

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Ross and Cromarty Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Wednesday, 1 May 2019 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 A MacInnes	Ms M Smith
Mr G MacKenzie	Mrs C Wilson

### Officials in Attendance:

Ms B Couston, Additional Supports Needs Manager (Mid Area)  
Mr J Allan, Lighting and Communications Manager  
Mr R MacLeod, Housing Manager (North)  
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Skye, Ross and Cromarty  
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic 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

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

### Good News Items:

Members welcomed the confirmation from HIE, due to be issued via a press release, that the next Newton Room, a high profile new education hub in the Highlands will be in Dingwall. Members welcomed the possibilities that will open up to pupils from the town and across Ross and Cromarty and wished the Newton Room every success.

The refurbished Dingwall Service Point was due to open on 14 May 2019 and Members were welcome to take a short tour of the new facility immediately following this committee.

Ross County had done very well and should be congratulated on their promotion from the Championship back to the Scottish Premier League.

The Committee **AGREED** to send a letter congratulating Ross County on their return to the Premier League.

## **Business**

### **1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A MacKinnon, due to other Council business, and Mrs C Wilson.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the last meeting which had been held on 30 January 2019 and had been approved by the Highland Council on 14 February 2019.

### **4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No RC/014/19 together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in response to a request for clarification on the protocol followed for road closures during wild fires, the Group Manager responded that the fire teams generally erred on the side of caution and in liaison with Police Scotland by closing the roads where necessary with public notification via radio and social media;
- there had been a high proportion of both deliberate fires and road traffic collisions in the Tain and East Ross area;
- the Fire and Rescue Service was to be commended for the service offering advice on fire safety in people's homes and this free service should be promoted;
- concern at whether the wild fire attendance by SFRS impacted local availability of equipment in the immediate area; and
- in relation to false fire alarms, it was understood that as the SFRS were not responsible for the building when the fire alarm was being reset, it was for the owner of the building to reset the fire alarm.

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

### **5. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No RC/015/19 by the Director of Community Services. An amendment to Table 3 providing information on Void re-let times at Section 5 of the Report was tabled. An error had been discovered whereby

time accrued within the financial year had been used in compiling the original report and not 2 years as required by the Scottish Housing Regulator guidance. The error was historic and impacted previous years' data. The tool had been corrected and verified so that the data for Q4 2018/19 in the document tabled was correct and the error will not recur in future reporting.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- pleased to see the reduction in arrears in the Black Isle area, although it was understood that one or two instances in these areas can have an impact on the figures;
- the length of time for re-letting was a concern, in particular when the average in Highland had improved, but Members understood this was due in part to the change to the table;
- a breakdown of the reasons for the arrears was requested and Members were informed that this request would be passed to the Policy Team and brought back to individual Ward Business Meetings;
- beneficial to Members to know the addresses of the temporary accommodation for homeless people, and this would be brought to individual ward meetings;
- Members understood the pressures on resources but asked that absence management be revisited, and in particular maintenance officer cover be better organised during periods of absence; and
- some of the older more vulnerable adults had little expertise with the new digital media and this had to be taken into account.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

## **6. 2018/19 Area Structures Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais Structaran Sgìreil 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No RC/016/19 by the Director of Community Services. The master list of work requested at a previous meeting was in progress but unfortunately due to circumstances beyond the control of officers, officers had more of a reactive than a proactive role. The list, following input from Members, would provide a priority rating and costings and the officers would then work through the prioritised list on a proactive footing.

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

- in response to a question on the number of bridges detailed in the report at 361, Members were advised that these were only bridges with a span of over 3.5 m and associated with adopted roads and did not include other bridges, culverts and smaller bridges;
- a considerable amount of work had been carried out at Newbridge following land slips, this was an ongoing problem and a solution was required before a major landslip occurred, Members were thereafter advised of different options that could be considered to minimise the risk of continued landslips and these would be passed to Head of Roads and Transport for consideration within overall resources;
- the Canal Bridge in Dingwall had been closed for 2 years, unfortunately this did not come under the same remit; and

- the 45% over budget at the end of February, which had been advised as being from the previous year.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **7. Roads Capital Programme Progress Report 2018/19 Aithisg Adhartais Prògram Calpa Rathaidean 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No RC/017/19 by the Director of Community Services.

