

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 14 January 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mrs I Campbell
Dr I Cockburn

Mr A MacInnes

In attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure and Environment
Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager (Skye, Ross and Cromarty), Infrastructure and Environment
Mr R MacLeod, Housing Manager (North), Property and Housing
Mr J McHardy, Housing Development Manager
Mr A Webster, Principal Regeneration Officer
Miss S Tarrant, Corporate Communications and Engagement Officer, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Group Commander A McKinley, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms R Clarke, Local Development Officer, Applecross Community Company (ACC)
Mr O Kilbride, Chair, Applecross Community Company

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 Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 15 October 2020 which were approved by the Council on 29 October 2020 were noted.

4. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/001/21 dated 18 December 2020 together with the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, the following responses were received from the Group Manager:-

- there is a financial cost to false alarms, for example, a call out charge for each retained firefighters, an hourly rate for staff thereafter, vehicle fuel, wear and tear on the equipment. There is also an element of road risk having an appliance respond to an incident. The Group Commander advised that when there were repeated false alarms the local managers will help and work in partnership with the premises holders to reduce unwanted fire alarm activations. The Protect and Prevention Directorate has recently appointed a UFAS Champion who has the reference of overseeing the reduction strategy;
- station availability was constantly monitored especially in these challenging times. The Group Commander advised that they strove for 100% appliance availability, at all times, and they would challenge any reductions seen in availability;
- 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;
- the Fire service were still responding to medical emergencies and now carried defibrillators on all appliances, the Fire Service endeavoured to support the Scottish Ambulance Service in any way they could following the relevant training in the use of specialised equipment; and
- Members had been impressed with the engagement with the elderly on fire safety visits. 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, the amount of people seeking home safety visits was very good.

The Committee **NOTED** the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Performance Report.

5. **Supporting Community Action and Involvement Presentation: Applecross Community Company A' Cur Taic ri Gníomhachd is Com-pàirteachas Coimhearsnachd Taisbeanadh: Companaidh Coimhearsnachd na Comraich**

Roslyn Clarke, Local Development Officer, Applecross Community Company (ACC) gave a presentation on the work of ACC, the benefits it brings and what more the Council could do in support.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- Ms Clarke responded that there was too much wood to sell it all to the community, the majority of the wood would be felled and removed by the contractor with only a small proportion of the wood sold within the community;
- the ACC had looked at installing a campervan waste disposal unit but the positioning would be in close proximity to the existing one. Local people had mixed views and wanted to encourage the use of the camping site for campervans where they could use camping site toilets and waste disposal units and not the use of wild camping;
- Members commended the community with their clear vision and for their collaboration and resilience during the Covid-19 outbreak;
- land purchase took a considerable time, an example was for an asset transfer from NHS Highland for a piece of land beside the GP surgery, which had commenced in approximately 2015 and it had taken five years to purchase;
- preference would be for a community owned let holiday home as opposed to a holiday home only used for two weeks in the year. A let holiday home provided local employment an income and money spent within the community, unfortunately most holiday homes were not owned by local people who could not compete with the money paid for local houses by people from elsewhere in the country.

The Committee thanked Ms Clarke and Mr Kilbride for the very informative presentation.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

6. Town Centre Fund Maoin Meadhan a' Bhaile

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/002/21 dated 15 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the proposed additional items of Town Centre Fund expenditure, namely:-

- i. Strathpeffer Community Council - additional pump for the Fountain and/or Waterfall cascade - £9,000;
- ii. Strathpeffer Community Council - extend electricity supply within the new gazebo to provide power points and lights - £1,000;
- iii. Strathpeffer Community Council - Improved signage for visitors - £15,000;
- iv. Strathpeffer Community Council - drainage works required for the site of the new community play park - £28,000; and
- v. the residual balance of £3,104 should be held as contingency in the event that the cost items exceed budget estimates or in the event it is not required used for a trishaw for the new Pefferry Way to facilitate residents from local care homes accessing the countryside.

7. Associated School Group Overview
Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/003/21 dated 8 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning which provided an update of key information in relation to the schools within the Ullapool Associated School Group (ASG).

The Committee **NOTED** the report had been withdrawn and would be brought to the next meeting of the WRSL Committee.

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

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/004/21 dated 15 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment which detailed the proposed 2021/22 Roads Maintenance Programme for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- in response to a question on the Bundaloch Road works, Mr Moncrieff advised that due to the suspension on funding for Capital Works at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak these works had not been completed last year, it was intended that, subject to the weather, these works would be completed before the end of this financial year and if not it would be completed at the start of the next financial year; and
- the Strathhill road into Plockton required work and Members would look at this and if additional funding was made available it would be discussed at the next ward business meeting.

Mr Malcolm MacLeod advised that a report was intended to be brought to the E and I Committee on 4 February on additional capital funding. An updated capital report would then be brought to the next relevant Area Committee with the enhanced level of funding for the next two years set out.

The Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the proposed 2021/22 Roads Maintenance Programme for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh.

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

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/005/21 dated 22 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment which report invited 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.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED**:

- the Highland's draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan; and

- the progress within the developments highlighted within section 5 of this report and included as appendix 1 of the report.

10. Housing Performance Report **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/006/21 dated 15 December 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing 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.

The Committee **NOTED** that as the Committee was no longer quorate, Cllr I Campbell having lost connectivity, this report would be carried to the next meeting of the WRSL Committee.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm.