

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair)** held in the Chamber, Tigh na Sgire, Park Lane, Portree on **Monday, 3 December, 2018 at 10.30 am.**

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr J Gordon

Mr R MacDonald

In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Service
Mr F Nixon, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr M Colliar, Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr R Middlemiss, Area Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr D Esson, Education Quality Improvement Manager, West, Care and Learning Service
Ms J Bruce, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr D Kennedy, Access Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:

Mr R MacKenzie, Area Manager West, NHS Highland
Shadri Nel)
Katrina Martin) Portree High School/ Eilean a Cheò/Misty Isle Youth Forum
Julia Coe)

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

Mr J Gordon – Cathraiche (Chair)

Business

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 3 September, 2018, which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 6 September, 2018, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

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

There was circulated Report No SR/15/18 by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which provided an update on progress against the priorities outlined in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Area Committee Plan for Skye and Raasay 2016-2018. The report also contained previously agreed information and performance as requested by the Committee.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- 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 Portree. Further, new Rapid Response Units would be based in three Stations on Skye and Raasay and would hopefully assist in improving the availability in the Stations receiving them. This was a great investment with new equipment and technology which would have a positive impact on the Service's operational response.
- The Service was actively recruiting in a number of communities to improve station and fire appliance availability and there had been some new appointments to stations in Broadford, Staffin and Dunvegan. There was currently some difficulty in recruiting to the station in Uig, but the service was actively promoting vacancies locally in the hope of attracting applicants. One of the benefits of the new Rural Fire Officer post was that the Officer would be able to act as back up cover where there were gaps in station availability on the Island.
- Day time availability of Fire Personnel in rural areas was a significant challenge for the Service given that primary employment of personnel was during the day. However in rural areas the incidents that stations attended were very low and most domestic incidents happened during the night when availability of stations was good. The Service was actively recruiting personnel where there were gaps in availability.
- It was queried if the costs of dealing with muirburning incidents were increasing each year. It was explained that while no exact costs could be given, such incidents were expensive for the Service to deal with given the prolonged time fire crews had to be in attendance.
- Although the number of wildfires had been low in the area, some of them had been very serious and it was queried what the service was doing to tackle this. It was explained that an analysis of such incidents identified seasonal variations e.g. muirburning season and holiday periods. The Service had introduced a number of fire reduction strategies and thematic action plans targeting these types of incidents. Working in partnership with other key agencies, the Service was working hard to reduce these incidents overall and targeting key groups ahead of known peak activity periods.
- In terms of the Fire Service acting as First Responders to health care in the area, it was advised that once terms and conditions had been nationally agreed this would enable the Service to move to this new role in supporting health services, particularly in rural areas in certain types of medical emergency. Trials of training Officers in out of hospital cardiac arrest had been

carried out which had been very successful and it was intended this would be one of the new roles of the Fire Service.

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

5. NHS Highland – Progress Update with Implementation of the Ritchie Report NHS na Gàidhealtachd – Cunntas Adhartais mu Bhuileachadh Aithisg Ritchie

Mr Ross MacKenzie, Area Manager West, NHS Highland was in attendance and provided an update on the implementation of Sir Lewis Ritchie's report into Out-of-Hours Care in Skye, Lochalsh & South West Ross.

The Committee were briefed on action being taken to implement a number of recommendations made by Sir Lewis Ritchie into Out-of-Hours Care in relation to:- Urgent Care Services from Portree Hospital; Community Beds – to maintain current provision pending future discussion on provision in North Skye; Closer Interagency and Public Participation; Collaboration with Ambulance Service; Collaboration with NHS 24; First Responders – Developing Community Schemes; Workforce Capability and Capacity; Housing Solutions; Road Issues; Transport & Accessibility; Digital Innovation; Glenelg/Arnisdale capacity; Raasay recruitment; Centre for Excellence and Training; Lochcarron service model; Use of NHS 24; Work Streams and Community engagement to implement recommendations.

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

- In terms of urgent care services in Skye it was encouraging to note that 5 new Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) had been recruited and were being trained. This was in addition to the current 3 ANP in post at present. It was intended to resume a 24 hour care service from around about May, 2019, subject to the successful completion of staff training;
- The public were encouraged to use the NHS 24 service for medical issues so that they could be directed to the most appropriate resource and ensuring there was no delay in their care.
- In relation to community beds, it was felt that trying to recruit staff for this service would be challenging given recruitment difficulties in the area. The community had made some helpful comments regarding problems with the NHS recruitment website and as a result some jobs were now being advertised via a different website.
- Workforce capacity and housing for key staff were major concerns. There was a need to be more proactive to find housing solutions for key staff. Work was ongoing regarding housing provision on the new Broadford Hospital site and the NHS were liaising with the local Housing Association to find a joint housing solution.
- It was noted with sadness that there was a fatality on Raasay yesterday and it was queried if there were any lessons to be learned from this incident.
- Transport and accessibility of medical care for Raasay was a work stream issue being looked at. In terms of transport some boat charter provision was being considered and there would be talks with Calmac regarding Out of Hours cover. Access to medical care was the biggest issue to resolve for Raasay and 4 Support Workers for the Island would have provided 24 hour cover, but due to sickness absence amongst team members and that the Support Workers did not have to live on the Island, had prevented this happening.

- There was discussion regarding the future provision of beds at Portree Hospital, whether they were to be hospital beds or community beds and an option appraisal exercise by the Scottish Future Trust (SFT) had been suggested. However, there were concerns about the SFT not being independent for such an exercise.
- The Scottish Government's Health Secretary in a letter to Rhoda Grant MSP had advised that there would be no more funding to implement the recommendations in Sir Lewis Ritchie's report. In this respect, it was felt that the Scottish Government needed to make a clear statement to the Community if it was going to fund the recommendations contained in the Ritchie report or not. If not, the view was expressed that this would represent the end of what traditionally was NHS provision in North Skye. There was a need for the Scottish Government to fund the recommendations. Portree was the main population centre on Skye and Skye was an international tourist hub. Therefore, Portree should have a 24 hour urgent care unit which Sir Lewis Ritchie said should be equitable with the provision in Broadford.
- There was optimism and expectation that funding would be available for Sir Lewis Ritchie's recommendations as there could not be radical and wide ranging changes without this. At least half of the recommendations would require additional resources.

Thereafter, the Cathraiche (Chair) thanked Mr MacKenzie, Area Manager West, NHS Highland for his presentation.

6. Celebrating the Year of Young People A' Comharrachadh Bliadhna na h-Òigridh

There was circulated Report No. SR/16/18 by the Education Quality Improvement Manager (West) which provided an update of the variety of activities undertaken with Portree High School Associated School Group to support The Year of Young People.

Also in attendance were S6 pupils on behalf of Portree High School/ Eilean a Cheò/Misty Isle Youth Forum who had worked on developing a new "Positive Relationships and Bullying Prevention Policy and Guidance". This included consulting young people across Highland to create the new policy and guidance. The policy had been launched on 14 June, 2018 at the High Life Highland, Highland Youth Parliament Annual Conference. This was the first Care and Learning Policy which had been developed by young people across Highland from initial consultation through to its launch. The S6 pupils gave an account of their experiences and role in developing the policy. The new policy had the positive impact of Head Teachers seeking the assistance of pupils to help other pupils to tackle the problem of bullying in Schools and talking to the bullies to find out what was happening in their lives to act like this and recognising that the bully may also need support. There was also more awareness in Schools of the Bullying Policy and less stigma around the subject and pupils felt more able to talk about bullying issues. Further, in terms of online bullying, best practice was to treat this the same way as any other form of bullying.

The Committee commended the work of the Misty Isle Youth Forum in developing the "Positive Relationships and Bullying Prevention Policy and Guidance". Their approach to developing the policy had been impressive, with a great deal of honesty on the subject by both pupils and teachers and working together to deliver a new strategy and policy. The Leadership shown at the Forum and from the School was exceptional.

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

- The Year of Young People themes on Participation; Education; Health and Wellbeing; Culture; Equality and Discrimination and Enterprise and Regeneration could be seen in all schools in the area and this was very positive. Encouragement and support to schools would be provided for them to continue with these themes and importantly to celebrate and promote the pupils achievements.
- Smaller Schools such as Elgol and Raasay had seen a wide range of developments taking place, working with a range of different partners. This showed that communities and schools working together could bring positive outcomes for pupils.
- The wide range of activities being carried out in schools was commended and congratulated. Highlights of the Year of Young People, included The Misty Isle Youth Forum who not only represented other young people but also their communities and it highlighted what young people could do. Other highlights included Portree High School linking with Columba 1400; Leadership opportunities; examples of intergenerational work and the ongoing range of health initiatives in schools;
- The holistic approach to education and cultural interactions was commended;
- It was queried if the interaction of Portree High School with Columba 1400 could be rolled out to all schools on Skye. It was explained that while it would be beneficial to continue with this initiative there would be significant cost implications for schools. However, schools did have links with Columba 1400 and work was ongoing to see how these links could be formalised.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the report and update on the variety of activities undertaken with Portree High School Associated School Group to support The Year of Young People.

