

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, 4 March, 2019 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
Chief Inspector B Mackay, Police Scotland
Inspector L Allan, Police Scotland
Mr G MacDonald, Senior Engineer, Community Services
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr J Allan, Lighting and Communications Manager, Community Services
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:

Mr S MacPherson, Head of Strengthening Communities, Highlands & Islands Enterprise

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

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr C MacLeod.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 6 – Mr J Gordon – (non financial)

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 December, 2018, which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 13 December, 2018, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

4. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìre

There was circulated Report No SR/1/19 by the Chief Inspector for Police.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The increase in licensed premises checks which had resulted in a reduction in violence and disorder incidents was welcomed and an assurance was given that these checks by Police would continue;
- While there had not been an increase in drug related offences in the local area in the last period, the use of drugs was a problem for every Community and reporting of this activity to Police by the public for intelligence and enforcement purposes was encouraged. The public's help in detecting this crime and the anonymity of those providing the information was key particularly in small communities. The public could call the Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously with information. The Chief Inspector undertook to reassure the public through Police media that the anonymity of reporting a crime to Crimestoppers was guaranteed.
- There was an increase in Police time dealing with people with mental health issues. The Police were working with NHS Highland and The Highland Council to look at ways of reducing Police time spent on such incidents.
- Speeding continued to be a problem in the local area, particularly in Portree and Broadford. A lot of speeding incidents were due to the significant increase in tourist traffic and more deterrents should be put in place to make it clear to drivers what the actual speed limit was. It was advised that a site visit would be made to Viewfield Road, Portree to see what speed prevention measures could be put in place. The Chief Inspector undertook to discuss this with the Police roads unit and BEAR Scotland.
- In terms of anti social behaviour at night time, an assurance was given that the Police would continue to have a visible presence in towns at night time and would continue with licensed premises checks in order to act as a deterrent. The 'Pub Watch' voluntary scheme also acted as a deterrent and was very successful.
- The Council's Housing Service had to deal with anti social behaviour incidents involving tenants and the Police worked closely with the Council on this, details of which were provided at the meeting.

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

i progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 Year 2, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2018- 31 January 2019;

ii that the Chief Inspector would issue a media release to reassure the public that the anonymity of reporting a crime to Crimestoppers was guaranteed; and

iii that the Chief Inspector would discuss with the Police Roads unit and BEAR Scotland to establish what further speed prevention measures could be put in place on Viewfield Road, Portree.

5. 2018/19 Area Roads Capital Programme Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais Prògram Calpa Rathaidean na Sgìre 2018/19

There was circulated Report No. SR/2/19 by the Director of Community Services.

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

- It was welcomed that the Highland Council was to increase its Roads budget by an additional £1.5m next year, and the Skye/Raasay area allocation of this additional funding would be circa. £132k.
- Members recognised the hard work and effort of the local Roads team for their maintenance work on A & B Class roads following last Winter's severe weather. This had impacted on the Planned maintenance programme and the Surface Dressing Programme and there would be a period of catch up on these works. It was queried if there were enough local resources to ensure this happened. It was explained that there was a significant backlog in roads maintenance. The additional financial resources for the Roads budget was welcomed and the best use of these resources would be made, such as additional resurfacing and/or ensuring road patching continued throughout the year. The level of staff resources within the roads team was aligned to requirements for winter maintenance i.e. the number of staff required for winter routes.
- The milder winter this year was good news and there should be a saving through less need for salt on the roads and less damage to road surfaces. However, given the age and condition of roads, their surfaces continued to deteriorate as a consequence of water damage.
- In relation to the 'Keep Left' campaign initiated following a serious local road traffic accident, Members welcomed the programme of White lining to improve road safety as a reminder to tourist traffic to drive on the left.
- It was confirmed that roads at Grianan and Lealt would be added to the Surface Dressing Programme.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i **NOTED** the contents of the report; and

ii **AGREED** that roads at Grianan and Lealt would be added to the Surface Dressing Programme.

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

Declaration of Interest: Mr J Gordon declared a non-financial interest in this item as a member of the Group of volunteers organising the Christmas lighting and decorations in Portree 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 was circulated Report No. SR/3/19 by the Director of Community Services.

