

**The Highland Council
No. 2 2018/2019**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 28 June 2018 at 10.35am.

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

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Chief Executive	Director of Finance
Director of Development & Infrastructure	Director of Community Services

Also in Attendance:

Chief Superintendent G MacDonald, Police Scotland
Chief Inspector D Ross, Police Scotland

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr J Gray and Mrs T Robertson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 3 – Mr A Jarvie (Non-Financial)

Item 9(i) Mr K Rosie (Non-Financial)

Item 9(vi) – Mr A Baxter (Financial) and Mr A Graham (Non-Financial)

Item 18 – Ms L Munro, Mr T Heggie, Mr D Macpherson, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Jarvie and Mr D Louden (all Non-Financial)

3. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Gold Award Presentation Sgeama Duais Diùc Dhùn Èideann – Toirt Seachad na Duais Òir

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board Member of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme 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.

It was **NOTED** that, as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, thirty six young people from across the Highlands were due to receive the Gold Award in the current year.

In this regard, the Convener presented Gold Award badges to the following fifteen recipients who were present at the meeting:-

Steven Grant (Culloden Academy)

Jed Russell (Culloden Academy)

Nina Robertson (Culloden Academy)

Kirsty Watt (Portree High School)

Danielle Mckandie (Culloden Academy)

Freya Shepherd (Fortrose Academy)

Aimee Vincent (Inverness Royal Academy)

Meg Wallace (Culloden Academy)

Katherine Baines (Dornoch Academy)

Johnathan Hibbard (Grantown Grammar School)

Lucy Dornan (Golspie High School)

Neil Crawshaw (Culloden Academy)

Rachel Hay (Culloden Academy)

Heather Longbottom (Girl Guides UK)

Jessica Wade (Girl Guides UK)

4. Confirmation of Minutes Daingneachadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 10 May 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 as contained in Volume which had been circulated separately as undernoted:-

Caithness Committee, 16 May
 *Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee, 17 May
 Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee, 22 May
 Sutherland County Committee, 23 May
 Corporate Resources Committee, 24 May
 **Care, Learning & Housing Committee, 30 May
 *City of Inverness Area Committee, 31 May
 Isle of Skye & Raasay Committee, 4 June
 *Nairnshire Committee, 13 June
 Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 14 June

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

Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee, 17 May

***Starred Item: Item 23: PP. 99-100: Waste Management Strategy**

The Council **AGREED** the continuation of the role of the Member Waste Working Group to support and scrutinise the project going forward

Care, Learning & Housing Committee, 30 May

***Starred Item: Item 13: PP.135 : Review of Statutory Consultation Exercise into the proposal to establish a new primary school to serve the Ness Castle and Ness-Side housing developments**

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

***Starred Item: Item 21: PP. 139-141: 6-Monthly High Life Highland Progress Report**

The Council **AGREED** the nomination of Mrs A MacLean to support the Youth Work Improvement Group and Highland Youth Parliament to develop it.

City of Inverness Area Committee, 31 May

***Starred Item: Item 10: P. 149: Town House Works Programme Phase 3**

The Council **AGREED** 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

Nairnshire Committee, 13 June

***Starred Item: Item 3: PP. 164-165: Nairn Business Improvement District (BID)**

The Council **AGREED** to support the 'NairnConnects' BID Proposal.

6. Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board Co-Bhòrd Luachaidh na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean Siar

There had been circulated for information Minutes of Meeting of the Valuation Joint Board held on 18 January 2018 (approved by the Board on 21 June 2018) which were **NOTED**.

7. Membership of Committees, etc Ballarachd Chomataidhean, msaa

It was **NOTED** that Mr D Mackay had confirmed that he had now left the Independent Group and joined the Scottish Conservatives Group.

In this regard, it was **NOTED** that the revised membership of the Council was as follows:-

Independent – 27/SNP – 19/Scottish Conservatives – 11/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 9/7/4/4/1

Revised Committee membership lists had also been tabled at the meeting and were **AGREED**.

The Council also **AGREED** the following –

North Planning Applications Committee (Sub – Ward 1) – Mr H Morrison
 North Planning Applications Committee (Sub – Ward 2) – Mr S Mackie
 North Planning Applications Committee (Sub – Ward 3) – Ms N Sinclair
 South Planning Applications Committee (Sub – Ward 12) – Ms E Knox
 South Planning Applications Committee (Sub – Ward 16) – Mrs I MacKenzie

Planning Review Body

It was noted that, following the resignation of Mr S Mackie, nominations had been sought from Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 9 for the vacant place on the Planning Review Body and had been received for Mr A Sinclair and Mr R Bremner.

On a vote being taken, Mr Sinclair received 24 votes and Mr Bremner received 40 votes, with 4 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-

Votes for Mr A Sinclair

Mr D Macpherson, Mr R MacDonald, Mr T Heggie, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr C Smith, Mr J Finlayson, Mr G Adam, Mr D Rixson, Ms L Munro, Mr D MacLeod, Mr J Bruce, Mr I Ramon, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr H Morrison, Mr M Reiss, Mrs F Robertson, Mrs I Campbell, Mrs J Barclay, Mr A Jarvie, Mr S Mackie, Mr P Saggars, Mr D MacKay and Mr W MacKay.

Votes for Mr R Bremner

Mr K Rosie, Mrs P Munro, Mr B Allan, Mr K Gowans, Mr C MacLeod, Ms P Hadley, Mr R Balfour, Mrs M Paterson, Miss J Campbell, Mr G Ross, Mr R MacWilliam, Ms K Currie, Ms E Knox, Mr B Boyd, Mr D Loudon, Mr A Rhind, Mr B Thompson, Mr L Fraser, Mrs A MacLean, Mrs M Cockburn, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr G MacKenzie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr M Finlayson, Mr A Graham, Mrs C Caddick, Mr B Lobban, Ms M Smith, Mr R Laird, Mr A Henderson, Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A MacKinnon, Mr A Baxter, Mr A Christie, Mrs D MacKay, Mr R Bremner, Mr J McGillivray and Mr N McLean.

Abstentions

Mr R Gale, Ms K Stephen, Mrs C Wilson and Ms N Sinclair.

It was therefore **AGREED** that **Mr R Bremner** should be appointed to the Planning Review Body.

8. Question Time
Am Ceiste

The following Questions had been received by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development 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 the Leader could seek clarification from the Scottish Government as to why SNP MPs had not supported the proposal for an additional runway at Heathrow Airport in the recent vote at Westminster in view of the potential benefits for the Highland area and economy.

In response, the Leader confirmed that a letter would be sent to Ian Blackford MP to express disappointment at this situation.

(ii) Mr S Mackie**To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee**

“Given the rise in vandalism of Council owned play equipment in the Thurso and Northwest Caithness Ward, what measures are open to the Council in protecting its assets from mindless vandalism and ensuring that ratepayers are not liable for the cost of replacing and repairing play equipment?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Mackie queried as to whether the Leader would agree to meet with himself, Police Scotland and Community Groups with a

view to considering measures which could be taken for the reinstatement of play equipment in the Thurso and Northwest Caithness Ward.

In response, the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee confirmed that this would be arranged as requested.

(iii) Mr D MacLeod

To the Leader of the Council

“Can you let me have an update on your efforts to persuade the Government/Treasury to reduce the principal and/or greatly re-schedule the interest payments on the £200m legacy borrowing incurred whilst providing the infrastructure which supported the oil industry during the 1970’s and 1980’s?”

It should be noted in this context that Government Revenues from Oil & Gas production totalled \$470 billion between 1970 - 2014 and much of this Production was extracted from structures built at Nigg and Ardersier, many of which are still operating today”.

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr MacLeod queried as to whether it would be possible to form a Working Group to allow consideration and research into a substantial business case for submission to the Treasury in relation to reducing the principal and/or greatly re-scheduling the interest payments on the £200m legacy borrowing.

In response, the Leader confirmed that this was now a political issue but that further discussion would be undertaken with Ian Blackford MP and with others on an individual basis thereafter as appropriate.

(iv) Ms M Smith

To the Leader of the Council

“The Administration has spoken widely in the press and this Chamber about being in favour of a Transient Visitor Levy (Tourist Tax). Given the express need for income to this Council to protect public services from further cuts, will the Administration kick start this by giving a directive to one of its Working Groups or Boards to take this forward immediately, thereby instructing Officers to prepare a business case on different options for a Transient Visitor Levy?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Smith queried as to whether a Special Meeting of the Tourism Working Group could be arranged at an early date to allow consideration of a business case on different options for a transient visitor levy.

In response, the Leader confirmed that this would be arranged as requested.

(v) Mr R MacWilliam

To the Leader of the Council

“What progress has been made in setting up the Highland Council Capital Board

which was agreed at full Council?"

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr MacWilliam queried as to whether detailed financial information could be provided for Members in relation to investment in the School Estate.

In response, the Leader confirmed that this information had already been provided.

(vi) Mr A Graham

To the Leader of the Council

"Could you provide an update on the rollout of fibre broadband in the Highlands, with particular reference to (a) progress in landward areas and (b) progress in "not-spots" in City of Inverness and other urban areas, and on what the Council is doing to further progress matters?"

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Graham queried as to whether, given the chaotic situation and the continuing major issues with broadband installation, the wide-ranging problems experienced by broadband subscribers and the difficulties the public faced in obtaining information, consideration could be given to setting up a "One-Stop-Shop" website for Highland residents to access information about broadband provision and service, possibly funded by the City Deal.

In response, the Leader confirmed that this would be considered as requested and also that a Seminar would be arranged.

(vii) Mr K Gowans

To the Leader of the Council

"On 30th October 2014 the Council agreed the policy Appointments to major external bodies and arms' length organisations. The policy, as agreed, is without limit of time and can only be revoked or amended by a decision taken at full Council by all Members. Officers have confirmed there have been no formal meetings of any Members, at any time, to amend this policy and no other mechanisms exist that would allow the policy to be changed, other than with the agreement by Members at full Council. Consequently, the conclusion must be that the policy as agreed on October 2014 remains in place, therefore appointments to all outside organisations cited in the policy document must be made in accordance with the current policy. The policy also recommends that appointments to other external organisations should be made in accordance with the policy.

At the last meeting of the full Council, the Convener stated in the Chamber "there is no appointments panel, that was in the previous Council and it was not taken forward into this Council".

If the Leader of the Council agrees with the Convener's statement above, can the Leader provide Members with details of the meeting, including minutes, of any meeting where a decision to depart from the policy in question Highland Council policy was taken behind closed doors, or if no such meeting has taken place, does the Leader agree that the policy should have been followed?"

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Gowans queried as to whether the Leader would agree to consider the re-establishment of the Appointments Panel in relation to External Bodies and Arms-Length Organisations.

In response, the Leader confirmed that this Panel had not been re-established at the start of the new term of the Council and that no further consideration would be given to the issue.

9. Notices of Motion Brathan Glusaid

It was **NOTED** that, in line with Standing Order 17.2, the Convener had accepted the following additional Notice of Motion as **Urgent Business** –

“Council notes with concern that the Scottish Government has underspent its Budget in 2017/18 by £453 million. This impacts all residents in Scotland. The Highland Council calls for this to be released immediately to Local Councils in line with the accepted and previously used grant distribution formula. This would equate to an additional £21.345 million for the Highland Council.

Council calls upon all Highland MSPs to publicly support our call for our share of this funding which will allow the Council to maintain services, mitigate and re-phase some of the Budget decisions previously scheduled for later on this year.”

Signed: Mr A Christie Mr A MacKinnon Mr A Baxter Mr A Henderson
Mrs D MacKay Mrs M Davidson Mr J Gray

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- if the Scottish Government’s underspend was reallocated, the Council’s share would equate to twice the amount of the savings made earlier in the year. This would help to protect services under threat and avoid the need to make further difficult choices in future;
- in these times of financial austerity, it was suggested that the level of the Scottish Government underspend was irresponsible, especially when services and jobs had been cut. Also, over recent years, the reduction in Local Government finance had meant a reduction of £172 per person in the Highland area;
- any additional funding for the Council could enable real progress to be made in repairing roads;
- it was hoped that Highland MSPs would show solidarity and, regardless of political party, seek reallocation of the underspend for the good of the Highland area. There were examples, particularly surrounding the school estate, where this collective approach had already been of benefit;
- a Highland MSP had recently been appointed as Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy and this was welcomed, given that it would allow greater understanding of the difficulties which Local Councils were facing;
- there were instances where previous Scottish Government Administrations had returned surpluses to the Westminster Government;
- the Scottish Government had already indicated how it intended to utilise this surplus. There would be many other calls for this money and it was ingenuous to think that it could all be used to fund Local Government;

- the reallocation of the surplus would provide only be a short term solution covering a one year period;
- if there were calls for the Scottish Government to spend its reserves, there was an argument that the Highland Council should do likewise; and
- the Scottish Government was unable to run a deficit and elsewhere the building up of reserves would be seen as sound financial management.

Thereafter, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr A Mackinnon, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Dr I Cockburn, seconded by Ms M Smith, moved that the Notice of Motion should not be supported.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 45 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 20 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr A Baxter, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr A Graham, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Mr W Mackay (via VC), Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr J McGillivray (via VC), Mr H Morrison, Ms L Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Mr A Sinclair, Ms N Sinclair (via VC), Mr B Thomson and Mrs C Wilson.

For the Amendment:

Mr B Allan, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner (via VC), Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr K Gowans, Mrs P Hadley, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr D Louden, 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.

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

Declaration of Interest – Mr K Rosie declared a non-financial interest in the following item 9(i) as a Trustee of the John O’Groats to Inverness Trail but, having applied the test as outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not prevent him from taking part in the discussion.

(i) ‘Highland Council recognises the contribution that walking tourism can make to our rural landscape and local economy and congratulates Jay Wilson and the Friends of the John O’Groats Trail for literally blazing a path from Inverness to John O’Groats.

Recognising that over 90% of the Trail’s bridges and stiles have already been built through an outpouring of local voluntary work, the Highland Council pledges to offer its full support to the initiative by designating the Trail as a ‘core path’ and helping to

promote it to visitors from home and abroad.’

Signed: Ms N Sinclair Mr M Reiss Mr K Rosie

Prior to discussion, and in light of a resource implication which had been highlighted, it was noted that the signatories to this Notice of Motion had now amended the last paragraph to read as follows:-

‘Recognising that over 90% of the Trail’s bridges and stiles have already been built through an outpouring of local voluntary work, the Highland Council pledges to offer its full support to the initiative by designating suitable parts of the Trail as a core paths and flexibly adding to that core path network as stretches of the Trail continue to improve. No stretches of the Trail will be deleted without prior discussion with local Elected Members’.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it should be noted that, with support from the local Estate and the Beatrice Fund, volunteers had built a bridge over the Ousedale burn over two weekends in March, thus improving the access of this stage from Red to Amber status;
- tribute was paid to Jay Wilson whose drive and enthusiasm had been fundamental in taking forward improvements to the John O’Groats Trail;
- walking tourism was important and the development of the Trail encouraged visitors to stay longer in the area, allowing the rugged nature of the north landscape to be celebrated. Although still in its infancy, interest in the Trail was growing;
- the Trail represented a community sustainable initiative which had also generated a number of other groups, thus amplifying the benefits;
- there was still concern amongst some landowners in regard to the negative impact the Trail could have so it was important that these fears were addressed;
- the main objective was to have the entire Inverness to John O’Groats Trail designated as a Core Path Network; and
- following confirmation that the last sentence of the amended last paragraph could not be implemented as the Council had no locus in this respect, it was suggested that this should be removed.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the following amended Notice of Motion:–

‘Highland Council recognises the contribution that walking tourism can make to our rural landscape and local economy and congratulates Jay Wilson and the Friends of the John O’Groats Trail for literally blazing a path from Inverness to John O’Groats.

