

**The Highland Council
No. 12 2018/2019**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 9 May 2019 at 10.35am.

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

Present:

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

In Attendance:

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

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown, Mrs M Cockburn and Ms K Currie.

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Convener, on behalf of the Council, welcomed Mr B Allan back to Council business and extended best wishes to Mrs M Cockburn after a period of ill health.

The congratulations of the Council were extended to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex on the birth of their son on 6 May 2019.

Best wishes were conveyed to the Chief Executive on her birthday.

It was **NOTED** that the Pre-Election period in respect of the forthcoming European Elections had now commenced.

It was also **NOTED** that Ms M Smith and Dr I Cockburn were now Joint Leaders of the SNP Group within the Council – with Mr R Bremner as Depute Leader.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

- Item 9(i) - Mr R Laird (financial)
- Item 10 - Mr A Christie (financial)
- Item 13 - Mr D Louden and Mr L Fraser (both financial)

3. Presentation – Calmac/MacBraynes Taisbeanadh – CalMac/Mac a' Bhriuthainn

A Joint Presentation was undertaken at the meeting (12.45pm) by Mr D Mackison, Chief Executive Officer (David MacBrayne Ltd) and Mr B Fulton, Director of Community and Stakeholder Engagement (CalMac) during which the Corporate Structure of the company was highlighted, along with the main Values of Safety, Passion, Bravery, Trust, Teamwork and Results.

In this respect, and in presenting a map of the geographical area covered, it was confirmed that there were currently 33 ferries serving 53 ports and harbours, 50 routes providing 160,000 sailings per year, 5.2m passengers and 1.4m cars. It was also noted that CalMac was the UK's largest ferry operator with 1700 employees and had been awarded 'Ferry Operator of the Year' at the National Transport Awards in 2018/19.

In summary, it was highlighted that the company had deep roots in communities and an understanding and empathy for challenges being faced by the Islands and rural areas. Also, future issues included an ageing fleet and obsolescence of technology, operational options, changing weather patterns and capacity issues.

It was confirmed that any discussion on the terms of the presentation would be undertaken during the lunch recess.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the terms of the presentation as detailed.

**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 7 March 2019 and of the Special Meetings held on 20 March and 25 March 2019 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 – which were **APPROVED**.

Nairnshire Committee, 13 March
Care, Learning and Housing Committee, 14 March
Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 27 March
City of Inverness Area Committee (Special Meeting), 28 March
Lochaber Area Committee, 10 April
City of Inverness Area Committee (Special Meeting), 25 April
Ross and Cromarty Committee, 1 May

It was also **AGREED** that Mr B Boyd would replace Mr R MacWilliam on the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee as put forward by the SNP Group.

**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 25 January 2019 which were **NOTED**.

It was also **AGREED** that Mrs H Carmichael should be included as a Substitute for the Board as submitted by the Independent Group to fill the current vacancy.

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

There had been circulated for information Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Board held on 19 December 2018 (approved by the Board on 21 March 2019) which were **NOTED**.

**8. Question Time
Am Ceiste**

The following Questions had been received in accordance with Standing Order 11 -

(i) Mr B Thompson

To the Chair of the Care, Learning & Housing Committee

“In light of very recent significant increases to the estimate of UK deaths due to air pollution, as well as very recent guidance from Public Health England to all UK local authorities to prioritise protecting children against the effects of air pollution, what

steps is Highland Council taking to monitor and reduce air pollution in and around our schools?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried as to whether there would be a report on the roll-out of proposals in due course.

In response, it was confirmed that a report would be submitted to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee in October 2019.

(ii) Mr A Baxter

To the Leader of the Council

“Will you provide an update on the roll out of car parking charges in accordance with the Change Programme which you outlined at the full Council meeting on 7th March 2019?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried why a 2 tier parking system had been introduced whereby some areas paid increased charges and other areas paid nothing.

In response, it was confirmed that car parking charges were currently being rolled out and the situation would change as the year continued.

(iii) Mr A Baxter

To the Leader of the Council

“Will you confirm where car park charging has been introduced since 1st April 2018 where no charges were previously applicable and what is the anticipated contribution from these car parks towards the £1.407 million budget saving rolled forward into the base budget for 2019/20?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried why, in terms of the original budget template in regard to Year 1 of a 5 Year Programme for the introduction of car parking charges, Members were asked to support a budget proposal under false pretences.

In response, it was confirmed that this matter would be checked, specifically in terms of the budget template and the reference which had been made to ‘false pretences’.

(iv) Mr B Boyd

To the Leader of the Council

“Due to public pressure and lobbying, I am requesting you to bring a report to either the City of Inverness Area Committee or other appropriate Committee on the procedures that were followed in giving delegated planning consent to the project on the Inverness River at the commencement of the Christmas holidays 2018/19?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried why, in terms of local community engagement, Ballifeary Community Council had not been positively engaged in this process in time to submit their views within the deadline.

In response, it was confirmed that this issue would be checked with Officers.

(v) Mr D Louden

To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee

“Highland Council is facing a sharp rise in electricity charges in fiscal year 2019/20. How many of our 1,400 non-domestic buildings or areas of land have been fitted: 1) with LED lighting 2) with solar thermal, solar PV, wind or hydro technologies with or without battery storage to reduce our electricity costs?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried as to how this process would be speeded up to save money on energy bills and to help to save the planet.

In response, it was confirmed that a very successful street lighting project was underway with huge savings and further information would be provided on this in due course.

(vi) Mr N McLean

To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee

“Do we know if the use of ‘Roundup’ (glyphosate) used by the Highland Council has been significantly reduced as per our previous motion to Council several months ago and are the Council following their guidelines of only weed killing the verges where sightline or road safety is an issue?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried how, in terms of the photographic material produced at the meeting, children could use play equipment in certain locations without coming into contact with glysohate.

In response, it was confirmed that this matter would be raised with Officers and a response provided in due course.

**9. Notices of Motion
Brathan Gluasaid**

The following Notices of Motion had been received in accordance with Standing Order 12 –

Declaration of Interest – Mr R Laird declared a financial interest in this item (i) on the basis of having a small shareholding in one of the energy firms and left the Chamber during discussion of the item.

(i) In recent weeks one member of the “Big Six” energy firms has completed the sale of a 49.9% share in two windfarms to a windpower investment firm and an

anonymous UK Pension Fund in a deal worth £635million. This values the two windfarms at a sum of £1.272billion – yes, that is billion. The public benefitted in line with its stake in the development. Our 0% stake earned us £0.

The value of the developments consented to by Highland Council's Planning Committee approved, consented and installed runs to 4,000MW, which has a resale value of £4 million per MW, giving a total value of £16billion. The installed cost averages £1m per MW. This means developers have profited to a maximum of £12billion on projects given approval in the Highland Council area.

We live in a democracy. Housing developers know we'll expect to share in developments. The present arrangement for windfarms has clearly failed dismally to deliver anything of any significance for our communities, except a little community benefit, which is at the developer's discretion. This has to change. In the next cycle of onshore windfarm developments or windfarm reprogramming we should have the right to participate, paying our way as a partner, in the projects brought forward.

Highland Council recognises the £12billion in capital gains made by developers of windfarms and agrees to bring a report to Full Council, exploring ways in which the Council or communities can financially partner these future projects.

Signed: Mr D Louden Ms M Smith

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in defining the term 'social enterprise', it would be imperative to focus more closely in future on the potential benefits from the development of renewables and particularly the scale of capital gain which could be achieved for the area;
- such benefits had already been recognised by others but to date the Council had not had a financial stake in this regard and this had to change;
- there was a need to bring a report to the full Council in order to fully explore ways in which the Council and communities could become financial partners in any future developments;
- financial gains by the Council through this approach would help significantly in eliminating current levels of debt;
- in terms of highlighting a possible and positive way forward for the Council to become more commercially minded, reference was made to suggestions which had been made in regard to future windfarm developments and specifically proposals for a 50/50 financial split between developers and local communities/businesses in this regard;
- it had to be noted that developers had already profited to a maximum of £12billion on projects which had been approved in the Highland Council area but this money had not come to the Highlands and this was at a time when local communities were paying more for energy bills than in any other part of the country;
- this was a matter of public interest and as such deserved a lot more scrutiny in the future, particularly as community benefit was not even mandatory at present;
- it would be extremely helpful if consideration of this Notice of Motion could also include reference to the situation in regard to offshore wind;
- this Motion was particularly timely and not least because onshore wind was at a pivotal point and there was the potential for future applications to include reference to significantly bigger turbines. As such, there had to be discussion with companies in regard to how potential benefits were dealt with in future;
- there was general dismay at the current low level of community benefit being

provided from offshore wind and disappointment with the approach being taken in relation to hydro schemes in the Highlands; and

- in any future discussions, it had to be noted that presently there was often stipulation in place that any community benefit would be restricted in future years if the current year's benefit was not spent in full by communities.

Decision

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

(At this point, Mr Laird returned to the meeting)

(ii) Highland Council recognises the serious and accelerating changes to the world caused by climate change.

We commit to call together an informal group of interested Elected Members from across the Council to:-

- (i) inform ourselves on what the Council is currently doing to reduce our carbon footprint;
- (ii) revisit the Carbon Clever declaration made by the Council in 2012 with a view to updating and reinvigorating those commitments;
- (iii) consider and recommend any new targets and priorities for the Council's Corporate Plan by June 2019;
- (iv) we realise we can achieve far less by working alone so we commit to listening to and involving Highland citizens in all that we do and to involve them in the preparation of our new carbon reduction plan; and
- (v) promptly we will target areas for behavioural change, such as plastic reduction. These areas to be selected by public consultation.

Signed: Mrs M Davidson Mr A Christie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in moving the terms of the Notice of Motion, it was now also proposed to add the following wording to the end of the first sentence – “and declare a climate change emergency”;
- there was no doubt that there was a real climate change emergency but one of the biggest concerns was that there would be a level of ‘tokenism’ in terms of addressing the issues involved and as such there was an urgent need for the UK Government to propose detailed actions to deal with this situation;
- it had to be highlighted that Highland Council had already implemented a ‘Carbon Clever Initiative’ in 2012 and the Council Leader at that time (Mr Drew Hendry) had committed to a ‘Carbon Neutral Inverness’ and a ‘Low Carbon Highlands’ by 2025 to which 100 businesses had signed up and as such it was important that this should be revisited;
- it was important that action on climate change was taken not just for the present time but more importantly for future generations;
- it should be recognised that climate change represented one of the greatest threats to national security (in terms of potential shortage of products, changes to the environment and civil disobedience) also in relation to collective democratic health and social wellbeing and as such there was a need to act now and to act quickly;
- Highland Council was doing relatively well in reducing its carbon footprint but this could always be improved and a key aspect would be encouraging

behavioural change, such as changing normal modes of transport where possible;

- although the terms of the Notice of Motion were supported, it was felt that the wording could be strengthened and in this respect an amended form of words was tabled which highlighted the need to declare a 'climate and ecological emergency', to establish a more formal 'Climate Change Panel' with responsibility for the issues which had been listed and to report directly to the full Council on progress and to work towards a 'Carbon Neutral Highlands by 2025';
- it was a problem that many people did not believe that climate change was real and in this respect it was imperative more information was provided on what was causing it and what the implications would be of any measures put in place to tackle it, such as decarbonisation by 2025;
- there was unease about declaring this to be an 'emergency' and as such it was felt that the wording in the original Notice of Motion was more appropriate than what was being suggested in the tabled amended wording;
- it was accepted that future generations would not judge this period in history kindly if we did not take urgent action now;
- it would be helpful to research what was being done in other areas in this respect and also to contact the UK Government to seek the reinstatement of previous incentives in relation to renewable energy which had been withdrawn;
- there were many 'energy intensive' buildings in the Highlands and as such there was an urgent need to put in place practical measures to reduce our carbon footprint wherever feasible so that we could be seen to be leading by example;
- reducing the carbon footprint of any area would lead as a consequence to reduced energy bills and this would be welcomed by all;
- whilst taking account of the role of the population in respect of climate change, it was contended that nature had an equal role and this needed more research in future;
- as opposed to the proposal for an informal group of Members to consider this issue in detail, it was suggested that a formal Climate Change Panel would be much more effective in terms of recommending future actions to be taken to the full Council; and
- Highland Council had to be at the forefront of this debate and had to include both partners and businesses from across the area in order to establish the most innovative way forward.

Thereafter, Mrs M Davidson, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** the terms of an amended Notice of Motion which took account of the suggested wording in relation to declaring a climate and ecological emergency, establishing a formal Climate Change Panel which would report to the full Council and working towards a Carbon Neutral Highlands by 2025.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr G Cruickshank, moved the wording within the original Notice of Motion.

On a vote being taken, the Motion received 58 votes and the Amendment received 6 votes, with 5 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr J Bruce, Miss J Campbell, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Ms P Hadley, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mr A MacInnes, Mrs D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Macpherson, Mr R MacWilliam, Mrs B McAllister, Mr J McGillivray, Mr N McLean, Mr H Morrison, Ms P Munro, Ms L Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr A Rhind, Mr D Rixson, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr K Rosie, Mr A Sinclair, Ms N Sinclair, Mr C Smith, Ms M Smith and Mr B Thompson.

For the Amendment:

Mrs C Caddick, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie and Mr I Ramon.

Abstentions:

Mr R Gale, Mrs A MacLean, Mr M Reiss, Mr G Ross and Mr P Sagers.

Decision

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

Highland Council recognises the serious and accelerating changes to the world caused by climate change and therefore declares a climate and ecological emergency.

The Council will establish a Climate Change Panel with responsibility for the following and reporting directly to full Council on progress:-

- (i) inform ourselves on what the Council is currently doing to reduce our carbon footprint;
- (ii) revisit the Carbon Clever declaration made by the Council in 2012 with a view to updating and working towards a carbon neutral Highlands by 2025;
- (iii) consider and recommend any new targets and priorities for the Council's Corporate Plan by June 2019;
- (iv) we realise we can achieve far less by working alone so we commit to listening to and involving Highland citizens in all that we do and to involve them in the preparation of our new carbon reduction plan; and
- (v) promptly, we will target areas for behavioural change, such as plastic reduction. These areas to be selected by public consultation.

(iii) Council acknowledges the transformative effects that special schools have on the life outcomes and development of children who attend them. However, with fewer than 180 special school places from a total school roll of nearly 31000, there is a need to expand capacity in this area. There also appears to be particular need for specialist autism provision which many other Councils have.

At the moment, some Highland children who require this specialist education are being placed in schools up to 400 miles away from their families as Highland does not have these facilities.

It is therefore proposed that in order to meet a demand which is only going to increase, to seek a small proportional developer contribution towards this particular

area. It is anticipated the rate charged would be no more than the mid hundreds of pounds. The Planning and Development service is therefore requested to calculate this cost under the existing fair methodology for education contributions and to bring this forward as proposed supplementary guidance to the next appropriate EDI Committee.

Signed: Mr A Jarvie Mr S Mackie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was now proposed that the original Notice of Motion should be amended to the following wording – ‘Council acknowledges the ongoing work into ASN and special school provision. The Planning, Development and Infrastructure Service is therefore requested to conduct a feasibility study into developer contribution towards special schools and to bring a report to the next appropriate Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee’;
- whilst acknowledging the current work being undertaken in this respect, it was suggested that there was a need to consider expanding the provision of specialist education in Highland and thanks were extended to Officers for their help advice which had been greatly appreciated in developing this proposal;
- a specialist residential autism unit had previously been considered by the Council in response to the increasing number of children going out of the Authority area to seek the support and education which they needed;
- there were many very positive examples of the benefits for children who had attended specialist units in the past;
- there had been a huge increase in children born prematurely and who required specialist and often 24 hour care and as such any feasibility study had to include detailed evidence on which any proposed action would need to be based;
- there was a need for any future services in this regard to be provided as locally as possible for the benefit of not just children but also their parents and guardians;
- this proposal had already been implemented by other Local Authorities as a sensible and prudent approach and had delivered significant benefit to those affected;
- whilst being generally supportive of the Notice of Motion, it was important to take note of the work currently being undertaken in this regard and it was suggested that it might have been more beneficial to have this considered after that work had been completed;
- there was already a great deal of excellent work being undertaken in current schools across the area and very positive results from work within an autism unit in a mainstream school;
- an area of concern would be if developer contributions were only received and used in areas where there was significant development as it was felt that any contributions had to be dealt with on a Highland wide basis;
- it would perhaps be more appropriate for a report to be submitted to the full Council on this issue (as opposed to the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee);
- it was also hoped that the review would take account of young adults with learning disabilities and older people who required respite care and should not just be limited to special schools. As such, it would be important to look at demographics and communities on a holistic level so that future services could be provided which were relevant and pertinent for as many people as possible;

- it was considered that one solution would not fit all and any proposed action would have to be undertaken on a Highland wide level;
- there was concern about the potential catchment area of any new building and the possibility of some children being excluded if they were outside of that area;
- it had to be recognised that the needs of every single child were different and would require different arrangements to be put in place;
- there was a need for detailed statistics as to how many children had been born in the past 2-3 years who would require specialist education;
- this would represent a very difficult task for Officers in terms of determining how future specialist education could be provided and how it could be financed as it was considered that planning gain would not be sufficient in the long term in light of the various and complex issues involved;
- in relation to establishing the level of future need, consultation with partners and stakeholders would be imperative;
- it was felt that the Notice of Motion as amended was still too narrow in scope and that any future report would have to make reference to the Council's Capital Plan and capital investment in relation to the special school estate, alongside any issues in relation to developer contributions; and
- there was concern in relation to the link between the provision of education and the buoyancy of the property market; and
- it was suggested that the best way forward (as an alternative to what was being proposed) was for both Members and Officers to consult with families in the first instance in order to work out exactly what was needed for their children and for a feasibility study to be undertaken thereafter.

Decision

Members **AGREED** the following amended Notice of Motion:-

Council acknowledges the ongoing work into ASN and special school provision.

The Planning, Development and Infrastructure Service is therefore requested to conduct a feasibility study into developer contributions towards special schools and to bring a report to a future full Council meeting.

10. Highland Partnership of NHS Highland and the Highland Council – Driving Forward Health and Social Care Integration Ath-sgrùdadh air Aonta Com-pàirteach le NHS na Gàidhealtachd

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS 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 him from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. HC/14/19 dated 22 April 2019 by the Chief Executive.

Prior to discussion, a Joint Presentation was undertaken by the Chief Executives of Highland Council and NHS Highland during which it was confirmed that at present a situation existed for a renewed relationship to be instigated between both organisations and that all opportunities would be taken to work more closely together in the future.

In this respect, it was highlighted that both organisations were facing similar challenges and that further joint working arrangements would be put in place to find solutions as and when they arose. As such, the recommendations within the report included a proposal for investment in the appointment of a temporary post at Head of Service level for a 9 month period in order to lead a review and present recommendations within the 2019/2020 financial year.

It was also confirmed that a further report in this regard would be presented to the December meeting of the full Council in order to keep Members fully updated.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in terms of the key issues of leadership and collaboration, the commitment to partnership working was welcomed and there was now a need to examine what had worked well in the past and what needed to be changed;
- it was felt that the proposal for a new temporary post for a 9 month period represented a good opportunity to further evaluate the integration process at this point;
- there were very few Members of the Council who had been in place at the start of the integration process and it would therefore be helpful if a training event for both Council and Board Members could be arranged in due course;
- the real benefits of the joint working arrangements could be seen in communities across the Highlands and as such it was critical that 'tailor made' services were provided to those who needed them most in the future;
- regular consultation with Local Members across the Highland area was vital, along with a commitment to review governance and implement change in terms of accountability where necessary;
- in recognising that there would be a need to improve on the current NHS complaints procedures, it was noted that any issues in this respect should be conveyed directly to the NHS Highland Chief Executive where necessary;
- there was a need to demonstrate the political will to enable a shift in the balance of care where required and continue the improvements which were being put in place;
- the circulation to Members of the Council of a list of contact details for specific NHS Highland staff would be helpful;
- it would be important for all improvements to be monitored and measured in order that a further report could be submitted to highlight the details of how and where changes had been successfully implemented;
- with specific reference to suicide prevention, it was imperative that lessons were learned from other areas who had dealt with this issue and seen a reduction in the number of suicides, particularly in relation to young men under the age of 45;
- the proposals for increased community involvement were welcomed and in this respect it was highlighted that there was requirement for a needs based approach in future;
- there were areas of extreme rurality in the Highlands and there was a need for further information as to how potential improvements would be implemented in such areas;
- involvement of third sector colleagues would be essential to ensure the success of any future proposals; and
- in relation to the issue of suicide prevention, it was noted that NHS Highland were to consider the introduction of a Mental Health Directorate and this was welcomed.

Decision

Members **AGREED** that the Council and NHS Highland should work together to prepare a draft action plan in response to the review.

It was also **AGREED** that the Council should invest in the appointment of a temporary post at Head of Service level for a 9 month period in order to (a) lead the review and present recommendations within the 2019/2020 financial year to enable a new partnership agreement to be signed in April 2020 and (b) to work with the Chief Executive to review and provide recommendations for the permanent resourcing of a health position within the new management structure of the Council.

**11. Corporate Plan and Improvement Priorities 2019-22
Comharran Coileanaidh agus Comharra-mheasadh Reachdail Ionadail agus
Nàiseanta 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/15/19 dated 24 April 2019 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the approach being taken for development of the Corporate Plan, which would enable the Council to be placed in a stronger position in future, was welcomed;
- it was felt that there could be confidence in the sustainability of this approach which would ensure connection to communities across the Highlands and would be robustly monitored;
- this Plan provided a clear understanding of the vision of the Council and how various issues would be dealt with in future;
- in terms of clarity of ambition and direction, it would be important for Strategic Committees to ensure that priorities and actions linked with the Plan;
- it was suggested that there was a need to review the statistics which had been provided in relation to population decline across the Highlands as it was felt that the position might be more optimistic in some areas than had been projected;
- the honesty of the survey was welcomed but it was worrying to note that only 62% of Members felt that they had a good understanding of performance across the Council and this had to be improved, perhaps through further training events for Members in this respect;
- there was a need for a clear understanding as to how key performance indicators were to be improved;
- it was noted that only 83% of Members had agreed that a key aspect of their role was to scrutinise performance and challenge Officers which was disappointing as it was felt that all Members of the Council should see this as a priority;
- it was worrying that some Members had felt that the public forum and webcasting of meetings made challenge (of Officers) more difficult as it was imperative that there was no diminution of public forums/webcasting across the Council and a commitment had to be given in this regard as a matter of priority;
- it was accepted that there was a place for Seminars and Workshops within the Council but it was accepted that this should be in addition to (and not instead of) the current arrangements for public forums/webcasting; and
- it would be helpful if consideration could be given to increased input from (and engagement with) the public in respect of Council business in future.

Decision

Members **APPROVED** the draft Corporate Plan for 2019-22 and **AGREED** that further Member and Officer engagement was required to continue to develop and refine the Plan's targets with further reports coming to the Council on progress with the first no later than September 2019.

It was also **NOTED** as follows:–

- (i) that the Corporate Plan would be updated to take account of decisions Members took in relation to the Council's Governance Review, any amendments to the Change Programme, the Council's approach to performance improvement and any organisational restructure;
- (ii) that the Plan would support the delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan;
- (iii) that the Corporate Plan would be the subject of an Annual Performance Report in September each year and the first report for this Plan was due in September 2020; and
- (iv) in addition to the further work required on measures and targets that the Plan was normally reviewed following the Annual Performance Report to Council and any changes would be submitted to Council.

12. **Change Strategy** **Prògram Atharrachaidh**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/16/19 dated 25 April 2019 by the Chief Executive.

There had also been tabled at the meeting an Amended Appendix to this report.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for a further recommendation to be added to the report in regard to the Chief Executive being tasked with developing an evaluation and reporting system to provide leading indicators that the financial outcomes were being achieved and that once agree this would be reported on a regular basis to the Council;
- in highlighting that there had to be scrutiny in place prior to action being taken, and with specific relation to the appointment of 4 additional posts through the Care, Learning & Housing Committee in relation to Sustainable Education in the Highlands whereby it had been agreed that a report would be commissioned to advise on progress but to date there had been no further feedback, it was noted that that a progress report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 29 May;
- in regard to future proposals for communication, it was imperative that communities across the Highlands were listened to and that action was taken thereafter where and when necessary;
- in regard to the proposed creation of temporary posts, there was a need for a 'sunset clause' be used so that any proposals to make such posts permanent were reported to Members in the first instance and a report submitted to the Council during consideration of the budget in February 2020;
- in relation to Education Transformation, it had been stated that 'work was underway within Schools to enhance capacity to lead quality improvement work and develop improved approaches to learning and teaching' and it was

suggested that it would be helpful if examples of this work could be provided, along with further information on whether the associated training would be provided in-house or externally;

- it would be important to arrange as much in-house training as possible as public perception was that previous spending on Consultants had been too high;
- with regard to the ASN Transformation Project, any future proposals for consultation had to focus on going out to listen to communities across the Highlands and the provision of feedback thereafter;
- in terms of the proposal that the Change Fund should support the appointment of a full time Project Manager for a minimum of 9 months with the option to extend if required into the second year of the Change Strategy, it was questioned whether one full time post would be sufficient in regard to the potential workload associated with this post;
- in relation to the Visitor Levy consultation, there was a need to consult with local businesses and those who would be most affected in the first instance and that this should be undertaken along with research into what had already been put in place in this respect in other parts of the country;
- with specific reference to the original stated purpose of the Change Fund which had been agreed by the full Council in February, it was suggested that only the Education Transformation programme, ASN Project Management post and NHS Partnership Review met the relevant criteria and further consideration should be given as to whether this was the best use of funds for the other projects which had been listed in the report;
- in regard to the issues which had been raised as to further reports on the use of the Fund, and specifically the posts which were being proposed, it was noted that the intention was to report back through the Strategic Committees and to the full Council at the time of budget consideration in February 2020;
- it would be imperative that consultation was undertaken with staff members, service users and partners on the proposals where required;
- in regard to the commitment which had been given to establish a parent and pupil advocacy resource, it was suggested that parents in Lochaber had not yet been consulted and this should be undertaken as soon as possible;
- there was concern that the proposals in relation to the Visitor Levy consultation might duplicate what was already being undertaken by the Scottish Government;
- in contrast, it was suggested that the proposals in respect of the Visitor Levy represented the best value for money in light of the potential benefits if successful for the Highlands, including enabling improvements to infrastructure and the environment, and that there was a need for a detailed consultation exercise to be undertaken with local hotels and businesses; and
- in terms of communication in future, there had to be an authoritative and instant response where inaccurate information concerning the Council appeared in the local press and on social media.

Thereafter, Ms M Smith, seconded by Dr I Cockburn, **MOVED** the recommendations within the report in respect of the ASN Project Manager, the establishment of a parent and pupil advocacy resource (£11k), the inclusion of young people as key stakeholders in shaping the Council's transformation of inclusive practice (£11k) and the NHS Senior Health post only.

As a **FIRST AMENDMENT**, the Convener, seconded by Mr A MacKinnon, moved all of the recommendations within the report – together with the proposal for the Chief Executive to be tasked with developing an evaluation and reporting system to provide leading indicators that the financial outcomes were being achieved and that

once agreed this would be reported on a regular basis to the Council.

As a **SECOND AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr S Mackie, moved that the recommendations within the report should be agreed – with the exception of the Visitor Levy consultation/proposals (£23k) and the proposals for Enhanced Communications (£60k).

On a vote being taken between the First Amendment and the Second Amendment, the First Amendment received 38 votes and the Second Amendment received 14 votes, with 19 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the First Amendment:

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

For the Second Amendment:

Mr J Bruce, Mr A Jarvie, Mr R Laird, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr D Mackay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr D MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr J McGillivray, Mr I Ramon, Mr P Saggars, Mr A Sinclair, and Mr C Smith.

Abstentions:

Mr B Allan, Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Dr I Cockburn, Mr C Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Ms P Hadley, Mr A Henderson, Ms E Knox, Mr D Louden, Mr A MacInnes, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr N McLean, Ms P Munro, Mr K Rosie and Ms M Smith.

On a subsequent vote being undertaken between the Motion and the First Amendment, the Motion received 22 votes and the First Amendment received 48 votes, with 1 abstention, and the **FIRST AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr B Allan, Mr A Baxter, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Dr I Cockburn, Mr C Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Ms E Knox, Mr R Laird, Mr D Louden, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr A MacInnes, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr J McGillivray, Mr N McLean, Ms P Munro, Mr K Rosie and Ms M Smith.

For the First Amendment:

Mr G Adam, Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr J Finlayson, Mr M Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr T Heggie, Mr A Henderson, Mr A Jarvie, Mr B Lobban, Mr R MacDonald, Mrs D Mackay, Mr D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackinnon, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr H Morrison, Ms L Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr I Ramon, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Mr D Rixson, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Mr P Saggars, Mr A Sinclair, Ms N Sinclair, Mr C Smith, Mr B Thompson and Ms C Wilson.

Abstention:

Ms P Hadley.

Decision

The Council **AGREED:-**

- (i) that the six priority areas for expenditure from the second phase of the Change Fund would be: Education Transformation, ASN project management and parent and pupil advocacy, Visitor Levy consultation, NHS Partnership Agreement Review, Catering and Cleaning Peer Review and Enhancing Communications;
- (ii) that support for these projects would be provided through a combination of the Change Fund and the re-prioritisation of existing in-house resources; and
- (iii) a total sum of £0.307m (pro rata) for expenditure against the six areas as detailed in Sections 5 and 6 and in Appendix 1 to the report.

It was also **AGREED** that the Chief Executive should be tasked with developing an evaluation and reporting system to provide leading indicators that the financial outcomes were being achieved and that, once agreed, this should be reported on a regular basis to Council.

13. **Redesign Update** **Cunntas às Úr mu Ath-dhealbhada**

Declarations of Interest – Mr D Loudon and Mr L Fraser declared financial interests in this item on the basis of having undertaken work for specific companies which had been listed and left the Chamber during discussion.

At this point, Mr D Loudon left the meeting.

There had been circulated Report No. HC/17/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Chief Executive.

In this regard, there had also been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Redesign Board held on 26 March, 23 April and 1 May 2019.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need to thank all those involved in the work which had been undertaken as this had been a very difficult piece of work, especially in relation to compilation of the baseline information on costings;
- it would be important for future work to focus on improvements to structures, processes and systems in terms of delivering savings, becoming more efficient and making it easier for staff to do their jobs;
- consideration should be given to speaking to previous post holders if possible in order to learn lessons from their experience; and
- there was a need to address current issues whereby large amounts of travel time were involved in certain jobs, perhaps by employing local tradesmen in local areas where this was feasible.

Decision

Members **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Redesign Board and **NOTED** the progress on Council Redesign work.

Members also **AGREED** the Board's recommendations of the Agency and Temporary Workers Peer Review and, in respect of Trade Services, to the recommendation to establish a multi-supplier framework via an Open Procedure as considered by the Board at its meeting on 1 May 2019.

(At this point, Mr Loudon returned to the meeting).

**14. Electoral Review of Island Council Areas
Ath-sgrùdadh Chrìochan Ùghdarras Ionadail**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/18/19 dated 29 April 2019 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst the proposals in the report focused on a Council response, individual Members and Groups within the Council were also entitled to submit their own responses if they so wished;
- it was felt that the Council had been 'behind the curve' in previous years when the Boundary Commission had undertaken consultation with Island Council areas and as such there was need to change this in future;
- it was considered that the issues of 'remote' and 'rural' should have been included in the Islands Bill;
- there was a need for early engagement with the Boundary Commission on the principles to be followed in future reviews; and
- the unintended consequences of what was being proposed within the report was a concern, particularly in regard to any future changes which could perhaps adversely affect remote and rural areas in particular, and as such it would be beneficial in the first instance for discussion to be undertaken between the Leader of the Council and interested Members in order to inform any future discussion or correspondence with the Boundary Commission.

Decision

It was **AGREED** that an early meeting should be arranged between the Leader and those Members who were interested in further discussing this issue.

**15. Deeds Executed
Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh**

It was **NOTED** that a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 7 March 2019 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

**16. Exclusion of the Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Council **AGREED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**17. Organisational Structures
Structaran Eagrachaidh**

There had been circulated to Members only Confidential Report No. HC/19/19 dated 9 May 2019 by the Chief Executive.

Decision

Following private discussion, the Council **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 5.50pm.

**The Highland Council
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick, on Wednesday, 15 May 2019 at 10.00am.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr D Mackay
Mr W Mackay

Mr M Reiss
Mr K Rosie
Ms N Sinclair

Officials in attendance:

Mrs H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care & Learning Service
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Planning & Development Service (by VC)
Ms L MacKellaich, Road Safety Officer, Community Services (by VC)
Ms J Sutherland, Senior Engineer, Community Services
Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr J Allan, Lighting and Communications Manager, Community Services
Mr J Gunn, Technician, Community Services
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager R Dibble, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms K Jenks, External Auditor, Audit Scotland

Mr M Reiss in the Chair

The Chair welcomed Ms K Jenks, Audit Scotland who was attending the meeting in relation to the Best Value Assurance audit.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Liesgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr S Mackie and Mr A Sinclair.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

Following on from this item, It was proposed the Minutes be taken as the first item of substantive business on the agenda followed by 'Matters Arising' to allow Members to raise any issues from the previous meeting. In addition, it was suggested that an action tracker be produced for the Committee to allow Members to monitor progress with individual actions.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that in future the 'Minutes' be taken as the first item of substantive business on the agenda followed by an item 'Matters Arising'; and
- ii. **AGREED** that an action tracker be produced for the Committee.

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

There had been circulated Report No CC/06/19 dated 3 May 2019 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- an update was sought on progress with the upgrading of Thurso Fire Station. It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing with NHS Highland on the potential for a shared facility in Thurso and Wick;
- clarification was sought and provided on the processes in place to identify individuals at risk and an update was provided on the lessons learnt by the Service and partners following a recent fire fatality;
- the potential to expand the use of social media as a measure to address recruitment challenges in the area;
- the appointment of a full time rural full time officer post in the area was a good news story and should be welcomed;
- the Service be thanked for the hard work and commitment of firefighters in tackling recent major wildfires in Sutherland. It was also important to thank employers for the support they had provided in releasing firefighters to attend these incidents and communities for the support they had provided;
- clarification was sought and provided on the decision making process around the deployment of a helicopter to tackle major wildfires and the process for recruiting and training volunteers to attend these incidents;
- the importance of continuing to reinforce key messages to the public with a view to reducing the number of wildfires.
- the potential to use Traffic Scotland's information signs to alert the public when there was a high fire risk. The Local Senior Officer advised that he would raise this matter with Traffic Scotland;
- the importance of ensuring the locations referred to in the Service's news releases were identified correctly; and
- an explanation was sought and provided on the interventions undertaken by the Service, including with schools, to reduce the number of deliberate fires.

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

4. **Area Priorities - Caithness: The Energy County** **Prìomhachasan Sgìreil – Gallaibh: Siorrachd an Lùtha**

There had been circulated Report No CC/07/19 dated 29 April 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy.

The Chair thanked Mr R Bremner and Ms N Sinclair in particular for their work in developing the Area Priorities.

In discussion, it was suggested this was a positive and aspirational document which achieved a good balance in terms of being a genuine strategic vision while also being as local and pragmatic as possible. It set realistic and achievable goals, and also tied in with the key themes of the Council's Programme.

Further points raised included:-

;

- a key issue for Caithness as the 'Energy County' was both the opportunities in the energy sector in terms of employment and the economy and also the collective energy and determination of communities within area to deliver on the area priorities;
- the challenge going forward was how to progress the document. There was a need to develop the local community partnership further and have a mechanism of tracking progress and measuring what was being delivered and achieved;
- the projections for depopulation in the area would only be realised if no action was being taken and therefore a key focus of the area priorities was to build on the plans already in place and focus on future plans, for example in the energy and technology sectors, and also on lobbying to create further opportunities
- there were communities in Caithness where the population was increasing and therefore it was important to maintain a balanced view across the whole area;
- a point in regard to the interest being expressed by local families in vacant affordable housing in Mey which was becoming available for sale and the boost this would provide to the community; and
- the creation of more modern apprenticeships in Caithness was key to retaining young people in the area.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** "Caithness: The Energy County", the local strategic priorities for Caithness, including the stated priorities for the next 12 months;
- AGREED** to promote these with the wider Council membership and as part of the Council's Programme 2017-22 Local Voices, Highland Choices;
- NOTED** that there will be opportunity through the Caithness Community Partnership and engagement with partner agencies, community bodies and communities to consider wider shared priorities over the Council's term; and
- NOTED** that further work will be done in 2019 to identify how the local priorities agreed can be supported by staff and any other Council resources. This will include considering how best to measure progress. Some priorities are already well aligned to the Council's Programme

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

There had been circulated Report No CC/08/19 dated 3 May 2019 by the Director of Care and Learning.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the need to ensure the continuation of Gaelic medium education from the current level of provision at nursery and primary school level within the ASG, through Thurso High School. An update was therefore requested in relation to the provision of and preparation for Gaelic medium education at the School;
- concern was expressed in relation to the review of the Council's policy on the transition from nursery to primary school. The view was expressed that while the driving factors to tighten up this policy maybe budget and capacity issues, these should not override the judgement of head teachers and parents, and the principal consideration should always be the wellbeing and development of the individual child. The Education Quality Improvement

Manager confirmed that the wellbeing and development of the child was always the most important driver she would inform Ms N Sinclair of any meetings being arranged in relation to this policy;

- there were also potential resource implications associated with the additional support that maybe required for children starting school before they were ready to make the transition from nursery;
- the improvements delivered in the figures for positive destinations at Thurso High School was welcomed;
- the potential for Members to meet with Head Teachers in the area be investigated further ;
- clarification was sought and provided on the policies in place to reintegrate pupils who had carried out physical assaults at school;
- the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team at Thurso High School be congratulated on their hard work and proactive approach in delivering improvements at the School;
- concern at the delays in securing improvements to the bus turning area at Thurso High School and specifically in the Council providing a plan to show the developer the area of land involved, noting that this had been raised again at a recent meeting of the Parent Council;
- the offer of the refurbished former Janitor's House at Thurso School had contributed towards attracting two new teachers to the area, and the opportunities to upgrade other similar disused janitor's houses in the area. The Manager advised that this issue was being considered at a Highland wide level and she would report back to the Chair as to whether a report was to be brought to Members on the matter; and
- while the condition and suitability of Thurso High School was listed as 'poor', this did not reflect all parts of the building such as the soft areas, and the Senior Management Team should be commended on being realistic in relation to the prospect of a new build.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that an update be brought back to the Committee in relation to the provision of and preparation for Gaelic medium education at Thurso High School.

6. Caithness & Sutherland Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Guidance Ro-innleachd Meadhan Baile Ghallaibh agus Chataibh

There had been circulated Report No CC/09/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

- the Supplementary Guidance complemented and supported the work being undertaken locally and involving a range of stakeholders to develop a town centre regeneration strategy for Wick, which demonstrated there was a joint shared purpose on this matter;
- this joint approach created an opportunity to create a more vibrant, welcoming and identifiable town centre in Wick;
- in terms of next steps, it was important that the public consultation exercise was aligned with the consultation being undertaken locally;

- local Members would be encouraging the Thurso Community Development Trust to engage fully in the consultation and it would be helpful if a Council officer could meet with the Trust directly;
- support was expressed for the potential to convert vacant shops for residential use;
- caution was expressed in relation the practicality of cycling through the town centre precinct on safety grounds;
- in relation to the Thurso town centre, the opportunities to better signpost the views and proximity to the beach; and
- support for the focus in the Strategy regenerating the area around the Caithness Horizons building in Thurso.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the Draft Caithness and Sutherland Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Guidance at **Appendix 1** for the purposes of public consultation;
- AGREED** to authorise officers to make minor presentational changes prior to publication, in consultation with and agreement from the chairs of the Area Committees;
- AGREED** the approach to public consultation as set out in section 5 of this report; and
- NOTED** that issues raised in comments received on the draft Strategy will be reported back to the two relevant Area Committees for their consideration, together with possible amendments to the Strategy prior to completion of procedures leading to its adoption as statutory Supplementary Guidance.

7. **20mph Speed Limit Implementation Wick** **Cur an Gnìomh Casg Astair 20msu ann an Inbhir Ùige**

There had been circulated Report No CC/10/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

The Road Safety Officer advised that following a recent meeting with local Members, the proposed order/scheme extents had been amended to remove a number of arterial routes from the proposal i.e. North Road, Thurso Street, Thurso Road, George Street, Robert Street, Miller Avenue and Gowrie Place. In relation to the Bridge Street/High Street section it had been agreed to retain the 20mph limit on this routes on the basis this was an accident cluster area and that as parking restrictions in this area were to be removed this could naturally have the effect of increasing speeds.

In discussion, Members commented as follows:-

- the introduction of a blanket 20mph limit in Wick would not have been appropriate for the town and the amendments to the proposed order would reduce driver frustration while at the same time significantly improving road safety particularly in school zones and built up residential areas;
- the Road Safety Officer be thanked for facilitating the amendments to the original proposal within a short timescale;
- clarification was sought and provided in relation to the retention of the 20mph limit on Bank Head Row/Station Road;
- clarification was sought and provided that four speed signs were being ordered for specific locations in Wick to support the implementation of the

speed limit, and that after speed counts would be carried out to determine the effectiveness of the new speed limit;

- it was hoped the Police locally could undertake an appropriate level of enforcement following the implementation of the speed limit;
- the scope for camera vans to be deployed to assist with enforcement. The Road Safety Officer confirmed she would investigate the potential to request that a camera van be deployed; and
- a request that a meeting be arranged with local Members to consider traffic management issues in Ward 2: Thurso and North West Caithness.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the background to the proposed 20mph speed limit order for Wick, in particular the collision history, and the representations received;
- APPROVED** the making of the Road Traffic Regulation Order (RTRO), subject to an amendment to remove arterial routes from the proposal on the basis agreed with local Members; and
- NOTED** the intention to carry out after speed counts to determine effectiveness of the new reduced speed limit, and **AGREED** that the potential for camera vans to be deployed be investigated.

The Committee further **AGREED** that a meeting be arranged with local Members to consider traffic management issues in Ward 2: Thurso and North West Caithness.

8. Road Structural Maintenance Report 2019/20 Càradh Structarail Rathaidean 2019/20

There had been circulated Report No CC/11/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern around the extreme challenges in terms of the available budget and the condition of the road network in the area and the frustrations this created for Members and the public;
- concern the schemes local Members were identifying as priorities were not been recognised in the Programme;
- the plan to have monthly meetings between Roads officers and Members to discuss progress with roads issues was welcomed on the basis there was a need to improve communication; and
- a point in regard to the potential costs associated with undertaking works to improve the condition of Ormlie Road, Thurso. The Senior Engineer confirmed she would provide the Chair with the costs of repairs and overlaying.

Thereafter, the local Members advised that they had expected the Riverside/Norseman Car Park in Wick to be included within the Programme. This was on the basis that a fit for purpose car park in this location was considered to be an important part of the holistic approach being taken locally to the regeneration of Wick town centre. It was important therefore that the Service had regard to the views of Members, local community council and the public on this issue.

Members expressed concern that car park had been deteriorating for a number of years. There was a question as to which Service within the Council was responsible for its maintenance, and concern was expressed that this type of

bureaucracy should not be allowed to take priority over localism. It was acknowledged there had been a commitment given by the Service to carry out pot hole repairs to the car park at a cost of approximately £6k. However, it was requested that a new Programme be developed which included a good repair of the Norseman Car Park, and an indication provided on the implications for the other schemes to ensure a reasonable level of safety and quality was maintained in terms of the priorities identified within the Programme

The Senior Engineer advised that the capital element of the Programme was allocated for roads schemes on the basis of the mileage of roads in the area. She understood that the Care and Learning Service who were responsible for the car park had instructed repairs at a cost of £50k to be carried out, but she was unaware of what these works would involve.