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

- There was significant volunteering necessary to deliver Christmas lighting and decorations and most areas had to identify sources of funding for this.
- The organising group in Portree had done a tremendous job in providing Christmas lighting and decorations with no budget and was reliant on public help/donations for this. The Group aimed to improve on what could be achieved in future years through fundraising.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i that the Council has previously removed the £35,000 budget for the delivery of Christmas Lighting;
- ii that Members would liaise with local Community Councils and/or Community Groups where communities wish to deliver Christmas lighting and decorations.
- iii that Health & Safety and general guidance will be published for communities to enable the safe erection of Christmas Lighting and Decorations in the future.

7. Skye Aerodrome Update **Cunntas às Ùr mu Raon-adhair an Eilein Sgitheanaich**

There was circulated Report No. SR/4/19 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

- Members had received a significant amount of communication on this issue from the public both opposing and supporting the proposal for scheduled air services from Skye Aerodrome. Concerns from the public had been raised in relation to:- the investment in Air Services at a time when more funding was required for other priorities on Skye/Raasay such as roads, health services; whether there was to be an extension to the Airfield which could damage the surrounding environment; the accuracy of the economic and social study into the Aerodrome; the annual operational costs for the trial period and the Public Service Obligation (PSO); what level of public engagement would there be; confirmation that any income generated by the Aerodrome through non flying activities would be reinvested in the Aerodrome.
- In relation to finances for the Aerodrome, it was explained that any proposed transport project needed a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of greater than one, which meant that for any £1 spent, more than that came back in value to the Community. The BCR for the Aerodrome project was greater than one. While

there was a Capital and Revenue programme for Roads maintenance for example, there was no commitment for the Aerodrome project in the Council's Capital or Revenue budget programme. Pressures on the transport infrastructure were Council wide and efforts were made by the Council to achieve solutions itself or to work with other partners. Further, there was no request in the report to meet the annual maintenance costs or the PSO costs associated with this project, as there was still a lot of technical detail to work through to finalise the project. It was intended that the PSO costs would be covered by the operator of the airfield. The funding sought in the report would go towards finalising the project so that statutory procedures could commence.

- In terms of public engagement on the project, there were statutory permissions required for operating a licensed airfield and wider engagement would commence at this stage. There may also be planning permission required for some of the infrastructure at the Aerodrome and this would be another opportunity for public engagement.
- Information was provided on how other similar sized airfields operated and in particular Dundee Airport which could be used as a model to be followed for Skye. Also in terms of connectivity, it was queried how Skye compared with other Islands with airfields.
- There was no intention to increase the length of the runway at the Airfield;
- There was a desire to see significant economic regeneration in the Highlands so as to improve public services and create better employment opportunities. One of the key drivers of economic regeneration was infrastructure and the Council owned the Aerodrome which was a key infrastructure asset that was under utilised. Any investment on the Aerodrome would potentially have significant economic and socio-economic benefits for the local area. Tourism was vitally important for the Skye area, but there was a need to diversify the local economy and encourage entrepreneurs to invest and work on Skye and transport links to the central belt and London were key to this.
- At meetings of HITRANS there had been no negative concerns of Air Services to the Islands. Also, with a licensed Airfield there would be employment opportunities at the Aerodrome.
- Scheduled air services on Skye would also have the benefit of allowing health service specialists to visit the Island on a regular basis. This would be factored into the ongoing review of health service provision on the Island.
- A number of local people had stated that they would use the air service for convenience purposes should it commence.
- In terms of next steps, should the Committee and the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee support the investment of £170k to support costs with setting up a trial air service, this would hopefully assist in attracting funding from other partners such as HIAL. Ultimately, Scottish Government funding would be required to establish the trial air service.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the update about operational matters at the Aerodrome;
- *ii **AGREED** to recommend to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure (EDI) Committee that they approve the Rules for Users and the Fees;
- iii **NOTED** the update information for the re-introduction of air services provided by the Short-life Working Group; and

*iv **AGREED** to recommend to the EDI Committee that they:-

- a. approve £170k of additional funds to undertake further engagement with statutory bodies and preparation work; and
- b. request the Chair of Environment, Development and Infrastructure writes to the Transport Secretary on behalf of the Highland Council, HITRANS and HIE, seeking financial and technical support to progress the potential of trial air services between Skye and Glasgow.

8. Uig Development Brief **Brath Leasachaidh Ùige**

The Committee were informed that the Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service was unwell and unable to attend the meeting. Therefore, the Committee **AGREED** to **DEFER** this item until the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 pm.