

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 9 November 2021 at 10.30 pm.

### **Present:**

Mr A MacKinnon  
Mrs A MacLean

Mr G Mackenzie

### **In attendance:**

Mr M Rodgers, ECO Property and Housing  
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager (Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth), Communities and Place  
Mr R MacLeod, Area Housing Manager, Property and Housing  
Mr D Martin, Area Care and Learning Manager  
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Planning and Environment  
Ms J Bain, Planner, Planning and Environment  
Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Property and Housing  
Ms S Lamb, EFF Regional Development Officer, Property and Housing  
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance

### **Also in attendance:**

Chief Inspector Kevin MacLeod, Police Scotland

Mr R McAulay, Peffery Way Association

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.**

Item 4 of the agenda was taken before item 3, and item 9 of the agenda was taken after Item 3, the minute however will remain in the original numerical order.

### **Business**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulans**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs M Paterson.

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

Items 5 and 6 – Mrs A MacLean (non-financial).

### 3. Police – Area Performance Summary Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No DSA/008/21 dated 26 October 2021 by the North Area Commander.

CI Scott MacDonald had been appointed as the North Area Commander. Until he was able to take up his post, Chief Inspector Kevin MacLeod would be covering the post in the interim with Inspector Ross as the area Inspector.

The Group Area Commander responded to comments as follows:

- the Promotion of NC500 Visitor Management is led by Highland Council, if the Police circulate any information it would be through their own social media channels and no costs incurred;
- the increase in stolen vehicles had been linked to one non-criminal incident and also one where there is dispute over arrangements for scrapping. The others are ongoing enquires;
- vandalism primarily involved youths, the detection rate across the area was not great as there were rarely any witnesses;
- there was a lengthy process involved in anti-social behaviour orders and often the issues had resolved by the time the order was in place;
- the majority of missing people are from looked after children or children from within the care system, liaisons with care homes had made a difference but this was an ongoing challenge; and
- there was a new team to be set up in Inverness whose primary focus would be on County Lines controlled substances and it was hoped that pro-active work would make a difference.

Mr M Rodgers, stated that there were shared challenges for the Police and the Council in relation to anti-social behaviour. The tenancy agreement was part of tenancy law so any sanctions were civil as opposed to criminal matters. In practice the Courts had a wide area of discretion where there was little that could be undertaken through the Housing Scotland Act. An issue had to be proven before an anti-social behaviour order could be made.

Mr R MacLeod, stated that Housing Services worked closely with Police Scotland on anti-social behaviour and cases going forward could be reviewed with decisions made on possible actions available. There was often a mutual element of dispute and a lot of work had to be undertaken to build an evidentiary case which relied heavily on witness accounts. There was an Anti-social Behaviour Inspector who took statements. Housing Officers can take action where there is a breach of the tenancy agreement.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 2, attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 01 April 2021 – 30 September 2021; and

- ii. Housing Services to work closely with Police Scotland on anti-social behaviour and cases going forward could be reviewed with decisions made on possible actions available.

#### **4. Peffery Way Association Comunn Slighe Pheofharain**

There was a presentation from the Peffery Way Association.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- there is no intention to close any other paths in the area. The plan is to link with then, namely Knockbain road path, Knockbain Farm path and the path to Knockfarrel from Fodderty;
- the Peffery Way path had kept the gradient as gradual as possible to enable greater accessibility for all;
- once the path was fully open, the route would enable children from Strathpeffer to cycle to school in Dingwall and discussions have been ongoing with schools;
- the entire route of the path benefited from access rights; and
- it was an aspiration to raise funds for a trishaw bicycle which could take two people with a bike pilot on the path. A great benefit for people who are lonely and not managing to get out.

