

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummie on Monday, 25 February 2019 at 2.00pm.

Present:

Ms K Currie

Mr R Gale

Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray

Mr H Morrison

Ms L Munro (by tele-conference)

Officials in attendance:

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

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

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

Mr M Dent, Access Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service

Mr J Allan, Lighting and Communications Manager, Community Services

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

Also in Attendance:

Chief Inspector I MacLelland, North Area Commander, Police Scotland

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

There had been circulated Report No SCC/01/19 dated 12 February 2019 by the North Area Commander.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the level of enforcement being carried out in relation to road safety and reduction in the number of speeding offences over the period was welcomed;
- an assurance was sought and provided by the Chief Inspector that he was not aware of any change in policy by the Council as the lead agency with regard to the Driving Ambitions initiative being rotated around secondary schools in Sutherland or in terms of pupils from other areas travelling to Golspie High School to participate in the initiative
- the potential to refresh the above initiative and to use a range of strategies and new technologies to educate young drivers in relation to road safety, including local initiatives and the involvement of Transport Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service;

- concern at the increase in the number of drink/driving offences over the period. The Chief Inspector advised this mainly related to drink driving offences, although there were elements of drug driving and he provided an assurance that enforcement would continue including the targeting of young drivers;
- concern at the number of people who continued to be detected for seat belt offences, it being noted this was across a range of age groups and tended to involve work vehicles;
- an assurance was provided that if Members had any information in relation to drug dealing in Sutherland then they pass this to the Chief Inspector, local officers, or call Crimestoppers or the 101 number;
- while the increase in the numbers of detections for drugs supply, production and cultivation was positive, the overall numbers appeared to be relatively low in comparison to the levels of supply and demand, and given this was an endemic problem in many areas and an issue across society. The Chief Inspector confirmed he would feedback Members comments in relation to drugs to the relevant officers; and
- clarification was sought and provided on the reason for the increase in the occurrences of common assaults, Members were advised this encompassed a range of types of assaults in and out of dwellings and there were no specific trends being observed, for example linked to licensed premises.

The Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20.

4. North Coast Campus Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Campas a' Chost a Tuath

There had been circulated Report No SCC/02/19 dated 11 February 2019 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Education Quality Improvement Manager provided an update to the report during which she reported on the substantial redevelopment and improvements undertaken to improve the condition and suitability of the buildings within the ASG. Specifically, she detailed the works carried out over the past year at Farr High School, Farr and Melvich Primary Schools and planned work to Tongue Primary School.

In discussion, the improvement in the condition of the buildings and staffing levels within the ASG was welcomed. Thereafter, reference was made to the positive figures detailed in the High Life Highland section of the report, and particularly the fact that customer visits to Bettyhill Library and Service Point and Youth Development Officer attendances had effectively trebled. Clarification was sought on the reasons for the significant increase and in response the Education Quality Improvement Manager confirmed she would report back to Members on this matter.

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

**5. Modified Core Paths Plan (Caithness and Sutherland) Amended
Plana Phrìomh Cheuman Mion-atharraichte (Gallaibh agus Cataibh)
Atharraichte**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/03/19 dated 11 February 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In response to questions, the Access Officer provided further details in relation to the nature of the unresolved objections set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

In response to the Chair, the Access Officer also provided an update in relation to an issue which had arisen the previous year in relation to access over the Dairy Park, Golspie. He had written to Golspie Community Council to confirm that the access which had been ploughed and cropped over in the previous year, would be kept trampled or cut if cropped in the current year to ensure it was not impenetrable during the growing season and access could be taken. He explained there was no expectation that a field should not be ploughed because of a core path.

The Committee **APPROVED** the:-

- i. the modifications to the Amended Core Path Plan which have resolved objections shown in **Appendix 2**;
- ii. the modification to the Amended Core Paths Plan following a representation shown in **Appendix 4**;
- iii. the Amended Core Paths Plan for a 30 day public consultation on the above modifications; and
- iv. the Amended Core Paths Plan with unresolved objections shown in **Appendix 3** and thereafter to be submitted to Scottish Ministers.

**6. Christmas Lighting and Decorations
Solais agus Sgeadachaidhean Nollaige**

There had been tabled revised Report No SCC/04/19 dated 22 February 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

The Chair advised that an amended report had been tabled which included additional information on the Community Groups which delivered Christmas lighting and decorations in the area.

In discussion, it was suggested that further clarification was required in relation to the figures set out in the report and the extent of the works which were being delivered by the Council or by community councils and/or community groups in the area. The report should also be amended going forward to cover all of the communities in Sutherland which had Christmas lights. In relation to the recommendations set out in the report, it was not the role of elected Members to liaise with local community councils and/or community groups where communities wished to deliver Christmas lighting and decorations, this being more appropriately the remit of officers.

In response to questions, the Lighting and Communications Manager advised that the Council's insurance covered Christmas lighting and decorations where they were mounted on street light columns. Work was ongoing to identify any undocumented installations around the County with a view to universal approach being adopted in all communities. In this regard, it was suggested that it would be

helpful to write to all community councils in Sutherland asking them to clarify the arrangements for Christmas lighting and decorations in their communities.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that the Council had previously removed the £35,000 budget for the delivery of Christmas Lighting;
- ii. **AGREED** that the appropriate officers within Community Services liaise with local Community Councils and/or Community Groups where communities wish to deliver Christmas lighting and decorations;
- iii. **NOTED** that health and safety, and general guidance will be published for communities to enable the safe erection of Christmas lighting and decorations in the future; and
- iv. **AGREED** to write to all Community Councils in Sutherland asking them to clarify the arrangements for Christmas lighting and decorations in their communities.

**7. Dornoch Common Good – Assignment of Dornoch Caravan Park Lease.
Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich – Sònrachadh Aonta-màil Phàirc
Charabhanaichean Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/05/19 dated 8 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and Acting Head of Policy.

In discussion, reference was made to concerns which existed within the community, community council, and amongst long term site residents in regard to the current operation of the Caravan Park. The outstanding debts had not been paid and therefore and it was questioned why the Irritancy clause within the lease had not been evoked and the lease cancelled. This was a commercial lease and therefore Members had not had the opportunity to scrutinise all aspects including any business or payment plan, however there were reputational issues for the Council and Members which should be considered. Further concerns expressed included whether the terms attached to the dilapidations would be enforceable, the length of time the lease had been in the hands of the executors and in relation to the solvency of the new operator.

The Chair seconded by Mrs D Mackay moved that consideration of the report be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on 22 May 2019 to allow clarification to be provided on:- (i) rent arrears (ii) proposals for dilapidations, and (iii) evidence of available funds from the new operator

Mr J McGillivray seconded by Ms K Currie moved as an amendment that the Irritancy clause contained within the lease be pursued.

The Ward Manager advised that the amendment was not competent on the grounds that a decision on this matter could not be taken until such time as an assessment of whether the terms of the lease had been broken had been undertaken and the Council's debt recovery procedures and the negotiations on the dilapidations had been completed, all of which were contained in the motion to defer consideration of the report. On this basis, Mr J McGillivray with the agreement of Ms K Currie confirmed he was content to withdraw his amendment.

The Committee **AGREED** that consideration of the report be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on 22 May 2019 to allow clarification to be provided on:-

(i) rent arrears (ii) proposals for dilapidations, and (iii) evidence of available funds from the new operator.

**8. Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Report
Aithisg Sgrùdadh Ràitheil Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/06/19 dated 25 January 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and Acting Head of Policy.

In response to a question, the Ward Manager confirmed he would discuss the current status of the Fund with Mr J McGillivray outwith the meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good Fund, as shown in the Q3 monitoring statement against budget.

**9. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 15 November 2018, which had been approved by the Council on 13 December 2018.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm.

