purchases in areas zoned for housing development, the Council was limited as to the what other statutory powers it could potentially use to acquire land;
- it was requested that Members at Ward level be keep informed of any potential interest for developers seeking to construct housing as part of the Highland Affordable Housing Programme;
- it was emphasised that the reallocation of money to other projects should be made swiftly if projects were to be subsequently dropped from the Programme; and
- following comment regarding the number of projects proposed within Inverness in comparison with the wider Highland area, it was confirmed that the Programme reflected the housing needs throughout the Highlands as identified within the Council's Housing Need and Assessment.

The Committee **NOTED** the affordable housing investment programme as set by the Scottish Government and **AGREED**:-

- i. the 2018/19 indicative affordable housing programme as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. that any proposed changes to the indicative affordable housing programme be discussed with the Chairman of Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee and appropriate Local Members with the outcome of any discussions reported back to Committee in future reports.

## 11. Property Revenue Maintenance Budget 2018/19 Budget Allocation Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Càradh Thogalaichean 2018/19 Riarachadh Buidseit

There had been circulated Report No EDI/23/18 dated 27 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in highlighting concerns raised by parents regarding children falling on chipped floor tiling at Dalneigh Primary School, confirmation was sought, and received, that these concerns would be investigated;
- concern was expressed regarding the poor quality of teleconferencing and videoconferencing facilities following an upgrade in the system within the Chamber at HQ, and confirmation was sought, and received, that this would be investigated; and
- in welcoming a proposed increase in the maintenance budget allocation, it was highlighted that the budget would be spread out across a number of projects listed at Appendix B to the report.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed work categories, budget allocations and project proposals for the 2018/19 Property Revenue Maintenance Budget.

**The Committee broke for lunch from 1.20pm until 2.00pm**

## 12. KIMO – Re-establishing Membership KIMO

There had been circulated Report No EDI/24/18 dated 26 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED**:-

- i. to re-establish the Highland Council's membership of KIMO; and
- ii. having been duly proposed and seconded, to appoint Ms K Currie, Mr D MacLeod and Mrs T Robertson to represent the Highland Council on the UK KIMO board.

## 13. Shopfront Design Guide: Planning Guidance Iùl Dealbhachaidh Aghaidh Bhùithtean: Stiùireadh Dealbhaidh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/25/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- advice should be given to businesses that were closing to avoid having unsightly empty shop fronts;
- the guidance was welcomed as was working with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to improve and enhance shop fronts;
- improvements needed to be carried out to promote and raise awareness;
- concern was expressed at the low priority given to disabled access and reference was made to work underway with the local access panel in Nairn;

- it was important to keep the document “live” and up-to-date; and
- large retailers such as supermarkets should be encouraged to conform with what would fit in to a conservation area.

The Committee **APPROVED** the finalised version of the Shopfront Design Guide: Planning Guidance for adoption as non-statutory supplementary guidance.

#### 14. **Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy 2018 (Consultation Draft)** **Ro-innleachd Choilltean na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/26/18 dated 1 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concern was expressed that outlooks from viewpoints were being obscured with trees i.e. Loch Maree; from the Fort William to Mallaig Jacobite Train and Loch Ness-side;
- future developments could go some way to reintroducing habitat for species that were under threat e.g. wild cats;
- bearing in mind the work they already undertook, particularly with broad leaf species, it was suggested that the Woodland Trust should also be included as a consultee;
- the breadth of the document, looking at issues as far ranging as health and employment, was to be commended and highlighted during the consultation; and
- ideally a public register should be maintained detailing the ownership of woodlands.

Having been assured that additional comments raised by Members during the consultation period could be discussed directly with officers, the Committee otherwise **APPROVED** the ‘Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy’ for public release and an 8 week consultation.

#### 15. **Inverness Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report** **Aithisg Maoin-chunntas Gas Taigh-ghlainne Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/27/18 dated 30 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Climate Change Officer reported the following minor corrections to his report:-

- that the second last sentence in item 2.1 of the report should be revised to read “Inverness” and not “Highland”; and
- the Inventory Area’s net emissions recorded under item 5.4 should be noted as 308,961 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and not 364,496 which is detailed in the report.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- although Highland had a long history of renewable energy, it was still important to raise awareness and understanding to staff and the public on what changes needed to be made;

- bus companies needed to be engaged as to the part they could play in a low carbon economy;
- many communities were already trying to reduce carbon emissions, the Muir of Ord community fridge being cited as a specific example, and clarification was sought on how the proposed multi-agency Climate Change Working Group would feed into communities outwith Inverness; and
- it was emphasised that there was a significant demand for cycle routes.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED** that:-

- funding opportunities be explored to allow a greenhouse gas inventory to be prepared for the whole Highland region; and
- a multi-agency Climate Change Working Group be established under the Highland Environment Forum to take forward priority actions identified in the Inverness GHG Baseline report.

**16. Inverness Airport Business Park Ltd – Unsecured Loan Stock**  
**Pàirc Gnothachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis Eta – Stoc lasaid Neo-thèarainte**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/28/18 dated 30 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- the outcome of the review of the Loan Stock Instrument and in particular that there was:
  - no scope to take further action to recover the sum due within the current terms of the Loan Stock Instrument; and
  - little scope to vary the terms of the Instrument;
- the implications for repayment of the Council's Outstanding Loan Stock

**17. Scottish Government Consultation: Fees Charged for Applications under the Electricity Act 1989**  
**Cìsean a Bhuilicheadh airson Iarrtasan fo Achd an Dealain 1989**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/29/18 dated 20 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the response provided to Scottish Government by the Head of Planning and Environment.

**18. Disposals at Land Below Market Value – Policy**  
**Cuidhteachaidhean fo Luach na Margaid –Phoileasaidh**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/30/18 dated 10 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was important that, when transferring assets, the Council were not left with any of the liabilities such as the responsibility for the costs and maintenance of grounds;
- while there might be enthusiasm for a community group to acquire an

- asset, it was important that this was sustainable in the long term;
- reassurance was also sought that a full and robust evaluation was carried out to ensure that Members' concerns on transfer proposals were taken into account and, other than those small disposals delegated to officers, details were brought back to Committee; and
- a consequence of the legislation could mean that public assets were lost to the wider population and transferred to smaller groups.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the policy and guidance (Appendix A) entitled 'Disposals of land for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained' prepared in respect of the Internal Audit – Rental Income Audit 2016 (Ref: HEE03/001.bf) action for a policy on 'rent waivers/reduction of rent'; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the policy and guidance be accepted as a Council policy

#### 19. **Community Asset Transfer – Annual Review** **Glusad So-mhain Choimhearsnachd – Ath-sgrùdadh Bliadhna**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/31/18 dated 30 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concerns were expressed that some in the community were not aware of the application for the asset transfer of the Northern Meeting Park. The potential loss of use of green space could have a negative impact;
- an update was sought on the timeframes of asset transfers and that this be reviewed to develop a quicker process; and
- clarification was sought on how a community was defined.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the levels of community interest in taking over assets, the nature of the assets and the basis communities sought control of them; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the summary of community asset transfer activity information outlined at Appendix 1 to the report be submitted to the Scottish Government as our Annual Report on Community Asset Transfer, as required under section 3 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act.

#### 20. **Community Services Revenue Budget 2017/18 – Final Outturn 2017/18** **Buidseat Teachd-a-steach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd 2017/18 – Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/32/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the additional monies received from the Scottish Government to meet the additional expenditure incurred as a result of the adverse winter weather conditions was welcomed. However, this represented only a small proportion of what was required;

- clarification was sought, and received, as to what the budget saving was on public conveniences and when the revised proposals were to be reported back to Members;
- there had been miscommunication with communities on toilet closures which had led to bad publicity. Furthermore, it was important to review the closure of toilets located in scenic areas as this could negatively impact on tourism in the area's affected;
- a request was made for an additional column to be included in revenue monitoring statements detailing the income generated from car parking fines;
- while acknowledging the overspend on winter, appreciation was expressed to the manual workers for their hard work;
- a concern was expressed that the reduced budget savings could negatively impact on street cleaning services;
- with the annual fee for the collection of residents' garden waste increasing from £30 to £35, it was questioned if this had resulted in a decrease in take-up of the service;
- an anomaly had arisen on the harbours budget heading due to the late receipt of income relating to the 2016/17 financial year. Harbours had achieved a break-even position in 2016/17 but, having reviewed that year's financial position, a budget error had been identified and consequently rectified;
- an evaluation needed to be carried out on the workload and stress of staff working in Community Services. In this regard, cognisance needed to be taken that the same level of service could not be provided as before and clarification was sought as to what areas of service had been affected;
- clarification was sought on the current policy for verge maintenance and, acknowledging the need to maintain sight lines, if grass cutting had been reduced along with the need for the use of pesticides and glyphosate weed killers;
- it was vital to communicate effectively with both the public and Scottish Government as to the Council's position as a result of budget cuts and the need to raise income; and
- the cuts and reduction in services had brought some communities together and they had set up their own initiatives ie. Auldearn and Cawdor were looking after their own community environments by grass cutting in public areas.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the revenue budget near final outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2018;
- ii. **AGREED** that details of income from car parking charges and fines be included in a separate table within future reports; and
- iii. **AGREED** that details of a previously agreed saving on grass verge maintenance be recirculated to Members.

**21. Community Services Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018  
Aithisg Choileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – 1 Giblean 2017  
gu 31 Màrt 2018**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/33/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.



In discussion, tribute was paid to the exceptional work carried out by Community Services operatives in keeping the streets of Inverness clean. However, reference too was made to potholes which had caused damage to vehicles and disappointment expressed that the compensation process was slow.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

## **22. Community Services Service Plan Plana Seirbheis nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/34/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

Members highlighted the importance of providing and maintaining a network of public conveniences, particularly in rural areas and as a result of the significant increase in tourism in recent years. In the past this had been achieved through the Highland Comfort Scheme but the number of facilities available had reduced. Generally, there were increasing demands on the rural infrastructure and, if the Council's objectives with regards to Tourism and creating a welcoming environment were to be achieved, this needed to be addressed. The Council had applied to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund but, alone, had submitted applications totalling half of the funding available and it was suggested that what was being proposed would be challenging to achieve.

The Committee **APPROVED** the draft Service Plan for 2017-22.

## **23. Waste Management Strategy - Final Business Case Ro-innleachd Rianachd Sgudail – Cùis Gnothachais Deireannach**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/35/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was vital to move forward with this at pace as currently approximately 83k tonnes of waste was sent to landfill at a cost of £11m per annum. The procrastination of previous Administrations was no longer an option and the time had now come for the Council to decide how rubbish generated in the Highlands was disposed of;
- there was an allocation identified within the Capital Programme if Option 2 (Construction of a Centralised Materials Facility(CMF)) was pursued;
- the creation of an in-house project team tasked with delivering the project was welcomed, bearing in mind the tight timescales involved;
- whilst it was recognised that a process was underway to identify the most suitable site, it was questioned what would happen if this did not come to fruition;
- there were various factors which would need to be taken into account, including the impact on local vistas, and it was important to recognise too that there were also many variables;
- in deciding upon a site it was important to be open, frank and honest with the public from the outset, given the level of public interest such a facility could potentially attract. The message had to be put across that, in taking a sustainable approach, the site selected was likely not only to be for a

CMF but, at some future point, an Energy from Waste Plant. An integrated approach to communication on all the aspects was essential;

- it was important to drive change with those creating waste. Reference was made to the refuse generated from packaging materials from major supermarkets;;
- it was no longer acceptable for Highland to continue to transport its waste south and everyone, not just the Council, needed to work harder to drive up recycling rates;
- there were different values of recyclate and, by having a CMF in Highland, an innovative approach could be taken to ensure best use was made of resources;
- Seater Landfill Site would continue to be used up until January 2021; and
- Members should be kept up to date with progress. The all-Party Member Working Group was welcomed and it was hoped that this would result in greater understanding.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** Option 2 within the report - the establishment of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in the Inner Moray Firth area as the Council's preferred interim arrangement for meeting the requirements of the ban on landfilling Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW);
- ii. **NOTED** that the cost of continuing with current arrangements, Option 0, would be £365,049,000 over 25 years if the ban on landfilling waste in Scotland was not in place;
- iii. **AGREED** to support the establishment of an in-house project team dedicated solely to delivering the project solution and to support the back-filling of those posts;
- iv. **AGREED** that further work be carried out to identify the Council's preferred long-term arrangements for the management of its waste for the next 30 years, in particular the viability of Option 3, an Energy from Waste plant located in the Inner Moray Firth area;
- \* v. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council the continuation of the role of the Member Waste Working Group to support and scrutinise the project going forward; and
- vi. **AGREED** that a communication strategy be developed to help explain to stakeholders the Council's medium and long term proposals for managing its waste and the role people can play in minimising their effect on the environment.

#### 24. **Bus Contracts in Lochaber Cunnraidhean Bus ann an Loch Abar**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/36/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

Following an update, the Committee **AGREED** to grant delegated authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, to decide on an appropriate level of service and **AGREED** the award of contracts for the following routes:-

- Corpach – Upper Achintore (evenings)
- Kinlochleven – Fort William
- Roy Bridge – Fort William.

**25. Department of Transport Consultation on Section 19 and 22 – Permits for Road Passenger Transport**  
**Co-chomhairle Roinn na Còmhdhalach air Earrainn 19 agus 22 – Ceadan airson Còmhdhail Luchd-siubhail Rathaid**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/37/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the Council's response to the Department of Transport's consultation on Permits for Road Passenger Transport, the closing date for which was 4 May 2018.

**26. Strategic Timber Transport Fund Status of 2017/18 Projects and 2018/19 Bids**  
**Inbhe Pròiseactan Maoin Ro-innleachdail Còmhdhail Fiodha 2017/18 agus Tagraidhean 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/38/18 dated 27 April 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the delivery of the 2017/18 programme of works, including the additional works delivered using Strategic Timber Transport Scheme underspend;
- ii. **NOTED** the bids made to the 2018/19 Strategic Timber Transport Fund, including the submission for the B9090 White Bridge project;
- iii. **AGREED** that, should the Strategic Timber Transport Fund match funding bids be unsuccessful, residual match funding would be reallocated to enhance drawdown of successful projects, or be reallocated across the Areas using the Road Condition Survey parameters, with scheme selection being decided by Members at local Area level; and
- iv. **AGREED** that, subject to the availability of funds as decided at the annual budget setting stage and the continuation of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund programme, up to £0.5m be allocated under the road structural (capital) funding as match funding for future years.

**27. Harbours Management Board – Change of Membership**  
**Bòrd Stiùiridh nan Calaidhean – Atharrachadh Ballrachd**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr D MacLeod to the Harbours Management Board to replace Mr A Sinclair.

**28. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee:-

(a) **NOTED** the Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC), for:-

- i. North PAC – 28 November 2017
- ii. South PAC – 12 December 2017
- iii. North PAC – 23 January 2018
- iv. South PAC – 30 January 2018

- v. North PAC – 6 March 2018
- vi. South PAC – 13 March 2018

(b) **NOTED** the Minutes of the Tourism Working Group of 14 March and 18 April 2018; and

(c) **APPROVED:-**

- i. the Minutes of the Harbours Management Board of 21 February 2018; and
- ii. the Minutes of the Waste Strategy Working Group of 29 March and 23 April 2018.