The Committee thanked Mr McAulay, the Peffery Way Committee and the volunteers for their exceptional work in the development of the path.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

#### **5. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs A MacLean declared a non-financial interest as a family member was receiving improvements to their Council house but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/009/21 dated 1 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- the actual figure for non-emergency repairs can fluctuate depending on when a job is marked as complete. It was not necessarily the case over the long term that Ross and Cromarty was behind in all cases. Often material shortages, the type of repair and the type of houses delayed repairs. Housing Services can provide more detail on the backlog of repairs and this would be brought to the February Committee;

- Housing Services engage with housing support to ensure people are able to access information on affordable heat programmes and food packages etc which are linked into our management of rent arrears;
- in respect of implications on equality, poverty and climate change issues these would be worth reflecting on and would be brought to the attention of the Management Team and brought forward in the reporting to Committee;
- a figure for repairs carried out at first visit specifically for the Dingwall and Seaforth area would be taken back to Committee;
- we do contact tenants in advance and try to keep appointments. If access is not gained we do follow up visits and liaise with others who may have reported the repairs. In rare cases we have had to undertake a legal forced entry where there are health and safety concerns;
- rent loss through voids were trending up slightly, however over the last year we have had an increase in people moving and in Council house stock; and
- not always possible to tie everything back directly to the effects of covid, indirect effects such as access to, and availability of trades had an impact.

The Committee:

- NOTED** the report; and
- NOTED** that further detail on repairs would be brought to the next meeting; and
- NOTED** Housing Services would be asked for more detail on the backlog of repairs and this would be brought to the February Committee;
- NOTED** in respect of implications on equality, poverty and climate change issues these would be worth reflecting on and would be brought to the attention of the Management Team and brought forward in the reporting to Committee for housing and garages; and
- NOTED** a figure for repairs carried out at first visit specifically for the Dingwall and Seaforth area would be taken back to Committee.

## **6. Housing – Garages Taigheadas – Garaidsean**

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs A MacLean declared a non-financial interest as a family member rented a garage from the Council but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/010/21 dated 1 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer – Housing and Property.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- we do hear in communities about demolishing garages for parking, if the amenity of our estates was not appropriate and some action could be taken by removing garages to increase parking amenity it was certainly worth exploring;

- in relation to the repair of the Fraser Road garage mentioned, Housing Services will examine why it has not been repaired; and
- it was requested that an updated review report on garages be brought back to the next Committee.

Mr M Rodgers advised that a general review of the housing revenue capital stock was to be undertaken over the next two years and this could also look at garages and the level of investment required against the ongoing cost of the stock.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** that a report be brought back to the next committee on a review of garages;
- NOTED** in relation to the demolition of garages for parking, if the amenity of the Council's housing estates was not appropriate and some action could be taken by removing garages to increase parking amenity it was certainly worth exploring;
- NOTED** in relation to the repair of the Fraser Road garage mentioned, Housing Services will look into why it has not been repaired;
- NOTED** request for an updated review report on garages be brought back to the next Committee; and
- NOTED** that Mr M Rodgers had advised that a general review of the housing revenue capital stock was to be undertaken over the next two years and this could also look at garages and the level of investment required against the ongoing cost of the stock.

## 7. **Place Based Investment Fund – Proposed Investment Funds** **Maoin Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/011/21 dated 27 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer, Community Services.

The Committee **AGREED** to:

- invest in Village and Town Amenities and Maintenance - £80,000;
- invest in Playparks - £10,000 - Recognising the increased usage of open spaces and supporting local projects to improve play opportunities. Funding to be delegated to the Head of Community Support and Logistics; and
- support Business - £10,000 – to support the Business Community to establish formal representative groups funding to be delegated to the Highland Council's Development and Regeneration Team.

## 8. **Dingwall Common Good Fund** **Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Pheofharain**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/012/21 dated 26 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place and the Executive Chief Officer – Resources and Finance.

The Committee **NOTED** the updated information provided in the Dingwall Common Good Fund.

**9. Ross and Cromarty Educational Trust  
Urras Foghlaim Rois is Chromba**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/013/21 dated 26 October 2021 by the Area Care and Learning Manager.

