

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held remotely on Monday 1 March 2021 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:

Ms F Duncan, Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Communities and Place

Ms A Donald, North Area Manager, Education & Learning

Ms K Wood, Headteacher, North Coast Campus, Education & Learning

Ms J Sutherland, Roads Operation Manager, Infrastructure and Environment

Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer, Communities and Place

Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Performance & Governance

Also in Attendance:

Station Commander J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Mr R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

The Items are recorded in the order that they were taken at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 9.

**3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report
Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/01/21 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, Members commended the Station Commander and his crews for the work undertaken across the area and on the support provided to the community and raised the following main points:-

- clarification was sought and provided on the statistics shown in relation to accidental dwelling fires for Quarter 3. The Local Senior Officer

confirmed that he would provide further clarification to Members on this matter;

- an explanation was sought and provided in relation to the number of false alarms recorded in November 2020. It was confirmed there had been an issue at a care home due to a faulty detector head which had now been replaced;
- the need to undertake a recruitment drive in view of the impacts of the pandemic on recruiting, retaining and training staffing and taking account of the age profile of existing staff;
- specific concerns in relation to the station availability at Tongue and Bettyhill and confirmation the Local Senior Officer would have discussions with Mr H Morrison outwith the meeting to discuss opportunities to recruit and train staff in the locality; and
- it was hoped the issues with the automatic fire alarm at Tongue Fire Station had been resolved.

The Committee **NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report, and that clarification would be provided on the statistics in relation to accidental dwelling fires for Quarter 3.

5. Update on Implementation of 20mph Speed Limits Fios às Ùr mu Bhuileachadh Chriochan-Astair 20msu

The Committee was provided with the following update:-

Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill

In 2019 the above Private Members Bill to reduce the general speed limit on restricted roads (*i.e. C and U class roads in built up areas*) to 20mph was put forward to the Scottish Parliament. Highland Council supported the proposal and made the point that The Scottish Government make available suitable funding for both Local Authorities and Transport Scotland to enable implementation. The Bill was unsuccessful and therefore the intention is to bring a report to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee in May 2021 to outline potential ways forward for 20 mph limits in Highland.

Highland Council 20mph Implementation Programme

The August 2013 TEC/13 paper outlined that £50,000 per annum had been identified for the implementation of the Council 20mph programme. This dedicated Council budget, due to run until 2022/23, was cut in 2017/18. Therefore, while there was a desire to implement 20mph schemes across the Council Area, there was no dedicated budget for this implementation.

More recently there has been the introduction of temporary 20 mph speed limits in Dingwall and Aviemore via Sustrans emergency COVID Spaces for People funding with Fort William, Thurso and Portree due to go live imminently. These temporary limits were valid for a period of 18 months and would then require a permanent Road Traffic Regulation Order.

Going Forward

The Council would continue to identify funding opportunities for the implementation of 20 mph limits across the area. Wards were welcome to provide their list of desired locations for the implementation of a 20 mph limit to the Road Safety Team (road.safety@highland.gov.uk) and these would be

assessed and added to the list. Full details of the process would be outlined in the report to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee in May 2021.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- it appeared the ongoing project in relation to the implementation of 20mph speed limits was slow in being rolled out in villages within Sutherland, and the need for Members to push for more urgency in this regard,
- the Back Road, Golspie be considered as a priority given that it was used as a rat run and served both the Primary and High Schools;
- a number of community councils in the North, West and Central Sutherland ward had been proactive in relation to this item and a number of schemes for the area would be put forward;
- Edderton Community Council was seeking to have 20mph limits implemented within the village and had funded signage in this regard. In addition there was the ongoing issue of the 40mph limit on the A836;
- Dornoch Area Community Council were keen to have a number of 20mph schemes implemented within the boundary of the Burgh; and
- a proposal that the implementation of 20mph speed limits be progressed as quickly as possible within Sutherland and that consultation take place with communities across the County.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update; and
- * ii. **AGREED** to request that the implementation of 20mph speed limits be progressed as quickly as possible within Sutherland and that consultation take place with communities across the County.