## 29. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

## 30. Land and Property Fearann is Cuid-seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/39/18 dated 8 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations contained within the report.

## 31. Property Transactions Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/40/18 dated 25 April 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** the monitoring statements for General Fund and Property Account transactions as approved by the Head of Development & Regeneration under delegated authority as well the Budgeted Sales for 2018/19 and beyond.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 22 May 2018 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  
Ms C McGonigal, Head Teacher, Grantown Grammar School  
Mr A Puls, Conservation Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service  
Mr F Nixon, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services  
Mrs M MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer, Care and Learning Service  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

**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

### 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)

#### 3. Presentation – Head Teacher – Grantown Grammar School Taisbeanadh – Ceannard – Sgoil Ghràmair Bhaile nan Granndach

A presentation was made at the meeting by the Head Teacher of Grantown Grammar School during which she provided basic background information and explained the uniqueness of the school, particularly in regard outdoor education; outlined the school's values; provided information on the local delivery and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence, including performance in regard to attainment and achievement. Information was also provided on the links between the Kingussie High School and Grantown Grammar School and other educational establishments to progress pathways to further education, training and employment. In conclusion, she set out the challenges ahead for the school and the next steps to ensure continuous improvement.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Committee commended the staff for their diligent work ethic and praised the results being achieved. Although the school was relatively small and based in a rural location, Grantown Grammar School was an excellent example of adopting innovative ways of working that could be replicated not only across the Highlands but also nationally;
- Concern was expressed at the worrying trend of a 75% reduction in applications to Inverness College due to transport difficulties and this had to be addressed; and
- Further information was sought and provided in regard to the building improvement priorities.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that further work be undertaken to investigate and address the trend of a 75% reduction in applications to Inverness College due to a lack of transport provision.

#### 4. **Grantown Conservation Area Appraisal** **Measadh Sgìre Ghlàidhteachais Bhaile nan Grandach**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/6/18 dated 11 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was difficult to understand why 1970s redevelopments, as referred to within the Appraisal, should be included within the conservation area and further explanation on the rationale for this was provided;
- There was a need to communicate with the relevant residents to ensure that they were aware that they resided within the conservation area and the potential impact of this; and
- Further information was sought on where the consultation process would be held, the details of which had yet to be confirmed. It was further confirmed that both schools, the primary and secondary, would be included in the consultation process.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Appraisal and recommendations to extend the current Conservation Area boundary; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the draft appraisal for a minimum six week public consultation and **NOTED** that Members would continue to be kept informed of this process as it progressed.

#### 5. **Scottish Fire and Rescue – Area Performance Summary** **Smàladh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba – Geàrr-chunntas Coileanadh Sgìre**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/7/18 dated 7 May 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Concern was expressed at the substantial increase in the number of fatalities on the A9;
- There was a perception that Grantown station did not have sufficient staffing levels and further information was requested in regard to local recruitment of retained fire fighters;
- It was queried whether fines were incurred for repeat offenders of false fire alarms and further information was provided on the proactive approach to address this; and
- Overall it was felt that this was a very positive report with a reduction in the number of fatalities which was evidence that the community safety approach was effective.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the Badenoch and Strathspey Performance Report;
- ii. that further information would be provided to Councillor Cockburn in regard to local recruitment statistics; and
- iii. that the Group Manager would report back on the concerns raised in regard to Road Traffic Collisions with a view to working in partnership with Police Scotland to develop a local strategy to reduce these incidents.

**6. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018  
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2017 gu 31 Màrt 2018**

**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 in the room to participate in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/8/18 dated 2 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Concern was expressed at the decline in performance in regard to emergency repairs, particularly with heating issues, and further information was sought and provided on what further support could be offered to improve response times;
- It was suggested that when a new tenant took residence in a property that basic training should be provided on how to operate the heating system;
- In regard to Table 3 contained in the report, further information was requested on Cairn and Albyn Housing Associations average re-let times for comparison purposes;
- In terms of Universal Credit, the Citizens Advice Bureau provided essential support but their resources were limited and it was queried whether there would be further impact on the Council as a result of this;
- Further information was sought and provided in regard to homelessness levels;
- It was indicated that a report was regularly submitted to Ward Business Meetings on Housing Development and it was felt that it might be helpful for this to be reported at future Area Committees;

- The critical importance of encouraging people to register on the Housing Needs Register was emphasised. It was further suggested that the Council could work collaboratively with schools to educate and communicate directly with young people on the importance of registering for social housing;
- Concern was expressed that the Housing Needs and Demands Assessment was not reliable and there was a need to ensure that sufficient land was being allocated for development to meet future demands;
- It was highlighted that the local rental market was also creating additional pressures on housing; and
- There was a need to capture the demographics to fully inform future housing requirements.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018;
- ii. that further information be provided to Councillor Lobban on Cairn and Albyn Housing Associations average re-let times; and
- iii. that consideration would be given to submitting reports on Housing Development to future Area Committee meetings.

## **7. Celtic Media Festival Fèis nam Meadhanan Ceilteach**

The Gaelic Development Officer provided a briefing on the successful bid to host the 40<sup>th</sup> Celtic Media Festival in Aviemore in June 2019 (exact dates yet to be confirmed). The Celtic Media Festival was an annual three day event that promoted the languages and cultures of the Celtic Nations and Regions in media. Continuing, she explained that a strong international delegation was expected to attend which would also be an excellent boost to the local economy.

In terms of the next steps, the Gaelic Development Officer advised that a local advisory committee would be formed to support the event organisers; work was ongoing to attract additional sources of funding for the event; and plans were also being developed to engage local University of the Highlands and Islands students and local schools with a view to them participating in workshops to produce short films which would then be broadcast during the festival.

The Gaelic Development Officer assured the Committee that she would keep them informed of arrangements as they progressed and suggested that the event Director be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

During discussion, the Committee welcomed the news and recognised that this would be an excellent opportunity to showcase the area as well as the economic benefits that could be achieved. It was further requested that, as well as schools, local nurseries also be encouraged to participate in the event.



The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the briefing on the successful bid to host the 40<sup>th</sup> Celtic Media Festival in Aviemore in June 2019; and
- ii. that Members would continue to be kept informed of arrangements and that the Festival Director would be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

**8. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 13 February 2018 which were approved by the Council on 8 March 2018.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.

**The Highland Council  
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummie on Wednesday, 23 May 2018 at 10.30am.

**Present:**

Ms K Currie

Mr R Gale

Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray

Mr H Morrison

Ms L Munro (Chair)

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service

Ms J Sutherland, Senior Engineer, Community Services

Mrs M Grant, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services

Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

**Also in Attendance:**

Mr M Evans, Head Teacher, Golspie High School

Group Manager M Loynd, and Station Manager J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**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. Golspie Associated School Group Overview  
Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Ghoillspidh**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/04/18 dated 10 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Arising from the report, the Education Quality Improvement Manager provided an update on the actions being taken by the Service in response to the challenges around staffing within the ASG. This included the early interviewing and placing of probationary teachers, and other placements and recruitment of a number of teachers from Canada through TimePlan.

Mr M Evans, Head Teacher, Golspie High School reported on HMIe's inspection of the School and subsequent report published in May 2017 and recent press coverage in regard to attainment in relation to five Highers. He reported that the School's improvement plans were mainly directed at improving attainment, and highlighted the following key issues:-

- overall attainment at the School had been graded as satisfactory in the inspection report, and HMIe had been supportive of the improvement plans which had been put in place;

- in terms of Level 4 and 5 results, the School was generally above HMle's virtual comparator;
- a key focus had been on developing strategies to target attainment within the various subgroups identified by HMle within the overall cohort of pupils at the School;
- it was important to note the School was performing well in regard to positive destinations and had been generally above the Highland and national figures over the last 2/3 years;
- this coming year it was anticipated that approximately 40% of school leavers would go to university, of which 58.3% had received unconditional offers;
- there was also a focus on developing the aspiration of pupils in relation to attainment at Level 6;
- work had also focused on ensuring the School was inclusive for all, particularly in relation to the timetable and subject choice so that pupils' attainment at any level and in any subject area was recognised in the same way as those going to university, and he provided details of vocational courses being developed in this regard; and
- the School was holding informal discussions with parents on how to improve engagement with them to aid the learning of pupils.

In discussion, Members commented it was crucial the School was being supported in relation to the challenges around staffing levels and recruitment in terms of improving attainment and the next HMle report. In response, Members were advised of the support being provided to the School including that the Acting Depute Head was to remain in post for a further year. In addition, provision had been made for the recruitment of both a maths and home economics teacher.

During further discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was important to recognise the excellent work being undertaken by the School on inclusion and around vocational education;
- a point in regard to the reason for the difference in attainment at level five at the School and a neighbouring School. The Head Teacher referred to the differences in SIMD data and also the challenges faced in creating a positive forward thinking School. He reported the current complement of staff were committed in this regard and the more positive ethos and atmosphere in the School had been commented on by parents;
- it was suggested utilising Canadian teachers was not a sustainable model going forward and the long term strategy should be to create a workforce dedicated to the School and the community;
- the potential for flexibility to match teacher vacancies in north schools to probationers leaving teaching college to attract teachers who wanted to return to the area and those who wished to live in the Highlands;
- it was suggested there was a need to better market and publicise the excellent and positive work being undertaken at the School;
- a particular success and good news story had been the uniformed services courses which had been run at Golspie High School and this should be highlighted to the HMle;
- the uniformed services course was an excellent example of developing local solutions to the challenges around young people wishing to remain in the area and employers seeking to attract recruits;
- it was noted that the Pupil Equity Fund had been used to employ a health and wellbeing officer at the School and Members welcomed the excellent

work the officer was undertaking with disadvantaged young people in raising their attainment; and

- the Head Teacher be commended on taking the HMIE report and using it as a benchmark to focus on the areas which need to be addressed and by which to move the School forward, specific reference to the work being undertaken in relation to inclusion.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report.

#### **4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail na Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/05/18 dated 10 May 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, information was sought and provided in relation to the Driving Ambitions initiative. It was suggested that the initiative and materials used required to be updated to encourage young people to become involved. In addition, concern was expressed that Members and schools on the north and west coasts were no longer actively involved in Driving Ambitions, and that it would also encourage participation to take the initiative out to those schools.

Mrs D Mackay confirmed that she would take this issue back to the Sutherland Community Planning Partnership and the local Senior Officer confirmed that he would also report back to the relevant staff within the Service with a view to meeting local requirements. The Chair advised that the Committee would also be content to work with the Partnership in terms of rolling out Driving Ambitions in the area.

Thereafter, it was suggested that in terms of recruitment at Bonar Bridge, it would be helpful if the Service could provide publicity material which could be posted in Ardgay and District Community Council's newsletter, which was within the catchment area for that station. There may also be an opportunity to circulate material in the other areas where recruitment challenges were being experienced. The Local Senior Officer confirmed that he would follow up on this matter.

Following on from the above, there was discussion on the issues around road safety on the North Coast 500 and the Local Senior Officer advised of a multi-agency approach in relation to which the Service would be content to be involved.

The Chair welcomed the new type of fire appliances being introduced at Bettyhill and Lochinver as part of its Transformation programme. She also requested that the potential to introduce the Hi-Fires programme into Sutherland be discussed at the next appropriate meeting. The Local Senior Officer reported that a programme of Hi-Fires events was being scheduled and he would forward this to Members once available.

The Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the Area Performance Report.

#### **5. Road Structural Maintenance Report 2018-19 Càradh Structarail Rathaidean 2018-19**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/06/18 dated 26 April 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Senior Engineer advised that due to the winter conditions a large number of pot hole repairs were required, and that capital monies would be used to supplement the revenue budget to carry out those repairs which would in turn have an impact on the Programme for 2018/19. She explained this was a 'live' list of works and subject to change throughout the year depending on the rate of the deterioration of roads. Therefore the intention was to provide quarterly progress reports to Members on all roads matters in Sutherland.

The Senior Engineer also provided an update to the list of priority projects circulated as Appendix 1 to the report and advised that the following schemes had been identified as the top three priorities within this year's Programme:- (i) Muirfield Road, Brora, (ii) Lyne Straight, Ledmore; and (iii) Embo to Crossroads

In discussion, concern was expressed at the condition of Muirfield Road, Brora which it was reported served a significant number of elderly people and young families and was the direct route to the local wellbeing hub. This matter had been raised initially in 2015, and since then different start dates had been provided, albeit with the proviso that there may be slippage on the Programme. It was appreciated there had been staffing issues over this period, and it was reported that the local community had been patient on this matter to date. However it was suggested the road had deteriorated to the extent it was disintegrating and it was important this scheme was progressed as a priority.

During further discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- an update was sought and provided on the initial feedback on the Totalmobile system of reporting and repairing pot holes which was being piloted in Sutherland;
- a point in regard to how Members communicated any changes to the Programme throughout the year to their constituents. The Senior Engineer confirmed that any changes would be notified in the quarterly updates to be provided to Members at their Ward Business Meeting;
- the Chair advised that the quarterly updates would also give Members the opportunity to input into the priority list within the Programme;
- it was noted that the outstanding projects from the previous year had not been included in the Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. It was important that an accurate and up to date list be provided to allow Members to properly scrutinise the Programme; and
- an update was sought and provided on the position with white and yellow lining in Sutherland.

Thereafter, the Senior Engineer provided an update on the current vacancies for road workers in Sutherland and advised of three posts which had been earmarked for the Council's modern apprentice scheme. In response to questions, she confirmed that the information on the modern apprentices would be circulated to Members once fully scoped. In addition, it was intended to feed into the careers initiative being run in Sutherland schools.

The Committee **APPROVED** the prioritised programme of Maintenance for Roads for the Sutherland Local Committee Area commencing in 2018/19.

**6. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018**  
**Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2017 to 31 Am Mart 2018**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/07/18 dated 24 April 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, confirmation was sought and provided that Sutherland compared favourably to other areas of Highland in relation to rent arrears notwithstanding that a significant increase was being observed in the area which reflected the Highland-wide trend. It was confirmed that a detailed report on rent arrears was being submitted to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee on 30 May 2018.

Thereafter, Members queried the main reasons Universal Credit was contributing to increased rent arrears, in response to which it was reported that delays in payment continued to be a main contributory factor and the number of seasonal workers in the area was not being observed to be having a significant impact. Further information was also provided on the assistance provided by the Housing Team to those in rent arrears through repayment plans, housing support delivered in Sutherland by New Start Highland and referrals to the Highland Council Welfare Support team.

Thereafter, the Chair suggested that going forward the Performance Report be submitted to the Committee on an annual basis with exception reporting throughout the year as and when required.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Housing Performance Report be submitted to the Committee on an annual basis with exception reporting throughout the year as and when required.

## 7. **Street Naming – New Housing Developments** **Ainmeachadh Sràide - Leasachaidhean Ùra Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/08/18 dated 23 May 2018 by the Head of Policy and Reform

The Committee **APPROVED** the name of a new development in Dornoch as Allan Gardens.

