

The Highland Council Sutherland County Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummuie on Monday 24 February 2020 at 10.30am.

Present:

Ms K Currie

Mr H Morrison

Mr R Gale

Ms L Munro

Mr J McGillivray

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 K Wood, Head Teacher, North Coast Campus, Care and Learning Service

Mr C Simpson, Principal Tourism and Film Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service

Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service

Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service

Mr J Holden, Area Housing Manager (North), Community Services

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

Also in Attendance:

Chief Inspector J Wilson, Police Scotland

Mr R Gale in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs D Mackay.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There had been circulated Report No SCC/01/20 dated 18 February 2020 by the North Area Commander.

In discussion, Members raised the following main issues:-

- whether the Police supported a local campaign for the introduction of a 30mph speed limit on the A836 between Ardgay and Bonar Bridge. The Chief Inspector advised that the Council would require to carry out speed measurements and the Police analyse the accident data in this location prior to an assessment being made, and undertook to raise this matter with the Roads Policing Inspector;

- clarification was sought and provided on the increase in detections of drug driving offences, this being mainly due to the Police having the modern equipment to carry out drug tests;
- the process for changing /extending speed limits in response to the speeding culture and increased volume of traffic being observed in North West Sutherland. The Chief Inspector advised local Members to convene a case conference involving all the relevant agencies and community councils to develop a problem profile to take this forward;
- the need for a more informed discussion on how to better manage incidents and adopt a more pragmatic approach to cases of missing persons involving vulnerable young people in care given the significant impact on care staff, allied professionals and Police resources, and the opportunity to raise this with the Community Planning Board and local community partnerships;
- a proposal by the Sutherland Drug and Alcohol Forum to introduce a Sutherland Pub Watch scheme in the area. The Chief Inspector advised that a data protection issue had arisen in relation to such schemes and he would feedback to the relevant officer once a solution had been confirmed; and
- additional 'keep left' road signage in six different languages had been erected in North and West Sutherland in conjunction with local community councils and had proved to be effective over the past 18 months. The Chief Inspector undertook to investigate potential funding sources to extend this type of signage in the area.

The Committee following scrutiny **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-2020 Year 3, for the period covering 1 April 2019- 31 December 2019.

4. Investing in Sutherland Tourism **A' Tasgadh ann an Turasachd Chataibh**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/02/20 dated 14 February 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, regret was expressed at the decision by Scottish Ministers to refuse the planning application for Coul Links Golf Course. Following a short adjournment, the Chair confirmed that with Members agreement he would write to the Scottish Government Minister for Rural Economy and Tourism inviting him to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the future economy of Sutherland in view of the decision to refuse planning permission for Coul Links Golf Course.

Thereafter, Mr J McGillivray confirmed he would be inviting those groups and agencies who had opposed the planning application to meet and discuss with Sutherland Members the future socio-economic opportunities at Coul Links, and the state of the Sutherland economy as a whole.

During further discussion, Members raised the following main issues:-

- the income generated by the North Coast 500 and benefits to the Highland economy was encouraging, however concern was expressed at the adequacy of the infrastructure along the route to deal with the high volume of visitor numbers;
- the need to explore in more depth the opportunities from a commercial perspective for the Council and for private operators to better promote the network of facilities already available, specific reference being made to toilets and facilities for the disposal of waste from motorhomes;

