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The Highland Council
No. 4 2018/2019

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday, 23 October 2018 at 10.00am.

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

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mr D Louden
Mr R Balfour	Mr D Mackay
Mr B Boyd	Mr W MacKay (by video-conference)
Mr R Bremner (by video-conference)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr J Bruce	Mrs A MacLean
Mrs C Caddick	Mr C MacLeod
Mrs I Campbell	Mr D Macpherson*
Miss J Campbell	Mrs B McAllister
Mr G Cruickshank	Mr D Rixson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr K Rosie (by video-conference)
Mr J Gordon	Mr G Ross
Mr A Graham	Mr P Saggars
Mr J Gray	Mr A Sinclair
Ms P Hadley	Mr C Smith
Mr T Heggie	Ms M Smith
Mr A Jarvie	Mr B Thompson
Mr B Lobban	

* Mr Macpherson entered the meeting following the commencement of the Hearing and was therefore ineligible to participate in determination of the application.

In Attendance:

Mr K McCorquodale, Principal Planner, Development and Infrastructure
Mrs K Lyons, Principal Solicitor (Planning), Chief Executive's Office
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development and Infrastructure
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

Also in Attendance:

Ms Lauren Riach, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, for the applicant
Mr Johannes Smit, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, for the applicant
Mr Russell Stewart, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, for the applicant
Mr Francis Williams, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, for the applicant

Mr Stuart Findlay, for the Community Council

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Allan, Mrs J Barclay, Mr A Baxter, Mr I Brown, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Henderson, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKinnon, Mr D MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr J McGillivray, Mr N McLean, Mr H Morrison, Ms L Munro, Mrs P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Mrs F Robertson, Mrs T Robertson, Ms N Sinclair and Mrs C Wilson.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Application to be Determined** **Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh**

3.1 Applicant: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc. (18/00760/FUL) (HC/38/18)

Location: Land 325M SW of Whitebridge Cottage, Auchteraw, Fort Augustus (Ward 12 – Aird and Loch Ness)

Nature of Development: Extend Substation, creation of two platforms in phases, for gas insulated substation buildings, plant, access tracks, associated landscaping and other ancillary equipment.

Recommendation: Grant

There had been circulated Report No HC/38/18 by the Area Planning Manager (South) recommending the grant of the above planning application subject to the conditions detailed therein.

Hearings procedure

The application was subject to a formal Hearings Procedure, which was summarised by the Chair; all parties confirmed that they understood the process.

Prior to introduction of the application, the Principal Planner advised Members of a correction to page 1 of the Report which made reference to a pre-meeting site visit taking place and confirmed that, as had previously been agreed by the Council at its meeting held on 6 September 2018, a site visit would not be necessary on the basis that drone footage would be used as an alternative. He also advised of a correction to paragraph 2.4 (d) within the Report and confirmed that the height of proposed 132kV GIS building was 15.95m.

Introduction

The Principal Planner introduced the application and gave a description of the proposed extension to the substation.

Applicants

Speaking on behalf of the applicants, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (SHET), Ms Lauren Riach advised that SHET, as the transmission licence holder in the north of Scotland, had a duty under the Electricity Act to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission and must be able to offer connection to the transmission system, both for new generation and for new sources of electricity demand. The proposed extension to the substation was

set out in two phases and it was highlighted that this approach had been agreed with Highland Council as it would allow SHET to provide a long term plan for the amount of development which could potentially be required on the site.

In relation to site access, Ms Riach advised that Route 5 had been assessed as being the preferred route following consideration of a number of options and involved the use of publicly adopted roads through Three Bridges, Jenkins Park from immediately north of Fort Augustus. A draft construction traffic management plan had been included within the application and took into consideration key mitigation measures to ensure that Route 5 could safely accommodate construction traffic whilst also protecting the ongoing integrity of the road.

In drawing attention to the landscape and visual considerations, Ms Riach emphasised that the proposed development should be considered in the context of the existing substation building and towers. It was confirmed that a Long Term Tree Forest and Landscape Plan had been developed and adopted a phased approach which would help minimise the visual impact of the development. It was recognised that there had historically been some issues with noise in and around the substation for particular noise sensitive receptors; however, Ms Riach advised that all three problematic reactors which were found to be causing the noise issues had been replaced and ongoing noise monitoring had confirmed that the historic noise issues had now been completely resolved. In addition to the installation of four new high specification transformers which would have low noise emissions levels, noise mitigation measures had been proposed around the existing transformers and it was therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in an increase in noise.

In response to questions asked, Ms Lauren Riach, Mr Johannes Smit, Mr Russell Stewart and/or Mr Francis Williams advised that:-

- A Draft Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) had been prepared and would include measures to ensure that the contractor encouraged the workforce to travel together in order to reduce the number of trips required to and from the substation;
- Discussions had taken place with the contractor regarding the use of minibuses and vans to transport the workforce and equipment to the site and these proposals would be included in the CTMP
- The installation of all equipment on site, including gas insulated switch gears within the buildings and the new transformers, had taken into consideration the 50 cycle hum as part of the noise reduction measures;
- The CTMP provided an indication on the number of vehicles anticipated to use the site;
- In advising that the number of workers for a development of the proposed scale was likely to fluctuate over the period of development, it was estimated that the overall programme of development would last five years;
- In terms of the value of the development, it was confirmed that that contracts in the region of nine figures were being signed and was therefore considered a substantial investment in terms of the applicant's contractors and the local area;
- There were already a number of existing energy developments currently connected to Fort Augustus Substation and the proposed development would enable the connection of other developments including wind power projects at Bhlraidh and Beinneun and the Glendoe hydro scheme;
- The CTMP provided a commitment to avoid construction traffic movement and deliveries to the site during busy times including during school opening and closing times and school bus drop-off times;

- Reassurance was provided that the behaviour of construction traffic drivers was monitored stringently and any drivers who drove over the speed limit or acted irresponsibly with their vehicle would be dealt accordingly;
- A noise level model had been created and agreed with the Department of Environmental Health to ensure that measures were in place to reduce noise levels to an acceptable level;
- Information was provided on the testing of noise measuring equipment and reassurance given that, in the event that any complaints regarding noise levels were received, noise measuring equipment would be installed in the relevant spot and monitored;
- A local community officer was available on behalf of the construction company for members of the public to contact regarding any issues arising from the development and would also be in attendance at the community liaison group meetings;
- The community liaison group met monthly in Fort Augustus and comprised of residents of Auchteraw and Fort Augustus and was attended by representatives of the applicant, including the community liaison officer and one of the lead production managers, the community council, Local Members and the Forestry Commission; and
- It was confirmed that the electrical equipment had been designed to a specific noise emitting level and that mitigation measures, such as the creation of bunds in the earthworks and the installation of noise enclosures, had been included within the design of the development to reduce noise levels should these be exceeded.

Community Council

Mr Stuart Findlay, representing Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Council raised a number of concerns, including:-

- The work undertaken over the previous 8 to 10 years in connection with the Beauly – Denny 400kv line project had resulted in a significant negative impact on the local community including an increase in road traffic, excess noise being generated and the overall visual appearance of Fort Augustus Substation;
- The proposed development would create massive disruption to residents and communities as construction traffic would be using a 2 mile long stretch of road from Inchnacardoch Junction, through Jenkins Park and Auchteraw to the Substation;
- The proposed two-phased construction period of the development over approximately six years was a very long time for the residents to have to endure personal upheaval from both noise and traffic disruption and the visual impact of the construction site;
- The three main areas of concern for the Community Council were in relation to the following:-
 - The Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
 - The visual and noise impact arising from construction; and
 - The landscape appearance of the site on completion of the project.
- The proposed CTMP did not provide sufficient measures to ensure the safety of residents and children using the road daily as a safe route to school and should include enforceable measures to address speeding;
- The CTMP should also make provision for the installation of signage along the entire route from the A82 to the construction site entrance to ensure that Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) did not deviate from this route by using the shortcut through Bunoich Brae as this was unsuitable for HGVs;
- The unclassified road network required upgrading to a better standard than what

was currently required for carrying HGVs and should include provision for the installation of adequate passing places to allow safe vehicle movement;

- A suitable crossing for residents and children using the safe route to school was required at Jenkins Park; and
- Mitigation measures were required to ensure a sufficient landscaping finish and permanent screening.

In response to questions asked, Mr Findlay advised that:-

- The opposite side of the road up to the safe route to school at Jenkins Park was currently unpaved;
- Discussion was required between the Community Liaison Group and the applicant to identify the most appropriate location for a crossing at Jenkins Park;
- Concerns had been raised by the local community regarding the risk liability over the previous six years due to the lack of a safe crossing at Jenkins Park;
- The provision of traffic control, such as a traffic light system or stop and go signage, had been requested due to the lack of passing places and would also assist in the monitoring of traffic speeds on the safe route to school;
- Noise levels during construction of the Beauly to Denny project had been horrendous and whilst measures had been put in place by the applicant to address this, concern had been expressed from residents living in close proximity to the site regarding the potential noise levels arising from the proposed development and how this would be controlled;
- It was hoped that mitigation measures would be taken to ensure that the Substation would not be visible from the road; and
- The felling of trees could have a visual and noise impact on houses in close proximity to the Substation and therefore mitigation measures should be included to address any problems arising from a reduction in screening.

Third Party Objector

The Clerk advised that a statement had been submitted by Ms Lorraine Doolan on behalf of the Auchteraw Liasion Group; however, as Ms Doolan was unable to attend the meeting, the Clerk read out her statement which identified a number of concerns, including:-

- In addition to connecting Bhlaraidh and Beinneum wind farms to Fort Augustus Substation, the proposed extension would also enable connectivity from the Corrie Glas pump storage scheme which was currently subject to a separate planning application;
- It was considered unlikely at this stage of the process that the applicant had not already identified the proposed route for connection from the Corrie Glas pump station scheme to Fort Augustus Substation and therefore the proposed route should be made known to the community of Auchteraw;
- A condition of the planning application should be a commitment to put all future connections underground through Auchteraw;
- The operation of the existing substation had resulted in a devastating impact on Auchteraw and the proposed development would make it worse; and
- None of the issues raised by the residents of Auchteraw had been taken into consideration by the applicant, the Community Council or the Planning Authority.

Points of Clarification

In response to questions from Members, the following was confirmed by the Principal Planner and/or the Transport Planning Manager:-

- The increase of capacity of Fort Augustus had been proposed as part of SHET's duty under Ofgem to deliver the transmission needs of the United Kingdom and to provide connectivity to renewable energy projects within the locality;
- It was confirmed that a separate Section 36 application in relation to the proposed Corrie Glas pump storage scheme would be submitted by the applicant; however, the Planning Authority was bound by the different application processes which restricted the consideration of projects that might be anticipated and therefore, whilst the applicant might have a view on the potential connectivity of the Corrie Glas pump storage scheme to Fort Augustus Substation, this could not be taken into consideration in the determination of the application to extend the Substation;
- Whilst there were no measures to include road signage/ signposting along the off-road tracks, the Council as Road Authority could work with the applicant to take forward signposting schemes to promote active travel and recreation;
- Condition 10 within the recommendation required the submission of a Construction Outdoor Access Management Plan for approval by the Planning Authority to ensure that existing access rights within the area would not be restricted due to construction works;
- The Construction Outdoor Access Management Plan could be strengthened by the inclusion of better signage of access tracks;
- Route 5 would be the only route used by contractors associated with the proposed development and this would be reinforced by the applicant through their procurement processes to ensure that Burnoch Brae could not be used as a shortcut by construction vehicles;
- Deliveries to the site would be restricted to ensure arrival out with the school bus and school start and finish times;
- Whilst the final details of the upgrades to Jenkins Park junction had not yet been concluded between the applicant and the Planning Authority, this would be done to ensure the safety of pupils using the safe route to school and would be within the guidelines of good design and junction management;
- The management of abnormal loads routes would be discussed with the Council's trunk roads authority, the applicant, the contractor and Police Scotland and information shared with communities as and when they were likely to occur;
- Whilst consultations with communities regarding the likely impact of abnormal loads was restricted to the community council within the locality of the development, Council officers could provide input based on local knowledge from communities along the routes where abnormal loads would be travelling;
- The applicant had a good record on health and safety and road management and had shown a willingness to address contraventions of its code of conduct;
- The use of trackers on vehicles could be difficult to implement fully as not all companies contracted by the applicant would have this type of technology fitted to vehicles; however, it was important for the applicant to work with contractors to identify the time periods where traffic would be at its most intense and for that to be managed as effectively as possible;
- The applicant's appraisal of the abnormal load route from Invergordon to the application site had identified some structures which might need some support work during transportation;
- Condition 4 within the recommendation required the submission of full details regarding abnormal loads for approval by the Planning Authority;
- Whilst the patrolling of speed limits was a matter for Police Scotland, the Council had the necessary equipment such as flashing beacons and temporary or permanent traffic count equipment to help identify where changes to the speed limit of roads occurred;
- The transformers within the existing site which had previously failed had been

replaced and covers installed around them;

- Scottish Planning Policy sought to ensure that the country would encompass the benefits and opportunities arising from renewable energy and this was also reflected in the Council's Local Development Plan policy which was supportive of a change to renewable energy; and
- This type of development could provide the Highlands with the capacity to deliver more electricity power and enable companies in the area greater access to power for economic development.

Applicant's Response to Points Raised

The Chair having ascertained that there were no further parties present that had given notification of their wish to speak, invited the applicant to respond to the points made.

Ms Lauren Riach and Mr Russell Stewart, speaking on behalf of SHET, commented on the following:-

- The Construction Traffic Management Plan reaffirmed that the shortcut through Burnoch Brae could not be used for construction vehicles;
- The contractor would be required to sign up to a construction noise management plan which set out the construction working hours agreed with the Council where noise was audible at the boundary of the Substation as follows:-
 - between 8am and 7pm Monday to Friday;
 - between 8am and 1pm on Saturdays;
 - no noise generating works on Sundays or bank holidays; and
 - any variations to these would need to be agreed with the Planning Authority.
- Improvements to the route of construction traffic included the following:-
 - Every passing place along the route of construction traffic would be upgraded to a point where it would be able to accommodate two HGVs within it and the addition of three new passing places;
 - Road resurfacing was proposed from the junction with the A82 through to beyond the junction at the substation towards the community of Auchteraw;
 - Signage and white lining to be provided around the passing places; and
 - Drivers would be able to see the next passing place from the one before to enable traffic moving back and forth the opportunity to pull in and allow unrestricted movement of vehicles along the route.

Those present having been asked, and having given confirmation that the Hearing had been conducted in a satisfactory manner, the Chair declared that the Hearing was concluded.

Summing-up

The Principal Planner summarised the main points of the application, making reference to the key planning considerations as detailed in the report and the material considerations that had been taken into account in the assessment of the application. He confirmed that the application was consistent with both the Council's Local Development Plan and Scottish Government policies which were in support of enhancements to the grid network and renewable energy. He also confirmed that statutory and other consultees were supportive of the application. He acknowledged that objections had been received regarding the proposed development; however, the conditions recommend within the report could mitigate the impact on surrounding residents and communities.

In response to a request that the draft management plans be submitted to the local community liaison group for comment prior to their submission for approval by the planning authority, it was confirmed that the submission of the draft management plans would include consultation with Local Members, who would then have the opportunity to provide the local community with details of the plans for comment, and that the relevant conditions contained in the recommendation could be amended to reflect consultation with Local Members.

In response to a question regarding the potential economic impact of the proposed development on the value of house prices in the surrounding area, it was confirmed that this was not a material planning consideration.

Discussion

The Chair having ascertained that there were no further points of clarification required by Members, opened the meeting up to discussion, during which, Members raised the following issues:-

- The local community had expressed concern that the Council was unable to take into account live planning applications for nearby energy developments which were likely to require connection to Auchteraw substation and it was suggested that the Council raise this issue with the Scottish Government in order to try and change the current procedure;
- It was suggested that neither of the original substation developments at Auchteraw or Beaully would have been granted permission under current planning policies as they were both located within residential areas;
- Reassurance was offered to the residents of Auchteraw that the Council would do its best to protect them from any potential disruption arising from the proposed substation extension;
- The opportunity for Local Members to provide details of the draft management plans to the local community liaison group was welcomed as the local community was likely to have an interest in the mitigation measures proposed in relation to construction traffic, landscaping and noise;
- In highlighting that there were two places on the Auchteraw road from which the substation could be viewed, it was requested that an enhanced landscaping plan be submitted by the applicant and that it take into consideration the installation of heavy-standard trees to provide immediate screening of the substation;
- In highlighting that a noise abatement order was currently in place in Beaully, it was requested that noise monitors be installed in all areas around the site where noise might become an issue for local residents as part of the Noise Impact Assessment;
- The applicant's offer to comply with the proposed speed limit of 20mph on all construction traffic using the unclassified roads from A82 (T) to the road end beyond Auchteraw farm was welcomed;
- It was requested that work on the Jenkins Park junction include a reconfiguration of the junction to incorporate either a stop or give way sign, and that a clear and safe crossing be provided onto the footpath further west;
- It was highlighted that an extension to the layby had been proposed in order to take cars using the new cemetery at Fort Augustus off the road;
- It was highlighted that the use of a new forestry track had been proposed in order to improve safety on the Auchteraw road;
- It was emphasised that all the matters contained within the conditions should be agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with Local Members prior to the commencement of any development on the site;

- In emphasising that the proposed development would have an impact on surrounding residents and traffic on the A82(T), concern was expressed regarding the current planning process and that it did not enable the Council to take a strategic view on longer term developments;
- It was suggested that closer liaison with Transport Scotland was required in order to address the potential impact on local communities and also tourists using the A82(T) arising from future developments in the area; and
- The proposed development represented an opportunity for further connectivity to the national grid and, whilst the concerns of the community were acknowledged, it was emphasised that the community liaison group would have the opportunity to raise any issues arising during construction with Local Members.

The Committee agreed to **GRANT** planning permission, subject to:-

- The conditions recommended in the report with conditions 5, 11 and 14 being amended to include: “in consultation with Local Members” after “Planning Authority”; and
- The prior conclusion of an agreement under of Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

The meeting ended at 12.00pm.

**The Highland Council
No. 5 2018/2019**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 25 October 2018 at 10.35am.

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

Present:

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

In Attendance:

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

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

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

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Allan, Mrs J Barclay, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr K Gowans, Mr R Laird, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr H Morrison, Mr A Rhind and Ms C Wilson.

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

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

Item 13.b – Mr A Christie, Mr A Jarvie and Ms E Knox (all Non-Financial)

Prior to the commencement of formal business the Convener thanked Mr S Barron, Chief Executive, for his service to the Highland Council, this being his last full Council meeting prior to retirement. The Leader of the Council and other Members also paid tribute to his outstanding work, referring to his wise counsel, approachable manner and his approach to maximising the Capital Programme whilst also bringing efficiencies from his experience in the private sector. The Convener then presented him with a token of the Council's gratitude on behalf of Elected Members. Mr Barron responded in suitable terms.

Congratulations were also expressed to the Highland Council staff who had lifted the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation Benefits and Welfare Reform Team of the Year Award. Their entry had described their customer-focussed model which provided local services at the point of need and single access to Council entitlements. Through collaboration with partners, they had increased benefit take-up by £6M for customers and delivering service cost savings over £1.3M.

Appreciation was also expressed to Highland Council from the Camanachd Association for its on-going support for the sport of shinty, demonstrated at the international shinty-hurling match held on 20 October 2018 and the after-match reception hosted at the Town House. 2018 was the 125th Anniversary of the Camanachd Association and Members wished the Association well in meeting its strategic objectives of fostering, encouraging, promoting, developing and growing the sport. Calls were made for the Council to continue to support shinty in both the rural and urban areas, whilst also strengthening the links with the language and culture of the Highlands, and to acknowledge the contribution made by all those involved in the sport.

**3. Membership of the Council
Ballrachd na Comhairle**

Members were advised that Ms Kate Stephen had confirmed her resignation as a Member of the Council with effect from 1 October 2018.

On that basis, a By-Election for Ward 5 (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh) had now been arranged and would be held on Thursday, 6 December 2018.

**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 6 September 2018 as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately - which were **APPROVED**.

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

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

Nairnshire Committee, 12 September 2018
Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 20 September 2018
Care, Learning and Housing Committee, 18 October 2018

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

Starred Item: Item 15: PP.14: Review of Statutory Consultation Exercise on the Establishment of a Catchment Area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

The Council **AGREED** the creation of a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar on the basis shown at Appendix 4 of the consultation report.

**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 21 June 2018 (approved by the Board on 13 September 2018) which were **NOTED**.

**7. Community Planning Board
Bòrd Dealbhadh Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Board held on 21 June 2018 (approved by the Board on 4 October 2018) which were **NOTED**.

**8. Recruitment Panel
Pannal Fastaidh**

There had been circulated for information Minutes of Meeting of the Recruitment Panel held on 14 September 2018 which were **NOTED**.

**9. Health and Social Care Working Group
Buidheann-obrach Slàinte agus Cùraim Shòisealta**

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

10. Membership of Committees, etc
Ballarachd Chomataidhean, msaa

The Council was advised that, following the resignation of Ms K Stephen, nominations were being sought at the meeting for the position as Vice Chair of the Care, Learning and Housing Committee.

In this regard, having been duly proposed and seconded, nominations were received for the appointment of Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee as follows:-

Ms L Munro
 Mr A Jarvie

On a vote being taken, Ms Munro received 46 votes and Mr Jarvie received 10 votes, with 6 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-

Votes for Ms L Munro

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mr B Boyd, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr L Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Ms P Hadley, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Baxter, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr R Gale, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Ms E Knox, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr W Mackay, Mr G Mackenzie, Ms A MacLean, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs L Munro, Mrs P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mrs T Robertson, Mr K Rosie, Mr G Ross, Ms N Sinclair, Ms M Smith and Mr B Thompson

Votes for Mr A Jarvie

Mr J Bruce, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Mackay, Mr S Mackie, Mr D MacLeod, Mr I Ramon, Mr P Saggars, Mr A Sinclair and Mr C Smith.

Abstentions

Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr C Fraser, Mr J McGillivray, Mrs I MacKenzie and Mr N McLean.

It was therefore **AGREED** that **Ms L Munro** should be appointed as Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

The Council **AGREED** the following:-

Audit and Scrutiny Committee – Mr A Graham replace Ms K Stephen

Care, Learning and Housing Committee – Mr D Rixson to replace Ms K Stephen

Redesign Board – Mrs H Carmichael to replace Mr M Reiss

11. Question Time
Am Ceiste

The following Questions had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance in terms of Standing Order 11–.

(i) Mr A Jarvie**To the Leader of the Council**

'Was any information forthcoming on the support available from the Scottish Government for the provision of toilet facilities on your 20 August meeting with Kevin Stewart MSP?'

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Jarvie queried whether any further meetings were planned with the Scottish Government to raise the issue.

In response, the Leader responded that, although no meetings were planned specifically on the issue of public toilets, discussions had taken place with Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs who had encouraged Highland Council to apply to the Tourism Infrastructure Fund for the strategic network of public toilets along the NC500.

(ii) Mr J Bruce**To the Leader of the Council**

'Given that HIE awarded an £8.5m funding package to Macdonald Hotels to develop the Aviemore Resort, including the construction of the leisure arena in the early 2000s, should Macdonald Hotels not allow Highlife card members to use the swimming pool facility in view of the public funds they enjoyed and has this point been raised in negotiations?'