## 8. **Dornoch Common Good Leases** **Aontaidhean Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/09/18 dated 11 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and the Head of Policy and Reform.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** approval of lease of:-

- i. Dornoch Beach playpark to Dornoch Community Council for £1pa (if asked) for 19 years and otherwise on terms and conditions agreed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure; and
- ii. 2,000 sq.m of Dornoch Common Good Land to Mid- America (UK) for £1,500 pa for 30 years and otherwise on terms and conditions agreed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

**9. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated and **NOTED** the Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 27 February 2018, which were approved by the Council on 8 March 2018.

The meeting closed at 11.55am.

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**The Highland Council  
Corporate Resources Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 24 May 2018 at 10.30 am.

**Present:**

Mr G Adam	Mr B Lobban
Mr R Bremner (by video conference)	Mr D Louden
Mr J Bruce	Mrs D Mackay
Mrs C Caddick	Mr D Mackay (substitute)
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr A Mackinnon
Dr I Cockburn	Mrs M Paterson
Mr J Finlayson (substitute)	Mr M Reiss
Mr L Fraser	Mr D Rixson
Mr R Gale	Mr P Saggars
Mr A Jarvie (substitute)	Mr B Thompson
Mr R Laird	

**Non-Members also Present:**

Mr M Finlayson	Mr J McGillivray (by video conference)
Mr K Gowans	Ms M Smith
Mr R MacWilliam	

**Also in attendance:**

Mr M Hayes, UNISON  
Mr P MacPherson, GMB  
Mr R Whyte, Unite the Union

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr S Barron, Chief Executive  
Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources  
Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr S Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service  
Mrs S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Ms K Lackie, Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr M Watters, Freedom of Information & Data Protection Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office



**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 A Mackinnon in the Chair**

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs M Davidson, Mr R Macdonald, Mr S Mackie, Mr K Rosie and Mrs C Wilson.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Good News Stories  
Naidheachdan Matha**

The Chair advised that in 2006, Highland Council Officers and Trade Union health and safety representatives worked together to produce the Safety Representatives Charter and the Health and Safety Partnership Agreement. These documents set out how both parties would work in partnership to meet the requirements of the regulations and help ensure the health and safety of staff, and others across the Council area.

This was an innovative approach to partnership working and the TUC referred to it as the “Highland Model” and worked with other organisations to produce a similar framework. The documents were reviewed every three years, and signed by the Chief Executive and the senior Health and Safety representatives from each of the main trade unions. This underlined the importance of health and safety partnership working.

Thereafter, and on the invitation of the Chair, Mr Steve Barron, Chief Executive, Mr M Hayes, Unison, Mr R Whyte, Unite and Mr P MacPherson, GMB proceeded to sign the 2018 Agreement and Charter.

The Committee welcomed and **NOTED** the Signing of the Health and Safety Partnership Agreement and Safety Representatives Charter.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S OFFICE  
OIFIS AN ÀRD-OIFIGEIR**

*In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, Item 11 on the agenda was taken at this point.*

#### 11. Chief Executive's Office Service Plan Plana Seirbheis Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir

There had been circulated Report No RES/26/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Chief Executive which set out the Chief Executive's Office Service priorities and how it was contributing to the delivery of the Council's Programme, "Local Voices, Highland Choices."

In discussion, points raised by Members included:-

- The Chief Executive's Service included a number of support services to the Council and in particular Policy and Reform, Legal and Democratic Services and Trading Standards would see a significant increase in their workload as a result of community planning, localism and participatory budgeting. An indication was sought as to whether these services would be protected in terms of their resources and if appropriate, strengthened, to ensure that the Council's priorities were able to be achieved in an effective and meaningful way for communities;
- It was queried if there was any proposal for a further review of the Ward Management structure in light of the redesign of the Council and the changing role of the Ward Manager;
- In relation to the Corporate Communications team, there had been a significant increase in communication received by the Council from the public through social media and queries through this medium generally did not get a response. It was acknowledged that the Corporate Communications team's staff resources were limited, but it was important in terms of good customer and public relations that queries/comments through social media should be responded to. An indication was sought if there were any proposals in the Service Plan to improve how social media was used;
- It was suggested that in order to improve how the Council responded to queries through social media, a pilot project be introduced whereby each Service had a dedicated officer to respond to queries raised from members of the public; and
- The Corporate Communications team were congratulated for their work on the Council's application of Augmented Reality technology.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the draft Chief Executive's Office Service Plan for 2017-22; and
- ii. **AGREED** to consider ways of improving feedback to queries raised by members of the public through social media.

#### **CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE SEIRBHEIS A' CHÙRAIM AGUS AN IONNSACHAIDH**

#### 4. Gaelic and Culture Update Aithisg Ùrachaidh Gàidhlig agus Cultair

There had been circulated Report No RES/19/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning which informed Members on a number of

significant Gaelic/cultural developments which the Gaelic Team were currently taking forward in respect of Draft Gaelic Language Plan 3; Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund; and the 40<sup>th</sup> Celtic Media Festival.

Members welcomed that the bid to hold the 40<sup>th</sup> Celtic Media Festival next year in Aviemore had been successful. This was a prestigious festival and therefore was excellent news for the Highlands and for the Council's commitment to the Gaelic language.

Further good news was that the Council's Gaelic Language Plan 3 had been well received by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The Council now had to deliver on the plan and the Council looked forward to working closely with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to promote Gaelic through education and cultural activities throughout the Highlands. It was also encouraging that the Council had submitted twelve bids for project funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The outcome of these bids would be known in July 2018.

Members were pleased with progress on Gaelic development at the Council which was extremely encouraging to the commitment of the promotion of the language and culture.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. that Officers continue to liaise with Bòrd na Gàidhlig in relation the actions required in order to ensure that the Draft Gaelic Language Plan 3 fulfilled their requirements;
- ii. the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund submissions be supported; and
- iii. that the Chair of the Gaelic Implementation Group, with support from Officers, lead and support the 40<sup>th</sup> Celtic Media Festival when it was based in Aviemore in the late Spring/early Summer 2019.

## **FINANCIAL MONITORING SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL**

### **5. Corporate Revenue Near Final Monitoring Report for 2017/18 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Teachd-a-steach Corporra airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/20/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources which provided a summary of the near final revenue budget spend for financial year 2017/18. The position was described 'near final' pending the completion of the year-end accounts and audit process.

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

- the overspend in the annual revenue budget had showed the impact of successive budget reductions and council tax freezes. It was therefore extremely challenging to manage significant pressures on demand led services. The Council's Administration Budget Team had done all it could to protect front line services and jobs, and they were focused on finding ways the Council could increase income and maximise efficiency

savings in areas where the Council did not have statutory responsibilities. The Council's budget would remain challenging in years to come, meaning that Members would have difficult decisions to make in order that the Council had a balanced budget as was legally required;

- the Administration's Budget Team intended to introduce a baseline budgeting approach and other political groups would be consulted during the budget process;
- concern was expressed that the Council's general fund non-earmarked balance had reduced from £11.363m to £8.561m. The year-end balance represented 1.56% of the annual revenue budget. Audit Scotland had recommended that public sector bodies should have a minimum of 2% of their annual revenue budget in reserve;
- It was queried what the Administration's Budget Team plan was for increasing the funding that the Council had in its non-earmarked balances. This fund would be critical in dealing with a major unforeseen event. It was also queried if the savings from the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme had been put back into the reserve budget or general budgets;
- Only 18% of the Council's funding came from Council Tax and therefore it was not felt that successive Council Tax freezes would have made a significant difference to the Council's budget position;
- A point was made that if the Council had been able to increase Council Tax by 3% over the period of eight years of Council Tax freezes, this would have raised an additional £25m for the Council;
- One of the results from a previous Citizen Panel annual survey was that 61% of respondents would support a rise of 5% in Council Tax as long as it was spent on local services and there was less waste in the Council. It was unclear if there would be a penalty on the Council if it went above the 3% increase in Council tax, but if it could, this would help the Council's budget situation;
- There were many households in the Highlands that were very grateful that the Council Tax had been frozen for successive years. The Council had also been compensated by the Scottish Government for not increasing Council Tax;
- A view was expressed that vacancy management should no longer be continued to be used for budgeting purposes and that if vacant posts were not required then they should be deleted from the Service's establishment. Instead, savings should be sought from efficiencies in the Service;
- The practice of vacancy management in the Looked after Children service should end as this affected very vulnerable young people;
- The additional funding received from the Scottish Government for winter maintenance, while welcomed, did not cover the Council's spend on this activity and had resulted in reserve funding being used;
- The Care and Learning Service budget was consistently overspent every year and therefore more funding was required for this Service next year;
- All public sector organisations were facing financial challenges in light of less funding being given to the public sector;
- This was the first overspend the Council had in many years and was mainly due to additional spend on winter maintenance as a consequence of the severe winter. There was a need for the Council to look at how it budgeted for demand led services such as winter maintenance and for Looked after Children;

- A point was made that if it was not for an underspend in loan charges and underspends in the Chief Executive's Service and Corporate Resources Services, then the Council's reserves budget would be in a far worse position. The Council could not continue to rely on such underspends in future and a new budget approach was required; and
- It was queried if the figure contained in the Looked after Children budget was based on last year's budget or last year's budget outcome. The Council had little control over demand led budgets such as this and therefore there was a need for a more thorough review of spending and income targets to ensure these were met.

In responding to a number of points, the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources stated that Members should regard the year end result as a "wake up call" and stressed that the Council had to make tough decisions regarding savings, and then deliver on these. Several points made during the debate had suggested increasing expenditure which was not feasible without a reassessment of priorities. He outlined that vacancy management was an appropriate tool for dealing with short term turnover, and helping to deliver future years' savings.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- AGREED** the near final financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets for 2017/18 and noted the ensuing impact on balances; and
- NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

#### **6. Corporate Capital Monitoring Final Monitoring Report for 2017/18 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Dheireannach Calpa Corporra airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/21/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources which provided a summary of the capital expenditure made by the Council during financial year 2017/18 and identified the sources of funding used for that investment.

Following consideration, the Committee:-

- AGREED** the near final position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes as at 31 March 2018;
- HOMOLOGATED** the decision of the Chair, in conjunction with Group Leaders to agree that condition 1 for applications to the Capital Discretionary Fund be waived and the committed funds to Linnhe Leisure be provided as set out in paragraph 6.3; and
- AGREED** that approval for signing the agreements and associated documents for Alness be delegated, and the set-up of a project board, as described in section 7 of the report.

**7. Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget – Near Final Revenue Monitoring for 2017/18**  
**Buidseat Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra agus nan Sochairean – Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail Iar-Dheireannach airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/22/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

It was noted that issues with the Council's Occupational Health contract had now been resolved.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service Revenue Monitoring and Welfare budget to 31 March 2018.

**8. Corporate Resources Service Capital Near Final Monitoring Report for 2017/18**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Calpa Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/23/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service capital budget as at 31 March 2018.

**9. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Near Final Revenue Monitoring Report 2017/18**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/24/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Chief Executive.

A reduction in expenditure on training, travel and subsistence was welcomed and was a result of staff changing the way they undertook their business e.g. using video and telephone conferencing facilities.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the financial out-turn position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018; and
- ii. **NOTED** the Chief Executive's Office achieved £0.443m savings in 2017/18.

**10. Chief Executive's Office Capital Near Final Monitoring Report for 2017/18**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Calpa Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/25/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **AGREED** the out-turn position for the Chief Executive's Office capital budget for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE  
OIFIS AN ÀRD-OIFIGEIR**

**12. Data Protection Policy Review  
Fios às Ùr mu Phoileasaidh Dìon Dàta**

There had been circulated Report No RES/27/18 dated 14 May 2018 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the changes to Data Protection legislation;
- ii. **NOTED** the effect on the Council and Members;
- iii. **AGREED** that Data Protection Impact Assessments be undertaken whenever changes were being considered which might affect the processing of personal data; and
- iv. **APPROVED** the updated Data Protection Policy.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE  
SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORRA**

**13. Treasury Management – Summary of Transactions  
Rianachd Ionmhais – Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean**

There had been circulated Report No RES/28/18 dated 23 April 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, reference was made to the importance of treasury management to the Council's finances and staff were commended for their excellent work in this regard.

The Committee **NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions as circulated.

**14. Universal Basic Income (UBI): Research Projects Update  
Teachd-a-steach Bunaiteach Uile-Choitcheann: Fios às Ùr mu Phròiseactan Rannsachaidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/29/18 dated 9 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed at the cost of producing the report and it was suggested that no further time or resources should be expended on a matter which was outwith the control and ambit of the Council;
- it was highlighted that the Finnish Government had announced it would not be extending its UBI trial;
- the view was expressed that UBI would result in a significant increase in public expenditure and therefore was not a viable proposition;
- it was important that any welfare system while alleviating poverty did not encourage dependency and it was suggested that the way forward was

a universal credit system which replaced the current system of multiple benefits;

- any move towards UBI would require the approval of the UK and Scottish Governments and it was not anticipated this would be forthcoming in the near future;
- the cost of producing a report should not preclude the Council from considering major and radical proposals such as UBI;
- the Council had a duty to find a starting point by which to explore any opportunities UBI could bring to the quality of life in the Highlands and it was noted there had been widespread support for this approach at the full Council meeting on 14 December 2018;
- it was suggested that UBI had the potential to make more fragile remote and rural communities in the Highlands more sustainable, drive the innovation and enterprise required, provide stable employment and respond to the demographic challenges and anticipated demand for health social care and other public services;
- it was suggested that in view of the wider issues associated with UBI that a stand-alone cross party UBI working group be established to take this forward and ensure a Highland voice in national discussions;
- it was important to highlight that the recommendation the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group continue to track progress with UBI would be accommodated within existing resources;
- concern was expressed at the suggestion that a universal credit system was the way forward given the impacts of the roll out of the current system in the Highlands, and at any stereotyping of those who were unemployed;
- there was no current UBI model which would be a cost on top of the current public expenditure landscape and it should be noted that UBI was a radical and fundamentally different way of addressing income inequality;
- the Scottish Government was supporting feasibility studies in four local authorities which suggested it supported further exploration of UBI;
- a request that officers investigate the potential for a Council Member to sit on the Scottish Government's UBI working group; and
- it was suggested that the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group was the appropriate forum to keep a watching brief on UBI, rather than setting up a separate working group which would also have resource implications.

Following discussion, Mr P Saggars, seconded by Mr A Jarvie, **MOVED** that the Council note the content of the report and thank the Corporate Resources Service for the work involved in preparing the report. At a time when the resources of the Council were severely stretched, the Committee agree that no further time or resources should be expended on a matter which was entirely outwith the control and ambit of the Council.

As an **AMENDMENT**, the Chair, seconded by Mr B Lobban, moved the recommendations contained within the report.

In response to a point of order, the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources advised that the motion was competent in terms of the



Council's decision on 14 December 2018 in response to the notice of motion on UBI.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 3 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 18 votes with 1 abstention, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr J Bruce, Mr A Jarvie, Mr P Sagers

**For the Amendment:**

Mr G Adam, Mr R Bremner, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs H Carmichael, Dr I Cockburn, Mr J Finlayson, Mr R Gale, Mr R Laird, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Mr G Mackenzie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mr B Thomson

**For the Abstention:**

Mr L Fraser

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that members of the Poverty & Inequalities Working Group continue to track progress with the feasibility studies in Scotland. This could be achieved within existing resources although should Members decide to accelerate participation in UBI research at some point in the future then resource implications would need to be reviewed.

