

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.