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mr Bruce queried what conditions were attached to the funds from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to MacDonald Hotels.

In response, the Leader responded that details of the conditions would be investigated and shared with Mr Bruce.

(iii) Mrs M Cockburn**To the Leader of the Council**

'What progress has been made in the review process that the Administration were undertaking with regard to NHS integrated health care partnership?'

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mrs Cockburn queried if the Leader was confident in the transparency of the accounting and engagement with NHS colleagues.

In response, the Leader confirmed that new governance arrangements had been agreed but more detailed discussions were now required as to how the financial governance arrangements would operate.

(iv) Ms M Smith

To the Budget Leader

'Would you provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred in the financial year 2017-18 by Officers and Members with regard to attendance at conferences and seminars outwith Highland, giving the conference title?'

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Smith queried what other areas of expenditure within the Council lacked similar levels of detail.

In response, the Depute Budget Leader confirmed that there were very few but if there were specific areas required these would be investigated.

(v) Dr I Cockburn

To the Leader of the Council

'What information did the Brexit meeting you attended in Edinburgh with other Council Leaders on 28 September 2018 provide you with?'

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Dr Cockburn queried if the Leader would give a full briefing of the meeting held on 28 September and the meeting on 22 October, given the importance of Brexit.

In response, the Leader confirmed that the minutes of the Highlands and Islands Leaders Group and, when ready, the Convention of the Highlands and Islands could be shared with Dr Cockburn.

**12. Notices of Motion
Brathan Glusaid**

The following Notices of Motion have been received in accordance with Standing Order 12:-

(i) 'Council believes that although good quality pupil assessment is an essential component of the drive to raise educational standards in Scotland's schools it is simply not necessary in Primary 1 and places additional workload on to teachers with no real improvement in educational outcomes for these children.

Larry Flanagan, General Secretary of the EIS said in August this year, "We are sceptical about the worth of standardised assessments generally, but we're particularly opposed to their introduction for P1 pupils. They bring a rigid formality to assessment at a stage where the judgements of teachers, based on observation of child centred learning, are all that's needed".

With so many frontline teaching staff opposed to these tests, this Council calls on the Scottish Government to respect the Parliamentary vote to scrap these tests and for the Leader to write to John Swinney to represent this Council's view'.

Signed: Mrs I MacKenzie Mr A Christie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed at the methodology and that the data collected was unreliable. Consequently, there was little value in the tests but, unfortunately, it was teachers and pupils who were the ones affected;
- tests could take 40 minutes or more and, in a class of 25 pupils, this could take a teacher two weeks to complete. Furthermore, testing at such a young age could mean some pupils would tire of being tested and would rush through the test simply to complete it;
- children developed at varying stages and were influenced by a variety of factors such as environment etc. Rather than testing, pupils should be allowed to grow and explore at their own rate;
- P1 pupils were still often "feeling their way". Also, learning was very much based around human relationships and building trust and, while the intentions of testing were undoubtedly admirable, these were based solely on factual evidence;
- pupil confidence took time to build but could easily be knocked by testing. While everyone wanted the best for pupils these tests added pressure and many were intimidated by the process;
- testing interrupted the time that should be devoted to learning;
- the curriculum in P1 was centred around play and testing was consequently unlikely to achieve anything;
- although it was the common perception that we lived in an inclusive society, some P1 pupils might never have used IT equipment and would therefore be placed at a disadvantage;
- teachers could assess pupils through their experience and training and these tests therefore deskilled them. Formal assessment could take place much later;
- profiles of pupils were carried out in Pre-school and it was questioned what additional information P1 tests could bring;
- there were instances in Highland where pupils were being tested up to three times in P1;
- although it was argued that P1 tests were unpopular with parents, some Members pointed out this issue had rarely been raised either with them, the Director of Care and Learning or the Chair of the Care, Learning and Housing Committee and this lack of representation was mirrored in other local authorities;
- there was a historical culture of assessment in Highland and it was perhaps society's attitude towards them that was the issue;
- John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills was due to make an announcement on this matter imminently and it was inappropriate for the Council to take any action meantime. However, it was understood the Cabinet Secretary felt testing still had merits, albeit that he would ask Education Scotland to independently assess the process and to report back. Until that point no action should be taken;

- caution was urged at interfering with operational matters which were best left for educational professionals to consider;
- these tests had homogenised the various previous practises which had existed throughout Scotland; and
- there was merit in both formal and informal approaches.

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

As an **AMENDMENT**, Ms K Currie, seconded by Ms M Smith, moved that ‘the assessment to inform professional teaching and support for children and young people in the Highlands is vital to ensure that the child centered learning and teaching occurs and that the attainment gap that exists is reduced for learners in Highlands. Council supports the teachers and managers of schools to deliver assessments and teaching that nurtures and encourages children and their parents and carers to be active, happy and confident learners and awaits the response from the HMle investigation into the matter’.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 39 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 21 votes, with 2 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr R Gale, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mrs P Hadley, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mr D Mackay, Mrs D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms L Munro, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mrs T Robertson, Mr P Saggars, Mr A Sinclair, Ms N Sinclair, Mr C Smith and Mr B Thomson.

For the Amendment:

Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Miss J Campbell, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr C Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Ms E Knox, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr N McLean, Ms P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie, Mr G Ross, and Ms M Smith.

Abstentions:

Mr A Henderson and Mrs F Robertson.

Decision

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

(ii) ‘The Highland Council welcomes the interest taken by Scottish Ministers in the Council’s extensive school estate, as demonstrated during recent visits, but is disappointed that this is for political purposes.

The Council has a significant number of schools with condition, suitability and capacity issues. Regrettably, the Scottish Government continues to ignore our strong case for a different approach to capital investment in our schools. It fails to

recognise the unique challenges of having responsibility for over 200 schools spread across a vast area.

The Council is disappointed that the Scottish Government has delayed any announcement of further schools programme funding, through the Scottish Future Trust, or a successor programme. This continues to hinder the improvement of our school network. The Council urges the Scottish Government to work in partnership with the Council to provide a better future for our pupils and staff.’

Signed: Mr A Baxter Mr J Finlayson Ms A MacLean Ms L Munro Mr A Christie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a perception that the lack of progress in moving forward with the school estate was the fault of the Highland Council;
- the Council’s decision to cut its Capital Programme by 50% had caused upset, especially to those Members who had campaigned for new schools or school improvements;
- the Council had identified priority projects which could be considered as viable as bids to the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). Previous indications had suggested that the next round of funding from the SFT would have taken place in June 2018 but it now appeared that there would not be another funding round until 2021. Given the current situation, it was vital the Scottish Government found funding for Capital Projects;
- representations had been made to Highland MSPs and the Scottish Government highlighting the challenges Highland Council was facing. However, the response was that Highland had received funding which, it was suggested, should have been sufficient and, in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act, that it was the Council’s responsibility to maintain its estate. Nevertheless, without funding Highland Council could not upgrade and build those projects identified as priorities. Highland needed to be treated fairly;
- Highland Council had more schools than any other authority, spread over a huge land mass, covering both rural and urban areas, and this presented unique challenges. Examples were provided of ASGs covering large geographical areas whilst having relatively few feeder primaries and other areas, where considerable amount of house building had taken place, where there was no capacity for more pupils and who had to be transported to other schools;
- there was a duty to provide schools which were watertight, safe and provided an environment for a 21st century education;
- St Clements School was in desperate need of improvement and, despite visits by local MSPs, little had been accomplished. A call was made for MSPs Marie Todd and Kate Forbes to meet with the Local Members, the Chair of Care, Learning and Housing Committee and the Leader to determine a collective way forward to providing a new school;
- all Members had schools which could be viewed as priorities, Tain Royal Academy and Craighill and Broadford primaries cited amongst the examples. Situations were reaching critical points and could not be allowed to continue;
- reference was made to the SFT Business Plan 2018/19 where it was suggested the replacement of funding would be known as the Learning Estate Investment Plan and that an announcement would be made by the end of the year;
- it was pointed out that Highland was the second highest funded Council in Scotland in terms of Capital funding for schools;

- it was not solely the fault of Scottish Government. It was also the fault of successive Council Administrations and decades of neglect now had to be addressed;
- reference was made to a meeting between the SFT and the Council's Group Leaders where, it was understood, a standardised model was to have been prepared rather than what was perceived as high spec bids. Assurances were sought, and provided, that this could be incorporated into the Notice of Motion; and
- acknowledging the poor state of schools, some Members had prepared a report looking at alternative ways to build. It was disappointing that this report had received little interest from fellow Members and officers. However, this alternative proposal could be used when asking the Scottish Government for funding.

Decision

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

'The Highland Council welcomes the interest taken by Scottish Ministers in the Council's extensive school estate, as demonstrated during recent visits, but is disappointed that this is for political purposes.

The Council has a significant number of schools with condition, suitability and capacity issues. Regrettably, the Scottish Government continues to ignore our strong case for a different approach to capital investment in our schools. It fails to recognise the unique challenges of having responsibility for over 200 schools spread across a vast area.

The Council is disappointed that the Scottish Government has delayed any announcement of further schools programme funding, through the Scottish Future Trust, or a successor programme. This continues to hinder the improvement of our school network. The Council urges the Scottish Government to work in partnership with the Council to provide a better future for our pupils and staff.

The Council produces some examples of standardised designs to Highland schools, that can be sent along with a letter to Scottish Government showing the Council's willingness to achieve best value for money in terms of its school building programme.'

(iii) 'That Highland Council believes that the interests of the people of the Highlands would be best served by a referendum on the terms of leaving the European Union with the option of remaining in the European Union.

We wish to formally add our voice to those calling for a People's Vote.

We agree to write to our MPs and MSPs expressing our view and asking them to support a People's Vote and ask Highland Council to make representations to this effect.'

Signed: Mrs D Mackay Mr A Christie Mr J Finlayson

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- although it had been argued that there would be benefits outside the EU, after 2 years of negotiations there was still confusion and uncertainty and what was likely to be delivered was considerably different from what was proposed in 2016. Consequently, that the public should be able to make an informed choice, once they were furnished with the full facts and figures, and to consider how it would affect the Highlands, Scotland and the UK;
- the key difference between a People's Vote and the 2016 vote was that the referendum was based on little factual information;
- Brexit would have an impact on future generations and it therefore needed to be ratified by a People's Vote;
- leaving the EU could have a detrimental impact on tourism in the Highlands;
- it was important that the UK remained in the Single Market and Customs Union;
- the Brexit referendum had been divisive but the decision to leave the EU had been made and Parliament had been given a clear instruction to negotiate how best to do this;
- this was not a single party issue as constituencies from other political parties had voted to leave the EU;
- it was inconceivable not to accept the outcome of one Referendum whilst suggesting that Brexit should be voted on a second time. If a second vote was to take place, why should it be any more binding than the first one;
- the methods of some associated with the campaign for a People's vote was questionable and the Council should not be associate this;
- it was questioned if it was the role of the Council to commit itself to a campaign;
- with the country due to leave the EU in March 2019, a People's Vote would have a shorter lead-in time than the EU Referendum and it would be difficult to see how the public would therefore be better informed this time;
- a leaflet had been sent to every household setting what the 2016 Referendum was about, as well as stating that the Government's position was to remain. The Government had however also given a commitment to implement whatever the outcome of the vote was; and
- it was argued that there had been no confusion as the choice had been clear. Opinions from both sides had been made allowing individuals to make an informed decision.

Thereafter, Ms D MacKay, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed with the first paragraph being amended as follows:-

"That Highland Council believes that the interests of the people of the Highlands would be best served in the Brexit Negotiations by remaining in the Single Market and Customs Union. If this is not agreed then a referendum on the terms of leaving the European Union with the option of remaining in the European Union should take place".

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr S Mackie, moved that the Notice of Motion was disregarded.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 34 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 22 votes, with 2 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr J Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gray,

Mrs P Hadley, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Ms E Knox, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mrs A MacLean, Mr C MacLeod, Mrs B McAllister, Mr N McLean, Ms L Munro, Ms P Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs T Robertson, Mr K Rosie, Ms N Sinclair, Ms M Smith and Mr B Thomson.

For the Amendment:

Mr A Baxter, Mr J Bruce, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mr G Ross, Mr P Saggars and Mr C Smith.

Abstentions:

Mrs C Caddick and Mr R Gale.

Decision

It was **AGREED** “That Highland Council believes that the interests of the people of the Highlands would be best served in the Brexit Negotiations by remaining in the Single Market and Customs Union. If this is not agreed then a referendum on the terms of leaving the European Union with the option of remaining in the European Union should take place.

We wish to formally add our voice to those calling for a People’s Vote.

We agree to write to our MPs and MSPs expressing our view and asking them to support a People’s Vote and ask Highland Council to make representations to this effect”.

(iv) ‘This Council recognises the improvement in road safety and reduction in harmful emissions that the 50mph HGV trial has delivered on the A9 between Perth and Inverness and nationwide in England and Wales since 2015. By reducing speed differences between vehicles, the number of serious injuries from HGV incidents has decreased by 67%. HGVs travelling at 50mph also produce up to 15% less CO2 than at 40mph.

This Council calls on the Scottish Government to reflect on the success of this trial and make the A9 trial permanent. But also to further rollout the 50mph limit to other appropriate single carriageway roads.’

Signed: Mr A Jarvie Mr M Reiss

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the significant reduction in collisions was welcomed;
- a consequence of the trial was a reduced need to overtake and speeds were now more consistent;
- the increase in speed from 40mph cut 30 mins off the journey between Inverness and Perth and there was therefore also an economic benefit;
- it was important to drive according to road conditions and professional HGV drivers were well aware of this;

- the average speed cameras on the A9 had improved safety and had undoubtedly changed driver behaviour; and
- a commitment had been given by the Scottish Government that once the A9 pilot report was produced, as was the UK Government's report on the uplift of speed limits, that full consideration would be given to making the trial permanent.

Decision

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

(v) 'Council resolves to invite Wipro representatives to a future committee to give information on what processes they have put in place to prevent the serious and severely hampering faults with the remote direct access, which resulted in Council employees and Councillors being unable to access emails for days on end, as well as schools having to cancel in service training days due to having no web access to their materials.'

Signed: Ms M Smith Ms G Campbell Sinclair Dr I Cockburn

Given the widespread impact, it was important for this issue to be fully scrutinised at a Corporate Resources Committee.

Decision

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

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

a) Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais

There had been circulated Report No. HC/39/18 dated 12 October 2018 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion of part (a), Members raised the following issues:-

- Councillor M Smith pointed out that she had expressed an interest in being involved with the peer reviews relating to In-house Catering Services. This was a matter for the Redesign Board to decide;
- in relation to the two new posts in Procured Legal Services, recruitment for one post was underway and the second was being discussed with a view to commencing the recruitment process; and
- cross-party working on the reviews had been beneficial, with project boundaries being a particular challenge, and many requiring long term culture change and investment. It was important that any investment was tracked against future savings.

The Council **NOTED**:-

- i. the peer review into commissioned preventative services for children was now complete and was considered elsewhere on this agenda. The

building trades peer review was now substantially complete and would be presented to the Redesign Board for approval on 13 November 2018. A number of new peer reviews were being tasked;

- ii. an officer level Lean Project team had been established to closely monitor and support the Lean review implementation, especially where savings or income potential were being delayed and to prioritise future Lean reviews, in discussion with the Redesign Board;
- iii. an up-date of the range of redesign reviews and their budget impact, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- iv. there would be greater focus on implementation of completed Peer and Lean Reviews, with progress reported back through the Redesign Board.

The Minutes of the Redesign Board meeting held on 25 September 2018 were also **APPROVED**.

**b) Council Redesign – Final Report on Commissioned Children’s Services
Ath-dhealbhadh Comhairle – Aithisg Dheireannach mu Sheirbheisean
Chloinne Coimiseanaichte**

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Christie as a director of Highland Third Sector Interface Ltd, Highland Citizen Advice Bureau Ltd and General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau and a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland; Mr A Jarvie as his mothered worked for Direct Child Care; and Ms E Knox as a director of Children in the Highlands Information Point declared non-financial interests in this item, but having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interest did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. HC/40/18 by the Redesign Team – Children’s Commissioned Services.

During discussion of part (b), Members raised the following issues:-

- assurance was provided that the Council intended to continue working with all relevant partners in the third sector and that many of the suggestions submitted by partners were in the process of being implemented, including the collective ability to report to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee;
- information was sought, and provided, on efforts being made to source foster carers, including improved recruitment methods and web presence, online applications and improved information sources for prospective carers. No increase in interest had yet been noted but work was ongoing to consider the level of the allowance and whether an increase would impact positively on recruitment. It was suggested that although increased allowance might attract more carers initially, the level of ongoing support available for them was a key retention issue;
- Councillor M Smith explained that she had only attended one meeting review of the funding for preventative services commissioned for children, due to prior commitments;
- the commissioned services review was welcomed and had resulted in savings in Care and Learning;

- the potential costs associated with the TUPE of staff in-house had to be taken into consideration;
- further consideration should be given to recruiting retired people as foster carers;
- the services under consideration were being provided to the most vulnerable and fragile people in the community and any changes proposed should only be to make improvements to the quality of their lives and not for the purpose of saving money;
- concern was expressed that the report lacked an equalities impact assessment. Budget decisions should not be taken without this being undertaken and this should be added to the recommendations in the report;
- it was suggested that the proposed savings could be spread across the three year programme and it was explained that timescales were flexible and that budget decisions would be brought to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee before implementation;
- information was sought, and provided, on the level of involvement of the service users and communities in the decisions;
- the responsibilities of all Members and members of the community planning partnership as corporate parents were emphasised; and
- effective communication within political groupings was encouraged. However, it was pointed out that Members also, at times, wished to make points as an individual and not always as representatives of the Group.

Decision

The Council **AGREED**:-

- i. to take forward the proposals presented in section 11.3 of the report and to integrate the proposed in-house hub for Placement and Support Services for Children into the overall agreed approach to the review of Children's Services delivery;
- ii. to continue to have dialogue with the Highland Third Sector Interface and other stakeholders to ensure that proposed savings can be made with minimum impact to individual clients and families; and
- iii. a savings target of £779k over 2019/20 and 2020/21 with contract lead officers delegated the responsibility to develop proposals as outlined above to achieve the overall targets indicated. It was recognised that these targets require a full impact assessment and timescales might need to be reviewed in the context of the Council's future budget considerations.

14. Results from the Citizens' Panel 2017/18 Performance and Attitudes Survey Toraidhean bho Shuirbhídh Coileanaidh agus Bheachdan Phannal nan Saoranach 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No. HC/41/18 dated 24 September 2018 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed at the decreased levels of public satisfaction in relation to road repairs and potholes and more preventative maintenance was urged to avoid vehicle repair costs and compensation claims. Highland Council had been ranked 9th best in Scotland in the Scottish road maintenance condition survey in 2011 but had fallen to 24th in 2017. Of the estimated £21.7m required to maintain the road network at its current level, only £9.7m had been allocated. However the context of extreme budget pressures and the impossibility of 'catching up' with the backlog of road maintenance that was required without significant additional funding was explained. It was also suggested that the road condition could vary throughout the year so the timing of the survey was relevant. In recent years, additional funds had been allocated to the roads budget and this should be publicised;
- it was unfortunate media attention tended to focus on negative issues rather than publicising more positive news. Better use of social media to answer negative comments and promote positive news stories was suggested;
- increased collaboration with partners, stakeholders, communities and government was urged, to devise new ways of working and delivering services in view of the challenging budget situation. Reference was made to the successes Hull City Council had achieved in this regard;
- staff were thanked for their hard work and the improvements being made to many services, despite the public perception to the contrary, and Members were urged to encourage positive messages to avoid undermining staff confidence; and
- in relation to 'satisfaction with Council services' at 3.2 (j) of the report, it was important to consider and report on actions to reduce the negative scores.

The Council:-

- NOTED** the key findings of the feedback from the Citizens' Panel from this year's survey;
- APPROVED** the follow up action to communicate the results set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report;
- AGREED** to await further analysis and reports as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report; and
- AGREED** to consider and report on how to reduce the negative scores at 3.2(j) of the report.

15. **Towards a Sustainable Financial Future – Revenue Budget Update 2018 - 2022** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Bhuidseat**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/42/18 dated 15 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- reference was made to the uncertain and unpredictable economic climate and the working assumptions that would be used to model the budget. One of the economic objectives in the Council's 2012 Plan was to protect frontline staff and stability and this remained the case, with everything possible being done to avoid compulsory redundancies. Over £100m had been saved in the previous five years and this level of savings had to continue through a stringent programme, based on Best Value audit templates, of meetings and engagement with all stakeholders, initially Members and trade unions and then

the public, staff and partner organisations. This would include online surveys, a media launch and facebook forums. The budget was challenging but it was hoped that through extensive engagement the Council would protect jobs, reduce waste, improve services and make the best use of tax payers' money;

- it was important that commercial activity was adequately resourced, given its vital role in generating income;
- further information on the budget gap information at Table 3.6 in the report was sought for Members;
- more information was sought on the revenue implications of capital spend e.g. the effect of interest rate rises. It was clarified that consideration had been given to risk implications and further information would be provided on this. Two key areas of uncertainty for the budget were the outcomes of equal pay negotiations and the severity of the coming winter;
- reference was made to the 14% increase in Council Tax for the highest four categories of Council tax, as a result of rebanding, during the previous financial year in addition to the agreed 3% rise across the board. In response to suggestion that this additional income of £14.1m had 'vanished', it was clarified that it was clearly documented and had been used to bridge the £20m savings gap;
- the serious nature of the current economic climate was emphasised with the Council's reserves being at their lowest limit, the increasing numbers of older people, decreasing retention of younger people leading to workforce planning challenges and widening education gaps. Unity among Members was urged to find solutions and increase engagement, including with community councils;
- it was suggested that reserves should be available for emergencies without unnecessary restrictions in relation to repayment and the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources clarified that plans were in place to repay £1m to reserves annually for the next three years to bring reserves back to 2% of the overall budget;
- information was sought, and provided, on the cost of the voluntary redundancy scheme and the savings obtained as a result;
- it was suggested that unachieved savings be reported to the next Corporate Resources Committee;
- consideration was given to the merits of cross-political and group budget collaboration versus independent plans being worked on; and
- it was important that following consultation, any findings or decisions were adhered to and not postponed.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the:-

- i. work to date in addressing the budget gap;
- ii. proposals for engagement and consultation; and
- iii. current risks and uncertainties.

AGREED that :-

- i. that community councils be engaged as part of the consultation process;
- ii. more detailed information be shared with Members in relation to the figures contained in Table 3.6 of the report and on the revenue implications of capital spend both historical and future;

- iii. an update be provided on equal pay negotiations; and
- iv. when the Council withdraws from its reserves plans for replenishment are communicated to Members.

