

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Housing and Property Committee** held remotely on Thursday 10 December 2020 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr B Allan	Mr A Henderson (substitute)
Mrs J Barclay	Mr A Jarvie
Mr B Boyd (substitute)	Mrs B McAllister
Mr R Bremner	Mr D Mackay
Miss J Campbell	Mrs A MacLean
Mr L Fraser	Mr H Morrison (substitute)
Mr A Graham	Mr P Saggars
Mr R Gale (substitute)	Mr B Thompson

Non-Members also present:

Dr I Cockburn	Mrs M Paterson
Mr J Finlayson	Mrs T Robertson
Mr J McGillivray	

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance
Mr F MacDonald, Head of Property & Facilities Management
Mr B Cameron, Housing Policy & Investment Manager
Mr J McHardy, Housing Development Manager
Mr M Mitchell, Service Finance Manager
Ms M Macleman, Principal Tenant & Customer Engagement Officer
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator
Miss M Zavarella, Clerical Assistant

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council.
All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.**

Mr B Thompson in the Chair

BUSINESS

1. **Apologies for Absence** **Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mrs L Munro, Mrs F Robertson and Ms E Roddick.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9: Mr R Bremner (non-financial)
Item 6: Mr L Fraser (Financial)
Item 7: Mr A Jarvie and Mr B Thompson (non-Financial)

Declaration of Interest: Mr R Bremner declared a non-financial interest in items 3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9 below as a Board Member of Albyn Housing Society Ltd but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.

**3. Good News
Naidheachdan Matha**

There had been circulated a note of the good news stories which included information on the tenant participation work that had been undertaken during the pandemic.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The importance of tenant participation was emphasised and Members were encouraged to get involved in the tenant engagement process which was a good opportunity to break down barriers and hear directly from tenants;
- Reference was made to the importance of social engagement, particularly throughout the pandemic, and the positive benefit of organised events such as the online Christmas party;
- Appreciation was expressed for the commitment of staff throughout the response to the pandemic and the vital support provided by community groups; and
- Digital inclusion was more important than ever and further information was sought and provided on how this could be further improved and maintained, particularly as everyone transitioned back to more normal times post Covid.

The Committee **NOTED** the good news as circulated.

**4. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Non-HRA Budget Monitoring Statement to 30 September 2020
Aithris Sgrùdaidh Buidseat Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais agus Neo-thaigheadais gu 30 An t-Sultainn 2020**

There had been circulated Report No HP/14/20 dated 27 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- it would be useful to know the impact of vacancy management on the deliverability of services as this was rarely reported on. In response to a question, it was agreed that it was important to be able to report the difference between active and natural vacancies that occur in a service and the Chair gave a commitment to investigate how this could be reported;
- it was confirmed that when Area Committees were considering localised performance the impact of vacancies was included in the narrative of the report;
- clarification was sought, and provided, that the downsizing policy was not actively promoted though it continued to be utilised on a targeted basis;

- service delivery was praised by Members and it was highlighted that recently appointed recruits were providing a high-quality service which spoke to the excellent training they had received from staff;
- further information was sought and provided in regard to the feasibility of selling garages/garage sites; and
- given the high demand for allotments, and the potential income revenue stream from this, a request was made for consideration to be given to identifying any potential allotment sites for local residents.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the budget position on the Housing Revenue Account and non-Housing Revenue Account;
- AGREED** to investigate how best to report the difference between active and natural vacancy management; and
- AGREED** that further consideration be given to the use of surplus HRA land for allotments.

5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September 2020
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais gu 30 An t-Sultainn 2020

There had been circulated Report No HP/15/20 dated 27 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- it was confirmed that no funding for the works had been made available by the Scottish Government;
- the Fire Service had installed alarms as part of safety checks/visits in the past and it was confirmed that contact would be made with the Fire Service as part of any new arrangements;
- in relation to the Strategic Housing Investment Programme for 2021-26, it had been stated that it would be possible to approve at least 500 units each year and further detail on this was needed, including proposals for how this would be resourced. It was confirmed that the target for the Council House Building element of the programme was currently 150 units per year;
- this issue, along with many others, would be discussed at the forthcoming Seminar on 27 January 2021 and all Members were encouraged to attend;
- most alarms were currently battery operated as opposed to being hard wired and there was a need for further information as to whether this was to be changed in future;
- confirmation was sought on what was being considered as potentially achievable in terms of capital spend in the current year and also in the following year;
- in terms of the progress with the Council House Building Programme for 2020-21, whereby it was anticipated that this programme would deliver 106 new completions within the current financial year, more information was needed on the cost per unit in this respect;

- in relation to the new build housing plan, there had to be a focus on provision within rural areas in particular, not least in light of current de-population issues;
- it was noted and welcomed that specific details of capital spend to the end of November, which would include a breakdown of costs per unit, would be provided as requested;
- it was queried as to what impact the slippage reported in the current year would have on the following year's programme and this would be reported to a future committee;
- further information was needed in terms of the definition of 'one-off houses' and it was noted that this would be provided at the Seminar;
- where there was no available in-house electricians, local contractors would be considered if possible, for the fitting of fire safety alarms along with consideration of a programme for future local apprenticeships (especially in rural areas);
- there was a need for continued communication in relation to risk assessments within flats, in conjunction with the Fire Service where necessary, not least to build in additional resilience where required;
- upgrading of fire prevention measures/equipment should be offered to all tenants;
- it was anticipated that, in view of the fact that the new fire safety regulations had now been delayed in terms of their implementation until 2022, this would allow all of the necessary work to be undertaken in advance of that date; and
- there was considerable frustration at not being able to identify sites for future housing development in an area such as the Highlands and it was hoped that this could be taken forward during future discussions with the Scottish Land Commission if possible.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the budget position on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Monitoring Report; and
 - ii. **APPROVED** the transfer of £1m from Revenue to Capital budgets for fire safety works for both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 budgets;
 - iii. **NOTED** that further information would be circulated to Members on the spend to end of December 2020, the monthly spend projections to the end of the financial year, and a breakdown of unit cost for new builds;
 - iv. **AGREED** to review the Fire Safety Programme of Works to determine the feasibility of targeting property types and prioritising areas and the opportunities for wireless devices; and
 - v. **AGREED** that the operation of the Apprenticeship Scheme and the level of trades officers in Caithness be investigated and the outcome reported to Councillor D Mackay.
- 6. Property & Facilities Management Services: Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2020**
Seirbheisean Stiùiridh Thogalaichean & Ghoireasan: Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach gu 30 Sultain 2020

Mr L Fraser declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds he undertook work for the Housing Service in Nairn but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of

Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion on the basis this work was so remote and minor it would not impinge on his work on the Committee.

There had been circulated Report No HP/16/20 dated 16 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- in relation to the budget for Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management, there was a need for further clarification on the budget which would be in place to support this area, including future recruitment, and as part of that it was hoped that a response would be received from the Scottish Government in this regard at an early date;
- further information was needed on when school lets, and specifically outdoor facilities, could be reinstated;
- there was a concern about the potential budget gap should sufficient additional funding not be confirmed;
- in thanking the staff concerned for the excellent work which continued to be undertaken, it was noted that they had been under significant pressure over recent months and consideration was currently being given as to whether there might be a need for agency staff to be employed in the near future;
- responsibility for the different elements of this budget should be discussed and reviewed if considered necessary;
- it was imperative that the provision of good and nutritional hot meals for schoolchildren was maintained and improved upon if/where necessary; and
- it had to be made clear that any additional budget support received was not expected to significantly change the level of service currently being provided and as such current and future pressures in this respect had to be highlighted in the coming months and kept under constant review.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the more detailed reporting of gross income and gross expenditure to improve scrutiny of net budgets as set out in the Appendices attached to the report;
- ii. net spend at the end of quarter 2 totalled £35.240m;
- iii. based on the best available information to date, a service budget gap of £8.417m to the end of 2020/21 was presently forecast, largely due to continued Covid responses;
- iv. almost every area of service relied on income to pay for services and this was significantly disrupted this year because of Covid impacts. Ongoing spend addressing Covid related issues was the key reason for the service's forecast budget gap; and
- v. the budget gap might change positively or negatively depending on the application of expenditure and recruitment controls, adjusting services to meet previously agreed budget savings; in-year income recovery, identifying new income and procurement opportunities, drawing down any further Government grant support and any new Covid related recovery costs.

7. Update on the Corporate Landlord and Strategic Asset Management Approach to Buildings and Assets
Fios às Ùr mu Dhòigh-obrach Uachdarain Chorporra agus Stiùireadh So-mhain Ro-innleachdail a thaobh Thogalaichean is So-mhain

Declarations of Interest: Mr B Thompson and Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as Directors of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interest did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No HP/17/20 dated 18 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the high-level vision was inspiring but the size and scale of the project was emphasised and it was queried whether the Council was adequately investing in the appropriate management tools and training that would be required to achieve the objectives;
- feedback was provided on the Property Performance Framework (PPF) and the suggested metrics during which a number of queries were raised in regard to feasibility of the PPF being completed at least partially prior to the suggested timeline of two years to enable priorities to be quickly identified; whether the impact of home working would be incorporated into the process; the need for evaluation of insulation and energy efficiencies; and whether a pragmatic approach was being adopted to identify the key priorities, for which it was felt that schools should be a key focus; and whether the Council should be actively considering prudent borrowing;
- with regard to property rationalisation, it was queried how the capital receipt should be allocated and a number of views were expressed at whether this should be retained centrally or retained in the local area that it was generated and it was highlighted it might be easier to rationalise estate if local areas received some proportion of the capital receipt. It was further highlighted that disposal of assets also generated a revenue saving which was retained centrally. It was acknowledged that the Council had a significant number of properties (1,200 in total). However, it was highlighted the rationalisation of these would not be straightforward given the land mass of the Highlands. It was indicated that disposal of common good properties would not be possible in many instances and assurance was provided that there would be cognisance of the social value of buildings, particularly in remote and rural areas;
- assurance was provided that the proposed approach would involve collaboration with communities and services at a local level and a plea was made for early intervention with building users with reference being made to the Fort William 2040 initiative and ascertaining community views. The importance of co-locating with the third sector organisations, as well as public sector organisations, and keeping buildings in rural areas vibrant and protecting employability was also emphasised. Further information was sought and provided on how the Corporate Landlord model would impact on Community Asset Transfers;
- it was indicated that transferring staff and relevant budgets from previous responsible services would be a difficult task;

- with regard to homeworking, it was queried whether staff contracts of employment would need to be amended to reflect this change and that workplace risk assessments would need to be undertaken. It was also queried how the Council's carbon reduction target would be addressed if energy use was being transferred from Council buildings to staff homes;
- the importance of ensuring that the data was up to date was emphasised; and
- further information was sought and provided on the types of criteria applied to assess and grade buildings.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

8. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No HP/18/20 dated 27 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- concern was expressed at the increasing rent arrears trend and Members expressed their appreciation to staff for their diligent efforts supporting tenants. In addition, staff were further commended for their sympathetic approach in dealing with homelessness presentations. Members praised the team for the commitment and dedication and it was suggested that these achievements should be captured and acknowledged;
- with regard to rent arrears, it was highlighted that additional support and advice was available from the Council's Welfare Team and the Citizen's Advice Bureau;
- reference was made to the Average re-let time performance indicator and a request was made to follow up on earlier discussions held with the Chair regarding initiatives in Caithness. It was further highlighted the profile of voids in this area had reduced and it was suggested that this be reassessed; and
- with regard to the suggestion that the number of complaints had increased during the pandemic, it was clarified that the numbers detailed in the report were cumulative, i.e. the figures for June – September also included the figures for April to June hence why it appeared like an increase.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

9. Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator Aithris Bharantais Bhliadhnail do Riaghladair Taigheadais na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No HP/19/20 dated 27 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, reference was made to the positive response that the Council had received from the Scottish Housing Regulator as set out in their letter which had been appended to the report and the reasonable suggestions for improvement that had been made.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the report from the Scottish Housing Regulator on the Annual Assurance Statement for 2019; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the Annual Assurance Statement for 2020 detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The meeting was closed at 1.55pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Special Meeting of the **Lochaber Committee** held remotely on Friday 11 December 2020 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr B Allan	Mr N McLean
Mr A Baxter	Mr D Rixson
Mr A Henderson	Mr B Thompson

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager
Mr D Gallagher, Business Gateway Service and Development Manager
Ms E Lawson, Business Gateway Adviser
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator

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 A Baxter in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Ramon.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 3 – Mr D Rixson and Mr B Thompson (both non-financial)

3. Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF) – Support to Businesses in Lochaber Maoin Coimhearsnachdan Cladaich na Gàidhealtachd – Taic do Ghnothachasan ann an Loch Abar

Declarations of Interest:

Mr D Rixson declared non-financial interests in this item as the Council nominee to the Isle of Rum Community Trust and Secretary of Mallaig Heritage Centre but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interests did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Mr B Thompson declared a non-financial interest as one of the owners of a business that had an online presence. However, he had no relationship with Business Gateway and would not be applying for the funding that was to be the subject of discussion therefore, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs

5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No LA/18/20 dated 26 November 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In introducing the report, the Chair thanked Councillor Thompson for his initial suggestion that the Lochaber Committee should look at providing some specific support for businesses as part of the HCCF. The subsequent discussions by Members, officers and Business Gateway staff had led to the proposal before the Committee today, and thanks were expressed to officers for taking Members' suggestions and turning them into a cohesive policy that could be applied to the HCCF.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- one of the things that had stood out over the past few months was the distress being experienced by some of the business community, not only from a financial perspective but in terms of mental health etc, and it was important to do as much as possible to support businesses, particularly if they were having to diversify;
- Members welcomed the progress that had been made, expressed support for the recommendations and looked forward to seeing some good uptake by local businesses;
- whilst the report indicated that the grant scheme would first be directed to businesses that had already engaged with the Business Gateway, new businesses would also be looking for opportunities and support was expressed for the scheme being open to them straight away; and
- in relation to the proposed requirement for businesses to obtain three quotations, it was questioned whether the sector was big enough for businesses to be able to do so in all instances. In response, it was acknowledged that it might not always be possible to obtain three quotations, Lochaber being a relatively small community, and it was confirmed that the intention was to be as flexible as possible in delivering the fund. Members welcomed the pragmatic approach.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the proposal for delivery of business support through adding value to the Business Gateway service in Lochaber, as set out in the Appendix 1; and
- ii. a ringfenced sum of £30,000 of HCCF – Lochaber funding to deliver the proposal for digital support grants to businesses.

The meeting ended at 10.37 am.

**The Highland Council
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of **Special Meeting of the Caithness Committee** held REMOTELY on Friday,
11 December 2020 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr R Bremner (am only)	Mr M Reiss
Mr D MacKay	Mr K Rosie
Mr W Mackay (am only)	Mr A Sinclair
Mr S Mackie	Ms N Sinclair

Non Members in attendance

Mr A Jarvie
Mrs D Mackay

Officials in attendance:

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive
Ms N Grant, Interim Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning
Mrs K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance
Mrs F Malcolm, Interim Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care
Mrs H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr A Macmanus, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr I Kyle, Head of Improvement and Performance
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant

Also in Attendance:

Ms P Dudek, Chief Executive, NHS Highland
Chief Superintendent, C Trickett, Police Scotland
Mr D Wilson, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Ms N Sinclair in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Item 3: – Mr W Mackay, Mr K Rosie, Mr M Reiss – Non financial

3. Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project

Declaration of Interest - Mr W Mackay declared a non-financial interest in this item as Chairman, Caithness Learning Disabled Group ENABLE and Director, Caithness Mental Health Support Group but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Mr K Rosie, declared a non financial interest in this item as Chairman of Caithness Drug and Alcohol Forum but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Mr M Reiss, declared a non financial interest in this item as Director of Caithness Mental Health Support Group but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

The Chair advised that this special meeting had been called as an emergency response to the escalating mental health issues in the Caithness area. The aim of the meeting was to consider a series of positive and immediate steps under the pathfinder programme, funded by the Scottish Government and agreed at the recent meeting of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

A wide range of guests had been invited to the meeting, highlighting the strategic importance of the Caithness challenge and the commitment of all statutory service providers.

A series of presentations were made by statutory service providers.

Presentations

The Highland Council – Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive, The Highland Council

Honesty, Courage, Understanding, and Empathy were themes highlighted in association with mental health issues. In recent months, it had been inspiring to hear the honesty that had come forward in conversations and this was intergenerational in Caithness and people wanted to open up and talk about their experiences with mental health issues that perhaps they had not shared before.

Everyone needed courage in the months ahead and many people had shown this. Courage to be able to open up and to be honest. Courage to say what is not working and what we need to do better and the need to provide the services that are required for the people of Caithness so that they can be supported with some of these issues.

There was a need to understand what was happening and whether this was just a Caithness issue. In this respect, the pathfinder project would be important for the rest of Highland and Scotland.

There was an empathy and commitment to make sure that everyone learned together. The Lead partners needed to work in a different way to provide services and consider what Caithness could offer as a community in helping to understand the issue. The Lead Partners would work together to make a difference to people's lives and regular updates on progress would be made to the Caithness Committee and the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

Police Scotland – Chief Superintendent, C Trickett, Police Scotland

There were challenges facing Police Officers in Caithness on a daily basis. There had been a significant increase in suicides and drug related deaths in 2020. There had been an increase in violence, violent custodies in Police stations; murders; attempted murders; increases in weapon crime; increases in assaults against emergency workers. There was also a complicated drug problem with a variety of drugs in the area that were causing some of the reactions that Police Officers were experiencing.

The way to tackle some of these issues was by a collaborative approach by Lead agencies. Some of the approaches being taken by Police Scotland were highlighted and in particular Operation Ruling launched in December, 2020 following public engagement, to target crime and improve public confidence in policing.