- the transient visitor levy should also apply to motorhomes/camping and the potential to lobby the Scottish Government on this issue, the Council's having already raised this point in its consultation response to the introduction of the levy;
- if parking was provided in the centre of communities it was more likely visitors in motorhomes would use the local facilities available. It was confirmed this approach was being progressed through some of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund projects, including in Lochinver and Helmsdale and if successful it was likely other communities would follow suit;
- frustration in communities about motorhomes congregating in areas outwith campsites and the need for the definition of wild camping to be clarified. It was confirmed the Scottish Government was reviewing the advice issued with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to emphasise the definition did not include motor vehicles. The North Coast 500 Roads Sub Group would be asked to investigate those areas where motorhomes were congregating such as the Kyle of Tongue to ensure they were appropriately managed;
- the potential to limit the number of parking spaces for motorhomes in some areas and also to consider charging, albeit enforcement could be an issue in this regard;
- the North Coast 500 Roads Sub Group to be asked to consider the provision of height barriers in off road car parks and those adjacent to cemeteries to prevent parking in some areas;
- the potential to more accurately record the actual number of motorhomes visiting the area from 1 April 2020 for the following year on the basis it was considered the figures were being underestimated;
- the lack of engagement with communities or compensation for any disruption from film companies visiting the area, any financial contribution being on a voluntary basis;
- discussions be held with the Principal Tourism and Film Officer on the opportunities for eco-tourism in relation to Coul Links; and
- concern the figures in the report produced by the North Coast 500 on the economic impacts of the route on communities may not be robust, no information having been provided on the methodology used, and the opportunities to improve the accuracy of the data to better inform future tourism strategies and investment.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the current situation regarding tourism in Sutherland; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Chair write to the Scottish Government Minister for Rural Economy and Tourism inviting him to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the future economy of Sutherland in view of the decision to refuse planning permission for Coul Links Golf Course.

5. North Coast Campus Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Campas a' Chost a Tuath

There had been circulated Report No SCC/03/20 dated 7 February 2020 by the Interim Chief Executive Officer Education and Learning.

Members were circulated with a written update on the North Coast Campus which provided further information on staffing, additional support needs, funding, buildings, lever destinations, exclusions and the school roll. The Head Teacher advised that the Campus structure was working well and had increased the range of opportunities available to children and staff, the pupils attained well in comparison to others and

staffing issues were ongoing and of significant concern. The Campus continued to work to support children with additional needs and to ensure a positive destination for all pupils.

In discussion, Members expressed their concern that the demountable unit which accommodated the music rooms at Farr High School was in a state of disrepair and could not be used and at the lack of alternative space within the School. It was understood there were surplus high quality demountable units available to the Council and therefore that a letter be sent to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Education Committee seeking an urgent resolution to this matter. It was also important that local Members were made aware of any issues within the Campus so that they could provide support and make representations where necessary.

During further discussion, Members welcomed the excellent performance within the Campus and raised the following main points-

- It was a credit to the ethos of the Campus to have so many pupils attending from other catchment areas;
- confirmation was sought and provided that transport costs for those pupils travelling from outwith the catchment area was not funded by the School;
- concern at the lack of support for children with additional support and other needs and an explanation was sought and provided on the level of support available to the School including outwith the education system and how this was accessed;
- a point that High Life Highland had been allocated funding for mental health training through active schools coordinators, and the need to ensure this was being rolled out;
- the need for a joined up approach within the Council on the potential to use vacant properties in the area to provide accommodation for probationary teachers;
- confirmation was sought and provided that opportunities for staff to achieve dual accreditation in primary and secondary subjects was being progressed, on the basis flexibility within the system was required to address the staffing challenges outlined; and
- the provision of video conferencing facilities at Farr High School be explored with the Sutherland Community Partnership.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to write to the Council Leader and the Chair of the Education Committee expressing concern at the lack of accommodation for the music rooms at Farr High School and seeking an urgent resolution to this matter.

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

There had been circulated Report No SCC/04/20 dated 4 February 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, it was confirmed that comments received from interested groups in communities had been taken into consideration, specific reference being made to those submitted by the Go Golspie Development Trust. The Principal Planner explained that some of the comments received had been outwith the scope of the

Strategy or related to settlements which had not been identified as town centres in the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan.

Thereafter, clarification was sought on the potential action to work with Transport Scotland to assess the need for and identify traffic management measures and the improvement of accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists alongside and across the A9 trunk road in Golspie. The Principal Planner advised the wording of this action had been influenced by the consultation feedback, in particular comments received from Transport Scotland. The Action Programme would be more specific in terms of identifying responsibilities and timescales and it was anticipated Transport Scotland and the Council would be key parties. There would also be liaison with Ward Members and Golspie Community Council.

A further comment welcomed the fact officers had within the Strategy taken into account the local comments received in relation to Dornoch.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the issues raised in consultation responses to the Draft Caithness and Sutherland Town Centre Strategy (Section 5 and Appendix 1) and revisions to the Strategy (Appendix 2);
- ii. **AGREED** that the Strategy, finalised in line with the decisions of the two Area Committees, be submitted to Scottish Ministers for consideration as per the statutory process for adoption of Supplementary Guidance;
- iii. **NOTED** that the Strategy will be a material consideration for development management purposes with immediate effect;
- iv. **AGREED** to the adoption and issuing of the submitted version of the Strategy as statutory Supplementary Guidance to the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan upon completion of the requisite 28 day period for consideration by Scottish Ministers, subject to any directions from Ministers indicating otherwise; and
- v. **NOTED** that the associated Action Programme will be drawn together by officers in consultation with Ward Members and the parties mentioned in it and subsequently will be published and promoted to those parties and the wider communities.

7. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2020/21 Cunntas Teachd A-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2020/21

There had been circulated Report No SCC/05/20 dated 10 February 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing.

In discussion, Members raised the following main issues:-

- a cautious approach was required in regard to any decision to identify garages as storage units and potentially increase the rent to reflect commercial charges;
- a reasonably priced storage area could potentially be a popular option going forward;
- support was expressed for the proposed 3% rent increase to be applied to Garages and Garage Sites in Caithness for 2020/21;
- a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee providing more detailed information and costings on the potential options for garages and garage sites in Sutherland, including a local assessment of demand and condition, to enable decisions on future investment and use.

The Committee **AGREED** that:-

- i. a 3% rent increase be applied to Garages and Garage Sites in Caithness for 2020/21; and
- ii. a report providing more detailed information and costs on the potential options for garages and garage sites in Sutherland be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to enable decisions on future investment and use.

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

There had been circulated Report No SCC/06/20 dated 12 February 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

The Ward Manager reported that following consultation with Members, the Council had rejected the offer made by Historylinks museum to purchase the museum site on the basis it was not in the best interests of the Dornoch Common Good Fund.

The Senior Ward Manager provided an update on the decision to withdraw the current consultation on a proposal to dispose, by new lease, of an area of Common Good land to Royal Dornoch Golf Club (RDGC) who were the existing tenants on the basis the terminology used and description in the consultation document of 'a fair market rent' could potentially be misleading. The Council was also now aware of a separate negotiation between Dornoch Area Community Council and RDGC which might have an impact on the lease. On this basis, a review of the current position was required and negotiations had re-opened. All those who had already responded to the consultation would be notified of the position and would have a further opportunity to respond once a new consultation was available.

In discussion, reference was made to the importance of negotiations progressing rapidly and seeking to adhere to the original time schedule for concluding this matter. The Senior Ward Manager provided an assurance the Council's legal officers had already acted timeously and were committed to responding as quickly as possible going forward.

A further point was raised in relation to the potential for the Fund's current balance to be provided to Dornoch Area Community Council on a monthly/quarterly basis, and stated in the report. In response, it was confirmed officers would have informal discussions with the Chair of the Community Council in relation to this matter.

The Committee **NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good Fund, as shown in the Q3 monitoring statement against budget.

9. Urgent Additional Item Development of Care Home on North Coast of Sutherland

The Chair agreed the following item be considered as an urgent additional item to allow Members to discuss and consider a response to the delay in the development of a new care home in North Sutherland

Mrs L Munro expressed her concern at the significant delay in the development of a new care home in North Sutherland, this being sixth year of the North Coast redesign, and at the impact this delay was having on staff and families. Local GPs had written to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on this matter and

a response was awaited. She had also written at the end of the previous week expressing her concern and seeking a response. There were suggestions this would be dealt with as part of the capital budget considerations, however it had been agreed previously that the new care home would be funded from slippage in the relevant NHS Highland budget. She therefore suggested that a meeting of the Sutherland Members be held immediately after the Committee to discuss this and other current issues of concern in the area.

The Chair suggested this was a further example of the area being disregarded in a number of different ways and a lack commitment to the people and investment in the economy of Sutherland.

The Committee **AGREED** to express its concern at the significant delay around the development of a new care home in Sutherland and that Members have further discussions on the approach to be taken on this matter outwith the meeting.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 14 November 2019 which were approved by the Council on 9 December 2019.