**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 27 February 2019 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mr R Laird
Mr B Boyd (substitute)	Mr B Lobban
Mr R Bremner (VC)	Mr D Louden
Mr J Bruce	Mr R MacDonald (VC)
Mrs C Caddick	Mr A MacInnes
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mrs D Mackay
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr A Mackinnon
Dr I Cockburn	Mrs M Paterson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr M Reiss
Mr L Fraser	Mr P Saggars
Mr R Gale	Mr A Sinclair (substitute)
Mr A Jarvie	Mr B Thompson

Non Members also Present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mr D Macpherson
Mr T Heggie	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr D Mackay	Mrs T Robertson

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 A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Corporate Resources Service
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mr E McIntosh, Localism & Engagement Co-ordinator, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistance, 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

Preliminaries

The Committee **NOTED** that:-

- Due to the postponement of the Gaelic Implementation Group meeting there was no Gaelic update but a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources had announced that he would be retiring in June 2019. The Chair stated that he had thoroughly enjoyed working with Mr Yule and expressed his appreciation for the guidance and support that he had provided.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr S Mackie, Mr G Mackenzie and Mr D Rixson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report to 31 December 2018 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/01/19 dated 1 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In introducing the report, the Chairman drew attention to the £5.5m overspend but explained that that new management actions had been implemented to ensure proper governance, accountability of budgets, and income targets. He further advised that at the conclusion of month 10, there had been a reduction of £500,000 in the overspend leaving an in-house budget pressure of £5m remaining. He acknowledged that there had been a lack of governance in respect of income targets and also the Redesign savings but he assured the Committee that there was new governance in place to ensure these targets were monitored and reported timeously. In addition, he advised that there would be a monthly cross party meeting to which all Members would be invited to discuss the current situation regarding income and expenditure. Continuing, he explained that the existing actions that had previously been implemented including recruitment controls and a freeze on non-essential spend would continue until the end of the current financial year. He further reminded the Committee that the Council had recently approved 2019/20 budget which was a budget for jobs, performance and change and he highlighted that this included no compulsory redundancies. In conclusion, he acknowledged that there was an in-house pressure but he was confident that a balanced budget would be delivered at the end of the financial year.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- A number of Members expressed concern regarding the overspend and the rate at which this had increased since the previous quarter. It was therefore queried whether it would be feasible to recover the position by the year-end which was fast approaching;
- With regard to Devolved Schools Management (DSM) budgets, it was highlighted that these were in a unique position whereby any underspend could be rolled forward to the next financial year and concern was expressed at utilising these budgets to address the corporate overspend pressure and the impact that this might have in future, i.e. encouraging an ethos of spend before the end of the financial year. In addition, further information was sought on the amount that would be recovered from DSM balances;
- It was highlighted that at the time of setting the 2018/19 budget concern was expressed that the income targets that were being set were not achievable. In addition, it was queried whether the financial overspend had been higher than £5.5m and, if so, by how much. It was stressed that the Council could not continue in this manner and there was a need for responsibility for expenditure to be identified with named budget-holders and also to ensure that there were appropriate monitoring and control measures in place. The Chair confirmed that these measures were in place to ensure accountability and that there would also be weekly governance meetings with budget-holders;
- The 2019/20 budget also contained large savings targets with high risks of achieving and concern was expressed that the budget was very tight with limited options in terms of contingency planning. The importance of setting achievable budgets was stressed;
- A significant share of the shortfall was the result of unachieved corporate savings and it was stressed that the reasons for these not being delivered needed to be established. In addition, the report indicated that there would be a shortfall in procurement savings and it was suggested that this aspect needed further review. It was highlighted that it was feasible to proceed with works up to the value of £50,000 based on a single price, i.e. without receiving three quotes, and it was felt that this was not best practice;
- The open and transparent approach of the Administration was welcome but further information was sought on the reasons for the lack of governance and the remedial actions that had been taken. Concern was expressed at the variance of actual figures compared to budgets and it was felt that the gravity of the low level reserves had been understated but the Chair indicated that plans were in place to increase reserves in the forthcoming years;
- It was highlighted that the overspend was mainly due to the high cost placements for Looked After Children which was a demand led service. However, it was highlighted that local accommodation units were not being staffed which could considerably reduce expenditure in this budget. Therefore, there was a need to ensure that vacancy monitoring controls were not adversely impacting on the Council;

- It was reported that unfortunately the level of demand for Looked After Children was increasing, the Council had been successful in bringing some children back to the Highlands but other children had to be placed out with the area. It was stressed that the welfare of the children was the Council's first priority. The Council would continue to work with the police and community partners to help and support families on reducing the need for this service; and
- It was stated that the Council was undergoing a period of major corporate change and although there had been improvements in financial governance there were still a number of external risks which could have a significant impact on the budget. Assurance was provided that work would continue to make the Council more efficient and a cross party collaborative approach to this process was welcome.

The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources responded to questions raised and acknowledged that a review of procurement to ensure that the Council was receiving value for money would be helpful. He explained that there was a need to ensure that Redesign budget savings were properly resourced and that vacancy monitoring and the implications thereof was a workstream that would be addressed in the forthcoming year. In terms of accuracy of budgets, he explained that these were based on assumptions and risks many of which were out with the Council's control. However, there was a need for budgets to be managed and to ensure efficient spend but demand would always exceed resources therefore resources had to be targeted to achieve better outcomes. It was recognised that change was required to ensure resources were used to best effect but this had to be funded hence the establishment of the Change Fund. In addition, relying on reserves to balance the budget was unsustainable therefore plans were in place to reinstate balances in budget Years 2 and 3.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets as at 31 December 2018 and **NOTED** the estimated year end forecast; and
- NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year;
- AGREED** that a briefing would be provided to Members on the budget savings that had not been achieved; and
- NOTED** that a meeting invite would be issued to the Cross Party Member Working Group which would include a report on procurement.

4. Corporate Capital Monitoring Report to 31 December 2018 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/02/19 dated 13 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The Chair advised the Committee that the Capital Programme would soon be reviewed and highlighted that due to slippage of contracts it was estimated that there would be a net underspend of £4.520m on the programme for the current financial year;

- It was highlighted that it had previously been agreed that any underspend would be allocated towards vital road repairs but the Chair highlighted that there was not an underspend and instead this was project slippage which would be carried forward and confirmed that further information on this would be provided at the Cross Party Member Working Group; and
- It was highlighted that there had been 54% of spend as at December 2018, compared to 46% in the previous financial year, and further information was sought and provided on the reasons for rapid spend within the last quarter of the financial year.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes as at 31 December 2018; and
- NOTED** that further information on project slippage would be provided as part of the Capital Programme review to be reported to the Cross Party Member Working Group.

5. Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget Revenue Monitoring to 31 December 2018
Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra agus Buidseat nan Sochairean gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/03/19 dated 5 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service and Welfare budget as at 31 December 2018.

6. Corporate Resources Service Capital Monitoring Report to 31 December 2018
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/04/19 dated 8 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Concern was expressed at the lack of officer presentation of agenda items which it was felt helped ensure good scrutiny by Members. The Chair indicated that this was his decision and Members endorsed his approach stressing that it was the Members responsibility to read the reports circulated in advance of the meeting.

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

7. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Revenue Monitoring Report to 31 December 2018
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018

There had been circulated Report No RES/05/19 dated 14 February 2019 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget as at 31 December 2018 and **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE
SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORA

8. Treasury
Rianachd Ionmhais

(a) Summary of Transactions
Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean

There had been circulated Report No RES/06/19 dated 29 January 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was queried whether officers stress tested how short term borrowing would be managed in the event of a sudden rise in interest rates and whether there were contingencies in place for this;
- With the volatility of interest rates and stock markets, particularly in view of BREXIT, it was queried whether it was appropriate to reconsider investment from the Pension Fund in Council infrastructure and the Chairman confirmed that this issue would be considered as part of the Council's overall review of borrowing the outcome of which would be reported to full Council on 9 May 2019; and
- Further information was sought and provided in regard to short term borrowing and repayment periods and Members also welcomed the opportunity for further training.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions as circulated; and
- ii. that further Treasury Management training would be provided for Members.

(b) Strategy Statement and Investment Statement – 2019/20
Aithris Ro-innleachd agus Aithris Tasgaidh – 2019/20

There had been circulated Report No RES/07/18 dated 14 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, assurance was sought that the initial spending that was required to enable the Scottish Futures Trust to develop shovel ready projects was being provided and it was explained that this aspect would be captured within the Capital Programme review.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Statement for 2019/20 and the Prudential Indicators as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/08/19 dated 11 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was noted that 72.8% of Council Tax bills were paid via Direct Debits and it was queried whether a target had been set to increase take-up of this payment method;
- In regard to Council Tax payers paying over 10 months, it was suggested that consideration should be given to making December and January the non-collection months;
- It was highlighted that the Council currently operated a wide variety of payment methods but there was a lack of awareness of these and the payment options needed to be better promoted; and
- It was indicated that businesses often charged if customers did not use their preferred payment method and it was suggested that the Council could consider adopting a similar approach.

The Committee **NOTED** the statutory and key performance indicators as outlined in the report.

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/09/19 dated 4 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Appreciation was expressed to staff for the progress that had been made and it was hoped that the ICT improvements would continue. However, concern was expressed at the mobile phone and IT difficulties being experienced by Members and it was requested that these matters be investigated and resolved. In addition, it was explained that Members with Office 365 still had direct access issues and the need for a reliable system was emphasised;

- The continued rollout of the Chromebooks was welcome; and
- Despite significant investment the IT systems within the Chamber continued to be unreliable and not fit for purpose and an update was sought on how these issues were being addressed.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the ICT Transformation and Network Programmes and **AGREED** that:-

- i. the IT and mobile phone problems being experienced by Members be investigated and resolved; and
- ii. an update be provided on how the Chamber IT issues were being addressed.

11. Annual Occupational Health and Safety Report 2017/18 Aithisg Bhliadhnail Slàinte agus Sàbhailteachd Obrachail 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No RES/10/19 dated 11 February 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The number of staff attending Health and Safety training courses was welcomed as was the increasing downward trends of key safety measures. However, concern was expressed on the number of reported incidents of violence and aggression within schools and it was queried what additional action could be taken to address this;
- The impact of sickness absence, particularly in regard to long term absences, on staff and also financially to Council was highlighted and the need to focus on reducing this was emphasised;
- Further information was sought on the reasons for non-attendance of appointments and the Chair highlighted that this issue had been discussed in detail at the Central Safety Committee and work was underway to reclaim the cost of this from the relevant service; and
- The recent presentation in the Chamber on Prostrate Cancer was welcome and confirmation was sought and provided that the Council would be delivering similar public health events on a regular basis.

The Committee **NOTED** the achievements and performance for 2017/18 and **APPROVED** the Annual Occupational Health and Safety report.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE OIFIS AN ÀRD-OIFIGEIR

12. Community Asset Transfer – Review Process Glusad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd – Pròiseas Ath-sgrùdaidh

There had been circulated Report No RES/11/19 dated 14 February 2019 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- An additional recommendation was proposed whereby no Member should sit on the Review Panel when considering an asset transfer request from within their own ward. On seeking clarification on the rationale for this it was explained that this would remove local Member pressure and enable the Review Panel to be more objective in their consideration/decision. However, although the reason for removing the local Member from the decision making process was acknowledged, the importance of their role in terms of providing local knowledge and informing the debate was stressed and on that basis it was suggested that they should be consulted on such issues;
- It was suggested that the quorum, which was set a three, should be increased to reflect the increased membership and ensure the process was more democratic; and
- It was highlighted that although the Planning Applications Committee had representation from every ward, the Planning Review Body did not. In addition, the Licensing Committee did not have representation from every ward but Members were able to vote on decisions within their own ward. Further concern was expressed that this proposal was being put forward in order to prevent a future problem that might not come to fruition. It was therefore recommended that the process should proceed as presented in the report and, if necessary, the position could be reconsidered thereafter in the event of any problems arising in terms of local Members being under undue pressure from community groups.

Thereafter, Mr B Lobban **MOVED** a **MOTION** seconded by Mr M Reiss to approve the recommendations in the report with the additional recommendation that Local Ward Members would be excluded from voting on the Review Panel of a Community Asset transfer review request.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr R Laird, seconded by Mrs Campbell-Sinclair, moved that the recommendations as set out in the report should be approved.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 15 votes and **AMENDMENT** received 7 votes with one abstention and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED** the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr G Adam
 Mr J Bruce
 Mrs C Caddick
 Mrs H Carmichael
 Dr I Cockburn
 Mrs M Davidson
 Mr L Fraser
 Mr R Gale
 Mr B Lobban
 Mr R MacDonald
 Mr A Mackinnon
 Mrs M Paterson
 Mr M Reiss
 Mr P Saggars
 Mr B Thompson

For the Amendment:

Mr B Boyd
Mr R Bremner
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair
Mr R Laird
Mr D Louden
Mr A MacInnes
Mr A Sinclair

Abstentions:

Mr A Jarvie

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that the membership of the Review Panel be increased from five to nine and that Local Ward Members would be consulted but excluded from voting on the Review Panel for Community Asset transfer review requests; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the proposed revised procedure for reviews of community asset transfer decisions set out at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS
GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN**

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

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 11 December 2018 the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

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

The following Minutes of Meetings were circulated and **APPROVED**:-

- i. Staff Partnership Forum held on 1 February 2019; and
- ii. Central Safety Committee held on 1 February 2019.

The meeting was closed at 12.20 pm.

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

Minutes of Meeting of the Pensions Committee and Pension Board held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 28 February 2019 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Pensions Committee

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

Pension Board

Mrs C Caddick, Highland Council
Mr G Cruickshank, Highland Council
Mr C Nicolson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr R Fea, representative for other Employers
Mr D Macdonald, Unison
Mr E Macniven, GMB
Mr D Main, Unite/Ucatt

Officials in attendance:

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

Also in attendance:-

Mr J Boyd, Grant Thornton (External Auditor) (by telephone conference)
Mr P Riedel, Hymans Roberston
Mr A McKerns, Hymans Roberston

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

Mr R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Ms L MacKay, Unison.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There was circulated Report No. PC/1/19 by the Head of Corporate Finance & Commercialism.

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

**4. Administration Strategy Statement/Discretionary Policies/Overpayment of Pension
Aithris Ro-innleachd Rianachd/Poileasaidhean Fo Ùghdarras/Tar-phàigheadh Peinnsein**

There was circulated Report No. PC/2/19 by the Head of Corporate Finance & Commercialism.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Administration Strategy Statement, including the schedule of charges;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Discretionary Policy report; and
- iii. **AGREED** the proposal for recovering overpayment of pension on death of a member.

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

There was circulated Report No. PC/3/19 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources Service.

The Committee:-

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

**6. Annual Audit Plan 2018/19 (External Audit Report)
Plana Sgrùdaidh Bliadhnaile 2018/19 (Aithisg Sgrùdaidh bhon Taobh A-muigh)**

There was circulated Report No. PC/4/19 by Grant Thornton which presented their annual audit plan setting out the work they plan to undertake as part of the audit of the pension fund.

In particular, it was explained that external audit fee pooled costs would cover external audit fees to support the administration of the audit process. These fees were calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Audit Scotland.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

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

The Minutes of meeting of the Investment Sub-Committee held on 31 August 2018 and 30 November 2018 were circulated for confirmation and **APPROVED**.

Arising from the Minutes of meeting of 31 August 2018, it was explained that as agreed by the Pensions Committee in its Statement of Investment Principles, consideration was being given to changing the balance of investments in the Pension Fund. As part of this review, an investment in infrastructure was being considered. Lothian Pension Fund had worked with other Pension Funds in Scotland to make infrastructure investments. Representatives of Lothian Pension Fund had made a presentation on this matter to the Investment Sub Committee. This was one option that the Fund could potentially acquire an infrastructure investment.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

**8. Membership of Investment Sub-Committee
Ballrachd na Fo-Chomataidh Tasgaidh**

The Committee **AGREED** to the following change to the membership of the Investment Sub-Committee:-

Mr R Gale to replace Mrs C Caddick

The meeting ended at 10.45 a.m.