16. Review of Public Conveniences in the Highlands Ath-sgrùdadh air Taighean-beaga Poblach

There had been circulated Report No. HC/43/18 dated 8 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- officers were thanked for the work undertaken during the summer to address the considerable concern expressed from various sources including members of the public;
- reference was made to the need to introduce fairness in the number of facilities available in each community, with some towns being currently better provided for than others. Detailed scrutiny and local engagement would take place around this;
- reference was made to the current 201 Public Convenience facilities that were available for public use and to planned partnership working with communities that could also consider other services such as showers and waste disposal, as detailed in the report;
- an explanation was sought, and provided, on the savings to be realised through the creation of mobile teams to service facilities within a certain radius. This would create up to 18 full-time posts, reducing the number of full-time equivalents required to provide the service by 11. Assistance would be provided to staff who required re-training, for example, to obtain a driving licence;
- it was hoped to developed an app to map all facilities;
- an explanation was sought, and provided, for the savings and expenditure figures in the report, some of which were estimated, that resulted in a the net value of the savings to be delivered of £0.491m;
- a definition was sought, and provided, of a 'publicly accessible toilet';
- information was sought on how a condition of sale for facilities sold on the open market that they be retained as a public convenience could be enforced;
- information was sought on which facilities would be serviced by the proposed mobile teams. Effective public communication on this was urged;
- reference was made to public conveniences having come 13th on the priorities list in the Citizen's Panel survey and, as a result, specific public convenience options were sought for Inverness in consultation with Members, partners and third sector organisations;
- specific queries regarding distances to individual facilities would be addressed outwith the meeting; and
- concern was expressed that there was insufficient concrete information and figures to agree the matter and that it should be deferred pending more accurate figures.

As a **MOTION**, Mr A Henderson, seconded by Ms L Munro, moved the recommendation as detailed in the report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Ms K Currie, seconded by Ms P Hadley, moved that a paper was presented to this council with accurate figures, projection and details in relation

to the public convenience provision in the Highlands, which could be appropriately scrutinised and debated by Members.

Whilst accepting the recommendation within the report to reduce the number of facilities from 201 to 191, Mr A Jarvie moved, but failed to find a seconder, that the facilities at Fortrose and Kinlochbervie be moved from the section “alternative non-Council provision be found” to the list detailing “proposed retention of facilities.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 33 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 23 votes, with 2 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mr A Baxter, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs B Campbell, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr R Gale, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Ms A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms L Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs T Robertson, Mr M Reiss, Mr D Rixson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Mr A Sinclair and Mr B Thompson.

For the Amendment:

Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr J Bruce, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr C Fraser, Mrs P Hadley, Mr A Jarvie, Ms E Knox, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr D Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D MacLeod, Mr N McLean, Ms P Munro, Mr I Ramon, Mr K Rosie, Ms N Sinclair and Ms M Smith.

Abstentions:

Mrs I MacKenzie and Mr C Smith.

Decision

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** that:-
 - a. There was currently a total of 201 facilities throughout the Highlands that were available for public use;
 - b. 90% of the Highlands’ population were within a 15 minute drive of a publicly accessible toilet; and
 - c. There were considerable opportunities for the Council, through working in partnership with communities and other alternative service providers, to deliver strategic facilities that would support tourism across the Highlands and address the increase in visitor numbers on smaller local facilities.
- ii. **NOTED** the progress on implementation of the savings agreed at the Council meeting on 15 February 2018;
- iii. **NOTED** the outcome of the Strategic Review of Public Conveniences in the Highlands;
- iv. **AGREED** that officers continue to work with third parties regarding transfer of facilities where this would deliver best value to the Council; and
- v. **AGREED** that, due to the lack of expressions of interest from alternative service providers, and the availability of alternative service provision nearby, the facilities identified in Appendix 2d of the report should close at the earliest opportunity after 31 October 2018 and that the Service continue to work with Elected Members and communities over the winter to seek alternative non

Council-run provision at these locations. No full-time facility would close where negotiations were ongoing with communities regarding alternative provision. Overall, this would result in 191 Public Convenience facilities being available to the public across the Highlands.

**17. Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund
Cuairt 1 de Phròiseactan Maoin Bun-structair Turasachd Dùthchail – Geàrr-chunntas na Gàidhealtachd 2018**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/44/18 dated 10 October 2018 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- these six projects, which had originated from communities themselves, were making excellent use of Scottish Government funding. The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund had been put in place by Fergus Ewing MSP and appreciation was expressed to him for this;
- officers were commended for their work in preparing the applications and which had undoubtedly contributed to their success;
- this funding was particularly welcome, given that the Scottish Highlands and Islands have been named by the Lonely Planet Guide as one of the top regions in the world for travellers in 2019. This would result in an even greater influx of visitors and the funding would make a huge difference to Skye where visitor numbers had increased considerably in the last 10 years. In addition, there were discussions taking place regarding establishing Edinburgh to China flights and, if connections could also be established to the Highlands, this would increase visitors even more;
- there was a second round of funding underway with full applications required by the end of January 2019 and it was hoped that Highland would again be successful; and
- the provision of six enhanced laybys on the Bealach Na Ba was welcomed given the difficulties campervans and caravans had in reversing on this steep single track road. Although some criticism had been expressed that the money could have been spent on filling potholes it was not possible to divert this money for this purpose and it had to be kept in mind that this was money that would not otherwise have been available.

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** the range of projects that were submitted to and those that were successful in attracting £1.4m of funding from the £3m available in the first round of the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund; and
- ii. **AGREED** that details of projects being submitted to the second round of the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund be shared with the Council's Tourism Working Group prior to submission.

**18. Commission on Highland Democracy
Coimisean air Deamocrasaidh Ionadail**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/45/18 dated 14 October 2018 by the Chief Executive.

The Leader reminded Members of the background which had led to the establishment of the independent Commission on Highland Democracy. Chaired by former COSLA Chief Executive, Rory Mair, the Commission had set out key findings which, it was hoped, would be embedded as an ethos of democratic participation. In particular, it had highlighted that public agencies needed to be more accountable and to work together. In this regard, the work the Council had done around localism had to not only continue but to intensify. Communities had been keen to have locality plans, nine of which were in place, but planning had to go down as far as the town and village level. Furthermore, the role of Community Councils needed to be considered as sometimes they too were perceived to be as distant and remote as the Council. In conclusion though, the Leader highlighted the importance of community responsibility. This did not just mean involvement in consultations but involvement in the decision making process and going forward this needed to be a clear commitment of the Council.

Whilst supporting these sentiments, it was highlighted that a key frustration of Community Councils was that they did not know who to contact. There therefore needed to be clear communication who to approach to avoid being passed back and forth between Services. Also, many communities were already taking on more responsibility but, in some cases, required a little assistance.

The Council **NOTED** the final report from the Commission on Highland Democracy.

**19. Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Update
Cùmhnant Coimhearsnachd Feachdan Armaichte na Gàidhealtachd – Cunntas Bliadhna**

There had been circulated Report No HC/46/18 dated 12 October 2018 by the Acting Head of Policy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- appreciation was expressed to staff for their support in taking the Armed Forces Covenant, particularly to Dot Ferguson and Jo Lenihan, a Development officer employed, at present, between Highland and Moray for a two year period;
- the Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Partnership was working well together and specific reference was made to the Military Liaison Group which had been established to support military issues in relation to schools and discharged persons;
- the Erskine charity was to have a presence in Inverness shortly in the form of Art for Erskine exhibition and this would highlight the work of the Partnership;
- the Council was already carrying out many of the requirements for the Gold Award in Defence Employer Recognition Scheme; and
- it was particularly poignant that the Council was choosing to reconfirm its commitment by signing the Armed Forces Covenant in a year of especial meaning to the Armed Forces.

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** the considerable progress made with partners over the past 18 months across a range of activities which support the Armed Forces Community Covenant;

- ii. **AGREED** to The Highland Council reconfirming its own commitment by signing the Armed Forces Covenant; and
- iii. **AGREED** to apply to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for a Gold Award.

20. Scheme of Delegation and Administration to Strategic Committees and Sub Committees and to Officers

Raòn Ùghdarrais agus Rianachd gu Comataidhean Ro-innleachdail agus Fo-chomataidhean agus gu Oifigearan

There had been circulated Report No. HC/47/18 dated 15 October 2018 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

The Council **AGREED** the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation as detailed in the report.

21. Deeds Executed

Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh

Members **NOTED** that a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 6 September 2018 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Ross and Cromarty Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Thursday, 1 November 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mrs A MacLean
Mrs J Barclay	Mr D MacLeod
Dr I Cockburn	Ms P Munro
Mr M Finlayson	Mrs M Paterson
Mr C Fraser	Mr A Rhind
Mr D Louden	Mrs F Robertson (Chair)
Mr G MacKenzie	Ms M Smith
Mr A MacKinnon	Mrs C Wilson

Officials in Attendance:

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive Designate
 Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
 Mrs A Clark, Acting Head of Policy
 Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North)
 Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Skye, Ross and Cromarty
 Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer
 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
 Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Mr R Dibble, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Ms M MacDonald, Ross and Cromarty Citizen's Advice Bureau Manager
 Mr M Rattray, Debtor Advisor, Housing and In Court Project, Ross-shire Citizen's Advice Bureau
 Ms A McRory, Court Worker for Ross-shire Citizen's Advice Bureau
 Mrs M Davidson, Leader of the Council

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

Prior to the commencement of business Mrs M Paterson read a poem to commemorate Armistice Day.

Good News Items:

Six pupils from St Clements School in Dingwall had completed their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award in 2017 and would now move to the Silver award. Learners with disabilities faced more challenges than their peers however this was

not a barrier to achievement and participation. The awards had given the pupils confidence and skills for life. The pupils are an inspiration to other young people who face similar challenges.

Roseann Christie, Additional Support Needs Officer, had been shortlisted for the Employee of the Year Award in the 2018 Highland Council Quality Awards.

Cromarty Primary School had been awarded a Primary Science Quality Mark which was a significant achievement for a school. Congratulations to teacher Mrs Milne for all her work with this.

Fortrose Academy had been awarded Gold Status by Sportscotland for continuous improvement in physical education and school sport offered.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs I Campbell and Miss E Leitch, Highland Youth Convener.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 4 – Mrs Angela MacLean (non-financial).

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the last meeting which had been held on 15 August 2018 and had been approved by The Highland Council on 6 September 2018.

4. Ross-shire Citizen's Advice Bureau Presentation Taisbeanadh Biùro Comhairleachaidh a' Phobail airson Siorrachd Rois

Mrs Angela MacLean, declared a non-financial interest as a Board Member of the Ross-shire Citizen's Advice Bureau but having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.

A presentation was given by Mary Macdonald, Manager from Ross and Cromarty Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) and Martin Rattray, Debt Advisor, Housing and In Court Project, Ross-shire CAB.

The presentation included the following:-

- Highland Council was a very supportive Council and the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the CAB workers appreciated the timeous responses received from Housing Services on queries relating to housing and rent matters;

- more volunteers were always wanted and Members should feel free to help or to encourage people in their area to help;
- there are various ways people can help and full training is given with a mentor to shadow you until you are confident to work on your own;
- help could also be given in other ways including filing, website development and general office duties to name a few;
- the Tain office was only open one day a week, although there were specialised appointments also held, this was due to a lack of volunteers in the Tain area;
- there were many ways to get in touch with CAB, including Skype appointments; and
- CAB dealt with a vast range of issues and Members were welcome to make an appointment to come and see some of the work being undertaken.

The Chair and Members thanked Ms Macdonald and Mr Rattray for their informative presentation.

5. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No RC/036/18 together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

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

- Members were pleased that Home Safety Visits were continuing this was a very valuable service;
- disappointed to see that there were still no female firefighters in Dingwall, although it was explained that this was due to there being no female applicants;
- a request that the Fire and Rescue Service add their support to the call for improvements to junctions and the reduction of speed limits at notorious blackspot areas;
- Members had previously been shown a demonstration of the new fire units that would be rolled out and had been very impressed, five units had been put to both the West and East Coast with four units kept for training purposes;
- in response to a question on whether the SFRS assisted with abandoned vehicles, it was advised that SFRS would only get involved if there was a fire risk associated with the abandoned vehicle, but do liaise with Police Scotland and Highland Council and seek to raise awareness of the risks ;
- that following an issue in Invergordon when the Police had been unable to send officers, the Fire appliance had been dispatched and they had rapidly diffused a very difficult situation on the high street; and
- pleased to see that fire crews were receiving training on mental health issues;

The Committee **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report.

**6. Winter Maintenance 2018/19
Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No RC/037/18 by the Director of Community Services.

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

- the Report had stated the A832 rather than A835 Braemore Junction to Gorstan junction;
- in response to a question on how the level of treatment of a road was determined, the Roads Operations Manager would send a copy of the climatic zones across Highlands to Members, the zones determined the level of treatment;
- the fact that the salt had been delivered by boat this year and had avoided travelling by road was welcomed;
- noted the amount of salt used on the roads, stated as 10 g for 0° with the risk of frost; 20g for 0° and ice; up to 40g for snow forecast;
- a thank you for the replacement of damaged grit bins on the Black Isle;
- concern that in relation to primary routes, the road to the hospital in Dingwall appeared to have been missed, could it be checked and added as a priority route;
- members of the public were prepared to grit the roads but there had to be salt in the salt bins to enable them to do this;
- pleased to hear there had been a trial of new mini gritting machines that would fit on a standard pick up vehicle, these therefore did not require an HG1 driver and would be in addition to the existing gritting, with one for Dingwall and one for Alness and Tain;
- with the changes made to the gritting routes it was important that corporate communications publicised the new schedules;
- Alness is fortunate to have windfarm monies to help with the cost of clearing pavements, clearing school areas, filling grit bins; and
- one of the footpath gritters for Tain was in Dingwall being repaired, it was important to have this back in Tain as soon as possible;
- there appeared to be no gritting outlined for the pavement in Invergordon High Street could this be looked into; and
- a request that a composite map be produced for maps 27 and 30;

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plans for Ross and Cromarty.

**7. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2019 – 2021
Prògram Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais 2019 – 2021**

There had been circulated Report No RC/038/18 by the Director of Community Services. Briefings had been held at Ward Meetings to take on Members' views in relation to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme. The Ward 5 Business Meeting would be attended shortly.

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

- a refresh of the 2009 condition survey of every property on the Council's estate would be helpful at some point in the future to help with identifying priorities;
- there was only a small pot of money available for environmental improvements and a method would have to be found to share the money between the Wards, in response it was advised that the budget was split pro rata in relation to the number of properties in each area;
- the amount of meetings undertaken in the Wards in relation to the programme should be reduced to save resources;
- officials and members of the public in different housing estates had undertaken a walkabout with Members and this was beneficial in identifying problems and often enabling the public to address some of the problems themselves;
- Members were keen to see a comprehensive list of works that had been completed in the Council's housing estate over the last ten years;
- provision of new heating systems had to be looked at carefully, it was important to get a balance between the cost of the system and its ongoing affordability for the tenant; it is also important that the tenant understands how to best use the system they have; and
- decoration allowances were an issue, in response it was noted that the aim is to quantify the level of disruption anticipated and provide allowances to cover that cost. The potential to include a level of redecoration within the contract was under discussion.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to Ross and Cromarty Area as set out in **Appendix 1**;
- ii. **NOTED** the investment priorities as set out in section 4.2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed two year HRA Capital Programme for Ross and Cromarty 2019-21 as set out in **Appendix 2**; and
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme will continue to be provided through ward briefings and at Local Committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

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

There had been circulated Report No RC/039/18 by the Director of Community Services.

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

- issues had arisen with the contractor failing to turn up on the date specified for works to Council houses;
- it was understood that staff vacancies impacted on rent arrears;
- it was good to see the general trend for completion of emergency repairs, non-emergency repairs and re-lets had improved;
- the CAB had expanded on the reasons people had rent arrears and the struggle many had in managing their rent arrears; and
- rent arrears had increased substantially and it was a major concern.

Garages were in varying conditions, with some let but others in poor condition and empty or being used for other purposes. Mr Holden indicated that better use could be made of the garages which could also provide the opportunity for increased income. Mr Holden indicated that the intention was to review an analysis of garages undertaken in 2015 and report back to Members with options/proposals for garages in various locations, which might range from repair to demolition or use for other purposes.

The re-let time for Council houses had been halved, this was a massive achievement and the Housing Managers and Housing staff were to be congratulated.

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

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

There had been circulated Report No RC/040/18 by the Acting Head of Policy.

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

- i. the name of a new development in Ainess as Sandy MacRae Street;
- ii. the name of a new development in Ullapool as Glenfield Park; and
- iii. the name of a new development in Kyle of Lochalsh as Duncan MacPherson Court.

10. Common Good Funds
Maoin Maith Choitchinn

There had been circulated Report Nos RC/041/18 – RC/045/18 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources and Acting Head of Policy which provided information on the following Common Good Funds:-

- a. Cromarty Common Good Fund RC/041/18
- b. Dingwall Common Good Fund RC/042/18
- c. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund RC/043/18
- d. Invergordon Common Good Fund RC/044/18
- e. Tain Common Good Fund RC/045/18

The Ward Managers were commended for the amount of work they put into Common Good Funds.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Common Good Fund Annual Reports for 2017/18; and
- ii. **NOTED** the position of the Common Good Funds, as shown in the 2018/19 Quarter 2 monitoring statements;
- iii. **AGREED** that options for the Invergordon Common Good Fund including disposal of the Town Hall by sale or a long lease be explored within the framework of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Lochaber Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Fort William on **Wednesday, 7 November 2018 at 10.30 a.m.**

Present:

Mr A Baxter	Mr I Ramon
Mr A Henderson	Mr D Rixson
Mr N McLean	Mr B Thompson

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)
 Mr F Nixon, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr A Nicolson, Programme Manager, Highlands & Islands Enterprise
 Mr S Manning, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services
 Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services
 Mr L MacDonald, Repairs Manager (South), Community Services
 Ms D Sutton, Amenities Manager (South), Community Services
 Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:

Mr J Taylor, Area Youth Services Officer (South), High Life Highland
 Ms E Leitch, Youth Convener
 Rachael Hatfield, Year of Young People Ambassador
 Connor MacKenzie – Kinlochleven High School
 Ruairdh MacLenlan - Kinlochleven High School
 Kathryn Kelly - Lochaber High School

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 - Chairman

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr B Allan.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 6 – Mr D Rixson (non-financial)

3. Lochaber Year of Young People Daoine Òga

There had been circulated Report No. LA/24/18 by the High Life Highland Chief Executive.

There was a presentation by Young People from the Lochaber Area which provided an update of the variety of activities undertaken within Lochaber surrounding Year of Young People. Activities covered in presentations from the Young People included – Pupil Council; Social Media; Summer Programme; Volunteering and Glen Fest (celebration of Lochaber Young People) and highlights of other events taken place in Lochaber over the past year.

During discussion, Members commended the Young People for their informative presentations and congratulated them on the many activities undertaken over the past year. In particular, the work of the Pupil Council in Kinlochleven High School was commended in that it did have an impact on issues out with the school, for example, the lack of bus shelters and the poor positioning of them along a school bus route in Lochaber had been raised by the Pupil Council and as a result, there were now new bus shelters that were better positioned to protect users from bad weather on the bus route in South Lochaber. This was a practical measure raised by the Pupil Council that would benefit the whole community.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i **NOTED** the report and presentations made by Young People representing the youth voice of Lochaber and High Life Highland;

ii **AGREED** to support the undernoted three areas for improvement that young people wish the Committee to action:-

- to support the development and use of social media within the Council as a platform for engaging with young people;
- to hold a consultation with Sheil Buses (main public transport provider), community transport providers, stakeholders and young people from the Lochaber area High Schools, West Highland College UHI and youth groups in the area to find out how public transport options could be improved to ensure they are efficient and meeting the needs of young people in the area so they can effectively engage in education, training, leisure and work activities as required; and
- to support the four High Schools in the Lochaber area to improve their LGBTI inclusive practice and where identified achieve their LGBTI Charter Award. Further, where appropriate, Members would positively consider applications to the Ward Budgets from schools to develop initiatives which support inclusive practice.

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

There was circulated Report No. LA/25/18 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland on progress against the priorities outlined in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Area Committee Plan for Lochaber 2016-2018. The report also contained previously agreed

information and performance as requested by the Area Committee.

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

- As part of the transformation of the Fire Service, there would be 56 full time Rural Fire Officer posts created to support the Retained Service in rural areas across Scotland. This was in addition to the current structure. One of these posts would be based in Fort William and the recruitment process was underway. This post would support the Lochaber District stations which would be a great investment in the Retained Service in the Lochaber area.
- Kinlochleven was a two appliance station which presented recruitment difficulties in trying to attract local people to crew those appliances. The Fire Service was continually trying to recruit people to fill vacancies. It was suggested that Elected Members could assist the Fire Service in their recruitment campaigns by working alongside Fire Officers when visiting local communities. It was queried if people from Glencoe could apply for vacancies at the Kinlochleven station and in response it was confirmed that they could and their application would be considered. However, there needed to be a reasonable response time to an emergency and this would be discussed with applicants.
- There was concern that the Fire Service will look at the Kinlochleven Fire appliance availability figures and potentially remove the 2nd Appliance given the low staffing availability for this appliance. This would be detrimental to South Lochaber and it was preferred that in any Fire Service review of the location of appliances, that one of the new Rapid Response Unit Appliances be based in Glencoe, where there were Mountain Rescue, Police and Ambulance stations. This was in recognition that many of the call outs for Kinlochleven Fire Station were not fire related, but for traffic incidents and it was important to have a 2nd Appliance to cover the A82 and the Oban road. The Officer advised that he was not aware of any current review of station locations.
- Concern was expressed that extending the response time to Kinlochleven Fire Station would mean Fire personnel attending emergencies on a road with poor sight lines and the preference in the longer term was for a reallocation of resources to the Glencoe/Balachulish area.
- It was requested that previous quarter data on Station availability be included in future Performance Reports for comparative purposes.

The Committee having scrutinised the Performance report, **NOTED:-**

i that Members comments on the Kinlochleven Fire Station staff resources and their preference for a reallocation of resources to Glencoe/Balachulish area in the longer term would be fed back to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; and

ii that the previous quarter data on Station availability be included in future Performance Reports.

5. Fort William 2040 Consultation Workshop Co-chomhairle mu Lèirsinn 2040 a' Ghearasdain

There was circulated Report No. LA/26/18 dated 26 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which presented the outcome of a major consultation exercise held in September, 2018 which brought together a wide range of stakeholders to create a vision for the future of Fort William, in its wider Lochaber context, and to prepare a Delivery Programme outlining projects, responsibilities and actions for delivering that vision.

The report presented the findings of the consultation and sought approval for a recommended approach to ongoing monitoring and collaboration in implementing the actions outlined in the Delivery Programme, and the vision for Fort William.

