

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held remotely on 25 May 2021 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 & Governance  
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Policy & Reform  
Mr D Wood, Principal Housing Officer, Housing & Property  
Ms F Shearer, Area Education and Learning Manager, Education & Learning  
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure & Environment  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance & Governance

### **Also in attendance:**

Mr K Rodgers, Project Director, NHS Highland  
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**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There was a verbal update by the Project Director, NHS Highland, on the NHS Redesign project. The Project Director advised that the project continued to be progressed against the revised Covid-19 Plan and the scheduled handover date was 18 August 2021. He gave an update on work currently being progressed which included mapping out the patient journey, liaising with the existing workforce and recruitment, and softening the internal environment through the use of public art. Further information was provided on the redesign and investment of ongoing community services such as Care at Home, End of Life Care and Therapy Beds. With regard to Health Centres, he advised that work had started to increase the

footprint in Kingussie and Grantown had reached the stage of advanced planning. In conclusion, he advised that there would be an open weekend at the end of August 2021 whereby members of the public would be able to book an appointment to take a tour of the hospital prior to opening.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members welcomed that the project was nearing completion;
- During a query on the future use of Aviemore Health Centre, it was explained that NHS Highland was awaiting a response from the Council regarding this. It was requested that the ECO Performance & Governance and Ward Manager pursue this response;
- In terms of local schools providing art for the hospital, it was reported that the secondary schools had been involved and would be providing the glass manifestations but work would be undertaken with a view to involving primary schools;
- Concern was expressed at the removal of changing facilities from the new hospital but it was clarified that there would be provision for this within the accessible WC;
- The recruitment for district nurses and mental health officers was welcomed;
- Further information was sought on the independent sector contract and assurance sought that this would cover all aspects of care required;
- An update was sought and provided on the Radiology Services during which it was reported that assurance was being sought to ensure the provision of local X-ray facilities. It was indicated that it did not seem sensible for this service to be omitted given the high level of visitors to the area;
- In terms of in-patient entertainment, it was explained that most people had their own devices and that access was provided to a dedicated WIFI network for patients;
- It was confirmed that there would be 24 hospital beds in total with 20 being used in the first instance and four being retained for future proofing purposes; and
- It was confirmed that there was a multi-disciplinary approach to End of Life Care. Provision of this service along with support from hospices was commended.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation on the NHS Redesign and **AGREED** that the ECO Performance & Governance and Ward Manager pursue the response from the Council to NHS Highland regarding the future use of Aviemore Health Centre.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/06/21 dated 11 May 2021 by the Area Inspector.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Appreciation was expressed to the Police for their continued support;
- It was indicated that 2020 had been an extraordinary year and this should be borne in mind when making any future statistical comparisons;
- The Council had incurred expenditure as a result of a number of instances of vandalism, and although it did not excuse or condone this behaviour, it did emphasise the importance providing young people with positive options, such as of youth groups and activities, to do during their free time;
- Further information was sought and provided on the partnership working being undertaken to enhance the services and support to young people; and
- With regard to the increasing public anxiety in respect of drugs in the community, assurance was provided that this was a Police priority and that every effort was being made to address this issue.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020 – 2023 Year 1, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.

**5. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021**  
**Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2020 gu 31 Màrt 2021**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/07/21 dated 28 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Increasing rent arrears had been an ongoing concern. In comparing Quarter 4 2020/21 to the same period for the previous year, it was very similar and it was welcomed that the position had not further deteriorated;
- Further information was provided on the changed provision for Homelessness during which it was explained that due to the Scottish Government's Unacceptable Accommodation Order, Badenoch House could no longer be used for this purpose. It was explained that the Council did not have any surplus stock. Council stock was being used as temporary units and a flexible approach was being adopted to ensure that there was provision across the Badenoch and Strathspey area. In addition, Badenoch House was being developed into five self-contained units which should be available for use next year;
- Concern was expressed at tenants being evicted from the private rental market in order that the accommodation could be used for holiday lets. It was confirmed that demand on the housing waiting list had not increased; and
- The return of doorstep visits was welcomed. It was reported that there had been some isolated incidents of Anti-social Behaviour, mainly arising from pressures from lockdown, but that these had been managed.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## 6. Education Report - Badenoch & Strathspey Aithisg Foghlaim – Bàideanach & Srath Spè

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/08/21 dated 10 May 2021 by the Area Education and Learning Manager.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Further information was sought and provided on the steps being taken to ensure the local pupils were not being disadvantaged by the SQA assessment process;
- It was queried how many pupils had elected to repeat 6<sup>th</sup> year and the importance of ensuring that there was no stigma attached to this was emphasised. It was confirmed that this information would be circulated to the Committee;
- Assurance was provided that Members would be kept informed of the local programme of events for the 'Summer of Hope';
- Further information was sought on whether there were sufficient staffing levels to deliver the 1140 Early Learning Care provision. It was queried how many staff were being recruited in regard to this and this information would be sought and circulated to the Committee;
- Praise was expressed for the positive integration of pupils on returning to school but it was queried if there had been any instances of young people experiencing difficulty. Further information was provided on the support being provided in this regard; and
- It was queried whether there had been any uptake within the ward of the Government's STEM training scheme for Early Year practitioners. Further information would be provided on this to the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report, including the new format and **AGREED** that further information be circulated to the Committee on:-

- i. the number pupils electing to repeat 6<sup>th</sup> year;
- ii. the number of Early Years staff being recruited; and
- iii. whether there had been any uptake within the ward of the Government's STEM training scheme for Early Year practitioners.

## 7. Area Roads Programme 2021/22 Càradh Rathaidean Sgìre 2021/22

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/21 dated 5 May 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The increase in the capital programme was welcomed but there was a need for sustained investment in order to plan ongoing maintenance improvements;
- It was suggested, and supported, that a report should be submitted to a future Ward Business Meeting on implementing charges for on-street parking and that the revenue generated could be utilised to provide additional car parking; and

- Further information was sought and provided on whether there had been a need for extra emergency resource for drainage and gully cleaning.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed prioritised 2021/22 Roads Programme for Badenoch and Strathspey Area and **AGREED** that a report be submitted to a future Ward Business Meeting on implementing charges for on-street parking.

## 8. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 9 February 2021 which were approved by the Council on 25 March 2021.

The meeting was closed at 11.47pm.