

## **The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 11 November 2019 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 and Governance, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager (Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey), Chief Executive's Office  
Mr R Chapman, Station Manager, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service  
Mrs S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr G Munro, Policy & Assurance Officer, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

### **Also in attendance:**

Ms C Graham, Local Delivery Relationship Lead, Social Security Scotland (Item 3)

**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**

#### **Preliminaries**

Prior to commencing the meeting, the Chair welcomed Mrs K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance to the meeting and advised that she had been assigned responsibility for the geographical area of Badenoch and Strathspey in accordance with the new senior management structure.

Continuing, the Chair expressed disappointment at the brevity of the agenda despite the diligent efforts of the Ward Manager and praised the Housing Service and external partners for their continued support. He indicated that with the exception of Housing, there was a lack of commitment from all other Council departments to the localism agenda. He therefore proposed that there should be a complete programme of reports from all Council departments for the next year of Area Committee meetings and that this should be in place by the second week in January 2020 at the latest for approval. This programme would then be supplemented with ad-hoc Council reports as well as the valued contributions from external partners.

This proposal was fully endorsed by the Committee and it was further requested that there be a report from NHS Highland with regard to the new hospital that was being built in Aviemore. Concern was also expressed that Members were not updated in a timely manner on the changes that were taking place in early years learning.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that:-

- i. a programme of reports from all Council departments for the next year (2020) of Area Committee meetings, to be supplemented with ad-hoc Council reports and contributions from external partners, be prepared for approval by the second week in January 2020; and
- ii. a report be submitted to a future meeting from NHS Highland on the new hospital that was being built in Aviemore.

## **Business**

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

There were no apologies for absence.

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

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

Item 5 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

### **3. Presentation: Social Security Scotland Taisbeanadh: Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba**

There was a detailed presentation by Ms Catherine Graham, the Local Delivery Relationship Lead for Social Security Scotland, on the rollout of Social Security provision in Highland and how it would roll out in the Badenoch and Strathspey area. The presentation included an overview of the agency structure, the legislative duties, and outlined the different types of benefits currently available as well as the various methods of application. In addition, further information was provided on the need for localism, particularly given the unique geography of the Highlands, and collaborative working with local stakeholders to achieve improved access and maximise benefit take-up.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Further information was sought and provided on how Social Security Scotland was monitored and scrutinised;
- With regard to the Best Start Foods benefit, further assurance was provided that this initiative had been extended to include a wider range of foods;
- It was highlighted that the Highland Council and NHS Highland operated an integrated service using the lead agency model and it was queried whether there had been any link in with this partnership;
- It was suggested that consideration should be given to using Educational Wellbeing and Counselling Services as a means of signposting individuals to services and also utilising Ambassador packs to cascade information to local networks; and
- It was queried how many drop-in facilities were likely to be located across the Highlands.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that a copy of the presentation and Factsheets be circulated.

**4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report  
Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**16**/19 dated 17 October 2019 by the Group Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Further information was sought and provided in regard to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service working collaboratively with health care teams to provide additional support and an indication was sought as to when this service, Safe and Well Visits, would come to fruition;
- Last year had been a difficult year in regard to wildfires and it was queried whether any educational programmes would be undertaken in regard to this;
- Assurance was provided that Rapid Response Units had been rolled out across 14 areas within the Highlands and confirmation was also provided that Community Response Units were located at Carrbridge; and
- It was queried whether there were any plans to increase the availability of staffing within Aviemore, which was the most populated area, and whether the Community Response Unit staffing levels would be reinstated in Nethybridge.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the report.

**5. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019  
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean gu 30 An t-Sultainn 2019**

**Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council house tenant but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained in the room to participate in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**17**/19 dated 28 October 2019 by the Executive Chief Officer – Customer and Communities.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Praise was expressed in regard to the Tenant Participation walk arounds that had been held and any follow up reporting on this would be welcome;
- Further information was sought and provided in regard to current 'pinch points' across the area. In addition, it was further emphasised that there was a need to be supportive of adapted properties, which created flexibility to meet changing client needs and also long-term cost savings; and
- Overall the performance results were good and this was welcomed but the need to keep on top of rent arrears was emphasised.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019.

**6. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 19 August 2019 which were approved by the Council on 5 September 2019.

The meeting was closed at 11.41am.