Recognising that over 90% of the Trail’s bridges and stiles have already been built through an outpouring of local voluntary work, the Highland Council pledges to offer its full support to the initiative by designating suitable parts of the Trail as core paths and flexibly adding to that core path network as stretches of the Trail continue to improve.’

(ii) ‘The Highland Council agrees to reinstate ‘NO OVERNIGHT PARKING’ signs at all Viewpoints/Car Parks throughout the region. This is aimed at preventing ‘wild camping’, particularly by Campervans, with the associated littering.

Staying overnight in a layby does not contribute to our rural economy and there are many high quality established campsites where all the requisite facilities are already provided.'

Signed: Mr D MacLeod Mr S Mackie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Highland area had significantly benefitted from the popularity of the North Coast 500 but many communities and businesses were frustrated at the increase in "wild" camping, often in close proximity to formal camp sites, and the associated littering and fouling that was left behind. The introduction of "No Overnight Parking" signs would go some way to alleviate this situation;
- a cleaner environment would attract more tourists, money and investment;
- work had already commenced at Local Committees to review the policy of overnight parking for vehicles and it was suggested that this could include the potential future use of traffic orders if and when necessary;
- "wild" camping could be discouraged through the Visit Scotland website and Tourist information Centres with tourists being redirected to the many excellent camp sites in the area;
- the rules/guidance on "No Overnight Parking" signs was unclear and, given the current financial climate, it was important to be risk adverse; and
- prior to the commitment of any resources on this issue, a Briefing Paper was sought, from the Head of Corporate Governance, to a future meeting to allow further consideration/discussion at that time.

Decision

The Council **AGREED to DEFER** the above Notice of Motion - on the basis that a Briefing Paper on this issue would be prepared by the Head of Corporate Governance prior to any further discussion/consideration.

(iii)'This Council welcomes the installation of the Rt Rev Susan Brown, Minister for the Dornoch Cathedral, as new the Moderator of The Church of Scotland.

Assuming the role as the leader of one of the nation's oldest and most influential institutions, this Council congratulates her and wishes her the best in working with people of all faiths and none for the benefit of our communities.'

Signed: Mr S Mackie Mr T Heggie Ms K Stephen

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Church of Scotland had deep roots in communities and was proactive in addressing various social issues. Having someone from the Highland area at its head was important and was to be welcomed;
- as localism developed it was important that the Council worked with organisations such as the Church of Scotland to ensure resilient communities;
- tribute was paid to the work carried out by the Rt Rev Brown and for the manner in which it had been done;
- congratulations were also extended to Robin Downie, Applecross, Lochcarron and Torridon Church of Scotland who had been appointed Moderator of the National Youth Assembly. In addition, Rev Angus MacRae, Dingwall and

Strathpeffer Free Church had been appointed Moderator of The Free Church of Scotland and reference was made to his extensive work with various community groups; and

- it was suggested that the first paragraph of the Notice of Motion should be amended to include reference to the 'General Assembly of' the Church of Scotland.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the following amended Notice of Motion:-

'This Council welcomes the installation of the Rt Rev Susan Brown, Minister for the Dornoch Cathedral, as new the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Assuming the role as the leader of one of the nation's oldest and most influential institutions, this Council congratulates her and wishes her the best in working with people of all faiths and none for the benefit of our communities.'

(iv)Senior Management Review –

'This Council notes the retirement announcement of the Director of Care and Learning and records thanks for his years of public service.

However, it would be a missed opportunity to not review our most senior management posts.

It is therefore agreed that a full review is conducted into what kind of Director level management this Council needs and where it is best for responsibility and management to lie. At the heart of this will be efficiency – either through deletion of post(s) or separating responsibilities for better service efficiency. If it is a feasible outcome from such a review, this could provide us the possibility of removing or changing a post without facing significant redundancy costs.'

Signed: Mr A Jarvie Mr P Saggars Mr J Bruce Mr D MacKay

Decision

Following confirmation from the signatories, the Council **AGREED to WITHDRAW** the above Notice of Motion.

(v)Kildonan Station -

'This Council is concerned by proposals to close the Kildonan station in Sutherland.

The Far North Line provides a vital link between Caithness, Sutherland, Ross-shire and the Highland Capital and role of rural stations are vitally important to ensuring that the line is as accessible to as many residents, visitors and the business community as possible.

Recent announcements concerning the introduction of Network Rail barriers at the stations crossing and the piloting of electronic flagging at request stops are welcome announcements that will positively affect both the journey time and experience for rail users.

The Council requests that the Leader write to HiTrans and the Transport Minister to urge very careful consideration of any proposals that compromise the accessibility of the railway for rural users and would urge all options to be considered to reduce travel times on the Far North Line.'

Signed: Mr S Mackie Mr R Gale

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Far North Line was in essence a life-line. It undoubtedly had flaws, including the journey time, but progress had already been taken to improve connectivity. Closing Kildonan Station would only save 4 minutes on an overall average journey time of 3 hours 50 minutes so retaining it was unlikely to have a detrimental effect on customer satisfaction or numbers;
- the Station was a core part of the community. It was located in a remote and rural area and steps should be taken to promote it, especially bearing in mind the huge growth in tourism in Sutherland;
- the Council should support the local community in its opposition of what was deemed a short sighted and misguided proposal; and
- reference was made to the HiTrans paper "Midnight Train to Georgemas" which explored the possibility of an overnight train from Thurso to Edinburgh, via Aberdeen. If this was to succeed, it would be important to have as many Stations open as possible.

Decision

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

Declarations of Interest –

Mr A Baxter declared a financial interest in the following item 9(vi) as the owner of a Post Office and left the Chamber during discussion of the item.

Mr A Graham declared a non-financial interest on the basis that a family member was employed by the Royal Bank of Scotland but, having applied the test as 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.

(vi)'In view of Royal Bank of Scotland's continued determination to close Highland branches and cause problems particularly with tourism, small businesses and the many people in our communities that do not have or wish to access online services, we believe Highland Council now needs to take initiative where we can.

We ask the Council to agree that the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources investigate how we can initiate and revive any agreements we have with other banks and also investigate how we can support the work of the Post Office and the banking services they provide.'

Signed: Mrs M Davidson Mr B Lobban

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was regretted that, despite many approaches to the Royal Bank of Scotland to ask them to reconsider, they had continued to close branches with the Tain

branch having closed in the previous week. In this respect, tribute was paid to the Tain RBS staff who had been instrumental in supporting many local businesses;

- branch closures were regrettable as many older people were reluctant and sometimes unable to use internet banking for a variety of reasons;
- there was a need to encourage and support communities in their efforts to keep banks open in their respective areas;
- it should be noted that the Council had a network of buildings in the Highland area which could potentially be used by banks; and
- the proposed use of Post Offices in the Highland area had many limitations, not least in respect of heavy cash businesses such as tourism.

Decision

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

(At this point, Mr A Baxter returned to the Chamber)

(vii)End to Free Lunches –

‘The Council agrees to end the routine provision of free lunches to Members on Committee days and agrees that a business case be prepared by Officers on the creation of a larger canteen for the use of Members and staff.’

Signed: Ms M Smith Mr R Laird

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- changing the layout of the current Members’ lounge would make it possible to extend the kitchen and offer a commercial facility for both staff and Members;
- the current staff canteen was small and not in a good location, especially for those with mobility issues;
- there was a strong possibility that the proposal would generate income although Members could still choose to claim the cost of their lunches. In this respect, a previous voluntary scheme for claiming for Members’ lunches had been attempted but with limited success;
- it had to be highlighted that Members needed to be aware of the perception of having a ‘sense of entitlement’ and being ‘treated differently’ from staff who, when working remotely, were unable to claim lunch expenses;
- the proposal would require investment but it was suggested that this could be viewed as a ‘spend to save’ project;
- as an alternative to the Notice of Motion, it was suggested that the Redesign Board could examine this proposal and report back to the Council on the best way forward in terms of providing catering for Members in the future; and
- an alternative view was that the provision of lunches for Members allowed them to make the most efficient use of time on Committee/Council days when time was limited.

Thereafter, Ms M Smith, seconded by Mr R Laird, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr B Lobban, seconded by Mr G Cruickshank, moved that the Redesign Board should carry out a comprehensive review of the provision of catering for Members in all Council premises where meetings involving Members were held and that a recommendation be brought forward for consideration at a future meeting of the Council.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 26 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 37 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDEMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr B Allan, Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner (via VC), Miss J Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Mr A Christie, Ms K Currie, Mr K Gowans, Mrs P Hadley, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr N McLean (via VC), Ms P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie, Ms N Sinclair (via VC), Mr B Thomson and Ms M Smith.

For the Amendment:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr A Graham, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr J McGillivray (via VC), Mr H Morrison, Ms L Munro, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Mr A Sinclair and Mrs C Wilson.

Decision

It was **AGREED** that the Redesign Board should carry out a comprehensive review of the provision of catering for Members in all Council premises where meetings involving Members were held and that a recommendation be brought forward for consideration at a future meeting of the Council.

(viii)Gypsy Traveller Sites -

‘The Local Authority has a duty to provide adequate facilities for Gypsy Travellers who arrive in Highland on their travels. Currently, there are limited parking sites allocated in Highland, all of which are south of the Cromarty Bridge.

It is in the interests of Gypsy Travellers and the wider public that the Council provides parking areas, as well as sanitary disposal facilities, in the north of Highland going forward. In the absence of these, Gypsy Travellers have no choice but to discover their own locations which are often at odds with local opinion and can lead to disputes. This is not what the Council wants for its travelling community or Highland communities.

The Council calls upon its Officers to prepare a business case, in conjunction and consultation with the Gypsy Traveller community, to look at how best they and the public can be served by providing parking and stopover facilities in the future. This may not happen immediately due to lack of funding but can go into a future programme, looking for matched funding elsewhere.’

Signed: Ms M Smith Mrs P Munro

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- gypsy travellers were part of Scotland’s diverse culture and yet were often poorly served in terms of the provision of facilities;
- an instance of gypsy travellers using an unofficial site was highlighted and this

had caused upset with the local community. From discussion with the travellers themselves, it was evident that using unofficial sites was often their only option and they had indicated that if facilities were available they would use them instead;

- the negative issues arising from using unofficial sites resulted in gypsy travellers feeling alienated; and
- in order that work could commence as and when grants became available, it was proposed that a business case be prepared with a subsequent report back to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee in Autumn 2018. In this regard, the signatories to the Notice of Motion agreed that the last paragraph of the Motion should be amended to reflect this suggestion.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the following amended Notice of Motion:-

‘The Local Authority has a duty to provide adequate facilities for Gypsy Travellers who arrive in Highland on their travels. Currently, there are 4 sites in Highland, all of which are south of the Cromarty Bridge.

It is in the interests of Gypsy Travellers and the wider public that the Council provides parking areas, as well as sanitary disposal facilities, in the north of Highland going forward. In the absence of these, Gypsy Travellers have no choice but to discover their own locations which are often at odds with local opinion and can lead to disputes. This is not what the Council wants for its travelling community or Highland communities.

The last needs assessment for Gypsy Travellers was completed in 2014 so it is recognised that there is a necessity to look at a new Needs Assessment as soon as possible. The Council therefore agrees to commence this process with immediate effect and bring back an initial report to a Care, Learning and Housing Committee meeting in the Autumn.’

(ix) Highland Brexit Summit -

‘Highland Council notes with dismay the UK Government’s disregard for the will of the Scottish Parliament, including the unanimous votes of Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green and SNP MSPs, to withhold consent for the EU Withdrawal Bill; remembers that the Highland electorate voted to remain in the EU in 2016 in common with every Scottish Local Authority area; believes that Highland economic prospects are likely to be considerably harmed as a result of Brexit; therefore calls on the Council Administration to host a cross-party Highland Brexit Summit in advance of the EU withdrawal date of 29 March 2019 involving Highland Councillors, Community Council representatives, MPs, MSPs, relevant Scottish and UK Ministers, relevant public sector agencies including HIE and NHS Highland; and resolves to seek agreement on a Highland specific plan to mitigate against Brexit-related harm and to promote Highland interests at all levels of government.’

Signed: Mr R MacWilliam Ms K Currie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- given that there were no guarantees that the investment support which was currently received from the EU would be replicated, it was important to consider the possible consequences as soon as possible in order to ensure

- that the sustained economic growth in the Highlands was not lost;
- it was unacceptable that EU nationals in Highland would need to answer questions and to pay to apply for “settled status”, especially when the area already had difficulties in retaining its population. If an economy was to grow, it was important to attract people to the area and many of those people were likely to be EU nationals;
 - there was a disproportionate elderly population in Highland and there needed to be a workforce to deal with this situation;
 - when considering measures to be taken, it was vital to engage and consult with communities who would be most affected by the Brexit situation on a day-to-day basis in the future;
 - the major issues were inward investment, demographics, labour supply, inward migration, population retention and growth, future support arrangements for key sectors and the replacement of funding for ESF and ERDF;
 - the key sectors affected would be food and drink, marine sciences, life sciences, agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, tourism, further and higher education, transport, local government and health energy;
 - the proposed summit would benefit from hearing the informed and objective opinions from representatives from key sectors in order to identify the major risks. As such, there had to be a collective effort and in this respect it was suggested that a cross-party group should be formed to consider the make-up, balance and arrangements for the event;
 - the impact of Brexit would not be exclusively negative and it had to be noted that there could also be new opportunities available. In order to take advantage of any new situations, it was imperative that a neutral and balanced approach was maintained; and
 - it was hoped that any new arrangements would help regeneration to be undertaken primarily at a local level.

Thereafter, Mr R MacWilliam, seconded by Ms K Currie, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed - with the addition of the suggestion to set up a cross-party Group to take forward the proposal.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr S Mackie, moved that the Council should note the challenges and possible opportunities that would come with Brexit but recognise the significant work required and therefore called on the Council Administration to host a cross-party Highland Brexit Summit in advance of the EU withdrawal date of 29 March 2019, involving Highland Councillors, Community Council representatives, MPs, MSPs, relevant Scottish and UK Ministers, relevant public sector agencies (including HIE and NHS Highland) and resolve to seek agreement on a Highland specific plan to realise opportunities and mitigate against negative impacts of Brexit in order to promote Highland interests at all levels of Government and immediately set up a cross-party group to take forward this proposal.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 30 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 24 votes, with 6 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr B Allan, Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner (via VC), Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mrs P Hadley, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr D Loudon, Mrs L MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr C

MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs A MacLean, Ms L Munro, Ms P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie, Mr G Ross and Ms M Smith.

For the Amendment:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr J Bruce, Mrs B Campbell, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr R Gale, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mr D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mr I Ramon, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr A Sinclair, Ms N Sinclair (via VC), Mr B Thomson and Mrs C Wilson.

Abstentions:

Mrs H Carmichael, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr A Henderson and Mr H Morrison.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed – on the basis that a cross-party Group would be set up to take forward the proposal.

**10. Police Scrutiny
Sgrùdadh Poileis**

(a) Performance against Highland Local Policing Plan 2017-20

There had been circulated Report No. HC/16/18 dated 14 June 2018 by the Chief Superintendent, Highland and Island Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, which provided details of the local performance report from Police Scotland against the Highland Policing Plan Objectives – April 2017 to March 2018.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the information which had been supplied was welcomed, particularly in terms of responding to issues previously raised by Members;
- it was felt that this was contributing to a return to ‘local policing’, with a consequent positive response from the public, and this again was welcomed;
- it was noted that more cases of drink/driving had been reported and that additional checks on vehicles were being undertaken on a regular basis;
- the positive response to issues raised in regard to the A82 road had helped to restore confidence in the local policing plan;
- there was still concern about the movement of heavy loads across the Highland area;
- the work in supporting the Syrian refugees in the area was greatly appreciated;
- there had been increased attendance at Community Council meetings and this was appreciated;
- increased input in issues in relation to licensing, particularly in the current year, had been extremely helpful;
- there was a need to identify the reasons behind the increase in the shoplifting statistics;
- the increase in hate crimes and attacks was a concern and the public had to be helped and supported in reporting this type of crime;
- further information was required in relation to the future levels of community policing;
- the input in relation to the Community Planning Partnership and the use of social media was welcomed;

- there had been positive feedback on the cleaner, safer City Centre which was appreciated;
- further information was required on the reasons behind the stopping of traffic during the rush hour on the A9 recently for census purposes which had caused problems;
- there was still concern in relation to drug/driving offences and it was suggested that consideration should be given to roadside testing wherever possible; and
- it was hoped that there could be improvements to the current process for '101' calls which were often the subject of significant delays.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the local performance report against the Highland Policing Plan Objectives – April 2017 to March 2018 – as circulated.

(b) Update on Call Handling

There had been circulated Report No. HC/17/18 by Chief Inspector, Mr D Ross, Police Scotland.

During discussion, reference was made to the extensive level of detail which had been provided and this was welcomed. The new processes would take time to become established but it appeared that there had been a low level of complaints from the public so far and that Officers had confirmed that the new procedures were currently working well.

There was still concern however in relation to the lack of local knowledge during '101' calls which often led to delayed responses and a lack of confidence in callers to this number and it was hoped that this could be improved in future.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the information on call handling as circulated.

11. Recruitment Process for Chief Executive Fastadh Àrd-Oifigear Ùr

There had been circulated Report No. HC/18/18 dated 25 June 2018 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, and following a request for clarification on why the proposed composition of the Appointments Panel was not based on political balance as had been the case in the past, it was confirmed that this proposal had been discussed by the Administration and it was felt that it represented inclusion of the necessary expertise of Senior Councillors for this appointment. However, if a request was being made for an additional Member to be included from the SNP Group (as the main Opposition Group within the Council), then it was felt that this could be accommodated.

In relation to the proposals that External Advisers should be used at a cost of £20k and that the salary should be set at a single point of £147,989, it was confirmed that advice had been sought and received from the Head of People & ICT and that both of these proposals were considered to be a good investment and good value for money for the Council in the long term.

At this point, it was highlighted that this was a two-way process and as such it was important that the Council should follow current best practice in terms of recruitment to the post. In this regard, further details of assessment procedures for potential candidates would be discussed with Opposition Group Leaders in due course and this would include consideration of arranging meetings with candidates for any Member of the Council who wished to be involved at that stage of the process.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the Appointments Panel and recruitment process as detailed in Section 1 of the report – on the basis that an additional Member from the SNP Group would be added to the Panel.

It was also **AGREED** that administrative issues related to the recruitment should be delegated to the Appointments Panel, that External Advisers should be used in accordance with Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the report and the extent of involvement should be approved by the Appointments Panel and not exceed £20k and that the salary should be a single point of £147,989.

12. Annual Accounts for the Year to 31 March 2018 Cunntasan Neo-sgrùdaichte

There had been circulated Report No. HC/19/18 dated 22 June by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, and in welcoming the new style of report which was very informative and ‘user friendly’, it was noted that further information would be provided in due course in relation to the total value of savings from vacancy management in the previous year, including other underspends associated with staff costs.

It was also noted that further information would be provided on figures regarding the investment in roads and bridges (£16.3m) and liabilities/borrowing (-£942.9m) which were contained within the report.

Decision

Members **AGREED** the unaudited Annual Accounts for the Highland Council, Highland Charities Trust, Highland Charitable Trust and the Highland Council Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2018 and **NOTED** that these would be presented to the appointed auditor by the prescribed date of 30 June 2018.

13. Multi-Year Revenue Budget Planning 2019/20 to 2021/22 Dealbhadh Buidseit Ioma-Bhliadhna

There had been circulated Report No. HC/19/18 dated 18 June 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it had to be recognised that there had had to be extensive budget reductions in recent years and not least in February when there had been a focus on protecting jobs by proposing potential income streams elsewhere, including the introduction of car parking charges in certain areas;
- it would be important for the budget decisions taken in February to be

followed through as concerns had already been raised by Trade Unions in regard to the potential for redundancies if this was not the case;

- it was clear that a multi-year budget approach was the only feasible route forward for future years;
- clarification was required from the Administration in terms of why the expected replenishment of reserves had not yet happened;
- there had been a lack of consultation in relation to the proposed implementation of car parking charges and this had caused significant problems in some areas;
- there had to be an increased emphasis in future on the work of the Tourism and Commercial Boards in light of the potential income streams which could be achieved for the Council;
- it should be acknowledged that Local Government had had to suffer disproportionate funding reductions in recent years and this had caused severe problems for public services;
- work had to be undertaken over the next months and years on providing alternatives for services which might need to be reduced or ceased altogether as a result of the budget situation;
- any further reductions in funding could lead to cuts in staffing numbers and this had to be acknowledged;
- it would perhaps be appropriate to present budget monitoring reports to all full Council meetings in the lead up to the February budget meeting in 2019;
- the work of the Redesign Board could have a key role in the budget considerations over the coming months;
- the statistics which had been presented in relation to the 3 year budget gap from 2019/20 to 2021/22 were very concerning and placed a greater emphasis on identifying new income streams as an alternative to cuts to jobs and services;
- an early indication of the budget timetable, together with budget monitoring reports, would be welcomed by all Members of the Council;
- it was imperative that there was a detailed rationale and considered process in place prior to any firm decisions being made to limit or cease services;
- it was noted that the current level of reserves was very low in comparison with previous years and this was a concern; and
- in relation to the overall budget strategy, there would be a draft programme in place within the next two months and all Members of the Council were encouraged to become involved in order to ensure that there was full input in all future decisions to be made in this regard.

Decision

Members **NOTED** the financial modelling assumptions and the scale of the financial challenge facing the Council over the next three years with a potential funding gap of between £34.1m and £124.9m.

Members also **AGREED** that proposals should be prepared for a multi-year budget for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22.

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

(a) Progress Report and Forward Look

There had been circulated Report No. HC/21/18 dated 19 June by the Chief Executive.

Decision

Members **NOTED**:-

- (i) the Board's activity since the Council meeting in May 2018 on the growing programme of peer and Lean and that two new types of reviews were to be introduced. Work continued on the communications plan and links were being made with workforce planning. Staff engagement continued through management briefings and the Board had been briefed on the take-up of participation requests and community asset transfers;
- (ii) the car parking review had concluded and the Board's recommendations had been reported separately to the Council;
- (iii) further work was planned over the summer months on taking forward new reviews, holding the first annual Lean event for staff to enable more learning and acknowledge staff success and on planning the next round of staff engagement through local forums;
- (iv) the chronology of the Board's activities over the past 12 months and its achievements and work still to do as summarised in Paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4; and
- (v) that redesign activity had not required the total budget allowance made for it.

Members **AGREED** that the Board should continue to operate beyond June 2018, adapt to new challenges, learn from experience and connect to other change processes in the Council for redesign to achieve even more going forward.

Members also **AGREED** that redesign should be subject to annual review by the Board and by the Council and to resource redesign with a budget feed of up to £40k from July 2018 to the end of June 2019. These costs could expect to be recovered from savings, costs avoided and income generation and income achievement identified from redesign reviews.

(b) Redesign Review of Car Parking – Final Report

There had been circulated Report No. HC/22/18 dated 12 June 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager (Review Team Leader).

Prior to discussion, the Convener confirmed that an additional recommendation was to be added to the proposals as follows – for the year 2018/19 only, any shortfall in area car parking income would be underwritten from the overall Community Services budget.

Thereafter, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the additional recommendation which had now been put forward was welcomed, particularly in the Ross & Cromarty area where there had been concerns about potential penalties if proposed income levels had not been achieved;
- it was hoped that local democracy and community engagement could be implemented in the months ahead;
- there were however still serious concerns in the Dingwall area in particular as it was not considered that there was a traffic management problem in this location at present and local residents feared that the introduction of car parking charges would have a detrimental effect on local businesses;

- it should be noted that there were areas where car parking charges had been implemented without public consultation beforehand and this was regretted;
- there was also some concern about some of the statistics within previous reports (outwith the redesign process) in relation to the number of car parking spaces available in specific areas which had subsequently been found to be incorrect;
- thanks should be conveyed to the team who had worked on this report as part of the redesign process and it was acknowledged that it would have been helpful to have concluded the review in advance of the decisions being made at the February budget meeting;
- it had to be acknowledged that the Council faced unprecedented financial circumstances with some extremely difficult budget decisions having had to be made and for that reason a number of Members were in favour of the introduction of car parking charges in view of the limited options currently available in relation to increased income;
- the consideration of this issue by the Redesign Board had been extremely thorough and this was welcomed, not least in terms of the proposal that a proportion of the income from charges could potentially be used for local purposes in future and that decisions in this regard would be made by Local Members; and
- it should be noted that car parking charges had already been in operation in certain areas of the Highlands for a considerable period of time.

Thereafter, Mr B Lobban, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** the recommendations as detailed with the report – together with the additional recommendation which had been highlighted at the start of this item.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr G MacKenzie, seconded by Mrs L MacDonald, moved that an immediate impact assessment on the introduction of car parking charges should be carried out for each Ward in Ross & Cromarty and Nairn as stated in general terms on Page 45, Item 5.14, of the report and a communications plan actioned in keeping with the Highland Council's pioneering policy on promoting local democracy and to consult fully with all stakeholders in each location, including local businesses, communities and Community Councils as highlighted on Page 17 of the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 37 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 15 votes, with 1 abstention, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion

Mr D Macpherson, Mr R MacDonald, Mr R Balfour, Miss J Campbell, Mr G Ross, Ms K Stephen, Mrs I MacKenzie, Ms E Knox, Mrs C Wilson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr B Thompson, Mr L Fraser, Mrs A MacLean, Mr G Adam, Mr D Rixson, Ms L Munro, Mr I Ramon, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr M Finlayson, Mrs F Robertson, Mrs I Campbell, Mrs J Barclay, Mr A Graham, Mrs C Caddick, Mr A Jarvie, Mr S Mackie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R Laird, Mr A Henderson, Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A MacKinnon, Mr A Baxter, Mr A Christie, Mrs D MacKay, Mr R Bremner and Ms N Sinclair.

For the Amendment

Mr K Rosie, Mrs P Munro, Mr B Allan, Mr K Gowans, Mr C MacLeod, Ms P Hadley, Mrs M Paterson, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr B Boyd, Mr D Loudon, Mrs M Cockburn, Mr G MacKenzie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs L MacDonald and Ms M Smith.

Abstention

Mr A Sinclair

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the process involved in the Board's review and in particular the opportunity the review had provided to hear a range of Member views in ten Board workshops and two formal meetings. The review had taken longer than expected but this had allowed for extensive deliberation and the opportunity to find some common ground.

The Council **AGREED**:-

- (i) the vision for parking as described in Paragraph 5.1;
- (ii) to devolve budget decisions on car parking to Local Committees through the extended local control budget option by including off-street parking in the disaggregated Community Services budget, providing a local Car Parking Budget for each Local Committee, noting current powers in the Scheme of Delegation relating to disaggregated budgets would apply to car parking if devolved and adding a new power for Local/City Committees as described in Paragraph 5.10;
- (iii) to enable local benefit from car parking opportunities by reinvesting any surplus income locally i.e. income above the target set by Council in its budget setting process. This provided local choices on the disaggregated budget including improving or protecting other local Community Services provision or investing in other local priorities. Where a deficit occurred, Local Committees would decide where other service savings would be made, including an awareness of workforce implications. Local Committees would monitor budget in year and investment/divestment decisions would be made by the Local Committee for the year ahead based on actual out-turns in the previous year;
- (iv) as part of the Council's budget setting process for 2019/20 and subsequent years, rather than setting any single corporate target for off-street car parking, the Council would set a revenue target for Local Committees instead;
- (v) to enable meaningful local engagement on local changes to car parking by introducing new ways of supporting Members to make local choices on their disaggregated budget, with proposals from Community Services being agreed and implemented for influencing the disaggregated budget for 2019 and engaging Local Members and communities in changes to car parking using a defined process as set out at Appendix 4. The Ward Management and Policy teams in the Chief Executive's Office would support Members and the Service with their engagement process;
- (vi) that, to support the shift to localism, proposals be developed by the Service to respond to the staff impacts expected around training, work load, priorities, staff roles and possibly structure;
- (vii) dependent on the staff resourcing above, to implement the changes to align with budget setting for 2019/20, with local decisions on investment/divestment from 2020/21 and the first annual review after April 2021;
- (viii) a revised policy for car parking to be considered at the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee as soon as practicable (earliest opportunity August 2018) and that it included the vision for car parking developed and agreed through the Board as set out at Paragraph 5.1, extended local control budget model, engagement process as set out in Appendix 4 and additional Board recommendations as set out in Appendix 5;
- (ix) that the revised car parking policy be given a higher profile in the Community Services Service Plan;
- (x) that other process improvement agreed by the Board as set out in Paragraphs 5.19 to 5.25 be noted as operational issues and be largely delegated to Officers in Community Services. These covered intelligence and opportunities

around land for car parking, developing car parking data and financial management arrangements, processes to support investment in car parking infrastructure, marketing and promotion of car parking, workforce issues and continually learning from good practice; and

- (xi) that, for 2018/19 only, any shortfall in area car parking income to be underwritten from the overall Community Services budget.

The Minutes of the Redesign Board meeting held on Tuesday, 12 June 2018 were also **APPROVED**.

15. Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal Update Cùmhnant Baile Roinne

There had been circulated Report No. HC/23/18 dated 31 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the progress to date as detailed in the report.

The Council also **AGREED** that clarity over the compatibility of the digital project with other Government digital initiatives should be undertaken to enable the business case to be finalised and that a monitoring and evaluation framework should be established to ensure the targets set in the City-Region deal could be scrutinised.

16. Single Use Plastics Plastaigean Aona Chleachdadh

There had been circulated Report No. HC/24/18 dated 24 May 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** that:-

- (i) a strategy should be developed to ensure that the Council worked towards phasing out single use plastic from its sites and schools in an effort to exceed statutory requirements;
- (ii) work with community planning partners should be undertaken to encourage the uptake of mutually-reinforcing strategies to reduce plastic pollution in a catering sundries context;
- (iii) Commercial and Procurement Shared Services (C&PSS), Scotland Excel and Catering Managers should work together to incrementally phase out single use plastic in the procurement of catering sundries and consider introducing wider measures designed to reduce the plastic content of packaging;
- (iv) communications be prepared and disseminated to inform Highland communities about the reasons the Council was phasing out single use plastic and to encourage them to switch to alternatives;
- (v) a cross-party Highland Council Working Group should be created to provide input and recommendations for the overarching strategy and the phasing out of single use plastic with Cllr Trish Robertson as Chair; and
- (vi) a cross-Service Highland Council Officers' Group should be created to implement the recommendations and write the overall strategy.

17. Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Ghallaibh agus Chataibh

There had been circulated Report No. HC/25/18 dated 13 June 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** that, following the expiration of the requisite period for consideration by Scottish Ministers, and unless directed by them otherwise, the final version of the Proposed Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (i.e. the 'Intention to Adopt' version of the CaSPlan) would be adopted and constituted as part of the Development Plan.

18. High Life Highland – Amendment to Articles of Association High Life na Gàidhealtachd – Atharrachadh do dh'Artaigilean Co-cheangail

Declarations of Interest –

Ms L Munro, Mr T Heggie, Mr D Macpherson and Mr A Jarvie 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 them from taking part in the discussion.

Mr K Gowans declared a non-financial interest in this item on the basis that a family member was employed by 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.

Mr D Louden declared a non-financial interest in this item on the basis of being a Trustee of the Tain & District Museum which was part funded by 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 Report No. HC/26/18 dated 18 June 2018 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** to amend Article 111, to insert Article 112A and to amend Article 113 of the Company's Memorandum and Articles as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

19. Church Representative – Care, Learning & Housing Committee Riochdaire Eaglaise – Comataidh a' Chùrain, an Ionnsachaidh & an Taigheadais

It was noted that the Council was required, in terms of Section 31 of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994, to have a minimum of three Church representatives on the Care, Learning and Housing Committee, two of whom were to be appointed on direct nomination (by the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church) and the third involving discretionary procedures.

In this regard, and on the basis of the rota system previously agreed by the Council, The Very Reverend Sarah Murray had been nominated by the Scottish Episcopal Church as its representative to sit on the Committee.

Decision

The Council **APPROVED** the nomination of The Very Reverend Sarah Murray as detailed.

20. 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 10 May 2018 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

21. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

It was **AGREED** that, during the recess period, powers should be granted to the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Service Directors, in consultation with the Convener, Leader of the Council, Depute Leader of the Council, relevant Committee Chair and the Leader of the Opposition, to deal with issues arising during that time and that a report should be prepared for the first meeting of the Council or relevant Committee following the period where these powers had been exercised.

The meeting ended at 6.10pm.

**The Highland Council
Pensions Committee and Pension Board**

Minutes of Meeting of the Pensions Committee and Pension Board held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 9 August 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:**Pensions Committee**

Mr R Bremner (by Video Conference)
Mr C Fraser
Mr R Gale
Mr A Jarvie
Mr B Lobban
Mr D Louden
Mr P Saggars

Pension Board

Mr G Cruickshank, Highland Council
Mr A MacLeod, (substitute), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr R Fea, representative for other Employers
Mr M MacDonald (substitute), Unison
Mr D Main, Unite/Ucatt

Officials in attendance:

Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism, Corporate Resources Service
Mr J Gibson, Joint Secretary (Trade Unions' Side)
Mr C MacCallum, Payroll & Pensions Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mrs M Grigor, Finance Manager (Corporate Budgeting, Treasury and Taxation)
Ms D Sutherland, Corporate Audit Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms C Stachan, Accountant, Corporate Resources Service
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:-

Ms J Brown, Grant Thornton (External Auditor) (Item 12 only)
Mr A Gustinelli, Grant Thornton (External Auditor) (Item 12 only)

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 R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs C Caddick and Mr B Thompson of the Pensions Committee and Ms L Munro, Mr C Nicolson, Ms L MacKay, Mr D Macdonald and Mr E Macniven of the Pension Board.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 28 June 2018 had not been used in respect of this Committee.

4. **Internal Audit**

4.a **Highland Council Pension Fund Internal Audit Annual Report 2017/18 Aithisg In-Sgrùdaidh Maoin Peinnsein Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd 2017/18**

There was circulated Report No. PC/07/18 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the content of the report, the audit opinion provided.

4.b **Highland Council Pension Fund Internal Audit Annual Plan 2018/19 Plana In-Sgrùdaidh Bliadhnail Maoin Peinnsein Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd 2018/19**

There was circulated Report No. PC/08/18 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

The Committee **APPROVED** the 2018/19 Audit Plan.

4.c **Highland Council Pension Fund Internal Report – Pension Fund Payments In-Aithisg Maoin Pheinnsein Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Pàighidhean Maoin Pheinnsein**

There was circulated Report No. PC/09/18 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

Members welcomed that both actions relating to the audit review of Pension Fund payments had been completed.

With reference to the five audit opinions that could be given, such as 'Substantial and Reasonable assurance', it was explained that 'Reasonable assurance' was the standard term used as no system of control could provide an absolute assurance against material loss and this applied to a snapshot in time. In addition, all individual audit reports contained an audit opinion ranging from full to no assurance.

The Committee **NOTED** the content of the report and the audit opinion provided.

5. **Governance Policy Statement 2018/19 Poileasaidh Riaghlaidh 2018/19**

There was circulated Report No. PC/10/18 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Highland Council Pension Fund Governance Policy Statement.

**6. Pension Fund Contributions and Administration
Tabhartasan agus Rianachd Maoin Peinnsein**

There was circulated Report No. PC/11/18 by the Head of Corporate Finance & Commercialism.

The Committee **NOTED** the details of the report.

**7. Highland Council Pension Fund: Monitoring of Retirements
Maoin Peinnsein Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd: Sgrùdadh Cluaineis**

There was circulated Report No. PC/12/18 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

It was noted that there had been 20 cases of ill health retirement within The Highland Council for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 at an average cost to the Pension Fund of £81,500 per ill health retirement which was a substantial cost. It was queried if death in service costs were included in this figure or were they accounted for elsewhere. It was explained that death in service would result in a payment from the Pension Fund but that this was not a retirement cost and was a separate cost to the Fund.

Further, ill health retirement was a benefit of the Fund and depending on the severity of the illness, the payment to the scheme member could be enhanced and this could be a considerable cost to the Fund. There was an option of taking out an Insurance Policy to protect the Fund from ill health retirement costs, and although this Policy could also be expensive, an undertaking was given to consider this option.

It was noted that the percentage of ill health retirements in the Development and Infrastructure Service was high compared to some other Services. It was queried what the Council was doing to reduce ill health retirements in certain areas. It was explained that in the recent departmental restructure, Development and Infrastructure had taken on a large group of staff and this would partly explain the increase, but a definitive answer would be investigated for Councillor A Jarvie.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to investigate the option of an Insurance Policy to protect the Pension Fund from ill health retirement costs; and
- iii. **NOTED** that information would be provided to Councillor A Jarvie on the actions being taken to reduce ill health retirements in some areas of the Council, such as Development & Infrastructure, where the number of ill health retirements was significantly high.

**8. Risk Management Update
Fios às Ùr mu Rianachd Chunnairt**

There was circulated Report No. PC/13/18 dated 25 July 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the updated risk register extract and compliance with the Pension Fund Regulator requirements; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the updated risk management strategy and policy.

9. Training Policy and Training Plan 2018/19
Poileasaidh Trèanaidh agus Plana Trèanaidh 2018/19

There was circulated Report No. PC/14/18 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the assessment and training resources provided by The Pensions Regulator and the requirement for newly appointed Board and Committee Members to complete induction training (section 5 and section 7 of the report);
- ii. **NOTED** the adoption of the CIPFA Local Pensions Boards Technical Knowledge and Skills framework (section 6 of the report), including the self-assessment matrix and the recently published guide for local pension boards issued by CIPFA (section 8 and Appendix 2 of the report);
- iii. **NOTED** the training delivered to date on pension fund matters (Appendix 3 of the report); and
- iv. **AGREED** the training policy and programme for 2018/19 set out within the report (section 10 of the report).

10. Consultation on the Review of the Structure of the Scottish Local Government Pension Fund
Co-chomhairle mun Ath-sgrùdadh air Structar Maoin Pheinnsein Riaghaltas Ionadail na h-Alba

There was circulated Report No. PC/15/18 by the Head of Corporate Finance & Commercialism.

In commenting on the consultation on the review of the structure of the Scottish Local Government Pension Fund and the four options for the future structure, it was stressed that the Trustees of the fund were responsible for acting in the best interests of the scheme members. It was highlighted that the fund had been managed extremely successfully with exceptional performance resulting in the scheme being in the very strong and unique position of being 101% funded. Therefore, there was no reason to change from these current arrangements.

Concern was expressed that the consultation was heavily weighted towards the proposal that funds should be merged for the main purpose of increasing investment in infrastructure across Scotland. However, the long term objective of the fund was to achieve a rate of return on investments and it was difficult to understand how investment in infrastructure would achieve this. Therefore, it was felt that this approach would limit investments and could

contravene fiduciary duties, i.e. to aim to achieve the best financial position for the fund and ensure it could support future scheme obligations. In addition, pursuing either option of pooling investments or merging to a single fund would result in the Fund's solvency level, currently at 101%, being reduced and would have a detrimental impact on the members of the fund. It was further highlighted that merging or pooling the funds would result in a loss of control and would also involve long-term set up costs.

Therefore, in view of the fact that there was no advantage to the Fund in respect of the two remaining options, i.e. pool investment between the 11 Funds and merging the 11 Funds into one or more new funds, the Committee was of the strong opinion that there should be no change to the current pension fund management arrangements. It was stressed that this was in the best interest of the fund members and that the existing fund arrangements enabled control to be retained locally which was in line with the localism agenda and it was requested that these views should be reflected in the consultation response.

The Committee also indicated that it would cautiously consider collaborating with other funds but only on the proviso that it demonstrated that it would generate a return on investment and be beneficial to the fund.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the option – ‘the current structure with 11 funds to the Local Government Pension Scheme’ and that a full draft response on the consultation from the Highland Council Pension Fund be circulated to the Pensions Committee for review, and the final response would be agreed in consultation with the Pensions Committee Chair prior to submission.

11. Investment Sub Committee: Minutes of Meeting Fo-chomataidh Tasgaidh: Geàrr-chunntas na Coinneimh

The Minutes of meeting of the Investment Sub-Committee held on 1 March 2018 and 7 June 2018 were circulated for confirmation and **APPROVED**.

The Committee also **NOTED** that information would be provided to Councillor A Jarvie on which way the Fund Managers' voted on Elon Musk's recent share deal with Tesla.

At this point the meeting was adjourned for a short break and it resumed at 11.10 a.m.

12. External Annual Audit Sgrùdadh Bliadhnail on Taobh A-muigh

12.a External Annual Audit Report to Members of the Pensions Committee and the Controller of Audit Aithisg In-sgrùdaidh Bhliadhnail on Taobh A-muigh do Bhuill de Chomataidh nam Peinnsean agus Rianadair an Sgrùdaidh

There was circulated Report No. PC/16/18 by the External Auditor, Grant Thornton.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

12.b Letter of Representation 2017/18
Litir Riochdachaidh 2017/18

There was circulated (Report No. PC/17/18) a copy of the annual audit letter of representation 2017/18.

The Committee **AGREED** that the letter be signed on behalf of the Highland Council.

12.c Audited Accounts 2017/18
Cunntasan Sgrùdaichte 2017/18

The Audited Statement of Accounts (Report No. PC/18/18) for the financial year 2017/18 were available for viewing at the following weblink:-

http://www.highlandpensionfund.org/media/4075/2017_18_pf-annual-report-and-annual-accounts-final-to-be-approved-at-pc.pdf

The Committee **APPROVED** the accounts.

The meeting ended at 11.15 a.m.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Ross and Cromarty Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Wednesday, 15 August 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs J Barclay	Mrs A MacLean
Ms I Campbell	Mr D MacLeod
Dr I Cockburn	Ms P Munro
Mr M Finlayson	Mrs F Robertson (Chair)
Mr C Fraser	Ms M Smith
Mr D Loudon	

Officials in Attendance:

Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager
 Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North)
 Mr R MacLeod, Housing Manager (North)
 Mr D Martin, Care and Learning Manager
 Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Skye, Ross and Cromarty
 Mr R McNab, Service Support Officer, Community Services
 Mr P Waite, Countryside Team Leader, Development and Infrastructure
 Mr N Brett-Young, Youth Work Manager, High Life Highland
 Ms W Kelt, Area Youth Officer – North, High Life Highland
 Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr R Bain, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms S Tarrant, Public Relations Officer
 Miss F Povlsen, Youth Trainee, Public Relations Office
 Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Chief Inspector I MacLelland, North Area Commander, Police Scotland
 Mr I Matheson, Blythswood
 Mr W MacKintosh, Blythswood
 Miss M McGorran, Youth Ambassador
 Miss R Hussain, Youth Ambassador

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

Preliminaries

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A MacKinnon, Mrs M Paterson and Mrs K Stephen.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the last meeting which had been held on 2 May 2018 and had been approved by The Highland Council on 10 May 2018.

**4. The Year of Young People
Bliadhna na h-Òigridh**

There had been circulated Report No RC/020/18 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Miss M McGorran and Miss R Hussain, Youth Ambassadors and pupils at Alness Academy gave a presentation on the Year of Young People highlighting meetings and events they had attended.

Mr Derek Martin thanked Miss McGorran and Miss Hussain for their presentation and the work they undertake that makes a huge difference to the young people in the area. Mr Martin highlighted mental health awareness and the importance of this in children's planning. Mental health awareness was important and merited a project by itself.

One of the highlights of the Year of Young People had been the Rock Challenge where four out of five competing Ross and Cromarty schools had reached the final.

Members discussed the participation of young people at Community Council meetings where their voices were important and should be heard. The possibility of a sub-group of young people, meeting during school hours, and feeding into Community Council meetings was thought to be advantageous.

The Chair thanked Miss McGorran and Miss Hussain for their informative presentation and wished them well in their chosen careers.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation and the report.

**5. Blythswood Presentation
Taisbeanadh Blythswood**

A presentation was given by Mr Ian Matheson from Blythswood, he outlined the work of Blythswood, the number of shops and employment in Highland and specifically Ross and Cromarty. Mr Martin further outlined the varied and diverse work undertaken by Blythswood and their commitment to zero waste.

The Chair and Members thanked Mr Matheson for his informative presentation.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

6. Police – Area Performance Summary Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No RC/021/18 by the North Area Commander. The Area Commander amended his report at page 23 where it stated “Reduce the number of Breach of the Peace/Threatening, Abusive behaviour Crimes” +14, it should read -14.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- Members had been interested in the banking protocol and asked that information be brought back to Committee on the reporting of hate incidents to Third party Reporting Centres;
- following an incident in Alness, Members asked that younger police officers receive training on their communications skills with people in the community; and
- in answer to a question, breach of the peace was defined as causing fear and alarm or threatening behaviour.

The Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017 – 2020:-

- (i) Year 1, attached as Appendix **A** to this report, for the period covering 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018;
- (ii) Year 2, attached as Appendix **B** to this report, for the period covering 1 April 2018 - 30 June 2018.

7. Area Priorities Prìomhachasan Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No RC/022/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform, Ward Management. On a question to the Chair, the Chair advised that she had attended ward business and other meetings to discuss Area Priorities which had been a long process started after the initial setting up of the local committees.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- the first bullet point should be amended to read “Developing and improving the road and rail network, including working with partners to improve the safety of junctions; and

the slipways at Nigg and Cromarty are important and contribute to tourism although it was noted they are privately owned

The Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the local strategic priorities for Ross and Cromarty subject to the amendment of the first bullet point under Transport and Infrastructure to read: ‘Developing and improving the road and rail network, including working with partners to improve the safety of junctions’;
- ii. **AGREED** to promote these with the wider Council membership and as part of the Council’s Programme 2017-22.

- iii. **NOTED** that there will be opportunity, through 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 will be done to identify how the local priorities agreed can be supported by staff and any other Council resources. This will include considering how to best measure progress. Some priorities are already well aligned to the Council's Programme.

8. **Evanton Railway Station** **Stèisean Rèile Bhaile Eòghainn**

There had been circulated Report No RC/023/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- disappointed that Local Rail Development funding had not been granted; and
- a request that officers continue to seek funding from the Local Rail Development Fund when the opportunity to do so arises.

Members thanked Mr R Gerring and Mr F Roach for their extensive work with this project.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** that the Local Rail Development Fund application in respect of the Evanton Railway Station had not been successful;
- ii. **NOTED** the STAG process requirements and in particular the flow diagram at **APPENDIX 1**;
- iii. **APPROVED** the support/involvement of Highland Council officers with a future Business Case Study co-ordinated by Hitrans; and
- iv. **AGREED** that officers continue to seek funding from the Local Rail Development Fund when the opportunity to do so arises.

9. **Annual Area Capital Update – 2017/18 Project Spend and 2018/19 Project Budgets**

Cunntas Bliadhnaile Calpa Sgìreil – Cosg Pròiseict 2017/18 agus Buidseatan Pròiseict 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No RC/024/18 by the Director of Finance.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- Members were disappointed with the level of information given and requested that future reports should contain sufficient information and detail for individual projects to be identified; and
- the report at appendix 1 stated that the year was 1819 this should be amended when the report comes back to the Committee.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2017/18;
- ii. **NOTED** the budget for each project in this Council area in 2018/19; and
- iii. **AGREED** *future reports should contain sufficient information and detail for individual projects to be identified.*

10. **Housing Performance Report** **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No RC/025/18 by the Director of Community Services.