Mr C Fraser, thanked the Roads Team for their work at the A832 Fairy Glen at Rosemarkie. There had been road slippage and by acting quickly a more serious problem had been averted.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the stage of the Crask junction works;
- the patching on Craig Road had been excellent, unfortunately the Gas Board had thereafter come along and excavated the pavement;
- the hole in the pavement at Kinnairdie Brae was growing and required work;
- although money was limited, some smaller roads required work as although not used by many cars they were used by heavy goods vehicles and required repair;
- some un-adopted housing estate roads were in a poor state of repair and clarification was sought on achieving adoption of these roads; and
- in response to a question on whether surface dressing works cancelled last year would be rolled over to this year, the Roads Operations Manager advised that cancellations had been due to equipment failure; also following the winter some roads had been beyond surface dressing and now had to be overlaid; and some had not been carried forward as other roads had become greater priorities.

The Committee understood the difficulties of staying within budget and Road officers were to be congratulated on the excellent work done to the Pefferside Park in Dingwall.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **8. Education Scotland Reports Sgrùdaidhean le Foghlam Alba**

There had been circulated Report No RC/018/19 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the new Head Teacher at Alness Academy had made a huge impact on the school and the whole community and Members looked forward to the school move to the new Academy;
- delighted to see the good work of the Gaelic team in Dingwall Academy recognised in the Report; and
- a full Inspection was merely a snapshot of the work of the school, and this report was an even smaller snapshot; and

- several initiatives were ongoing at the moment and this was good to see, with one of these initiatives, through Deaf Services in Dingwall Academy, many children could communicate using sign language.

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

## **9. Christmas Lighting and Decorations Solais agus Sgeadachaidhean Nollaige**

There had been circulated Report No RC/019/19 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the difference in many wards had been highlighted, some areas had volunteers oversee the setting up of Christmas lighting and decorations with no money from the Council, while other areas had some substantial sums towards Christmas lighting;
- Council plant and vehicles can be provided if officers are prepared to undertake the work in their own time; and
- a letter should be sent to the Community Councils/community groups that had previously received funding from the Council advising of the costs involved in the Christmas Lighting, to allow areas to assess and work towards the amount required to continue with their Christmas lighting and decorations where they wish to do so.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that the Council had previously removed the £35,000 budget for the delivery of Christmas Lighting;
- ii. **NOTED** the need to liaise with local Community Councils and/or Community Groups where communities wish to deliver Christmas lighting and decorations; and
- 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.

## **10. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Pharcadh Dì-eucoirichte**

There had been circulated Report No RC/020/19 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was requested that when the towns were revisited contact be made with the Ward Members to ensure the correct work was undertaken;
- road closures signs had been erected in Dingwall High Street two days prior to the parade by Ross County Football Team and it had made a tremendous difference to the parade and the amount of cars on the street; and
- it was good to see officers in towns controlling the parking especially in disabled parking bays and at bus stops.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the rollout of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) to Ross and Cromarty.

**11. Invergordon Common Good Fund – Invergordon Town Hall  
Maoin Mathas Coitcheann Inbhir Ghòrdain – Talla Baile Inbhir Ghòrdain**

There had been circulated Report No RC/021/19 by the Acting Head of Policy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Delighted to see the new group set up for the Invergordon Town Hall, various uses for the hall had been tried over the years but something dynamic and different was required; and
- the progress of the Invergordon Town Hall had taken years and it was good to see it moving on.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the feedback received under the Community Empowerment consultation on disposal of the Town Hall;
- ii. **AGREED** not to proceed with disposal of Invergordon Town Hall at the current time, on the basis of the feedback received and the subsequent establishment of the Invergordon Development Trust;
- iii. **NOTED** that this decision would be published on the Council's website in accordance with the consultation process;
- iv. **APPROVED** the Representations and Responses document attached at **Appendix 2** for publication on the Council website in accordance with the consultation process; and
- v. **AGREED** to hold further action at the current time to allow the Invergordon Development Trust time to develop a proposal. Regular updates on progress will be included within quarterly monitoring on Common Good to enable review and consideration of next steps.

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

There had been circulated Report No RC/022/19 by the Acting Head of Policy concerning the creation of addresses, following consultation with the respective Community Councils and local Members, for new housing developments at Alness and Tore.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- the name of a new business park development in Alness as Easter Ross Business Park;
- the name of the ring road around the new Alness business park development as Fyrish Drive; and
- the name of a new business park development in Tore as Greenhill Business Park.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm.