

**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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 basis 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.