Mr Holden, Area Housing Manager – North advised that as he had now reduced his working hours to a three-day working week, Mr Rory MacLeod would now be working with him as Area Housing Manager – North and their generic email should now be used to ensure a prompt response.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- there was a request for information on the number of properties by size and information on turnover by size and this to be sent to Members;
- the factors taken into account when considering the location for building new houses;
- the link between the Council housing list and the housing association housing list and in response the Area Housing Manager advised that they shared one list which indicated when people had been offered a house;
- homelessness was at the highest level in three years;
- whether the housing association have the same onus to provide housing for homeless persons; and
- thanks to the housing team for the tremendous amount of work undertaken in relation to the Syrian families housed in this area.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2018.

11. **Educational Trusts** **Urrasan Foghlaim**

There had been circulated Report No RC/026/18 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following:-

- the bursary awards within Ross and Cromarty should be delegated to an officer in consultation with Ward Members.

The Committee:

- **NOTED** the report on awards made by Duncraig Trust, and Ross and Cromarty Educational Trust;
- **AGREED** that Duncraig Trust should be referred to the investment subcommittee, in order to maximise income to the trust;

- **NOTED** the purposes and priorities of Ross and Cromarty Educational Trust;
- **APPROVED** the following annual transfers from Ross and Cromarty Educational Trust funds to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (subject to sufficient investment income):
 - £670 for prizes
 - £8260 for bursaries
 - 30% of any remaining surplus income (based on population size);
- **AGREED** to delegate the decision making and administrative duties of the above portions to the Director of Education of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, with an annual report to the trust;
- **AGREED** *the bursary awards within Ross and Cromarty be delegated to an officer in consultation with ward members;*
- **APPROVED** the maximum expenditure of free income as listed in the attached paper "Fifth Schedule- Expenditure of Free Income";
- **AGREED** to seek the approval of the Scottish Government for the above changes, as required under Ross and Cromarty Educational Trust Scheme 1961; and ask the Scottish Government to agree that future approval of the government will not be required for changes to the plan - reflecting modern governance of these types of trusts.

12. Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report for 2017/18 and Priorities for 2018/19 – Q1

Aithisg Sgrùdaidh mu Choileanadh a thaobh Cumail Suas Raointean airson 2017/18 agus Prìomhachasan airson 2018/19 – C1

There had been circulated Report No RC/27/18 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- a request that a list of all public conveniences in Highland be distributed to Members;
- the road sign between Ardullie and Dingwall was covered by overgrowth, could the overgrowth be cut back; and
- in relation to litter on the A9 was it possible to have some costs and possible examples of different forms of sign and have this taken back to the relative ward business meetings;

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

13. Deletion of Adopted Roads

Leasachadh Gnothachais: Cunntas às Ùr Rois agus Chromba

There had been circulated Report No RC/028/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the deletion of a redundant section of the U4636 Wester Greengates Road, Fortrose from The List of Adopted Roads.

**14. Common Good Funds
Maoin Maith Choitchinn**

There had been circulated Reports Nos RC/029/18 – RC/033/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform which provide information on the following Common Good Funds:-

- a. Cromarty Common Good Fund RC/029/18
- b. Dingwall Common Good Fund RC/030/18
- c. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund RC/031/18
- d. Invergordon Common Good Fund RC/032/18
- e. Tain Common Good Fund RC/033/18

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the position of the Common Good Funds, as shown in the Quarter One Monitoring Statement against budget; and
- ii. **APPROVED** a proposed underspend of £4,000 on the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund Special Grants budget in the current year to partly mitigate the impact on reserves.

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

There had been circulated Report No RC/034/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the following names for new developments:-

- Green Lady Court for a new development on land West of Tulloch Square, Dingwall;
- Achany Court for a new housing development on the former Area Education office site, Dingwall; and
- Greenside Street for a new development at Greenside Farm, Rosemarkie.

- 16. 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.**

**17. Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum Appointments
Luchd-dreuchd Fòram Inntreigh Ionadail Rois agus Chromba**

There had been circulated to **Members only** Report No RC/035/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Members asked that the appointment of an applicant for the land management vacancy for Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum be delegated to the Forum itself.

Members **AGREED** to *delegate the appointment of an applicant for the land management vacancy for Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum to the Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum.*

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm.

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, 16 August 2018 at 10.45 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Ms A MacLean
Mrs J Barclay	Mr D MacLeod
Mr R Bremner (Substitute by tele-conferencing)	Mr R MacWilliam
Miss J Campbell	Mr H Morrison
Dr I Cockburn	Mr I Ramon
Mr M Finlayson	Mr D Rixson
Mr C Fraser	Mrs T Robertson
Mr R Gale	Mr A Sinclair (by tele-conferencing)
Mr J Gray	Mr C Smith
Mr A Henderson	Ms M Smith
Mr R Laird	

Non-Members also present:

Mr A Baxter	Mr B Lobban
Mr J Bruce	Mr K Rosie
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr P Saggars
Mrs M Davidson	Mr B Thompson

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 E Boyd, Energy and Sustainability Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr S Duncan, Property Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates), Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr S Graham, Project Manager, Chief Executive's Service
 Mr A McCann, Economy and Regeneration Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager (Community Services/Development and Infrastructure), Corporate Resources
 Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager

Mr K MacInnes, Principal Economy Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr S Manning, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services
 Mr J MacLennan, Senior Service Support Officer, Community Services
 Ms F Boyd, Sustainability Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr P Wheelan, Planner, Development and Infrastructure Service
 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

Also in attendance:

Mr E Sinclair, Programme Manager, Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership
 Mr I Ross, Chair, Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership

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 Ms K Currie, Mr J Gordon, Mr W MacKay and Mr A Rhind.

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

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

Item 11 – Mr R Laird (non-financial)

**3. Good News
Naidheachdan Matha**

The Committee **NOTED** the items of Good News and **AGREED** that a seminar be held in the Autumn to review the current allocation formula for road maintenance, followed by a report to an early Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in 2019, in time for any agreed changes to be applied to roads funding in 2019 /2020.

**4. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 28 June 2018 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

5. Development and Infrastructure Service Revenue Budget Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun- structair

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/41/18 dated 31 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in highlighting the importance of reinvesting income from planning fees and building warrants to help improve service performance, clarification was sought, regarding the number of posts removed following the voluntary redundancy scheme and current vacancies within the service due to staff retirement; and
- in highlighting a shortfall in catering income, 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.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April to 30 June 2018, and the actions which had been put in place to manage the budget over the remainder of the financial year.

6. Capital Expenditure Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Caiteachais Chalpa

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/42/18 dated 7 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concern was expressed regarding ongoing delays to the Alness Academy project and reassurance was sought, and received, that measures were being taken to mitigate this, including an increase in the scope of the advanced works package;
- the proposed allocation of £0.250m for roads improvements at Crask Junction was welcomed; and
- disappointment was expressed that only three projects in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh (Ward 5) were contained within the capital programme.

The Committee **APPROVED**:-

- i. the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period 1 April to 30 June 2018; and
- ii. the allocation of £0.250m for roads improvements at Crask Junction.

7. Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 1 Performance Review Frèam Coileanadh Dealbhaidh agus Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanaidh Cairteal 1

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/43/18 dated 10 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, reassurance was sought, and received that complaints lodged and investigated under enforcement activity were being dealt with to a satisfactory outcome and that there was potential to include information within future reports on the number of successfully negotiated outcomes which did not require investigation.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards and Development Plans teams; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for submission to Scottish Government.

8. Finalised Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance Stiùireadh Leasachail Deireannach mu Thabhartasan Luchd-leasachaidh

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/44/18 dated 1 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- with regard to chapter 8 (Public Art) of the supplementary guidance, it was considered onerous to have a blanket requirement for developers to make a contribution towards public art and it was suggested that this be amended so that it would be at the discretion of the Planning Service to seek contributions as appropriate;
- reassurance was sought, and received, that developer contributions towards affordable housing received in local areas would be spent within that area;
- concern was expressed that a requirement for developer contributions could sometimes put off potential developers due to the additional costs required and reassurance was sought, and received, that the service could take a flexible approach when seeking developer contributions to ensure the viability of a potential development; and
- confirmation was sought, and received, that whilst developer contributions towards school provision were focused on primary and secondary education, the guidance recognised the need for developing community learning facilities.

The Committee, having considered the comments received on the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance (DCSG):-

- i. **AGREED** the Council responses and the resultant amendments made in finalising the guidance as summarised at Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to adopt the DCSG at Appendix 2 of the report as statutory Supplementary guidance to the Highland-wide Local development Plan (2012) subject to:-
 - Chapter 8 (Public Art) being amended so that it was at the discretion of the Planning Service;
 - the incorporation of any feedback from Scottish Ministers during the statutory referral process for adoption and any incidental, factual or presentational amendments.

- iii. **NOTED** that following its adoption the new DCSG would supersede the existing 2013 DCSG and form part of the Development Plan.

**9. A9 Dualling – Tomatin to Moy Publication of Draft Orders
Dùblachadh A9 – An Tom Aitinn chun na Moighe – Foillseachadh Dreachd Òrdughan**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/45/18 dated 3 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members emphasised the importance of undertaking cabling work prior to the commencement of construction to avoid lengthy traffic delays.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report, in particular the need to enter new side roads in the list of public roads and **AGREED**:-

- i. the proposed response to Transport Scotland, subject to the inclusion of comment on the importance of cabling taking place during construction; and
- ii. to delegate the Director of Development and Infrastructure to submit the approved response.

**10. Proposals for the Future Management of Facility Lets
Molaidhean airson Rianachd Aontaidhean Màil san Àm ri Teachd**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/46/18 dated 30 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, concern was expressed that the current policy was not fair and consistent as uniformed groups were eligible for free lets whereas other youth groups were required to pay a rental fee. In response, the downturn in lets was highlighted and it was emphasised that, whilst there could be an opportunity for charging other organisations, it was important to identify any potential impacts arising from this. Thereafter, it was suggested that a report be brought back to the Committee providing a breakdown of charges for other organisations.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress made with improving the lets booking process;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress with rationalising which schools were open for evening community lets, including engagement with Head Teachers and an assessment of the use of out-of-school hours in Public/Private Partnership (PPP) schools as set out at section 5 of the report;
- iii. **NOTED** the revised price structure as set out in section 6 and Appendix 2 of the report;
- iv. **AGREED** to continue current concessions of free lets as set out in section 7 of the report and that a further report at a future Committee Meeting be provided on the breakdown of charges for other organisations; and
- v. **NOTED** the intention to develop marketing and promotion once these proposals were implemented.

11. Economy and Regeneration Eaconamaidh agus Ath-ùrachadh

Declaration of Interest

Mr R Laird declared a non-financial interest in this item as Chair of the Academy Street Townscape Heritage Project 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/47/18 dated 3 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and the key developments highlighted during quarter 1 and emerging activity.

12. Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Com-pàirteachas Ath-ùrachaidh Ghallaibh agus Chataibh a Tuath

There had been circulated Report No EDI/48/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Mr Eann Sinclair, Programme Manager, gave a presentation, during which he provided an overview of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP) Programme and set out the focus of the Programme for 2017-2020, including the key opportunities arising from offshore wind, tidal energy, the UK vertical launch spaceport, Oil and Gas operations base, Nuclear services, Business services and the North Coast 500.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in thanking Mr Sinclair for his presentation, the potential opportunities arising from investment in Caithness and North West Sutherland were welcomed;
- with regard to the proposed Sutherland spaceport and the potential for a landing strip, clarification was sought, and received, that of the two types of launches currently possible for satellites, the two main space agency partners involved in the project had proposed a vertical launch from the site and were not proposing to develop a technology that would be capable of landing of a vertical launch satellite;
- the success of the CNSRP in working with other organisations to attract business and events such as the National MOD in 2010 was highlighted;
- retaining employment within the area was important and the need for continued partnership working following the decommissioning of Dounreay was emphasised;
- the creation of new jobs within the construction industry and the success of the North Coast 500 in attracting tourists to the area were highlighted;
- dialogue was required with energy companies to ensure that Caithness and North West Sutherland received its fair share of income generated from renewable technologies such as off-shore wind farms to help support investment in infrastructure in the area;
- in emphasising the importance of connectivity within the area, the work being undertaken by HITRANS in relation to the Midnight Train to Georgemas project was highlighted;

- in relation to negative press suggesting a lack of rocket engineers in North West Sutherland, it was highlighted that with the establishment of the proposed spaceport, there was an opportunity to develop worldwide expertise in this field, and the comparison was made with the expansion of the fabrication and welding expertise which had been developed at Ardersier and Nigg in the 1970's and 80's; and
- following a request for information on the retention and establishment of jobs in the area as a result of the decommissioning of Dounreay, it was confirmed that over the previous 10 years, a series of independent studies had taken place on the socio-economic impact of decommissioning and that the interim results of the information collected by the CNSRP prior to the next study in 2020/21 could be provided to Councillor Andrew Sinclair.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress to date, welcomed news of funding for the proposed Sutherland spaceport and **AGREED** to support efforts designed to improve flight connectivity at Wick John O'Groats airport.

13. National Council of Rural Advisors Consultation Co-chomhairle Comhairle Nàiseanta nan Comhairlichean Dùthchail

There had been circulated Report No EDI/49/18 dated 27 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in relation to the inequalities faced in rural Scotland, it was suggested that the provision of rural transport in remote communities should be explored; and
- clarification was sought, and received, that the National Council of Rural Advisors was an independent organisation set up by the Scottish Government.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the consultation response submitted to the Scottish Government.

14. Stability and Simplicity – Proposals for a Rural Funding Transition Period Post BREXIT Seasmhachd agus Simplidheachd – molaidhean airson ùine eadar-ghluasaid airson maoinachadh dùthchail

There had been circulated Report No EDI/50/18 dated 1 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the consultation response prepared and submitted to the Scottish Government on 15 August 2018.

15. Preliminary Confirmation of the Caol and Lochside Flood Prevention Protection Scheme (FPS) Dearbhadh Tòiseachail air Sgeama Casg Thuiltean a' Chaoil agus Thaobh Lòchaidh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/51/18 dated 27 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members welcomed the scheme and highlighted the significant urgency to proceed to protect the 300 properties at risk of flooding in Caol and Lochyside. It was highlighted that only one objection had been received and that the design footprint of the scheme has been developed to enable future enhancements to increase the standard of protection should it be required.

The Committee **CONFIRMED** the proposed scheme without modifications; and **APPROVED** the draft planning conditions as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

16. Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland Prògraman Lùth-èifeachdais airson na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No EDI/52/18 dated 30 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- that an update be given on the Swedish Timber Houses Programme. In this regard it was confirmed that there was no provision in the current year plan for further works there could an opportunity in future programmes;
- assurance was sought that the focus trial for the transition pilot for local heat and energy efficiency savings would be a Highland wide scheme and it was confirmed that a target area approach would be associated with the insulation roll-out;
- clarification was sought, and received, that there would be a provision in the new schemes to cover a wider range of measures. This was likely to include internal insulation and this could be considered an improvement measure for timber frame houses; and
- clarification was sought, and received, that the monitoring of household bills was an integral part of the programme and that the Council would take steps to verify the benefits.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress and programme for the current scheme, the changes to be made to the funding and the actions required transforming to Energy Efficient Scotland activities; and
- ii. **APPROVED** that a closer alignment between Council programmes and those targeted measures for householders and businesses to ensure that the programmes gain the maximum benefits for the Highlands.