NHS Highland – Ms P Dudek, Chief Executive, NHS Highland

There was an opportunity for Lead Partners to do something meaningful in tackling mental health issues in Caithness and other areas in Highland and to take forward the ambitions of the Christie Commission in 2011 on the future delivery of public services.

The trauma that Caithness had experienced recently with suicides and drug related deaths was devastating. The pathfinder project offered a significant opportunity to consider how we tackle inequality, poverty and bring hope to people.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) – Mr D Wilson

The Scottish Fire and Rescue had a proud history of working in partnership across Scotland, Highland and in Caithness to achieve best outcomes. They worked to deliver positive community outcomes and its staff, who were positive and strong role models, were willing to be involved in any initiative to improve matters for the community.

The SFRS had some positive projects that had taken place and were due to take place in Caithness through the Fire Service Skills Employability Awards and the Prince's Trust that worked with partners and young people who were identified as at greatest risk to help them build social, team working skills and confidence. Further, a Youth Volunteer Scheme was to be developed in Wick, for young people to learn skills and be given guidance and support.

SFRS community advocates had undertaken training in identifying adverse childhood experiences and this role was key to link in with the different projects referred to in Caithness and Highland.

Thereafter, the Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning gave an introduction to the circulated Report No CC/12/20 dated 6 December 2020 in relation to the Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder project.

At this point, the Chair sought the approval of the Committee, as provided for under Standing Order 24, to adjourn the meeting for a period of 1 hour. This would allow the Committee to discuss the report and the presentations with all of the community and partner representatives present and help to inform the Committee Members consideration of the matter.

The Committee **AGREED** to adjourn the meeting and the meeting reconvened at 12 noon.

The Chair highlighted the very useful discussion that had taken place involving community and partner representatives as it was important for everyone to talk about this very important issue. There was a commitment to work together going forward and hopefully this pathfinder project would be a turning point and it could eventually be rolled out across Highland and build hope and resilience in our communities.

Following consideration of the recommendations contained in the report, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the five key workstreams identified through the workshops and community engagement that took place on Monday 30 November virtually in Caithness as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to the development of the Project Action Plan as set out in Appendix 2, and that the Action Plan will make clear how the grant funding will be allocated to the Third Sector Groups operating locally to enhance the provision that is already in place;
- iii. **AGREED** to recognise the role that “lived experience” must play as an embedded part of the Action Plan;
- iv. **AGREED** to the immediate recruitment of a Strategic Lead to oversee the Pathfinder and ensure the pathfinder work and good practice is shared and developed across other Highland Communities;
- v. **AGREED** that a follow up workshop will take place early in 2021 when the strategic lead is in place to commit to the delivery of the action plan; and
- vi. **NOTED** the excellent contribution made by the elected Members, Community and many young people during the workshops sessions.

The meeting ended at 12.05 p.m.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held REMOTELY on Monday, 14 December 2020 at 10.00am.

Present:

Mr R Gale

Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray

Mr H Morrison

Ms L Munro

Ms K Currie

Officials in attendance:

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager

Mr A Webster, Regeneration and Employment Team Leader

Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Service Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Ms Morgan Zavarella, Committee Officer, Chief Executive's Office

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 3 – Mr R Gale and Mr J McGillivray (both non-financial)

3. **Town Centre Fund
Maoin Meadhan a' Bhaile**

Declarations of Interest –

Mr R Gale declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Trustee of the Go Golspie Development Trust and, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, confirmed that he would leave the meeting during discussion of the applications related to Golspie (Mr Morrison taking over in his absence).

Mr J McGillivray declared a non-financial interest as a Director of both the Dornoch & District Community Association and the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company and, having applied the test, also confirmed that he would leave the meeting during discussion of applications related to Dornoch.

There had been circulated Report No SCC/15/20 dated 3 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In this regard, and prior to discussion, it was **AGREED** that the total funding available (£84,156) should be considered on the basis of a three-way split between the areas of Brora, Golspie and Dornoch.

Following a summary of the report, followed by detailed discussion of each of the applications which had been received, the Committee **AGREED** that the undernoted projects should be allocated a Town Centre Fund grant (the value of funds to be offered in each case as highlighted):-

Brora and District Action Group

Provision of dedicated motorhome parking, chemical waste facility (£18k) and replacement signage (£10k).

Go Golspie –

Renovation of YMCA Building (£20k) and Town Signage (£8,052k) – on the basis that the £8,052 would allow for delivery of an early first phase of signage improvements and discussion should take place with the Brora & District Action Group in terms of potentially accessing additional (joint) funding for town signage.

Dornoch Area Community Interest Company –

Car, Coach & Motorhome Park – first phase of ‘Project Curlew’ - £28,502.

The meeting ended at 10.50am.