The meeting closed at 1.10pm.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held remotely on Thursday
9 July 2020 at 10.30am.

Present:

Ms K Currie

Mr R Gale

Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray

Mr H Morrison

Ms L Munro

Officials in attendance:

Mrs C McDiarmid, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Mr P Senior, Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning

Ms A Clark, Head of Policy and Reform, Communities and Place

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Communities and Place

Ms J Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure and Environment
Service

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

Also in Attendance:

Station Commander J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Ms A Simpson, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Mr J Johnston, Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra Community Council

Ms E Lindsay, Brora and District Action Group

Ms M Macdougall, North Coast Connections

Mr R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

Item 7: Mr J McGillivray (non-financial)

**3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Update
Fios as Ùr mu Sheirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba**

Station Commander J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, gave a verbal update on performance for Quarter 4, 2019/20 a copy of which had been circulated to Members. He advised the report reflected the significant amount of work carried out by the Service's community safety teams across Sutherland and the support given to the most vulnerable and high-risk households. He also provided an update on the resilience work undertaken by the Service in response to Covid-19.

In discussion, Members commended the Station Commander and his crews for the work undertaken in Sutherland, particularly with schools and during the Covid-19 period and raised the following main points:-

- the training of the Service's staff to drive ambulances was welcomed as an excellent example of cross agency working, noting that to date no formal

request had been received from the Scottish Ambulance Service to deliver such training in Sutherland;

- the recent successes in Sutherland in relation to recruitment was a good news story and reflected the level of work the Service had invested in the area;
- a point as to whether the problem with the automatic fire alarm at the Tongue station had been resolved. The Station Commander advised that he would arrange for a response to be provided directly to Mr H Morrison on the matter;
- in terms of station availability, clarification was sought on the reasons for the reduction in staff at Lochinver and as to whether a twenty minute response time continued to be applied as a measure to boost recruitment. The Station Manager confirmed he would arrange for a response to be provided directly to Mr H Morrison on both these matters;
- the opportunity for Members to have a demonstration of the goggles being used as part of Driving Ambitions, and commending the Service's input to the initiative; and
- confirmation was sought and provided that the Station Commander would investigate an incident at a Council property in Rogart which had involved a scrap vehicle, and report back to Mr J McGillivray in terms of any action taken by the Service.

The Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the update.

4. Return to School Update Fios às Ùr mu Thilleadh dhan Sgoil

During a verbal update, the Executive Chief Officer Education & Learning advised that the Council's whole ecosystem was working on the plans and preparations to ensure schools would be ready for reopening on 12 August 2020. The staff who serviced this ecosystem should be recognised for their efforts not only in schools and settings but in transport, catering, IT, facilities management and also parents and carers. He explained that Council services, schools and partners had been working on a scenario-based approach with the primary focus on Option A (100% return with no social distancing) in accordance with the national guidance but that work continued on contingency plans (Option B – 100% return with 1m social distancing and Option C – 50% return with 2m social distancing). However, the primary concern was the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and communities and therefore risk assessments continued and mechanisms were in place to adapt the model dependent on circumstances. It was also understood an announcement by the Scottish Government on school transport was imminent.

Continuing, the Executive Chief Officer advised that one of the key design principles had been co-production which involved a programme of engagement and consultation with key stakeholders such as Head Teachers, parents/carers and partner agencies. In terms of communications, he advised that a dedicated web page had been established on returning to school which also included a frequently asked questions section and this would be updated on a regular basis. Favourable feedback had been received from HMIE with regard to the report submitted on the