In accordance with Standing Order 9, with the consent of the meeting, item 8 on the agenda was taken at this point.

8. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Deanadais Taigheadais

There was circulated Report No. SR/18/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 September 2018.

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

- It was queried what advice was available for people on Universal Credit and did the Council have appropriate resources to offer this advice. It was advised that the Council had a Policy Officer in its Housing Policy and Investment team who focused on Universal Credit. This Officer worked closely with local staff on the changes to Universal Credit. The Council also had a Welfare Support team and offered housing support through 'New Start'.
- it was advised that due to Scottish Government changes to secure tenancies, new rules meant there could not now be an end date to a secure tenancy. It was uncertain what the impact of this would be on the availability of tenancies locally over the winter period.

- There had been a decrease in the number of people presenting themselves as homeless, anecdotal evidence suggested that because people knew that there was a shortage of accommodation locally there were fewer people presenting themselves as homeless or they may present themselves elsewhere as homeless.
- Anti social behaviour cases were low, but continued to be monitored as some of the cases involved repeat offenders.
- There had been an increase in the number of people giving up their tenancies in less than a year. The reasons for this were uncertain but may be due to people moving away for specialist health and social care reasons; to gain support from families living elsewhere; moving away for employment or transfers between the Council and other landlords. Further analysis of the reasons behind this increase would be provided in a future report.

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

7. Roads Maintenance Programme 2019/20 **Prògram Càradh Rathaidean airson 2019/20**

There was circulated Report No.SR/17/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided details of the proposed 2019/20 Roads Maintenance Programme for the Isle of Skye and Raasay. A further update on the Programme was tabled at the meeting.

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

- There was optimism that the roads budget would not face further cuts in the next financial year. The new Chief Executive had attended a staff and public engagement session recently on Skye and feedback from this was that staff and the public stressed the importance of ensuring that the road network and infrastructure was a priority for them. Arising from a recent Roads Seminar in Inverness, there may be a review of the criteria to determine the roads budget allocation for different areas. The Director of Community Services had stated that the Isle of Skye had the worst roads in Highland and therefore it was felt that the criteria of road condition should be considered. The Chief Executive had stressed the importance of localism and therefore there was a need to ensure that sufficient resources were available for roads on Skye.
- Additional funding for the road infrastructure on Skye was needed given the significant increase in visitors to the Island. Millions of pounds from tourism was being generated on Skye and the tax revenues were going to the UK Government and Scottish Government. There was a need for this revenue to be invested locally, in order for Skye to have a sustainable tourist industry.
- when there were major road repairs to be undertaken on Skye, the equipment had to be brought onto the Island from elsewhere which caused delays. If the local roads team had the necessary equipment based on Skye, the works could be carried out much quicker. The roads team had also suffered reductions in staff numbers over time due to successive budget cuts.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2019/20 Road Maintenance Programme for the Isle of Skye & Raasay.

9. West Highland and Islands Amended Core Paths Plan, Skye and Raasay Area Plana Atharraichte Phrìomh Cheuman na Gàidhealtachd an Iar agus nan Eilean, Sgìre an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair

There was circulated Report No. SR/19/18 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure which presented a Draft Amended Core Paths Plan for the Skye and Raasay area.

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

- Hill path repair work was done in a sensitive way, using local materials, to recognised techniques in order to keep the path looking as natural as possible. There were exceptions to this however, such as the path to the 'Old Man of Storr' where there was no alternative but to construct a large wide path due to the large number of visitors to that location.
- Non hill paths were constructed in a way that they could be used for multi purposes;
- There was no Council funding for the amended Core Paths Plan and it was uncertain if following Brexit, improving public access funding from the Scottish Rural Development Programme would still be available. However, if it did continue, the Core Paths Plan would be in place and should be considered for funding.
- There had been significant increases in visitors to locations such as the 'Old Man of Storr' (circa 205,000 people) and the 'Fairy Pools' (circa 180,000 people), and the Fairy Glen on Skye and there was a need to try and keep people to paths to avoid erosion to the wider area.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Skye and Raasay area of the West Highland and Islands Amended Core Path Plan to be published for formal consultation.

10. Street Naming – Development at Kyleakin, Isle of Skye Ainmeachadh Sràide – Leasachadh ann an Caol Acain, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach

There was circulated Report No. SR/20/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform which invited the Committee to homologate the name for a new development of 18 properties in Kyleakin as Charles Cameron Place. The Gaelic translation being Ceàrn Theàrlaich Chamshroin.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the naming of the new development in Kyleakin as proposed by the Developer as follows:

Charles Cameron Place - Ceàrn Theàrlaich Chamshroin

The meeting concluded at 1.05 pm.