

Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 13 January 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam
Mrs J Barclay
Mr C Fraser

Mr A MacKinnon
Mrs A MacLean
Mrs M Paterson

In attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer - Housing and Property
Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager (Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth), Chief Executive's Office
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager
Mr R MacLeod, Area Housing Manager
Mr J McHardy, Housing Development Manager
Mr A Webster, Principal Regeneration Officer
Miss S Tarrant, Corporate Communications and Engagement Officer
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Group Commander A McKinley, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulans

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Committee held on 13 October 2020 which were approved by the Council on 29 October 2020.

Members asked that the action note from Item 9 for workshop session(s) with community groups across the area be taken forward by the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Ward Manager.

4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn

There had been circulated Report No BIDS/001/21 dated 18 December 2020 together with the Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Performance Report by the Local Group Commander for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

In discussion, the following main points were addressed by the Local Group Commander:-

- on a question on whether home fire safety visits had been undertaken during the Covid 19 period, the Local Group Commander confirmed that only very high-risk home fire safety visits could be undertaken during this time, this meant homes with no smoke detection or homes where there was a possibility of fire related crime. The Group Commander stated, that as soon as restrictions were lifted engagement would recommence;
- recruitment and training had been ongoing although training at this time was restricted, remote training on their E Learning platform had taken place with safety critical training such as breathing apparatus and incident command training continuing at designated training facilities in their respective bubbles to reduce the risk;
- fire stations were operated with a bubble of four and these bubbles did not mix with other fire station officers and only occupied the fire station when required for risk critical maintenance; and
- the fire stations had been utilised already for some vaccinating of paramedics and several community fire stations were being utilised as Covid 19 test centres. If the NHS requested assistance to roll out the vaccinating programme the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would be happy to help, as they were ideally placed with risk assessed, Covid secured premises.

Members thereafter thanked the Group Commander and asked that their appreciation for the work undertaken be passed to all fire station staff.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the report.

5. Roads Capital Programme Progress Report 2020/21 Aithisg Adhartais Prògram Calpa Rathaidean 2020/21

There had been circulated Report No BIDS/002/21 dated 9 September 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment which detailed the proposed 2021/22 Roads Maintenance Programme for Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth.

Members discussed the proposed 2021/22 Roads capital Maintenance Programme for the area which was pending confirmation of the Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee budget allocations.

The Economy and Infrastructure Committee local allocations budget for 2021/22 had not yet been determined so the roads maintenance programme presented to the Committee today was based on the 2020/21 budget.

As the Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Area have a total of 28% of the road length in the former Ross and Cromarty area, this capital programme is based on 28% of the 2020/21 Ross and Cromarty Area Capital Budget which equates to £291,715. Members want to see further work carried out for this figure, as well as the final allocation figure when it is known, to be split down at ward level to give both the Black Isle Ward and the Dingwall and Seaforth Ward a budget.

Because of uncertainty regarding the actual budget and how this will be split between wards, Members felt they could only agree to works for which money can be confirmed.

Only surfacing works approved in the 20-21 programme but not yet completed will be undertaken this financial year as winter permits. Resurfacing works were proposed on the A832 at Muir of Ord and at the U2711 Bogallan – Allanglach Road on the Black Isle. There are a further 21 resurfacing works that have been identified as priority works but for which additional funding and further committee approval would be required. These include resurfacing sections of the A832 at a number of locations including Cromarty, Muir of Ord, Dingwall, Tore and Munloch; the C1071 Heights of Docherty route and the U2975 Ardnagrask Road.

Surface dressing was also proposed along the A862 at Station Road and the U3031 Riverford Crescent road in Conon Bridge. These schemes together with a further 6 projects on a list which will only be delivered if additional funding and committee approval can be secured.

