

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held remotely on 10 November 2020 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Ms P Hadley
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Mrs K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance
Ms N Grant, Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager (Badenoch & Strathspey, Culloden & Ardersier and Inverness South)
Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South)
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager (LNBS)
Mr S Eastaugh, Access Officer
Ms F Shearer, Area Education and Learning Manager
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr G MacLeay, Project Director, NHS Highland
Mr K Rodgers, Project Director, NHS Highland
Mr G Moir, Chief Executive, Cairngorms National Park Authority
Inspector V Tough, Police 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 B Lobban in the Chair

BUSINESS

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

Items 6 & 7 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

**3. NHS Redesign Project Update
Fios às Ùr mu Phròiseact Ath-dhealbaidh an NHS**

There was a presentation by the Project Director, NHS Highland giving an update on the NHS Redesign project. During the presentation, Members were informed that it had been contractually confirmed that the completion date of the project had been delayed by 12 weeks and as a result the new handover date was now 31 May 2021. The new community hospital would comprise of 24 in-patient beds

with accessible courtyards; 12 consulting/treatment rooms; an Accident and Emergency Department with X-ray facilities, and the Aviemore GP Practice and community health and care teams. Members were provided with a virtual walk through tour of the new hospital.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- A number of queries were raised and confirmation was provided that the X-ray room was fully accessible and could support bariatric beds, the box on the wall was a representation of a Snellen chart, and digital connectivity to the NHS Highland IT system would be via standard NHS N3 line and appropriate infrastructure including full Wi-Fi access throughout the building;
- Assurance was sought that there would be sufficient physiotherapy staffing levels to enable a whole systems approach to deliver the required services locally;
- With regard to the hospital being located next to the railway line, it was confirmed that acoustic modelling had been undertaken which concluded that there would be meaningful activity for people but no impact on equipment;
- Confirmation was also provided that single en-suite rooms varied in size between 16.5-22sqm and vending facilities would be available to provide refreshments; and
- The importance of the new building with up to date facilities and equipment for existing staff were emphasised.

Thereafter Committee expressed their appreciation for the virtual tour and **NOTED** the presentation.

4. Heritage Horizons Bid Iarrtas Fàirean Dualchais

There was a presentation by Mr Grant Moir on the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Heritage Horizons Project Bid during which it was explained that the Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA) was in the process of submitting a final bid, due by 26 February 2021, in the category of Landscape and Nature. It was explained that a transformation project was being developed focussing on people and nature thriving together and further information was provided on the vision, aims and objectives of the project along with examples of the different project themes. It was explained that this would be a two stage process, with the first being a development phase for two years (2021-2023) with a total funding package of £2.4m with 50% of this provided by the NLHF and the second being a five year (2023-2028) delivery phase with a total funding package of £40m which included £12m from the NLHF.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was requested that a copy of the presentation be circulated and that the Committee be kept up to date with progress of the bid;
- The importance of the bid to the area was emphasised and it was felt this would be recognised and endorsed by the Council;
- Confirmation was sought and provided that this would be a significant opportunity to generate income and attract private finance to the Park area;

- Confirmation was provided that travel and transport would be a key strand of the bid. It was suggested that the CNPA should dovetail with the work already being undertaken by the Council in terms of developing sustainable public transport provision;
- With regard to encouraging local apprenticeships, assurance was provided that job creation was a key aspect of the project and there would be opportunities for local contractors. In addition, there would be collaborative working with the Highlands and Islands Enterprise to upskill local businesses to ensure they had the capacity to undertake the infrastructure works required; and
- The progress of the bid was the result of the hard work and dedication of officers and their collaborative approach was welcomed. The project provided an exciting opportunity for both CNPA and the Council for transformational change to be delivered, the need for which had been accelerated by the pandemic.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation, a copy of which would be circulated to Members, and **AGREED** that:-

- i. local Members continue to be kept informed of progress with the bid;
- ii. the Council and Cairngorm National Park Authority work collaboratively to develop new ways to provide sustainable public transport; and
- * iii. the Committee seek Council endorsement of the bid.

5. **Police Area Performance Report** **Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**08**/20 dated 10 October 2020 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The impact of Covid, particularly on young people, had been challenging and it was essential that clubs/activities were recommenced as soon as possible to ensure that they were not negatively stereotyped for anti-social behaviour;
- It was queried whether it would be feasible to work collaboratively with car schemes to address the increasing trend in car thefts;
- Appreciation was expressed to Officers for their compassionate and supportive response to domestic abuse offences; and
- In terms of a potential influx of visitors for New Year, confirmation was provided that no events were being organised in this regard. Members of the public would be reminded of the Scottish Government's travel restrictions and the reduced opening hours of licenced premises would continue to be monitored.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan:-

- i. 2017-20 Year 3, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2019- 31 March 2020; and
- ii. 2020 – 23 Year 1, attached as Annex B to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2020 – 30 September 2020.

**6. HRA Capital programme 2021-22
Prògram Calpa HRA 2021-22**

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council house tenant but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained in the room to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/20 dated 21 October 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing & Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Further information was sought and provided on the impact of Covid on accessing properties in respect of the Heating Replacement Programme. In addition, it was clarified that an Options Heating Appraisal was undertaken to determine the best type of heating replacement system for each property. It was requested that there be further discussion at the next Ward Business Meeting on the different types of heating systems available;
- Concern was expressed that Badenoch and Strathspey did not receive their fair share of the capital allocation and it was clarified that the percentage of the HRA Capital Plan allocated to the Area was a UK Government accepted approach and used a calculation based on stock number, type and age to determine a major repair allowance per stock type/age and the level of investment required for each area; and
- In view of the delays to the programme arising from Covid, it was queried whether the Capital budget would be ring-fenced.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to the Badenoch and Strathspey Area as set out at paragraph 5.7 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the guideline investment priorities as set out in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed one-year HRA Capital Programme for Badenoch and Strathspey 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- iv. **NOTED** the position relating the current year HRA Capital Programme;
- v. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme would continue to be provided through ward briefings and at future Area Committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to Housing and Property Committee; and
- vi. **AGREED** that the different types of heating systems available be discussed at the next Ward Business Meeting.

**7. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean gu 30 An t-Sultainn 2020**

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council house tenant but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained in the room to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**10**/20 dated 21 October 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, confirmation was provided that there was no specific reason for the significant reduction in homelessness presentations but the position would continue to be monitored. In addition, it was also confirmed that there was no evidence of an increase in anti-social behaviour complaints.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

**8. 2019/20 Area Road Structures Annual Report
Aithisg Adhartais Rathaidean & Dhrochaidean Sgìreil 2019/20**

There had been circulated Report No **BS/11/20** dated 22 October 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Concern was expressed at bridges being scored below 65 against the Bridge Stock Condition Index (BSCI) and it was clarified that this was a method of recording and categorising the findings but the bridges were in a serviceable condition and these bridges would continue to be inspected more frequently but repair works were not currently required. However, further concern was expressed at the condition of Cromdale bridge and confirmation was provided that a report would be provided on this;
- It was suggested that additional support was required to enable culvert inspections to be completed;
- Concern was expressed that the Planned Schedule of Works had been interrupted due to Covid and further information was sought and provided on the feasibility of the slippage in the programme being recovered. Confirmation was also provided that Shankland Court, Grantown-on-Spey was on the Capital works structural improvements priority list for drainage works to be undertaken;
- The purchase of the new snow plough for the area was welcomed; and
- Aviemore was currently in the process of being converted into a 20mph speed limit zone at virtually no cost to the Council. There was demand for this to be adopted in other communities and further information was sought and provided on any plans in this regard. It was proposed that the Council bring forward proposals to introduce temporary speed restrictions in all areas of Badenoch and Strathspey currently served by 30mph speed limits and these proposals be considered at the next meeting of the Committee. It was recognised that there would be a financial implication for this but sources of external financial support were available. It was therefore felt that proposals should be developed, in line with communities' objectives, with a view to them being progressed subject to funding being available.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED** that a report be provided on the condition of Cromdale bridge; and

- * ii. **AGREED** that the Council bring forward proposals to introduce temporary speed restrictions in all areas of Badenoch and Strathspey currently served by 30mph speed limits and these proposals be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

**9. West Highlands and Islands Amended Core Paths Plan Review
Ath-sgrùdadh Plana Phrìomh Cheuman na Gàidhealtachd an Iar agus nan Eilean**

There had been circulated Report No **BS/12/20** dated 14 October 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the Committee recognised that the Cairngorm National Park Authority supported the proposals and confirmation was provided that the Committee's approval of the Amended Core Paths Plan was the most the Council could do in terms of demonstrating their strength of support. In addition, it was highlighted that additional parking was being provided next to the railway station at Dalwhinnie.

The Committee **APPROVED** an Amended Core Paths Plan for the Badenoch and Strathspey area of the West Highland and Islands Core Paths Plan Review with one outstanding objection to one proposed core path.

**10. Badenoch and Strathspey - Education Report
Bàideanach agus Srath Spè – Aithisg Foghlaim**

There had been circulated Report No **BS/13/20** dated 26 October 2020 by the Area Education and Learning Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was highlighted that some of the weblinks in the report were broken and this needed to be addressed for future. The Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning advised that an Attainment Toolkit Data pack would be circulated to Members and this would provide detailed information on the key attainment measures without the need of having to use links. In the meantime, she provided a summary of the key measures in respect of Kingussie Area School Group and Grantown Area School Group highlighting areas that were performing well and areas where there was scope for improvement. The Chair welcomed the update and confirmed that this was the level of detail that should be reported to future meetings;
- With regard to some of the attainment details provided, it was assumed that there would be a period of settlement in respect of the recent appointments of permanent Head Teachers;
- In terms of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), there was a need to capture the transitions from P7 to S1. It was highlighted that there was greater accessibility of support systems in the primary setting compared to the secondary setting and this needed to be addressed. It was queried whether Additional Support Needs should be assigned to

individual pupils and have the resource follow them through their education journey;

- SIMD did not get into the detail of rural deprivation and there was a need to look beyond this indicator and support a person-centred pathway;
- With regard to Wi-Fi being cost prohibitive for some families, confirmation was provided that a MIFI Council device could be issued which provided internet access. In addition, further work had also been undertaken to upskill parents on digital learning to enable them to provide support to pupils at home; and
- It was vital that young people had a good awareness of health and wellbeing issues and the implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Award for S3 was welcomed.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report and to ensure that there were no broken links in future reports; and
- ii. **AGREED** that an Attainment Toolkit Data Pack be circulated to Members.

11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 7 July 2020 which were approved by the Council on 30 July 2020.

The meeting was closed at 12.40pm.