In response, Members expressed concern that they had not been informed about the intention of the Care and Learning Service to allocate monies to carry out repairs to the car park. There was a need for clarity to be provided at a senior level within the Council as to level of repairs this would achieve, and whether it would include re-lining works. There was also a need to consider whether the Roads budget or alternative sources of funding could be used to top up the 50k to achieve a higher standard of repair.

In regard to the proposal to defer consideration of the Programme, the Senior Engineer cautioned that there was a narrow window in June and July for undertaking surface dressing works.

During further discussion, it was suggested that the Roads Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20 be deferred to an urgent special meeting of the Committee to allow further consideration on the options in respect of the Norseman Car Park, Wick, and that the Director of Community Services or the Head of Roads and Transport be invited to attend, by video conference if more convenient. This would be on the basis that the allocation of £6k to undertake emergency pot hole repairs would also be deferred meantime.

The Committee **AGREED** to defer consideration of the Roads Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20 to an urgent special meeting of the Committee, and that the Director of Community Services or Head of Roads and Transport be asked to attend this meeting.

9. Christmas Lighting and Decorations Solais agus Sgeadachaidhean Nollaige

There had been circulated Report No CC/12/19 dated 29 April 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, reference was made to the opportunity to use Ward discretionary funds to assist with the additional amounts of community funding that would be required, as detailed in the report.

It had been reported that the new LED street lights on the A9 at Spittal, had not been fitted with the connections to allow Christmas lighting to be erected. In response, it was confirmed that the trunk road was the responsibility of BEAR Scotland and communities would have to bear the costs which were prohibitive. The Lighting and Communications Manager confirmed that where the Council

replaced street lighting connections were provided, and undertook to check any opportunities in respect of the truck road.

The Committee:-

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

10. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2018 to 31 Am Mart 2019

There had been circulated Report No CC/13/19 dated 3 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

The Principal Housing Officer circulated a corrected the narrative in connection with section 6.3 of the report.

In discussion, concern was expressed at the delay between the budget being agreed in February and authority to recruit requests being granted, with specific reference to a vacant housing management post in the area for which budget provision had been made.

Related to the above, it was reported that complaints were being received in relation to the standard of grass cutting in the area due fact the grass cutting programme had commenced late. The budget had been agreed in February and therefore it was critical that by the beginning of April, budget holders had the authority to commit to the ordering of machinery to ensure works could commence at start of the season.

Further points raised included:-

- an update was sought and provided on the continuing challenges associated with the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears in the area, noting that slow improvements were being observed;
- clarification was sought on the issues around the potential to provide housing for homeless people from other areas in void properties in Caithness and reference to the challenges around having the infrastructure and capacity within services in the area to support and sustain such tenancies;
- issues around advantaging certain professional groups such as teachers in terms of cheap accommodation including the option of refurbishing janitors houses given the level of voids in the area; and
- in regard to the above, it was suggested that Members have a separate discussion on the options to reduce the number of void properties in Caithness in a forthcoming meeting on the environmental budget.

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

11. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 20 February 2019, which were approved by the Council on 7 March 2019.

The meeting ended at 1.45pm.

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, 16 May 2019 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mrs L MacDonald
Mrs J Barclay	Mr R MacDonald (substitute) (by video conference)
Mr B Boyd	Mrs A MacLean
Miss J Campbell	Mr D MacLeod
Dr I Cockburn	Mr D Macpherson
Mr M Finlayson	Mr H Morrison
Mr C Fraser	Mr D Rixson
Mr J Gordon	Mrs T Robertson
Mr J Gray	Mr K Rosie
Mr A Henderson	Mr C Smith
Mr R Laird	

Non Members also present:

Ms I Campbell (am only)	Mr B Lobban (am only)
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Mackay
Mr J Finlayson (am only)	

In attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure
 Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
 Ms C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources, 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 J Allan, Lighting and Communications Manager, Community Services
 Mr B Cameron, Housing Policy & Investment Manager, Community Services
 Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Care, Learning and Housing
 Mr S Duncan, Property Manager, Development and Infrastructure 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 D Mudie – Area Planning Manager (South), Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager, Chief Executive's Service
 Mr J Robertson, Programme Manager City Region Deal, Chief Executive's Service
 Mr A Yates, Environmental Health Manager, Community Services
 Mr A Puls, Principal Officer - Building Conservation and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service

Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Ms C Pendreigh, Food for Life Partnerships Manager, Soil Association (Item 4)
 Ms M Gilmore, Food for Life (Item 4)
 Mr R Robertson, Partnership Director, HITRANS (Item 15)
 Mr N MacRae, Partnership Manager, HITRANS (Item 15)

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 W MacKay, Mr I Ramon, Mr A Rhind and Mr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 12 – Mr D Macpherson (non-financial)
 Item 25 – Mrs A MacLean (non-financial)
 Item 26 – Mr A Henderson, Mr D Rixson and Mrs T Robertson (all non-financial)

At this point in the meeting the Chair referred to the sudden and tragic death of Lawrence Jones, a highly valued member of Community Services. Lawrence was 24 years old and worked as a Customer Services Officer in the Performance and Resources team. He was dedicated, enthusiastic and always eager to help Members, staff and the public. His wit, friendliness and charm were greatly missed. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair expressed condolences to his family and assured Members that support had been put in place for staff affected by Lawrence's death.

3. Good News
Naidheachdan Matha

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

5. Development and Infrastructure Service Revenue Budget – Near Final Outturn 2018/19
Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh is a' Bhun-structair – Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/21/19 dated 9 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee having commended the work undertaken by the Service to return an underspend, **APPROVED** the revenue budget near final outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2019.

6. **Capital Expenditure Monitoring** **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Caiteachais Chalpa**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/22/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the UIG Ferry Terminal Steering Group was supportive of the proposed Autumn/Winter 12 week outage to replace the linkspan and the construction of the revised roundhead;
- reassurance was sought, and received, that whilst a slippage of £1.4m had been reported in relation to Alness Academy, the project remained on schedule for completion by April 2020;
- in response to a suggestion that money rolled forward from slippage in relation to the Early Learning and Childcare building programme should be used to provide a business case and undertake preliminary works for a new academy in Nairn, Members were advised that until the long-term future of the school was established, the extent of investment required was unknown. However, it was confirmed that short-term works based on the condition survey could be prioritised within the available funding and that details of this could be provided to Ward Members;
- in response to a request for an update on flood prevention works in Thurso, the Head of Infrastructure advised that he would provide a briefing to Ward Members;
- in response to a request for further information regarding play park equipment, it was confirmed that the Council had bought equipment on behalf of self-funded community groups and that there was currently a programme of works to install the equipment; and
- it was suggested that money not used from the environment budget allocation within some housing schemes could be used for the provision of play parks within these schemes.

The Committee **APPROVED**:-

- i. the capital expenditure near final monitoring position for the year ended 31 March 2019; and
- ii. Autumn/Winter 12 week outage at Uig.

7. **Property Revenue Maintenance Budget 2019/20 Budget Allocation** **Riarachadh Buidseit 2019/20 Buidseit Gleidhidh Teachd-a-steach Seilbhe**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/23/19 dated 30 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed work categories, budget allocations and project proposals for the 2019/20 property revenue maintenance budget.

8. Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 4 Performance Review
Frèam Coileanaidh Dealbhaidh agus Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanaidh Cairteal 4

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/24/19 dated 15 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the increase in the number of users of the West Highland Way was highlighted;
- the Service was commended for the work undertaken in relation to the large volume of renewable energy applications which had required submission to the South Planning Applications Committee prior to the feed in tariff cut-off date at the end of March 2019;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that staff who had been prioritised to deal with the renewable energy applications would be re-engaged within the Service to reduce any further slippage in performance;
- in welcoming the information provided regarding enforcement activity taken by the Council, reassurance was sought, and received, that the Council would undertake the necessary enforcement action required if matters could not be resolved informally and that this was done in the interest of the public;
- it was emphasised that the public was keen to know what enforcement action was being taken by the Council and that the statutory processes could often frustrate members of the public as only the individual complainants were provided with an update; and
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that Morrison Construction had provided reassurance to the Council that completion of the Smithton and Culloden Flood Scheme works remained on schedule.

The Committee **NOTED** the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards, Development Plans, Transport Planning, Performance and Environment teams.

9. Development and Infrastructure Service Plan 2019/20
Plana Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun-structair 2019/20

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/25/19 dated 26 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in light of the Council's recent declaration of a climate emergency, further information was sought, and received, regarding the measures that would be taken by the Service to address climate change, during which it was confirmed that an updated carbon management plan would be presented at a future meeting of the Committee;
- the Chair highlighted that the Council had agreed to set-up a Members' Working Group on Climate Change;
- it was emphasised that any action taken by the Council to address climate change should be realistic and sustainable for the economy and also address issues in relation to community transport and waste;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the measures being taken to encourage the employment of more young people into the Service;
- the Service was commended for the work undertaken in relation to the development of new purpose-built housing at MacKay Court in Dingwall; and

- further information was sought, and received, regarding the opportunities available in Caithness for marine energy projects.

The Committee **APPROVED** the draft Service Plan for 2019/20.

10. Economy and Regeneration Eaconamaidh agus Ath-ùrachadh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/26/19 dated 29 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion regarding the Town Centre Fund, Members' comments included the following:-

- concern was expressed that the creation of a cross-party sub-group to consider and approve funding for eligible projects could delay the delivery of projects;
- it was suggested that change fund money should be used to support the teams delivering the Town Centre Fund;
- reassurance was sought, and received, that the infrastructure would be put in place for officials and staff to deal with applications to the Town Centre Fund and that Members were welcome to bring forward any eligible projects applying for funding within their wards;
- it was suggested that the Local Area Committees should be afforded the opportunity to consider and approve funding for eligible projects in local areas;
- the importance of commencing work with the Town Centre Fund as soon as possible was emphasised;
- a request was made that the funding criteria for the Town Centre Fund be made available to interested parties and on the Council's website;
- further information was sought, and received, regarding the types of projects which were likely to seek funding; and
- a request was made for further information on the number of start-up business within rural areas which had received support from Business Gateway.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the key developments highlighted during quarter 4 and emerging activity;
- ii. **APPROVED** the targets set for activity in 2019/20;
- iii. **AGREED** to **HOMOLOGATE** the written submission to the Finance and Constitution Committee, Scottish Parliament Inquiry into Funding of EU Structural Fund Priorities in Scotland, post Brexit, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** the purpose of the Town Centre Fund and **APPROVED** the indicative area allocations and proposed governance arrangements as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, including the creation of a cross-party sub-Group chaired by the Chair of EDI Committee.

11. Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Chùmhnant Baile Roinne Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/27/19 dated 24 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In welcoming the proposed changes to the governance arrangements, it was emphasised that there were several innovative projects currently being progressed, including the recently confirmed Newton Room in Dingwall.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the proposed changes to the governance arrangements; and
- ii. **NOTED** the progress with the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal.

12. Community Asset Transfers Gluasadan So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd

Declaration of Interest – Mr D Macpherson, as a Director of High Life Highland, 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/28/19 dated 10 May 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was emphasised that the Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust was seeking to purchase the gardens around the pavilion as the building was currently land-locked and that the sale would help to ensure the continued maintenance of the Pavilion;
- the importance of the Pavilion as both a historical building and a commercial venue was emphasised; and
- reassurance was sought, and received, that the sale of the Strathpeffer Pump Room and Pavilion Gardens would include the provision of a dissolution clause in the event of the Trust being wound up.

The Committee **AGREED** the following community asset transfer requests:-

- i. the sale of Bettyhill Visitor Centre to the Strathnaver Museum for £1. The terms of transfer would include:
 - the applicant would cover both the Council’s and their own costs associated with the transfer;
 - an economic development burden would be applied to this transaction;
 - any other terms to be agreed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair of EDI.
- ii. the sale of Strathpeffer Pump Room and Gardens to Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust for £1. The terms of transfer would include:
 - sale was conditional on SPCT successfully purchasing the Pavilion building;
 - the applicant to cover both the Council’s and their own costs associated with the transfer;
 - an economic development burden would be applied to this transaction;
 - any other terms to be agreed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair of EDI.

**13. Dingwall Business Improvement District (BID)
Sgìre Leasachadh Gnothachais Inbhir Pheofharain (BID)**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/29/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members emphasised the importance of gauging interest in the BID from local business.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the status of the proposed Dingwall BID Proposal and ongoing work to finalise the BID Proposal/Business Plan; and
- ii. **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee, to undertake the assessment and conclude whether the right of veto needs to be exercised or not. If there was reason to exercise the veto and the BID Proposers were unwilling to make the necessary changes, a report would be brought back to the Council meeting on 27 June 2019 to consider and approve.

**14. Grantown-on-Spey Conservation Area Appraisal
Measadh Sgìre Glèidhteachais Bhaile nan Grandach**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/30/19 dated 30 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In commending the work undertaken by Andy Puls and the Steering Group in relation to the Appraisal, it was emphasised that it would ensure that development could take place in Grantwon-on-Spey without being detrimental to its history.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Grantown-on-Spey Conservation Area Appraisal, including the proposed amendments to the designated Conservation Area boundary (as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report).

In terms of Standing Order 9, the Committee **AGREED** to take item 4 at this point in the meeting.

**4. Presentation – Food for Life
Taisbeanadh – Biadh airson Beatha**

A presentation was given by Ms Catherine Pendreigh, Food for Life Partnerships Manager at the Soil Association, on the certification awarded to Highland Council's school meals and how this could be developed in the future.

Food for Life's definition of good food encompassed food that was good for your health, the environment and the local economy and that, since adopting the scheme in 2009, the Council had served 8,800 bronze and 800 silver standard school meals every day. She emphasised that school meals in Highland were responsibly sourced and freshly prepared and highlighted that the organisation's tenth annual inspection would take place on 30 May.

During discussion, Members welcomed the reassurance given that much of the food provided in schools was sourced locally and the positive impact this had on local businesses and farmers. In emphasising the need to ensure that the source of food being served in schools could be traced, it was suggested that there was potential

for the scheme to be rolled out into Highland's secondary schools.

The Chair having thanked Ms Pendreigh for her presentation, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

15. Skye Aerodrome Raon-adhair an Eilein Sgitheanaich

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/31/19 dated 26 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the reintroduction of flights between Skye and the Central Belt had been a strategic priority for Skye and Raasay Committee Councillors for some time. In addition, the Council supported localism and therefore cognisance needed to be taken of the views of the Local Members, bearing in mind they represented the interests of their communities;
- Community Councils in Skye were also supportive of the proposal;
- the progress to date had been welcomed by many businesses, organisations and individuals and a campaign group in support of the proposal had been established. In this regard, appreciation was expressed to a number of bodies who had helped develop the proposal to the stage it had now reached;
- several studies have been undertaken looking at every aspect of the airport and potential services and capital investment and operational costs had been recently reviewed as part of a consultation. The consultation report highlighted the potential contribution to the economic and tourism strategy that scheduled air services would bring to Skye and the surrounding area including greater access to markets, increased business confidence, increased economic activity and providing an alternative form of transport;
- since the original business case had been drawn up the projected benefit cost ratio of the Skye Airstrip had improved significantly;
- the consultation had been much wider than some of those opposing the proposal suggested;
- this proposal would also benefit the communities in Wester Ross;
- journey times to the Central belt from Skye and Lochalsh were more than 6 hours and this restricted its ability to compete in many business sectors and to access many public services. Furthermore, there were still parts of the Skye economy which were fragile such as the population demographics where many school rolls had declined and reinstating air services would help support sustainable business growth and provide additional employment within the area;
- concerns about climate change were acknowledged but this project would have a minor impact as it only involved 2 19-seater twin otter planes. In addition, there was potential, in the future, for electric planes to be used with Skye an ideal location;
- a wider environmental approach needed to be taken as a Council to tackle climate change;
- concern was expressed at the message that any proposal to halt this would send to other airports in Highland and which would suggest that Highland Council did not support air travel;
- it was unfair to pick the Skye Airstrip solely as a mechanism to address the Council's carbon reduction and, instead, a more holistic approach was needed;
- if such a robust approach was taken it would suggest that the Council's capital

programme should be put on hold as many of the projects would have carbon implications;

- clarification was sought in relation to the fees and the application of VAT;
- Members had received many emails opposing the use of £170k to undertake further engagement work. In addition, a petition had been received, claiming to be from local people. However, on further examination, some were from overseas;
- whilst acknowledging the strength of support for the establishment of the Aerodrome by the Local Area Committee, it was emphasised that since the report had been written, the Council had declared a climate emergency and it was suggested that the project should be delayed until the steps required to achieve the Council's carbon neutral target by 2025 had been identified;
- if Highland was to reduce its carbon footprint in future, many painful measures would have to be taken; and
- tourism in Skye was important but before proceeding with this proposal it was important to know what the benefits would be.

Thereafter, the Chair, seconded by Mr C Smith, **MOVED** approval of the recommendations as contained within the report.

Having agreed with recommendations (i), (ii) and (iv), as an **AMENDMENT**, in relation to recommendation (iii), Mrs T Robertson, seconded by Mrs A MacLean, moved that, in light of the "Climate Emergency" declaration last week the project should be delayed until identification of the steps required to achieve the carbon neutral target by 2025.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 19 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 2 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

Motion

Mr R Balfour, Mrs J Barclay, Mr B Boyd, Miss J Campbell, Dr I Cockburn, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr J Gray, Mr A Henderson, Mr R Laird, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D MacPherson, Mr H Morrison, Mr D Rixson, Mr K Rosie and Mr C Smith.

Amendment

Mrs A MacLean and Mrs T Robertson.

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update for the Aerodrome;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Rules for Users and the Fees;
- iii. **APPROVED** £170k of additional funds to undertake further engagement with statutory bodies and preparation work; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Chair of Environment, Development and Infrastructure write 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.

**16. Community Services Revenue Budget – Near Final Outturn 2018/19
Buidseat Teachd-a-steach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/32/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- officers were congratulated on their hard work in bringing in an underspend of £0.427m. It was felt the public did not appreciate the pressures within the budget and it was essential that a way was found to explain this and to give a better understanding of the challenges the service faced. Looking to the future there was a need to generate more income to maintain the service and to enable the service to focus on the roads and bridges infrastructure;
- appreciation was expressed for recent works completed in Evanton;
- seagull fouling had been mitigated in public areas in Invergordon by placing spikes on street lights and this could be replicated in other towns; and
- the maintenance budget earmarked for roundabouts from commercial sponsorship had now been used to alleviate the overall budget pressures. This had meant that maintenance teams were now unable to undertake all the necessary works.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue budget near final outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2019.

**17. Community Services Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2019
Aithisg Coileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – 1 Giblean 2018 gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2019**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/33/19 dated 7 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

Having been informed of updated information, Members made the following comments:-

- overall, performance was exceptional. However, it was feared that the increase in staff absences could be due to stress that staff were now under;
- a request was made, once the necessary software had been developed, for the number of repairs the Jetpatcher had completed; and
- when activities such as gully emptying or road repairs were undertaken it was important to let the public know to raise the profile of the good work staff were doing for communities within the limited resources available.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Director of Community Services liaise with Corporate Communications as to how best to raise the profile of day to day activities undertaken by community services staff.

18. Community Services Service Plan 2019/20
Plana Seirbheis nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/34/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the results of the 2017/18 Annual Survey of Performance and Attitudes had highlighted that road repairs and potholes were of major concern to the public and direct additional budget resources to this was needed; and
- in relation to the action to introduce collection hubs for school children, it was pointed out that a parcel of land was available adjacent to Thurso High School which would enable an improved drop off/pick up arrangement for pupils to be provided. With potential for match funding from Safer Routes to Schools, calls were made for the Council to engage with the developer in this regard.

The Committee **APPROVED** the plan.

19. Changes to Council Policy on Categories of Waste Received at Household Waste Recycling Centres
Atharrachaidhean do Phoileasaidh na Comhairle mu Sheòrsaichean Sgudail a tha air an Gabhail aig Ionad Ath-chuartachaidh Sgudail Thaisgean

There had been circulated Report No EDI/35/19 dated 17 April 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the provision of recycling centres was welcomed, and mention was made as to the helpful and courteous approach of staff. However, there was concern that the proposed policy was too prescriptive and could lead to more fly tipping, a growing issue in some Wards. If the use of trailers was not to be permitted people would have to visit recycling centres more often, thereby using more fuel. However, with householders only permitted to one visit per day, they might look to less environmentally friendly ways to dispose of their waste. Accordingly, it was suggested the existing policy be retained, especially as the Council should encourage the public to use such centres, not deterring them;
- whilst the measures proposed for commercial waste were acceptable, for householders modernising a house and replacing kitchen and/or bathroom suites, such waste should be considered household waste;
- for householders living some distance away from recycling centres, the limits on what could be brought would make it uneconomical for them;
- an alternative was to increase charges, including for commercial operators;
- clarification was sought as to the policy for accepting car tyres at recycling centres as it now seemed to contradict what was previously in place;
- clarification was sought, and received, regarding the hiring of skips from the Council and if the Council's charges were competitive; and
- the Chairman pointed out that the Bulky Uplift Service was still available.

The Director responded by highlighting that the saving of £300k over this financial year and next had already been agreed by Council when setting its budget in February. He referred to the backing sheet covering this saving and reminded Members that it had already been agreed to review the bulky uplift policy to enable

the saving to be delivered. He confirmed that he was happy to review the detail on the revised policy but it would still have to deliver the full saving, as agreed by Council.

Thereafter, the Committee **DEFFERED** the report until the next meeting of the Committee pending further discussion with officers.

20. Food Standards Scotland Audit Sgrùdadh Inbhean Bìdh Alba

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/36/19 dated 24 April 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Audit outcome of “insufficient assurance” was not a reflection on staff as the decision to reduce the workforce had been a Member decision. Bearing this in mind it was also highlighted that some complex cases could involve a considerable amount of officer time;
- in light of BREXIT, fish exports from Kinlochbervie and Lochinver might need to be signed off, placing further strain on staff; and
- in response to a question, confirmation was provided that, where requested, Environmental Health Officers, would inspect Cruise Liners and a charge was made for this service.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the audit findings and action plan; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the review and re-profiling of Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Officers to increase resource on statutory food safety duties.