Members had not had the opportunity at ward level to look in detail on the priority list of works nor were they in a position to know a definite figure for our budget. We have only been able to agree the projects for which funding was confirmed to go-ahead. Further talks will take place at ward level on allocation and the priority list for other projects. Once this has taken place the decisions will be ratified as soon as possible by our Area Committee. This detailed work will take place as rapidly as possible and in the meantime officers will make arrangements for the confirmed projects to move forward.

All local members are committed to ensuring we make the most of available resources and will continue to review and monitor progress on a regular basis.

The Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the proposed 2021/22 Roads Maintenance Programme for Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth area as above; and

- ii. **AGREED** that further talks take place at ward level on allocation and the priority list for other projects and that these would be brought back to Committee.

6. Town Centre Funding Maoin Meadhan a' Bhaile

There had been circulated Report No BIDS/003/21 dated 18 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members had concerns over the Newton Room project within Dingwall Town Hall and the ingress of water which required immediate attention; and
- all works should be undertaken urgently to secure the Town Centre funding as works had to have started before 31 March 2021 or the funding would be lost.

The Committee **AGREED** the proposed additional items of TCF expenditure, namely:-

- i. Rosemarkie and Fortrose Trust are to receive an additional £25k to allow them to complete the refurbishment of the public toilets in Rosemarkie and Fortrose;
- ii. £100k will be invested in Dingwall Town Hall i.e. roof repairs; and
- iii. the remaining £71,364 will augment the £30k approved in 2019/20 to deliver improvements to the North Kessock (A9) Layby i.e. improved lighting to the steps, waste disposal facility, information/interpretation and white lining of vehicle spaces.

7. Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) Plana Tasgaidh Taigheadais Ro-innleachdail

There had been circulated Report No BIDS/004/21 dated 14 December 2020 inviting consideration of the Highland's draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) which sets out proposals for affordable housing investment during 2021-2026, as reported to Economy and Infrastructure Committee at the meeting held on 4 November 2020.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members asked that the history of the areas be taken into account when naming the new developments;
- there had been no recent updates on the Meiklefield Road development and the Station Road development in Dingwall for some time and Members asked that an update be provided to the WBM;
- a notice board/sign in the Meiklefield Road area detailing the development was beneficial for local residents; and
- a request that the private tenants and owner/occupiers in Meiklefield Road be kept up to date with the project.

- Fodderty is on the ward boundary and should be included in the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh plan

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the Highland's draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan;
- ii. that updates would be provided to the Ward Business Meeting for Meiklefield Road and Station Road in Dingwall; and
- iii. the progress within the developments highlighted within section 5 of this report and included as appendix 1 of the report.

8. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No BIDS/005/21 dated 14 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer – Housing and Property which provided Members with information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 September 2020.

Members started by thanking the Housing Service Team for their work during the Covid-19 outbreak and asked that their appreciation be passed to staff.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- concern was expressed for those in receipt of benefit and having arrears for the first time due to Covid-19 and Members urged tenants to get in touch as soon as possible if they were having money problems, the Housing Service had been undertaking a pro-active approach and tenants were advised through newsletters and when signing a tenancy to get in touch as soon as they understood they may have arrears;
- some people from other areas had been intending to come to the Highlands with the perception that the Highlands was a safer place to be during the covid outbreak, these people had been urged to stay where they were; and
- Members understood that mutual exchanges could not take place at the present time where the higher level of transmission from the new mutated Covid-19 strain prevented people from entering a property that was not their own home, with mutual exchanges the houses could not remain empty for any length of time as the exchanges happened on the same day.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

9. Common Good Funds Maoin Maith Choitchinn

There had been circulated Reports Nos BIDS/006/21 – BIDS/008/21 dated 17 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Finance and Resources and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place which provided information on the following Common Good Funds:-

- a. Cromarty Common Good Fund BIDS/006/21;
- b. Dingwall Common Good Fund BIDS/007/21; and
- c. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund BIDS/008/21.

The Committee **NOTED** the updated information provided in relation to each Fund.

The meeting closed at 12:55 pm.