

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drumbuie on Thursday, 22 August 2019 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr R Gale
Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray
Ms L Munro

Officials in attendance:

Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
Ms T Stones, Head Teacher, Dornoch Academy, Care and Learning Service
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Inspector J Thomson, Police Scotland

Mr R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms K Currie and Mr H Morrison.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

Following on from the above, disappointment was expressed that the agenda for the meeting was relatively light. It was suggested the focus on localism within the Council was not being sustained. There were many challenges and opportunities across Sutherland for the Committee to discuss and also the potential to align more with the work of the Sutherland Community Partnership. Members would therefore seek to discuss this issue with Council Leaders going forward.

**3. Police – Area Performance Summary
Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/13/19 dated 7 August 2019 by the North Area Commander.

In discussion, Members recorded their thanks to the Inspector and her officers for their good work across Sutherland and raised the following issues:-

- Police Scotland be commended on their proactive approach in relation to the recent operation to target drivers on the North Coast 500 and clarification was sought and provided on the types of offences which had been recorded during this campaign;

- a breakdown be provided on the number of offences which had been incurred by those travelling around the NC500 and those living locally. The Inspector undertook to provide Members with this information while noting the focus had been on targeting tourist traffic;
- an explanation was sought and provided on the range offences covered under the heading 'Protecting People at Risk of Harm';
- the emphasis being placed on drug testing was welcomed, reference being made to a recent presentation given to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee which had reinforced the point that Highland had the same issues around drug misuse as other areas;
- clarification was sought and provided on the process by which the Police dealt with missing persons cases;
- it would be helpful if Police Scotland could issue as much timeous information as possible following fatal accidents, while recognising there were sensitivities around the need to inform relatives and the significant work involved in accident investigations; and
- further information was sought on Police Scotland's recent initiative involving cyclists. The Inspector reported that she would provide Members with further details on these sessions.

The Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-2020 Year 2 and first quarter of Year 3, attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 1 April 2018- 30 June 2019.

4. Dornoch Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Dhòrnaich

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

The Education Quality Improvement Manager reported it was the intention that more up to date figures would be provided in future reports, and that she was aware the Chief Executive also intended to consult Members on the type of the data they would wish to have reported for scrutiny purposes.

Members also heard from Ms T Stones, Head Teacher, Dornoch Firth 3 to 18 Campus on the excellent figures achieved in relation to positive destinations and the work undertaken around the curriculum and developing pathways for pupils. She outlined the work which had been undertaken around pupil attendance, absence and exclusions including the building of positive relations with and developing appropriate plans for children and families using highly trained practitioners and the pupil support team. She suggested that more services were required in relation to children who had barriers to attending school. She commended the work being undertaken by the Youth Development Officer, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to tackle this issue and it was hoped to build upon this partnership approach to reach out to families and children. She also provided an update on efforts which had been made to encourage staff to have dual accreditation so that they could teach at primary and secondary level for example in maths and specialist subjects.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Head Teacher, staff and local community be congratulated on the success of the 3-18 campus and on the positive report;

- the Active Schools Coordinator, Youth Development Officer and Librarian be commended on their excellent work;
- an explanation was sought and provided on the additional services that would assist in addressing the challenges around children who had barriers in attending school, reference being made to the need to do more in partnership on this issue. It was suggested that the Sutherland Community Partnership would be a helpful focus for this work;
- it was valuable for Members to have the relevant head teacher in attendance at meetings;
- confirmation was sought that the good practice in relation to the use of a secondary school teacher to support specialist subjects at primary level was in place within other ASGs in the area;
- concern at the suitability and condition of buildings within the ASG in comparison to other areas of Highland and reference to the work ongoing to progress the provision of a sports facility in Dornoch; and
- concern at the condition of the janitor's house located at a gateway into Dornoch.

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

5. Annual Area Capital Report Cunntas às Ùr mu Chalpa Sgìre

There had been circulated Report No SCC/15/19 dated 12 August 2018 by the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- clarification was required on the status of the Golspie High School Lifecycle project in respect of which £400k had been allocated in the Area Capital report for 2018/19 but which as a matter of disappointment had not been included in the report for 2019/20;
- a breakdown had been requested in relation to the allocation of £475k shown in respect of the Lochinver pontoons. It had transpired the bulk of this money was being allocated towards a tele-handler and a fishery pier refurbishment, rather than towards the pontoons. There was a need therefore for further clarification and a more detailed narrative to be provided in the capital reports particular on those projects involving significant expenditure;
- the inclusion of the Golspie Flood Prevention Scheme/Natural Flood Management Study was welcomed and it was hoped this would be available early in 2020 which would allow Scottish Government funding for flood defences to be accessed;
- the ongoing housing capital expenditure in the area was welcomed and the Housing team be commended for the work being undertaken locally;
- a point in regard to the detail around SALIX loans, it being noted that there was no expenditure listed for Sutherland; and
- the Administration had been asked that a report be submitted to the next Council meeting showing the capital budget for all areas and their scheduled and actual spends so that Members had full information across Highland. This same information had also been requested in relation to the City-Region Deal.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2018/19;
- ii. **NOTED** the budget for each project in this Council area in 2019/20 and **AGREED** that clarification be provided on the status of the Golspie High School Lifecycle project in respect of which £400k had been allocated in the Area Capital report for 2018/19 but which was not included in the report for 2019/20; and
- iii. **NOTED** the cumulative spend for each project in this Council area for 2018/19 and 2019/20 to end of June.

6. **Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Report** **Aithisg Sgrùdadh Ràitheil Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/16/19 dated 2 August 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy.

In discussion, reference was made to the importance of the community consultation in respect of Royal Dornoch Golf Club being handled sensitively given this was a major project for Dornoch and an explanation was sought and provided around the arrangements for the public consultation. It was further confirmed that the same consultation period would apply to the Historylinks Museum as a Common Good asset, if and when an offer was received and subject to County Committee approval.

Thereafter, it was noted the situation in relation to the Dornoch Caravan Park was progressing in a positive manner.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of Dornoch Common Good fund at the end of the first quarter;
- ii. **AGREED** that the Council runs a community consultation on the potential disposal of Dornoch Common Good land by way of 99 year lease to Royal Dornoch Golf Club; and
- iii. **NOTED** the update on current Dornoch Common Good issues.

7. **Minutes** **Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 22 May 2019 which were approved by the Council on 27 June 2019.

The meeting closed at 11.30am.