21. Lighting Policy Poileasaidh Soillseachaidh

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/37/19 dated 29 April 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in urban areas it was questioned how high night time use of paths and fear of crime issues would be measured. In response, the Chairman clarified that this would be determined at Local Area Committees and Ward Business Meetings;
- information was sought, and provided, as to how the dated lighting units in conservation areas would be addressed;
- clarification was sought, and provided, as to when it was anticipated all lighting units would be converted to Light Emitting Diode (LED). In response, it was explained that it was hoped this would be completed in the next financial year and, at the moment, the older orange street lamps were being replaced as a priority as this model of lighting was no longer being produced;
- in response to a question, it was explained that lighting units were painted as and when required; and
- concern was expressed regarding lighting at the North Kessock junction of the dual carriageway and it was important to establish with Bear Scotland whose responsibility these were.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the updated lighting policy regarding existing lighting as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the publication of guidance (detailed in Appendix 2 of the report) for installation of adoptable lighting which will be regularly reviewed and updated; and
- iii. **NOTED** that, following the decision taken by Members in February 2018 to remove the budget for Christmas/Festive lighting, reports are being presented to all Local Area Committees to inform Members and communities of the implications for this year.

22. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC) for:-

- i. North PAC – 27 November 2018;
- ii. South PAC – 5 December 2018;
- iii. North PAC – 22 January 2019;
- iv. South PAC – 29 January 2019;
- v. South PAC – 20 February 2019;
- vi. North PAC – 5 March 2019; and
- vii. South PAC – 12 March 2019;

and **APPROVED**:-

- viii. Waste Strategy Working Group Minutes of 7 February 2019;
- ix. Harbours Management Board Minutes of 6 March 2019; and
- x. Stromeferry Working Group Minutes of 20 March 2019.

23. 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 for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act, the relevant paragraphs being shown.

24. Land and Property Fearann is Cuid-seilbhe

Paragraphs 6 and 9

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/38/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Having complimented officers on the number of housing projects, the Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations contained within the report.

**25. Property Transactions Monitoring Report
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe**

Declaration of Interest – Mrs A MacLean, as a Board Member of Ross and Cromarty Citizen’s Advice Bureau, 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 her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.

Paragraphs 6 and 9

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/39/19 dated 17 April 2019 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.

**26. Housing Development Initiatives
Iomairtean Leasachaidh Taigheadais**

Declaration of Interests – Mr D Rixson and Mrs T Robertson, as Board Members of Lochaber Housing Association and Highland Housing Alliance respectively and Mr A Henderson as a family relative was a Director of New Start, 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 interest did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

Paragraphs 6 and 9

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/40/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Having commended officers for delivering exceptional projects, the Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations contained within the report.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 20 May 2019 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 R MacDougall, Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms F Shearer, South Area Care and Learning Manager, Care & Learning Service
Mr J Allan, Lighting and Communications Manager, Community Services
Mr N Young, Transport Planning Officer, Development & Infrastructure
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr S Henderson, Community Development Officer, Age Scotland's Veterans' Project (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 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 9 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

3. **Presentation: Age Scotland Veterans' Project** **Taisbeanadh: Pròiseact nan Seann Ghaisgeach**

There was a presentation by Mr Steve Henderson, Community Development Officer, on Age Scotland's Veterans' Project which involved working collaboratively with partners in the Unforgotten Forces consortium of 16 organisations to support the health, wellbeing and quality of life of older veterans aged 65 and over and their families locally, regionally and nationally.

During the presentation, Mr Henderson explained that Scotland had been awarded £4m of funding for a three year project operating from 2017 to 2020 but he hoped that the project would continue beyond this period. Continuing, he explained that the project provided high quality information, advice and support for veterans; offered information and links to local opportunities to reduce isolation and encourage inclusivity; and campaigned and influenced policy with both the Scottish and UK Governments.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed and supported the work of the Veterans' Project and recognised the benefits being generated for this community group;
- It was queried whether it was anticipated that the age criteria, currently set at 65, was likely to increase;
- Responding to concerns raised, assurance was given that there were a number of organisations in place to provide support and guidance for all ex-military personnel regardless of age but it was acknowledged that awareness and sign-posting to these groups could be improved; and
- It was queried whether the current level of funding was sufficient and suggestions of additional potential sources were made.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and indicated their support that the project would continue.

4. Celtic Media Festival Fèis nam Meadhanan Ceilteach

The Ward Manager provided an update on the forthcoming Celtic Media Festival which would take place in Aviemore on 4–6 June 2019. The prestigious Celtic Media Festival was an annual three day event that promoted the languages and cultures of the Celtic Nations and Regions in media. Particularly in this, the 40th year of the Festival, the success in bringing the event to Aviemore would not only bring a strong international delegation to the area, it would be an excellent boost to the local economy.

Continuing, the Ward Manager reported the work that had been undertaken by the Highland Council and the Celtic Media Festival since the last briefing to the Area Committee which included the establishment a local organising and advisory committee to assist in delivering the Festival in the area. This committee had included members of the local community and local business representation. One of the key aims of the steering group had been to spread the reach of the Festival beyond the actual event itself. In addition, meetings had also taken place directly regarding the event with the Area Chair/Highland Council Convener, the Chair of Corporate Resources and the Director of the Celtic Media Festival.

The Celtic Media Festival was widely recognised as a prestigious event, attracting nominees from the UK, Ireland, Europe and Canada to compete across 23 award categories including Arts, Comedy, Current Affairs, Drama, Factual, Sport and Radio. The Festival supported and provided an opportunity to showcase the great talent that existed within the Gaelic broadcasting industry and Bafta Scotland, the British Film Institute, the BBC and RTE as well as a range of international broadcasters and cultural and economic development organisations converging in Aviemore on 4 June 2019.

The Committee **NOTED** the update.

**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/05/19 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Appreciation was expressed for the diligent work of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in addressing the recent local wildfires;
- It was confirmed that there was currently no staffing availability for Nethybridge Station despite ongoing efforts and that recruiting to this area was very difficult. In view of this, it was queried whether firefighters could be recruited and deployed on tailored duties, e.g. attending fires only and not road traffic accidents but it was explained that this was not feasible as retained firefighters had to undertake the full fire service training programme. Appreciation was expressed in regard to the work that had been undertaken in respect of recruitment and ensuring station and fire appliance availability for the whole of the Badenoch and Strathspey area;
- Confirmation was sought and provided that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service issued information in regard to wildfires via social media similar to that operated by the Cairngorm National Park; and
- On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman expressed appreciation to Mr MacDougall for his support in the Badenoch and Strathspey Area and wished him well in his new role/location.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**6. Grantown Grammar Education Report Session 2017/18
Aithisg Foghlaim Seisean 2017/18 Àrd-Sgoil Bhaile nan Granddach**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/06/19 dated 7 May 2019 by the Director of Care and Learning Services.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- An update was sought and provided in regard to recruitment at Kingussie High School;
- It was queried why the majority of S4 pupils studied English over two years and further information would be provided on this;

- Confirmation was sought and provided that the Early Learning and Childcare provision was on schedule and it was anticipated that an update would be issued on this to a future Ward Business meeting; and
- An update was sought and provided on the current position in regard to Gaelic Medium Education.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that further information be provided on the reason that the majority of S4 pupils studied English over two years.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/07/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was queried and explained that the high Christmas lighting costs in Nethybridge was due to the volume of decorations; and
- Confirmation was provided that a Health and Safety leaflet to enable the safe erection of Christmas Lighting and Decorations was currently being finalised and would be distributed to local communities.

The Committee:-

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

8. **Dalraddy to Slochd: The Highland Council: Objection Response** **Dail Radaidh don t-Sloc: Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd: Freagairt Gearain**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/08/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Chairman highlighted that objections remained to the Draft Orders from the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the three local Community Councils. Concern was also expressed at the potential additional costs involved in the Council taking over the extra section of road which were key links to the A9 and in view of this it should be treated and managed by Transport Scotland as part of the Trunk Road network. It was therefore recommended that the Council should also continue with their objection to this scheme on this basis and this view was supported by the Committee.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report and updated comments received from Transport Scotland; and
- ii. **AGREED** that following consideration of the response received from Transport Scotland, the objection to the Draft Orders for both sections (Dalraddy to Slochd and Crubenmore to Kincaig) be sustained.

9. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2018 gu 31 Màrt 2019

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Housing team was commended for their proactive work in managing Rent Arrears in the Badenoch and Strathspey area particularly in light of the implementation of Universal Credit; and
- It was welcomed that presentations in homelessness as a result of termination of private rental tenancy agreements would continue to be monitored for potential trends.

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

10. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 11 February 2019 which were approved by the Council on 7 March 2019.

The meeting was closed at 11.50 am.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummie on Wednesday, 22 May 2019 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr R Gale
Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray
Mr H Morrison

Officials in attendance:

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr M Evans, Head Teacher, Golspie High School, Care and Learning Service
Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner, Development & Infrastructure Committee
Ms J Sutherland, Senior Engineer, Community Services
Mrs M Grant, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Station Manager J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms K Jenks, External Auditor, Audit Scotland

Mr R Gale in the Chair

The Chair welcomed Ms K Jenks, Audit Scotland who was attending the meeting in relation to the Best Value Assurance audit.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms K Currie and Ms L Munro.

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

Item 8: Mr J McGillivray (non-financial)

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

There had been circulated Report No SCC/07/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, Members conveyed their thanks to Service for the commitment shown in tackling the recent major wildfires in Durness and Melvich. Members also commended employers for releasing retained duty firefighters for extended periods and the community and businesses for the support and level of welfare provided during these incidents.

Members then raised the following issues:-

- the improved staffing position at Helmsdale was welcomed. The Local Senior Officer confirmed the Service was continuing to focus on promoting recruitment at Bonar Bridge, Lairg, Tongue and Bettyhill stations;
- concern in regard to the continuing challenges around recruitment in the area, and the fact a significant issue was the lack of a suitable pool of potential recruits in smaller rural communities;
- the reduction in the number of road traffic accidents in the area in 2018/19 was welcomed;
- an update was sought and provided on the interventions being undertaken by the Service in care homes and hospitals and other specific premises in the area to reduce the number of false alarms;
- the importance of communicating key messages to the public around heeding the warnings and wildfire notices issued by the Service and being careful whilst in the countryside; and
- concern at the cost to the Service of investigating and identifying the root causes of wildfires. In response to a specific question, the Station Manager advised that it was likely the wildfire in Golspie in the previous year was deliberate, and the indications were that the Melvich incident was accidental.

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

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

There had been circulated Report No SCC/08/19 dated 7 May 2019 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Mr M Evans, Head Teacher, Golspie High School reported on HMle's follow up visit in December 2018 and subsequent report published in March 2019, and thereafter further record of visit. The report acknowledged the work and clear progress made since the original inspection and recognised that the measures being delivered through the improvement plan to raise attainment had not yet had a sufficient period of time to show impacts. In conjunction with the Head of Education and Education Quality Improvement Manager there had been a focus on key statements arising from the HMle report and on developing an improvement plan for each area with the full involvement of teachers.

Mr Evans further reported that:-

- In relation to equity and inclusion, the School had achieved significant improvements since the original inspection moving from 'weak' to 'good' which was encouraging;
- the number of pupils gaining five highers had increased from 15% to 30% in 2018, which represented a significant improvement and was now on a par with the School's virtual comparator used by HMle;
- the figures for literacy and numeracy had improved since 2017 and was above the School's virtual comparator;
- the School had achieved 100% positive destinations in 2017/18;
- it was hoped that the significant work which had been invested in raising attainment in the senior phase would have a positive impact on this year's examination results; and

- there continued to be staffing challenges in the School in maths, English and physics, and one of the Deputy Head Teacher posts was soon to become vacant. Online distance learning had been used as a measure to overcome these challenges but it was not yet known what impact this would have in terms of results.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the School be commended on achieving 100% positive destinations in 2017/18;
- concern was expressed at the attainment figures at the School and an update was sought and provided on both the staffing challenges and the interventions that had been put in place to support pupils and raise attainment particularly in relation to English and maths in the senior phase;
- concern that the recruitment process for the Depute Head Teacher post be progressed in early course;
- it was appreciated the staffing challenges particularly in relation to STEM subjects was a national issue;
- the progress being made in the face of significant challenges and the intensive support being provided by the Head of Education was welcomed. It was important going forward that the right level of support from the Service was maintained;
- in terms of recruitment, the potential for a joined up approach across the public agencies to attract teachers and encourage them to remain in the area, a key issue being the ability to grow talent within the area;
- an update was sought and provided on the latest position in respect of pupils support assistants in the area in the context of the ongoing review of Additional Support Needs provision across the Council; and
- the extension in early years provision was welcomed and information was sought and provided on transport provision to early years centres, confirmation being provided that this tended to be the responsibility of parents.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the Head Teacher for the improvements being delivered at the School, and asked that Members appreciation be conveyed to all the staff.

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

5. Caithness & Sutherland Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Guidance Ro-innleachd Meadhan Baile Ghallaibh agus Chataibh

There had been circulated Report No SCC/09/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In discussion, Members welcomed the report and requested that the approach to public consultation include the Sutherland Community Partnership and local development trusts in the area. The Principal Planner confirmed that these organisations were included on the list of consultees. He undertook to furnish Members with the full list of consultees prior to the commencement of the public consultation exercise.

Thereafter, it was highlighted that the Strategy identified the same priorities as set out in the Locality Plan and at a more local level those identified by the 'Vision for

Brora' project which was supported by the North Highland Initiative and NC500. In this regard, it was important the consultation on the draft Strategy was aligned to that being undertaken by the 'Vision for Brora' Steering Group. The Principal Planner advised that he was aware of the cross cutting nature of this work and that it would be helpful if he could be furnished with the relevant contacts for the project, and any other relevant information.

Thereafter, Members advised it would be helpful for officers to attend meetings of community organisations involved in town centre development work such as the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company and to have a named contact/s within the Service in this regard. The Principal Planner advised that he and his colleague D Chisholm, Planner, would act as first points of contact and that early notifications of any relevant meeting dates would be appreciated.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Draft Caithness and Sutherland Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Guidance at **Appendix 1** for the purposes of public consultation;
- ii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to make minor presentational changes prior to publication, in consultation with and agreement from the chairs of the Area Committees;
- iii. **AGREED** the approach to public consultation as set out in section 5 of this report; and
- iv. **NOTED** that issues raised in comments received on the draft Strategy will be reported back to the two relevant Area Committees for their consideration, together with possible amendments to the Strategy prior to completion of procedures leading to its adoption as statutory Supplementary Guidance.

6. Road Structural Maintenance Report 2019/20 Càradh Structarail Rathaidean 2019/20

There had been circulated Report No SCC/10/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

The Chair advised that while Members recognised the financial challenges facing the Service, it was disappointing that only 8 schemes would be completed in Sutherland. He expressed concern about the condition of the single track roads located on the North Coast 500, and suggested that Members be provided with a condition report in respect of the roads on the North Coast 500 located in Sutherland with a view to additional funding being sought to support the maintenance of these routes.

The Senior Engineer confirmed that monthly condition reports could be provided to Members. In terms of the broader spectrum of data such as traffic volumes and the road condition index, this was managed and collated centrally for the Council as a whole and she would seek to extract the Sutherland element.

A further comment related to the fact the Programme was localised which would make it more achievable to deliver best value from the available budget.

During further discussion, Mr H Morrison confirmed for the record he did not support the recommendation to approve the Programme due to the significant deterioration in condition of the single track roads on the North Coast 500 in North and West Sutherland. The North Coast 500 had created the concept but it was

unlikely that they or other partners such as VisitScotland would invest in the route. It was therefore unfortunate the Council had been left to bear the costs associated with the increased volume of traffic on the route at a time when budgets were reducing. He suggested that there was an increasing amount of negativity locally in relation to the route.

The Chair advised that the evidence he had requested above in relation to the NC500 would allow a case to be prepared going forward to seek additional funding towards the improvement of these routes.

A further comment suggested that the NC500 had been an unmeasured success and many local people were benefiting from the route. However, the Council was having to react rather than being proactive to its success, and the scale of this issue required Scottish Government intervention.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Roads Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20 for the Sutherland Area; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Members be provided with a condition report and other relevant data in respect of the roads on the North Coast 500 located in Sutherland with a view to additional funding being sought to support the maintenance of these routes.

7. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2018 to 31 Am Mart 2019

There had been circulated Report No SCC/11/19 dated 9 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- clarification was sought and provided on the main factors for the level of rent arrears, including Universal Credit, and it was noted that slow improvements in the position in Sutherland were being observed;
- a key issue in regard to rent arrears was to ensure early intervention with tenants so that the intensive support available from the Council and CAB could be provided in appropriate cases. Reference was also made to the importance of continuing to communicate key messages to tenants in relation to the support available;
- an explanation was sought and provided in regard to the process for classifying foreign nationals as homeless persons; and
- it was disappointing that a main factor for the low demand for properties in North and West Sutherland was the low population.

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

8. Assignment of Lease for Dornoch Caravan Park/Homologation of Lease for Sutherland Agricultural Society
Sònrachadh Aonta-màil airson Pàirc Charabhanaichean
Dhòrnaich/Aontachadh Aonta-màil airson Comann Àiteachais Chataibh

Declaration of Interest:- Mr J McGillivray declared a non-financial interest in this item due to his long standing association with the Sutherland Agricultural Society and left the Chamber for the consideration of the item 'Homologation of Lease for Sutherland Agricultural Society'.

There had been circulated Report No SCC/12/19 dated 8 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and Acting Head of Policy.

The Ward Manager confirmed that in terms of the Council's conditions, the requirement to provide evidence of sufficient funds and specifically the requirement for the prospective tenants to provide a bank reference remained outstanding. The bank reference had been applied for by the prospective tenants and a response was awaited. He also highlighted the key risks of delaying the signing of the lease.

In discussion, the Chair welcomed the positive progress made since the previous meeting in February 2019. In terms of the challenges there had been around communication there was a need to ensure there was direct access to the prospective tenants rather than dealing with third parties. He provided an assurance that the assignation of the lease would not be signed off until such time as the bank reference was in place.

Mr J McGillivray expressed his concern that the assignation would be in the name of a limited company rather than an individual person/s and that this was also a key concern of the local community.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the assignation of the lease for Dornoch Caravan Park to Dornoch Caravan and Camping Park Ltd, subject to the fulfilment of the Council's conditions and the agreement of the Chair, and on any other terms as agreed by the Depute Chief Executive/ Director of Corporate Resources and the Acting Head of Policy; and
- ii. **HOMOLOGATED** the lease of 0.12ha of Dornoch Common Good land to Sutherland Agricultural Society.

9. Sutherland Local Access Forum – Appointment Fòram Intrigeadh Ionadail Chataibh – Dreuchd

The Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of Lesley Cranna as a community representative, sponsored by Golspie Community Council, on the Sutherland Local Access Forum.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 25 February 2019, which had been approved by the Council on 7 March 2019.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

**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 Thursday 23 May 2019 at 10.30 am.

Present:

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

Non Members also Present:

Mr B Boyd
Mr T Heggie

Officials in attendance:

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive
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 Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance, Chief Executive's Office
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
Mr P Whitham, MA Programme Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mr D Mackenzie, Trading Standards Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms E Barrie, HR Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, 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 J Bruce, Mrs D Mackay, Mr S Mackie and Mrs M Paterson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 11 – Mr D Louden (Financial)

3. Good News Stories Deagh Naidheachdan

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. Derek Yule, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services had received an award from CIPFA Scotland as Public Sector Finance Professional of the Year. The Chair also expressed his appreciation to Mr Yule for his contribution to the Council with this being his last Committee meeting prior to retirement. The Leader of the Council and other Members joined the Chair in paying tribute to his outstanding work with reference being made to the professional advice and support he had given to the Council and particularly to Members through extremely challenging times. Members wished Mr Yule a long and happy retirement and conveyed he would be greatly missed. Mr Yule reciprocated in similar terms.
- ii. Ross Campbell, Rebecca Winton and Bryony McDiarmid had completed their Modern Apprenticeship in Business and Administration and certificates were presented at the meeting;
- iii. HR Officers Marie MacKenzie and Lorna MacKenzie had successfully completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Human Resource through the University of the Highlands and Islands; and
- iv. the efforts of staff in supporting exchange students from Augsburg with their work placements within the Council.

CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE SEIRBHEIS A' CHÙRAIM AGUS AN IONNSACHAIDH

4. Gaelic and Culture Update Aithisg Ùrachaidh Gàidhlig agus Cultair

There had been circulated Report No RES/12/19 dated 14 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The report demonstrated how active the Council had been in taking forward a wide range of Gaelic projects. The Council had submitted bids for funding amounting to £167,000 to Bord na Gaidhlig which reflected the wide range of Gaelic developments. These initiatives represented family, children, under school age, adult learners, sports leadership and support for Gaelic learners

in primary schools and CPD training for Head Teachers. The Highland Council was the lead authority for Gaelic development and the Council looked forward to hosting the Celtic Media Festival to be held in Aviemore in June 2019 and the Royal National Mod to be held in Inverness in October 2020. The Council's Gaelic team was working hard on an impressive range of initiatives which would help deliver progress on the Gaelic language;

- It was requested that a summary of the project evaluations undertaken for funders be submitted to a future meeting to provide assurance that their projects aims were being delivered;
- There was a desire to see more Gaelic incorporated into strategic meetings of the Council; and
- It was requested that a copy of the GME Head Teacher CPD Training Plan be provided to Councillor R Bremner and that further information be reported to the next meeting on the numbers undertaking the GME Head Teacher CPD training and how well connectivity was working in respect of the Gaelic Learner Education and 1+2 languages particularly in relation to the number of pupils continuing with Gaelic learning as they progressed through the Council's education system.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the developments to date which the Highland Council Gaelic Team were leading on and participating in;
- ii. **AGREED** that a report be submitted to a future meeting with an evaluation of Gaelic projects that are being delivered and the funding that the Council was contributing to these projects;
- iii. **AGREED** that a copy of the GME Head Teacher CPD Training Plan be provided to Councillor R Bremner and that further information be reported to the next meeting on:-
 - a. the numbers undertaking the GME Head Teacher CPD Training; and
 - b. how well connectivity was working in respect of the Gaelic Learner Education and 1+2 Languages particularly in relation to the number of pupils continuing with Gaelic learning as they progressed through the Council's education system.

FINANCIAL MONITORING SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL

5. Corporate Revenue Near Final Monitoring Report for 2018/19 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Teachd-a-steach Corporra airson 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No RES/13/19 dated 15 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- There had been a substantial improvement in the near final year end position with an overspend of £2.280m, an improvement from that forecasted at the end of quarter 3 when an overspend of £5.550m had been projected. This had been possible as a result of good financial governance, controlling expenditure and vacancy monitoring although assurance was provided that posts were still being filled on the basis of need being demonstrated. While there were still financial challenges ahead, with improved proactive financial

management there was confidence that the Council was in a good position to meet its budget targets going forward;

- By way of clarification, only £680,000 of the total deficit would be met from reserves with the remaining amount funded from non-earmarked budgets;
- While the reduction in the overspend was welcomed, the Council was still faced with a large year end deficit and while through financial management, this could be dealt with this year, there was a need to address the continuing overspend in some Services, otherwise the Council's reserves would be severely diminished;
- The recruitment freeze introduced to help manage the projected budget overspend had been described as a success, but until recently it had not included a freeze in recruiting from agencies which was key to reducing recruitment costs. It was explained that there would still be a need for agency staff within the Council but this would be strictly monitored by a Governance Board;
- There was a need to ensure sound financial management and understanding of the budget during the financial year to address overspends. It was requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the spending constraints incurred during the 2018/19 financial year and the impact of this on service delivery;
- The last financial year had seen the Council face tremendous pressures in terms of a reduction in Central Government funding, rising prices, wage increases and service delivery pressures, particularly in the Care and Learning Service with pressures on Additional Support Need and Out of Authority placements. However, there were now more controls in place to address the financial challenges and the Redesign of the Council would have significant benefits in terms of efficiency and savings. The efforts of staff in meeting the financial challenges and reducing the deficit was commended;
- Responsibility for expenditure needed to be assigned to named budget-holders who were accountable for ensuring that these were not overspent;
- It was the responsibility of Members for ensuring that Unallocated Savings targets were met by setting achievable budgets and this had not happened;
- More focus should be on how the Council's total revenue budget of circa £560m each year was spent in order to address financial challenges and to build up reserves. External Auditors had commented favourably on the sound financial management of the Council. However, the Council did need to consider how to address specific areas of overspending and the additional governance that had been put in place would help control this; and
- Concern was expressed regarding the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) underspends given the large demand for this additional support and it was queried whether this benefit was being sufficiently promoted. It was confirmed that all applications for DHP were assessed and awarded appropriately. The Council was doing all it could to positively promote this benefit and worked closely with its public sector partners in this regard.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the near final financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets for 2018/19;
- ii. **NOTED** the ensuing impact on reserves; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the spending constraints incurred during the 2018/19 financial year and the impact of this on service delivery.

**6. Corporate Capital Monitoring Final Monitoring Report for 2018/19
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Dheireannach Calpa Corporra airson 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No RES/14/19 dated 16 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Despite the financial challenges facing the Council, there had been £96.201m spent on capital expenditure in the Highland Council area during the year;
- It was disappointing to note the high amount of underspend in capital expenditure but it was acknowledged that this was mostly down to equipment not being purchased due to ICT project delays;
- There was a 66% increase on budgeted CFCR expenditure and while this meant better quality housing for tenants, it was felt this was not the appropriate funding method for many of the expenses in this budget. It was explained that CFCR was revenue from rents used to invest in capital projects. This was an alternative to borrowing to invest which helped reduce the Council's considerable debt portfolio. The capital programme for HRA was being reviewed and this should provide a clearer approach for the use of CFCR for the financing of capital investment; and
- Information was sought on the reasons why Government grant income on the Housing Revenue Account had not been fully drawn down.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the near final 2018/19 financial position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes; and
- ii. that information be provided to Councillor D Loudon on the reasons why Government grant income on the Housing Revenue Account had not been fully drawn down.

**7. Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget – Near Final Revenue Monitoring for 2018/19
Buidseat Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra agus nan Sochairean – Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail Iar-Dheireannach airson 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No RES/15/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Following consideration, the Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service Revenue Monitoring and Welfare budget to 31 March 2019.

**8. Corporate Resources Service Capital Near Final Monitoring Report for 2018/19
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Calpa Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra airson 2018/19**

There had been circulated Report No RES/16/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Although welcomed, it was queried why Solar PV expenditure was so low given the level of income that could be generated. It was explained that this was the first phase of expenditure on a project that was worth circa £2.5m. This would be self-financing capital expenditure and spend would increase during 2019/20 as sites were identified for Solar installations;
- It was understood that so far only twelve sites had been identified for installation of Solar PV, but the Council had a significant portfolio of land and properties where Solar could be used and therefore there was a need to accelerate this programme. Further, there was a savings target of £0.500m against this project and it was difficult to understand how this target could be achieved from only twelve sites. Confirmation was provided that the feasibility of accelerated rollout of Solar on land/properties would be raised with the Renewables Project Board; and
- There had been a £3.5m grant given by Salix Energy Efficiency Fund to The Highland Council to progress energy saving projects. This money would be invested over the next three years. Twelve schools would be equipped with Solar PV panels and this was just the start of the Solar PV rollout. It was explained that the Commercial and Efficiency team was proactively looking at opportunities for the use of Solar PV and Hydro energy generation.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service capital budget as at 31 March 2019.

9. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Near Final Revenue Monitoring Report 2018/19
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Iar-Dheireannach Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball airson 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No RES/17/19 dated 14 May 2019 by the Chief Executive.

Following consideration, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the financial out-turn position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019; and
- ii. **NOTED** the Chief Executive's Office achieved £0.582m savings in 2018/19.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE
OIFIS AN ÀRD-OIFIGEIR

10. Chief Executive's Office Service Plan
Plana Seirbheis Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir

There had been circulated Report No RES/18/19 dated 15 May 2019 by the Chief Executive.

In discussion the introduction of the Key Performance Indicators, as set out in the Service Plan, was welcomed however it was distressing to see that only 30% of Stage 1 complaints had been dealt with on time and disappointment was expressed with this poor level of performance. In addition, confirmation was sought and provided in regard to stabilising and reversing population decline in respect of how this would be actioned and measured.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the revised Service Plan for 2017-22; and
- ii. **NOTED** that eight area based plans, linked into the priorities contained in the Council Programme, setting out the actions that would be taken to stabilise and reverse population decline would be submitted to a future meeting.

**11. Trading Standards – Review of Activity and Proposed Plan for 2019/20
Inbhean Malairt – Ath-sgrùdadh air Gnìomhan agus Plana a Thathar a’ Moladh
airson 2019/20**

Declaration of Interest – Mr D Louden declared a financial interest in this item as the Company Secretary of Duthac Taxis Limited and left the meeting for the determination of this item.

There had been circulated Report No RES/19/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Chief Executive. A short presentation was made in support of the report during which the Trading Standards Manager explained the role and purpose of Trading Standards and how it responded to the needs of the people of the Highlands; outlined the wide-ranging work that it covered; explained the essential collaborative working that was undertaken with partner agencies; and gave an update on the innovative approaches that were being adopted to ensure effective law enforcement and better outcomes for consumers and businesses of the Highlands.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Appreciation was expressed for the informative presentation which demonstrated the strong and proactive work being undertaken by the Trading Standards team. It was further highlighted that the Trading Standards team was an example of a department which had redesigned its service delivery approach in line with financial constraints and was providing an efficient and effective service that was achieving excellent outcomes for the people of the Highlands. The Committee commended the team for their work and a number of Members expressed appreciation for their support in addressing a variety of specific issues in their wards;
- Further information was sought and provided in regard to the national Performance Indicator for Trading Standards: ENV5a – Cost of Trading Standards per 1,000 population and how this had been significantly reduced to one of the lowest in Scotland; and
- Confirmation was sought and provided that private car parking charges were lawful but it was suggested that this activity should be regulated. Concern was expressed that the associated car parking fines were disproportionate and the support and engagement of Trading Standards in addressing this issue had been appreciated. In addition, a specific update in regard to private car parking within Inverness was requested.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Review of activities of the Council's Trading Standards team in 2018-19;
- ii. **AGREED** the draft Operational Plan for the team for 2019-20; and
- iii. **NOTED** that an update would be provided to Councillor R Laird on private car parking within Inverness.

CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORA

12. Treasury Management - Summary of Transactions Rianachd Ionmhais - Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean

There had been circulated Report No RES/20/19 dated 26 April 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, the Treasury Management team was commended on their excellent work and further information was sought on the future impact of long and short term borrowing particularly in regard to the risks associated with potential changes in interest rates. And confirmation was provided that only UK based borrowing was undertaken.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions outlined in the report.

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/21/19 dated 7 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

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

14. Corporate Resources Service Plan Plana Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra

There had been circulated Report No RES/22/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion concern was expressed that the report indicated that there would be no significant environmental impacts. However, it was highlighted that a number of improvements were being made that should be reflected in the Strategic Environmental Assessment such as the role out of the new ICT equipment with Skype functionality reducing the need for travel and implementation of solar energy projects.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the draft Service Plan for 2017-22 (updated 2019), **AGREED** the amendments required and **APPROVED** the Plan.

**15. ICT Transformation and Network Refresh
Cruth-atharrachadh ICT agus Ùrachadh Lionraidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/23/19 dated 1 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was expressed at the length of time that projects were now behind schedule and it was queried whether these delays to project completion times would impact on costs and result in any inadvertent overspends; and
- Confirmation was sought and provided in regard to the revised timescale for completing the SWAN Bandwidth upgrade works at Nairn Academy.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the update on the ICT Transformation and Network Programmes.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS
GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN**

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

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 13 March 2019, 10 April 2019 and 15 May 2019 the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

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

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Appeals Committee held on 28 February, 6 March and 5 April 2019;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Staff Partnership Forum held on 3 May 2019; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the Central Safety Committee held on 3 May 2019.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Care, Learning and Housing Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 29 May 2019 at 10.05 am.

Present:

Mr B Boyd	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr R Bremner (by Video Conference)	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mr A Christie	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr J Finlayson (Chair)	Ms L Munro (Vice Chair)
Mr T Heggie	Mrs F Robertson
Mr A Jarvie	Mrs T Robertson (Substitute)
Ms E Knox	Mr G Ross
Mr D Mackay	Ms N Sinclair (by Video Conference)
Mr W MacKay (by Video Conference)	Mr C Smith

Religious Representatives:

The Very Rev S Murray
Mr W Skene

Non-Members also present:

Mr G Adam	Mr A Sinclair (by Video Conferencing)
Mrs A MacLean	

In attendance:

Ms D Manson, Chief Executive
Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr A Gunn, Interim Chief Officer Resources, Care and Learning
Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service
Dr J Vance, Interim Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services
Ms S Harrington, Senior Manager Early Years, Care and Learning Service
Mr I Kyle, Children's Planning Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance (Third Sector)
Ms C Nichols, Youth Highland (Third Sector)
Ms S Blyth, Highland Parent Council Partnership
Miss J Maclennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life Highland
Senior pupils from Fortrose Academy
Head Teachers from the Change Team

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 Finlayson in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs J Barclay, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms K Currie, Mr A Graham, Ms S Lamont, Ms E Leitch, Mrs B McAllister, Ms M Newdick, Mrs M Paterson and Prof H van Woerden.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 7 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

Item 8 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

Item 11 – Mr A Christie (financial)

Item 14 – Mr A Jarvie and Mr T Heggie (both non-financial)

Item 20 – Mr A Jarvie, Mr T Heggie and Ms L Munro (all non-financial)

Item 21 – Mr A Christie (financial)

3. Good News/Outstanding Achievements Naidheachdan Matha/Coileanaidhean Air Leth

There had been tabled a list of good news and outstanding achievements by people and groups.

The Committee **NOTED** the good news and outstanding achievements.

4. Presentation: Young Enterprise Taisbeanadh: Iomairt Òigridh

Senior pupils from Fortrose Academy gave a presentation about their experiences leading to securing the Company of the Year accolade at the Highland and Moray regional finals of the Young Enterprise Scotland (YES) Company Programme in March. The team, who traded as Venture, devised a board game credited with bridging the generation gap and helping to tackle loneliness. The game has a spinner function to stimulate conversation on a variety of topics. Pupils used their idea with senior citizens across the Black Isle and attended regular board game sessions at their school. The Venture team also won awards for production and development, innovation, marketing and communications, financial management and the best company report. The team were due to travel to Edinburgh to represent the Highland and Moray area at the YES national finals and were also being considered for a Social Enterprise in Education Award.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the pupils were congratulated on both winning their award and on their presentation. Not only were they a credit to their communities but to their school, a school which had a long history of entrepreneurial success;
- the project had been truly a social enterprise with the pupils forming close links with the Parklands Care Home. This partnership had been rewarding for all concerned; and
- the pupils were asked, and informed Members of, what they had gained from taking part in the competition.

The Chairman having thanked the pupils, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the presentation.

5. Presentation: Education Transformation Taisbeanadh: Cruth-atharrachadh Foghlaim

There had been circulated Report No CLH/27/19 dated 17 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

The report introduced a detailed presentation on developments in the transformation of education within the Council since the paper presented to the Committee in March 2019. There was also an introduction to the five Head Teachers on the Change Team, who outlined their main priorities/tasks.

The Chair thanked officers for the important and informative presentation which articulated why change was needed and how it was going to be achieved, and pulled together many of the issues at national and local level. He emphasised the need to support Head Teachers and tackle bureaucracy, and the importance of tying in to the National Improvement Framework agenda and other Scottish Government agendas. Evaluation and monitoring were key, and it was his ambition to have progress updates from the Interim Head of Education and the Change Team at Care, Learning and Housing Committees. It was an exciting and challenging time, and he expressed confidence that, with support from Members, schools and communities, change would take place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- it would be helpful for Members to receive information on the Improvement Families for the schools in their ward;
- it was important to be positive and to recognise that it was not a case of starting from scratch;
- the importance of teamwork and keeping the lines of communication open were emphasised;
- reference was made to feedback in terms of the impact Regional Improvement Collaboratives were having on schools, and information was sought, and provided, on how the Northern Alliance fit into the proposals;
- in relation to school inspections, the Council and Education Scotland were working to the same agenda and, with greater collaboration, there was no reason why grades of good or better should not be achievable;
- the importance of engaging with parents was emphasised and information was sought, and provided, in that regard. In addition, it was necessary to make effective use of Pupil Councils in terms of gathering pupil opinions;

- that Highland was not performing as well as it should was a relatively new concept, both to Members and parents, and a request was made for more open and consistent engagement with local Members by schools to allow Members to know what the attainment data indicated and to enable challenge, either with the Change Team or individual schools. It was added that it would be helpful to have a more formalised plan for Member and Parent Council engagement;
- ongoing tracking, monitoring and reporting was key, and it was necessary to develop a creative and innovative solution that allowed all schools to move forward;
- Area Committees were key to moving the proposals forward. In that regard, it was explained that the new Council structure would facilitate more engagement at area level. In addition, it was clear from the Governance Review that Area Committees wanted more in-depth information on performance, benchmarking and attainment and it was envisaged that, by the end of the calendar year, Head Teachers would be presenting school-level data to Area Committees. Members welcomed the reassurance;
- the difference that high-performing teachers could make to pupils' performance was recognised;
- Members welcomed the skills, expertise and experience of the Head Teachers on the Change Team;
- there had previously been resistance to transformational change and information was sought, and provided, on the steps being taken to ensure that there was buy-in to the proposals by the teaching profession and what would happen if there was not;
- it was necessary to be more robust in terms of timescales and how improvements were going to be measured;
- it was important not to become insular and to be aware that many people would not understand the terminology being used and the proposed interventions. In that regard, it was suggested that there might be a need for a further pillar – Wider Engagement on Evaluation - to ensure that non-educationalists understood how attainment and outcomes were improving, and how Additional Support Needs were being addressed;
- exam results were seen as a major indicator of how well schools were performing and how well children were doing in comparison with others. However, whilst there was some merit in that, there were other factors that needed to be considered;
- the proposals represented a seismic change in culture and policy, and teachers would require support. In addition, pupils would want to know why things were changing; and
- an assurance was sought that Members would get evidence that the sizeable investment from the Change Fund had been successful and the desired outcomes were being achieved.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the system of support and challenge being put in place to deliver better outcomes for young people;
- ii. **NOTED** the priorities of the Change Team;
- iii. **AGREED** that information be provided to Members on the Improvement Families for the schools in their ward; and
- iv. **AGREED** that further information on Member and Parent Council engagement be provided and a plan finalised.

In terms of Standing Order 9, the Committee **AGREED** to consider items 20, 21 and 14 at this stage.

20. High Life Highland Progress Report **Aithisg Adhartais High Life na Gàidhealtachd**

Declarations of Interest: Mr A Jarvie, Mr T Heggie and Ms L Munro declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors 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 their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No CLH/42/19 dated 1 May 2019 by the Chief Executive, High Life Highland.

The Chief Executive, High Life Highland, gave a presentation in amplification of the report during which he reported on the company's performance, its continuing reduction on reliance on Council funding, the development of its new Business Plan for 2019-24, the 4-year investment by Sportscotland for the Active Schools programme, and recent recognitions and awards.

High Life Highland had joined in with Moray, Orkney, the Western Isles, and Argyll and Bute with a venture that would see High Life members able to access free use of leisure facilities in these areas at no extra cost. In addition, High Life members were entitled to discounts at a wide range of local and national retailers. However, Members felt that this latter benefit could be promoted more.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that High Life Highland had met or exceeded the outcomes expected in the Service Delivery Contract with The Highland Council for the operating period to March 2019; and
- ii. **NOTED** the general updates since the last report to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee in December 2018.

21. Schools Music Tuition **Oideachadh Ciùil Sgoiltean**

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a family member received music tuition 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 CLH/43/19 dated 1 May 2019 by the Chief Executive, High Life Highland.

Following a presentation in amplification of the report, Members made the following comments:-

- the provision of a pipe band drumming tutor in Skye and Lochalsh was welcomed and it had had a huge positive impact on pipe band participation in the area;
- the additional focus had enabled schools music tuition to grow, not only in terms of the number of children taking up music tuition but its expansion in to other areas such as adult tuition and intergenerational classes. It was also evident that there was more of an inclusive approach, thus enhancing communities. Other local authority areas had seen participation numbers drop and it was suggested that the High Life Highland approach should be promoted as a model of good practice elsewhere;
- a timetable as to when the new service in Culloden providing evening music lessons for adults and children would be rolled out would be welcomed;
- information was sought as to the attrition rate from classes through the school term. Also, to enable performance indicators to be established, information was sought as to what capacity the service was at in terms of the number of musical instruments and tutors available;
- the more business-like approach High Life Highland had been able to adopt had enabled schools music tuition to be safeguarded. Furthermore, the freezing of prices was a tremendous achievement;
- recognition was given to the music tutors who gave up some of their time and attention and it was important to encourage more people to attend the public concerts displaying the talent of Highland young people; and
- High Life Highland was still evolving as a company but the success achieved to date was acknowledged. In this regard, it was questioned if, looking to its long-term purpose, there was a possibility of capitalising on this success and expanding further into the arts and festivals.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the successful completion of the transfer of music tuition to High Life Highland;
- ii. early indications of improvement in service delivery since the transfer;
- iii. the joint guidance published in February 2019 by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Government and the Music Education Partnership Group; and
- iv. that historically, the service had complied well with the new national guidance and that this approach was being continued by High Life Highland.

14. Community and Leisure Capital Programme and Related Revenue Implications Prògram Calpa Coimhearsnachd is Cur-seachad agus Seaghan Teachd-a-steach Buntainneach

Declarations of Interest: Mr A Jarvie and Mr T Heggie declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors 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 their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No CLH/36/19 dated 16 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

From discussion of the report, the following comments were made.

Considerable investment had been made in Caithness Horizons in the recent years and it was disappointing that urgent capital works were now required before the building could be opened. Caithness Horizons was an asset to both the local community and to Highland and had made a positive contribution to tourism, especially with the popularity of the North Coast 500, and consequently all Caithness Members had been looking at solutions to have it reopened as soon as possible. There was a tremendous footfall going past the building and there was therefore potential to raise its profile and, to ensure its long-term future with an appropriate operator in place, to maximise it commercially. The Council faced risks and challenges, taking into consideration the National Lottery funding arrangement and potential the Council may be asked to repay grant funding if the facility was not reopened. There were also the additional challenges on the External and Third Sector Sports, Leisure, Culture and Community Funding Working Group who had been tasked with trying to find savings of £200k out of a budget of £600k. Protecting facilities or organisations from budget reductions by the Committee further removed the Working Group's ability to achieve savings, consequently having a negative impact on the remainder of the third sector groups. However, given the potential repayment of £1m to the National Lottery Fund and that the Dounreay Site Restoration Fund were willing to match the Council funding, it was essential Caithness Horizons was brought back up to standard and reopened.

The Committee **AGREED** to:-

- i. the capital and revenue commitments to support the re-opening of Caithness Horizons, Thurso, all as detailed in section 4 of the report; and
- ii. the novation of the existing agreement with the National Lottery, currently co-signed by Highland Council and Caithness Horizons, solely to Highland Council.

6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Non-HRA Budget: Near-final Outturn Report 2018/2019
Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Cunntas Buidseat Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No CLH/28/19 dated 20 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, information was sought, and provided, on how the Council recovered current bad debt, the delays in fully implementing mobile technology for trade operatives, and the impact of limiting non-essential repairs.