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

- As part of the consultation, there had been an undertaking given by the Development Plans team to go back to certain local Community Groups and it was confirmed that meetings would be scheduled with the Fort William Community Council Association and South Lochaber Community Council Association on the Fort William 2040 vision;
- Members requested more time to look at the detailed submissions to the consultation rather than the summary responses in Appendix 1;
- In respect of the updated Fort William 2040 vision draft diagrams tabled at the meeting, concern was expressed that Members were only receiving these at the meeting and that Community Councils and local residents did not have the opportunity to see these.
- In terms of the consultation process a view was expressed as to whether the vision for Fort William 2040 could be delivered. For example there had been a charrette focusing on Fort William Town Centre a few years ago resulting in many recommendations that were now repeated in this report, particularly about revitalising the Town Centre and refocusing the Centre outwards towards the waterfront. Transport Scotland were key to this happening but they had dismissed a lot of the suggestions. Further, a number of suggestions in the report relied upon Liberty Group and their new operation in Fort William. There was still no evidence that the promises that the company had given to Lochaber beginning to come to fruition. The Officer confirmed that the next steps in the process were in response to this situation. There were challenges in delivering development and infrastructure and improvements to support existing communities and to provide growth ambitions. The aim was to capitalise on the work already undertaken by the Council to prepare a delivery programme to support the local development plan. One of the outcomes from the consultation event was that it would give a process for the ongoing monitoring of the delivery programme. It was therefore hoped that the delivery programme was a proactive response to the dilemma outlined.
- In terms of Appendix 3, number 17 LNG Energy it was queried what were the practical implications of the rollout of an LNG network in Fort William. The Officer advised that consideration was still being given as to what would be required to take forward a gas network in the town. There would require to be more consultation and engagement before any firm decisions were made on this.
- There seemed to be little content in the report regarding contacts between the North and South sides of Loch Linnhe. Further, there seemed to be only reference to development in the North Side of the Loch and virtually nothing in the South. Even if the communities were not interested, they should at least be part of the process of engagement.
- Included in the summary of the responses was for Fort William to be a place with a distinctive, local, cultural identity. This was one of the local priorities of the Committee and currently a potential bid to the European Union Regional Development Fund was being explored.

Following further discussion, the Committee **DEFERRED** consideration of the recommendations in the report until the next meeting to enable refinement of the

tabled diagram at Appendix 2; for Members to consider the responses to the Community consultation; and for the Development Plans team to consult with the Fort William Community Council Association and South Lochaber Community Council Association on the Fort William 2040 vision.

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

Declaration of Interest: Mr D Rixson declared a non-financial interest in this item as the Council's representative to Lochaber Housing Association 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 discussion.

There had been circulated Report No LA/27/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Housing Charter and other performances indicators for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September, 2018.

It was noted that the first four performance indicators (Reactive repairs; Repairs appointments; Rent collected; Gross rent arrears) in Appendix 1 were incorrect and an amended Appendix with revised RAG status for these indicators had been issued to Members.

It was queried why there was a declining performance for non emergency repairs and whether work was being allocated to the housing repair teams electronically to save time. Also, in terms of housing repair work on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula this would potentially involve the team spending a full day on the Peninsula for even minor repairs. It was queried if other Council staff, who might not be in the housing service i.e. Roads team, could be used for minor housing repairs in that area.

It was confirmed that cross service working for minor housing repair work on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula would be considered. Further, there was currently a paper based system and mobile system for allocating work to the Housing team. It was the intention to roll out mobile working to all Housing repair staff, however Wipro still required to install software on the mobile devices.

It was confirmed that a high proportion of rent arrears was due to the introduction of Universal Credit and that the decline in revenue would eventually impact on carrying out housing repairs.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September, 2018;
- ii. the use of the staff from the Roads team to carry out some minor housing repair work on Ardnamurchan Peninsula would be considered; and
- iii. that Councillor A Baxter undertook to request Wipro to speed up the rollout of Mobile working devices used by the Housing repair team in Lochaber.

7. **Car Parking in Lochaber** **Parcadh Chàraichean ann an Loch Abar**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/28/18 by the Director of Community Services which reviewed financial projections from parking charges implemented on 23 April,

2018.

A summary of the report having been provided by the officer, the following main points were raised:-

- There was a correction to the report in relation to average weekly car parking income for Fort William, this was circa £12, 360 and not £15,081 as detailed in the report;
- In the review of car parking in Lochaber, particularly Fort William, it was queried if there had been a reduction in disabled parking spaces in Fort William town centre and if so how many, particularly in car parks but also on streets. While there was no intention by the Service to reduce disabled parking spaces, an undertaking was given to check and send this information to Members.
- It was queried why it took nearly a year for new coach parking signs to be erected in the West end of Fort William. This had been agreed over a year ago in consultation with local retailers, and there had been confusion for coach operators over the summer season as to whether they could park where it had been agreed for them to do so. It was advised that the delay was a result of a staff resource issue within the Service and the need to re-publish amendments to the Traffic Order procedure. It would be checked that the signs had now been erected.
- It was noted that there was a Notional budget set for Lochaber car parking income. Previously the indication had been that car parking income was a Lochaber budget and that there was also supposed to be for example a Dingwall and Nairn budget. It was queried why it had suddenly become a Notional budget and whether the Committee needed to take any recognition of the recommendation to discuss and agree mitigation measures to help address the budget shortfall.
- It was advised that full Council did not give specific income amounts for each car park and they were to be spread out across the areas, and there was a commitment by Council that Community Services would deal with shortfalls in income across the rollout car park charging locations for this financial year. Therefore, the budgeted new income target for Lochaber was £543k and while there was a pressure to meet the budget shortfall if this did not come from Lochaber car parking income, the shortfall would be met from Community Services. On this basis the view was expressed that this was a Community Services budget problem and not for Lochaber Committee, particularly when other Local Areas had not taken the budget responsibility and introduce car park charging as required by budget decisions at full Council. Therefore, if there was a reduction in Community Services provision as a result of a shortfall in car parking income it was assumed this would be met from the Roads budget etc from other Local Areas rather than Lochaber. It was advised that the Director of Community Services was reporting to the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee on 8 November, 2018 and there may be more clarity on this point.
- It was felt that the car parking budget target was unrealistic for Fort William. While mitigation measures could be looked at, how long could this continue, as the income from parking charges just was not there to meet the target. Potentially by charging for parking you damage the footfall on the High Street.
- It was explained that the budget target for additional income set by Council for car parking charges was £1.4m. A breakdown of income levels for each of the Local Committees had been produced and the target for Lochaber had not been achieved. There was an option to make some car park tariffs cheaper and increase the yield. Tariffs would continue to be reviewed in order to generate

income as would payment methods to make it as easy as possible for car park users to pay.

- The car parking budget raised around £2m to the Council each year and it appeared to be heavily under resourced in terms of staffing for the programme it was expected to deliver.
- In terms of mitigation measures to help address the budget shortfall, it was queried if the “control of use” of the Nevis Centre car park could be brought forward into this financial year. It was advised that the intention was to implement this as soon as possible and the Council’s Property team were currently drafting a lease with Nevis Centre Solicitors;
- There was a traffic pressure at the end of Glen Nevis and potentially there may be an opportunity to create a car park at the Glen Nevis turning area;
- In terms of car parking enforcement in Fort William, this was mainly carried out by Officers based in Fort William with support from Officers in Inverness. There was not a high contravention rate in Lochaber. It was requested that car parking enforcement statistics for Lochaber be submitted in a future report to Committee;
- The budget shortfall could be eased by the introduction of car parking charges in Mallaig;
- The Local Parking Season Ticket was growing in popularity and the uptake was good;
- Retailers in Fort William had valid concerns regarding the new retail sites on North Road, Fort William. It was queried from car parking data if there was any change in car parking habits in the centre of Fort William over the last year and particularly from April when the new Aldi Store was opened. While the Officer undertook to do analysis on this and report back, it was advised that the free parking period had been very successful;
- It was queried if information could be provided from car parking data as to where cars come from, so an analysis of town traffic could be made. Also an analysis of event sales for each car park could be undertaken to see how they vary across the year;
- The period in the run up to Christmas was extremely important for retailers and it was acknowledged that the half hour free car parking had a successful uptake, but that this might not be long enough for Christmas shoppers. It was queried what impact there would be in terms of loss of revenue for introducing free parking for 2 hours in one designated car park in Fort William, as Perth had just introduced free car parking for 6 weeks in the run up to Christmas for their town centre car parks. It was confirmed that the loss of income would be substantial, and nationally there was no evidence that reasonable charging for parking impacted on footfall in Town Centres. This was a matter for Members discretion but there would be cash consequences on the budget.
- Extending the Local Parking Season ticket to the short stay car parks in Fort William was suggested for a limited period of time. This would increase the benefits of having a Season ticket and thereby increasing the uptake of it.
- It was advised that Car parking income of £1.4m was money Community Services required to find and the Notional element was how this figure was split between the different local areas. The Officer advised that any recommendation to reduce car parking income could not be supported. However, the view was expressed that other areas were not charging for car parks in their area, which they could feasibly do with little impact on their communities. Fort William had been charging for car parking for many years and it was for other areas to address the budget shortfall and not the Lochaber area.

It having been confirmed that the review of car parking tariffs was a delegated function to Local Committees, M A Baxter, seconded by Mr B Thompson **MOVED** to introduce

2 hours free car parking in the six weeks running up to Christmas Eve for Fort William for this year. This was on the basis that there were no statistics available on the impact of Car Parking in Fort William Town Centre from the new retail development on North Road, Fort William and once these were available, consideration could be given to introducing 2 hours free car parking in the six weeks running up to Christmas Eve on a permanent basis in future years once a full set of yearly statistics from the new car parking regime were known.

The Committee supported the Motion.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the projected budget shortfall;
- ii. **AGREED** that there is no reduction in the Local Parking Season Ticket;
- * iii **AGREED** to introduce 2 hours free car parking in the six weeks running up to Christmas Eve for Fort William for this year. This was on the basis that there were no statistics available on the impact of Car Parking in Fort William Town Centre from the new retail development on North Road, Fort William and once these were available, consideration could be given to introducing 2 hours free car parking in the six weeks running up to Christmas Eve on a permanent basis in future years once a full set of yearly statistics from the new car parking regime were known.
- iv **NOTED** that it would be checked if the number of disabled parking spaces in Fort William had been reduced;
- v **NOTED** that it would be checked that the new Coach parking signs had been installed in the West end of Fort William.
- vi **NOTED** that an opportunity to create a car park at the Glen Nevis turning area would be explored;
- vii **NOTED** that car parking enforcement statistics for Lochaber would be submitted in a future report to Committee; and
- viii **NOTED** that an analysis of car parking in Fort William Town Centre over the last year and particularly from April when the new Aldi Store was opened would be undertaken, to establish if the Town Centre car parking had been impacted by the new out of town centre retail development.

8. **Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Obair-glèidhidh Raointean**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/29/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how Community Services performed in relation to performance indicators for the period 1 April to 30 September 2018.

The Officer highlighted a correction to the report under the section relating to Public Conveniences. The Wards inspected were numbers 11 and 21 and the number of inspections and number of satisfactory inspections were both 17.

It was queried if the figure of 100% satisfactory inspections for both grounds maintenance and public convenience inspections was actually the case overall. It was advised that given that the number of inspections was low, it was unlikely that the overall performance was as good.

Further, it was confirmed that in terms of the Public Conveniences review, the Station Brae, Fort William public convenience would be retained and the intention was to install charging at this facility.

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

**9. Appointment of Director to the Isle of Rum Trust
Cur Stiùiriche an Dreuchd do dh'Urras Eilean Rùm**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/30/18 by the Acting Head of Policy which sought approval for the appointment of Councillor Denis Rixson to the Isle of Rum Community Trust.

The Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of Councillor D Rixson to the Isle of Rum Community Trust.

**10. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Lochaber Committee held on 30 August 2018 which were approved by the Council on 6 September 2018.

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.

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, 8 November 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr W MacKay (by video conference)
Mrs J Barclay	Ms A MacLean
Miss J Campbell	Mr D MacLeod
Dr I Cockburn	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr C Fraser	Mr H Morrison
Mr J Finlayson (substitute)	Mr I Ramon
Mr R Gale	Mr D Rixson
Mr J Gray	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Henderson	Mr A Sinclair
Mrs L MacDonald	Ms M Smith
Mr D MacKay (substitute)	

Non-Members also present:

Mr A Baxter	Ms E Knox (pm only)
Mr B Boyd	Mr B Lobban
Mr R Bremner (by video-conference)	Mr K Rosie (by video-conference)
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr B Thompson
Mrs M Davidson	

In attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure
 Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
 Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources
 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 A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Ms N Wallace, Acting Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services, Community Services
 Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport, Community Services
 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
 Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager
 Mr A Yates, Environmental Health Manager, Community Services
 Ms F Daschofsky, LEADER Development Officer/EFF Development Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service

Mr S Manning, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services
 Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services
 Mr M Smith, Principal Engineer and Team Leader - Flood Team
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr W Beattie, EB Scotland Limited (Item 4 only)

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

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms K Currie, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr R Laird and Mr C Smith.

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

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

Item 5 – Miss J Campbell and Mr R MacWilliam (both non-financial)

Item 6 – Mr D Rixson (non-financial)

Item 8 – Miss J Campbell and Mr R MacWilliam (both non-financial)

Item 9 – Mr R MacWilliam and Mr D Rixson (both non-financial)

Item 13 – Mrs H Carmichael (non-financial)

Item 32 – Mr D Rixson (non-financial)

**3. Good News
Naidheachdan Matha**

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

**4. Presentation - Landfill Tax Fund
Taisbeanadh – Maoin Cìse Làraich Sgudail**

A presentation was given by Mr William Beattie of EB Scotland Limited on the Scottish Landfill Community Fund, during which he advised that the Scottish Landfill Community Fund was a tax credit scheme that allowed landfill operators to contribute a portion of their annual landfill tax liability towards the Fund and that it aimed to benefit communities which had faced dis-amenity from waste management activities. He confirmed that since the scheme had started, all monies contributed by the Council to the Fund had been spent in the Highland area and an explanation was provided as to the process for accessing funds

and the criteria to be considered when applying. He also gave some examples of projects within Highland which had benefited from funding.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in relation to the Seater Landfill Site, concern had been raised by Caithness West Community Council that they had been unsuccessful in their application for funding and that they had not received any benefit from the Fund. In response, it was suggested that the Community Council's concerns be forwarded to the Chair so their application could be further investigated;
- a request was made that contact details for Mr Beattie be provided to all Members;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the eligibility criteria for projects, during which it was emphasised that currently projects had to be located within 10 miles of a registered landfill site or transfer station. However, it was suggested that Members could try to seek a review of the eligibility criteria;
- it was suggested that greater publicity of the Fund should be made to raise its profile among local community groups and to help encourage more applications for funding; and
- whilst welcoming the funding opportunities available to local community groups from the Fund, it was emphasised that the Council was still seeking to reduce the amount of waste it currently sent to landfill.

The Chair having thanked Mr Beattie for his presentation, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation;
- ii. **AGREED** that contact details for Mr Beattie, EB Scotland Limited, be provided to all Members; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a list of current waste landfill sites, closed waste landfill sites and transfer stations be E-mailed to all Members.

5. **Development and Infrastructure Service Revenue Monitoring** **Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun-** **structair**

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

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/66/18 dated 29 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concern was expressed that the shortfall in income in relation to energy and sustainability and catering, cleaning and facilities management would need to be funded from underspends elsewhere in the budget. A reliance on underspends could impact on work being undertaken at Ward level;

- concern was expressed regarding the deletion of vacant posts and vacancy management as a savings target going forward; and
- in welcoming an increase in income in relation to planning and building standards fees, it was suggested that this should be reinvested in the service budget.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April to 30 September 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

Declaration of Interest – Mr D Rixson, as a Board Member of Lochaber Housing Association, declared a non-financial interest in respect of this item 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/67/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- further information was sought, and received, regarding the installation of replacement cremators at Inverness Crematorium and that spend for the year was on their retention;
- disappointment was expressed that only three projects in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh (Ward 5) were contained within the capital programme;
- concern was expressed that an additional budget allocation of £0.9m had been made towards the new build of Aness Academy and further information was sought, and received, regarding how the money would be allocated within the project budget;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the additional £1.5m which had been allocated to roads structural works following an underspend elsewhere in the Capital budget;
- concern was expressed at the significant economic impact of road traffic delays occurring as a result of the road/rail diversion in connection with works undertaken to the rock face at Stromeferry and a request was made that a report be brought back providing an explanation as to why the option of undertaking works to the rock face during night-time had not be pursued when a tender had been submitted which would have allowed the road to remain open;
- in highlighting the suggestion that Transport Scotland take over the 50 mile stretch of road from Garve to Kyle of Lochalsh, this was unlikely to happen due to the poor condition of the road and the money required to bring it up to trunk road standards;
- it was suggested that the Council should seek to annul its current agreement with Network Rail regarding the maintenance of the rock face at Stromeferry. The condition and upkeep of the rock face was a responsibility that both organisations should share;

- it was suggested that the Committee should recommend the release of money by the Council to push forward the design works required for the new Stromeferry bypass road option as a matter of urgency;
- a request was made for information to be provided as part of the STAG appraisal as to the number of times the Stromeferry bypass had been closed due to repairs to the rock face since 1970;
- in response to a suggestion that money could be made available from the additional income of £14.1m generated from an increase in Council Tax towards the design works required for the new Stromeferry bypass road operation, it was clarified that this money had already been used within the revenue budget to offset savings which were required by the Council in order for it to continue to deliver services;
- in thanking officers and staff for their work in relation to the Stromeferry Bypass, and also Ward 5 Members for their input, the Leader of the Council advised that herself and the Chair would be attending a meeting later in the month with the Scottish Government Transport Secretary, Michael Matheson MSP, to discuss the options for the bypass going forward and that the outcome of the meeting would be reported back;
- the economic cost of road closures in the West Highlands was substantially higher than in other areas of Scotland and it was requested that the Transport Secretary be asked if the Scottish Government could evidence how it had calculated the economic cost of road closures;
- it was emphasised that the Council was responsible for the upkeep of a high number of local roads and opportunities for funding should continue to be sought in partnership with the Scottish Government;
- the replacement Muir of Ord Railway Bridge had made a significant positive impact in the community and the time and money spent on completing the project was emphasised, and the team congratulated;
- the Council's capital discretionary budget for the upkeep of war memorials was highlighted and the work undertaken by officers in preparation for Armistice Day was commended;
- the progress of onsite works in relation to White Bridge was welcomed;
- it was highlighted that the Council, as the owner of a number of old bridges which were in serious need of upgrading, should investigate opportunities to seek funding from the Scottish Government;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the commencement of flood prevention schemes on the River Thurso and at Halkirk;
- it was suggested that the case be made to Scottish Government that the A890 become a trunk road as part of the longer term solution; and
- a request was made that the steering group which had been established in connection with the Uig Ferry Terminal upgrade engage further with the local community.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period 1 April to 30 September 2018
- ii. **AGREED to HOMOLOGATE** an additional allocation of £0.9m to Alness Academy project from the School Estate Improvement Programme; and
- iii. **AGREED** to look at the release of monies to push forward the design works required for the new Stromferry Bypass option.

7. Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 2 Performance Review Frèam Coileanadh Dealbhaidh agus Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanadh Cairteal 2

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/68/18 dated 31 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- further information was sought as to the number of planning applications which had not been determined within the intended timeframe and whether there were any capacity issues in relation to this;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the possibility of utilising Modern Apprentices to ensure the service's responsibilities under the Construction Compliance Notification Plans (CCNP) would be met;
- in highlighting the public consultation exercise carried out in Fort William under the FW2040 banner to create a new vision for the town and a delivery programme, it was suggested that there was potential to undertake a similar exercise in Dingwall to help promote businesses and improve communications;
- it was suggested that feedback be sought from users of the Council's website and customers using the Idox system as to any issues they had experienced when searching for planning applications online;
- the potential expansion of the Environment team on a cost-recovery basis to meet the high demand for ecological advice was welcomed;
- in highlighting that 15 out of the 100 cases identified in relation to enforcement activity had been served with notices, it was requested that further information be provided within future reports on breaches which had been identified but had not be served with notices; and
- the significant improvement in performance in relation to responses to warrant applications was commended.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards, Development Plans, Transport Planning, Performance and Environment teams;
- ii. **AGREED** that further information be sought as to the number of planning applications which had not been determined within the intended timeframe and whether there were any capacity issues in relation to this;
- iii. **AGREED** that feedback be sought from users of the Council's website and customers using the Idox system as to any issues they had experienced when searching for planning applications online; and
- iv. **AGREED** that further information be provided within future reports on enforcement activity, in particular, breaches identified which had not be served with notices.

8. Economy and Regeneration Eaconamaidh agus Ath-ùrachadh

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

There had been circulated Report No EDI/69/18 dated 26 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the work of Business Gateway in providing advice to small businesses in rural areas and its importance to the local economy was emphasised;
- it was suggested that the Scottish Parliament’s Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee’s visit to Inverness on 3 December 2018 should be promoted;
- in highlighting the transfer of the Council’s Family Firm function to Development and Infrastructure, the importance of ensuring that young people continued to be provided with opportunities to get into education and employment was emphasised;
- it was suggested that if businesses were willing to share details of the advice and services which they had received from Business Gateway then this information could be used to help promote Business Gateway to other businesses in the area;
- in highlighting the recent difficulties experienced by the Cairngorm Mountain resort, the work undertaken by Business Gateway with local businesses in Badenoch and Strathspey was commended;
- in highlighting the seven projects within the Highlands which had successfully secured half of the total grant funding available from the Scottish Government’s Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF), reassurance was sought, and received, that the Council had encouraged as many communities as possible to apply to the next round of funding;
- it was highlighted that expressions of interest within the Highlands alone for the next round of the RTIF had already exceeding the total amount of funding that would be available; and
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the availability of European Regional Development funding (ERDF) and the work being undertaken to identify projects eligible for funding.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report and the key developments highlighted during quarter 1 and emerging activity; and
- ii. the transfer of the Family Firm function to the Development and Infrastructure Service.

**9. Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019/2021
Plana Tasgaidh Taigheadais Ro-innleachdail 2019/2021**

Declarations of Interest – Mr R MacWilliam and Mr D Rixson, as a Director of Highland Small Communities Housing and as a Board Member of Lochaber Housing Association respectively, declared non-financial interests in respect of this item but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No EDI/70/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in welcoming the report, it was emphasised that the Strategic Housing Investment Plan could help to deal with growing housing demand and the number of people currently on housing waiting lists, in particular within Nairn;
- further information was sought, and received, as to how the Plan would take into consideration skills shortages within the construction industry and whether firms could be encouraged to take on apprentices to address the shortage;
- it was emphasised that discussion with public sector organisations, including NHS Highland, should take place to ensure that their needs would be reflected within the Plan;
- whilst acknowledging that the main emphasis in relation to social housing was on the number of people currently registered on housing waiting lists, it was emphasised that quality of design and build should also be taken into consideration;
- the recently completed housing development at Raining Stairs was highlighted as an example of well-designed housing. It had also been shortlisted in three categories of the Inside Housing Design Awards;
- it was emphasised that future developments in Fort William, including the expansion of the Aluminium Smelter, Corpach Marina, Fort William 2040, the new hospital and the UHI Stem-centre, would create additional pressures on housing demand in the area;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the types of houses being built to meet the specific needs of disabled households;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the roll-out of Fit Houses in Highland and the variations which had been made to the original designs of the houses following the initial 6 month living in period;
- with the introduction of Fit Houses, there was potential for some people currently in hospital to be transferred into a Fit House;
- Dingwall was the highest priority area in the Easter Ross area in terms of housing demand and attention was drawn to rising house prices within the area;
- it was suggested that in places such as Skye, which had only one major building developer, consideration be made at an early stage towards the provision of accommodation for contractors from outwith the area and the potential use of new builds being used for accommodation prior to being released onto the open market;

- in highlighting a number of housing projects in Lochaber, which had either been completed or were due to commence construction, the work of the Head of Development and Regeneration and his team in the area was commended;
- in highlighting the current standards of housing being built in the Highlands, it was suggested that further emphasis should be made in the report on the extent to which the Council could eliminate fuel poverty;
- in highlighting the Council's ambition towards achieving a minimum Silver Level as per the 2011 Building Regulations in respect of both carbon dioxide emission and energy for space heating, further information was sought, and received, regarding the potential of increasing this target towards Gold Level;
- greater quality assurance was required on some housing developments as some building companies did not have a third party independent sign-off on new builds; and
- whilst there was a perception that an increase in housing construction costs could be attributed to an improvement in house building standards, it was considered that any impact on cost from increased building standards would be in relation to the value of the land.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- APPROVED** the Strategic Housing Investment Plan as submitted to the Scottish Government in draft form, as included within Appendix 1 of the report; and
- NOTED** the planned investment programme as included within Appendix 2 of the report.