Council's approach, operational plans and risk assessments, details of which would be reported to the Education Committee.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the drive towards a 100% return to schools with no social distancing was welcomed on the basis it was important youngsters returned to normality as soon as possible;
- whether social distancing measures would be deployed on school transport, concern being expressed that if so there would not be sufficient capacity in terms of the available transport in Sutherland. It was confirmed the Scottish Government was due to make an announcement on social distancing and the wearing of face masks on school transport. The transport sub group had been considering measures such as fuel vouchers for parents and other creative solutions in the event that social distancing was required;
- the Committee's thanks be conveyed to Head Teachers and the teaching staff in Sutherland for the enormous amount of work undertaken preparing for the different return to school scenarios and on taking on new roles such as digital learning during lockdown;
- the flexibility within school timetables to provide additional hours to secondary school pupils whose learning may have been affected due to Covid-19. It was confirmed that an assessment of all learners would be undertaken and that all options to bridge any gaps in learning would be considered;
- concern that parents had received an instruction that pupils were not permitted to bring hand sanitisers on to school buses. The Executive Chief Officer advised he was not aware of any such instruction and confirmed he would follow this up with transport colleagues;
- the disparity in the quality of teaching and learning between different schools during the Covid-19 period and going forward the need to learn from the experience and develop a gold standard template for children who could not attend due to a pandemic or other issue, including children with a disability. It was confirmed that given the number of school settings and pupils in the Highlands it was inevitable there would be variable practice. However, there was a need to maximise learning to ensure that in the event there was a second wave of the pandemic the Council was ahead of the curve. A Highland gold standard bar in terms of quality of practice and equity of offer irrespective of where children attended school would be a key driver going forward; and
- clarification was sought on the plans for those children with underlying conditions to return to full time education. It was confirmed that individual risk assessments would be undertaken in respect of vulnerable children, recognising that pupils would need a phased approach or a bespoke programme.

The Committee **NOTED** the update.

5. Covid-19 Response Freagairt Covid-19

i. The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

There was a presentation by the Ward Manager on the Covid community response. The Ward Manager explained that humanitarian assistance centres (HACs) had been established as part of the emergency response to support key groups within the community that would be vulnerable to Covid-19. The presentation provided detailed

information on the types of support that had been provided and the local arrangements that had been established; set out the key learning opportunities; outlined the next steps including how the Council would continue to work with local communities; provided financial information on the local funding for community support and how this had been distributed; and provided information on the Business Grant support that had been awarded to businesses across Sutherland.

ii. Community Response Freagairt na Coimhearsnachd

During a verbal update, Ms A Simpson advised that Highlands and Islands Enterprise had administered the supporting communities funding stream on behalf of the Scottish Government. The twelve anchor organisations in Sutherland had received £300,000 of funding towards the emergency response. This funding had supported information and communications, PPE for volunteers, purchasing food, fuel and essential goods, setting up and expansion of food larders, and delivering hot meals to vulnerable people in the community. It had also covered volunteer expenses, supporting new social support networks and befriending services. In terms of next steps, it was important to build on the lead taken by communities and the collaborative approach across Sutherland

Ms E Lindsay reported that the Brora and District Action Group was one of three organisations forming the Brora Community Anti-virus Group. Brora Community Council had assumed responsibility for organising and increasing the volunteer resource who helped deliver shopping and prescriptions and other forms of support, and also for supplying PPE to volunteers and setting up a helpline to assist with social isolation and mental health and a volunteers group on social media to provide for regular contact. Brora and District Action Group had taken responsibility for administration, communication of information, handling and distributing funding, and setting up of a Facebook page about the virus. The Group has organised the making and delivery of facemasks and worked with schools to provide Covid ready stationery packs. Brora Village Hub had developed its food parcel delivery service and had delivered over 700 food boxes. The next steps included a review of the food box and fuel poverty requirements. There was also a need to consider the lessons learned ahead of any potential second wave of the pandemic and how to harness volunteers into other village activities in future.

Ms M Macdougall, North Coast Connections reported that Kyle Centre staff had regularly contacted lunch club members, provided support, and signposted to other services. They had organised the delivery of a targeted hot meals service to reach the most vulnerable and those shielding. An appeal for more volunteers had been issued through social media and an excellent response received. The organisation had worked with the local health centre and local community transport organisation to deliver prescription medicines, and local businesses had set up a home delivery service for shopping. While not impacting on local businesses, the organisation was delivering a small number of food parcels to vulnerable households and those with financial difficulties. Activity packs had been provided for younger children and green health packs were to be distributed. Ms Macdougall advised the activities undertaken previously at the Kyle Centre had increased the resilience of the community to cope with the current circumstances, and links with the community transport group and local community council had ensured no duplication of effort. The links established with NHS Highland and the Citizens Advice Bureau provided confidence that the adverse impacts of the pandemic were being mitigated.

Note: Mr J Johnston, Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra Community Council was unable to join the meeting due to technical issues and confirmed he would arrange for his presentation to be sent to Members by email.

The Chair thanked the Ward Manager and community representatives for providing a full understanding of the community response. He paid tribute to the anchor and other organisations and communities in Sutherland for responding immediately in a positive, flexible and bespoke manner to support communities and vulnerable people across the County over what had been a difficult and challenging period. The cross agency and third sector working had been excellent and the impact community organisations could make across the board recognised. It was hoped to capitalise on the volunteer resource going forward and the Council's Recovery Board was looking to interact with voluntary and third sector organisations to ensure that in building recovery their thoughts and ideas were taken into consideration on the basis this would result in a more responsive Council. Highlands and Islands Enterprise should also be commended on their efficient administration of the supporting communities funding and the confidence this had given to the community groups.

In discussion, Members recorded their thanks to communities across Sutherland for their excellent work in distributing funding and reaching out to those who did not normally use services. There would be a need to revisit plans and locality plans which had been drawn prior to Covid-19 to ensure the actions were fit for purpose, and the local community partnership would continue to focus on supporting localities but also take a pan Sutherland approach going forward. To ensure these plans were robust as possible, there was a need to continue to work with community groups on the ground and to harness their energy and skills for the benefit of Sutherland through the recovery process as communities continued to feel the economic and social impacts of the virus.

The Committee **NOTED** the updates.

6. Sutherland Roads Update Rathaidean – Gníomhachd

There had been circulated Report No SCC/07/20 dated 26 June 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an explanation was sought and provided on the main works activities which had not been carried out over the Covid-19 period due to the capital programme being on hold;
- confirmation was sought and provided that the priority works would be built into the capital programme going forward;
- clarification was sought on the works listed as road safety defect repairs in the report, and whether this included the installation of the new North Coast 500 road signs. It was confirmed the contract for the North Coast 500 signage, which was Leader funded, had been let separately by Headquarters and was being undertaken by an external contractor;
- in relation to a housing development at Bishopfield, Dornoch consideration be given to the improvement of the junction at Stafford Road/Grange Road being included in the capital programme;
- the Roads Operations Manager be commended on the level of work being undertaken in the area and Members thanks be conveyed to the members of staff who had retired;

- clarification was sought and provided that the Jetpatcher was due to return to the area in August/September, with the relevant training for operatives having been scheduled for next month;
- the need to allocate more staff to support the operatives on the ground with grass cutting, cemeteries, burials and other amenity works. It was reported the Service had limited resources in terms of the assisting with amenities which was now the responsibility of the Communities and Place Service. The Roads Operations Manager advised she would feed Members comments back to her Head of Service who was involved in ongoing discussions on cross service working;
- the Chair advised that it would be helpful to have the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place attend a future Committee to provide an update on amenities; and
- the potential for white lining works to be undertaken at Fountain Road Car Park, Golspie. It was confirmed that currently junctions were the priority for white lining for safety reasons, and there was no separate budget for car parks.

The Committee **NOTED** the works undertaken during the Covid-19 period.

7. **Dornoch Common Good – Applications for Funding** **Maoin Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich – Tagraidhean airson Maoineachadh**

Declaration of Interest: Mr J McGillivray declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds he was a Director of Dornoch Area Community Interest Company and took no part in the determination of the application for funding submitted by that organisation.

There had been circulated Joint Report No SCC/08/20 dated 9 June 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

In discussion, Members commended the Dornoch Heritage SCIO on their application and advised the expansion of the museum would allow more exhibits to be displayed and enhance the facility as visitor attraction.

In addition, the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company project was ambitious and would improve an area of derelict land, offer new facilities and be to the benefit Dornoch and surrounding area.

The Committee **APPROVED** funding of:-

- i. £27,365 to Dornoch Heritage SCIO for the Historylinks Museum Extension project – Phase 2; and
- ii. £39,760 to Dornoch Area Community Interest Company for the Project Curlew Masterplan Phase 1 Car and Coach Park, subject to match funding being in place

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.