**15. Corporate Resources Service Quarterly Performance Report  
Aithisg Choileanaidh Ràitheil Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra**

There had been circulated Report No RES/30/18 dated 3 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, the Service was congratulated on the positive trends achieved in respect of the Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates in-year collection rates. However, concern was expressed at the trends in relation to the collection of the Business Improvement District (BID) Levies and the fact that the onus for collection lay mainly with the Council and the potential for BID to provide more support in this regard. Where collection levels continued to show decline it would be helpful to have information on the bands of rateable values for those properties that had not paid the levy to provide a better understanding of the overall position.

Thereafter, the Service was commended on the performance achieved in respect of the number of days to process housing benefit where there had been a change of circumstances.

The Committee **NOTED** the statutory and key performance indicators as circulated.

**16. Corporate Resources Service Plan 2017-2022  
Plana Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra 2017-2022**

There had been circulated Report No RES/31/18 dated 14 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee, thanked the staff within the Corporate Resources Service for their excellent work and on their willingness to embrace change.

In discussion, clarification was sought and provided that the Service was considering those areas of activity which had definitive performance indicators in terms of how a managed alteration to those performance targets might achieve budget savings. It was also confirmed this work would be progressed across the Council.

Thereafter, it was suggested that the Plan was critical in that it set out in detail the direction, priorities and goals of the Service and would allow progress to be monitored and for an informed discussion in future budget considerations in relation to the impacts of any proposed savings. It was hoped that the other Service Plans would be presented in the same level of detail. In addition, the key priorities and actions which would specifically support and have a positive impact upon protected groups and those at risk of socio-economic disadvantage was crucial in terms of the Highlands being an inclusive place to live. It was important that Members and officers worked together to deliver the Plan.

The Committee **APPROVED** the draft Corporate Resources Service Plan for 2017-22.

**17. Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Plan 2018  
Poileasaidh Slàinte, Sàbhailteachd agus Sunnd Chorporra 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/32/18 dated 9 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, reference was made to the proportion of sickness absence attributed to mental health issues and information was sought and provided on the range of support provision available in terms of staff awareness raising, training and support.

It was suggested that consideration be given to replacing the word 'pressure' with 'expectation' in the Stress Management section of the Plan on the basis that the statement that a degree of pressure was a positive force at work could be considered to be a subjective matter.

The Committee **APPROVED** the updated Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Plan subject to the word "pressure" being replaced with the word "*expectation*" under the Stress Management Section of the Policy.

**18. ICT Transformation and Network Refresh**  
**Cruth-atharrachadh ICT agus Ùrachadh Lìonraidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/33/18 dated 10 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the progress being made on the contract delays was encouraging, however the need to improve the business as usual element of the Programme should also continue to be a priority;
- confirmation was sought and provided that as technology advanced there was a planned evaluation of the roll out of chrome books as the project progressed;
- concern at issues with the lack of adequate IT provision at Croy Primary School and a request that a date be provided to Culloden Academy for the roll out of their chrome books. The ICT Operations Manager confirmed he would follow up on both these matters; and
- the need to have an appropriate level of IT engineer support at Nairn Academy during the exam period and concern in relation the cost to the School of ensuring that support was in place. The ICT Operations Manager provided an update on discussions with Wipro on support provision during exams and confirmed that the issues around the cost would be explored further.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the ICT Transformation and Network Programmes.

**19. ICT Projects Update**  
**Cunntas às Ùr mu Phròiseactan ICT**

There had been circulated Report No RES/34/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS**  
**GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN**

**20. Commercial Board: Minutes of Meetings**  
**Bòrd Malairteach: Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 14 March 2018, 19 April 2018 and 16 May 2018 for approval.

**21. Minutes of Meetings**  
**Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan**

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Employment Release Sub-Committee held on 9 May 2018;
- ii. **NOTED** the Appeals Committee held on 16 March 2018 and 26 March 2018;
- iii. **APPROVED** the Central Safety Committee held on 4 May 2018; and
- iv. **APPROVED** the Staff Partnership Forum held on 4 May 2018.

**22. Exclusion of the Public**  
**Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE**  
**SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORRA**

**23. Holiday Pay**  
**Pàigheadh Shaor-làithean**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/35/18 dated 14 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Following discussion, the Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the addition of '*holiday*' in the wording of Recommendation 1.

The meeting ended at 1.40pm.

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## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Care, Learning and Housing Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 30 May 2018 at 10.05 am.

### Present:

Mr A Baxter (Chair)	Mr W MacKay (video conferencing)
Mr B Boyd	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr A Christie (Chair)	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs M Cockburn	Mr R MacWilliam
Ms K Currie	Mrs B McAllister
Mr J Finlayson (Vice Chair)	Ms L Munro
Mr A Graham	Mrs F Robertson
Mr T Heggie	Mr G Ross
Mr A Jarvie	Ms N Sinclair (video conferencing)
Ms E Knox	Mr C Smith
Mr R MacDonald (video conferencing)	Ms K Stephen (Vice Chair)

### NHS Highland:

Ms J Macdonald

### Religious Representative:

Mr K Weidner

### Non-Members also present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mr J McGillivray (video conferencing)
Mrs M Davidson	Mrs M Paterson
Mr K Gowans	Mr A Rhind
Mr J Gray	

### In attendance:

Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning  
 Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services  
 Mrs B Cairns, Head of Additional Support Services, Care and Learning Service  
 Ms S Campbell, Head of Children's Services, Care and Learning Service  
 Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service  
 Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service  
 Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services  
 Ms S Harrington, Senior Manager Early Years, Care and Learning Service  
 Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Care and Learning Service  
 Mr G Killbourn, Residential Resources Manager, Care and Learning Service  
 Ms A Gillies, 16+ Opportunities for All Coordinator, Care and Learning Service  
 Mrs S Galloway, Rector, Plockton High School  
 Mr D O'Neil, Business Manager Teacher/Young Enterprise Lead, Plockton High School  
 Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service

Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance (Third Sector)  
 Ms G Newman, Highland Children's Forum (Third Sector)  
 Ms S Blyth, Highland Parent Council Partnership  
 Miss J Maclennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
 Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
 Mrs C Maclver, Committee and Elections Officer, Chief Executive's Office

**Also in attendance:**

Senior Pupils, Plockton High School  
 Ms L Thomas, Area Team Chair, Young Enterprise Scotland  
 Mr T Boyd, Advocacy and Participation Manager – North, Who Cares? Scotland  
 Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life Highland

**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 A Baxter in the Chair**

**Business**

In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, items 18,19 and 21 on the agenda would be taken at the end of the meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence  
 Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms P Munro, Ms M Newdick, Ms S Lamont and Ms M Roberts.

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

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

Item 6 – Mr A Graham (financial)  
 Item 10 – Mr A Christie (financial)  
 Item 11 – Mr A Christie (financial)  
 Item 21 – Mr T Heggie, Mr D Macpherson, Ms L Munro (all non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial)  
 Item 23iv – Mr A Christie (financial)

**3. Outstanding Achievements  
 Coileanaidhean Air Leth**

There had been tabled a list of outstanding achievements by people and groups.

The Director of Care and Learning added that Grantown Grammar School had been identified as the best outdoor sports school in Britain, and the Head Teacher of Kingussie High School had been awarded Fellowship of the Scottish College of Educational Leaders. These achievements would be formally recognised in the list presented to the August Committee.

During discussion, Members highlighted that Staffin Primary School had won Poppyscotland's learning competition and had received £1000 to update the local area.

Having commended all those involved, and, in particular, the breadth of achievement across Highland schools, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outstanding achievements; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the relevant Director write to all those involved in recognition of their success.

#### 4. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Non-HRA Budget: Near-final Outturn Report 2017/2018**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/02/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the near-final revenue budget position for 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the year-end HRA surplus of £0.325m be applied as Capital from Current Revenue.

#### 5. **Community Services Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/03/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

#### 6. **Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016: Rent Pressure Zones**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared a financial interest in this item as a registered landlord and left the Chamber for the duration of the item.**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/04/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Rent Pressure Zones needed to come into effect before there was a significant problem. However, given that applications relied on retrospective information on rent increases, it was difficult to say what the Council could do to be pre-emptive;
- anecdotal evidence was not sufficient to support an application for a Rent Pressure Zone, and Members and officers needed to work together to ensure that information on private sector rents was fed through the system. In addition, it was suggested that consideration be given to a press call to encourage private sector tenants struggling with increasing rents to provide information;

- information was sought, and provided, on what could be done to protect tenants in the event of private landlords increasing their rent and, having been informed that they could not afford it, serving notice to quit;
- it was suggested that the possibility of UHI undertaking research on private sector rents be explored;
- there were a number of strands to draw together to get a picture of what was happening with rent levels – eg changes in taxation meant that a lot of people with buy to let properties were now selling their properties, and the increase in Airbnb had taken properties out of the rental market;
- data was necessary to monitor and evaluate rent increases and the impact on those who were struggling to afford them; and
- a timescale having been sought for a further update, it was confirmed that it was intended to provide a briefing note towards the end of the calendar year.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on Rent Pressure Zones;
- ii. **AGREED** to continue dialogue with other Councils, COSLA and Scottish Government officers in developing a common approach to research and data collection that would support successful applications for Rent Pressure Zones;
- iii. **NOTED** that it would take time and resources to develop the evidence base to support applications in Highland and that there was no specific budget provision for this;
- iv. **AGREED** that discussion take place locally with Ward Members, where requested, regarding specific local issues of affordability in the Private Rented Sectors that might help in identifying specific locations in which to target evidence gathering in future;
- v. **AGREED** that further updates be provided to Members as work progressed nationally; and
- vi. **AGREED** to explore the possibility of UHI undertaking research on private sector rents.

## 7. Children Living in Temporary Accommodation

There had been circulated joint Report No CLH/05/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Directors of Community Services and Care and Learning.

In introducing the report, the Chair referred to a previous request that information on the number of households with children in temporary accommodation be reported on a quarterly basis. This had been addressed in the Children's Services Performance Report at item 10 on the agenda, which set out a number of proposed amendments to performance measures.

During discussion, information was sought, and provided, on what could be done to cease the practice of children being placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation, such as Houses in Multiple Occupation or Bed and Breakfasts that also housed large numbers of people with issues such as addictions.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the report.

## 8. Care and Learning Revenue Budget – Near-final Outturn 2017/18



There had been circulated Report No CLH/06/18 dated 18 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the interim solution with regard to Aviemore pool was welcomed. However, there appeared to be a recurring issue towards the end of the contract and it was suggested that consideration be given to an innovative long-term strategy to provide quality swimming for the community, particularly in Badenoch;
- concern was expressed that Annex 1 could be photocopied separately and mistaken for a final report and it was therefore suggested that a prominent heading be added to such reports, stating that it was a forecast at a particular date;
- pressure on the Looked After Children (LAC) budget was one of the main reasons for the overspend and it was hoped that the final outturn report would provide details of expenditure on LAC and some analysis and planning as to what was going to be done. In response, the Chair reminded Members of previous discussions and that the Committee had approved a business case for in-house provision aimed at tackling this issue; and
- in relation to Staff Costs and Other Costs, it was hoped that the final outturn report would provide a breakdown of expenditure, particularly on Other Costs, the variance in that regard being approximately £8m. In both cases, it was suggested that an “80/20 analysis” be undertaken to pick out the major contributions to the variance.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the revenue budget near final outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2018; and
- ii. **NOTED** the update provided regarding Aviemore pool and **AGREED** that consideration be given to an innovative long-term strategy.

## 9. Care and Learning Capital Programme – 2018/19 Budget Allocations

There had been circulated Report No CLH/07/18 dated 23 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Chair commended the new Strontian Primary School building, which he had visited recently and which would be a great start to the new school year for local children. He explained that he had extended an invitation to the local steering group to attend a future meeting of the Committee, both to celebrate what they had achieved and to describe some of the many challenges they had faced and how they overcame them. This would be of interest to other communities in Highland who wished to explore whether the model was appropriate for the circumstances in their area.

In addition, he explained that the Council’s Budget Team and representatives of opposition groups had met and had detailed and frank discussions with both Scottish Futures Trust and Hub North. In relation to Scottish Futures Trust in particular, details of the bid criteria and process were awaited so that the Council could proceed in preparing and submitting bids. In relation to Hub North, useful discussions had

taken place, and would continue over the next few weeks, regarding how to maximise the number of schools within the available capital spend.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the commitment to engage with communities regarding Scottish Futures Trust was welcomed;
- in relation to the proposed programme set out in Appendix 1, information was sought and provided regarding contingency planning in the event that other projects arose during the course of the year;
- with regard to mobile library vehicles, some Members, whilst welcoming the move to a programme of replacement, expressed concern that it would take too long and suggested that it be accelerated. Some existing vehicles would be 15/16 years old with mileage in excess of 300,000 by the time they were replaced, and further vehicle failures were inevitable. The issue would be easier to address if there was a multi-year budget but, given that was not the case, it was suggested that leasing three vehicles and replacing the three oldest existing vehicles immediately was the best way forward. It was emphasised that the Council had a statutory obligation to provide an equitable and sustainable library service for all communities in Highland, and that mobile libraries did not just provide books but provided a lifeline. In relation to the possibility of purchasing a used vehicle with the balance of £20k, it was suggested that this was ambitious. However, other Members highlighted that some local authorities were reducing their use of mobile libraries and affordable used vehicles were becoming available. Other Members also expressed frustration at the suggestion that spend be accelerated and emphasised the need to work within the available budget. The Chair added that schools too were an extremely pressing statutory obligation and that all Members were wrestling with how to balance the capital programme, the available funding and delivering aspirations within communities. He concurred that a multi-year budget settlement would be preferable and confirmed that the Council would continue to make representations in that regard; and
- Inverness schools was one of the biggest budget pressures the Council faced. Whilst briefings had been held for Inverness Members, there were implications for the whole Council and concern was expressed that there had not been a report to Committee in 2018. The Chair confirmed that a report would be presented to a future meeting. With regard to the ongoing monitoring of delivery of capital projects, it was explained that, in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this was reported to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

Following discussion, Mr A Jarvie proposed an addition to the recommendation, namely, that the Director come back with a report on the feasibility of either wholly leasing or a combination of lease and purchase in order to immediately replace the three oldest mobile library vehicles. The Chair confirmed that he was content to accept this.

In summing up, the Chair explained that he and the Leader of the Council had had extensive discussions with Highland MSPs regarding capital funding for schools and the unique position Highland was in in terms of geography, the age of the school estate, small school rolls in rural schools and the associated challenges. An acknowledgement had been received to the effect that the Scottish Government

recognised the unique position Highland was in and the Council would continue to make the case that it should be treated differently to other areas of Scotland in terms of capital funding for schools.

Members welcomed the discussions and queried whether the ratio of pupils to teachers, particularly in larger schools where there was significant detriment in comparison to other authorities, had been raised. The Chair explained that no specific discussions had taken place to date but the point was well made and he would ensure that the issue, which had also been mentioned to him by Head Teachers, was raised.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the capital budget allocations for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 1 and paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 of the report; and
- ii. that the Director come back with a report on the feasibility of either wholly leasing or a combination of lease and purchase in order to immediately replace the three oldest mobile library vehicles.