17. Community Services Revenue Budget Buidseat Teachd-a-steach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No EDI/53/18 dated 16 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- clarification was sought, and received, on the issues that had arisen in Lochaber with the parking metres at the short stay car parks;
- given the level of overspend (£611k) identified by the service against car parks and public conveniences, reassurance was sought and given that

adjustments would be made to the budget to help ensure a balanced position at the year-end;

- a concern was raised on the delay in implementing the rationalisation programme for public conveniences and assurance was given that a comprehensive review was underway and would be complete by 31 October 2018;
- concern was expressed that the predicted targets for car park for generating income might have been set too high;
- concerns were expressed on how communities would be able to find funds to provide Christmas lights at such a late stage of this year.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April to 30 June 2018.

**18. Community Services Performance Report – 1 April to 30 June 2018
Aithisg Choileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – 1 Giblean gu 30 Ògmhios 2018**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/54/18 dated 16 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- there had been concerns that some reports of potholes passed to Services Points and on the Council's web-site were not being relayed to Community Services via the Council's CRM system;
- the good weather and extra funding had made a significant improvement to the roads surface dressing programme this year;
- clarification was sought, and received, that the reason for the reduction in waste collected was due to less garden and rubble waste being collected; and
- assurance was sought, and received, that the additional funding for roads maintenance had been discussed and approved at Area Committees.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April to 30 June 2018.

**19. Progress Update on Implementation of the Council's Preferred Option for Managing its Biodegradable Municipal Waste
Cunntas Adhartais mu Bhuileachadh Roghainn na Comhairle airson Rian a Chumail air a Sgudal Bailteil Bith-chnàmhach**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/55/18 dated 30 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

A presentation was given by the Head of Environmental and Amenity Services which provided an update on the site and the justification for the location that had been identified.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it would be important to use good visuals to display the siting, design and layout of the development to emphasise its minimal impact;

- a clear communication strategy was required for reducing and recycling waste;
- a concern was raised on the potential environmental impact the location of this site could have;
- clarification was sought on the 83,000 tons of waste being landfilled in the Highlands before processing;
- the focus was on the material recovery facility and it was suggested that other sites that deliver this similar technology be investigated; and
- the site was located close to the road network enabling material to be easily moved around.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the Report; and **AGREED** that officers pursue the site identified at the former Longman Landfill Site in Inverness as the Council's preferred location for its Materials Recovery Facility, in consultation with the Common Good Fund as landowners.

20. Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey 2017
Suirbhidh Staid Gleidhidh Rathaidean na h-Alba 2017

There had been circulated Report No EDI/56/18 dated 24 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- whilst the information provided was welcomed a request was made for it to be broken down further to Ward level;
- although £9.7m was being spent this year, overall this needed to be placed in the context of £21.7m required to address the annual backlog of road maintenance and staff were having to manage the situation using limited resources;
- disappointment was expressed that Highland Council was ranked 24 out of 32 local authorities for its Road Condition Indicator but it was hoped this would improve in next year's survey results given the additional funding allocated this year;
- it was important to have accurate information to hand as to what was required to address this backlog to ensure progress was made; and
- it had been hoped that the Jetpatcher would have made more progress to reduce the backlog but, in monetary terms, this had not transpired. However, this was largely due to increases in costs of materials.

The Committee **NOTED** the results of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey for 2017; and considered additional investment in the road network.

21. Winter Service Review 2018
Ath-sgrùdadh Seirbheisean Geamhraidh 2018

There had been circulated Report No EDI/57/18 dated 26 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- damaged grit bins needed to be replaced as moisture made grit less effective;

- although the questionnaire sent to Community Councils on the winter service operations and resilience schemes was commended, the low response rate was disappointing and it was suggested that it be repeated;
- concern was expressed that it was not possible to reach some of the more remote locations before the commencement of bus or school transport journeys;
- although there appeared to be “red tape” about providing equipment for local communities to clear pavements this was a result of insurance requirements;
- the reduction of the Saturday treatment service to offset the additional costs of providing an increased Sunday service was questioned but it was explained that Area Committees would have the opportunity to look at route priorities and, within that, consider implications of this change. However, time was of the essence to inform and engage with the public about this change of service;
- reviewing the winter service policy was an on-going process and consultations helped to inform this;
- the mobilisation of all available manual staff across Community Services to assist with treatment of footways was welcomed but there was still a need for community resilience schemes;
- the poor spread of grit on footways in some areas had caused a number of falls;
- with the potential introduction of charges to car parks it was important that they were cleared of snow and ice;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that drivers had been involved in addressing the problem with new gritting vehicles going into “limp home” mode;
- whilst acknowledging the importance of the statutory safety inspection, it was questioned if there was any leeway to vary the inspection within the 8 week period when inclement weather was forecast; and
- the impact of breakdowns had an impact on the Service’s ability to respond and an indication was sought, and received, as to when the full complement of relief vehicles would be achieved.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the actions being taken to improve the winter service;
- ii. **NOTED** the outcomes of the survey with Community Councils;
- iii. **AGREED** that options on the budget for the winter service were included in any public engagement undertaken for the council’s budget from 2019 / 2020 onwards;
- iv. **AGREED** to adjust the weekend service as per section 8 in the report; and
- v. **AGREED** to amend the Winter Service Policy accordingly.

22. **Review of Road Construction Consent Inspection Fees** **Ath-sgrùdadh air Cosgaisean Sgrùdaidh Aonta Togail Rathaidean**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/58/18 dated 24 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the proposed revised scale of fees for Road Construction Consent Inspections, which will be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2017; and
- ii. **NOTED** that a 12 month validation trial will be undertaken to assess the appropriateness of the new fees and that a subsequent report will be presented to this committee in November 2019.

23. Parking Services Seirbheisean Parcaidh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/59/18 dated 2 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- appreciation was expressed to officers for their hard work in implementing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) since its transfer from Police Scotland in 2016. Considerable progress had been made in addressing anomalies and reviewing existing arrangements whilst also liaising with Members and communities;
- clarification was sought, and received, as to what was involved in Phase 2 of the DPE programme;
- the policy document set out the consultation process for communities;
- further details were provided in relation to the measures proposed to allow the clamping and uplift of vehicles;
- overnight parking by motor homes in Council car parks had reduced in Lochaber by using enforcement powers and further information was sought as to how successful this had been;
- confirmation was sought that the guidance would not have implications for local decision making where these decisions fell within policy;
- information was sought as to the outcome of the Inverness Car Club 2 year trial;
- where car parking spaces became available they could be included in the list of spaces available for Parking Permits;
- the grace period at the start of a parking session was welcomed;
- the fact that Parking Enforcement Officers did not have set targets should be publicised; and
- clarification was sought, and received, regarding how the on-going capital cost of £210k related to the rateable value of the Rose Street multi-storey car park.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement;
- ii. **APPROVED** the adoption of the attached five year Parking Policy; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the service review of resources including staffing and structure required to deliver Parking Redesign outcomes.

**24. Scottish Water Section 7 - Memorandum of Understanding
Uisge na h-Alba Earrann 7 – Meòrachan Tuigse**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/60/18 dated 24 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding between The Highland Council and Scottish Water with regard to the ability to enter into individual Section 7 agreements;
- ii. **NOTED** that funding for maintenance of sites with a Section 7 agreement may result in budget pressures, which should be recognised, as continued maintenance of these sites is essential to reduce the risk of localised flooding; and
- iii. **NOTED** the current position in Highland in relation to the legacy surface water drainage systems.

**25. Northern Roads Collaboration
Co-obrachadh nan Rathaidean a Tuath**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/61/18 dated 3 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee;
- ii. that decisions on whether to participate in potential roads collaboration projects will be reserved to the Council; and
- iii. that it is intended that EDI Committee will receive an annual report on performance, activities and achievements of the Joint Committee.

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

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr D Rixson to the Harbours Management Board to replace Mrs T Robertson.

**27. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee:-

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

- i. North PAC – 17 April 2018;
- ii. South PAC – 24 April 2018;
- iii. North PAC – 5 June 2018;
- iv. North PAC – 20 June 2018;

(b) **NOTED** the Minutes for:-

- i. Tourism Working Group of 13 June 2018;
- ii. Education Transport Entitlement Review Sub-Committee of 20 June 2018; and

(c) **APPROVED:-**

- i. the Minutes of the Harbours Management Board of 15 June and 3 August 2018; and
- ii. the Minutes of the Waste Strategy Working Group of 10 August 2018.

28. 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.

29. Restructuring of Waste Services' Management Team
Ath-structaradh Sgioba Stiùiridh nan Seirbheisean Sgudail

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/62/18 dated 19 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **NOTED** that determination of this item had been deferred until the Committee's next meeting on 8 November 2018.

30. Land and Property
Fearann is Cuid-seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/63/18 dated 7 August 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/64/18 dated 1 August 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.

32. Housing Development Initiatives

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/65/18 dated 15 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 21 August 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
Inspector M Middlehurst, Police Scotland
Mr A Puls, Principal Officer Building Conservation & Environment, Development & Infrastructure
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Mr J McHardy, Housing Development Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services
Mr R McNab, Performance & Inspection Co-ordinator, Community Services
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, LN&B&S
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr K Rodgers, NHS Highland (Item 3)
Ms D Forsyth, NHS Highland (Item 3)
Mr B Dunlop, Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust (Item 4)
Mr A McCracken, Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust (Item 4)
Mr P Crane, Cairngorm National Park Authority (Item 7)

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 10 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

3. NHS Highland: Redesign Process NHS na Gàidhealtachd: Pròiseas Ath-dhealbhaidh

A joint presentation was made by the NHS Highland Senior Project Manager and Senior Project Lead on the redesign process for the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Hospital Hub project for which a detailed planning application had recently been submitted. During the presentation, the Committee was provided with detailed information on the site location (Aviemore Technology Park); internal and external designs and layouts including landscaping and the intention to work in partnership with the Active Aviemore project to enhance local community transport and pathway links; and information on the services that would be undertaken at the hospital hub which included details on the Integrated Design Transport hub. In conclusion, information was provided on the project timeline which included the full Business Case being completed by May 2019, construction commencing in June 2019 and works completed by April 2021.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was queried whether the off-road pathway that led to the railway underpass would be enhanced;
- Further information was requested and provided on the intended plans for the existing health centre building once it had been vacated and the inclusion of the Council in this process;
- Assurance was provided that the 128 parking spaces would be adequate to meet projected demands;
- Concern was expressed at the lack of X-ray facilities in Aviemore and assurance was sought that provision of this service would be included within the new hospital. It was further highlighted that in doing so, this would free-up other services such as Ambulance Services who often had to transport patients to another location for X-rays;
- Confirmation was sought and provided that there was adequate provision on the new site for future expansion;
- It was queried whether a vibrations survey had been undertaken in view of the close proximity to the railway line;
- It was recommended that Albyn Housing should be included in future liaisons in regard to the path-network development to ensure joint access routes;
- It was suggested that provision of housing for key workers should be included as part of the project process;
- It was felt that modifications would be required to the road network at the junctions of Grampian Road and Dalfaber Drive in view of the likely increase in traffic volumes and further consideration of this was recommended; and
- It was queried whether there would be any scope for the project timeline to be shortened and an assurance was sought and provided that the existing facilities would remain in place and continue to be maintained until the new facility was operational.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the NHS Highland presentation.

4. **Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust Urras Carthannach Rèile Shrath Spè**

A joint presentation was made by Mr B Dunlop and Mr A McCracken from the Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust during which detailed information and photographic evidence was provided of the significant works that had been undertaken to date on the project 'Getting rails to Grantown'. The presentation also included information on the proposed realignment plans for the A95 and the potential location and design layout of the train station which would be a valuable asset for Grantown. In addition, the significant importance of linking Aviemore with Grantown and the resulting impact on tourism and the local economy was emphasised. In conclusion, the project sought the Council's support of their aforementioned plans to bring the project to fruition.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- Further information was provided on the Transport and Works (Scotland) Order which would be submitted in October 2018 with a view to the decision being received in Spring 2019;
- In regard to the A95 road alignment, it was clarified that this would be undertaken by Transport Scotland once the Trust had provided and installed the new bridge that was required;
- The Committee commended the Trust for their astounding achievements to date and recognised the benefits that the project would generate for the local area and economy;
- It was highlighted that the Council had been supportive of this project and would do all that it could to continue that support to bring the project to its completion. It was therefore proposed that a recommendation should be made to Council that the Highland Council continued to provide non-financial support to the project; and
- It was highlighted that the project would require significant funding and this was acknowledged by the Trust and it was explained that further work would continue in regard to attracting public and private funding once the TAWS Order had been approved.

* Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation on Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust and **AGREED** to recommend to Council that the Highland Council continued to provide non-financial support to the Strathspey Railway project.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/18 dated 8 August 2018 by the Area Commander.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- appreciation was expressed for the community policing and the visibility of this which had been particularly helpful;
- concern was expressed at the increasing levels of drink driving offences and there was a need to campaign against this unacceptable behaviour;

- although the reduction in the number of fatalities on the A9 was welcome, there was still a need for continued lobbying for the road to be dualled to increase safety; and
- a request was made for more mobile road policing units to be located at village entrances in a bid to reduce to speeding motorists.

The Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highlands and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 for the period covering 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 (Year 1) and 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018 (Year 2).

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

7. Active Aviemore Study Update Cunntas air Sgrùdadh na h-Aghaidh Mòire Gnìomhach

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/11/18 dated 2 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In addition to the report, a further update was provided during which the Committee was advised that an application had been submitted to the Scottish Government Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to upgrade the car park and form a multi-use tarmac path to Loch Morlich at the Cairngorm and Glenmore area and the outcome of this would be announced on 5 October 2018.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- There was a need for continued dialogue with NHS Highland to ensure the Active Aviemore path-network was maintained/developed to encourage community use;
- The news that pathways would not be mixed usage by pedestrians and cyclists was welcome but public concerns had been expressed regarding the width of the road being reduced to accommodate a designated cycle lane. However, the need to ensure public safety was recognised therefore it was important that members of the public were encouraged to read the report to ensure they were fully informed of the plans. It was further requested that Members were provided with an early sight of the final report prior to it being published;
- A query was raised as to whether the cycle network would be expanded to encompass the surrounding villages. The logic of this was acknowledged and it was proposed that a recommendation should be made to the Council seeking non-financial support for the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CPNA) to take forward an off-road route connecting Aviemore, Carrbridge and Boat of Garten as part of the A9 dualling project; and
- Concern was expressed at the congestion difficulties being encountered at the local petrol station in Aviemore and the need for this to be managed was emphasised.

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

- i. that authority be delegated to the Director of Development & Infrastructure to prepare and submit an application, or applications, to Community Links funding for the Design Phase for sections 1 to 5;
- ii. to confirm support for the submission of an application, or applications, to Community Links funding for the Design Phase for the Aviemore Orbital Path (section 6) and links to NCN7;
- iii. * to recommend to the Council that the Highland Council provided non-financial support to the CNPA to take forward a non-motorised users route connecting Aviemore, Carrbridge and Boat of Garten; and
- iv. that the Committee be provided with a copy of the full report, 'Active Aviemore – Active Travel Study', prior to publication.

6. Grantown Conservation Area Appraisal Update Measadh Sgìre Ghlèidhteachais Bhaile nan Grandach

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/10/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Responding to a question, it was clarified that there was a community aspiration to convert Inverallen Church to community use. It was understood that Seafield Estates was gifting the land to the church for development which would be used to fund converting the church to community use. In view of this, concern was expressed that inclusion of this area of land in the Conservation Area would be a barrier to this development. However, it was explained that the purpose of a Conservation Area was not to deter new development but to ensure that it was designed to protect the special character of the area

The Committee **NOTED** the public comments and that the draft appraisal would be presented to the forthcoming South Planning Applications Committee for approval.

8. Annual Area Capital Report Aithisg Bhlìadhnaì Chalpa Sgìre

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/12/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.