The Committee **APPROVED** the near-final revenue budget position for 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

7. Community Services Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2018 gu 31 Màrt 2019

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau 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 CLH/29/19 dated 20 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the disposal of the property at Achow, Lybster was welcomed as it was not in keeping with the remainder of the housing stock in the area;
- several properties in Wick were to be marketed to reduce the number of voids in Caithness. This high level of voids had a detrimental impact on Highland's overall performance and in this regard a feasibility study was suggested as to how best to review the housing stock and to determine which properties should be declared surplus to requirements;
- to drive voids down further a pilot project was proposed in an area like Hilton to gauge if extra resource could drive down voids and make properties available to re-let sooner. Local knowledge was key to this;
- Members welcomed the improvements in relation to the performance on repairs;
- the reduction in rent arrears for Quarter 4 2018/19 from 76.5% to 68.3% was also welcomed. This could partly be attributed to more tenants requesting direct landlord payments through Scottish Choices. This arrangement gave tenants security over their tenancy and was an option which should be promoted further;
- a reduction in the number of homeless presentations and households in temporary accommodation was reported but this appeared to conflict with the information contained in Report No CLH/30/19; and
- in response to concerns raised that improvements in performance were not replicated in Ross and Cromarty the Head of Housing and Building Maintenance offered to have further discussion with Ward Members to discuss local performance issues.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019;
- ii. **AGREED** that a Housing Revenue Account property at Achow, Lybster, be declared surplus and available for disposal on the open market; and
- iii. **AGREED** that consideration be given to a pilot improvement initiative in a specific estate to drive down the number of void properties.

8. Homelessness: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Phlana Eadar-ghluasaid a thaobh Ath-thuineachadh Luath

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau 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 CLH/30/19 dated 20 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was suggested that there was merit in discussing with other local authorities, especially those where homeless rates were high, the possibility of using voids in areas such as Wick. In doing so it was recognised that many individuals would have specific needs and the necessary portfolio of services to support them and bring them back into society might not necessarily be available. However, this approach had been tried within Highland with limited success as many individuals from an urban area identified with a city environment and found it difficult to settle in a more rural area;
- the content of the plan was welcomed and confirmation was sought, and received, that it was based on good practice taking place elsewhere, the networking of which had been facilitated by the Scottish Government;
- providing housing fitting the needs of an individual was life changing. With all agencies in the Community Planning Partnership working together a sustainable tenancy could be achieved. In this regard, it was highlighted that decisions taken by individual partners might have an impact elsewhere and this was not always recognised;
- it was important to remember the person when dealing with homelessness. There was good work taking place in this regard by the Scottish Government;
- the lack of capital funding had led to the shortage of suitable housing. However, there were interventions which could be put in place to address the root causes of homelessness; and
- local authorities were the only statutory providers of housing and it was felt that other publicly funded agencies delivering social housing should be subject to the same rules and regulations.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the updated Highland Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and associated Action Plan as attached at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** that Scottish Government phase 2 funding was now anticipated for confirmation from August 2019;
- iii. **NOTED** that a further report would be presented to Committee with details of progress against the Action Plan once funding was confirmed; and
- iv. **NOTED** that a further report would be presented on the homeless appeals process.

9. **Annual Monitoring Report: Housing Allocations Policy** **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Bhliadhna: Poileasaidh Riarachadh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No CLH/31/19 dated 20 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the information contained in the Annual Monitoring Report on housing allocations and that the policy was achieving its objectives in relation to meeting housing needs; and
- ii. that a policy review was in process and that Members would be invited to a Policy Development Group in Autumn 2019.

10. Care and Learning Revenue Budget Near Final Out-turn 2018/19 Suidheachadh Faisg air Deireannach Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Cùraim agus Ionnsachaidh 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No CLH/32/19 dated 13 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concern was expressed at the £4.7m overspend for Looked After Children. Whilst it was acknowledged that there would always be children who needed to be placed Out of Authority, it was feared that some were placed out of authority due to a lack of capacity in Highland. It was essential this was addressed and it was suggested greater use could be made of Foster Carers who were approved for two to three placements but only had one child in their care. If payments were provided to them for additional children it would help address this overspend as well as substantially improving life outcomes for the young people. However, other Members urged caution as fostering additional children could have a detrimental effect on the existing fostering arrangement;
- a lot of exciting work was taking place in terms of bringing out of authority children back to Highland, and all suggestions were being taken into consideration. However, there was only a finite amount of money available and therefore it was important to take time, to get it right and to build up capacity, also with families, so that more sustainable respite and residential provision could be delivered across Highland and better outcomes ensured;
- assurances had been given during the budget process that the revisions to funding would not affect support needs schools but recent press reports had suggested that the Scope autism unit in Caithness had been mothballed. In response, the Chairman pointed out that these press reports had been misleading and there had now been a retraction. Local Members had been kept informed of the situation and this communication would now be shared with all Members;
- whilst this long-term approach was to be applauded, action was needed now to address the budget overspend. The same budget pressures arose every year and it was disappointing that the remedial action taken had impacted on the Devolved School Management budget. Assurance had been given during the budget-setting process that this was a one-off and confirmation was sought that this would not be repeated;
- the needs of the child should be at the centre of the decision-making process but a small number of children with complex needs placed in out of authority care could have a significant detrimental impact on the budget. If children were to be returned to Highland the correct level of care needed to be in place; and
- clarity was sought as to the exact level of savings to be made from the Additional Support Needs budget and over what timescale this was to be achieved.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the revenue budget near-final outturn for 2018/19 and the actions being taken to address the budget position in the current year;
- ii. **AGREED** that the communication to Local Members in relation to the Scope autism unit in Caithness be circulated to all Members; and

- iii. **AGREED** that a briefing on recent developments in relation to Looked After Children provision be provided to all Members of the Committee.

11. Care and Learning Service Plan 2019/20 Plana Seirbheis a' Chùrain agus an Ionnsachaidh 2019/20

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS 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 Report No CLH/33/19 dated 20 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- a request for cross-party Member involvement in For Highland's Children 5 was made, an approach which had been adopted in For Highland Children's 4. In this regard, the Member involvement across the 13 Improvement Groups was welcomed;
- it was felt that there was a plethora of plans in Education and too much time was spent reviewing them rather than addressing the substantive issues. The Plan before Members contained a list of objectives but it did not explain outcomes and strategic methods as to how they could be achieved. For example, concerns had been raised in the recent Education Scotland Authority report about mixed outcomes from inspections and performance information in Highland but there was no detail as to how these would be tackled; and
- it was important that there was a synergy between the various plans and that they had defined purposes and provided positive outcomes for young people. In this regard it was important that Members continued to question if plans achieved what they set out to do.

The Committee **AGREED** the draft Care and Learning Service Plan for 2019/20, subject to the points raised during discussion, and that latest performance against the updated plan for 19/20 be presented to Committee in August 2019.

12. Early Learning and Childcare Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Thràth-ionnsachadh agus Cùram-chloinne

There had been circulated Report No CLH/34/19 dated 17 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) was an ambitious programme and there was a tight timescale in which to deliver the necessary capital infrastructure. Information was therefore sought, and provided, as to what contingency plans were in place in Highland if these deadlines were not met;
- the challenges being faced had been well articulated but it was also important to acknowledge the good progress made. Working with partners was crucial if equality of provision was to be achieved;

- the excellent work undertaken in partnership with CALA through the Peep Progression Pathway was commended. This programme supported fathers in prison to undertake units relating to early years and, for many, offered an opportunity to gain knowledge about positive parenting; and
- the Peep Progression Pathway was also being run at UHI and the number of young men wishing to consider a career in ELC was welcomed as this would provide positive male role models for many children.

The Committee **NOTED** the current national and local position

13. Care and Learning Capital – Early Learning and Childcare/School Estate Improvement Programmes

Calpa Cùraim agus Ionnsachaidh – Tràth-ionnsachadh agus Cùram-chloinne/Prògraman Leasachaidh Oighreachdan Sgoile

The Committee **NOTED** that this item had been withdrawn following discussion at the monthly Members' budget meeting. Members were assured that the report would be discussed at the next Members' budget meeting on 18 June and thereafter the intention was to take to full Council for consideration in the context of the wider Capital Programme. Any delay would not impact on planning for Early Years arrangements.

15. Statutory Consultation – Closure of Altnaharra Primary School

Bun-Sgoil Allt na h-Eirbhe – aithisg dheireannach le moladh airson dùnadh

There had been circulated Report No CLH/37/19 dated 15 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

- * Having acknowledged the excellent work of officers working with the community, the Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that education at Altnaharra Primary School be discontinued and its catchment area divided between those of Tongue Primary School, Farr Primary School and Lairg Primary School.

16. Statutory Consultation – Proposal to Proceed to Statutory Consultation for Formal Closure of Uig Primary School

Bun-Sgoil Ùige – iarrtas co-chomhairle reachdail a thòiseachadh a thaobh dùnadh

There had been circulated Report No CLH/38/19 dated 25 April 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion it was suggested that, with the closest school having a majority of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) pupils, the possibility of splitting the schools separately into GME and mainstream be explored. In response it was confirmed that all viable options raised through the consultation process would be considered but the knock-on effects of such proposals would also have to be taken into account.

The Committee **AGREED** to proceed to statutory consultation on the basis of the Proposal appended to the report.

17. Statutory Consultation – Proposal to Proceed to Statutory Consultation for Formal Closure of Stoer Primary School
Bun-Sgoil an Stòir – iarrtas co-chomhairle reachdail a thòiseachadh a thaobh dùnadh

There had been circulated Report No CLH/39/19 dated 25 April 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members commented that, whilst education should be delivered as locally as possible, this had to be balanced against the other curricular activities that could be provided and which school could offer the best educational experience.

The Committee **AGREED** to proceed to statutory consultation on the basis of the Proposal appended to the report.

18. Review of the Statutory Consultation Exercise to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Ullapool Primary School
FtG Ullapuil – aithisg dheireannach le molaidhean sgìre-sgoile FtG a stèidheachadh

There had been circulated Report No CLH/40/19 dated 25 April 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

- * The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council the creation of a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Ullapool Primary School on the basis shown on the map at Appendix 2 of the report.

19. Statutory Consultation – Gaelic Medium Catchment Proposals for Mount Pleasant Primary School, Thurso
Bun-Sgoil Mount Pleasant, FtG Inbhir Theòrsa – iarrtas co-chomhairle reachdail a thòiseachadh a thaobh stèidheachadh sgìre-sgoile FtG

There had been circulated Report No CLH/41/19 dated 25 April 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

Whilst supportive of proceeding to consultation the point was made that, when looking at catchment areas, it was important to consider how the Council was going to resource the expansion of GME in the future. It was important that GME was sustained in to secondary schools and a meeting was shortly to be held with representatives from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government to pull all interested parties together to address this issue. In the meantime, it was important to progress communication with parents, teachers and communities to assure them that their concerns were being listened to. Recruitment of GME teachers had historically been a problem but at last there appeared to be more teachers available, although where they chose to teach might still be a problem. This matter could be further considered at the Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group.

The Committee **AGREED:-**

- i. to proceed to statutory consultation on the basis of the Proposal appended to the report; and

- ii. to progress, as soon as possible, communication with relevant communities regarding future resourcing of Gaelic Medium Education provision.

22. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 4 December 2018;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Child Protection Committee – 4 December 2018;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Community Justice Partnership – 12 December 2018;
- iv. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group – 13 March 2019;
- v. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 28 March 2019;
- vi. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the External and Third Sector Sport, Leisure, Culture and Community Funding Working Group – 26 April 2019; and
- vii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the External and Third Sector Sport, Leisure, Culture and Community Funding Working Group – 17 May 2019.

The meeting concluded at 2.55 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 30 May 2019 at 10.00am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr J Gray
Mr B Boyd	Mr A Graham
Mrs C Caddick	Mr A Jarvie
Miss J Campbell	Mr R Laird
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	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
Mr K Gowans	Mr C Smith

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms F Shearer, South Area Care and Learning Manager, Care & Learning Service
 Mrs MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer, Care and Learning Service
 Ms A Tanner, Inverness City Heritage Trust Project Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service
 Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr G Inkster, Group Manager, 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 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 Mrs Sheila Mackay OBE, former Depute Provost and District Councillor, who had recently passed;
- congratulations were conveyed to Milton of Leys' Primary five-six football team on their great success in winning the Scottish Schools National Finals in Glasgow; and
- a warm welcome was extended to the exchange students from Augsburg and appreciation was expressed for the staff efforts in supporting their work placements within the Council.

Business

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

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown, Ms E Knox and Mrs B McAllister.

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

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

Item 5 – Mr A Graham (Financial)

Item 6 – Miss J Campbell, Mr J Gray and Mr R MacWilliam (all non-financial)

3. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Committee Performance Report for Q3 and Q4 of 2018-19** **Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba airson C3 agus C4 de 2018-19**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/19/19 dated 30 May 2019 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Committee welcomed the positive performance information contained within the report, particularly in regard to Road Traffic Collisions which demonstrated that the collaborative working had been effective and it was hoped that this trend would continue;
- confirmation was provided that more local community briefings would be held on wildfires. Wildfires were a significant drain on resources and although controlled fires by Estates were not licenced/regulated there was ongoing engagement and collaborative working to reduce this risk;
- further information was sought and provided in regard to whether there were any common factors/trends in respect of accidental dwelling fires and deliberate fires; and
- it was queried whether the role of the Fire and Rescue Service would be broadened to include rapid response to medical emergencies particularly in rural areas.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the attached City of Inverness Performance Report.

4. **Education Report** **Aithisg Foghlaim**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/20/19 dated 21 May 2019 by the Area Care & Learning Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- views were split with regard to the new report format. The summary of the capital programme works was felt to be helpful but it was indicated that this should include all capital works. Some Members supported the broader reporting style with the synopsis of key highlights and advocated the suggestion of more tailored detailed briefings according to Associated School Groups (ASG) being presented at Ward Business Meetings. However, in contrast, some Members expressed concern at this approach as these were private meetings and it was felt that it was important that this information was presented and discussed in a public forum to facilitate greater transparency and encourage parent engagement to achieve better outcomes. In addition, although it was acknowledged that Inverness City comprised of six ASGs, it was felt that it was helpful to receive information on each of these as this enabled comparators to be made;
- concern was expressed that the purpose of the report was unclear. The report duplicated information that was already reported to other Committees and indicated how other information could be accessed. A request was made for future reports to contain attainment and performance information and also for benchmarking information to be incorporated;
- confirmation was sought and provided that HMIE reports were issued to Members once they had been published;
- it was felt that the information contained within the Dashboard was unclear and further information was sought and provided on who uploaded the data to the Dashboard. It was highlighted that there was a disconnect between the information reported at strategic committee level and that contained on the Dashboard and this needed to be addressed; and
- concern was expressed at the lack of a capacity within school rolls, particularly at Culloden and Smithton Academy, and that the increasing demands from new housing developments were not being factored into future projections. This was unsustainable and additional capacity needed to be established.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the content of the report and the new format which would be further discussed with Members.

5. The 2020 Inverness Royal National Mòd Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail Inbhir Nis 2020

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Graham declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Bord Na Gaidhlig and left the meeting for the determination of this item.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/21/19 dated 17 May 2019 by the Interim Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members recognised that hosting the 2020 Inverness Royal National Mod would bring a strong international delegation to the area and welcomed the wide-ranging economic and cultural benefits.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the benefits of the Royal National Mòd taking place in Inverness in 2020.

6. Inverness City Heritage Trust Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Urras Dualchais Baile Inbhir Nis

Declarations of Interest: Miss J Campbell and Mr R MacWilliam declared non-financial interests in this item as Members of the Inverness City Heritage Trust and the Townscape Heritage Partnership Grants Sub-Committee and Mr J Gray declared a non-financial interest as Chair of the Inverness 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.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/22/19 dated 14 May 2019 by the Inverness City Heritage Trust Project Officer.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Inverness City Heritage Team was commended for their work which was often very time consuming and their ongoing dialogue with businesses and building owners to encourage and support them in moving projects forward to ensure buildings of architectural and historical importance were properly restored and sustained for future generations. Appreciation was also extended to the building owners for their support and commitment without which completion of these projects would not be feasible;
- continuing, further appreciation was extended to the team for their innovative work with limited resources and praise was extended for the specialist traditional building skills being utilised. It was queried how the Council could help with addressing the specialist skills shortages to ensure continuity of this sector of the workforce;
- the desktop study undertaken by the Inverness City Heritage Trust helped to identify the important buildings in and around Inverness and demonstrated the need for attention to be focussed on the City Centre. The Academy Street project was an indication of the valuable heritage restoration works that were being undertaken;
- further information was sought and provided in regard to how Blue building plaques could be obtained and also on the Doors Open Days event;
- the value of the City's built heritage was being recognised and the Leader of the Council proposed that wider discussions be held with Members with a view to the Council developing a strategic approach for sustainable investment in Council/Common Good Fund owned buildings of historical value. She further highlighted the employability and philanthropic opportunities to assist with such projects; and
- confirmation was provided that, although the Inverness City Heritage Trust was the only Heritage Trust in the Highlands, it might be feasible to extend the scope of their work across the wider Highlands.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress of the ICHT during 2018/19;
- ii. that future activity beyond 2020 was dependent on securing funding from Historic Environment Scotland and
- iii. that the Leader of the Council would hold wider discussions with Members with a view to the Council developing a strategic approach for sustainable investment in Council/Common Good Fund owned buildings of historical value.

**7. Torvean Gateway: Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief Update
Slighe Thòrr Bheathain: Cunntas às Ùr mu Bhrath-leasachaidh Thòrr
Bheathain agus Thaobh Nis**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/23/19 dated 30 May 2019 the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks were conveyed to the Local Members and the Officers for a good report which highlighted a lot of exciting opportunities for the area;
- it would be important that any difficulties were overcome and that partnership working was put in place from the outcome, especially in relation to the provision of public transport to and from the area;
- this had the potential to be a major attraction for families in particular and as such it was crucial that both public transport and adequate parking facilities were in place from the outset;
- consideration should be given to 'Park and Ride' schemes if feasible;
- permanent arrangements for rowing, cycling and training for all age groups were imperative to ensure future and long term success;
- it would be important to get the balance of services correct from the outset as this was a unique area/destination;
- transport would be crucial but it was hoped that this could tie in with healthy lifestyles and as such not be car dependent;
- in terms of the transport infrastructure, it was suggested that consideration should be given to different aspects, such as a car free zone if possible;
- it would be helpful to examine what was currently in place in other similar areas in different parts of the country, especially in regard to cycling provision;
- it would be important to take account of the whole area in terms of future development, including the provision of housing, children's play areas and wildlife, with consultation being undertaken with other agencies, such as SNH, where necessary;
- a combination of a range of uses which capitalised on what was already in place in the area would be the ideal in terms of presenting the best possible opportunities at the gateway to the City;
- it was essential that any further recommendations for future car parking and/or housing (in addition what was now being proposed) should come back in future reports for the Committee to enable consideration at that time;

- it would be helpful if any income generation proposals for the long term were also discussed with the Commercial Board;
- the consultation which had been undertaken with local schools was welcomed;
- it would be essential that the current balance of green space within the development was preserved for the local community and that the height of any future development had to be in keeping with what was already in place in the area;
- it would be helpful to seek the views of the Inverness Community Safety Partnership in any future discussion on transport options;
- consideration should be given to arranging a further Members Briefing in order to allow the opportunity to further discuss any additional options to what was currently being proposed; and
- whilst welcoming all of the proposals in the report for this area, it had to be noted that similar proposals would be warmly welcomed in future for development on the east side of the City.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the summary of comments received on the Brief and **AGREED** the Council responses as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to update the adopted Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief to incorporate the revised Torvean content at Appendix 2, subject to clearance by Scottish Ministers.

8. Structures Progress Report 2018/19 Aithisg Adhartais Structaran 2018/19

There had been Report No. CIA/24/19 dated 7 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, thanks were conveyed to the Officers concerned for the significant levels of work which had been undertaken within the current budget.

Also, and in relation to potential future projects, it was stressed that any consideration in this regard had to take account of the condition of current assets and any associated structural concerns which would need to be fed through to the Capital Programme in the first instance.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

9. Station Square, Inverness – Prohibition of Left Turn from Academy Street Ceàrnag an Stèisein, Inbhir Nis – Casg air Tionndadh Cli bho Shràid na h-Acadamaidh

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/25/19 dated 15 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst agreeing with the safety concerns which had been highlighted in relation to the potential dangers of large vehicles reversing out of Station Square and into the live traffic on Academy Street, it was suggested that there should be a restriction of 3.5 tonnes (as opposed to the 3 tonne restriction which had been proposed within the report);
- there was a need for consideration to be given as to what any new proposal would mean for coach drivers, specifically in terms of future alternatives to what was currently being undertaken;
- in terms of the development of Station Square, it was questioned as to whether there should be no left turn for any vehicles from Academy Street;
- there should be consideration to the height of vehicles in addition to the weight;
- it had to be noted that this was a major Rail Station and as such there was a need to also focus on health and safety issues;
- it would be helpful if contact could be made with groups regularly using Station Square, such as coaches conveying elderly and disabled people, in order to make them fully aware of the agreed future arrangements; and
- it was noted that the increase in weight limit (to 3.5 tonnes) would make the Road Traffic Order less onerous and it would not require to be re-advertised.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information contained in the report with regard to progressing with the proposed Road Traffic Order; and
- ii. **AGREED** to amend the proposed Road Traffic Order to allow for a 3.5 tonne weight restriction to be put in place (as opposed to the 3 tonne restriction which had been highlighted within the report).

10. The Highland Council (Inverness West Link (A8082) Stage 1) (30mp and 40pmh speed limits) Order 2017
Òrdugh (Ceangal an Iar Inbhir Nis (A8082) Ìre 1) (casg-astair 30 msu agus 40 msu) Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd 2017

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/26/19 dated 10 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in terms of the proposed speed limits, it was felt that the natural place for the 30mph limit to take effect was just before the Queen's Park Roundabout;
- in terms of appropriate speed limits, it was suggested that Sections J and L within the report would be perceived by drivers as 40mph zones and this was in fact most appropriate for this stretch of the road;
- there were already problems with speed limits within the City and Sections J and L would not work as 30mph zones;

- in contrast, and whilst acknowledging the concerns which had been raised, there was a need to encourage cycling and walking in this area and as such it was suggested that the proposal within the report for this to be a 30mph zone was appropriate;
- in terms of the current speeding issues, it was felt that the perception of drivers often was that a wider road allowed a faster speed limit;
- it was suggested that just lowering the speed limit would not encourage people to leave their cars and cycle/walk as an alternative; and
- in any future consideration of speed limits across the City, there were locations, such as adjacent to the Gaelic School, where consideration should be given to lowering the speed limit to 20mph on the grounds of health and safety.