6. **Road Structural Maintenance 2021/2022** **Càradh Structar Rathaidean 2021/2022**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/02/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- confirmation was sought and provided that it was hoped to commence work on the Altnamain Straight in March 2021 and details were provided on the proposed scheduling of the works going forward;
- an update was sought and provided on challenges around staffing and the ability to deliver works and support was expressed for as much work as possible to be carried out inhouse;
- the Council was conducting a review of staffing and it was hoped the staff resource would be increased going forward;
- an explanation was sought and provided on the projects it was anticipated could be delivered within the available budget in 2021/22, noting this would be continually reviewed as schemes were delivered;
- the need to ensure that stocks of tarmac were reserved for those routes in priority need;

- confirmation was sought and provided that match funding was being secured from Scottish Timber Transport Fund in respect of routes in Sutherland;
- the importance of storing and covering salt to maintain its quality and the proposals to erect salt barns in Lairg and Wick, going forward;
- clarification was sought and provided on the reconstruction works proposed for Craigton, Bonar Bridge; and
- the priorities within the Programme would be subject to further discussion at the next Ward Business Meeting.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed Roads Maintenance Programme 2021/22 for the Sutherland Area, on the basis priorities would be considered further at the next Ward Business Meeting.

4. Remote Learning and Childcare in Sutherland Schools Ionnasachadh Iomallach agus Cùram-chloinne ann an Sgoiltean Chataibh

The North Area Manager and Headteacher, North Coast Campus gave a verbal update on this item.

The North Area Manager gave an overview of this first phase of return to schools, advising this had gone smoothly due to the careful planning of head teachers, Officers from transport, catering, cleaning, health and safety and education had worked closely to ensure services required were provided safely. Schools now had a stock of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) home testing kits for use by staff and senior phase pupils. Positive feedback was being received from head teachers in Sutherland, and the return had allowed teachers to measure and monitor where the children were in their learning.

In relation to remote learning, a balance of live learning and independent activity was being delivered and health and wellbeing remained a key priority Support was being provided to those who required help with devices or connectivity. During the second lockdown period, staff were more confident with the technology, attendance and engagement was good, and those who were not engaging had regular communication and support from staff in their schools.

The Head Teacher, North Coast Campus gave a presentation on the lockdown lessons and return to schools over the period of the pandemic to date, the priority being the health and wellbeing of pupils, parents and staff. She provided a summary of the remote learning delivered at all levels, the support provided by staff to pupils and the engagement with parents. The return to schools was focusing on the recovery process and assessment of pupils' progress with learning. In terms of lessons learned, she advised that communication was key and that offering an online option had increased parents' ability to engage. Whilst online learning offered many possibilities that could be transferred into the traditional classroom, it was could not replace the benefits of face to face learning.

Members congratulated the Head Teacher, staff, pupils, parents and the wider school community on the excellent work undertaken within the North Coast Campus in response to what had been and continued to be extremely challenging circumstances due to the pandemic. The return to schools and

new opportunities which had arisen for example in relation to online parent engagement was also welcomed.

The Committee **NOTED** the verbal update.

**7. Dornoch Common Good
Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich**

**(a). Consultation on proposed change of use of an area of Dornoch Links for the location of a takeaway food van
Co-chomhairle mu atharrachadh cleachdadh ga mholadh airson raon de dh'Fhigheach Dhòrnaich airson bhana biadh-siubhail**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/03/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

In discussion, support was expressed for the recommendations set out in the report. The proposed new site represented a positive step forward and addressed some of the concerns raised in consultation and while initially a short-term lease was proposed, there was the potential to extend this after the pilot period. It would be the applicant's responsibility to deal with any planning and licensing issues.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as contained in the analysis at **Appendix 1**;
- ii. **AGREED** the suggested amendment to the proposal regarding location;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposal to change the use of the amended area of Dornoch Links for the location of a takeaway food van subject to the consent of the Sheriff Court being obtained; and
- iv. **NOTED** that other permissions may be required relating to planning and environmental health in connection with the operation of the business however, these are separate processes and procedures to that required under Community Empowerment legislation.

**(b). Annual Report 2019/20, Proposed Budget 2021/22 and Quarter Monitoring Statement 2020/21
Aithisg Bhliadhnail 2019/20, Buidseat ga Mholadh airson 2021/22 agus Aithris Sgrùdaidh Ràith 3 2020/21**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/04/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

In discussion, officers were commended on an excellent report and on the range of projects being supported by the Common Good Fund. The Ward Manager was thanked for his work in conjunction with Dornoch Area Community Council for the progress made towards the refurbishment of the Dornoch Square public conveniences.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/20;
- ii. **AGREED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund Annual Budget for 2021/22; and
- iii. **NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good Fund, as shown in the Q3 monitoring statement against budget.

**8. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 5 November 2020 and 14 December 2020 which were approved by the Council on 7 January 2021.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held remotely on Thursday 1 April 2021 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr R Gale

Mrs D Mackay

Mr J McGillivray

Mr H Morrison

Ms L Munro

Officials in attendance:

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Communities and Place

Ms P Betts, Leader and Development Officer, Infrastructure and Environment Service

Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Infrastructure and Environment Service

Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Performance & Governance

Mr R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Ms K Currie.

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

Item 3: Mr R Gale, Mrs D Mackay and Mr J McGillivray (non-financial)

**3. Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF) - Assessment of Applications
Maoin Choimhearsnachdan Cladaich na Gàidhealtachd Measadh Iartasan**

Declarations of Interest:-

Mr R Gale, declared a non-financial interest in the Go Golspie applications as a Director of Go Golspie Development Trust and he left the meeting for the determination of these applications.

Mrs D Mackay declared a non-financial interest in the East and Central Sutherland Citizen's Advice Bureau application as a Director of East Sutherland CAB and she left the meeting for the determination of this application.

Mr J McGillivray declared non-financial interests in the applications by the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC) and Dornoch Free Church as a Director of DACIC and a member of Dornoch Free Church and he left the meeting for the determination of these applications.

There had been circulated Report No SCC/05/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee was invited to consider all the applications presented for funding, taking into account the technical and RAG assessments set out in the report, and agree whether to approve, defer or reject the application, and agree which applications should receive a funding award from HCCF up to the value of the available area allocation.

The Chair advised this was a good news story for Sutherland, and he welcomed the opportunity to award funding of £700,407 to projects across the area and the thanked the officers for their work in bringing forward the report. He advised that the applications received reflected the level of work being undertaken in communities across the County and he commended all the volunteers involved. Unfortunately, Members were not in a position to approve all of the funding requests given the total value of the applications was well in excess of the funding allocation for Sutherland.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the maximum grant award be capped at £80,000.

Thereafter, the Committee considered the applications for Highland Coastal Communities Funding and **AGREED** as follows:-

Assynt Leisure - Cludgie project phase 2

APPROVED: £68,230.00

Helmsdale & District Development Trust - Multi Use Games Area

APPROVED: £19,298.00

Scourie Community Development Company - Scourie Rocks

APPROVED: £80,000

East and Central Sutherland CAB – Rural Recovery

APPROVED: £11,068.58

Members commented that while the level of funding applied for had been reduced, the CAB was encouraged to seek other sources of funding available to the organisation.

Clyne Heritage Society - Old Clyne School Redevelopment to Museum & Community Heritage Centre

APPROVED: £52,000

Members commented that while the level of funding applied for had been reduced at this stage, it was recognised the start date for the project was in the future and funding for the project was already in place. .

Brora Primary Parent Council – Community Play Park

APPROVED: £25,000

Members commented that while the level of funding applied for had been reduced, this award would enable the project to proceed and the Parent Council was encouraged to seek other sources of available funding.

Dornoch Area Community Interest Company - Dornoch South Car, Coach and Motorhome Park

APPROVED: £80,000

Kinlochbervie Community Company - Slow tourism for KLB (promotion)

APPROVED: £6,220.00

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust – Tourism Infrastructure

APPROVED: £71,678

Kinlochbervie Playing Field Association – Community Playing Field

APPROVED: £37,724

Skerry Harbour Association – Harbour Renovation

APPROVED: £10,000 for a time limited period of six months following which the application would be reviewed at a ward business meeting.

Skerry Village Hall – Refurbishment Project

APPROVED: £15,000

Assynt Foundation - Upgrading and Resurfacing of Single Track Road to Improve Public Access

APPROVED: £26,988.58 subject to a condition that the funding be used for passing places and signage.

Brora & District Action Group - Vision for Brora - Phase 2 (Fascally Park element)

APPROVED: £52,000

Members commented the level of funding applied for had been reduced in recognition that no match funding was in place at this stage and this award would allow the project to proceed.

Helmsdale & District Development Trust - Helmsdale Kitchen Garden/E-bikes

APPROVED: £4,200

Members commented that this award would cover the cost of the e-cargo bike and Members looked forward to a report in relation to the success of the four e-bikes on order.

Dornoch Free Church of Scotland - Dornoch Free Church Renovation - Phase 3

NO AWARD

Golspie Golf Club – Clubhouse Refurbishment

NO AWARD

Helmsdale & District Development Trust - Old Bank Building Renovation

NO AWARD

Plastic@bay – Tracking Plastic Pollution with Circular Economy

NO AWARD

Note:- Having declared an interest, the Chair left the meeting for consideration and determination of the following applications submitted by Go Golspie. The Vice Chair, Mr H Morrison, took the Chair for the determination of both applications.

Go Golspie – Golspie Youth Centre Restoration

APPROVED: £61,000

Go Golspie – Breakwater Restoration

APPROVED: £80,000

Thereafter, the Committee requested that in respect of those applications that had not been approved or the amount applied for reduced, the applicants be encouraged to apply to the next round of HCCF.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.