**10. Annual Report under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2017/18
Aithisg Bhladhnaile fo Dhleastanasan Atharrachadh Gnàth-shìde
Bhuidhnean Poblach 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/71/18 dated 18 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:-

- information was sought, and received, on the increased usage of electricity by the Council despite the introduction of LED streetlights which had been expected to lead to decreased expenditure. Reasons included increased housing, centralisation of school energy budgets leading to less ownership of expenditure, and the need for greater emphasis on individual responsibility for reducing energy consumption;
- consideration should be given to the Council moving to a renewable-only supplier in future;
- both cost and carbon reduction were important issues and the Council's ability to produce the most carbon-free energy in Scotland ought to bring more benefits than was currently the case; and
- cross-party support for the recommendations was urged.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Council's completed submission for the 2017/18 reporting year is submitted to the Sustainable Scotland Network in compliance with statutory climate change duties.

11. Single Use Plastic Strategy and Action Plan Ro-innleachd air Plastaig Aon Chleachdadh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/72/18 dated 22 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion the following issues were considered:-

- the Council was congratulated for being one of the first public organisations to adopt a single-use plastic strategy and it was hoped the issue would soon be considered by the Community Planning Partnership;
- discussions had taken place with Scottish Water about the possibility of water bottle filling stations being installed in schools;
- it was suggested that the opportunity be provided for Members to act as ECO Councillors;
- A DVD, Clean Sea, was suggested for educational use for Members and for schools;
- the annual updating of the strategy was welcomed and it would tie into regional, national and international initiatives;
- under the key themes section of the report, reference could be made to the supplier agreement to voluntarily commit to reducing food packaging waste and this could be referenced at other relevant sections of the report;
- reference was made to the welcomed policy of a café in Fort William which offered free water bottle refilling;
- the dangers of micro plastics for marine life was highlighted;
- progress made to date was welcomed but it was important to maintain momentum on the various initiatives including encouraging public ownership and responsibility, to continue to effect strategic change but also to encourage individual behaviour change;
- the Council had made important operational changes e.g. banning the use of single use cups; and
- waste plans should be considered as part of the planning permission process for new businesses, especially take-away restaurants with high levels of disposable items.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the adoption of the Single Use Plastic Strategy and Action Plan; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the opportunity be provided for Members to act as ECO Councillors.

12. Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy Ro-innleachd Mòr-Choille agus Coille na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No EDI/73/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion the following issues were considered:-

- information in the report on ancient woodlands was welcomed and a broadleaf section was suggested;

- information was sought, and received, on the possible inclusion of deer stalking and grouse moor regeneration in the report;
- it was suggested that the move away from deer fencing could be detrimental to forestry;
- information was sought on the level of interest in creating affordable housing in a woodland setting; and
- the wild growth of trees was spoiling the views on some key tourist routes.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the Council responses as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. to adopt the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy (at Appendix 2 of the report) as part of the Development Plan, subject to any non-factual amendments or formatting changes, and clearance by Scottish Ministers.

13. Visit Inverness Loch Ness Tourism Business Improvement District Sgìre Leasachadh Gnothachais Loch Nis Visit Inbhir Nis

Declaration of Interest – Mrs H Carmichael declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of the Board of Inverness BID and the Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No EDI/74/18 dated 13 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, information was sought, and received, on the possible involvement of organisations which operated in the district but were not based in it e.g. cruise companies.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the assessment made in Appendix 1 of the report relative to the Visit Inverness Loch Ness Tourism Business Improvement District draft final Proposal and **AGREED** not to exercise the Council’s right of veto; and
- ii. if, upon receipt of the final BID Business Plan, it was considered that changes have been made which affect the assessment made in Appendix 1 of the report, **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee to seek the necessary amendments to the final BID proposal, failing which, a further report would be brought to Council on 13 December 2018.

14. A9 Dualling: Draft Orders Dalraddy to Slochd and Crubenmore to Kincaig Dreachd Òrdughan Dùblachadh an A9

There had been circulated Report No EDI/75/18 dated 25 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the dualling proposals were welcomed but concern was expressed at the gap in provision of a non-motorised route between Carrbridge and Aviemore. An objection to this had been supported by the Local Area Committee and it was hoped the Council would continue to support this stance. Cllr M Cockburn pointed out that she had not been in attendance at the Ward 20 Business Meeting briefing on 1 October 2018 at which the objection to the absence of non-motorised users (NMU) infrastructure between Aviemore and Carrbridge had been initially discussed. However she had been at meetings where support for the objection had been further considered.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of this report, in particular the need to enter new side roads in the list of public roads;
- ii. **AGREED** to **HOMOLOGATE** the responses submitted to Transport Scotland and provide any comments or additions;
- iii. **NOTED** the update about the matters discussed at the two meetings with Transport Scotland and additional clarification received subsequent to the preparation of this report; and
- iv. having considered the response already submitted to Transport Scotland based on the new information that has been received from Transport Scotland, **AGREED** to sustain an objection to the Draft Orders.

15. **Section 37 Interim Report on Flood Risk Management Plan Actions Aithisg Eadar-amail Earrainn 37 mu Ghnìomhan Plana Rianachd a thaobh Cunnart Thuiltean**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/76/18 dated 20 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the Section 37 Report and progress made on the measures within the current Highland and Argyll Local Flood Risk Management Plan;
- ii. **AGREED** to make the Section 37 Report for the Highland and Argyll Local Plan District available to the public on the Council's website; and
- iii. **NOTED** that Moray Council will approve and publish the Section 37 Interim Report for the Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District.

16. **Community Asset Transfer - Review Gluasad So-mhaoin Choimhearsnachd – Ath-sgrùdadh**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/77/18 dated 24 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:-

- all relevant requests for asset transfer should be considered by the Asset Management Board to check the Council did not miss potential opportunities. The evaluation process was explained and the membership of the Board would be checked to ensure it remained fit for purpose;
- it was hoped the speed of the process could be improved as the

- perception that the process was lengthy could be a deterrent to applicants;
- it might be inappropriate for the same people to be on the initial panel and on the review panel; and
- it was important all transfers were appropriate and to the benefit of all.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the work undertaken and the work underway way to address the issues raised through the review;
- AGREED** both community asset transfer requests recommended for approval, and those recommended for refusal are considered by Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee; and
- AGREED** the proposal to increase the Members' Review Panel membership from 5 Members to 9 Members.

17. **Nevis Landscape Partnership Com-pàirteachas Cruth-tìre Nibheis**

Following reports to the former Planning Development & Infrastructure Committee meetings on 5 November 2014, 4 November 2015 and 17 February 2016, the Council provided a Guarantee to the Clydesdale Bank (the 'Bank') for a maximum sum of £150,000 to underwrite an overdraft facility made available to the Nevis Partnership by the Bank.

The overdraft facility was required by Nevis Partnership to undertake a programme of works (along with Partner organisations) called the Nevis Landscape Partnership.

The Council had been notified by Nevis Partnership that they were in the process of cancelling their overdraft facility with the Bank and, when the cancellation of the overdraft had been completed by Nevis Partnership, the Council's Guarantee to the Bank would no longer be required and could also be cancelled.

The Committee **AGREED** to formally cancel the Council Guarantee and formally close the legal guarantee documentation between the Council and the Bank (after the cancellation of the overdraft facility has been completed).

18. **Community Services Revenue Budget Monitoring Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/78/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Director highlighted various aspects of the report including the projected overspend of £493k and the work that was ongoing to try to reduce this including vacancy management, ceasing all non-essential expenditure and continued implementation of the recovery programme.

During discussion, Members considered the following issues:-

- the severity of the coming winter could impact significantly on the budget;

- concern was expressed about unachieved savings in various areas including car parking and public conveniences. Attention was drawn to the inequity that arose when one area of Highland put in place the necessary work to achieve a savings target but were inadvertently penalised because less progress was achieved elsewhere;
- information was sought on the percentage of car parking income that would be returned to community funds. However it was explained that the Council had not yet taken that decision; and
- in response to a suggestion that at a previous meeting it had been thought that car parking income targets might take four years to achieve, this target had related to Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.

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

19. **Community Services Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018**

Aithisg Choileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – 1 April 2018 gu 30 September 2018

There had been circulated Report No EDI/79/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion concern was expressed that the Annual Household Waste to Landfill percentage had increased since the previous year, and recycling tonnage had decreased. A public education campaign was urged, including the possibility of putting stickers on recycling bins to indicate what should go into them and to encourage the use of recycling bins by new tenants of Council properties. Population growth had increased overall waste production and the implementation of garden waste charges had led to a degree in demand for its collection and recycling. These issues would be addressed in the new waste strategy.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April to 30 September 2018 and **AGREED** consideration be given to putting stickers on recycling bins to indicate what should go into them and to encourage the use of recycling bins by new tenants of Council properties.

20. **Corran Ferry Options Appraisal – Presentation** **Measadh Roghainnean Aiseag a' Chorrain – Taisbeanadh**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/80/18 dated 16 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

A presentation was provided by the Consultants commissioned by Highland Council to undertake an appraisal of future operations for the Corran Ferry service, to review all aspects of infrastructure and operation and the options as to how, and at what level, the service could be put on a sustainable footing. Whilst acknowledging the community aspiration for a fixed link across the Corran Narrows, this was a long term proposition and did not remove the more immediate need to make the ferry service viable. An analysis had been made of all factors including infrastructure, crew, operations and methods of delivery.

Three options had been developed against Transport Planning Objectives (TPO) and Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria:-

Option 1a - a new larger quarter point vessel, with MV Corran retained as the refit/relief/second vessel

Option 2c – a larger straight through vessel, with MV Corran retained as the refit/relief/second vessel

Option 2d – larger straight through vessel, with refit/relief/second vessel secured from elsewhere.

All three options addressed the infrastructure and service problems and therefore the determining factor was the method of service delivery. Bearing in mind that the current model was unsustainable, Members were asked to consider the degree of control they wanted to maintain, the extent to which they wished to retain liability for the service and if they wanted the private sector to be involved.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:-

- the report was welcomed and the essential lifeline nature of the service was emphasised, with examples provided of the impact on the local community during periods of loss of service;
- if Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) was applied to the service, there would be an increase in fares and, given the lifeline nature of the service, support was sought from all for a variation from RET guidelines in this case;
- in the longer term, options other than a ferry service should be considered and information was sought, and received, on the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Project which would examine national capital investment projects for the coming 20 years, including fixed link proposals;
- reference was made to the poor quality of many of the roads and routes on the peninsula served by the ferry; and
- reference was made to the importance of the appointment of a project manager.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the strategic business case options presented in the Corran Ferry Service Options Appraisal;
- ii. **APPROVED** the appointment of a Project Manager to undertake further exploration of options, in more detail in order to develop a preferred outline business case, including essential consultation with Members and appropriate stakeholders;
- iii. **AGREED** to hold discussion with Transport Scotland in order to explore options in more detail; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Governance arrangements for the project will be through the Harbours Board.

21. Road Structures – Annual Report Structaran Rathaid – Aithisg Bhliadhnaid

There had been circulated Report No EDI/81/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, it was pointed out that 'steady state' was a useful term to help understand the situation with regard to the condition of the road network. In relation to this, it was explained that approximately £3m would be required to maintain Highland bridges in a 'steady state' but that only £530k was available for this. A risk based inspection regime was used to allocation funds and some mitigation might require to be put in place e.g. weight restrictions.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of the Bridge Stock Condition Indicators in Highland;
- ii. **NOTED** the current position in Highland in relation to the number of structures inspections undertaken; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the 2 year rolling programme for 2019-21 for the "Bridges, Retaining Walls and Culverts" allocation of the Community Services Capital Programme.

22. Progress Update on Implementation of the Council's preferred option for managing its Biodegradable Municipal Waste
Cunntas às Ùr mu Adhartas le bhith a' Buileachadh na roghainn as fheàrr leis a' Chomhairle airson rian a chumail air a Sgudal Bailteil Bith-chnàmhach

There had been circulated Report No EDI/82/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was vitally important that the design and visual impact of the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) was taken into account given its location on a main entrance to Inverness. If a high quality approach was adopted it had potential to add to the vista of this area;
- it was encouraging that the drop-in consultation session had been well attended and information was sought regarding the response to the online survey. Public involvement with this project was essential;
- the approach of the communication strategy was commended but could be enhanced with case studies;
- it was suggested that contact be made with the planners of the Fort William 2040 project so that the principles of "Prevent/Re-use/Recycle/Recover/Value" could be incorporated; and
- assurances were sought, and received, that the proposal put forward was for a MRF and not as a means of also achieving an Energy from Waste plant, although this could be something which had potential at some stage in the future. It was important that this was seen as being independent from that, otherwise there was a danger that the proposal could lose support at an early stage.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress made in delivering a Materials Recovery Facility at the former Longman Landfill Site; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the Waste Communications Strategy detailed in Appendix 1.

**23. Environmental Health Operational Plan 2018/19
Plana Obrachail Slàinte Àrainneachd 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/83/18 dated 8 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

Following a presentation highlighting specific elements of work carried out by the Environmental Health team, particularly referring to food safety and the multi-agency operational approach adopted, Members commended the Trade Waste Project which had taken place in Inverness Town Centre. This had greatly reduced the number of bins and was an excellent example of working with businesses and communities. In addition, it was queried if additional sound equipment could be purchased to assist with the number of Noise Control cases. However, it was explained the necessary equipment was particularly expensive but the Team were looking at other approaches to deal with this issue.

Having expressed their appreciation to the Team, the Committee **APPROVED** the Environmental Health Operational Plan 2018/19 as detailed in Appendix 1.

**24. Consultation – Licensing of Dog, Cat and Rabbit Breeding Activities in Scotland
Co-chomhairle – Ceadachd Briodaidh airson Chon, Chat is Choineanach ann an Alba**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/84/18 dated 8 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on licensing of dog, cat and rabbit breeding activities in Scotland as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

**25. Electric Vehicles Update
Cunntas às Ùr mu Charbadan Dealain**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/85/18 dated 29 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The introduction of usage charges simply to balance the cost of the electricity provided was, it was argued, a disincentive for commercial providers to enter into the market and therefore a more commercial levy should be considered.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress in delivery of charging infrastructure made to date and the programme for future delivery in 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- ii. **NOTED** that the Council has been delayed by Transport Scotland in the previously agreed intention to introduce charges for consumption of electricity, and that usage charges can and will be introduced from January 2019;
- iii. **NOTED** that fixed term funding has been secured to manage the delivery of a commercial rate charging infrastructure and promotion;

- iv. **AGREED** that Transport Scotland should include grant funding for project management in the annual grant offers; and
- v. **NOTED** that Highland Council is developing a planning policy for the provision of charging infrastructure in new development.

26. Community Transport Grants
Tabhartasan Còmhdhail Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No EDI/86/18 dated 19 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** a continuation of funding to Community Transport organisations for 2019/20 within the existing budget, and in line with discussions held with each individual group; and
- ii. **NOTED** that a future report will be presented once criteria for longer-term awards of grant have been prepared, in line with the Council's Redesign recommendations.

27. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee:-

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

- i. North PAC – 1 August 2018;
- ii. South PAC – 8 August 2018;
- iii. North PAC – 11 September 2018;
- iv. North PAC – 18 September 2018;

APPROVED the Minutes for:-

- (b) Tourism Working Group of 14 August 2018 and 26 September 2018;
- (c) Waste Strategy Working Group of 19 September 2018; and
- (d) BREXIT Working Group of 28 September 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. Property & Facilities Management Team Proposed Restructure
Ath-structaradh ga Mholadh airson Sgioba Stiùiridh Cuid-seilbh & Ghoireasan

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/87/18 dated 19 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** that this item had been deferred pending further consultation with the Trade Unions.

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

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/88/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

**31. Property Transactions Monitoring Report
Aithisg Sgrúdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/89/18 dated 23 October 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 and Regeneration under delegated authority as well the Budgeted Sales for 2018/19 and beyond.

**32. Housing Development Initiatives
Iomairtean Leasachadh Taigheadais**

Declaration of Interest – Mr D Rixson, as a Board Member of Lochaber Housing Association, declared a non-financial interest in respect of this item 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 to Members only Report No. EDI/90/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Having expressed appreciation to officers for their innovative approach to maximise resources, the Committee otherwise **APPROVED** the recommendations contained within the report.

The meeting ended at 4.50 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 14 November 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
Mr G Morrison, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer, Community Services
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Dr Oliver O'Grady, Project Officer, Badenoch Great Place Project (Item 3)
Mr F Nixon, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 4)

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

Mr 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 3 – Ms P Hadley (non-financial)
Item 6 – Ms P Hadley (financial)
Item 7 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

At this point, the Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the brevity of the agenda, despite the diligent efforts of the Ward Manager, and expressed disappointment that reports from Community Services had been withdrawn and no report had been submitted from the Care and Learning Service in regard to Education.

Arising from this, it was stressed that it was essential that regular reports were submitted to the Area Committee providing accurate and up to date information on local schools on a range of topics including performance measures, staffing and capacity levels, and estate issues. Without this information Members could not fulfil their duties in terms of celebrating and supporting staff and pupils. The Committee was supportive of this view and the importance of reports being submitted to the Area Committee was emphasised.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

In terms of Standing Order 9, it was **AGREED** to take item 5 at this point.

**5. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report
Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/17/18 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Chairman commended the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for their successful performance results, especially the reduction in road traffic collisions and it was hoped that this would continue;
- Estate owners were commended for the lack of wildfires particularly as it had been an extremely dry and hot summer;
- In response to queries, confirmation was provided that there were no habitual offenders for repeated false alarms; there had been no incidents arising from fireworks; and the 8 minute rule (the time in which a crew had to get to a station for a callout) was being achieved;
- Confirmation was provided that work continued in regard to the falls prevention programme and it was anticipated that an update on this would be provided to the next meeting; and
- It was queried, and confirmed, that female members of staff attended recruitment campaigns and it was explained that targeted campaigns were also conducted to attract women such as stay at home mums.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**3. Presentation: Badenoch Heritage Great Place Project
Taisbeanadh: Pròiseact Dualchais agus Sàr Àiteachan Bhàideanach**

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board member of Badenoch Heritage Great Place Project but having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.

There was a presentation by Dr Oliver O'Grady, Project Officer, on the Badenoch Great Place Project (BGPP) which was a community heritage project primarily funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as well as through additional funding from the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Transport Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and The Highland Council along with support from a number of other partner agencies.

Dr O'Grady explained that Badenoch was an area immersed in history and the project intended to create a legacy of economic development around the area's cultural heritage. Continuing he explained the vision and project aims and explained how these had been translated into 20 project activities to be delivered across the area. He further set out the benefits of the project which included the commissioning of two important studies, namely Interpretation and Marketing Plan for Badenoch and Concept Development and Testing of a new Alternative Tourist Route for Badenoch. Concluding, he advised of the importance of sharing knowledge and urged people to get in touch and be involved in the project.

Arising from the presentation the following key points were raised:-

- The Chairman thanked Dr O'Grady for his presentation and he particularly welcomed that the project had already engaged with local schools as the children were the future of the area;
- It was recommended that the project study related to a new Alternative Tourist Route for Badenoch and should consider links with the snow roads route at the eastside of the Cairngorms leading back into Grantown-on-Spey. In doing so, this would provide strong economic support to the area via a circular tourist route i.e. exiting the A9 heading north towards Ballater, leading to Grantown-on-Spey and continuing around the southern part of Badenoch towards Laggan and Dalwhinnie;
- A number of suggestions were made in regard to areas of historical interest that could be captured within the project including the local Wade and Telford roads; capturing oral recordings from local residents; and building on increased attention on the area as result of high profile TV programmes/films being filmed on location in Badenoch; and
- Confirmation was sought and provided that the Ambassador programme would be intergenerational and this was welcome.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that there be a further progress update to a future meeting later next year.

4. Badenoch and Strathspey Community Partnership Com-pàirteachas Coimhearsnachd Bhàideanach agus Shrath Spè

An overview of the development and progress of the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Partnership (BSCP) was provided by the Partnership Chair Mr Fraser Nixon. He advised that Highland Community Partnerships had been formed as a further development of the Community Planning Partnership and as a direct response to the Community Empowerment Act (2015) for Community Planning.

The key role of the Partnership was to tackle social, environmental and economic issues across Badenoch and Strathspey and a number of plans had been developed to achieve this including a Children's Plan and an Adult's Plan.

The BSCP comprised of five core public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups to work collaboratively with the people of Badenoch and Strathspey to improve services and deliver better outcomes. Mr Nixon emphasised the importance of community engagement and local knowledge to identify areas of priority and to support local areas/people more effectively. In conclusion, he advised that a Project Engagement Officer would be appointed imminently and that work was currently underway to explore the feasibility of transitioning across a small sum of funding from the Badenoch and Strathspey Drug and Alcohol Partnership for community use.

During discussion, the Chairman highlighted that the partnerships across the Highlands were at varying stages of development and he commended the significant progress of the BSCP to date. He welcomed the news regarding the appointment of a dedicated staff resource to the area and highlighted that the Chairman of the Access and Transport Group had indicated their desire to work collaboratively with the Partnership. With regard to utilisation of funding from the Badenoch and Strathspey Drug and Alcohol Partnership, it was suggested that this could be used towards educational opportunities at schools prior to the Christmas party season.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

**6. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2019-2021
Prògram Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais 2019-2021**

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/**18**/18 dated 24 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Chairman welcomed the report and the planned improvements to the housing stock which was much needed;
- It was highlighted that key complaints in regard to housing related to heating and condensation, and balancing these contradictory issues was difficult, therefore assurance was sought and provided that the allocated budget for the area would be sufficient to meet ongoing demands;
- The level of engagement with tenants was commended and a request was made for an update to a future meeting on the infra-red heating technologies that were currently being piloted; and

- Assurance was sought, and provided, that the contract would be well managed and continuously monitored to ensure that the programme of works were being completed to a high standard.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to Badenoch and Strathspey Area as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the investment priorities as set out in section 4.2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed two year HRA Capital Programme for Badenoch and Strathspey 2019-21 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme would continue to be provided through ward briefings and at Local Committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee; and
- v. **AGREED** that an update be provided to a future meeting on the outcome of the infra-red heating technologies that were currently being trialled.

**7. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean 2018 to 30 An t-Sultainn 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/19/18 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- The overall results in the report were commended but concern was expressed at the rise in homelessness and it was queried whether this might be due to recent changes in national legislation which had made the role of the landlord more onerous and as a result landlords were being attracted to alternative uses such as Airbnb which was unregulated;
- It was queried whether evidence was being collected in order to establish the reasons private rentals were being vacated and whether information was recorded on the number of people from outwith the area which presented in Badenoch and Strathspey and registered as homeless; and
- It was reported that local estates had indicated that the recent changes in the short assured tenancy to the new system had resulted in difficulties in anticipating their needs for any tied housing that might become available as the option to close down a tenancy within six months was no longer available and consequently properties that had previously been occupied by local tenants had now become vacant. Therefore it was queried whether this type of information was being collated and compiled in

conjunction with the Council information in order to build a more comprehensive dossier of information on the local position as a whole.

Thereafter the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018.

8. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 21 August 2018 which were approved by the Council on 6 September 2018.

The meeting concluded at 11.55 am.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummie on Thursday, 15 November 2018 at 10.30am.

Present:

Ms K Currie

Mr J McGillivray

Mr R Gale

Mr H Morrison

Mrs D Mackay

Ms L Munro

Officials in attendance:

Mr H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

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

Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development and Infrastructure Service

Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer, Community Services

Mr C Simpson, Principal Tourism and Film Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service

Ms J Sutherland, Senior Engineer, Community Services

Ms S Tarrant, Public Relations Officer, Chief Executive's Office

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

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager R Dibble, and Station Manager J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

Item 11(b): Mr J McGillivray (non-financial)

**3. Appointment of Chair of Sutherland County Committee
Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd airson Comataidh Siorrachd Chataibh**

Mrs L Munro thanked Members and officers for their support during her period as Chair and advised that she would remain committed to the Committee and to working in partnership, including with the Community Planning Partnership to tackle issues such as poverty and inequalities in Sutherland. She then proceeded to invite nominations for the position of Chair of the Committee.

Members then thanked Mrs L Munro for her significant contribution as Chair during what had been a challenging period and wished her well in her new role as Vice Chair of the Care, Learning and Housing Committee and the contribution she would make from a Sutherland perspective.

Thereafter, Mr H Morrison seconded by Mrs D Mackay proposed that Mr R Gale be appointed as Chair of the Committee.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr R Gale to the position of Chair.

The Chair advised that he looked forward to working with Members, the Community Planning Partnership, community councils and other community groups in the area to ensure the needs of Sutherland were addressed. He wished to ensure the Committee was relevant, respective and reflective of the unique communities it represented

4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No SCC/20/18 dated 6 November 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- a point in regard to the suspected cause of the wildfire in Golspie which had occurred in July 2018. The Group Manager advised that the Service suspected it had been deliberate, although this was difficult to prove;
- confirmation was sought and provided on the main causes of the unwanted false alarm signals which had occurred over the reporting period and the action being taken to address this issue;
- the Service be commended on its Transformation programme which suited the needs of the Highlands and on its significant investment in Sutherland;
- clarification was sought on the Service's policy in respect of turn out times for recruits in relation to those stations which had challenges around availability. The Group Manager advised that a flexible approach was taken in the Highlands and the Service would consider each individual case on its merits. The main challenge continued to be getting potential recruits to come forward in communities and Members continued support on this issue would be helpful;
- the importance of there being a focus on training drivers in the area and an update was sought and provided on the timescale for the provision of new fire appliances across Sutherland; and
- the potential for Hi-fires type courses to be organised for young people in Sutherland in partnership, on the basis there were communities in the area who would be keen to work with the Service towards funding these events. The Station Manager confirmed that he would welcome any discussions with local communities on this matter and advised that funding had been secured from TESCO towards the cost of running such courses. The Service was also seeking to address recruitment challenges through a new cadet scheme.

In response to further questions, the Group Manager reported that a review of the Retained Duty System was currently being undertaken, including the potential to vary contracts to suit the skill sets and availability of recruits. It was hoped a rural full time officer post would be based in North West Sutherland to provide support to RDS crews at a cluster of stations and improve availability. In terms of improving community resilience the pilot scheme in relation to the Service attending uninjured falls had also been extended into Sutherland and defibrillators had been provided in all appliances in the area, and there had been enhanced emergency medical response training for crews.

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

**5. Kinlochberrie Associated School Group Overview
Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Cheann Loch Biorbhaidh**

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

During discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- the 100% positive destinations achieved within the ASG over the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 be welcomed;
- an explanation was sought in relation to the assessment of both the suitability and condition of the buildings within the ASG as set out in the report. The Education Quality Improvement Manager confirmed she would arrange for Members to receive a more detailed explanation of the gradings;
- confirmation was sought and provided that there were no underlying concerns with attendance within the ASG, and that the small numbers of pupils involved could skew the percentages under this heading;
- the positive feedback received in relation to the operation of the 3 to 18 campus be welcomed, however it was also important for Members to receive feedback in relation to any concerns people may have in relation to the new model;
- it was crucial there was good tracking and monitoring at all schools in terms of raising attainment and closing the attainment gap; and
- in terms of the positive destinations into employment, it was noted this tended to be mainly into local employment.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Members be provided with a more detailed explanation in relation to the gradings shown for the condition and suitability of the buildings within the ASG.

**6. Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan: Action Programme
Prògram Gnìomha: Plana Leasachaidh Sgìreil Ghallaibh agus Chataibh**

There had been circulated Report No CC/22/18 dated 15 November 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Planner advised that Members' approval was being sought to include the John O'Groats Trail in the Action Programme as an additional action prior to its publication, following engagement with the Caithness Community Partnership and NHS Highland. He advised that feedback would be sought from the Friends of John O'Groats Trail on this action.

In discussion, an update was sought on progress with the delivery of the National Digital Fibre Network/Local Access to Full Fibre Network projects, concern being expressed at any potential delays in relation to Sutherland given their importance to the future development of the area. A specific point was raised in relation to whether private wireless network providers had been involved in any discussions to date. The Planner confirmed that he would seek to provide Members with a further update on these items.

During further discussion, Members then raised the following key points:-

- confirmation was sought and provided that the Action programme reflected the up to date position with the A9 Berridale Braes Improvement Scheme;
- clarification was sought on what was proposed under the 'Golspie reconfiguration and demolition' action. The Planner confirmed he would seek an update on this item from NHS Highland for Members;
- an explanation was sought and provided as to why there under no sites in Sutherland listed under the Economic Development Sites section of the Action Programme which related to developments outwith the main and growing settlements. The Planner advised that while there had been no requests to include additional economic settlement sites in the CaSPlan, there was flexibility in the Action Programme to include emerging developments in the area;
- in regard to the above, arrangements be made for Members to meet with Mr E Sinclair, Area Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise to discuss economic development in Sutherland;
- a query in relation to progress with the Golspie Flood Protection Scheme. The Planner confirmed he would arrange for Members to receive an update on this item.
- confirmation was sought and provided that the Golspie Town Centre health check was expected to be published in November 2018;
- the Council's policy in regard to developer contributions for housing developments, and the process by which the Council and communities could access this funding. The Planner confirmed he would provide Mr J McGillivray with the contact details of the Council's new Developer Contributions Officer as the first point of contact on this matter; and
- the need for a coordinated strategy to address various pinch points on the A9 in Sutherland, and also in relation to the rail network given the importance of both to the development of Sutherland. In this regard, Members requested that representatives from Transport Scotland and Hi-Trans be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Local Development Plan that has been adopted;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Action Programme in Appendix 1 subject to the inclusion of the John O'Groats Trail as an additional action;
- iii. **NOTED** the intended arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of the Action Programme and that updates to the Action Programme will be made from time to time;
- iv. **AGREED** that the Planner seek updates from the relevant stakeholders on the following items for Members:
 - the National Digital Fibre Network/Local Access to Full Fibre Network projects in respect of Sutherland
 - under Health Services, Golspie reconfiguration and demolition; and
 - Golspie Flood Protection Scheme
- v. **AGREED** that arrangements be made for Members to meet with Mr E Sinclair, Area Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; and
- vi. **AGREED** that representatives from Transport Scotland and Hi-Trans be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

7. Housing Capital Programme 2019-2021 Prògram Calpa Taigheadais 2019–2021

There had been circulated Report No SCC/23/18 dated 24 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- the report and information on Sutherland’s allocation of the overall capital spend be welcomed.
- the flexibility provided by the two year Programme and the provision made for equipment and adaptations also be welcomed;
- further information was sought and provided in relation to that part of the Programme which related to ‘on demand’ works;
- an explanation was sought on the Member led budget for environmental improvements in response to which it was confirmed this would be taken forward through the local Housing Team who were best placed in terms of identifying local priorities;
- an update was sought in relation to those properties which would benefit from external insulation works and the budget allocation for these works. The Housing Investment Officer advised that he would circulate the address list of the properties identified for these works, and that it was hoped at the tendering stage the two year budget and economies of scale would allow additional external insulation works to be undertaken in the area; and
- the potential for external insulation works to be undertaken to Council properties when contractors were on site to carry out works to private properties.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to Sutherland Area as set out in Appendix 1;
- ii. **NOTED** the investment priorities as set out in section 4.2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed two year HRA Capital Programme for Sutherland 2019-21 as set out in Appendix 2; and
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme will continue to be provided through ward briefings and at Local Committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

8. Sutherland Tourism Turasachd Chataibh

The Principal Tourism and Film Officer give a presentation on this item during which he provided an update on who was involved in tourism within the Council and on what had been a successful 2018 tourist season. He also reported on the Expressions of Interest submitted for the second round of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund in respect of Sutherland projects. He reported on the main benefits associated with the success of the North Coast 500 route. In conclusion he provided a summary of the opportunities and challenges for Sutherland Tourism going forward.

In discussion, Members requested a copy of the presentation and raised the following key issues:-

- information was sought and provided on the level of engagement the Council had with VisitScotland, on the basis there was need for the organisation to do more to promote Sutherland;
- concern at the impact of VisitScotland's decision to withdraw from the tourist information and visitor centre in Durness which had a significant footfall and had been a great asset to tourists visiting the area;
- a mature conversation was required in relation to the negative impact the increasing number of motorhomes and campervans visiting the area was having on some local communities and on how improved facilities and services could be provided;
- in terms of the challenges for tourism going forward, this should also include the impact on the condition of the road network in Sutherland;
- confirmation was sought and provided that there the opportunity to submit an application to Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund in time for the January 2019 deadline and that the Council Leader had written to the Scottish Government asking that the scheme be extended; and
- a request that Members be provided with a summary of all the Expressions of Interest submitted for the second round of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that a copy be circulated to Members;
- ii. **AGREED** that Members be provided with a summary of all the Expressions of Interest submitted for the second round of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

9. **Winter Maintenance 2018/19** **Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/24/18 dated 17 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- Information was sought and provided on the weather forecasts used by the Service to inform the decision making around treatment plans for the area;
- a request that Members be provided with the relevant contact numbers for the duty officers in Sutherland and the emergency out of hours number;
- the progress being made in relation to recruitment of operatives to ensure the depots were fully staffed and any assistance Members could provide in this regard;
- an assurance was sought and provided that measures had been taken to address the technical difficulties experienced with some gritters in the previous year;
- the process under the Winter Resilience scheme by which Members and communities could request that salt/grit bins be provided at strategic points in the area;
- a request that the Ward Manager in conjunction with the Policy and Programmes Manager write to all community councils in Sutherland to raise awareness of the Winter Resilience scheme;

- the potential for a programme to be put in place to ensure there was equity of provision of the footpath tractor between the villages on the east Coast of Sutherland. The Senior Engineer confirmed she would refer this matter to the Roads Operation Manager; and
- information was sought and provided on the process by which repairs to safety barriers could be requested and taken forward, reference being made to the need to replace barriers at Kylesku and Kylestrome.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the 2018/19 Winter Maintenance Plan for Sutherland;
- AGREED** that Members be provided with the relevant contact numbers for the duty officers in Sutherland and the emergency out of hours number; and
- AGREED** that the Ward Manager write to all community councils in Sutherland to raise awareness of the Winter Resilience Scheme.

10. Dornoch Common Good Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich

(a) Dornoch Common Good Annual Report 2017/18, Proposed Budget 2019/20 and Quarter 2 Monitoring Statement 2018/19 Aithisg Bhliadhnail Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich 2017/18, Buidseat ga Mholadh airson 2019/20 agus Aithris Sgrùdaidh Cairteil 2 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No SCC/25/18 dated 18 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development and Acting Head of Policy.

In discussion, an emerging issue was highlighted in relation to concerns around the lack of progress made with the conclusion of the lease for the Dornoch Caravan and Camping Park which continued to lie with the executors,. This matter had been raised with the Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executive and a response was awaited. In the meantime, Members expressed their support for the early resolution of this matter.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18;
- AGREED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund Annual Budget for 2019/20; and
- NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good Fund, as shown in the Q2 monitoring statement against budget.

(b) Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC) - Application Companaidh Ùidh Choimhearsnachd Sgìre Dhòrnaich – Iarrtas

Declaration of Interest: Mr J McGillivray declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Dornoch Area Community Interest Company and left the Chamber for the remainder of the meeting.

There had been circulated Report No SCC/26/18 dated 18 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development and Acting Head of Policy.

The Committee **AGREED** an award of £20,000 over two years to Dornoch Area Community Interest Company for part funding of Community Development Manager post.

11. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 23 August 2018, which had been approved by the Council on 6 September 2018.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm.

**The Highland Council
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick, on Tuesday, 20 November 2018 at 10.00am.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr D Mackay
Mr W Mackay

Mr M Reiss
Mr A Sinclair
Ms N Sinclair

Officials in attendance:

Mr A Macmanus, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer, Community Services
Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service
Ms J Sutherland, Senior Engineer, Community Services
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager R Dibble, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**1. Apologies for Absence
Liesgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr S Mackie and Mr K Rosie.

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

Item 7: Mr M Reiss (non-financial)

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

There had been circulated Report No CC/15/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the opportunity for the Service to share a joint facility with NHS Highland in Wick be welcomed;
- the figures contained in the Local Performance report showed that Caithness was one of the safest communities in Highland;
- Members were willing to engage with community councils and other community organisations to promote recruitment with specific reference to the station availability at Dunbeath;
- the potential for Hi-Fire type events for young people to be arranged in Caithness and also as a route to interest parents in joining the Service. The Group Manager reported that funding had been secured from TESCO towards the cost of running such courses. The Service was also seeking to address recruitment challenges through a new cadet scheme.

- an update was sought and provided on progress with the upgrading of Thurso Fire Station, and on the potential to share a joint facility with NHS Highland which was currently being explored; and
- clarification was sought and provided that there was flexibility in the Highlands in relation to the minimum response times from stations with each individual case being considered on its merits.

Thereafter information was sought on the practical measures being taken forward through the Transformation programme to boost recruitment. The Group Manager reported that a review of the Retained Duty System was currently being undertaken, including the potential to vary contracts to suit the skill sets and availability of recruits. In terms of improving community resilience, defibrillators had been provided in all appliances in the area, and there had been enhanced emergency medical response training for crews.

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

4. Thurso Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No CC/16/18 dated 15 November 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

In discussion, Members highlighted their concerns at the exclusion rates at Thurso High School. The Education Quality Manager advised that Head Teacher and Senior Management Team were focused on this issue and provided an update on the targeted interventions and support being undertaken to address this matter. She explained there was a particular issue with the S.2 year group and Members requested that they be provided with the details of the percentage of overall exclusions at Thurso High School which related to that particular year group.

Thereafter, reference was made to absence rates at some schools within the ASG which it was suggested was due to an absence problem with particular children rather than a generalised absence problem. An update was provided on the structured interventions and support put in place for individual pupils across the ASG, and an assurance was provided that rates were being monitored. The ASN Service was also reviewing the support network for schools. It was important to recognise the figures reflected the actual number of teaching hours and did not factor in the other non-core subject activities pupils may be involved in such as Rock Challenge.

Following on from the above, Members discussed progress with the sustainable schools review. There was a general willingness amongst the Stakeholder Group to move forward on from discussions around the process, and the Manager advised that it was intended to present options to the Group in January 2019. The level of information which had been provided to the Group in the sustainable schools information pack was welcomed. A key concern in relation to any proposed model was that Head Teachers had the appropriate level of support in respect of any cluster arrangement to ensure there was no impact on pupils progression, learning and attainment.

Further comments included:-

- while the school roll projections within the Thurso ASG seemed to tie up the school roll forecast showed Wick High School's trend curving upwards

where as the primary school projections didn't correspond. The Education Quality Improvement Manager reported that she would report back to Members on this matter;

- The new Head Teacher and Depute Head Teachers at Thurso High School were now in post and would continue drive forward positive change over the next year;
- the upgrading of the Janitor's House in the grounds of Thurso High School to provide accommodation for two new teachers was welcomed. There was also a similar opportunity at Mount Pleasant Primary School; and
- in terms of the grading of the suitability and condition of Thurso High School, the Senior Management Team acknowledged the financial position of the Council and were driving forward prudent small scale improvements to the School, details of which were provided. This was an extremely helpful attitude in the current financial climate.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report; and;
- ii. **AGREED** that Members be provided with details of the percentage of overall exclusions at Thurso High School which related to the S.2 year group.

5. **Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2019-2021** **Prògram Calpa Taigheadais 2019–2021**

There had been circulated Report No CC/17/18 dated 1 November 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

Discussion followed on concerns which had been expressed over the reliability of air source heating systems and the on the consultation undertaken with tenants on the choice of heating system for their property. It was acknowledged there was a range of factors to be taken into account such as affordability, type and characteristics of the property and energy efficiency considerations. It was suggested that Members receive a presentation at a Ward Business Meeting on various heating systems available and the process for deciding the most appropriate system for a property.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to Caithness Area as set out in Appendix 1;
- ii. **NOTED** the investment priorities as set out in section 4.2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed two year HRA Capital Programme for Caithness for 2019-21 as set out in Appendix 2;
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme will continue to be provided through ward briefings and at Local Committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee; and
- v. **AGREED** that Members receive a presentation at a Ward Business Meeting on the various heating systems available and the process for deciding the most appropriate system for a property.

**6. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2018 to 30 An t-Sultainn 2018**

There had been circulated Report No CC/18/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- Members were well aware of the issues in respect of void properties and there was a need to consider the way forward to address the challenges in Caithness;
- the potential to convert void properties in the Pulteney area of Wick to provide nursing accommodation in the event the NHS Care Hub was located in Pulteney House;
- in terms of attracting teachers to the area, issues around the fact the current allocations policy did not allow advantage to be shown to Council employees and the potential for that aspect of the policy to be reviewed;
- extreme concern was expressed at the increase in rent arrears as a direct result of Universal Credit and at the increasing burden of debt being placed on the Council and the pressure this was placing on the budget and the need for further lobbying to be undertaken on this issue;
- there was a need to consider whether a property should continue to be held on the Council's stock if there was no demand for that property and it was considered to be surplus to requirements;
- an explanation was sought and provided on the level of evictions being pursued in the area and the process followed including support for those tenants once they had been evicted; and
- clarification was sought and provided around the system whereby tenants could apply for advanced payments and alternative payment arrangements. In respect of Universal Credit.

Thereafter, it was reported that the Head of Housing was to meet with Members to discuss the issues around void properties in Caithness.

The Committee following scrutiny, **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018.

**7. Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan: Action Programme
Prògram Gnìomha CaSPlan**

Declaration of Interest: Mr M Reiss declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Trustee of the John O'Groats Trail and took no part in the discussion on this item in relation to the Trail.

There had been circulated Report No CC/19/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Principal Planner advised that Members approval was being sought to include the John O'Groats Trail in the Action Programme as an additional action prior to its publication. This was to acknowledge this project had moved on significantly since the preparation of CaSPlan. He advised that feedback would be sought from the Friends of John O'Groats Trail on this action.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- the inclusion of the John O’Groats Trail in the Action Programme be welcomed;
- a significant amount of work had been undertaken in Wards 2 and 3 around town centre regeneration and the need to check there was no overlapping or duplication of that work in relation to the strategies to be developed following the town centre health checks; and
- the process for monitoring progress with actions and the potential to request periodic updates to the Action Programme from delivery partners, particularly in relation to long term projects.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Local Development Plan that has been adopted;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Action Programme in Appendix 1 subject to the inclusion of the John O’Groats Trail as an additional action; and
- iii. **NOTED** the intended arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of the Action Programme and that updates to the Action Programme will be made from time to time.

8. Winter Maintenance Plan 2018/19 Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No CC/20/18 dated 17 October 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- the extent of the Council’s and BEAR Scotland’s responsibility for gritting the walk way on Francis Street, Wick and the need to ensure there was no gaps, reference being made to problems which had been experienced with a section of the walkway in the previous year. The Senior Engineer advised that she would ask the Roads Operation Manager to clarify this matter;
- comments had been received from Wick Community Council and members of the public about difficulties they had experienced in being provided with the information on the Winter Resilience scheme including after they had signed up to the scheme. The Senior Engineer confirmed she would feedback the comments on this matter to the Service’s Policy and Programme’s Manager;
- concern was expressed there may not be the resources within the Service to fill the grit/salt bins under the Winter Resilience scheme and that it may have to be left in piles in certain locations in communities which it was suggested was unfair on volunteers;
- the process communities should follow to monitor and request the salt/grit bins be replenished. The Senior Engineer recommended that communities should use the Council’s CRM system for such requests to ensure the call was logged and could be tracked;
- the potential to achieve efficiencies in relation to the manual gritting of paths be investigated, specific reference being made to the potential to purchase trundle trollies and also for advice to be provided to communities on this matter.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the 2018/19 Winter Maintenance Plan for Caithness;
- ii. **AGREED** that clarification be provided on responsibility for gritting the walk way on Francis Street, Wick;
- iii. **AGREED** to feedback Members comments in regard to the Winter Resilience scheme on the importance of community councils and members of the public being supplied with the information they required in relation to the scheme;
- iv. **AGREED** that clarification be provided in relation to the availability of resources to ensure grit/salt bins in communities would be filled; and
- v. **AGREED** that the potential to achieve efficiencies in relation to the manual gritting of paths be investigated.

9. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 28 August 2018, which were approved by the Council on 6 September 2018.

The meeting ended at 12.35pm.

**The Highland Council
Corporate Resources Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 21 November 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr R Bremner	Mr B Lobban
Mr J Bruce	Mr D Louden
Mrs C Caddick	Mr R MacDonald (by Video Conference)
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr G MacKenzie
Dr I Cockburn	Mr S MacKie
Mrs M Davidson	Mr A Mackinnon
Mr L Fraser	Mrs M Paterson
Mr R Gale	Mr M Reiss
Mr J Gray (substitute)	Mr D Rixson
Mr A Jarvie	Mr P Saggars
Mr R Laird	Mr B Thompson

Non Members also Present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mr T Heggie
Mr A Christie	Mr D Mackay

Officials in attendance:

Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources
 Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr P Whitham, Senior Learning and Development Adviser, Chief Executive's Office
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

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

Mr A Mackinnon in the Chair

Business

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr G Adams, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs D Mackay and Mr K Rosie.

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

Item 4: Mr R Bremner (non-financial)

**3. Good News Stories
Naidheachdan Matha**

The Committee **NOTED** this item.

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

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

Declaration of Interest – Mr R Bremner declared a non-financial interest in this item as the Chair of the Caithness branch of An Comunn Gàidhealach, 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 RES/50/18 dated 12 November 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning and a short film on bilingualism was shown to Members in respect of this item.

The Chair thanked the Gaelic Team within the Council for preparing the detailed update on Gaelic and related cultural matters and on the range and scope of the activities and initiatives being undertaken.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- the film 'Fàs Foghlaim' highlighted the important benefits of bilingualism for pupils in Highland schools and the range of employment opportunities which were available;
- the outstanding item in relation to the Council's third Gaelic Language Plan had been addressed and formal notice was awaited from Bord na Gàidhlig that the Plan had been approved;
- the numbers of pupils involved in Gaelic tuition in Highland as set out in the report emphasised the Highland's leading role on this front;
- the Celtic Media Festival would be held in Aviemore in June 2019 and the Royal National Mod would return to Inverness in 2020 bringing significant economic and cultural benefits to the area;
- the many competitors from Highland were congratulated on their success at the recent Royal National Mod in Dunoon;
- the Council continued to support a number of other Gaelic events and initiatives in the area, details of which were provided;
- the need for more support mechanisms to be in place to support the Council to meet the specific aims within the Scottish Government's Gaelic Language Plan 2016-2021 to increase the number of Gaelic speakers;

- the need to plan for and evidence the positive impact high profile events and festivals and community events such as the Royal National Mod to be held in Inverness in 2020 would have on the Highland economy;
- the Lochaber Committee had adopted the theme of cultural heritage as one of its local priorities and was considering how this could be promoted;
- details of the projected number of Gaelic secondary school teachers over the next five years be reported to the next Committee; and
- in terms of educational outcomes an explanation be provided on how Gaelic fitted with the 1+2 languages strategy be provided to the next Committee.

During further discussion, it was suggested that the Gaelic update reports to the Committee required to be strengthened to better evidence for Members the benefits of the Council's investment in Gaelic and income secured through other funding sources was delivering for the area. In particular there was a need to set targets by which to measure and monitor performance and to improve accountability. There was also a need to cross reference the work of the Corporate Resources Committee, Care, Learning and Housing Committee and Gaelic Strategy Implementation Group in relation to Gaelic.

Thereafter, the Leader requested that Chair and Councillor Bremner provide a list of suggested Gaelic performance measures for inclusion in the draft Council Programme.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the work that had been undertaken and that recommendations could be incorporated into the relevant developments and activities as they progress;
- AGREED** that details of the projected number of Gaelic secondary school teachers over the next five years be reported to the next Committee;
- AGREED** that an explanation of how Gaelic fitted with the 1+2 languages strategy be provided to the next Committee; and
- NOTED** that the Chair and Councillor Bremner would provide a list of suggested Gaelic performance measures for inclusion in the draft Council Programme.

FINANCIAL MONITORING SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL

5. Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2018 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Corporra gu 30 Sultain 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/51/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was encouraging to note that the net year overspend was forecast to be £2.238m which represented a significant reduction on the position reported to the previous meeting and was as a direct result of the urgent corrective action taken;

- the position continued to be closely monitored by the Administration and Executive Leadership Team and it was hoped a balanced budget could be achieved at the end of the financial year. However there were potential challenges in relation to winter maintenance in the event of a severe winter and pressures from out of authority placements for children, an assurance being provided the focus would continue to be on the best option for the child; and
- details of the cost of repairing the landslip at Kinloch Hourn be provided when this was available given the potential impact this might have on the Community Services budget.

Thereafter, discussion followed on the risks associated with the outcome of the national pay award negotiations. In addition, clarification was sought on the assessment done on the financial implications of any industrial action by teachers given that the EIS membership had overwhelmingly voted to reject the pay offer.

The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources advised that the national Pay Awards had been flagged as a risk for a significant period of time and that in common with all other local authorities in Scotland the Council had set a budget provision on the basis of the pay offer to the unions. Any settlement above that would represent an additional cost burden to the Council, would not be affordable in the current climate, and would require to be offset by significant savings in the current year as well as ongoing implications for the next financial year. Industrial action would result in a short term saving, however the main focus should be on the long term implications.

The Leader advised that this was an issue for all local authorities in Scotland and she would share with the Committee the emails from COSLA regarding the national Pay Award negotiations.

In response to a question, the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources explained that the Council had based its budget provision on the Scottish Government's public sector pay policy, details of which he provided. The current offer on the table was 3% for salaries up to £81,000 which already created a budget gap of approximately £400,000 in the current year. Whilst most Councils had made budget assumptions for future years' pay awards, this should not be confused with affordability as Members were aware of the significant three year budget gap, which was impacted on by pay cost increases.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets as at 30 September 2018 and **NOTED** the estimated year end forecast;
- NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year;
- AGREED** that Members be provided with details of the cost of repairing the landslip at Kinloch Hourn when this was available; and
- NOTED** that the Leader would share with the Committee the emails from COSLA regarding the national Pay Award negotiations.

**6. Corporate Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September 2018
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Corporra gu 30 Sultain 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/52/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In response to a question, the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism confirmed he would provide Mr D Loudon with a more detailed explanation outwith the meeting in relation to the variance shown for 'Government Grant Income', which he confirmed was linked to the variance shown for 'Borrowing'. In regard to whether the figures suggested the Council was building fewer houses, the Chair advised that the Council had an extensive house building programme and both he and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism would be content to have a discussion on this matter outwith the meeting.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes as at 30 September 2018.

**7. Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget Revenue Monitoring to 30 September 2018
Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra agus Buidseat nan Sochairean gu 30 Sultain 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/53/18 dated 2 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, clarification was sought on the fact that staff vacancies were the key contributor to the overall underspend position within the Service and therefore whether it was necessary to retain those posts in the Council's establishment if the workload was being managed by the current complement of staff.

The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services explained that more efficient ways of working were being introduced, including a move towards more electronic methods, and this had enabled vacancies not to be filled. He indicated that consideration was being given to deleting posts and this was an ongoing process.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service and Welfare budget as at 30 September 2018.

**8. Corporate Resources Service Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September 2018
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra gu 30 Sultain 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/54/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that Members would be provided with a detailed breakdown of the increase on the ICT Transformation budget of £7.779m.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service capital budget as at 30 September 2018 and that a detailed breakdown of the increase of £7.779m on the ICT Transformation budget be provided.

9. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2018
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball gu 30 Sultain 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/55/18 dated 12 November 2018 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget as at 30 September 2018 and **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE
SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORRA

10. Treasury Management
Rianachd Ionmhais

(a) Summary of Transactions
Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean

There had been circulated Report No RES/56/18 dated 23 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, it was requested that information be included in future reports on changes to interest rates over time to allow comparisons to be made with previous years.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions as circulated; and
- ii. **AGREED** that information be included in future reports on changes to interest rates over time to allow comparisons to be made with previous years.

(b) Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2018/19
Aithisg Stiùiridh Meadhan-Bliadhna an Ionmhais 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No RES/57/18 dated 6 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, the Treasury Management team was commended on their excellent work on managing the risks associated with borrowing and changes in interest rates and the transparency and openness provided in

the report. In response to questions, the Head of Corporate Finance confirmed he would have a more detailed discussion outwith the meeting with Mr D Loudon on the figures included at Appendix 3 of the report on the impact of interest rate rises on refinancing costs.

The Committee **NOTED** the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2018/19.

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/58/18 dated 5 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, Members congratulated the Council team on their achievement in being awarded the Institute of Rating, Revenues and Valuation UK's 'Benefits and Welfare Reform Team of the Year 2018' and the IRRV Scotland's 'Best in Scotland 2018'. In addition, reference was made to the opportunity to further publicise this achievement in the public domain.

Thereafter, concern was expressed at the downward trend in relation to the collection rates for the Business Improvement District Levies, and Members were advised that in terms of enforcement powers, it was for the BID management team to take this issue up with the various businesses who were not contributing. The Council recovered full collection and administrations costs and was expected to deliver an efficient service and no adverse feedback had been received in terms of performance. The Service's staff continued to focus on working with the BID management team to ensure payment rates were maximised.

A point was then raised in regard to whether the opportunity to apply for discounts on invoices through payment within a period of 30 days were being taken up, and the potential in future reports to detail the level of discount realised over the reporting period. The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources confirmed that he would check and report back to Members on this issue.

Following on from the above, clarification was sought on the processing of housing benefit and Council tax reduction claims, and the proportion of claims which subsequently had to be corrected due to Council, DWP or claimant error, concern being expressed at the impact of overpayments on low income households and difficulties experienced in recovering overpayments. The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources advised that he would arrange for a report to be submitted to the next Committee providing more detail in relation to the processing of claims and overpayments. He explained that a significant reduction in the number of payments had been achieved and this was linked to improvements in the speed of processing claims. This meant that the level of error had reduced significantly and claimants were receiving the correct award, thereby reducing the level of overpayments which were notoriously difficult to collect.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the statutory and key performance indicators as outlined in the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to check whether the opportunity to secure discounts on invoices through payment within a period of 30 days was being taken up;

- iii. **AGREED** that a report be submitted to the next Committee providing more detail in relation to the processing of housing benefit and Council Tax reduction benefit claims and overpayments.

12. Modern Apprenticeship Programme Prògram Phreantasachdan Ùr-nodha

There had been circulated Report No RES/59/18 dated 30 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, Members welcomed the report and raised the following key issues:-

- the Senior Learning and Development Adviser and his team be commended on their excellent work in relation to the Programme;
- new apprentices would only be employed as and when vacancies became available within the Council and this explained the variances in the number of apprentices between the different localities in Highland.
- the importance of the Council supporting modern apprenticeships for young people living in the more rural areas and engaging with school leavers interested in a modern apprenticeship;
- the opportunity for the Council to be more ambitious in relation to the number and training and assessment of apprentices as the Programme was developed and to secure a higher level of levy and other funding for the Council;
- the need to address the lack of placements in Nairn;
- in relation to the Council's ageing workforce the potential to train apprentices as backfill for posts so that the relevant expertise was available in house;
- it was difficult to predict when staff would retire and therefore it was important to ensure that a vacancy was available for an apprentice;
- the opportunity to better advertise positions and publicise the Programme as a good news story, including engagement with schools;
- the focus on care experienced young people was welcomed and clarification was sought on the numbers either on or seeking an apprenticeship;
- a point in regard to where the modern apprenticeships programme sat within the Council's wider workforce planning and concern at the lack of apprenticeships within the Care and Learning Service given the known future requirements for types of staff such as social workers, early years practitioners and teachers;
- the Council's investment in modern apprenticeships would deliver benefits to the local economy, irrespective if some moved into the private sector;
- the creation of older modern apprenticeships for staff was a positive development;
- in expanding the number of apprenticeships it was important to have the necessary support structures in place and therefore the need to expand the number of in house mentors and assessors;
- the potential for an analysis to be undertaken on how long modern apprentices stayed in post and the ability of the Council to compete with the private sector; and

- clarification in relation to whether all the budgeted positions within the Council for apprentices were in place or being actively pursued.

The Chair and the Senior Learning and Development Adviser provided an assurance that discussions were ongoing with the Care and Learning Service in respect of the Programme.

The Committee **NOTED** the excellent progress to date, current activities and future opportunities

13. Unified Communications Project Pròiseact Chonaltraidhean Aonaichte

There had been circulated Report No RES/60/18 dated 12 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In response to questions, the Head of People and ICT confirmed that he would provide Mr D Louden with an explanation outwith the meeting in relation to the detailed figures associated with the reduction in telephony costs in 2017/18. He also confirmed that details would be provided to the next Committee on what the saving of £44,081 realised on telephony costs in 2017/18 represented in percentage terms on the original budget.

Thereafter, the ongoing exploration of future commercial opportunities with local businesses was welcomed.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the update on the Unified Communications Project; and
- AGREED** that details be provided to the next Committee on what the saving of £44,081 realised on telephony costs in 2017/18 represented in percentage terms on the original budget.

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/61/18 dated 29 October 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Chair advised that Members were aware of the significant issues which had been experienced over the past few months with direct access and connectivity. He reported on a recent confidential briefing held for Members at which a senior representative from Wipro had been in attendance. He thanked the ICT Team for all their hard work and commitment to resolving these issues during this challenging period. In meetings he attended with the Chief Executive around the area, staff had commented on the length of time it was taking to log on to the network and he expressed concern at the impact this was having across the Council.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- an update was sought in relation to the timescale for rolling out Office 365 to Members, confirmation being provided that officers had impressed to Wipro's senior management this was a priority and it was anticipated timescales would be available soon;
- the need to consider at which point a line should be drawn in terms of re-setting the key milestones dates set out in the report in the event there was slippage on those dates going forward;
- an explanation was sought and provided on the progress set out in the report on site installations and the roll out of chrome books in relation to the spend to date and future projected spend; and
- a report on the ICT Transformation and Network Refresh should be submitted to the full Council and a senior Wipro representative invited to attend on the basis this was an issue that impacted on all Members.

In conclusion of this item, the Chair advised that a cross party Member Working Group would be established to monitor the contract and nominations would be sought for the membership of this Group.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update on the ICT Transformation and Network Programmes;
- ii. **AGREED** that a report on the ICT Transformation and Network Refresh be submitted to the full Council and a senior Wipro representative invited to attend; and
- iii. **NOTED** that a cross party Member Working Group would be established to monitor the contract.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN

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

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 13 September 2018 and 17 October 2018, the terms of which had been approved.

16. Minutes of Meetings Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Appeals Committee held on 4 September 2018;
- ii. **NOTED** the Employment Release Sub-Committee held on 2 October 2018;
- iii. **APPROVED** the Staff Partnership Forum held on 31 October 2018; and
- iv. **APPROVED** the Central Safety Committee held on 2 November 2018.

The meeting was closed at 12.25pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday 22 November 2018 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr K Gowans
Mr B Boyd	Mr A Graham
Mr I Brown	Mr J Gray
Mrs C Caddick	Mr A Jarvie
Miss J Campbell	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Macpherson
Mr A Christie	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr G Cruickshank	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G Ross

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources
 Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
 Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
 Ms U Lee, Urban Designer
 Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager
 Mr G McCormick, Senior Environmental Health Officer
 Mr B Cameron, Housing Policy and Investment Manager
 Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer
 Ms S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager
 Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator
 Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator

Also in attendance:

Mr P Strachan, Chair, Inverness BID
 Mr M Smith, Manager, Inverness BID
 Mr G Morrison, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Ms F McNally, Programme Manager, Inverness City Active Travel Network, HITRANS

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

Mrs H Carmichael in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to commencing the meeting, the Chairman made the following announcements:-

- Condolences were expressed in respect of Ms Molly Doyle, former Inverness City Councillor, who had recently passed;

- Children's Services Worker at the 'The Bridge' in Inverness, Ms Jenny Graham, was congratulated for her wonderful world record breaking success for circumnavigating the globe unaided on a bicycle, and a civic reception would be held in recognition of this significant achievement. The Committee also offered their congratulations; and
- Appreciation was expressed for the Civic and Facilities Team for their work in organising and preparing for the wide range of civic functions held at the Town House.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mrs B McAllister and Mr C Smith.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 5 – Mr K Gowans (non-financial)

Item 7 – Mr A Jarvie (non-financial)

Item 11 – Miss J Campbell, Mr J Gray and Mr R MacWilliam (all non-financial)

3. Yearly Annual Report on Inverness Business District

There had been circulated Report No CIA/47/18 dated 6 November 2018 by Inverness City Area Manager. The report was supported by a presentation by the Chairman of Inverness BID during which the Committee was provided with a progress update; details of the member representation and Board structure; the mission statement and how this translated into two principal thrusts (operational and strategic) and the four key pillars of the operational Business Plan 2018-2023. In conclusion, he advised of the third term platform for growth; emphasised the critical importance of partnership working; and confirmed that major opportunities would continue to be leveraged.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- The Committee commended Inverness BID and the Ambassadors for their exemplary work to date, it was recognised that Inverness BID was an important interface between the business and public sectors, and details of their achievements should be better promoted. However, it was essential that work continued to build on these successes to date and a number of suggestions for improvement were made including seeking increased representation from the building sector and improved engagement with the third sector which would bring added value; maximising opportunities to increase student accommodation; identifying alternative solutions to reduce the usage of single use plastics and improving/reducing litter; increase footfall in the Victorian Market and extended shop opening hours. In addition, there was a need for a proactive approach to be adopted with landlords to encourage investment in their asset and remind them of their civic duties to

maintain and enhance local buildings as well as their statutory responsibilities in terms of safety;

- It was highlighted that in the past the BID and Business collection rates were approximately at the same level (96%) but concern was expressed that the BID collection rate had reduced by approximately 8% and this needed to be addressed by BID as the Council could not enforce collection;
- The importance of partnership working was recognised and it was suggested that there was a need to work with the Council to develop a shared vision and align strategic goals and outcomes which could be included in the Council's Programme;
- The establishment of a multi-agency group to take the station development forward via a phased approach was welcomed;
- There was a need to capitalise on the cultural heritage of the City and the redevelopment of Castle Hill which was an area of significant importance to the whole of Scotland. This was a major opportunity and the V&A Dundee was referenced as an excellent example of the benefits that could be achieved from such a project; and
- Engagement and support was sought from BID to work beyond the City Centre and in particular to improve the gateway to the City at Millburn Road by reducing litter and removing excess bins.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to endorse the work detailed in the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** the presentation provided by Inverness BID representatives and the ongoing development of partnership working.

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

There had been circulated Report No CIA/48/18 dated 1 November 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Further information was sought and provided on the types of Deliberate Fires that had been attended during Quarters 1 and 2 and whether there was any trend in regard to repeat offenders;
- Confirmation was provided that there was engagement with carers and NHS Highland should concerns be raised as a result of attending Accidental Dwelling Fires in regard to elderly or vulnerable people coping at home;
- The Service was commended for their educational work with local estate and landowners and the success of this was evident from the report statistics. However, concern was expressed at the increasing numbers of deliberate fires at Dores Beach being left unattended, and further engagement with the very proactive local community council in regard to keeping the beach safe and clean was requested;
- Concern was expressed at the high level and associated costs of Unwanted False Alarm Signals and there was a need to educate the staff of the hospital and medical premises involved in order to reduce these incidents; and

- Retained Firefighters were utilised at many rural fire stations and difficulties in attracting new recruits which was often due to the residential training course requirement were emphasised. It was therefore suggested that attendance of this training should be subsidised by the Scottish Government to enable increased take-up.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the City of Inverness Performance Report for Q1 and Q2 of 2018-19 as circulated.

5. Delivering Local Priorities – City of Inverness and Area Prìomhachasan Baile Inbhir Nis

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

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/49/18 dated 31 October 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed the City Priorities document which they felt was most helpful and it was suggested that a more holistic approach was required in regard to deer management facilities;
- In terms of transport, a review was required as the existing infrastructure was failing to cope and keep up with increasing housing levels and volumes of traffic. It was felt that roads and infrastructure priorities should be developed at a strategic level and development of a visual interpretation would be a helpful aid for this process;
- The desperate need for in-door sports facilities was emphasised and the provision of these via the UHI campus was welcome and it was further recommended that developer contributions should be sought to assist in alleviating these types of pressures;
- There was scope to increase student accommodation and this should be encouraged; and
- With regard to working with partners to deliver more affordable housing, it was queried whether consideration had been given to developing a homeless village, similar to that being developed in Edinburgh. And in terms of City Regeneration and in view of the high level of visitor numbers, it was suggested that a full review should be undertaken of the City provision of public conveniences.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the links between the Council's Programme and the City Priorities; and
- ii. the progress being made on delivering the City Priorities and related projects; and

- iii. a response would be provided to Councillor J Campbell from the relevant officers on the points raised in regard to the feasibility of a homeless village and the suggestion of undertaking a full review of the City provision of public conveniences.

6. **activeinverness: Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre Pròiseactan Wayfinding**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/50/18 dated 8 November 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed this initiative with positive comments being made in regard to the clear, informative and attractive signage system and use of the monoliths was encouraged. The added value that this would bring to the community was also highlighted;
- Further information was sought and provided in regard to total project costs and it was queried whether funding would be sought from external sources such as the Smart City funding, and assurance was provided that third party funding would be sought to finance the delivery of the project;
- It was suggested that English should be placed in a more prominent place to Gaelic, however it was highlighted that this did not align with the Council's policy which gave equal provenance to both languages; and
- Confirmation was sought and provided that the signs would be dementia friendly.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that the Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre at Appendix 1 of the report be adopted by the Council as a Non-Statutory Planning Advice Note;
- ii. **NOTED** the comments received during the public consultation on the Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre;
- iii. **AGREED** the recommended Council responses contained in Appendix 4 of the report; and
- iv. **AGREED** that officers would use all reasonable endeavours to ensure third party funding opportunities were used to deliver the full project.

7. **Riverside Way – Way Forward Pròiseact Dealbhaidh Slighe na h-Aibhne**

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/51/18 dated 7 November 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Chief Executive of High Life Highland.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Although supportive of the aspirations of the project, concerns were expressed at the details contained therein. It was felt that the one-way system would result in higher volumes of traffic and more could be done to minimise speeds and eliminate the through traffic which should be a key objective of the project. It was also felt that there had been a missed opportunity to further enhance the area and it was suggested that the funding was not being spent to maximum advantage as more could be achieved in return for the investment, i.e. the development of a riverside esplanade area. It was felt that alternative options must be considered and should include consultation with locals. In conclusion, this was an iconic area which should reclaim a small part of the City from traffic and it was felt that the project failed to demonstrate how active travel should be delivered;
- In contrast, it was felt that this was a comprehensive report and appreciation was extended to officers for their work in this regard. It was felt that the project would be of significant benefit for local residents and users of the Bught Park as well as a major improvement along the riverside whilst promoting active travel. Following a number of meetings, the Bught Area Stakeholder Group had raised a number of potential solutions to improve access and ease traffic congestion and these had been recognised by the traffic consultants AECOM. In response to the concerns raised by local residents, it was suggested that the project would enhance connection, improve cycle and pedestrian access and ultimately safety. These improvements combined with the reduced traffic as result of the West Link would improve traffic flow;
- Concern was expressed that there had been a deficiency of local democracy in regard to this initiative in that community councils/groups were not being informed and stakeholder groups had not included local residents. Concerns had been expressed by residents and meaningful engagement should be undertaken with locals prior to further progression of the project. Although supportive of the project in principle, local stakeholders had to be given a voice and it would therefore be beneficial to delay the project to allow these views to be taken on board and an informed decision could be made thereafter;
- An alternative to the one-way system was not being explored and a strategic traffic management system was required for the whole of the City;
- The current area/system was hostile to cyclists and the proposal was welcome which was felt would be user-friendly for tourists and pedestrians as well as cyclists;
- In regard to the riverside area, concern was expressed that at some points the low railings were too low and it was queried whether the street lighting would be adequate;
- Concern was expressed that the width of the carriageway along the one-way system would not be sufficient and it was requested that early consideration be given to the exit route from Ballifeary Road to ensure that there was not a build-up of traffic, e.g. left turn only;

- It was highlighted that this project was good news and should be embraced. It was felt that the progress of the project should not be subject to further delay as there would be a formal statutory consultation process as the project continued and this would be the appropriate time for engagement with local residents and detailed concerns would be addressed as part of this process in order to achieve a balanced solution. It was also highlighted that there had been strong support for this project by both residents and users;
- Concern was expressed that implementation of a one-way system would facilitate increased traffic volume and user speed despite a 20 mph speed limit;
- The difficulties in regard to access in and around Ballifeary Road and the increasing volumes of car parking in this area were raised; and
- Clarification was sought and provided that there was no commitment to Option A and that Option C could be reinstated at a later date.