## 10. Performance Report – Children’s Services

**Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/08/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to Indicator 35 - the number of LAC who attain qualification in any subject at level 3 or above will increase - information was sought on the reason for the fluctuation since the baseline was established in 2012;
- in relation to Indicator 44 – the percentage of schools awarded an evaluation of good or better for self-evaluation in HMI inspections increases - all schools worked to the same agenda, namely, “How Good Is Our School?”, and knew what they were going to be assessed on. It was therefore puzzling that the current position was as low as 50%. It was considered that this could be increased quite quickly and information was sought on how it was proposed to do so. The Chair commented that, although the indicator was below target, it was important not to lose sight of the fact that there had been a considerable improvement from a baseline of 20%;
- in relation to Indicator 45 – the percentage of schools awarded an evaluation for good or better for curriculum in HMI inspections increases – whilst the current position was 8% above target, that left almost a third of schools designated as less than good and an explanation was sought in that regard;
- in relation to Indicator 46 – the percentage of schools evaluated as good or better for meeting learners needs in HMI inspections increases – the increase to 83% was welcomed and congratulations were expressed to all those involved;
- there were several references to exclusions in the report and further information was sought in that regard including whether they had increased or decreased

over the past few years and the reasons why, and whether there had been any assessment of the impact of exclusions, and non-exclusions, on schools. It was also suggested that it might be better to record exclusions by number of pupils as the same pupil being excluded several times could distort the picture;

- self-evaluation was at the core of school inspections and it was necessary to better prepare schools for inspection and ensure those that had been inspected provided feedback to other schools;
- in England, a school would not know it was being inspected until the day of the inspection. Schools in Scotland had the advantage of being able to be more prepared;
- it was necessary to find a better way of monitoring and reporting on LAC;
- it would be helpful to know how schools were utilising Pupil Equity Fund money, what best practice was coming forward and whether it was making a difference in terms of reducing exclusions. In particular, information was sought on the impact of “nurture rooms”; and
- concern was expressed that some of the data in the report was 14-17 months old and it was requested that, where indicators were flagged as red, more up-to-date data be provided so progress could be tracked. In relation to Indicator 26 in particular, early dental care intervention was an important health contributor and a request was made that officers work with colleagues in NHS Highland to provide more up-to-date data.

In responding to the points raised, the Director explained that exclusions was a complex issue and suggested that a dedicated report be presented to a future meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the performance information;
- ii. **NOTED** the information provided on quality improvement;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed amendments to Key Performance Measures, which would require to be submitted to the Joint Monitoring Committee; and
- iv. **AGREED** that a report on school exclusions be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

## 11. NHS Highland Assurance Report

**Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/09/18 dated 18 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** that Members’ comments would be incorporated into a report to NHS Highland.

## 12. Statutory Consultation – Tain 3-18 Campus

There had been circulated Report No CLH/10/18 dated 24 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning. The appendices had been circulated separately as Booklet A.

During discussion, Members' comments included the following:-

- appreciation was expressed to Officers for their hard work in bringing this proposal to the Statutory Consultation stage and for the community engagement undertaken;
- the stakeholder group had been very inclusive and informative and had a wide membership base. In addition, the nine Parent Councils had been key in the communication process and would continue to be so;
- as a result of the work undertaken with the Commission for Highland Democracy, the Council now knew how to carry out good meaningful public engagement and, as it moved forward to the Statutory Consultation stage, it was important to involve those parents who still had concerns about the proposal; and
- given the poor condition of some of the schools it was critical to move forward with a strong collective approach.

The Committee **AGREED** to proceed to statutory consultation on the proposal set out in Booklet A to establish a new 3-18 campus in Tain, with a consequential merger of Craighill Primary, Knockbreck Primary and St. Duthus School, on one of two site options.

## 13. Review of Statutory Consultation Exercise into the proposal to establish a new primary school to serve the Ness Castle and Ness-Side housing developments

There had been circulated Report No CLH/11/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning. The appendices had been circulated separately as Booklets B and C.

Concern remained regarding the wider development taking place on the south side of Inverness and it was suggested that the pressure on schools there too needed to be taken into consideration as part of the review so a long term strategic plan was put in place.

The Committee:-

- \* The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council:-
  - i. the establishment of a new primary school for Inverness, to serve the Ness Castle and Ness-side housing developments; and:
  - ii. the creation of a catchment area for the new school based on Option B of the catchment options outlined in the original Proposal Paper.

## 14. Sustainable Education in Highland Communities

There had been circulated Report No CLH/12/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Prior to debate a draft video clip was shown highlighting and emphasising clearly the challenges faced in providing a sustainable education system in Highland for the future.

During discussion, Members' comments included the following:-

- the participants of the Steering Group were thanked, particularly the Parent Councils who had helped shape the Programme;
- community engagement and communication with stakeholders were key and this element had been lacking in earlier phases. It was highlighted that Parent Councils had many ways by which to communicate with parents and the Highland Parent Council Partnership had already disseminated useful information. The role of the Community Engagement Officer would not solely be about communicating Council decisions but to encourage joint decision making and to take on board the views of those parents who might have concerns;
- to avoid frustration, it was important to explain to participants what would happen with their input;
- in this connection, a number of Highland MSPs had been briefed so that they too understood the approach being adopted by Highland Council;
- the Programme offered many opportunities and the lessons learnt during the next phase would help inform and move the Programme forward as it expanded into other Associated School Groups (ASGs);
- the engagement of Head Teachers with the Steering Groups was welcomed. The Programme was not about closing schools but making education sustainable for the future and Head Teachers were now embracing the challenges and opportunities open to them. It was important Head Teachers remained leaders of learning and part of the local community;
- IT had an essential part to play in integrating remote and rural communities and it was questioned, as the Programme progressed, if the Council's current IT provision was sufficiently capable;
- the shift towards IT would free up teachers to teach and inspire young people;
- the use of video as a means of communication was welcomed and reference was made to a video clip produced by Gairloch Primary School pupils in their search for a new Head Teacher;
- whilst acknowledging that this was a spend to save proposal, clarification was sought as to how the additional posts would be funded given the cuts that had been made elsewhere in education. In total, the proposal was to spend £220k and it was essential, to justify this investment to communities, to measure how this would directly impact on savings. In reply, the Chairman explained that two of the posts would be filled from redeploying existing staff and this expenditure was required if effective community engagement and communication was to be achieved;
- although this would have a cost benefit, this was not the central aim: the Programme would generate huge educational advantages and would address equality issues enabling pupils across Highland to have equal opportunity to access subjects; and
- there was significant momentum in Caithness regarding the proposals and the first steering group meeting had been well attended. Among the topics discussed were the role and remit of the Group, timescales and budget proposals and whether or not a Caithness ASGs was a sustainable solution.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress on the proposals presented to the March 2018 Committee and **AGREED**:-

- i. the reframing of the programme as “Sustainable Education in Highland Communities”;
- ii. the five workstreams set out in the revised programme plan;
- iii. that engagement progress with regard to management structures and school groupings in the Gairloch, Kinlochleven, Inverness High, Thurso and Wick Associated School Groups;
- iv. that local stakeholder groups be established in other Associated School Groups, linking with Community Planning and other local partnerships;
- v. the team job descriptions set out in Appendices 2 to 5 of the report; and
- vi. in principle, the implementation of Team Leader school office posts.

#### **15. National Improvement Framework – Progress Update**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/13/18 dated 20 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress being made in the delivery of the National Improvement Framework.

#### **16. Regional Improvement Plan**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/14/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **NOTED** the draft Regional Improvement Plan.

#### **17. Early Learning and Childcare Update**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/15/18 dated 18 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Chairman highlighted the significant progress that had been made in recent months. Following lobbying, additional allocations had been made and CoSLA had agreed to deviate from the usual funding formula meaning that Highland Council were now in a position to move forward with expansion plans. The ethos of the initiative was to provide something that was flexible, accessible, affordable and provider neutral and it was vital to recognise the third sector’s role in this.

Appreciation having been expressed to CoSLA and Maree Todd, Minister for Early Years and Childcare, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the multi-year funding allocation;
- ii. the position on the additional graduate and modern apprentice posts; and
- iii. the update on the trial sites.

#### **20. Joint Transition Service**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/18/18 dated 18 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members' comments included the following:-

- a concern was expressed that the joint transition team did not have enough education providers as opposed to the number of social workers;
- it was suggested that a plan needed to be put in place for dealing with housing issues and the demands of young people when approaching school leaving age; and
- to enable the Members to understand the plans and resources for the Transitions Team it was requested that all Members be invited to attend the opening day for the new office base.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress of the implementation of the Joint Transitions Team;
- ii. **NOTED** the move of Deaf Services from Kenneth Street Inverness; and
- iii. **AGREED** that Committee Members be invited to the opening of the Transitions Team office base.

## 22. Appointment to Food and Health in Schools Group

The Food and Health in Schools Group replaced the former School Meals Stakeholder Group which had been in place between 2011 and 2015. The Group now covered a broader remit about overall child health and healthy eating and made recommendations on food, nutrition and health policies for pupils and staff in Highland schools.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr D Macpherson and Ms K Currie to the Food and Health in Schools Group.

## 23. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

**Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in item 23iv as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership Group – 12 December 2017;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Community Justice Partnership – 20 December 2017;
- iii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 28 March 2018;
- iv. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee – 25 April 2018; and
- v. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group – 26 April 2018.



## 19. Presentation: Corporate Parenting Strategy

There had been circulated Report No CLH/17/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The report introduced a presentation on the corporate parenting responsibilities of Highland Council and current developments in services for young people. Members were reminded that there were, at present, 510 children and young people in care in Highland with approximately another 300, under the age of 26, who had been in care. Their circumstances all varied but key features were that their parents had been unable to cope. Despite significant developments the outcomes for these young people remained poor in comparison to their peers. However, there was a sense of momentum, both nationally and locally, for change and the resources and support services available were detailed. In addition the role of Who Cares? Scotland was outlined, explaining they provided advocacy and support to care experienced young people.

Behavioural issues sometimes caused difficulties but it was important to bear in mind that challenging behaviour had a root cause. Balancing the needs of all young people was vital and reference was made to the innovative work taking place in Dingwall Academy with care experienced pupils and which had been an enlightening and informative experience for the teaching staff involved.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** to the strategy outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and the methods for monitoring work undertaken to progress the outcomes for care experienced young people in Highland.

## 18. Presentation: Supporting Young Enterprise

There had been circulated Report No CLH/16/18 dated 18 May 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The report introduced a presentation by senior pupils from Plockton High School, who were Company of the Year in the Young Enterprise (Scotland) Highland & Moray 2017/18 Programme. They explained that their company, Bamboozled, produced high quality, sustainably sourced bamboo baskets and chopping boards. They outlined the process they had followed which included market research, design, production, publicity and promotion.

In commending the pupils for their success Members highlighted the good team working skills they had acquired which would undoubtedly stand them in good stead in their future careers.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the presentation.

## 21. 6-Monthly High Life Highland Progress Report

**Declarations of Interest:**

**Mr T Heggie, Mr D Macpherson and Ms L Munro declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

**Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest as his wife was an employee of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/19/18 dated 11 May 2018 by the Chief Executive, High Life Highland.

The Chief Executive, HLH, gave a presentation in amplification of the report, during which further information, photographs and a video clip were provided in relation to a number of HLH service deliveries for health and wellbeing; falls prevention exercises, cancer rehabilitation and the need for a new youth work strategy plan.

It was highlighted that since HLH has been established, 32 facilities and services had been added to HLH remit. These ranged from small facilities such as the Ferrycroft Visitor Centre in Lairg to leisure centres and swimming pools. New services transferred from the Council had included the new community facilities in Wick, the Council's Countryside Rangers and Music Tuition services. He also highlighted the new partnership arrangement developed with NHS for HLH to host a pharmacy collection booth in Ardnamurchan Library.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the provision of a pipe band drumming tutor in Skye and Lochalsh was welcomed;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the proposal for HLH to take on the day-to-day operation of Lochalsh swimming pool;
- staff were congratulated on their positive engagement with the public;
- an update was requested on the impact of the new funding stream which had been provided for the development of an adults learners programme;
- appreciation was expressed at the positive changes which had taken place at Nairn Library. Although initially these had caused concern, it was now recognised that there had maintained services and the Librarian was keen to reassure other librarians that this worked well;
- it was suggested that the health and wellbeing plan should incorporate lunch clubs ie Merkinch Community Centre, as, in addition to providing exercise, this prevented falls. In addition, it was suggested that the partnership for wellbeing could also use the Merkinch minibus to transport people to activities;
- following a request, a brief update was given on the pilots that had been carried out with the countryside rangers;
- the dispensing of pharmacy drugs at Ardnamurchan Library was a fantastic initiative and should be developed in other areas;
- it was suggested that HLH should explore the Scottish Government's "Cycling Without Age" initiative which had the aim of enabling older people to stay active and socialise;

- it was hoped that pupils in special needs schools had access to activities provided by Youth Development Officers;
- it was highlighted that both the voluntary youth sector and the new youth improvement group needed to work together in partnership;
- a future report should outline the risks and main challenges that HLH might face in the future and what services that might need to be protected;
- HLH had changed significantly since its inception in 2011. The value of their prevention work over this period of time was difficult to quantify but they had undoubtedly made a marked contribution. Moving forward, it would be important to achieve a balance in provision throughout Highland and across all age groups.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that High Life Highland had met or exceeded the outcomes expected in the Service Delivery Contract with the Council for the operating period to March 2018;
- ii. **NOTED** the general updates since the last report in August 2017;
- iii. **NOTED** the contributions made by High Life Highland to health and wellbeing; and
- \* iv. **AGREED** that a new Youth Work Strategy be developed as outlined in section nine of the report and to nominate Mrs B McAllister and **TO RECOMMEND** to the Council the nomination of Mrs A MacLean to support the Youth Work Improvement Group and Highland Youth Parliament to develop it.

The meeting concluded at 2.50 pm

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 31 May 2018 at 10.00am.

### Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr J Gray
Mr B Boyd	Ms E Knox
Mrs C Caddick	Mr R Laird
Miss J Campbell	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mrs B McAllister
Mr A Christie	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G Ross
Mr K Gowans	Mr C Smith
Mr A Graham	

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development & Infrastructure  
 Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager  
 Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure  
 Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager  
 Mr C Baxter, Planning Officer  
 Mr G MacCormick, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
 Mr J Kelman, Principal Project Manager  
 Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager  
 Mr H Gardner, Bereavement Services Manager  
 Ms J Murray, Victorian Market Manager  
 Ms J Willars, Policy & Assurance Officer  
 Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager  
 Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant

### Also in attendance:

Mr Chris O'Neill, Principal of Inverness College UHI  
 Mr G Morrison, Group Manager, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

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

**Mrs H Carmichael in the Chair**

### Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Provost & City Leader paid tribute to the former Provosts Allan G Sellar and William A E Fraser who had both passed away in March 2018.

The Committee also offered congratulations to Mr Colin Baillie who had recently been awarded the Freedom of Inverness.

## Business

### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr A Jarvie and Mr R MacWilliam.

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

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

Items 3 & 4 - Mr K Gowans (financial)  
 Item 4 - Mr C Smith (non-financial)  
 Item 11 - Mr J Gray and Miss J Campbell (both non-financial)  
 Item 15 - Mrs M Davidson (financial)  
 Item 19 - Mr D Macpherson (non-financial)

### 3. Presentation – Inverness College UHI Taisbeanadh – UHI

**Declaration of Interest - Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Inverness College UHI but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

Mr Chris O'Neill, Principal of Inverness College UHI, undertook a presentation at the meeting on the work being undertaken by Inverness College UHI to deliver on the vision and the objectives of the College, with a focus on how these tied in with those for the City and Area.

Following the presentation, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this had been an excellent and extremely informative presentation and it would be appreciated if a copy could be circulated to all Members following the meeting;
- there was a need for the Council and UHI to work together in order to improve outcomes for both organisations and for the Highland population as a whole;
- there were opportunities for the Council to highlight issues as part of the new Programme which would follow later in the year;
- among the challenges facing the Council would be the situation for the ever expanding Highland area post Brexit and leadership and vision would be required in this regard;
- it had to be highlighted that Local Members were best placed to provide links into their respective communities and it was suggested that this could be discussed further with UHI in terms of future possibilities;

- as part of the strengthening of current links with schools across the area, there had to be focus on transport issues which continued to cause problems;
- consideration of regional powers post Brexit would be especially important and as such early discussion on this with UHI would be welcomed;
- tourism was thriving in the Highlands and it would be important to build on this and offer as many new opportunities as possible in the area in future;
- encouraging entrepreneurship in the Highland would be crucial in the coming months and years and should be supported whenever and wherever possible;
- there were opportunities around the ageing population in the area and reference was made to the current focus on health and social care issues, including home care, which was being led by communities at present;
- there were examples of successful regeneration elsewhere, including Birmingham, and these offered important guidance in how to achieve success;
- regular teacher training in the area was essential in order to encourage young people to remain in the Highlands;
- consideration should be given to future engagement by Inverness UHI with the Community Safety Partnership which it was felt would be beneficial for all concerned;
- the inclusive approach to vulnerable young people within the community was welcomed;
- there was a need to encourage businesses to relocate to the Highlands wherever possible; and
- there should be a focus on providing more rental accommodation in the area and bringing empty properties back into use for this purpose if possible.

Thereafter, and having thanked Mr O'Neill for his attendance at the meeting and his presentation, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the position.

#### **4. Developing Economic Links with Augsburg - Update A' Leasachadh Cheangalan Eaconamach le Augsburg – Cunntas às Ùr**

**Declarations of interest - Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Inverness College UHI and Mr C Smith declared a non-financial interest as a member of the Inverness Town Twinning Committee but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/15/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure and the Inverness Area City Manager.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members thanked the Officers concerned for the excellent report which had been submitted and highlighted the need to fully support this important initiative.

In this regard, reference was made to the significant opportunities which existed and it was confirmed that there was a need to take full advantage of the excellent links, both economic and cultural, which existed with Augsburg.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED** to support the continued development of economic links with Augsburg and to work with partners to ensure that the initial activity undertaken by the Council was developed and built upon.

The Committee also **AGREED** to the commitment of additional resources to a maximum of £10,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund to compliment the Development & Infrastructure Service and Highland & Islands Enterprise financial input.

**5. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Area Performance Summary**  
**Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba – Geàrr-chunntas**  
**Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/16/18 dated 9 May 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, information was sought and received on the number of false alarms over the reporting year, most of which were unwanted fire alarm signals. In this regard, it was confirmed that a new policy which required Service personnel to work closely with duty holders in order to reduce the impact of these events had been implemented locally and was having a positive impact.

Information was also provided on achieving the priorities within the Local Plan for the City, including the delivery of free fire safety visits, post domestic incident response and the Driving Ambition road safety programme.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the City of Inverness Performance Report for Q3 and Q4 of 2017-18 as circulated.

**5a. Inverness Community Safety Partnership (ICSP)**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/16a/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Area Commander (Highland and Islands Division, Police Scotland, Inverness).

The Committee **NOTED** the work of the Inverness Community Safety Partnership for 2017 and endorsed the work of the Operation Respect Daytime Group as detailed in the report.

It was also **NOTED** that, with the formation of the local community partnership, the governance, tasking delivery and accountability would be enhanced if aligned to the Inverness Community Partnership. Whilst a formal approach to the Chair of the said Partnership would be required, early indications were that this approach would be well received. In this regard, Members would continue to receive an annual update on the work of the Partnership in addition to any updates as part of regular Police and Fire scrutiny reports.

## 6. Inverness East Development Brief Brath Leasachaidh Inbhir Nis an Ear

There had been circulated Report No CIA/17/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst welcoming the terms of the report as circulated, it was hoped that further development of sports facilities in the Culloden area could be undertaken in due course;
- further clarification of boundary lines in the Resaurie area was required following concerns raised by residents in the area;
- there were proposals for 4 storey housing in the Ashton area and it was suggested that this should be changed as it was not considered appropriate;
- the consultation exercise which had been undertaken was welcomed as was the proposed introduction of sports facilities on the east side of the City;
- it would be important to ensure that green spaces were maintained/available as part of the future development of the area;
- there had been concerns raised by the residents of Ashton Farm in terms of the location of future development and it would be helpful if these could be addressed at an early date;
- it had been noted that there would be a very high railway bridge as part of the new proposals and it was suggested that consultation should be undertaken with Network Rail on cost/contribution and location;
- there was a particular need for green space around the Stratton Primary School;
- further clarification was required in terms of developer contributions; and
- it would be helpful if concerns about the density of housing in the area which had come from some local residents could be addressed.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the summary of comments received on the Brief and **AGREED** the Council responses as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and to adopt the Inverness East Development Brief at Appendix 2 as part of the Development Plan (subject to any non-factual amendments or formatting changes and clearance by Scottish Ministers) and that the Brief be used as a material consideration for planning decisions and advice with immediate effect.

It was also **AGREED** that further detail should be provided for Members on the proposed development of 4 storey houses as mentioned in the report (which were not felt to be acceptable as part of the design going forward and should be reduced to 2 and 3 storey buildings as an alternative).

## 7. West Link Stage 2 An Ceangal an Iar Ceum 2 – Cunntas às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No CIA/18/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure



Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- consideration should be given to making use of the Torvean Quarry area in future if possible;
- there was temporary car parking in the area at present and consideration should be given to making this permanent;
- this was an example of a model infrastructure project by the Council and should be replicated by other projects in future;
- there was a need to avoid any unnecessary changes to the project at this stage in view of the potential cost and timescale implications;
- the arrangement of a further Briefing/Workshop for Members would be helpful in terms of discussing future options for the area and this should also involve local groups and members of the community;
- congratulations had to be conveyed to the current Officers (and the previous Officers who had worked on this project) for the exemplary work which had been undertaken;
- there was a need for density of housing in addition to open spaces;
- the local community had to be involved in proposals for leisure facilities and the provision of open spaces in particular;
- there had been misgivings at the start of this project in relation to the option which had been chosen but this had been a really successful project for all concerned and this had to be acknowledged; and
- the inclusive approach which had been adopted throughout had to be continued in regard to the future development of the area.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** progress with the delivery of the Phase 2 West Link Road project and the intention to submit further information through the planning process required under the conditions attached to the existing planning permission;
- (ii) **AGREED** in principle that the detail of the proposed Jacobite Cruises building be deferred to allow further discussion with Jacobite Cruises in conjunction with Scottish Canals, subject to formal consideration under the planning process;
- (iii) **AGREED** that a new planning application be submitted to enable the provision of an additional leg on the proposed Torvean Roundabout to allow vehicular access to the Canal towpath south of the new swing bridge and to provide temporary overflow parking off this additional leg, the proposal to deliver a recreational/fitness network on the area covered by holes 5-8 as an early project (subject to securing appropriate funding) with progress being reported back at the appropriate time and the proposals to consult on a possible amendment to the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief in the coming months on the future use of land soon to be vacated by Torvean Golf Club; and
- (iv) **AGREED** that a further Briefing/Workshop on Stage 2 should be provided for Members in due course.

## 8. Inverness City Centre Trade Waste Policy - Update Sgudal Malairt – Aithisg Ùrachaidh Pileatach

There had been circulated Report No CIA/19/18 dated 11 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this was an excellent example of partnership working between the Council and others within the City;
- consideration had to be given to the need to avoid blocking fire exits in any new bin storage areas;
- exemptions from the policy should be a last resort but it was accepted that they might need to be considered in some cases;
- it had to be highlighted that there were some businesses who were still not complying with the policy and this had to be addressed as a matter of urgency if possible;
- there was a need to find ways to encourage members of the public to use the bins which had been provided in the evenings in particular;
- there was still a problem with seagulls and pigeons in the City Centre and it was hoped that this could be addressed;
- it would be helpful if 'before' and 'after' photographs could be displayed on the Council Website to highlight improvements;
- it was imperative that a robust attitude was maintained in relation to the current policy and that any exemptions were kept to a minimum;
- clarification would be helpful in terms of rolling out the policy to other parts of the City;
- it was important that the footpaths and pavements were kept clear for pedestrians and not used for bin storage;
- consideration should be given to linking this policy with the general waste strategy in future;
- further action should be taken to encourage the use of and highlight the availability of vehicles in the evening for the collection of waste (in addition to the morning collections); and
- a full review of the policy should be undertaken and reported to the meeting scheduled for 22 November 2018.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** progress with the implementation of the trade waste policy as provided and that a formal and full review of the policy would be undertaken and presented to the meeting on 22 November 2018.

## 9. Victorian Market Annual Report/Action Plan Aithisg Bhliadhna/Plana-ghnìomh na Margaidh Bhictòrianaich

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/20/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, it was suggested that consideration should be given to the statistics relating to footfall in the Market and transaction numbers throughout the year as a measurement of success.

Also, and with specific reference to the Lettings Framework within the Action Plan, it was suggested that care should be taken in relation to the proposal to set parameters or thresholds for similar uses and shop types

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** to the continued development of the 'branding' of the Victoria Market as described in the report and the development of a business case for the remodelling of the Market Hall.

Members also **NOTED** the draft project programme attached as Appendix 3 to the report on the basis that further reports would be submitted on progress to the project programme as required.

#### **10. Town House Works Programme Phase 3 Ath-leasachadh Taigh a' Bhaile Ceum 3**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/21/18 dated 31 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members thanked the Principal Project Manager and his team for the work which had been undertaken to date.

Information was also sought and received on the installation of the new windows which would comply with energy efficiency standards and it was confirmed that, where possible during Phase 3 of the works, contractors would be encouraged to use local suppliers.

\*Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** in principle – and subject to full Council agreement – to proceed to tender for Phase 3 (with a total estimated project cost of £3,304,083.58 for all the remaining sections of the Town House) and with a further third party funding application to Historic Environment Scotland

#### **11. Inverness Townscape Heritage Project Pròiseact Dualchas Sealladh-baile Sràid na h-Acadamaidh**

**Declarations of Interest – Miss J Campbell declared an interest in this item as a member of the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project and Mr J Gray declared an interest as a member of Inverness City Heritage Trust but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/22/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

During discussion, and in welcoming the significant level of work which had been undertaken, information was sought and received from the Chair of the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project on capital grants, including high and medium priority projects and grant awards to date (which included the former Al Welders building) and also the Activity Plan which covered four key areas (the digital trail, employability, education and training and awareness and engagement).

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress being made in delivering the Inverness Townscape Heritage project as detailed in the report.

**12. Inverness City Arts - Annual Report**  
**Ath-sgrùdadh Bliadhna/Plana-gnìomh Ealain Baile Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/23/18 dated 16 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, information was provided in relation to the Governance and Action Plan and in respect of Project Updates which had been detailed in the report.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated

**13. Participatory Budgeting toward Mainstreaming**  
**Tachartasan Buidseataidh Com-pàirteach a' Bhaile**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/24/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Acting Head of Policy.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to the Community and Democratic Engagement Manager and his team for the extremely successful events which had been held in the Aird and Loch Ness and Merkinch areas;
- it was appreciated that even where projects had not been successful, advice and guidance had been given in terms of future presentation of these projects;
- it was imperative that these successful projects were replicated and expanded into other areas;
- where feasible, lessons should also be learned from other parts of the country where participatory budgeting had been successful;
- future participatory budgeting events could perhaps be combined with other events in specific areas in order to encourage attendance;
- it had to be recognised that there would be a considerable challenge in future in terms of involving new people in such events, as opposed to those people already involved in similar local initiatives;
- it would be important to identify projects which represented appropriate models for participatory budgeting and also considering events other than those where physical attendance was required on a specific date;
- representative democracy was what was required and it would be important to keep this in mind as opposed to handing over responsibility to others in communities;
- in terms of the mainstreaming of participatory budgeting in future, it would be essential for this to involve tenants where feasible;
- whilst being ambitious in the selection of future projects, it would be equally as important to avoid different areas having to compete against each other; and

- a further report was required for a future meeting to provide detail on how Ward Discretionary Budgets had been allocated in those areas not involved in participatory budgeting.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the events held in the area in 2018 and the participatory budgeting applied to mainstream service areas.

It was also **AGREED** that a further report should be submitted to the Committee to provide detail on how Ward Discretionary Budgets had been allocated in those areas not involved in participatory budgeting.

**14. Castle Wynd, Eastgate and Bridge Street – Proposed Alterations to Taxi Ranks – Consideration of Objections**  
**Lùb a’ Chaisteil/An Àrd-Shràid agus Sràid na Drochaide – Atharrachaidhean gam Moladh ri Raointean Tagsaidh – Beachdachadh air Gearanan**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/25/18 dated 23 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager and Head of Roads and Transport.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was felt that taxis were not now as reliant on actual ranks as had been the case in the past and for this and other reasons, not least the need for better arrangements to be made for tourists and the general public, the proposal to discontinue the use of Castle Wynd as a waiting area by taxis was supported;
- in contrast, there was a view that Castle Wynd was a good location at present, particularly for those travelling to the west side of the City, and the proposed use of Eastgate as an alternative night time taxi rank was not considered feasible, particularly in terms of the potential impact on the surrounding and immediate area and the possible disruption;
- consideration should also be given to using the loading bay opposite the Town House as a potential taxi rank;
- there was a need to implement an additional survey of residents in the Broadstone Park area as it was felt that the initial survey had been too limited in terms of responses received; and
- there was a need for a further report on possible alternatives to the proposal for a night time taxi rank in Eastgate.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **AGREED** to abandon the proposal to amend Broadstone Park Permit Parking hours and that an additional survey of residents in the area should be undertaken;
- (ii) **AGREED** to “make” an order to re-designate Castle Wynd as a restricted zone, no waiting or loading at any time;
- (iii) **AGREED TO DEFER** consideration of an order for the provision of a night time Taxi rank in Eastgate Inverness pending consideration of alternatives to this proposal and the submission of further recommendation(s) to the Committee;

- (iv) **AGREED** to abandon the proposal to provide an Eastbound daytime Taxi rank on Bridge Street; and
- (v) **APPROVED** the maintaining of a 24 hour rank westbound on Bridge Street and the extension of the rank into the Loading Bay after 6pm.

