

Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Black Isle Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 5 August 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam
Mrs J Barclay
Mr C Fraser

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager (Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth), Communities and Place
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Ms S Murdoch, Common Goods Fund Officer, Performance and Governance
Mr A Coyle, Corporate Communications and Engagement Officer, Performance and Governance
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Group Commander A McKinley, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr J Palmer, Black Isle Partnership

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

Item 8: Councillor G Adam (non-financial).

3. Appointment of Chair Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd

Councillor G Adam stated that as Chair of the previous Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Committee he remained Chair of this Committee.

Councillor C Fraser was unanimously appointed as Vice Chair.

4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn

There had been circulated Report No BI/001/21 dated 20 July 2021 together with the Black Isle Performance Report by the Local Group Commander for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

In relation to the ongoing incident, a serious fire between Tore and Muir of Ord at the Fettes Sawmill, two appliances had been in attendance and at this time there was no information on the cause of the fire but members would be updated when information became available.

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

- on a question on papers the Group Commander confirmed that the information requested, namely the statistical summary, at the end of the appendix to the report, had been provided and would continue to be provided;
- the striking reduction in false alarms was likely due to many people working from home. The Fire Service were still engaging with the stakeholders in reducing this further as any incident was one too many;
- there had been concern in the likely wild fires in the area this year, however there had not been as many as had been reported in the previous year. Although it was early days the new Wild Fire Strategy and Wild Fire Forum was of particular benefit. The information given to key landowners and stakeholders and put on social media with warnings to the community and with landowners requested not to undertake burning in their fields at high-risk times had proved beneficial. Unfortunately, the Fire Service had no enforcing authority to prevent people creating fires for barbecuing or for campfires in the wild, however the fire service would continue to engage with social media.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

5. Winter Maintenance Plan 2021/22 Obair-glèidhidh Geamhraidh 2021/22

There had been circulated Report No BI/002/21 dated 22 July 2021 by the Interim Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- on a question on the pressures in the service, this year has been particularly stressful for many of the staff. There were three agency drivers available and these agency workers would be taken on to cover the two vacancies in Greenhill and one in Tain;
- the Committee would like to see enhanced engagement within the community and one area would be in the clearing of footpaths;

- the Council would be hesitant to give a footway tractor to communities of unqualified people for gritting the pavements, however the service could arrange for grit bins, salt, yellow vests and shovels to be provided; and
- any group in the community wanting to get in touch can register as a community helper and this would then cover them for insurance purposes.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plans for the Black Isle.

6. Area Capital Programme 2021-2022 Prògram Calpa Sgìre 2021-2022

There is circulated Report No BI/003/21 dated 22 July 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- once a decision was made on the work to be undertaken at Braehead, the school bodies and councillors would be advised;
- the works carried out at Ordhill had been excellent, however further up the road the road was falling away and it was requested that this was investigated;
- the Bogallan junction was to be included in the minor capital improvement works – money had been earmarked for this work but unfortunately there was no timescale at present; and
- Members requested that an email be forwarded to the Head of Infrastructure to confirm the Bogallan junction works would be funded.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the progress on the 2021/22 Road Maintenance Programme for the Black Isle Area;
- APPROVED** the proposed 2021/22 Roads Maintenance Programme schemes funded by the Roads Ward Discretionary Budget following confirmation from the Head of Infrastructure that the Bogallan junction would be funded from the minor capital improvement works; and
- APPROVED** additional capital schemes funded from Capital Budget.

7. Common Good Funds Maoin Maith Choitchinn

There had been circulated Report Nos BI/004/21 – BI/005/21 dated 26 July 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

- Cromarty Common Good Fund BI/004/21
- Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund BI/005/21

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

**8. Black Isle Partnership: Representative to report on activity and future plans
Com-pàirteachas an Eilein Duibh: Riochdaire ri aithris air gnìomhachd is
planaichean an ama ri teachd**

**Declaraton of Interest: Councillor G Adam declared a non-financial interest
as a Director of the Black Isle Partnership.**

Mr Jon Palmer of the Black Isle Partnership gave a presentation on the recent, past and resilient future of the Black Isle Partnership.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- although a public debate at this Committee was not how the Highland Council Committees is allowed to operate, there were alternative methods of incorporating meaningful community engagement through community meetings or forums; and
- as Councillors there was a more rounded view of the pressures involved in the work of the Council officers.

Following discussion, Members thanked Mr Palmer for his presentation and all the volunteers for the excellent service they continue to give to the Black Isle. It was hoped there would be increased participation between the Highland Council, the Black Isle Community Councils and the Black Isle Partnership.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

**9. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Committee held on 14 April 2021 which were approved by the Council on 13 May 2021.

The meeting closed at 12:05 pm.