Mr B Boyd **MOVED** a **MOTION** that a meeting be called with invites being extended to community groups and stakeholders to resolve community concerns prior to approval of Recommendation 2.ii and 2.iv of the report and these recommendations be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to allow the meeting with the community to take place.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr G Ross, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 4 votes and **AMENDMENT** received 13 votes with one abstention and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED** the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr K Gowans and Mr R MacWilliam

For the Amendment:

Mr R Balfour, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs T Robertson, and Mr G Ross.

Abstentions:

Mr A Jarvie

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report, including the background, engagement and feedback;
- ii. **AGREED** that it be delegated to the Director of Development and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Provost and Depute Provost, to prepare and publish a series of Draft Road Traffic Regulation Orders covering the following proposals:
 - a. Inverness Riverside Area 20mph Speed Limit Order
 - b. Inverness Riverside - Ness Walk and Bught Road One Way Order

- c. Inverness Riverside – Ness Walk and Bught Road Redetermination Order
- d. Inverness Riverside Area Event Traffic Management Order and to make the orders where there were no valid sustained objections;
- iii. **NOTED** that where there were valid and sustained objections an update report would be submitted to a future Committee; and
- iv. subject to the making of the Road Traffic Regulation Orders, **AGREED** that it be delegated to the Director of Development and Infrastructure to further develop and implement the works associated with implementing the Road Traffic Regulation Orders.

At this point, the meeting was adjourned at 1.10 pm and reconvened at 1.45 pm.

8. Inverness City Centre Trade Waste Policy Poileasaidh Sgudal Malairt Meadhan Baile Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No CIA/52/18 dated 1 November 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Members commended the policy and the resultant reduction in trade waste bins which had made a significant difference in the city centre with limited resources;
- information was sought, and provided, on the potential to extend the policy to other parts of Inverness and Highland, and the associated cost implications. The Senior Environmental Health Officer having explained that it was not necessary to introduce the policy to apply the same legislation and that it was considered better use of resources to tackle business in areas such as the Crown, Tomnahurich Street etc on a case by case basis, Members welcomed the assurance that measures were in place and that the public would not move from a clean zone to a litter-strewn zone;
- the need for vigilance, to ensure the reduction in bins was maintained, was emphasised;
- thanks were expressed to the Senior Environmental Health Officer and his team for their efforts, and the conciliatory manner in which the policy had been implemented;
- for both environmental and economic reasons, it would be helpful to implement a wider policy that covered not only trade waste in the city centre but overall litter and waste reduction, and encouraged both businesses and residents to recycle more. The Senior Environmental Health Officer undertook to discuss the matter with waste colleagues; and
- Members were encouraged to report any issues in their wards to the Senior Environmental Health Officer.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the results of the public consultation and review of the Trade Waste Policy as outlined within the report; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the recommendation to extend the time for the morning uplift window within the Trade Waste Policy as detailed within the report.

**9. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2019-2021
Prògram Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais 2019-2021**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/53/18 dated 5 November 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- thanks were expressed to the Housing Policy and Investment Manager and the Housing Investment Officer for their assistance in responding to Members' queries;
- the data in the report was crucial in terms of enabling Members to update constituents on housing upgrades; and
- the "on demand" option, which allowed individual dwellings that had been identified as requiring works to be upgraded, was welcomed.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to Inverness Area as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the investment priorities as set out in section 4.2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed two year HRA Capital Programme for Inverness for 2019-21 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme would continue to be provided through ward briefings.

**10. Inverness and Nairn Local Access Forum Appointments
Cur an Dreuchd gu Fòram Inntrigidh Ionadail Inbhir Nis agus Inbhir Narann**

The Inverness City Area Manager explained that this item had been withdrawn due to Appendix 1 of the report being incomplete, and that it would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

**11. Inverness Townscape Heritage Project
Pròiseact Dualchais Cruth-baile Inbhir Nis**

Declarations of Interest: Miss J Campbell and Mr R MacWilliam declared non-financial interests in this item as Members of the City Heritage Trust and the Townscape Heritage Partnership Grants Sub-Committee, and Mr J Gray declared a non-financial interest as Chair of the City Heritage Trust but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

The Inverness Townscape Heritage Project had been established to encourage regeneration of the historic built environment within Academy Street to improve the quality of life for those people who lived, worked and visited there and businesses that traded there. The Townscape Heritage Project Partnership, which consisted of a Partnership Board and Grants Sub-Committee, had been

set up to direct and monitor the 5 year delivery and implementation phase from January 2016 to January 2021.

The Partnership Board was chaired by the Highland Council and:-

- directed activity and monitored progress to fulfil the objectives of the project in accordance with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland grant terms; and
- provided effective liaison with their representative bodies and acted as ambassador for the Townscape Heritage Project.

The Grants Sub-committee:-

- received and evaluated grant applications and officer recommendations; and
- agreed and submitted recommendations on all grant applications for the Townscape Heritage Partnership's consideration and determination.

Following the resignation of Mr R Laird, the Committee was invited to appoint one Member as Chair of the Townscape Heritage Partnership Board.

Nominations were received for Mr J Gray and Mr R MacWilliam.

Clarification having been sought, it was explained that an appointment to the Townscape Heritage Partnership Grants Sub-Committee would only be required in the event Mr R MacWilliam, who was a Member of the Sub-Committee, was appointed as Chair of the Partnership Board.

On a vote being taken, Mr Gray received 11 votes and Mr MacWilliam received 3 votes, with 3 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-

Votes for Mr Gray

Mr R Balfour, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A Graham, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D MacPherson, Mrs T Robertson and Mr G Ross.

Votes for Mr MacWilliam

Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown and Mr K Gowans.

Abstentions

Mrs C Caddick, Mrs I MacKenzie and Mr R MacWilliam.

Decision

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr J Gray as Chair of the Townscape Heritage Partnership Board.

12. Appointments to Sub-Committee, Working Groups etc
Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean, Buidhnean-obrach is eile

Following the resignation of Mrs E McAllister, the Committee was invited to appoint one Member to the following Working Groups:-

i. Inverness City Arts Working Group

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr I Brown.

ii. Events and Festivals Working Group

Nominations were received for Mr D Macpherson and Mrs I MacKenzie.

Mrs T Robertson having indicated her intention to stand down, the Committee **NOTED** that there were now two vacancies and **AGREED** to appoint Mr D Macpherson and Mrs I MacKenzie.

13. Inverness Airport Consultative Committee
Comataidh Cho-chomhairleachaidh Port-adhair Inbhir Nis

The Committee **NOTED** that the Provost had been invited to attend this group which acted as a liaison between the community and airport management.

14. Homologation of New Street Names
Aontachadh Ainmean Ùra Sràide

There had been circulated Report No CIA/55/18 dated 8 February 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the naming of new streets for the new housing developments in the Ness-side, Hilton, Culloden and Smithton areas of Inverness as detailed in the report.

15. Inverness Common Good Fund
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

(a) Inverness Common Good Fund Annual Report 2017/18
Aithisg Bhliadhnail Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No CIA/56/18 dated 1 November 2018 by the Director of Corporate Resources/Deputy Chief Executive and the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- information was sought on the year on year percentage growth of the investment portfolio and it was requested that a report in that regard be presented to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- information was sought, and provided, on how the funding allocated to the Disabled Go Project had been expended, and it was confirmed that the outcome of the project would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the final monitoring report and balance sheet for the Inverness Common Good Fund as at 31 March 2018;
- ii. **AGREED** that the outcome of the Disabled Go project be reported to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a report on the Common Good investment portfolio, including the year on year percentage growth, be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

**(b) Financial Monitoring
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/57/18 dated 5 November 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, information was sought, and provided, on the Conference Support budget and how it contributed to conference promotion.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 1 November 2018 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

**(c) Grants and Capital Projects
Tabhartasan agus Pròiseactan Calpa**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/58/18 dated 12 November 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager. A copy of supporting documentation had been circulated separately as Booklet A.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the following applications for funding:
 - Blythswood Care - £20,000
 - The Shirly Project - £24,200; and

AGREED TO REJECT the following application:

 - Activness Ltd - £13,200
- ii. **APPROVED** the application from Inverness BID for £59,777 towards the City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays 2019;
- iii. scrutinised and **NOTED** the current status of capital projects;
- iv. **AGREED** to the transfer of £35,250 from the Conference Support Budget to the Grants Budget; and
- v. **AGREED** the extra costs incurred of £9,358 for the Ness Islands Bridge Work, to be funded from the Other Properties Budget.

**16. Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments 2019/20
Sgeama Pàigheadh Geamhraidh – Ath-sgrùdadh**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/59/18 dated 13 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Inverness City Area Manager.

In introducing the report, the Benefits and Welfare Manager drew attention to paragraph 4.3 and recommended that the timescale in relation to Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants be extended to 28 February, as it had in previous years, rather than 31 January as set out in the report.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- information was sought, and provided, on the proposed change in criteria referred to in recommendation vi;
- the user-friendly application process was welcomed;
- it was highlighted that the Council had won the Benefits and Welfare Reform Team of the Year Award, a UK-wide award, at the prestigious Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation Performance Awards 2018, and Members commended the Benefits and Welfare Manager for her contribution in that regard;
- the Benefits and Welfare team did as much as possible to ensure that Highland residents got the support they needed, the Winter Payments Scheme being an example, and their positive relationship with local Citizens Advice Bureaux was commended;
- whilst the scheme would not solve fuel poverty, the support it provided to vulnerable people was to be welcomed and the need for Members to promote it to their constituents was emphasised;
- in relation to the pie chart setting out 2017/18 payments by ward, it would be helpful if information could be overlaid to show the geographic distribution across the city. In addition, whilst Inverness Central ward indisputably had the highest levels of deprivation in the city, the chart appeared to be disproportionate and it was suggested that more work was needed in other wards to ensure that uptake was maximised. It was added that every village in the Aird and Loch Ness ward, which had the least uptake, had people on low income and living in fuel poverty in isolated houses in the country. In responding to the points raised, the Benefits and Welfare Manager queried whether it would be helpful, in the next report to Committee in May 2019, to provide not only more granular data but a comparison with Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data. Members confirmed that this would be helpful and Mr G Ross, Chair of Inverness Community Partnership, added that it would also assist the Community Partnership as it developed locality plans;
- given that Scotland was one of the most energy-rich countries in the world, concern was expressed that fuel poverty had not been effectively tackled. However, it was recognised that there was a significant amount of good work taking place; and
- in terms of promoting the scheme, it was suggested that consideration be given to video clips or podcasts that could be posted on the Council website and shared on social media.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the following recommendations for the 2019/20 Inverness Winter Payments Discretionary Scheme:-

- i. an increase in a single tier payment from £82 to be made in accordance with the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to those applicants that satisfied the eligibility criteria for the 2019/20 scheme. This was the only increase in payment recommended and would be submitted to the June 2019 Committee for Members' consideration;
- ii. there was an anticipated increase in budget from £132,000 to take into account the anticipated CPI increase which might result in an increase in payment for 2019/20. The recommendation for the budget for 2019/20 would be presented at the City of Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee in June 2019;
- iii. the criteria to be utilised for the 2019/20 scheme as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4 of the report, subject to the timescale in paragraph 4.3 in relation to Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants being extended to 28 February 2020. As set out in Appendix 2 of the report, in addition to a one-off discretionary payment from The Inverness Winter Payments Scheme, the same recipients might also be eligible for:
 - **£300** maximum payment from the UK Government's Winter Fuel Payment;
 - **£25** for each 7 day period where the criteria was met for the UK Government's Cold Weather Payments; and
 - **£140** Warm Home Discount from the household's utility bill.
- iv. this discretionary scheme was to be made available to residents in the City of Inverness and the landward areas of the seven city wards;
- v. to promote payment by BACS for this scheme as this was the most secure method of payment for recipients of the payment and the Council alike;
- vi. a change to the criteria resulting in a higher number of qualifying applicants and an increase to the payment amount (in addition to the anticipated CPI increase) would mean an increase in the budget. Payment for this scheme was coupled with the level of payments made via the UK Government's schemes as set out in recommendation iii. above. Officers' recommendations were to adopt the criteria detailed in Section 4 of the report and increase the payment in line with the CPI increase; and
- vii. to manage all related expenditure in a manner that safeguarded the Common Good Fund's assets and ensured this important scheme remained sustainable.

It was further **AGREED** that:-

- viii. opportunities for additional promotion, including videos and podcasts, be explored; and
- ix. the report to Committee in May 2019 should include ward level statistics in comparison with SIMD Index data.

17. Traffic Order Amendments Atharrachaidhean Òrdughan Traftaig

There had been circulated Report No CIA/60/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to the introduction of permit zones, Members cited an example of a young person living in the city centre being unable to obtain a parking permit, and information was sought on the plan for the streets not in the specified zones. It having been explained that there were no permit streets in the core streets in the city centre, Members commented that that, and the suggested solution of contract parking in Rose Street car park at a cost £63 per month, seemed harsh given that the Council wanted to encourage young people to move into the city centre to make it more vibrant. It was added that Rose Street car park was not heavily used overnight and there were opportunities to be more creative out of hours. Also, many of the buildings people were being encouraged to live in were older and did not have developer contributions. Mrs C Caddick undertook to liaise with the Principal Traffic Officer outwith the meeting regarding the points raised;
- with regard to Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, information was sought on the streets with the highest levels of offences and it was confirmed that a breakdown would be circulated to Members of the Committee;
- in relation to Eden Court Theatre car park, Members commented that people would be happier to pay the parking charges if they knew that the income generated was going to the theatre and the promotion of the arts. Further information having been sought in that regard, it was confirmed that 80% of the net income went directly to the theatre, the remaining 20% covering maintenance of equipment, charges relating to cash collection etc. Income generated from the Council car park was corporate revenue; and
- Members having raised the issue of people parking in loading bays in the city centre overnight and on Sundays, information was provided on the current restrictions, the potential to create evening permit bays and the associated issues.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the updates on Inverness traffic management issues; and
- ii. **AGREED**, in relation to Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, that a breakdown of the streets with the highest levels of offences be circulated to Members of the Committee.

18. Castle Wynd, Eastgate and Bridge Street - Proposed Alterations to Taxi Ranks

Caigeann a' Chaisteil, Am Bothar an Ear agus Sràid na Drochaid – Atharrachaidhean gam Moladh a thaobh Raointean Tagsaidh

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA//18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, further information was sought, and provided, on the issues associated with utilising the loading bay outside the Caledonian Bar for additional taxi rank allocation. Reference having been made to feedback from taxi drivers and the need to minimise dangerous U-turns on Bridge Street, it was proposed that the loading bay be made available after 9.30 pm as a taxi rank for two vehicles. It was recognised that this would require an amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order, which would be subject to public consultation.

As an alternative, it was suggested that consideration be given to utilising the bus bays on Union Street. However, it was explained that bus services ran up to midnight at those stops and the taxi trade, with whom there had been lengthy discussions, did not see any advantage in the bays being made available after midnight. A further suggestion, Station Lane, was under discussion in relation to the Railway Station development.

Other Members commented that the fact that the loading bay outside the Caledonian Bar was valued by emergency services was more important than providing two taxi ranks that the taxi trade was not pushing for. It was proposed that the Committee note the position as recommended and that the matter be revisited in the future, when information could be provided on what was working well, what could be done better, and the street pastors' views on what the problem areas were. The Inverness City Area Manager added that a complete picture could be provided once the "Accessing Inverness" consultation had concluded.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the status of the provision of a night time Taxi rank in Eastgate, Inverness.

19. Inverness Local Holidays 2019/20
Saor-làithean Ionadail Inbhir Nis 2019/20

The Committee **AGREED** the following dates as Local Holidays for the City of Inverness for years 2019 and 2020:-

2019

Tuesday 1 January (New Year's Day)
 Wednesday 2 January
 Monday 4 February
 Monday 4 March
 Monday 22 April (Easter Monday)
 Monday 6 May (May Day)
 Monday 1 July
 Monday 7 October
 Monday 4 November
 Wednesday 25 December (Christmas Day)
 Thursday 26 December (Boxing Day)

2020

Wednesday 1 January (New Year's Day)
 Thursday 2 January
 Monday 3 February
 Monday 2 March
 Monday 13 April (Easter Monday)
 Monday 4 May (May Day)
 Monday 6 July
 Monday 5 October
 Monday 2 November
 Friday 25 December (Christmas Day)
 Monday 28 December (Boxing Day Holiday)

20. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Minutes of the City of Inverness Area Committee held on 30 August 2018;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group held on 7 August 2018;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group held on 11 September 2018;
- iv. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 2 November 2018;
- v. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 29 October 2018; and
- vi. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 10 September 2018.

In relation to the Minutes of the City of Inverness Area Committee on 30 August 2018 and the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group on 10 September 2018, on the point being raised, it was confirmed that the previously agreed breakdown of expenditure on events and festivals in 2017/18 would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

In relation to the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group Minutes, it was **AGREED** that a list of events in the Victorian Market prior to Christmas be circulated to Members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 3.35 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held in the Chamber, The Court House, High Street, Nairn on Wednesday 28 November 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr L Fraser
Mr T Heggie

Mrs L MacDonald
Mr P Sagers

In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr G Morrison, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 3)

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

Mr T Heggie in the Chair**Preliminaries**

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

The Chair then drew attention to several key initiatives which were progressing within the Nairnshire area during the year ahead, including Nairn Business Improvement District (BID); the Nairn Links Development Framework and project proposals by Nairn PLAY. He advised that he had held discussion regarding wider projects in other Authority areas and within Highland with a view to developing specific areas of interest and that this would be focused on the inclusion and wellbeing of citizens. He highlighted that improving local outcomes and reducing inequalities within the community would be addressed along with other issues in partnership with the Community Planning Partnership. He drew attention to two local projects at the War Memorial and the pathway and parking at the Riverside which had recently been completed by local contractors to a high standard and concluded by highlighting the positive direction the community was heading in as a result of the hard work and focused effort being made across services.

Members welcomed the significant achievements which had been made over the previous year and the moves being taken by the Council towards further localism. The role of Nairn BID in the upcoming consultation on car-parking within Nairn was highlighted and it was emphasised that any changes to current parking arrangements should be based on the consensus of public opinion.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declaration of Interest:-

Item 5 – Mr L Fraser (non-financial)

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Committee Performance Report for 2018-19 Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba – Aithisg Coileanaidh na Comataidh Ionadail airson 2018-19

There had been circulated Report No N/17/18 dated 18 October 2018 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was highlighted that the number of deliberate fires within Nairnshire attended to by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service during the month of April accounted for a quarter of the total figures for the whole of the Highlands during the same month;
- In welcoming the information provided which indicated that there had been no reports of deliberate fires within Nairnshire during September, further information was sought, and received, regarding the Service's approach to educating young people on the actions of deliberate fires;
- In welcoming the report and the work being undertaken by the Service in relation to education and home visits, concern was expressed regarding an increase in the number of unwanted false alarm signals and further information was sought, and received, regarding the actions being taken to address this;
- Across the Highlands there was recognition of the pro-active joint working approach being taken by the Service in conjunction with Police Scotland within communities to raise awareness and provide education on preventative measures and the Service was commended for this; and
- It was emphasised that premises owners had to take responsibility for how they managed fire alarms within their buildings.

Having thanked the Local Senior Officer for his report, the Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the Area Performance Report.

4. Nairn Common Good Fund – Audited Accounts, Annual Report 2017/18 and Quarter 2 Monitoring 2018/19 Report Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann – Cunntasan Sgrùdaichte, Aithisg Bhliadhna 2017/18 agus Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cairteil 2 2018/19

There had been circulated joint Report N/18/18 dated 14 November 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Inverness City Area Manager.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In highlighting the scrutiny role of the Council's Pensions Investment Committee, the work undertaken by the Council's investment team was commended and it was emphasised that the Council was one of the few local authorities with a surplus on its pension fund;
- Attention was drawn to the good performance of the Council's pension funds and common good funds over the previous reporting period and the view was expressed that the Council's investments over the long terms would continue to grow and provide further income;
- The Common Good Fund was in a healthy position in comparison to previous years and the work undertaken by staff in relation to preparing and investigating issues arising from the Common Good Fund was commended;
- In highlighting the £6k reduction arising from the revaluation of the River Fishings rates, the work undertaken by Mr John Prince, Nairn District Salmon Fishery Board, in reducing fishing rates by £200 per year following a successful appeal to the rates assessor was commended;
- In highlighting the ongoing work being taken beyond local level in relation to statutory legislation and consultations being undertaken, the Nairn Common Good Fund was in a good position to deal with any changes or developments in legislation; and
- In commending the research and investigation work undertaken by the Ward Manager and dedicated Business Support staff in Nairn in relation to the Common Good Fund, it was emphasised that this work had helped the Council on a wider level to deal with issues arising in relation to potential legislative changes and the potential impact on other common good funds.

The Committee **NOTED** the Nairn Common Good Fund Annual Report for 2017/18 and the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund and outturn as shown in the Quarter 2 monitoring statement against budget.

5. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 30 September 2018 Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 30 Sultain 2018

Declaration of Interest: Mr L Fraser declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Sub-Contractor for the Housing Service in Nairn but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated report No N/19/18 dated 9 November 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In response to a request, Members were advised that a report providing further information on overall housing demand in the Nairnshire area and the Highland Housing Register would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in March 2019; and
- In highlighting a significant increase in the number of re-lets within Nairn and Cawdor, it was reported that the higher than normal turnover in houses was due to increased availability arising from new housing developments and new houses

coming onto the market in Nairn and that future housing developments such as at LochLoy might see this trend continue; and

- In highlighting the potential opportunity for the Council to purchase back vacant council houses, further information was sought, and received, regarding the Council's "off-the-shelf purchase policy" and the investigation of potential properties to purchase.

During discussion regarding Universal Credit, concern was expressed that the roll-out of the Universal Credit system had resulted in an increase in rent arrears and that some claimants had been left without an income for lengthy periods. It was emphasised that Council-wide arrears of £2¼m could impact on future budgets and action was required across the Highlands to address this. In response to a request for further information on how the Housing Service could help tenants experiencing difficulties with income, the Housing Manager (South) explained that tenants could visit Council Service Points where staff would be able to provide assistance and signpost them to the appropriate specialist advice agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. She also advised that the Department for Work and Pensions had an advice line which people were encouraged to contact and drew attention to a full report that was submitted to the Council's Equalities Working Group on welfare reform and the Council's position and that this was available on the Council website. During further discussion, a request was made for anonymous examples of the experiences tenants had faced under the Universal Credit system to be included within a future report.

In concluding discussion, the Chair emphasised the need to look at the provision and accessibility of affordable housing in the Nairnshire area and commended the work undertaken by housing staff within Nairnshire.

The Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2018.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 12 September 2018, which had been approved by the Council on 25 October 2018.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.