**15. Burial Ground Commutation Fund: Work Programme 2018/19**  
**Maoin Co-iomlaid Chladhan: Prògram Obrach 2018/19**

**Declaration of Interest – Mrs M Davidson declared a financial interest in this item on the basis that a family member was an employee of the Council but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/26/18 dated 15 May 2018 by the Bereavement Services Manager.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members welcomed the proposal to increase the allocation of £25,000 to Community Services to £30,000 for much needed works in relation to lifting sunken lairs, cleaning/clearing paths and the carrying out of some minor tree and shrub maintenance within the Inverness area Burial Grounds.

However, in relation to the work proposed for 2018/19 as detailed in the appendix to the report, there was concern about the proposed levels of use of the Commutation Fund within the context of the originally agreed principles for the fund and it was suggested that a further and full report should be submitted to the next meeting to provide further clarity in this respect.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** to increase annual maintenance costs from £25,000 to £30,000.

The Committee also **AGREED** the work programme for 2018/19 as detailed in Appendix A to the report – on the basis that a further and full report would be submitted to the next meeting on the use of the Commutation Fund, with particular reference being made to the original principles laid down for the use of this Fund.

**16. Centenary Fields**  
**Raointean nan Ceud Bliadhna**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/27/18 dated 10 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, clarification was sought and received on the benefits of taking part in this initiative which included contribution to a UK initiative to commemorate those involved with World War 1, raising awareness of both the initiative and the Council’s commitment to providing public access and recreation and raising the profile of the nominated sites. The initiative also aimed to safeguard valued public spaces for the future.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the nomination of Cavell Gardens as a Centenary Field.

**17. Inverness Common Good Fund: Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments 2018/19**

**Maoin Mathas Coitcheann Inbhir Nis: Sgeama fo Ùghdarras airson Phàighidhean Geamhraidh 2018/19**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/28/18 dated 10 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, and whilst welcoming the proposals as an excellent use of Common Good funds, clarification was sought as to how much of the proposed increase was due to the actual payment and how much was due to the anticipated demand. In this regard, it was suggested and agreed that a review of the scheme should be undertaken prior to submission of any proposals for payment in the following year.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED:-**

- (i) an increase in a single tier payment from £81 to £82 to be made to those applicants who satisfied the eligibility criteria for the 2018/19 scheme. This recommendation was based on the 0.4% increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI);
- (ii) an increase in budget from £105,000 to £132,000 to take into account the proposed increase in payment to £82.00 for 2018/19 and the anticipated increase in demand during 2018/19 arising from ongoing welfare reforms and energy costs;
- (iii) that the criteria utilised for the 2017/18 scheme as set out in Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4 should be used as the basis for the 2018/19 scheme;
- (iv) this discretionary scheme to be made available to residents in the City of Inverness and the Landward areas of the seven City Wards; and
- (v) to promote payment by BACS for this discretionary scheme as this was the most secure method of payment for recipients of the payment and the Council alike.

It was also **AGREED** that a review of the Winter Payments Scheme should be undertaken prior to submission of any proposals for payment in the following year.

**18. Homologation of new Street Names  
Aontachadh Ainmean-sràide ùra**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/29/18 dated 11 May 2018 by the Head of Policy & Reform.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the following new street names – on the basis that the proposed names in each case should be submitted to the Gaelic Translation Officer in the first instance for correction of any errors prior to final confirmation -

- (i) one new street name at Westercraigs as Ruighard Place;
- (ii) two new streets for application 2, Tornagrain housing development as Laggnagere, Laggnagere Court and Hares Loan;
- (iii) one street for the former Poultry unit, Loch Flemington as Souters View; and
- (iv) three streets in Culduthel as Kilfinan Way, Bracara Road and Banavie Gardens.

## 19. Town House Tours

**Declaration of Interest – Mr D Macpherson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/30/18 dated 11 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Principal Cultural Manager, High Life Highland.

The Committee **AGREED** to the Programme of Town House Tours commencing for 2018 as detailed in the report and Appendix 1 – subject to the following -

- corrections to be made to the following terms contained in the report which were incorrect in relation to the locations which they were describing – ‘Dignitary Rooms’, ‘Committee Rooms’ and ‘Great Hall’;
- the reference to ‘Cullicudden Stone’ to be corrected to read ‘Clachnacuddin Stone’; and
- the proposed date of 12 June for Members to tour the Town House to be changed as it coincided with the previously arranged South Planning Applications Committee meeting at Headquarters on that same day.

The Committee also **NOTED** the collaborative work done in preparation between the Council and High Life Highland, that the tours would be promoted through High Life Highland and all reasonable opportunity used to seek promotion elsewhere and that an evaluation report would be provided late in 2018 or early 2019 with proposals for the 2019 tourist season.

## 20. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

### (a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No CIA/31/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.



The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 30 April 2018 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

**(b) Grants and Capital Projects**  
**Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/32/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

In this connection, there had also been circulated copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

The Committee **NOTED** the current status of capital projects and **AGREED** to approve the following application –

Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd - £20,000

It was also **AGREED NOT TO PROCEED** with the proposed New Starter Unit at Lotland Street.

**(c) Whin Park Improvement Works**  
**Obair-leasachaidh Pàirc a' Chonaig**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/33/18 dated 17 April 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **NOTED** the details of work already completed and the proposed programme of improvement works for Whin Park.

The Committee also **APPROVED** the funding to complete the added value works over the next two years.

**21. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 22 February 2018 - **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 9 April and 14 May 2018 - **APPROVED**;
- iii. Events & Festivals Working Group held on 27 February and 16 April 2018 - **APPROVED**;
- iv. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 1 March, 22 March and 3 May 2018 - **APPROVED**; and
- v. Victorian Market Stakeholder Management Group held on 20 March and 5 May 2018 - **NOTED**.

The meeting ended at 4.30pm.

## 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, 4 June, 2018 at 10.30 am.**

### Present:

Mr J Finlayson  
Mr J Gordon

Mr R MacDonald

### In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Service  
Mr F Nixon, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North), Community Services  
Mr J Mackay, Amenities Manager (North), Community Services (by Video Conference)  
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development & Infrastructure Service  
Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's 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.**

**Mr J Gordon – Cathraiche (Chair)**

### Business

#### 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. **Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report for 2017/18 and Priorities for 2018/19** **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Dèanadais air Cumail-suas Talmhainn airson 2017/18 agus Prìomhachasan airson 2018/19**

There was circulated Report No. SR/4/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how Community Services performed in relation to performance indicators for the period 1 January to 31 March 2018.

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

- It was noted that in order to reduce the amount of strimming which was a slow process and reduce the number of accidents caused by flying stones, weedkilling was now being undertaken along fence lines/edge of pavements and around obstacles like lampposts. Members welcomed this sensible

approach which allowed a larger, quicker machine to cut closer to these edges. Further, it was queried if there was any scope for weedkilling around Highland Council buildings in the area. In response, it was confirmed that more weedkilling would be carried out around these buildings.

- It was queried how often grass was cut around schools. It was advised that grass cutting around schools was carried out on the same regularity as other areas of grass cutting and for efficiency purposes one geographical area at a time would be concentrated on.
- It was confirmed that Portree Primary School was on the grass cutting schedule.
- An update was sought in relation to discussions regarding the Minginish toilets remaining in the Highland Comfort Scheme. It was advised that the Amenities Manager (South) was to have discussions with the Minginish Community Hall toilets provider this month.
- It was welcomed that there had been improvements in maintaining grass in cemeteries. It was requested that details of the way grass was maintained to prevent subsidence of lairs in cemeteries from heavy mowers, be sent to Members.
- It was advised that on average there would be 25 inspections of grounds maintenance and public conveniences per operative a week using mobile technology.
- There was a perception that there was not enough public conveniences in the area. It was queried if there were standard opening/closing times for these public conveniences. It was advised that the opening/closing times were based on local needs and details of opening/closing times for public conveniences on Skye and Raasay would be sent to Members.
- In terms of the Highland Comfort Scheme, there was a need to promote the toilets in the scheme better so the public were aware of their location and opening/closing times. Details of the proposed improvements to the promotion of the Highland Comfort Scheme would be sent to Members.

Having scrutinised the report, the Committee **NOTED**:-

i the information provided on performance for the period 1 January to 31 March 2018;

ii that details of the way grass was maintained to prevent subsidence of lairs in cemeteries from heavy mowers would be sent to Members;

iii that details of opening times for Public Conveniences on Skye and Raasay would be sent to Members; and

iv that details of proposed improvements to the promotion of the Highland Comfort Scheme would be sent to Members.

#### 4. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 5 March, 2018, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

#### 5. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba

There was circulated Report No SR/5/18 by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which provided an update on progress against the priorities outlined in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Area Committee Plan for Skye and Raasay 2016-2017.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members expressed their appreciation for all the hard work that the Fire Service undertook on behalf of communities and in particular their recent extensive efforts in containing heath fires on the Isle of Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross.
- It was noted that the number of road traffic collisions in the area requiring special services had shown a slight decrease in activity and were low compared to the total number for Highland. In terms of reasons for this, it was felt that on other roads such as the A9, A96, A82 drivers were generally driving at higher speeds, resulting in more substantial incidents, while on the Isle of Skye and Raasay, driving speeds tended to be much lower, resulting in less serious incidents.
- In relation to the transformation of the Fire Service, it was explained that the aim was to improve the service provided by carrying out a better and broader role for community safety and supporting other organisations, such as the Health Service in local areas. The Fire Service had a good number of stations, many located in rural areas of the Highlands, and their personnel were well trained and their skills, expertise and equipment could be put to good use in supporting other services in the community.
- It was advised that the ideal number of Fire personnel for a one pump station was around 10 personnel to allow for holiday cover etc. The minimum requirement would be 4/5 personnel. It was very challenging to get a full complement of personnel in rural stations. Anyone who was interested in joining the service would be supported through the process. A multi agency recruitment event was being arranged to raise the profile of encouraging people to join the emergency services.
- As part of the Fire Service transformation, the implementation of new Rapid Response Units in three Stations in the Skye area would hopefully assist in improving availability in these Stations as they needed fewer personnel to operate them.
- The Fire Service did receive a lot of requests for home fire safety visits and the Service did encourage the public to request these, particularly from the elderly, vulnerable and those with mobility issues. It was an important aspect of fire prevention.
- the Fire Service engaged closely with landowners and Scottish Natural Heritage to get the message across to farmers etc. when there was a high

risk of heath fires due to very dry conditions. A community asset register had also been introduced where people could register their off road vehicles and fire fighting equipment that could be made available to the Fire Service in an operational incident.

Having scrutinised the report, the Committee **NOTED** the Local Performance Report.

## 6. **Housing Performance Report** **Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais**

There was circulated Report No. SR/6/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 31 March 2018.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- In common with other areas in Highland, rent arrears had increased with the continued roll out of Universal Credit a key contributing factor. The local team would continue to prioritise rent arrears. A report on Welfare Reform which gave an update on rent arrears Highland wide had been submitted to a Working Group of the Council. A copy of this would be sent to local Members.
- It was queried how the Housing team dealt with tenants in rent arrears and whether it liaised with the Citizen's Advice Bureau on this. It was advised that when Universal Credit was introduced, the Council reviewed its rent arrears policy; how its officers interacted with tenants and what advice should be given to them. This policy was based on early intervention to take action to prevent arrears increasing. However, due to delays in tenants receiving their Universal Credit payments, action was not taken as quickly as it used to be, but arrears were still closely monitored and the Housing team were proactively tackling rent arrears. The Council's staff resources to tackle rent arrears had been increased in Highland. Housing debt could just be one of a range of debts for tenants and therefore the Citizen's Advice Bureau played an important role in offering advice and support.
- It was noted that the average time taken to complete emergency repairs was higher in Skye than in the rest of Highland. It was queried if this was due to staffing shortages and if so, was the Council actively recruiting trades people and apprentices to work in the in-house repairs team, which could save money in the long term as sub contractors would not require to be used as often. It was advised that the challenge of meeting Highland repairs averages in Skye was due to geography and the availability of tradesmen. Due to the boom in tourism in this area, getting the services of skilled tradesmen was difficult and led to delays in repairs being made. Having an in-house team would help the problem and an undertaking was given to provide to Members information regarding what measures the Council was taking to recruit an in-house repairs team.
- It was queried if there was a reluctance for people to report anti social behaviour incidents as there was a perception that no one would help. Also, was there enough Police support to deal with such incidents. It was advised that in this area there was good support from the Police in dealing with anti social behaviour incidents. However, there was a reluctance in reporting

such cases, other than people making a telephone complaint, as statements required to be taken for evidence in case future court action was required.

- it was advised that trends in homeless presentations was difficult to understand and anticipate as, for example, while there was a drop in homeless presentations in the last quarter, this could increase again due to seasonal lets coming to an end and people presenting themselves as homeless.
- In relation to the Cruachan Flats in Portree, options were being looked at to improve the standard of accommodation.
- Working with the Housing Association would hopefully, in time, increase the amount of homeless accommodation, but it was felt that there would still be pressures in providing accommodation due to demographic changes.
- Members expressed their appreciation to all the hard work and effort by the local Housing team. This was a small team who faced great work pressures and challenges, particularly with homeless presentations, and they performed their duties in a very professional manner.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

i the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018;

ii that a report on Welfare Reform which contained information on Rent Arrears for Highland, previously submitted to a meeting of the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group on 13 February, 2018, would be sent to Members; and

iii that information would be provided to Members on whether the Council was actively recruiting trades people and apprentices to work in the in-house repairs team.

## **7. Skye Air Services Seirbheisean Adhair An Eilein Sgitheanaich**

There was circulated Report No. SR/7/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided an update on the Skye Air Services Project following the meeting of the HITRANS Board on 20 April, 2018.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was queried if Loganair had given a commitment to be involved in a pilot scheduled air service between Skye Airport and the Central Belt. It was explained that while initial contact had been made with Loganair who had given some very helpful business insight and had given a positive response to a trial air service, they had not made any commitment to be involved in the pilot. Loganair would be invited to take part in the Working Group set up to support the establishment of the pilot air service. The Working Group may also consider co-opting additional members as identified and agreed by the Group.
- It was confirmed that work had already commenced to look for modular buildings and redundant/surplus equipment from other airports to reduce costs and offer a sustainable way forward through a lower cost trial. Further, Skye Flying Club who were using the airfield, were interested in modular

buildings to expand their operations, so there may be potential for sharing all the infrastructure at the airfield.

- It was advised that should scheduled air services commence it might not be the Council that operates the airfield and therefore there needed to be a short term view in dealing with the current users of the airfield, so as not to constrain any future plans.
- There was a suggestion that the fees for use of the Skye airfield were high in comparison to other airfields. It was explained that there was a framework of charges approved by the Committee for use of the airfield, but there could be some variation to these on an individual or operational basis and he was happy to discuss this with potential customers. The Transport Planning Manager advised that he would be happy to review the fees and, if appropriate, would report back to Committee with any changes he felt necessary.
- In the event that the airfield needed to expand, it was queried if the Council owned enough land for this. It was explained that the operational airfield was in the control of the Council, but there was a piece of adjacent land to the airfield which the Council did not have clear records of owning that land. If there was an expansion of the airfield, then ownership of the adjacent land would need to be established.
- In terms of the business case for scheduled air services from Skye, it was explained that an analysis had been carried out of who on Skye and elsewhere might use the air service. A conservative evaluation of forecasted use was that two air services a day, with a return fare of circa. £120.00 from Skye to Glasgow would be realistic and affordable for customers. A 19 seater aircraft was being used for the business case purposes. The business case also set out the infrastructure requirements at the airfield i.e. runway, runway lighting, radar, ground buildings and crew, particularly a fire and rescue service. An economic evaluation of the benefits to tourism and creation of jobs had also been included in the business case.
- New technology would allow the pilot to fly to a point where he could see the airfield and therefore the decision to abort a landing could be made much later than previously was the case. In addition, HIAL were investigating remote air traffic control. This could be used for the Skye airfield and therefore less flights would have to be aborted due to the lack of Air Traffic Controllers.
- It was confirmed that any income from customers for the use of the Skye airfield was being carried over for purposes to invest in the airfield.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the contents of the report;
- ii **AGREED** to delegate the Director of Development and Infrastructure to represent the Council on the proposed short life working group; and
- iii **AGREED** to periodic update reports, typically every three months, being provided to the Ward Members.

## 8. Draft Uig Development Brief Dreachd de lùil Leasachadh Ùige

There was circulated Report No. SR/8/18 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure which sought approval for the Draft Uig Development Brief to be published for public consultation. The brief aimed to identify and coordinate development and regeneration opportunities within the commercial core of Uig and maximise benefits which may arise from Transport Scotland's investment in the Skye Triangle ferry routes. The Brief would set out detailed planning guidance which, when adopted, would inform the Council's future decisions on planning applications.

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

- In relation to the consultation on the development brief which would take place in July and August, 2018, it was queried if one afternoon drop-in exhibition followed by an open evening meeting was enough. It was advised that there had been significant consultation with local stakeholders in terms of the Harbour re-development, so it was felt that the single consultation for the Development Brief was sufficient. The public could contact the Council at any time during the consultation period which would run for at least 6 weeks, and should, for example, the Community Council request a separate meeting, then this could be arranged.
- In relation to the use of the existing terminal building and the land immediately to the rear, there were aspirations for more business premises which could go in this area, but also there was a local need for more residential accommodation, which was also a possibility in the development brief, if the Housing Association wished to build affordable housing in this area.
- There was a significant demand for affordable housing on Skye and Uig and in terms of the redevelopment it was queried if there was an option to encroach onto the land earmarked for potential future development. It was advised that this land had been purchased by a private owner for the sole purpose of protecting the land from development. Therefore there was no prospect of development on this land in the short term.
- It was advised that the residents of the Fairy Glen, near Uig were considering a pilot for Park and Ride facilities for visitors to the Fairy Glen and perhaps a tourism outlet. It was advised that there was scope for a large car park in the Brief, which could provide an opportunity for Park and Ride facilities to take pressure off the Fairy Glen road.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Draft Uig Development Brief at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to make minor illustrative and presentational changes prior to publication, in consultation and agreement with the Chair of the Committee;
- iii. **AGREED** the approach to public consultation on the Draft Uig Development Brief as set out in section 5 of the report; and



- iv. **NOTED** that comments received on the Draft Uig Development Brief will be reported back to this Committee for its consideration, together with possible amendments prior to completion of procedures leading to its adoption as interim statutory supplementary guidance.

The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held in the Chamber, The Court House, High Street, Nairn on Wednesday 13 June 2018 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr L Fraser  
Mr T Heggie

Mrs L MacDonald  
Mr P Sagers

### In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey  
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services  
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

### Also in attendance:

Mr M Boylan, Chair, 'NairnConnects' Business Improvement Steering Group (Item 3)  
Mr G Morrison, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 4)

**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 T Heggie 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 committee meeting held in public and was not webcast.

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 2. Declaration of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declaration of Interest:-

Item 7 – Mr L Fraser (non-financial)

#### 3. Nairn Business Improvement District (BID) Sgìre Leasachaidh Gnìomhachais Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated report No N/5/18 dated 31 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

Mr Michael Boylan, Chair of 'NairnConnects' Business Improvement Steering Group, provided an update on the proposal to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) for Nairn Town, during which he highlighted the main objectives of the BID and advised that the proposed BID was scheduled to go to ballot on 16 August 2018. He emphasised that, whilst Nairn was ideally situated in terms of tourism, the town was currently lagging behind some other areas with regard to branding and marketing; therefore, the establishment of a Nairn BID would help bring businesses together to ensure that Nairn received its share of tourism and support. Mr Boylan thanked the Council officers involved in the process of establishing a Nairn BID proposal.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Further information was sought and provided on amendments to the BID which had been made following consultation with interested parties;
- The BID presented an exciting opportunity for businesses to work together to the benefit of Nairn;
- The Council's contribution towards funding of the BID and the collaborative work undertaken by Council officers and the BID team was highlighted;
- Further information was sought and provided on the timeline for submission of the ballot and the creation of a BID Board towards the end of the year;
- Further information was sought and provided on the potential income and additional funding opportunities arising from the BID and the flexibility the BID had to potentially provide funding over a 5 year period; and
- The Committee welcomed the opportunity to work with the BID in the future.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the proposals for the establishment of a Nairn Business Improvement District; and
  - \* ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that it supports the 'NairnConnects' BID Proposal when this is considered at the meeting of the Council on 28 June 2018.
4. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Committee Performance Report for 2017-18**  
**Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba – Aithisg Coileanaidh na Comataidh Ionadail airson 2017-18**

There had been circulated Report No N/6/18 dated 23 May 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In regard to deliberate fires, further information was requested and provided on the multi-agency approach taken by Police and Fire Services and social workers to address this, including educating young people by visiting schools and an increased Police and Fire presence in affected areas;
- Further information was requested and provided on the reasons for an increase in false alarms being raised; this included some new alarms being overly sensitive to fumes and also business proprietors testing alarms without first informing the Fire Service of their intention to do so;

- Further information was provided on crew availability and the utilisation of the Fire appliances based in Nairn in response to wildfires outwith the area;
- Further information was requested and provided on the increased role the Service had in responding to emergency medical incidents, such as the use of defibrillators; and
- The Service was commended for the help it provided within Nairnshire and the flexible approach it had taken to dealing with the local community.

Having thanked the Local Senior Officer for his report, the Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the Area Performance Report.

## 5. Local Priorities for Nairn and Nairnshire Prìomhachasan Ionadail airson Inbhir Narann agus Siorrachd Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated joint Report No N/7/18 dated 29 May 2018 by the Head of Policy and Reform.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was suggested that the local strategic priorities for Nairn and Nairnshire could be shared with the Community Planning Partnership as there were a number of priorities identified which featured joint working with other organisations;
- The proposed upgrading/replacement of Nairn Academy was highlighted;
- It was important for Members and Associated School Groups to be aware of any potential changes to the governance of education and how this would be administered in the future;
- Further information was requested and provided on how the local strategic priorities would be scrutinised by the Committee and that this could include the submission of an Action Plan for review;
- In regard to 'FIT' houses, it was suggested that close working with the local community partnership should be included when developing an Action Plan; and
- In welcoming the local strategic priorities, it was emphasised that the Committee had the benefit of being able to scrutinise priorities that were specific to the Nairnshire area.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the local strategic priorities for Nairn and Nairnshire;
- ii. **AGREED** to promote the local strategic priorities for Nairn and Nairnshire with the wider Council membership and as part of the Council's Programme 2017-22;
- iii. **NOTED** that there would be an opportunity, through the development of the local community partnership and engagement with community bodies and communities, to consider wider shared priorities over the Council's term; and
- iv. **NOTED** that further work would be done in 2018 to identify how the local priorities agreed, some of which were already well aligned to the Council's Programme, could be supported by staff and any other Council resources, including consideration of how best to measure progress.

## 6. Nairn Links Scoping Report Aithisg Mheasaidh Machair Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated joint Report No N/8/18 dated 31 May 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In welcoming the report, it was highlighted that the interest shown by local groups in relation to proposals such as the expansion of the pontoon system at Nairn Harbour and the creation of a Coastal Trail could make the delivery of these projects feasible;
- The importance of consulting with interested parties to ensure consensus with regard to the development of projects in a measured approach was emphasised;
- In regard to collaborative working, rights and responsibilities, the importance of ensuring that any proposals arising from the consultation period took into account the potential need for future maintenance was emphasised.

Having considered the contents of the Scoping Report attached as Appendix A to the report, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to take forward a consultation on the future development of the Links in August 2018;
- ii. that further reports be brought back to the Committee as required; and
- iii. that a final plan be ready for consideration by the end of 2018/19.

## **7. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2017 gu 31 Mart 2018**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr L Fraser declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Sub-Contractor for the Housing Service in Nairn but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated report No N/09/18 dated 21 May 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- A request was made for information to be provided on the average target time for temporary emergency accommodation in Nairn; and
- The Committee commended the staff for their measured approach when dealing with requests for housing.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee commended the local Housing team and thereafter **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

## **8. Minutes of Previous Meeting Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 14 March 2018, which had been approved by the Council on 10 May 2018.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 14 June 2018 at 10.30am.

### Present:

Mr R Laird	Mr L Fraser
Mr P Siggers	Mr T Heggie
Mr R Balfour	Mr D Louden
Mr B Boyd	Mr D Mackay
Mr J Bruce	Mr G MacKenzie
Miss J Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mrs B McAllister
Mr A Christie	Mrs M Paterson
Mr G Cruickshank	Ms M Smith
Mrs M Davidson	Ms K Stephen
Mr C Fraser	

### Non-Members also present:

Mr B Lobban

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources  
 Ms E Johnston, Corporate Audit & Performance Manager  
 Miss D Sutherland, Corporate Audit Manager  
 Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning  
 Mr S Duncan, Property Manager  
 Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager  
 Miss S McKandie, Benefits & Welfare Manager  
 Mr Iain Swayne, Operations Manager (Mid)  
 Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager  
 Miss C Maragh, Committee Administrator  
 Miss O Bayon, Clerical Assistant

### Also in attendance:

Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life Highland

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

**Mr R Laird in the Chair**

### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr G Adam, Mrs J Barclay, Mr R Bremner and Mr S Mackie.

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

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

**3. Review of the Internal Audit Charter  
Ath-sgrùdadh air a' Chairt In-Sgrùdaidh**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/4/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **APPROVED** the amendments to the Internal Audit Charter as outlined in the report and contained in the revised Charter in Appendix 1.

**4. Internal Audit Reviews and Progress Report  
Ath-bhreithneachaidhean In-sgrùdaidh agus Aithisg Adhartais**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/5/18 dated 6 June 2018 by the Corporate Audit Manager which summarised the final reports issued since the date of the last meeting, together with details of work in progress and other information relevant to the operation of the Internal Audit Section.

In relation to the Internal Audit Section, specific reference was made to work for other Boards, Committees or Organisations, certification of grant claims, corporate fraud activity and investigations and other work, as well as progress against the 2017/18 audit plan and performance information.

The final reports were then presented as follows:-

- (i) Development & Infrastructure – Developer Contributions  
(Reasonable Assurance)

During discussion, and in response to a query, it was confirmed that in cases where payments made by developers did not match the number of properties within a development, this could be reviewed/revisited at a later date as necessary.

- (ii) Care & Learning – Commissioning of Throughcare and Aftercare Services  
(Reasonable Assurance)

During discussion, and in response to a query, it was confirmed that consideration was being given to the best use of resources/Officer time across Services and through the redesign process. In this regard, the Internal Audit team worked extremely well with all Services and there was flexibility within the Audit Plan to accommodate any urgent issues if and when they arose.

Also, and in relation to payment/approval of variations, it was confirmed that this was to be the subject of redesign review in the future and any necessary changes to current arrangements would be made at that time.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Final Reports and the current work of the Internal Audit Section as detailed in the report.



The Committee also **APPROVED** the deletion of the audit of recycling from the Internal Audit Plan and **NOTED** the current work of the Internal Audit Section.

**5. Action Tracking Report**  
**Aithisg a' Leantainn Gnìomhachd**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/6/18 dated 6 June 2018 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the action tracking information provided, including the revised target dates for the completion of outstanding actions.

**6. Internal Audit Annual Report 2017/18**  
**Aithisg Bhliadhna In-Sgrùdaidh 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/7/18 dated 6 June 2018 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

During discussion, and following a reminder to Members of the Committee that it was extremely important that the self-evaluation/online survey form (recently issued by the Corporate Audit & Performance Manager) was completed and returned, it was suggested that, in addition to this, consideration should be given to a similar form being issued to non-Members of the Committee if possible.

Also, congratulations were conveyed to the Internal Audit team for the performance which had been reported and also the work undertaken over recent years, including reference to some of the most important audits in recent years which had come from Members of the Council.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the content of the report and the audit opinion provided.

**7. Serious and Organised Crime Course: Learning Outcomes and Actions**  
**Cùrsa Eucoir Throm-chùiseach agus Eagraichte: Builean Ionnsachaidh agus Gnìomhan**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/8/18 dated 5 June by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, congratulations were conveyed to the team responsible for the excellent course which had been provided and which it was hoped could be repeated in future.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the content and key messages of the Serious and Organised Crime Course which had been delivered on 3 and 4 May 2018 and **APPROVED** the recommended actions as a consequence of the Course.

It was also **AGREED** that a copy of the presentation which had been used should be circulated to all Members of the Council for information.

## 8. Corporate Complaints Process Pròiseas Ghearanan Corporra

There had been circulated Report No. AS/9/18 dated 14 June 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, reference was made to the percentage of complaints which had not been made by email and it was stressed that the Council had to ensure that all available means of communication were kept open in future in regard to the submission of complaints.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the Council's improved 2017/18 annual performance for Stage 1 (+12.2%) and Stage 2 (+17.5%) complaints and recognised that the number of complaints received had been a low volume at 1.5% within the context of the scale of the Council's customer base and the scope of services provided.

The Committee also **AGREED** to support Officers' continued participation in the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network.

The Committee further **NOTED** the remit of the cross-Service Complaints Co-ordinators' Group and the ongoing sharing of leading practice in order to further improve corporate performance for front line resolution (Stage 1) and investigation (Stage 2) and the progress to date on the LEAN review.

## 9. Audit Scotland: Council's Use of Arm's Length Organisations Aithisgean Sgrùdaidh bhon Taobh A-muigh

There had been circulated Report No. AS/10/18 dated 5 June 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- congratulations should be conveyed to High Life Highland for the extremely positive work which had been undertaken to date and the many examples of good management, not least in terms of the commercial approach which had been taken in a number of instances;
- there should be a focus in future on the potential advantages (and disadvantages) of Council nominees as Board Directors or Trustees;
- it was noted that, following the Barclay Review, the Scottish Government had rejected the recommendation to lift the rates relief for leisure and cultural venues run by the arm's length organisations of Local Councils. Whilst existing organisations would continue to benefit from charity relief from non-domestic rates, new organisations would not and there was therefore a risk of charitable benefits being offset to deter future use of arm's length organisations;
- reference was made to the charitable purpose which arm's length organisations had in areas such as participation in sport, health and wellbeing and volunteering; and
- it had to be highlighted that there were still additional possibilities to be explored in the use of arm's length organisations by Councils in future. In

this regard, the Council's redesign process would continue to consider the use of arm's length organisations within ten options for service delivery.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the national report in the local context as circulated.

The meeting ended at 11.10am.