Thereafter, Mr A Graham, seconded by Mr R MacWilliam, **MOVED** acceptance of the recommendations within the report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mrs C Caddick, moved that Sections J and L should be 40mph - with the 30mph limit taking effect just before the Queen's Park Roundabout.

On a vote being taken, the Motion received 8 votes and the Amendment received 11 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr A Graham, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr B Boyd, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray and Mrs T Robertson.

For the Amendment:

Mr A Jarvie, Mrs C Caddick, Mr R Balfour, Miss J Campbell, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr R Laird, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson, Mr G Ross and Mr C Smith.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the background to the proposed 30mph and 40mph speed limit orders and the representations received; and
- APPROVED** the making of the: 'The Highland Council (Inverness West Link (A8082) Stage 1) (30mph and 40mph Speed Limits) Order 2017' – subject to promotion of the following amendment – Sections J and L to be 40mph - with the 30mph limit taking effect just before the Queen's Park Roundabout.

11. Christmas Lights and Decorations Solais agus Sgeadhaidhean Nollaige

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/27/19 dated 14 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it should be noted that Members had always had a very high regard for the work undertaken by the Lighting Service and there was now a need for that Service to liaise with local Community Councils and community groups in terms of the way forward for Christmas lights and decorations in future years;
- any proposals for future action to be taken should be discussed at Ward Business Meetings in the first instance;
- it was important to stress that lighting in the City Centre would remain as at present but there should perhaps be a focus on replacing/updating this lighting where necessary;
- in terms of what was currently being undertaken elsewhere, it was highlighted that the highly successful 'Festival of Trees' in Canada (whereby individual trees were sponsored by local businesses) should perhaps be explored as a future option for the City; and
- there was a need for clarification to be given to Community Councils in relation to the payment of VAT as part of Council invoices.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

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

12. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 31 March 2019 Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 31 Am Màrt 2019

There had been circulated Report No CIA/28/19 dated 9 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for further and more detailed information to be provided in future in relation to the HRA Capital Programme Inverness & Area and specifically in regard to the delays associated with the 'amber' ratings within this programme;
- it would be helpful if statistics in regard to all Quarters for the year could be provided in future;
- housing allocations represented the bulk of casework for many Members and as such information in this regard should be provided in future reports;
- it was hoped that early intervention in respect of void properties could be implemented in future with a view to enabling such properties to be brought back into use more quickly;
- thanks should be conveyed to the Housing staff for the excellent work which was being undertaken;

- it was hoped that the planned programming in respect of heating system failures would mitigate any potential future overspend in this regard; and
- it would be helpful if consideration could be given to presenting the performance indicators for housing management in actual numbers (as well as percentages) if possible in future.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the information provided on Housing Performance for the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019; and
- ii. the position of the HRA Capital Programme for Inverness as detailed.

13. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

a) Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Tabhartasan Maoin Mathas Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/29/19 dated 14 May 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to the City Manager and Hilary Tolmie for the considerable work which had been undertaken in respect of the proposals to revise the current administrative arrangements for processing applications;
- in relation to the future scrutiny of grant awards, the proposal in respect of two Members of the Sub Committee visiting and witnessing the work of organisations to verify the validity of applications and following this up with presentation of a cheque for any award granted (with associated promotion/publicity) was questioned and it was suggested that this was not required and should not be part of any future policy;
- in relation to the above, it was also highlighted that currently applicants could contact Members if they so wished and it was considered that this was sufficient;
- it was suggested that there should be specific limits set for any future grant applications;
- it was imperative that account was always taken of the original principles pertaining to the Common Good Fund; and
- in light of the issues which had been raised at the meeting, it was suggested that further consideration of this item should be deferred to allow a Special Meeting of the Common Good Fund Sub Committee to be arranged in the first instance and a further report to be submitted to the next meeting of the City Committee thereafter.

The Committee **AGREED TO DEFER** consideration of the options to revise the current administrative arrangements for processing applications for financial assistance in light of the issues which had been raised at the meeting - on the basis that a report would be submitted to a Special Meeting of the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub Committee in the first instance to allow further consideration and thereafter to the next meeting of the City Committee.

b) Discretionary Scheme for Winter Payments 2019/20
Sgeama fo Ùghdarras airson Phàighidhean Geamhraidh 2019/20

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/30/19 dated 15 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, thanks were conveyed to the Officers concerned for the very professional and efficient administration of this Scheme.

It was also highlighted that the 'energy cap' had recently been lifted and this could cause considerable additional hardship for those persons on low incomes. As such, it was suggested that, in view of the fact that the Scheme had been underspent in the previous year, consideration should be given to now increasing the proposed payment of £82 by 10%.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED TO DEFER** consideration of the single tier payment of £82 as proposed within the report until the next meeting – on the basis that the opinion of Members was that if possible (and within affordability limits) the proposal should be for the payment to be increased by 10% for the 2019/20 Scheme.

c) Financial Monitoring
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/31/19 dated 14 May 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 30 April 2019 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

Specifically in relation to the Inverness Common Good Fund Core Spend Monitoring Statement, it was also **AGREED** that a further and more detailed report should be provided on (i) Winter Payments (to include reference to cash used from the Benevolent Funds) and (ii) the Central Support Charge.

d) Grants and Capital Projects
Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/32/19 dated 17 May 2019 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

In this connection, there had also been circulated a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the following action in respect of the applications as circulated – LOC MNR 2020 (grant of £17,500), Special Needs Action Project (deferred for further clarification on business planning aspects), WASPs Trust (grant of £65,000), Eden Court (grant of £13,148), Scottish Canals (grant of 50,000) and LCC Live Events (grant of £17,000);

- ii. **AGREED** to refuse the Accessable proposal;
- iii. **NOTED** the current status of capital projects;
- iv. **NOTED** the cost to undertake the work to the Rose Window was £14,675.27 and would be paid from the Other Properties Budget;
- v. **APPROVED** the overspend on the Ness Islands Improvement Works Project from the Other Properties Budget; and
- vi. **APPROVED** an additional £6,500 to the Whin Park Improvement Works Project

14. Approval / Homologation of new Street Names Aontachadh ainmean ùra Sràide

There had been circulated Report No CIA/33/19 dated 20 May 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy & Reform.

The Committee **APPROVED** one new street name for the former Kinmylies Building as 'Achmore Court'.

The Committee also **HOMOLOGATED:-**

- i. one new extended street name at Westercraigs as 'Forester's Way';
- ii. one new street name west of Torvean Golf Club as 'Balphadrig Road'; and
- iii. one new name for a flatted development off Kenneth Street as 'Kenneth Buildings'.

15. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

City of Inverness Area Committee held on 21 February 2019, 28 March 2019 and 25 April 2019 - **NOTED**;

Victorian Market Stakeholder Group held on 26 February 2019 and 9 April 2019 - **NOTED**;

Inverness Events & Festivals Working Group held on 4 March 2019 - **APPROVED**; and

Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 13 May 2019 - **APPROVED**.

In respect of the Minutes of Meeting of the Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 9 April 2019, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Information was sought and received in respect of the previous funding position and the discussions with Creative Scotland to investigate possible future funding sources for 'The Trail' project;
- in terms of the 'My Ness' project, there was a need for further detail over the Fishermen's Hut and specifically the statement which had been made that it was the responsibility of the Ness Angling Club to access sources of funding in this regard;

- further detail was also required in relation to the 'Children's Feature', particularly in regard to concerns which had been raised over whether it was in the correct location in terms of health and safety;
- in relation to 'Rest Spaces – Dress for the Weather', and with a focus on good governance, there had been no specific reference to certain aspects of this particular project in previous Minutes of Working Group meetings and as such information was now required on whether it had been appropriate to class this as 'street furniture' in line with Permitted Development as opposed to seeking planning permission;
- requests for a Special Meeting of the City Committee had been made on two previous occasions in order to allow public debate on the governance of this project which was a matter of great importance to the City of Inverness but to date there had been no agreement to these requests and a further request was made at the meeting;
- it had to be highlighted that the Inverness City Arts Working Group had been charged with taking forward the various projects listed in the report and meetings of this Group had been open for any Member to attend;
- in terms of concentrating on process, and with specific reference to the 'My Ness' project, this was a contentious project which had resulted in a petition being received from around 3000 people in the local area, including local fishermen, who had concerns in relation to the physical, environmental and ecological risks associated with a high cost project of this size in the proposed location;
- it was acknowledged that the concerns in relation to the 'My Ness' project had been brought to the attention of the Leader of the Council and that a formal response was to be provided in due course;
- a considerable amount of work had been undertaken by Council Officers and external bodies in recent years on the various projects listed within the report. As such, and whilst acknowledging that this had not been an easy task, it had to be highlighted that nothing had been hidden in terms of information and Officers had made enormous efforts to adhere to the budgets which had been set with due process having been followed;
- there had been an open invitation to all Members of the City Committee to attend and become involved in the Working Group but to date this offer had not been taken up;
- in taking forward the projects which had been listed, it had to be accepted that it would be impossible for there to be no impact whatsoever on the River; and
- in terms of the concerns which had been raised at the meeting, it was suggested that an external review of the whole project should perhaps be considered.

In response, the City Manager confirmed that the Working Group was acting within its powers as delegated by the Committee and that advice was being taken on all aspects to ensure that the Council's legal duties were being met.

Thereafter, Mr J Gray, seconded by Mrs H Carmichael, **MOVED** the recommendations within the Minutes of the Meeting as circulated.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr R Laird, seconded by Mr R MacWilliam, moved that the recommendations within the Minutes of the Meeting should not be approved.

On a vote being taken, the Motion received 10 votes and the Amendment received 4 votes, with 3 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr J Gray, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A Graham, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson, Mr G Ross and Mr C Smith.

For the Amendment:

Mr R Laird, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr B Boyd and Mr K Gowans.

Abstentions:

Mr R Balfour, Miss J Campbell and Mr A Christie.

The Committee otherwise **APPROVED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Inverness City Arts Working Group as circulated.

The meeting ended at 4.30pm.

**The Highland Council
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Caithness Committee held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick, on Thursday, 30 May 2019 at 2.00pm.

Present:

Mr R Bremner

Mr M Reiss

Mr D Mackay

Mr A Sinclair

Mr W Mackay

Ms N Sinclair

Officials in attendance:

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services (by VC)

Mr A Macmanus, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Ms J Sutherland, Senior Engineer, Community Services

Mr J Gunn, Technician, Community Services

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

Mr M Reiss in the Chair

**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**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Road Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20
Càradh Structarail Rathaidean 2019/20**

There had been re-circulated Report No CC/11/19 dated 2 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, a point was raised in regard to the fact the upgrading of Princes Street, Thurso was not included in the Programme, given that it was in a poor state of repair and should be considered a priority. In response to a question, the Senior Engineer provided an assurance that she would undertake a site visit and provide the indicative costs of upgrading the road.

The Chair advised that a similar exercise had been undertaken in respect of Ormlie Road, Thurso and the cost of repairs and overlaying were significant. In this regard, it was suggested that developer contributions from a prospective hotel development may potentially fund improvements to a section of Ormlie Road, Thurso.

Thereafter, an explanation was sought and provided in regard to the reason the jetpatcher had not been deployed in Caithness during the previous year. It was explained this had been due to unforeseen staffing issues, details of which were provided, and that as an alternative option manual patching had been undertaken.

In regard to the above, concern was expressed that Members had not been informed of the situation, and it was hoped the plan to hold periodic meetings between Roads officers and Members to discuss progress with roads issues would improve communication going forward. Training for staff on the operation of the jetpatcher should be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

Members then heard from the Director of Community Services and Senior Engineer in regard to the potential to upgrade Norseman/Riverside Car Park from the Roads Budget Allocation 2019/20 for Caithness. The proposal was for the sum of £11,282 from the revenue budget and £10,000 from the capital budget to be ring-fenced for works to the Car Park. This would allow local Members to have discussions with the community on the potential to secure match funding to enable the Norseman Car Park to be upgraded to an appropriate standard. This was with the caveat that the works be undertaken in-house by the Council's DLO section. This option would maintain the viability of the proposed surface dressing element of the Programme and allow the schemes set out in the report to be completed during the June/July window for undertaking surface dressing works.

In regard to the above proposal, clarification was sought on the impact of the proposal on the revenue budget. The Senior Engineer reported that the jetpatcher would not be deployed in the area in the current year and alternative methods of patching would be used. In addition, other essential works which did not require materials would be progressed such as ditching, which Members observed was important to the long term maintenance and safety of the roads.

In discussion, Members raised the following main issues:-

- a holistic approach was being taken in conjunction with local stakeholders to the regeneration of Wick town centre and the upgrading of the Norseman Car Park was a key element and focal point of the draft regeneration plans;
- local Members would be seeking to match fund the proposed Council allocation of £21,282 from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund 2019/20 allocation for Wick, to create an overall funding package for the Norseman Car Park;
- the Town Centre Fund had to be spent within a period of one year and therefore confirmation was sought and provided that the DLO had the capacity to deliver the works within this timescale;
- there was a need to scope out as soon as possible the works required to achieve a good fix of the Norseman Car Park;
- confirmation had been provided that the approximate cost of white lining the car park was £4,000 which it was suggested was achievable within the available resources;
- white lining should be laid out to accommodate cars and other vehicles such as campervans and include disabled and child/parent spaces. The design should also discourage younger drivers from using the car park later in the evenings;
- a meeting of wider stakeholders, community groups and the general public on the draft regeneration plans for Wick Town Centre would be held on 10 June 2019, at which the bid to Wick's allocation of the Town Centre Fund for the Norseman Car Park would be discussed;
- following the above meeting on 10 June 2019, there would be an opportunity to have a further discussion on the scope and progress with the scheme at the regular meetings to be held with Roads officials; and
- it was important also to be mindful of the allocation of the budget for schemes in Thurso and North West Caithness within the Programme;

Thereafter, Members thanked the Senior Engineer for bringing forward the proposals for the Norseman Car Park in such a short timescale.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Roads Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the sum of £21,282 be set aside from the Roads Budget Allocation for Caithness 2019/20 to allow match funding to be sought to create an overall funding package towards the upgrading of the Norseman Car Park, the works to be carried out in-house by the Council and completed by 30 November 2019.

The meeting ended at 2.55pm.

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 Sgìre, Park Lane, Portree on **Monday, 3 June, 2019 at 10.30 am.**

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr J Gordon

Mr R MacDonald
Mr C MacLeod

In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Service
Mr M Colliar, Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr S Duncan, Property Manager, Development & Infrastructure Service (by VC)
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Community Services (by VC)
Ms N Young, Area Care & Learning Manager (West), Care & Learning Service
Ms J Bruce, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr I Moncrieff, Road Operations Manager (Skye, Ross & Cromarty), Community Services
Mr D Chisholm, Planner (Development Plans), Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:-

Ms A Campbell, Audit Scotland

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 4 March, 2019, which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 7 March, 2019, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

4. Property Maintenance Cumail Suas Thogalaichean

There had been circulated Report No. SR/6/19 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Reference was made to the removal of the allocation for cyclical maintenance which covers external and internal painting and related repairs. If the Council did not undertake cyclical maintenance this would create problems in future. It was queried if there was any other budget that could be used for cyclical maintenance. Also there were a number of property repairs carried forward from last year and it was queried who made the decisions in respect of prioritising maintenance work. There were also health and safety and statutory obligations in terms of property maintenance that would have to be budgeted for. It was explained that there was property capital funding available which could be used for maintenance work such as significant roof repairs. The property maintenance budget was split between statutory compliance repairs and reactive property maintenance. Although indicative funding had been allocated to each area of the Council, it was a Highland wide budget, and the Skye/Raasay allowance had been overspent prior to the end of the last financial year. Repairs could still be done, but the funding required to come from another areas allocation or from statutory compliance funding. In terms of repairs carry forward from last year, it was advised that the budget last year for property maintenance had not been exceeded and this had been achieved by not carrying out some repairs and carrying them forward into this financial year. It was important to achieve a balanced budget and therefore there would be budget implications this year arising from repairs identified in the last financial year.
- The budget allocation for property maintenance was allocated on the basis of certain criteria such as total gross floor area. It was felt that the condition of property should also be used as a criteria when allocating funding to areas for property maintenance. This would be fairer for areas that had properties in a worse condition than in other areas.
- There was currently a review of maintenance of renewable heating and in terms of the lifecycle replacement of these heating systems there was currently no budget for this. Therefore funds would need to be made available.
- The Scottish Government and the Council had declared a climate change emergency and it was queried if there were any external sources of funding that the Council could access for renewable energy to meet the objectives of tackling climate change. It was explained that the Council had received grants from the Salix Energy Efficiency Fund for projects that would reduce energy usage.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the budget allocations and current expenditure for property maintenance for the Isle of Skye and Raasay area for 2019/20.

In accordance with Standing Order 9, with the consent of the meeting, item 10 on the agenda was taken at this point.

Urgent Item of Business – *the following report was taken as an urgent item of business in order that Members could consider further engagement with communities regarding any proposals to charge for car parking and discuss sites for development across Skye with the purpose of managing visitor traffic.*

10. Update on Car Parking in Skye

Cunntas às Ùr mu Pharcadh san Eilean Sgitheanach

There had been circulated Report No. SR/12/19 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- The extra parking and revenue for the Council that would be generated from the sites to be developed was welcomed and the joint working with the Council's partners to make the additional car parking possible was acknowledged.
- Traffic orders at various sites on Skye had been published and commenced on 14th May, 2019 and lining works would be completed by the end of June, 2019. The Traffic order for Ford Road, Broadford had been made in part, excluding pay and display charges, as this had been set aside for further review given the considerable representations received from the Community. Further engagement with the Community would be held prior to a decision by the Committee being made.
- In relation to the Ford Road, Broadford Traffic Order, businesses and the Community Council would prefer free parking longer than 30 minutes. It was explained that up to one hour free parking could be implemented for traffic management purposes and further engagement with the Community Council on this proposal would be held.
- Pay and Display car parking machines for the Old Man of Storr and Lisigarry Court (Bayfield East) Portree would be installed soon;
- in terms of other sites for development a meeting was to be held at the end of June to consider proposals for car parking in Armadale;
- once income from car parking was received a business case could be made for capital borrowing for future developments to provide infrastructure at key visitor sites.
- A communication strategy was being developed to engage with communities to seek their views on introducing car parking charges at various sites on Skye before a final decision was made by the Committee;
- There was an urgent need to manage traffic and parking on Skye and given that Police resources on the Island may be diminished this Summer due to recruitment issues, there was a requirement for an additional Traffic Enforcement Officer covering Skye. The income generation from car parking charges should offset the costs of employing an officer. It was explained that more officers would be welcomed and a request for an additional three Traffic Enforcement Officers for the Highlands may be made, given the increased number of enforcement areas to be covered. Further, it had been requested that a part time vacant post of Traffic Enforcement Officer be made full time.

- Lining at the Old Man of Storr required to be removed and additional lining introduced and every effort would be made to do this by the end of June/ early July, 2019;
- There may be an incentive for people to avoid the designated areas for car parking at the Old Man of Storr, in order to avoid charges, which would cause road traffic management problems. It was advised that the level of compliance was generally good and given that it would be mostly visitors going to this location, it was not anticipated that the displacement of vehicles at this site would be significant. Further, as there were Traffic Enforcement Officers on Skye, they could monitor the situation.
- Car parking in Kyle, while outwith the remit of this Committee, was of significance to the people of Skye/Raasay as the train station was located there. Given there was a move to controlling car parks with short term car parking, it was queried what the implications of this would be. It was advised that the only current plans for Kyle at present were to regulate the car parks and charges and charging was only being considered at the car park beside the public conveniences. This proposal would require to go through the engagement process with the community. If charging was implemented at this site, then the income would be used to invest in additional free car parking spaces in Kyle.
- The Council's Income Generation Project Board would set a timetable for public engagement opportunities and Members would be informed of these dates once arranged. There was a Ward Forum to be held in Portree on 10 June, 2019 and a briefing note on car parking would be submitted at the forum for discussion.
- It was requested that lining be introduced at the hairpin bend at the Quiraing to stop traffic congestion. It was advised that a Traffic Order would be made for this location and pending approval, a temporary traffic order would be made to cover the Summer period.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the introduction of Traffic Orders at Old Man of Storr, Portree, Broadford (pending further review), Dunvegan, Sligachan and Kyleakin.
- AGREED** that a Traffic Order be introduced to stop vehicles parking at the hairpin bend at the Quiraing;
- NOTED** the update on further sites for development across Skye with the purpose of managing visitor traffic; and
- NOTED** that further engagement is required across communities regarding any proposals to charge for car parking.

5. 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 SR/7/19 by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Prevention activities were being progressed and included free home fire safety visits and post domestic incident response both aimed at reducing

dwelling house fires. The Fire Service were welcomed into people's homes to carry out fire safety inspections and post domestic incident responses. Fire crews also attended community events to raise awareness of fire safety. The Service had a Freephone contact telephone number for people to request a home fire safety visit.

- It was queried if there were pressures in recruiting people to the Fire Service in the area and in this respect an explanation was provided on the operational structure and roles of Fire personnel and station availability on Skye/Raasay. There were continual pressures nationally in recruiting people to the Fire Service, particularly during day time hours as many people work outwith the area where they live. New working models were being looked at in order to improve recruitment.
- In terms of the Fire Service's interaction with the NHS with the Fire Service taking on the additional role of first responders, it was explained that there had been a meeting nationally with trade unions to identify whether the Fire Service would take on additional roles and responsibilities and this was unanimously rejected. However, there was a great disparity between what the UK Government and Scottish Government expects in terms of the additional role for the Fire Service and further negotiations were being held with the trade unions on the Fire Service role of providing medical care and first responder duties. Also, further work with NHS Out of Hours Service was being undertaken in relation to the Fire Service assisting the Ambulance Service on a voluntary basis on Raasay, given this was an isolated community.
- It was queried if the standard and suitability of equipment was sufficient for the Fire Service on Skye/Raasay. It was advised that both the standard and suitability was generally sufficient for operational requirements and in particular the new Rapid Response vehicles had been very successful. There were minor improvements that could be made to equipment and a business case would require to be submitted for this. Also, the stations at Uig and Staffin were in need of improvement and efforts were being made to address this.
- The Fire Service are considering different radical approaches to tackling wildfires rather than the status quo. Various options are currently being reviewed in collaboration with other UK fire services.

The Committee **NOTED** the Local Performance Report.

6. Early Learning and Childcare Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Thràth-ionnsachadh agus Cùram-chloinne

There had been circulated Report No. SR/8/19 by the Area Care & Learning Manager (West).

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- There was a need to ensure that the capital projects for the Early Learning and Childcare programme were completed by August 2020. While contingency plans must be in place, such as longer opening hours in some settings, it was queried if these would be available locally. It was explained that in relation to Broadford School all the available accommodation was being used so that there was a parity of provision for English medium and Gaelic medium classes and minor modifications were required to what was

previously the Out of School Club premises. It was hoped that there would be future funding available to develop a new school on the same site. In relation to Portree school it was crucial to have the works completed over the summer holiday period as there was an agreement with Portree Nursery Ltd that they would come on stream if necessary in October 2019. In terms of works at Dunvegan school, this was still subject to agreement of the capital programme and stakeholder meetings had been held locally.

- This was an ambitious programme given the rural nature of Skye/Raasay and it was queried if the funding for the Early Learning and Childcare programme included start up costs. It was explained that the funding for staff and accommodation for developing the programme was fully funded from the Scottish Government and the management of the programme was contained within existing staff resources.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the current national and local position in respect of the Early Learning and Childcare programme.

7. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No. SR/9/19 by the Director of Community Services

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association had a campaign to encourage people in Broadford to join the housing waiting list and a Community company had done something similar in Sleat and both were surprised at how the numbers on the housing waiting list had increased as a result. This initiative should perhaps be considered Highland wide.
- In terms of staffing, it was noted that at times the average time to complete emergency repairs and non emergency repairs was slightly higher in this area than the Highland average. The challenges in recruiting local maintenance staff and staff with trades in this area was acknowledged and it was crucial that they were recruited so that repairs could be undertaken on target and so that there was less reliance on using external contractors at a much higher cost. There was also a need to have a more flexible workforce, working across different services to ensure best value for money. An undertaking was given to provide the Committee with information on the actions being taken to recruit more people with trades to the in-house maintenance team.
- Options for reducing the response times to emergency and non emergency repairs were currently being considered;
- Given that Skye was such an attractive destination, it was queried to what extent people were coming to the area and presenting themselves as homeless. It was explained that this did happen particularly during the summer period and all homeless presentations were assessed.
- An explanation was provided in respect of how rent arrears cases were dealt with and a copy of the Council's Rent Arrears Policy and Homeless Rent Arrears Policy would be circulated to Members. Information on how the current rent arrears in the Skye/Raasay area compared to the rest of Highland would also be provided.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED:-**

i the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019; and

ii that the following information would be provided to the Committee:-

- actions being taken to recruit more people with trades to the in-house maintenance team;
- how the current rent arrears in the Skye/Raasay area compared to the rest of Highland;
- the Council's Rent Arrears Policy and Homeless Rent Arrears Policy.

8. 2018/19 Area Structures Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais Structaran Sgireil 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No. SR/10/19 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- In Skye the majority of the 361 bridges were old and therefore the challenges in maintaining them within limited budgets was acknowledged. Tourist traffic on roads in Skye had substantially increased and some bridges were frequently being damaged as a result and it was queried if the inspection schedule needed to be increased. It was advised that the Council had a reasonable success rate in tracing drivers who had hit bridges and claiming compensation for the repairs from them.
- There was a long list of bridges on the capital programme and every bridge was inspected on a three year cycle. The cost of replacement bridges was substantial, and therefore it was important to maintain bridges on a regular bridges so as to save money in the long term.
- The increased numbers of visitors to Skye created a significant pressure on the infrastructure on the Island and local Members were keen to develop a Skye plan to improve infrastructure. There was a need to see the revenues generated here and elsewhere in Scotland returned to fund local infrastructure projects.
- It was noted that resources available in 2018/19 for undertaking routine maintenance on bridges had been diverted to pothole repairs and it was queried if this had any implications for routine maintenance of bridges. It was explained that diverting money elsewhere had impacted on maintenance of bridges, but bridges were robust structures and bridges built now were designed to last 120 years, so delaying minor maintenance for a short period of time would not affect bridges too much.
- It was intended to produce a bridge maintenance programme master list to identify works by similar type or by location to enable efficient repairs to be undertaken. A summary of the master list would be included with the annual report on area structures to the Committee.
- It was queried if there was any evidence that bridges on Skye had more wear and tear due to the weather than other areas. It was explained that the weather and the topography on Skye could cause more damage due to the force of the water on hilly terrain hitting bridges.

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

9. Draft Uig Development Brief Dreachd de Iùil Leasachadh Ùige

There had been circulated Report No. SR/11/19 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- The development brief was welcomed as it would transform Uig and guarantee its future economic success;
- In terms of approval for the funding of the new Ferry and Terminal building at Uig and two Terminals in the Western Isles, this had to go through a scrutiny committee for further assessment given the costs involved and this was expected to take place in June, 2019. In terms of the Harbour works project at Uig, it was understood that tenders, including those for the civil works were due in August, 2019. A planning application for the Terminal building at Uig was expected to be submitted for approval in June, 2019.
- it was explained that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service did intend to include in their capital programme provision for a new Fire Station in Uig and they were open to working with community groups and other public sector agencies as to how this could best be delivered to maximise the use of the new facility.
- In terms of the public consultation on the development brief, generally the public were very supportive of the Brewery Company remaining in Uig;
- It was welcomed that the brief would try and create a village feel for Uig, but it was queried if there would be sufficient parking as a result. It was advised that there was support within the Development Brief for significant increase in car parking and this would not be in such a prominent location as at present. In addition there would be an improvement in car parking provision as part of the Harbour redevelopment works.
- The Harbour redevelopment was expected to have a two year construction period, with contractors potentially being on site by the end of 2019.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the summary of comments received on the Brief ;
- ii. **AGREED** the Council responses as set out in **Appendix 1**; and
- iii. **AGREED** to adopt the Uig Development Brief at **Appendix 2** as part of the Development Plan, subject to any non-material amendments or formatting changes, and clearance by Scottish Ministers.

The meeting ended at 1.10 p.m.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held in the Chamber, The Court House, High Street, Nairn on Wednesday 12 June 2019 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr L Fraser
Mr T Heggie

Mrs L MacDonald
Mr P Saggars

In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey
Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector B MacKay, Police Scotland (Item 3)
Police Constable R Shanks, Police Scotland (Item 3)
Mr D Wilson, Local Senior Officer, 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 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.

Business**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

Item 7 – Mr L Fraser (non-financial)

3. Presentation - Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership

A presentation was made by Chief Inspector Brian MacKay and PC Rosemary Shanks which provided an update on progress of the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership (NNCP) which had been established following the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 and included representatives from public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups. Information was provided on the community consultation which had taken place within the area, during which, it was explained that following analysis of the data

received from the public, an area profile had been produced and was used to inform the NNCP's Locality Plan which aimed to improve outcomes for communities within Nairn and Nairnshire. Further information was provided on the progress which had been made in relation to a range of priorities contained within the Plan and how these were being delivered through multi-agency collaboration.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In commending the positive work undertaken by the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership, it was highlighted that there were a number of issues which were interlinked and could be cross-referenced by the Partnership going forward, such as access to transport for both the young and elderly and in relation to employability;
- The work of the Community Communication and Engagement Officer was commended;
- Having a wide range of members from different backgrounds had helped the Employability Sub-Group achieve a number of positive outcomes, in particular, the success of the Places and Spaces Sub-Group in moving use of community space forward was highlighted with an event due to take place on the 20 June at the Riverside Park;
- The Employability Sub-Group's future activities included an apprentice day in the Autumn, increasing the number of businesses offering work experience to students, looking at potential employment opportunities within the hospitality and care sectors and also seeking employment opportunities for ex-offenders;
- It was emphasised that there was an opportunity for liaison between organisations to discuss the shared use of facilities and that bringing together any concerns raised by individual organisations could help to achieve a positive solution; and
- The analysis, reporting and actions undertaken by the Community Partnership was commended.

Having thanked Chief Inspector MacKay and PC Shanks for their presentation, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Committee Performance Report for 2018-19

There had been circulated Report No N/9/19 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was expressed that 11 of the 21 reported incidents of deliberate fires for the whole of the Highland's for October 2018 had occurred within Nairnshire;
- In relation to moorland fires, confirmation was sought, and received, that whilst there was currently no specific link between the spread of wild fires and the close proximity of wind farms, wild fires were more likely to occur in wind driven areas with dry vegetation and greater exposure to sunshine;
- Overall the figures presented within the report in relation to Nairnshire reflected a comparable position with the rest of the Highlands;
- It was highlighted that a significant number of reported false alarms within Nairnshire had been raised in connection with one property;
- Working in conjunction with partner agencies had enabled suspects of fire-raising to be identified; and

- The willingness of individuals to make themselves available as retained duty staff was commended.

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

5. Nairn Links – Development Plan

There had been circulated Report No N/10/19 dated 3 June 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The work undertaken by the Ward Manager and her business support officer in relation to bringing the Links Development Plan process to the consultation stage was commended, and the work carried out on drafting of the Development Plan and bringing together the various community groups and agencies by the lead consultant was also commended;
- In highlighting that some initial work had been undertaken in relation to some of the projects identified with the Development Plan, clarification was sought, and received, regarding the likely timescale for commencement of projects, during which it was explained that work in relation to design and procurement would take place this year and that ground works could commence in 2020;
- The Development Plan presented an opportunity for the community of Nairn to help deliver the projects identified;
- It was emphasised that every opportunity should be made to publicise activity undertaken in relation to the Development Plan in order to keep the public informed; and
- The proposed framework would enable projects to be progressed as and when funding becomes available.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to adopt the draft Nairn Links Development Plan enclosed at Appendix A of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the forming of a Project Team and Steering Group to develop a project plan for stage 1 of developing the Nairn Links;
- iii. **AGREED** the initial project proposal to redevelop the paddling pool site; and
- iv. **AGREED** that update reports on future projects be brought back to the Committee for consideration as required

6. Nairn Shopfront Scheme

There had been circulated Report No N/11/19 dated 24 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was emphasised that improving the appearance of facilities and buildings could help to increase footfall on Nairn High Street;
- Confirmation was sought, and received, that in order to meet the requirements of the original Sainsbury Supermarket developer contribution, a review of the Section 75 agreement would be undertaken by Legal Services; and
- It was highlighted that The Ward Manager would be working with the Nairn BID to work on proposals for improvements to the environs of Nairn High Street.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. that a deadline be set for final applications to the Nairn Shopfront Improvement Scheme of 31 July 2019;
- ii. the proposals to work with the Nairn Business Improvement District to utilise the remaining funds to improve the environs of Nairn High Street; and
- iii. that an update report on outcome of project(s) be brought back to this Committee

7. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

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/12/19 dated 30 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In speaking to the report, the Principal Housing Officer confirmed that, following a request for further information at the previous meeting of the Committee, the level of debt which had been written-off in Nairnshire for 2018/19 was £5,051.79.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was highlighted that there were particular needs in relation to housing demand in Nairnshire and further information was sought, and received, regarding the ways in which the service prioritised demand in the area;
- Further information was sought, and received, regarding the purchase of properties for use as social housing and whether there could be an opportunity to purchase upper floor properties on Nairn High Street;
- It was highlighted that there was a perception by some members of the public that in some instances available houses were not being rented out; however, it was acknowledged that these houses had been allocated for tenants with specific needs;
- Concern was expressed regarding the high figures in relation to rent arrears and it was emphasised that monitoring of this needed to continue; and
- The collaborative work undertaken in relation to rent arrears between the service and Nairn Citizen's Advice Bureau was commended.

The Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

8. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 13 March 2019, which had been approved by the Council on 9 May 2019.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 13 June 2019 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr G MacKenzie
Mr P Saggars
Mr R Balfour
Mrs J Barclay
Mr B Boyd
Mr J Bruce
Mr A Christie
Mr G Cruickshank
Mrs M Davidson

Mr C Fraser
Mr L Fraser
Mr T Heggie
Mr D Louden
Mrs A MacLean
Mr D Macpherson
Mrs B McAllister
Mr H Morrison

Non-Members also present:

Mr Jim McGillivray (v/c)

Officials in Attendance:

Ms D Manson, Chief Executive
Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance
Mr S Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance
Ms E Johnston, Corporate Audit & Performance Manager
Ms K Lackie, Business Manager
Ms S McKandie, Acting Head of Revenues and Customer Services
Miss D Sutherland, Corporate Audit Manager
Mr J Campbell, Senior Auditor
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator
Miss C Maragh, Committee Administrator

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

Mr G MacKenzie in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr G Adam, Mr R Bremner, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr R Laird, Mr S Mackie, Mrs M Paterson and Ms M Smith.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

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

Members recalled that, at the last Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2019, it was agreed that the Committee would be represented on the City Region Deal Monitoring Group.

In this regard, the Committee **AGREED** to be represented on this Group by Mr P Sagers, Mr B Boyd and Mrs M Paterson.

**4. Internal Audit Reviews and Progress Report
Ath-bhreithneachaidhean In-sgrùdaidh agus Aithisg Adhartais**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/6/19 dated 4 June 2019 by the Corporate Audit Manager which summarised the final reports issued since the date of the last meeting, together with details of work in progress and other information relevant to the operation of the Internal Audit Section.

In relation to progress against the 2018/19 audit plan, the following comments were made:-

- end dates for audit reports would be welcomed, namely the Provision of Early Learning and Childcare Services and the Review of Self-service Payroll Process, both of which had been in progress for some time;
- a significant number of audits had either been deferred or cancelled and disappointment was expressed that the service reduction agreed as part of the budget process was a significant cause for this. However, the Chairman assured Members that one of the vacancies carried by the Internal Audit Section had been advertised and interviews would shortly take place. There was a staffing level in the Section which had to be maintained and it was essential that the Section was given adequate resources to carry out their role;
- clarification was sought, and received, as to who provided client feedback; and
- fraud investigations could take up a significant amount of time and many of these instances could not have been predicted when drawing up the audit plan.

The final reports were then presented as follows:-

- (i) Corporate Resources Service – Financial Assessments (Substantial assurance) – no issues raised at the meeting.
- (ii) Care & Learning Service – Investigation into fraudulent expenditure claims in Social Work office, System Weaknesses Report (Limited Assurance)

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the importance of petty cash was highlighted and it was essential that all receipts were recorded correctly. The report before Members showed that processes were now all in place to ensure good practise was being followed;

- sanctions should be taken where it was apparent the correct procedures had not been followed; and
 - the Chairman reminded Members that it had previously been agreed that reports receiving Limited Assurance would trigger Member involvement. However, as this particular matter was currently under investigation and there were potential prosecutions, this would not take place in this instance.
- (iii) Corporate Resources Service – Continuous Auditing Exercises (Reasonable Assurance)

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the audit had found that there was a lack of corporate instruction on how to use Integra effectively and, consequently, an easy to use guide was to be provided. So that Members too could have a greater understanding and to increase awareness a Briefing was requested;
- concern was expressed that no credit checks were undertaken for amounts over £10,000;
- there had been a big increase in the amount of Council debt which had been written off and, while these would have been done in accordance with the rules, this formed a significant part of the Council's deficit. The Committee noted that these write-offs were fully provided for in the Council's accounts via the bad debt provision;
- it seemed unusual for staff to be able to authorise payments to themselves through Integra;
- tenders would normally be included on the Public Contract Scotland Tender list but clarification was sought, and received, as to when there would be exceptions from this and reasons why Services might purchase items off contract; and
- clarification was sought, and received, about the use of fuel cards.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** final Reports referred to in Section 3.1 of the report;
- (ii) **NOTED** current work of the Internal Audit Section outlined at section 4 of the report and performance information provided at section 5; and
- (iii) **AGREED** for a Briefing to all Members be provided on the use Integra finance system.

5. Action Tracking Report Aithisg a' Leantainn Gnìomhachd

There had been circulated Report No. AS/7/19 dated 4 June 2019 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

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

- the Chairman clarified that there were 5 recommendations arising from the Repairs and Maintenance – Care and Learning Properties Report and not 561 as detailed in the report;

- it was suggested that instead of using the term “cleared” it might be more appropriate to report when recommendations had been completed;
- it would be useful if the date when recommendations were revised was included together with a brief explanation of the impact where remedial action was still outstanding. For example, the review of IT controls surrounding payments to creditors would have a huge impact given the training that would be involved throughout the Council to ensure data input was fully understood;
- in looking to reduce the use of purchase cards, the move to Card Controllers having to provide a business case for each card was welcomed. In this regard, clarification was sought, and received, as to why building maintenance had the largest spend on purchase cards and how it was proposed to ensure proper use was made of the Council’s stores systems; and
- in the future it was suggested the Committee could have a more proactive approach and that the action tracking could report issues before breaches occurred.

The Committee **NOTED** the action tracking information provided including the revised target dates for the completion of outstanding actions.

6. Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/2019 Aithisg Bhliadhnaidh In-Sgrùdaidh 2018/2019

There had been circulated Report No. AS/8/19 dated 31 May 2019 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

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

- whilst it was acknowledged that tenancy fraud investigations were ongoing and, in 2018/19, 6 houses had been recovered, additional information was sought, and provided, as to the nature of this type of fraud;
- following four years of limited assurance on the audit regarding the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme, a statement from the Service was sought as to how it proposed to record and monitor the Council’s carbon reduction and to provide assurance to Members;
- clarification was sought as to what was involved with the Climate Change Levy;
- assurance was sought that developer contributions were being charged at the new rate. The Chair pointed out that this was a matter than needed to be addressed with the Planning and Development Service directly; and
- cash payments and petty cash often led to errors and fraud and perhaps a wider review of the Council’s procedures was necessary to remove the opportunity for fraud and/or poor practice;

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report and the audit opinion provided; and
- ii. **AGREED** a Briefing to all Members be provided as to what the Climate Change Levy would involve.

7. Council Governance Review Ath-sgrùdadh Riaghlachais Comhairle

There had been circulated Report No. AS/9/19 dated 30 May 2019 by the Corporate Audit & Performance Manager.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the proposals set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report for submission to Highland Council on 27 June 2019 for approval to implement from 19 September 2019; the next scheduled Audit & Scrutiny Committee;
- ii. **NOTED** that further work is required to develop core competencies and training and this will require further engagement with Members as part of a wider programme of training and development; and
- iii. **NOTED** that a further Member seminar has been arranged later in June 2019 which will help to inform the above proposals prior to their submission to Highland Council for approval.

8. Code of Corporate Governance Còd Riaghladh Corporra

There had been circulated Report No. AS/10/19 dated 3 June 2019 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

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

- the monthly budget briefings for all Members was welcomed. However, this seemed to focus mainly on the revenue budget and information was sought as to the progress made in relation to the Capital budget. It was important that this received the same amount of attention and projects were at the “shovel ready” stage. In response the Council Leader reminded Members that the 10 year Capital Programme had been agreed in March 2018 but the next monthly budget briefing would be reflecting on it; and
- one of the core principles of the Framework and Guidance was to ensure openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement but there was still a lot of work to do to encourage community engagement and for the public to attend meetings of the Community Planning Partnerships. In this regard, it was also important to encourage representatives attending Council meetings to speak up at meetings where their specific area of expertise was being discussed. In reply, the Chairman said the latter issue was being explored by the Council’s Governance Review Group.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress on delivering the 2018/19 Code of Corporate Governance
- ii. **APPROVED** the 2019/20 Code of Corporate Governance

**9. Commissioner For Ethical Standards in Public Life/Standards Commission: Councillors' Code of Conduct – Investigation into Complaints
Coimiseanair airson Inbhean Beusail ann am Beatha Phoblaich/Coimisean nan Inbhean: Còd Giùlain nan Comhairlichean – Sgrùdadh Ghearanan**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/11/19 dated 3 June 2019 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

The Committee **NOTED** that, in respect of the complaints against Highland Council Members, concluded during 2018/19, the Commissioner had found there to have no breaches of the Code of Conduct.

**10. Corporate Complaints Process Report
Aithisg Ghearanan Corporra**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/12/19 dated 30 May 2019 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

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

- the marked improvement in terms of performance around complaints was welcomed and the skills of the customer service assistants were acknowledged;
- the redesign work carried out on the Council website page “How to Make a Complaint” had made a considerable contribution to reducing the number of complaints received as it had enabled customers to quickly and easily navigate to the relevant process for their purposes;
- although Community Services had a high number of complaints this was because it had many of the services accessed by the public. In this regard, it was highlighted that many complaints were in relation to decisions taken by Councillors but which Community Services had had to implement and tribute was paid to the staff and the Director for the manner in which these had been handled; and
- whilst every effort was made to address complaints there were always going to be incidents where members of the public remained unsatisfied. In such instances, it was important to consider what was, and what was not, reasonable for the Council to do.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the Council's continued improving annual performance for Stage 1 (+2.8%) and Stage 2 (+0.9%) complaints;
- ii. the Council's continued improved performance since 2017, +15% for Stage 1 and +18.4% at Stage 2;
- iii. that 65% of complaints were received via a digital channel (website and email) supporting the corporate digital agenda;
- iv. that the number of complaints received is a low volume at 1% within the context of the scale of the Council's customer base and the scope of services provided;
- v. officers continued participation in the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network;

- vi. the positive contribution the cross-Service Complaint's Co-ordinators group is making to national policy/guidance set by the SPSO;
- vii. the positive impact the cross-Service Complaints Co-ordinators' group is having on the improving performance within Services and the Council's overall performance; and
- viii. the implementation of the outcomes from the LEAN review.

11. Scottish Public Service Ombudsman Cases Received by the Council – Update Report
Cùisean Ombudsman Sheirbheisean Poblach na h-Alba a Fhuairleadh leis a' Chomhairle – Aithisg as Ùr

There had been circulated Report No. AS/13/19 dated 3 June 2019 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the outcomes of the SPSO cases and the actions that have been taken in response to the Ombudsman's recommendations.

The meeting ended at 12 noon.