Disappointment was expressed that a representative from the Finance Service had not attended the meeting to present the report and respond to questions from Members.

During discussion, it was highlighted that the Kentallen Travelling People Site was not based in Badenoch and Strathspey and further information was sought in regard to Aviemore Primary School replacement.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2017/18; and
- ii. budget for each project in this Council area in 2018/19.

9. Housing Investment Cunntas às Ùr mu Leasachadh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**13**/18 dated 14 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed the information on the level of housing investment planned for Badenoch and Strathspey, however concern was expressed that there was anecdotal evidence that in some cases social landlords were selling properties on the open market, as opposed to a restricted market, as higher sale prices could be achieved;
- A query was raised on whether any provision had been made for key workers, particularly in view of the forthcoming new hospital, and the critical need for this to be addressed was emphasised;
- Further information was requested on the Rural Housing Policy; and
- It was highlighted that although the area currently had a low wage economy, demand for Mid-market rental properties could increase as people upskilled.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the information provided on the planned housing investment for Badenoch and Strathspey; and
- ii. that further information would be provided to Councillor Cockburn on the Rural Housing Policy.

10. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018 Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais 1 Giblean gu 30 Ògmhios 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/**14**/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- Clarity was provided that the average temporary accommodation indicator was measured in weeks and this was an average time based on the total number of applicants;
- A query was raised as to whether there was any evidence of Airbnb expanding into long term lets and impacting on the housing market;
- Further information was provided in regard to how the forthcoming Lean Review of repairs processes would be conducted and the anticipated timeline;
- It was highlighted that there were often valid reasons, usually based on local knowledge, for delays in housing repairs, e.g. the tenant was on holiday, and it was queried whether there was a mechanism for recording this level of information in order to reduce the impact on this performance indicator; and

- Reference was made to the extremely fast average re-let time performance indicator of 21.45 days and this was commended.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on Housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

11. **Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report** **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh mu Choileanadh Cumail Suas Raointean**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/15/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee welcomed the positive results and thereafter **NOTED** the information provided on Grounds Maintenance performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

12. **Winter Maintenance Plan for 2018/19** **Obair-glèidhidh Geamhraidh**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/16/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services. In presenting the report, the Roads Operations Manager explained that at the recent meeting of Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee, a change was made to the Winter Maintenance Policy whereby it was agreed that there would be an uplift to the Sunday service.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- An assurance was sought that there would be no reduction in the Saturday service in order to provide the increase in the Sunday service. However, it was explained that although there had been no change to policy, careful management of resources would be required to ensure all routes could be completed;
- It was essential that the changes and the potential impact on winter maintenance routes was communicated to the public;
- Further information was provided on the process for obtaining salt bins;
- A request was made for a report to be submitted to a future meeting in Spring 2019 on the implementation and effectiveness of the new salt brine system that was currently being trialled; and
- It was reported that a local contractor had been deployed to assist with winter maintenance at Aviemore Primary School which had resulted in damage to infrastructure and it was requested that consideration should be made to this function being undertaken by Facilities Management.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Badenoch & Strathspey Area, which includes the priority road maps presented in Appendix B subject to the alterations verbally conveyed at meeting; and
- AGREED** that a report to be submitted to a future meeting in Spring 2019 on the outcome of the trial of the new salt brine system.

13. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 22 May 2018 which were approved by the Council on 28 June 2018.

The meeting concluded at 12.50 pm.

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 22 August 2018 at 10.05 am.

Present:

Mr A Baxter (Chair)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr B Boyd	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mr A Christie	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs M Cockburn	Ms L Munro
Ms K Currie	Mrs P Munro
Mr J Finlayson (Vice Chair)	Mr R MacWilliam
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 D Mackay	Ms K Stephen (Vice Chair)
Mr W MacKay (video conferencing)	

NHS Highland:

Ms M Newdick
Prof H van Woerden

Religious Representatives:

Ms S Lamont
The Very Rev S Murray

Non-Members also present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mr K Gowans
Mrs M Davidson	Mrs Paterson

In attendance:

Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning
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 A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Corporate Resources Service
Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service
Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Mrs S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms K Ralston, Area Care and Learning Manager – South, Care and Learning Service
Ms N Young, Area Care & Learning Manager – West, Care and Learning Service
Ms F Shearer, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr B Northedge, Management of Schools Programme Manager, Care and Learning Service

Ms S Chapman, Communications Officer (Management of Schools), Care and Learning Service
 Ms L Husher, Programme Officer (Management of Schools), Care and Learning 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 MacIver, Committee and Elections Officer, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr A Johnston, Project Director, Highland Science Skills Academy

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

1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms J Macdonald and Ms M Roberts.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 6 – Mr A Christie and Mr A Jarvie (both non-financial)
 Item 8 – Mr A Christie (financial)
 Item 9 – Mr A Christie (financial)
 Item 10 – Mr A Christie (financial)
 Item 11 – Mr A Christie (financial) and Mr G Ross (non-financial)
 Item 14 – Mr A Graham (financial)
 Item 16 Part 2a – Ms L Munro (non-financial)
 Item 21v – Mr A Christie (financial)
 Item 21vii – Mr A Christie (financial)
 Item 21viii – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

3. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 28 June 2018 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

4. Outstanding Achievements Coileanaidhean Air Leth

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

In addition, a number of headline figures were provided in relation to SQA examination results and it was explained that, when the official data became available in mid-September, officers would support schools to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, with a particular focus on progress in closing the attainment gap.

Reference was also made to the significant increase in online courses and Members' concerns regarding success levels. Results had now started to come in and, whilst not all the information was available at this stage, 67% of those who had presented for exams, which ranged from National 5 to Advanced Higher, had passed, which was a good pass rate.

Members having commented that they looked forward to the opportunity to discuss and scrutinise the official SQA data at a future meeting, the Committee:-

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

5. Presentation: Science Skills Academy – Progress Update Taisbeanadh: Acadamaidh Sgilean Saidheans – Cunntas air Adhartas

Andrew Johnston, Project Director, gave a presentation on the Highland Science Skills Academy, an initiative to increase the proportion of young people who were able to take advantage of the growing opportunities in life sciences, renewable energy and digital technologies.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the progress on the Newton Room in Caol and the impact it would have on young people in Lochaber was welcomed;
- information was sought and provided on how the Academy was linking with local employers in relation to the establishment of Newton Rooms and how they would be used; and whether the Academy had a role in countering the widespread attitude amongst girls that STEM subjects and a career in a STEM-related industry were not for them;
- disappointment having been expressed that progress did not appear to have been made in relation to Newton Rooms in Skye and Lochalsh, an update was provided in that regard;
- reference was made to the lack of computing science activity on the west coast, and the need to continue to be active in those communities was emphasised; and
- the contribution of the former Leader of the Council, Drew Hendry MP to establishing the Academy was recognised. Tribute was also paid to the role of Audrey MacIver, Director of Energy and Low Carbon, Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the presentation.

6. Advice and Information Services: End of Year Monitoring 2017/18
Seirbheisean Comhairle agus Fiosrachaidh: Sgrùdadh Deireadh Bliadhna
2017/18

Declarations of Interest: Mr A Christie and Mr A Jarvie declared non-financial interests as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and a Director of Inverness CAB respectively 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.

There had been circulated Report No CLH/20/18 dated 2 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In introducing the report, the Head of Revenues and Customer Services drew attention to the Minutes of the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group at item 21viii on the agenda which included a decision that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions expressing concern regarding the financial burdens incurred by Councils as a result of Universal Credit, including the rent arrears set out in the report.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- thanks were expressed to the Benefits and Welfare Manager and her team, as well as Citizens Advice Bureaux, who did an outstanding job of helping customers, as evidenced in section 5.1 of the report which set out the benefit gain over the past two financial years. The financial gains not only ensured residents received their full benefit entitlement but had a much wider social and economic impact in Highland;
- concern was expressed regarding the increase in rent arrears by tenants not in receipt of benefits and it was questioned whether enough was being done to help them regularise their rent accounts;
- over time, Universal Credit had had a significant detrimental impact on people's confidence and made them lurch towards poverty, and it was important to be aware of the pain and misery it had caused. In addition, it took up an inordinate amount of staff time in a variety of public agencies and the money that could be diverted into society if that was not the case was significant. The Council had been at the forefront, nationally, of drawing out the issues and, through the establishment of the Welfare Reform Working Group (now the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group) and engaging with MPs and the Department for Work and Pensions, had done a good job of trying to address them. However, many solutions were outwith the Council's control and it was hoped that the Scottish Government, when it had more powers to deal with benefits, would take steps to mitigate the situation;
- from a public health perspective, debt was a huge societal issue and the work taking place to reduce it was welcomed;
- further information was sought, and provided, on the preventative approach referred to in section 6.3 of the report;
- the Leader of the Council explained that lobbying in relation to Universal Credit had taken place from the start, the most recent success, thanks to the hard work of the staff involved, being the removal of housing benefit for temporary

accommodation from Universal Credit. The next area of focus was the removal of all housing benefit from Universal Credit, which would eliminate many of the debt problems people had. Another issue was the length of time payments took to come through, which had resulted in increased foodbank use. Any Members who had an opportunity to speak with Westminster MPs were encouraged to use their influence to lobby in relation to Universal Credit issues; and

- keys being issued for houses that were apparently not ready for occupation – eg no floor coverings, cooker etc – and people having to wait for emergency loans were adding to the problem and leading to delays in receipt of rent revenue.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the 15.4% overall increase in the number of customers reached by the Council's Welfare Support team and Citizens Advice Bureaux during 2017/18;
- ii. that financial gains for customers exceeded £24 million (+22.9%) which was mainly attributable to Universal Credit and challenging adverse decisions relating to Employment and Support Allowance/Personal Independence Payment;
- iii. the downward movement to £16.5 million (-15.5%) in the amount of debt presented; and
- iv. the increase in the number of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit which accounted for £1.3m of the Council's £2.5m total rent arrears at March 2018.

7. Care and Learning Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/19 Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach a' Chùrain agus an Ionnsachaidh 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No CLH/21/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Introducing the report, the Director of Care and Learning provided an update on Aviemore Pool, explaining that discussions were ongoing and officers were optimistic that a satisfactory conclusion would be reached. Local Members would be kept informed.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to Education Support and the variance relating to the cost of disclosure checking, an update was sought, and provided, on whether the disclosure process had been simplified;
- reference was made to Unallocated Corporate Savings, the ongoing pressure relating to children in out of authority placements, and the development of a budget recovery plan, which appeared to be required at an earlier stage than in previous years. In that regard, concern was expressed that there would be a moratorium on the filling of posts, particularly in the area of Additional Support Needs (ASN) which would impact on the most vulnerable young people in schools, and information was sought, and provided, on the measures being taken. The Leader of the Council explained that the papers for the Corporate Resources Committee on 29 August would contain statements on how it was intended to balance the revenue budget. It was hugely challenging and, given the ongoing and increasing Scottish Government cuts to Local Authority funding, the Administration was acting early so as not to impact on already depleted Council Reserves. It was emphasised that there was no moratorium in place and

concern was expressed that such a statement would cause alarm amongst parents and carers of children with ASN; and

- in relation to increased pupil rolls and staffing levels in special schools being offset by vacancies elsewhere in ASN teams, an assurance was sought that, going forward, a more sustainable solution would be put in place.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- AGREED** the revenue budget projected overspend position for the year to 30 June 2018; and
- NOTED** the update provided regarding Aviemore pool.

8. Care and Learning Service Plan 2018-22 Plana Seirbheis a' Chùrainm agus an Ionnsachaidh 2018-22

Declarations 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.

Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item as his mother and mother-in-law were care home residents 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/22/18 dated 14 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- reference was made to the significant number of Plans in existence, many of the themes of which were interrelated, and it was questioned whether there were too many and whether there was any means of simplifying them. The Chair confirmed that this merited consideration;
- it would be useful to see how the various Plans interacted with each other to deliver outcomes, and the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure the envisaged improvements were achieved was emphasised. In relation to the Care and Learning Service Plan in particular, it would be helpful to revisit it throughout the year and see how it related to the performance information in other Committee reports. The Chair confirmed that consideration would be given to how that could be addressed;
- the importance that had been attached to schools creating Plans that met the needs of their communities and young people, with a particular focus on closing the attainment gap, was emphasised. It was important that the Care and Learning Service supported school staff in that regard and to understand the number of other Plans they received;
- reference having been made to Education Scotland's concerns regarding mixed outcomes from school inspections, an update was sought, and provided, regarding the working group that had tasked with examining how schools could be better prepared for inspection;

- attention was drawn to an error in the ASN staffing establishment on page 21 of the papers and it was confirmed that this would be corrected;
- whilst the organisational chart on page 22 of the papers demonstrated the lines of demarcation, it would be interesting to see a chart which showed how the various services and posts interrelated; and
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the RAG status and reporting of the risks set out on page 29 of the papers.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- APPROVED** the draft Service Plan for 2018-22, subject to the correction of the Additional Support Needs staffing establishment on page 21 of the Committee papers;
- AGREED** that consideration be given to whether there was any means of simplifying the significant number of Plans that existed; and
- AGREED** that consideration be given to reporting on the delivery of the Service Plan throughout the year; and how it related to the performance information in other Committee reports.

9. Performance Report – Children’s Services Aithisg Choileanaidh – Seirbheisean Chloinne

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/23/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee:-

- scrutinised and **NOTED** the performance information; and
- NOTED** the information provided on quality improvement.

10. NHS Highland Assurance Report Aithisg Barantais NHS na Gàidhealtachd

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/24/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the Chair thanked the Head of Children’s Services for highlighting the national challenge in terms of recruitment across the health sector, which was particularly acute in Highland. The Council had also experienced difficulties recruiting to a

- range of professions, particularly teachers, and it was one of the biggest challenges being faced at both local and national level;
- information was sought, and provided, on how Health Visitor vacancies/workload were managed operationally to ensure that the right people were getting the right interventions at the right time;
 - the Council and NHS Highland needed to work together to address workforce challenges;
 - the fact that UHI could now train nurses was encouraging and it was hoped that, going forward, there might be opportunities to provide training for a range of professionals;
 - the Leader of the Council commended the Care and Learning Service for its substantial efforts in relation to workforce planning and welcomed Heads of Services in different disciplines talking about a “grow your own” approach. She added that the Council now had a robust workforce plan and the Head of People and ICT had been working on cooperating with partners such as NHS Highland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise;
 - breastfeeding rates remained disappointingly low and it was suggested that a meeting was required to discuss how to substantially improve the position. It having been queried whether funding was available, the Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, explained that the Scottish Government appeared to be considering training a new cohort of staff, NHS Highland having been approached in relation to whether it would be in a position to facilitate additional training. However, he had not had sight of any financial figures; and
 - the Chair highlighted that he had attended the recent induction event for probationer teachers and had met some of the Council’s 25 Canadian recruits, 13 of whom had already started in schools, who would make a useful and important contribution to the education system in Highland. Officers had put a lot of work into the recruitment initiative, which had halved the number of teacher vacancies, and it was suggested that it be deployed more widely.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the data and issues raised in the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to support the revised training programme for School Nursing and the use of the pay differential to fund the course fees, as set out in paragraph 7.3 of the report; and
- iii. **AGREED** to the appointment of three additional Practice Teachers on a two-year secondment, and the use of the Health Training budget to fund the course fees and the Practice Teacher costs as set out in paragraph 7.3 of the report.

11. Adult Social Care Update

Cunntas às Ùr mu Chùram Sòisealta Inbheach

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/25/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

In introducing the report, the Chair of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee thanked the Interim Director of Finance and the Planning and Performance Manager, NHS Highland, for the helpful Members' workshops they had undertaken on NHS finances and performance indicators. She also thanked the Committee Administrator for her efforts in minuting the Sub-Committee's wide-ranging and challenging discussions.

She went on to speak in amplification of the key themes identified in the report. In particular, she welcomed the introduction of a variable care at home tariff which addressed the needs of urban, remote and rural areas. Care at home was the default position and it was necessary to focus as much effort on it as possible. In relation to care homes, she referred to the focus on maintaining quality and the associated challenges, as well as the challenges in rural areas where economies of scale could not be achieved and it was necessary to explore alternative models. With regard to the joint transitions team, the aim was to ensure that children's and adult services worked together to provide consistent support for young people with a disability and she looked forward to seeing how it progressed.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to the Dail Mhor initiative in Strontian, it was right to recognise the key role of the community and, whilst it was now pleased with the outcome, it was hoped that lessons would be learned and, in the future, conversations would take place with local communities before decisions were made. In addition, reference was made to a similar situation in the village of Tongue and the surrounding area, and a plea was made that the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee try and progress matters as communities on the north coast had been waiting for an improved service for a number of years;
- information was sought, and provided, on progress with the joint strategic plan for adult social care and the governance route for approval of the plan by the Council; and
- concern was expressed regarding the shortage of care at home staff and the need to encourage people to join the care sector was emphasised.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the contents of the report and the highlighted items from the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

12. Statutory Consultation – Altnaharra Primary School Co-chomhairle Reachdail – Bun-Sgoil Allt na h-Eirbhe

There had been circulated Report No CLH/26/18 dated 31 July 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **AGREED** to proceed to statutory consultation on the proposal to discontinue the provision of education at Altnaharra Primary School.

13. Sustainable Education in Highland Communities: Update Foghlam Seasmhach ann an Coimhearsnachdan na Gàidhealtachd: Cunntas às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No CLH/27/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- equity of opportunity was central to the Sustainable Education in Highland Communities (SEHC) programme;
- enthusiasm having been expressed for the partnership with e-Sgoil, the Chair welcomed the cross-party support for what was an important project;
- Members welcomed time being taken to consider the way the curriculum was delivered and advocated an innovative model with as little common timetabling as possible;
- on the point being raised, the Chair provided an assurance that engagement with Members would continue to be a central part of the process, and he commended the excellent work of area staff in terms of involving Members in the work taking place in Wick and Thurso. He added that Members also had a responsibility to be involved and, having referred to disappointing attendance at previous Members' seminars on the programme, sought the assistance of Committee Members in encouraging colleagues across the Council to engage;
- an assurance was sought that Business Managers would not be appointed instead of teaching staff and that the two roles would remain distinct in whatever model was agreed;
- in relation to the Team Leader pilots, whilst there were real options for success in 3-18 campuses and smaller schools, concern was expressed regarding larger schools where administrative assistants already performed, to a large extent, the Team Leader role, and it was suggested that be explored further before overhauling the structure unnecessarily. In addition, there appeared to be some tensions between the feedback from Head Teachers and Team Leaders, and clerical assistants. Whilst there were some positive responses, there were a number of more negative responses which indicated that, in some areas, people saw it as a transference of workload and responsibility from management to office staff, and it was suggested that be further analysed before matters progressed. In relation to the proposed review of school office support in Mallaig High School Associated School Group (ASG), it was suggested that a parallel review be carried out in a large urban school to establish if there was a split between rural and urban areas. Finally, information was sought, and provided, on the status of school office support in the schools where pilots had concluded;
- what a school looked like was continually changing, and the need to support all school staff, particularly Head Teachers and managers, was emphasised;
- it was important Head Teachers were at the centre of management of staff and lines of communication and management responsibilities were closely aligned;
- the opportunity to study a greater number of subjects had an impact on what young people decided to do later in life and information was sought, and provided, on the number of subject choices in the senior phase;
- further information on e-learning would be beneficial for both Members and parents;
- Inverness High School ASG had the highest indicators of multiple deprivation in Highland and information was sought, and provided, on the timescale and plan for engagement so that the community could be informed;
- the Leader of the Council emphasised the significance of the programme in terms of sustaining small rural schools and expressed thanks to all staff involved. She referred to the Team Leader pilot at Kilchuimen 3-18 campus and welcomed the feedback regarding increased capacity to focus on educational activities, and increased morale and confidence amongst school office staff leading to greater

productivity and task ownership. In relation to Caithness, she commended Local Members for their engagement with education. E-learning was remarkable and had a key role in the future of education, not only in remote and rural schools but in all schools. However, in many smaller communities children had broadband at school but not at home and the roll out of the R100 programme was an absolute priority; and

- the Chair concurred with the Leader's comments regarding the significance of the programme and expressed particular thanks to the Programme Manager. The programme was not only about sustaining small rural schools but about creating a teaching community that was attractive, thereby enabling the Council to recruit and retain teaching staff and sustain communities across Highland where the provision of education was central.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress on the proposals presented to the May Committee;
- ii. **AGREED** to support the review of a revised school office support structure for Mallaig High School Associated School Group, and that consideration be given to carrying out a parallel review in a large urban school;
- iii. **NOTED** the processes being put in place for the delivery of Workstream 1 - Improving Education Outcomes; and
- iv. **AGREED** to endorse the formal relationship being set up with e-Sgoil.

14. Gaelic Medium Education Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and left the Chamber for the duration of the item.

There had been circulated Report No CLH/28/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Prior to debate, the Chairman referred to the summit on the Gaelic Language Plan held by the Deputy First Minister in Perth held on 9 August. This had been attended by Councillor Mackinnon, the Chair of the Council's Gaelic Strategy Group and the Director of Care and Learning together with other senior Members and officers from across Scotland. The aim was not only to increase Gaelic Medium Education (GME) but also its development and promotion in society. In calling for a collaborative approach a number of work streams had been agreed and the Deputy First Minister had indicated a stocktake would take place in August 2019 to discuss about progress.

In addition, reference was made to the support provided by Highland Council and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to the Care and Learning Alliance to support Gaelic Medium toddler groups. The exposure to Gaelic also benefited parents and, to support those parents wanting to set up new toddler groups, an e-module has been produced, a copy of which would be circulated to Members to promote in their own Wards.

In discussion, the following points were made:-

- whilst the increase of the number of young people entering GME at Primary School was welcomed, disappointment was expressed that the number of pupils

presented for exams throughout Scotland at SCQF levels 3-5 had dropped. This suggested that, despite the investment made in early years and primary GME, this did not translate to secondary schools. This was due in part to the lack of support for pupils in the senior phase who wanted to take courses in Gaelic but who did not have the opportunity to do so;

- recognition by the Deputy First Minister of the need to have a more strategic approach to recruiting and retaining Gaelic Medium teachers was welcomed. However, it was essential that teachers were properly skilled;
- Blasad Gàidhlig Fèisgoil, an active learning experience in aspects of Gaelic language, culture and music to further support the 1+2 Language Learning initiative, had proved successful. Provided externally by skilled musicians, storytellers etc, this released pressure on teachers and it was hoped this initiative would continue;
- the Council's partners, such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, could be used to cover teachers undertaking Professional Development training opportunities;
- although money had been provided by the Scottish Government to provide a new Gaelic Medium School, the Council had not committed any specific resources. However, in recognising the severe roll pressures, particularly in Inverness, difficult decisions had to be made and the Scottish Government allocation would only fund a proportion of the costs of a new GME school;
- a briefing for Inverness Members was to be provided in early September on roll pressures in Inverness, including Gaelic Medium. As it was suggested that this might have implications for other areas, the Chairman confirmed the briefing would be open to any Member wishing to attend. He assured Members no decisions would be taken outwith the Committee; and
- there was one GME school in Badenoch and Strathspey but it too was under pressure and a longer term strategy was required.

The Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to endorse the guidance on Meeting Additional Support Needs in Gaelic Medium Education.

15. Regional Improvement Plan Plana Leasachaidh Roinneil

There had been circulated Report No CLH/29/18 dated 7 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2); and
- ii. **AGREED** to endorse the work of the Northern Alliance, Regional Improvement Collaborative.

16. Closing the Attainment Gap A' Dùnadh a' Bheàirn Bhuileachaidh

Part 1: Update on Emerging Literacy
Pàirt 1: Cunntas às Ùr mu Litearras a' Tighinn am Bàrr

There had been circulated Report No CLH/30/18 dated 23 July 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

A summary was provided on progress with the Emerging Literacy developmental approach taken to match the teaching and learning of foundational literacy skills to the needs of children in the early stages, all facilitated through the lead agency model, and now embedded in around 300 schools across the north of Scotland, around a third of which were in Highland.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress being made through this approach to literacy development and the benefits achieved for children in the schools that used it; and
- ii. the wider benefits of sharing this approach across the Northern Alliance.

Part 2a: Highland Children's Forum Consultation about the issue of Children and Young People not in Full-time Education

Pàirt 2a: Co-chomhairle Fòram Chloinne na Gàidhealtachd mu Chloinn is Dhaoine Òga nach eil ann am Foghlam Làr-ùine

Declaration of Interest: Ms L Munro declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Committee Member of Highland Children's Forum 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 involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No CLH/31/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Gillian Newman, Highland Children's Forum, gave a presentation and provided a detailed summary of feedback obtained from children and young people, parents and carers, and educational professionals. Their respective priorities included, for children and young people: social inclusion, learning and understanding from their teachers; for parents: positive relationships with flexible teachers, and good partnership working with school; and for professionals: person centred practice and good partnership working. The barriers and challenges to adopting good practice were outlined, and person-centred practice was highlighted as key to success in overcoming these. All recommended practices were already included in policies and procedures, however increased consistency in application would be beneficial.

During discussion it was pointed out that it was a legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments for children with additional support needs and not a matter of discretion.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and briefing provided by Highland's Children's Forum.

Part 2b: Inclusive Education: Schools Exclusions and Part-time Education

Pàirt 2b: Foghlam In-ghabhalach: Às-dùraidhean Sgoile agus Foghlam Pàirt-ùine

There had been circulated Report No CLH/32/18 dated 31 July 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

A presentation was provided on the current national context and best practice for creating inclusive education in relation to pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs, and how the national guidance had been interpreted in Highland to support school staff, pupils and parents. While much of the data focussed on negative behaviours, this was an essential means of tracking successful interventions, which included workshops for school staff, early years intervention programmes, universal interventions and specialist support for staff. The most effective strategy was thought to be the development of an ethos of mutual respect where all individuals were valued and supported.

During discussion the following issues were considered:

- it was important to understand the issues behind the data and pursue good practice;
- effective leadership in schools set an appropriate school ethos which was a key predictor for both educational achievement and positive behaviour;
- reference was made to the inspirational work being undertaken in schools to tackle challenging behaviour and promoting positive behaviour, and this report highlighted the improvements that had been achieved, with serious violent incidents remaining rare. Tribute was paid to school staff, parents and communities which contributed to the ongoing culture of respect in the Highlands. Although seen as negative, in certain circumstances, exclusion could still be used as a short term policy to manage extreme behaviour;
- attention was drawn to a possible typographical error in reported percentage of pupils excluded from primary and from secondary schools in Highland, these both being reported as 0.22% to 9.47%;
- the statistics were used to target support where it was most needed, and input from Highland Children's Forum could be arranged if requested by Head Teachers;
- reference was made to Adverse Childhood Experiences and the film "Resilience", which had been shown to around 500 Care and Learning staff in Highland. A second round of viewings were planned and Members were urged to attend if possible;
- further information was sought on children who had not been excluded or placed on officially reduced timetables but whose attendance at school was poor. It was thought this might be due to failures of support measures. Reference was also made to home-schooled children who did not feature in the statistics in the report;
- all schools should be wheel-chair friendly to ensure they were prepared for any wheel-chair users, whether full or part-time; and
- the drop in violent and aggressive acts in Highland schools was encouraging, and the strategies that had been used to avoid such behaviour was outlined, including universal and enhanced transition packages for the move to secondary school and various early years interventions.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that standards of behaviour in Highland schools were generally in line with or better than the norms reported nationally;

- ii. **NOTED** that the policy framework in Highland was in line with that required nationally and focused on creating a positive culture and ethos, underpinned by positive relationships across the school community;
- iii. **NOTED** the progress being made by the various interventions and approaches to supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs; and
- iv. **AGREED** to support the promotion of positive relationships with staff in schools and wider school communities as a key factor in developing a positive school ethos.

17. School Term Dates Cinn-latha Theirmean Sgoile

There had been circulated Report No CLH/33/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, it was suggested that other educational establishments, ie the University of the Highlands and Islands, could be consulted when the review of future school term dates was carried out with a view to aligning holidays.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the current position in respect of school term dates; and
- ii. **AGREED** to a review of the process to consider the anticipated benefit of moving to a fixed school Easter holiday in the first 2 weeks of April each year.

18. Placement Services Change Programme Prògram Atharrachaidh nan Seirbheisean Socrachaidh

There had been circulated Report No CLH/34/18 dated 14 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- appreciation was expressed for the hard work undertaken in collating the report which outlined savings that could be made from in-house service provision for young people;
- a further report had been prepared and presented at the Redesign Board by the Head of Children's Services and the Corporate Audit and Performance Manager on the commissioned services for looked after children and young people of Highland and this would be circulated at a future meeting;
- affordable housing in new developments should be considered as units for homes for young people. In this regard, council housing could also be used to accommodate some of the looked after young people and this was being discussed with the Head of Housing and Building Maintenance to develop sustaining tenancies in their adult years;
- best outcomes for young people in Highland was paramount rather than focussing on savings;
- assurance was sought, and received, that the new team proposed would have the specialised skills to be able to deliver the outcomes detailed in the plan;
- it was important to ensure that there was a close working relationship with the NHS on developing the programme with adult health services;

- information was requested on how the commissioned services detailed in the plan would address young people excluded from school, those with disabilities, and the attainment gap;
- assurance was sought, and received, that there would be a broad range of learning provision brought in place which would focus on learning outcomes and employment;
- despite Highland Council being above the Scottish average for the Educational Attainment for Looked After Children, it was recognised that the further these children slipped in to care the more problematic attainment became;
- whilst parts of the plan were RAG'd red these were areas that still needed to be developed and would be the main focus and work of the new posts that were being proposed;
- as the programme developed further reports would be submitted to future committees to monitor and scrutinise the outcomes achieved;
- this plan should be joined up with other plans and initiatives so that any contracts awarded actively and collectively supported the aims and objectives;
- organising education around looked after children should be brought back to mainstream planning as specialist residential provision might not always be in their best interest; and
- communication with Elected Members was key in gaining support where provision was proposed in their Ward.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Programme Plan;
- ii. **APPROVED** a post to support the work related to the Attainment Challenge funding for Looked After Children;
- iii. **NOTED** that recruitment of a range of posts to support the Programme would commence over the next few months as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report, subject to vacancy monitoring approval;
- iv. **AGREED** to hold a seminar to support further discussion with Members regarding this Programme;
- v. **AGREED** that the possibility of providing placement accommodation in new housing developments be explored; and
- vi. **AGREED** that progress reports be submitted to future Committees as the Programme developed.

19. Kinship Care Cùram Dàimheil

There had been circulated Report No CLH/35/18 dated 14 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the need for assessments to be carried out to ensure that kinship care was the best option for the young person, and for the carers to be formally assessed and supported, was stressed.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

20. Membership of Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Ballrachd Fho-Chomataidh Leasachaidh agus Sgrùdaidh nan Seirbheisean Inbheach

The Committee **AGREED** the revised membership of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee as tabled.

21. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

Declarations of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in item 21viii as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey CAB, and a financial interest in items 21v and 21vii 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 interests did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 12 December 2017;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Community Justice Partnership – 7 March 2018;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 13 March 2018;
- iv. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Child Protection Committee – 13 March 2018;
- v. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 7 June 2018;
- vi. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers – 21 June 2018;
- vii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 10 August 2018; and
- viii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group – 14 August 2018.

The meeting concluded at 2.35 pm.