There was an update on the covid status of schools in the area.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- it was not known where shares in the Trust were invested, details of investments would be brought back to a ward meeting;
- Members may remember that the trust had been modernised, approximately two years ago, under the Ross and Cromarty Committee to now refer to modern monetary awards;
- the Ross and Cromarty Trust was governed by an act of parliament, governed by the Ross and Cromarty Education Act 1961 and was now fully devolved to trustees. Under the terms of the multiple trusts within law we have very strict guidelines relating to capital and we are unable to make any alterations;
- we do rely on monitoring by finance, the Trust had last been reviewed two years ago when no real changes had been suggested; and
- trustees may wish to consider what we are investing in, for example, issues around sustainable companies or fossil fuels or arms and you may wish to scrutinise at some point.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** it was not known where shares in the Trust were invested, details of investments would be brought back to a ward meeting

**10. Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2  
Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/014/21 dated 8 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- Conon Bridge CB02 site – a Transport Assessment requirement will be added to the developer requirements for the site so if and when an application comes forward then this Assessment would have to look at the A835 junction and possible mitigation such as a speed limit reduction on the A835 but any such limit would be subject to Transport Scotland agreement and community support;

- CB07 is subject to a pre-application proposal and CB05 had a planning permission. The 2015 plan will be the 'approved development plan' for determining planning applications until the new plan is finished. The new plan will be a material consideration when it is issued at the start of next year;
- Dingwall – the flood bund around the Business Park is not adopted by the Council. Investigations have been carried out to see what works are required to bring the bund up to standard, the outcome is still awaited;
- Maryburgh – a Transport Assessment requirement will be added to the developer requirements for site MB04 so if and when an application comes forward then this Assessment would have to look at the capacity of the existing A862 junction and possible mitigation such as a new roundabout or T junction off the A862. It is very likely such a new junction would be required given the scale of the site and likely development;;
- Muir of Ord – content with the recommendations with a call under active travel for a better travel link to Dingwall;
- North Kessock – no comments; and
- Tore – no comments.

Mr R Campbell clarified that flood defences for the St Clements School site were not within the flood risk area.

The Committee:

- NOTED** the issues raised by respondents to the consultation on local/City committee-specific matters and agree the recommended responses to these issues both as detailed at **Appendix 1**;
- NOTED** the issues raised by respondents to the consultation on strategic matters and officer recommended responses both as detailed at **Appendix 2** and recommend to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee the local/City committee's view on these strategic matters;
- NOTED** additional supporting documents will accompany the publication of the Proposed Plan, including those outlined in section 3 of the report;
- NOTED** that minor presentational, typographical and other factual updates and changes will be made by officers, with any material changes to be agreed in consultation and agreement with the chair of the relevant committee(s) prior to publication;
- AGREED**, in line with government guidance, for the published Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan to be treated as a material planning consideration in making planning decisions and providing advice; and
- AGREED** the approach to consultation outlined in section 7 of this report.

#### **11. St Clement's School, Dingwall Sgoil Naomh Chliamhainn, Inbhir Pheofharain**

There was a verbal report by the Estate Strategy Manager including the following information:-

There had been two reports to Highland Council in June which had prioritised five school projects ahead of the wider review of the Capital Programme. There was a commitment that these would be prioritised for capital investment with a further report brought to Highland Council in September giving details on the full scope, timescale, associated cost and funding options of the projects. The report

in September identified a budget of £13 m for St Clements School. The timescale would be a minimum of three years so an indicative date of August 2025 for occupation was included in the report.

Discussions had been ongoing with the Planning Service for development at the Dochcarty Road site. Pre-planning advice had been received from the Planning Service and they indicated they would generally support an application on the site. Consultants are working with Roads and Transport on the wider road issues including visibility splays and speed limits.

The statutory consultation could take up to a year. A report is likely to be taken forward to the Education Committee in February 2022.

The first meeting of the stakeholder group was hoped to take place shortly when dates suited. Highland Council were now looking to employ a contractor to take the project design forward.

The Committee thanked the Estate Strategy Manager and asked that any slippage to the programme be notified immediately to Members.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **12. Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Assessment of Applications Maoin Coimhearsnachdan Cladaich na Gàidhealtachd – Measadh Iartasan**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/015/21 dated 27 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee **APPROVED** funding for the Dingwall Men’s Shed of £6,000 with a condition for evidence that the site was maintained in a tidy condition.

## **11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee held on 16 August 2021 which were approved by the Council on 9 September 2021.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm.