

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Economy and Infrastructure Committee** held Remotely on **Wednesday, 5 May 2021** at **10.30 am**.

### **Present:**

Mr R Balfour	Mr A MacInnes
Mr B Boyd	Mr W MacKay (am only)
Mr I Brown	Mr D MacLeod
Mrs C Caddick	Mr C Munro
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Rixson
Mr K Gowans	Mrs T Robertson
Mr J Gray	Mr P Saggars
Mr A Henderson	Mr A Sinclair (am only)
Mr D Louden	Ms N Sinclair

### **Non-Members also present:**

Mr G Adam	Mr J McGillivray
Mr R Bremner	Mr D Mackay
Mrs M Davidson	Mr C MacLeod
Mr J Finlayson	Mr D Macpherson
Mr R Gale	Mr H Morrison
Mr A Jarvie	Mrs M Paterson
Mr B Lobban	

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure & Environment  
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager  
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure  
Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration  
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport  
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager  
Mr A McCann, Economy and Regeneration Manager  
Mr F McGunnigle, City-Region Deal Programme Manager  
Mr M Mitchell, Service Finance Manager  
Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager  
Mr A Puls, Acting Environment Manager  
Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner  
Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer  
Ms L MacKellaich, Road Safety Officer  
Mr D Summer, Principal Transport Officer  
Ms J Sayer, Mechanical Design Engineer  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
Mrs O Bayon Committee Officer, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms Fiona MacBain, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

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

**Mrs T Robertson in the Chair**

## Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair informed Members of the sudden death of Mr I MacKay, a member of the Corran Ferry crew. Having lived and worked in Ardgour, he was a valued and popular employee and Members thoughts and condolences were sent to his family.

## 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 4 – Mr C Munro (non-financial)

Item 8 – Mr C Munro, Mr P Saggars and Mr D Louden (non-financial) and Mr A MacInnes (financial)

Item 9 – Mr A Jarvie (non-financial)

Item 10 – Mr C Munro (non-financial)

Item 18 – Mr D Rixson (non-financial)

Item 22 – Mr D Rixson and Mrs T Robertson (both non-financial)

### 3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Chair informed Members of a list of good news and outstanding achievements, which was **NOTED** by the Committee.

### 4. Economy and Infrastructure Capital Programme Update Fios às Ur mu Phrògram Calpa na h-Eaconamaidh is a' Bhun-structair

**Declarations of Interest – Mr C Munro declared a non-financial interest in this item as a close family member worked for a woodland management company which had previously bid successfully for funds from the Strategic Timber Transport Fund but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/13/2021 dated 6 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- progress with the Uig ferry terminal was welcomed, particularly the news that, if approved at the Transport Scotland Investment Decision Making Board on 25 May 2021, Transport Scotland would fund all the ferry infrastructure works through grant funding, with the Highland Council contribution being made up

through increased harbour dues determined when final out-turn costs were established. With reference to the recommendation to approve delegated authority to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment to both accept the offer of grant funding and then recommend the award of the construction contract, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy and Infrastructure Committee, it was suggested that the Economy and Infrastructure Committee Spokesperson for the Opposition also be consulted;

- confirmation was sought, and provided, that the Ardgour side of the A861 would be considered for a future bid to the Strategic Timber Transport Fund; and
- clarification was sought, and provided, on the design process for the Uig ferry terminal, with reference to possible damage as a result of adverse weather conditions during construction.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress made during the current financial year with the Economy and Infrastructure projects in the Council's Capital programme;
- ii. **APPROVED** that Tordarroch Bridge was added to the list of structures to be funded from the Bridges Retaining Walls and Culverts line of the approved Capital Programme included in appendix 1 of Report ECI/38/20;
- iii. **APPROVED** the delegated power to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment to accept the grant funding provided by Transport Scotland for Uig Ferry Terminal, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy and Infrastructure Committee;
- iv. **AGREED** the delegated power the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment to confirm the award of the Main Civil Infrastructure Works contract in line with the confirmation from the IDM Board on the approved budget and in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy and Infrastructure Committee, *and with the E&I Committee Spokesperson for the Opposition Group*; and
- v. **NOTED** the submission of bids to the Strategic Timber Transport Fund.

## 5. Service Plan 2021/22 Plana Seirbheis 2021/22

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/14/2021 dated 14 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the service plan was welcomed and the range and variety of tasks and priorities within it were highlighted. It was hoped the UK and Scottish Governments would permit flexibility on expenditure, if required, in light of Brexit and Covid-19;
- the categorisation of Highland in relation to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund was disappointing and work was required to secure access to funds for Highland communities. The need to develop data sets in relation to several of the criteria was important and a report on this would be presented to the Council in due course;
- information was sought, and provided, on the process for extending laybys and passing places;

- consideration should be given to forming an arms length organisation for the council's harbour and marine facilities to facilitate investment in the coming years and to allow them to be run on a more commercial basis;
- the options appraisal of new opportunities for public/school transport provision in Highland was welcomed; and
- the excellent work to reduce street lighting power consumption was praised.

The Committee **APPROVED** the draft Service Plan for 2021/22.

## 6. Strategic Roads schemes – Capital Allocation Sgeamaichean Rathaidean Ro-innleachdail – Riarachadh Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/15/2021 dated 23 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the report was welcomed, with particular reference to some of the road widening projects;
- concern was expressed at the money being allocated from a strategic roads fund towards the Infirmary Bridge in Inverness, when it was considered that only half the required sum should have been allocated. The extra half of the allocation could have been invested in roads projects, noting that the quicker money was invested in roads, the less expenditure would be required in the long term. Several other Members spoke in favour of the allocation to the Infirmary Bridge, citing its iconic status, its importance as part of an active travel route in Inverness, its current level of deterioration and the high cost of replacing it if the intended remedial work was not undertaken, with the planned works estimated to extend the lifespan of the bridge by 25 years;
- in relation to corporate communications about roads initiatives, a distinct sub-brand should be considered, and plans for increased communication and engagement were welcomed. It was explained the Council was using the hashtag #highlandroadsrecovery;
- the allocation for the Portree link Road was welcomed;
- it was confirmed that work was underway to purchase plant and equipment as early as possible and this was likely to be discussed by the Council in June 2021;
- it was suggested that £100k was not a significant sum towards active travel and information was provided of the level of benefit that could be achieved for this amount and that active travel was being built into development schemes whenever possible;
- a Members' seminar on roads' capital strategy was suggested; and
- the standard of recent road repairs in Caithness had been good and further acquisition of JCB-type pothole machines was urged.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the proposed distribution of the budget, including the inclusion of new build schemes, as part of the previously agreed strategic £7.4M capital allocation over the financial years 2021/22 – 2022/23;
- NOTED** that Engineers may require to amend the road surface treatment programme, as part of their delegated powers, according to road condition (including the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey), safety aspects

and working efficiency as more information becomes available over the two financial years;

- iii. **NOTED** that any underspend will be allocated by Engineers with a focus on providing more carriageway surface treatments, footway works, minor repairs on structures, vehicle restraint systems (safety barrier), signs, cattle grids and drainage and
- iv. **NOTED** the 2021/22 distribution of the Roads Revenue and Capital Budgets in Appendix A of the report.

## **7. Economic Recovery Strategy Update Plana Ath-shlànachadh Eaconamach**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/14/2021 dated 19 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the work undertaken on Covid-19 business grants, to support businesses across the Highlands, was welcomed;
- the broad themes of the report were endorsed and more detail in coming months was anticipated;
- information was sought, and provided, on the Council's central role in relation to cultural and natural heritage, with attention drawn to the link to tourism and the need for clear measurable actions with assistance from partners;
- the selection of the Council as a pilot area for a Land Use Partnership was welcomed and approximately £50k had been provided by the Scottish Government to support this. A further update would be provided in due course;
- detail was sought, and provided, on the uptake of the Highland Employment Recruitment Offer (HERO) scheme. To date, spread had mostly been achieved through word of mouth but as recruitment progressed, appropriate marketing would be undertaken;
- the Healthy Active Highland strategy was welcomed, with particular reference to delivering a future strategy for Long Distance Routes across the region; and
- there were certain economic recovery schemes, for example the work placements and graduate internships, which the Council itself was eligible to benefit from, though not all were suitable or appropriate.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the ongoing work to prepare the Economic Recovery Strategy; and
- ii. the early positive uptake of the Highland Employment Recruitment Offer (HERO) and approve an allocation of up to £1m over financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 from the Economic Prosperity Fund to continue to enable the grant scheme to support businesses to create new jobs for unemployed adults.

## **8. Coastal Communities Fund Update Fios as Ùr mu Mhaoin nan Coimhearsnachdan Cladaich**

**Declarations of Interest – The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item relating to groups which had received an award from the Coastal Communities Fund, but, having applied the test outlined in**

**Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interest did not preclude their involvement in discussion:**

- **Mr C Munro - a trustee of a community trust which received an award from the Coastal Communities Fund, for which part of the application involved the installation of EV charging points**
- **Mr D Louden – Director of the Tain Heritage Trust**
- **Mr P Saggars – Director of Nairn BID**

**Mr A MacInnes declared a financial interest in respect of his interests within the seafood industry and as a director of organic sea harvest where he paid the Crown Estate on an annual basis for various marine leases and therefore contributed towards the coastal communities fund and would not participate in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/17/2021 dated 22 April 2021 by Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to an evaluation/review of the HCCF programme prior to the next tranche of funding being made available locally. This should be brought back to E&I Committee;
- ii. to make an open call for strategic projects i.e. projects that can clearly demonstrate a wider benefit than within their local Area Committee geography. Also, as agreed at Council in September 2020, Members are asked to agree that local areas can bid into this pot for additional top up support for approved or deferred local area projects where there has been over-demand from their first local area allocation round. No one area will be able to access more than 50% of the funds available; and
- iii. to **RECOMMEND** to the Council Option 1 from the report as a suitable mechanism to deliver the functions required from the two options proposed, namely that the Chair and Vice Chair of E&I Committee along with the Chair of each Area Committee form a sub-committee to undertake the functions outlined above.

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## **9. Inverness and Highland City Region Deal Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Chùmhnant Baile Roinne Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Council appointed Director of High Life Highland but, as a Council appointee and in terms of the specific exclusion in Section 5.18 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, confirmed that he would remain and take part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/18/2021 dated 14 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in response to a query about how any digital network coverage gaps would be filled, this would be known once the new plan of work for R100 was published.

Various alternative technologies to fill any gaps in coverage would then be discussed with partners; and

- information was sought on the prospect of resolving land remediation issues at Longman, Inverness, and whether there was flexibility to reallocate the funding. Prospects for a resolution were optimistic and any reallocation would require a new business case and would likely be a lengthy process.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress with the City Region Deal during the final quarter of 20/21.

## **10. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Network – Tariff Introduction** **Lionra Bun-structair Charbadan Dealain – Toirt A-steach Cosgais**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr C Munro declared a non-financial interest in this item as a trustee of a community trust which received an award from the Coastal Communities Fund, for which part of the application involved the installation of EV charging points, but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/19/2021 dated 29 March 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in response to a query on whether the intention of charging was to cover costs or to generate revenue, it was explained that the charges were intended to cover the cost of the electricity and manpower, with any surplus to be re-invested in the network. The rate was intended to avoid undercutting commercial providers and to encourage people to charge at home if they had the option. Once tariffs had been introduced, data would be collected on usage to drive future policies. Until recently, all charging points had been provided through external funding and, going forward, this was not sustainable;
- at the time the report was compiled, approximately 10 of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities had introduced charges, with more anticipated to start;
- it was suggested that to start with, cost recovery only should be considered;
- information was sought, and provided, on the challenges being experienced with the charging point in Achnasheen, which was not yet operational due to as yet unresolved land ownership issues;
- it was important to encourage more commercial operators, particularly near other facilities to give people activities to participate in while their vehicles were charging. A summary was provided of related initiatives;
- it was important to consider charging regimes being used in the rest of the UK, not only in Scotland, and reference was made to the usefulness of the filling station network;
- communication in relation to the introduction of charging was important and reference was made to the inclusion of Highland on the ChargePlace Scotland website, which was Scotland's national Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network. A press release would be issued after the meeting; and
- concerns in relation to specific charging points could be addressed outwith the meeting.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that Highland Council EV charge points are currently free to use;
- ii. **NOTED** the business justification as laid out in this paper;
- iii. **APPROVED** the introduction of a tariff as of 01 June 2021 in order to:-
  - alleviate an existing revenue pressure through the provision of free charging;
  - bring Highland Council tariff charging policy in line with other Scottish Local Authorities; and
  - ensure vital income to maintain low carbon transport connectivity assets for, and to, our city and rural communities.

## **11. Highland Biodiversity Action Plan - Council Commitments Plana Gnìomh Bith-iomadachd na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/20/2021 dated 16 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- concern was raised regarding the strain on resources for Highland Council to engage and develop the Biodiversity Action Plan due to its diversity and complexities;
- the inclusion of the British Dragonfly Society within the partners and stakeholders was recommended as they were very active in Scotland and would be a welcome addition;
- Members recognised the high economic benefit of fish farming in Scotland. However, to ensure the sustainability of native wild species, it was requested that a review of the possibility of land locked fish farms be investigated as a preference;
- it was imperative to engage the reports' key messages with highland communities including young persons in education;
- measures in place to protect green space, despite large numbers of housing applications, within the planning policies were welcomed; and
- the inclusion of allotments was requested within the embed outdoor and nature activities section of the report.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the proposed Council commitments in Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026;
- ii. **NOTED** any additional Council commitments Members would wish to see included within Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026; and
- iii. **APPROVED** and adopt the commitments outlined in Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026.

## **12. National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement Response and Refined Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy Freagairt Aithris Suidheachaidh Frèam Dealbhaidh Nàiseanta 4 agus Ro-innleachd Spàsail Roinneil Taisbeanach Grinnichte na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/21/2021 dated 12 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- in response to a query it was confirmed that the Highland Council's submissions to Scottish Government on NPF4 (including our response to the Position Statement and our Refined Highland IRSS, forming Appendices 1 and 2 to the report respectively), were available on the website;
- the consideration of freeport or greenport within the iRSS and submission as part of National Planning Framework 4 was clarified and supported; and
- Members commended officers involved in producing the report.

Thereafter, the Committee

- i. **APPROVED** by homologation the response that was submitted to Scottish Government's NPF4 Position Statement at Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the homologation of the refined version of the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy that was submitted to Scottish Government at Appendix 2 of the report; and
- iii. **NOTED** the anticipated next steps and timeline for engagement in NPF4 and for future Regional Spatial Strategy duties

### **13. Flow Country World Heritage Site Nomination – Accountable Body Ainmeachadh Làrach Dualchas na Cruinne airson Dùthaich nam Flòbhaichean – Buidheann Chunntachail**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/22/2021 dated 24 March 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- consideration should be given to the inclusion of Gaelic terminology and place names;
- the acknowledgement of the potential increase of “slow” tourism in highland was welcomed; and
- clarification was sought and provided, regarding the implications of being an accountable body for the FCWHS.

Thereafter, the Committee

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to support a request for the Highland Council to act as one of the Accountable Bodies for the Flow Country UNESCO World Heritage bid submission.

### **14. Climate Change Programme Alignment Co-thaobhadh Prògram Atharrachadh Gnàth-shìde**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/23/2021 dated 12 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- disposal of high consuming assets which were no longer required was recognised as one of the easiest ways to reduce corporate emissions;
- the targeted improvement of older buildings which were not performing as they should to achieve carbon net zero was emphasised;
- delays in woodland planting would lower the rate of sequestration by 2045;
- the importance of progressing planting mini forests to trial an innovative approach in restoring biodiversity in local communities was stressed; and
- attention was drawn to the Scottish Government challenge fund for supporting district heat networks.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the contents of the report; and
- AGREED** to support the arrangement of a Member workshop to present the outcomes of the Programme Alignment report, discuss options for the setting of a corporate net zero target date and then seek approval of a net zero target date at Full Council.

## **15. Consultation on Free Bus Travel for Under-19s Co-chomhairle mu Shiubhal Bus An-asgaidh dhaibhsan fo Aois 19**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/24/2021 dated 6 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the importance of ferries servicing islands and remote communities was welcomed within the report;
- concern was raised regarding safety implications of children lone travelling on buses;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding any ongoing cost liability for the Council in the long term by extending free bus travel scheme to people aged under 19; and
- achieving better services for rural areas by working together with Transport Scotland and COSLA was emphasised.

Thereafter, the Committee

- AGREED** to homologate the consultation response submitted on 7 December 2020;
- NOTED** that discussions are continuing between COSLA, ATCO and Transport Scotland on the implications for school transport; and
- AGREED** that a further report be brought to the Committee on the implications of the proposal after the Scottish Government's response to this consultation was published.

## **16. 20 MPH Schemes – Proposed programme following Grant Awarded Sgeamaichean 20 MSU – Prògram ga mholadh às dèidh Tabhartas Fhaotainn**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/25/2021 dated 16 April 2021 by Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- communities across Highland were eager to see 20mph schemes in built up areas rolled out and reference was made to the comprehensive approach adopted by Borders Council;
- a blanket approach would involve significant resource implications;
- with the funding available 20mph schemes could be provided in 30 communities across Highland;
- a suggestion was made that there should be a default position whereby all built up areas should have a 20mph scheme with any increase being an exception;
- on average it took 58 weeks to deliver a scheme and, if the current approach continued, this would mean it would be decades for the scheme to be delivered in all communities;
- there was irrefutable evidence supporting the reduction of speed limits and the reduction in the degree of severity of injuries as a result of any impact. In determining where 20mph schemes should be introduced it was wrong to rely on collision data and a preventative approach was preferable;
- Members were reminded that the full Council had agreed the implementation of 20mph speed limits in Badenoch and Strathspey; and
- recent advice from legal had outlined that the use of COVID regulations to implement temporary 20mph limits was no longer appropriate and therefore any new 20mph limits had to be implemented with permanent Traffic Regulation Orders. However, clarification on this point had been sought.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- AGREED** that up to £200,000 of the Council's Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes 2021/22 grant award was allocated to the delivery of a new Council 20mph programme and 10% of this annual budget was used in future years;
- APPROVED** that an appropriate Assessment Criteria, similar to that detailed in Appendices B and C of the report, for the prioritization of schemes for a new Council wide 20mph programme was used;
- AGREED** that the outstanding 4 schemes from the previous Council programme, namely Invergordon, Tain, Kingussie and Maryburgh, were reassessed using the new criteria as this would include utilization of recent collision data;
- AGREED** that Highland Council continue to lobby through CoSLA for the implementation of the National 20mph Restricted Roads Bill;
- AGREED** that Highland Council adopted a policy of supporting 20mph limits in all urban and rural areas in line with current guidance set out in 4.1 of the report, with the focus being on benefitting active travel users; and
- AGREED** to bring a report to the next Economy and Infrastructure Committee or Full Council, whichever was deemed appropriate, to consider revised proposals to substantially increase and accelerate the introduction of reduced 20mph limits schemes in consultation with local communities and that this report would include a revised Assessment Criteria which placed more emphasis on the needs of local communities and relied less on collision data.

## **17. Public and School Transport Contracts Cùmhnantan Còmhdhail Phoblach is Sgoile**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/26/2021 dated 5 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to the extension of existing public and school transport contracts until 31 December 2022, where agreement of contractors could be secured; and
- ii. that officers determine which (if any) contracts should not be offered for extension, taking account of short-and longer-term cost expectations on individual routes, and discussions with operators.

## **18. Bus Service Improvement Partnerships and Bus Partnership Fund Com-pàirteachasan Leasachaidh Seirbheis Bus agus Maoin Chom- pàirteach Bhusaichean**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr D Rixson declared a non- financial interest in this item as the Council’s representative to the Lochaber Environmental Group but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/27/2021 dated 19 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

Having highlighted the importance of also lobbying for revenue funding, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to the Council initiating a Bus Service Improvement Partnership;
- ii. **APPROVED** the outline Bus Service Improvement Partnership Plan as a basis for consultation and further development;
- iii. **AGREED** to delegate powers to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment in consultation with the Vice and Vice chair and the Economy and Infrastructure Committee Spokesperson for the Opposition Group to agree the content of a draft BSIP Plan and Schemes as they were developed for consultation;
- iv. **AGREED** to homologate the Bus Partnership Fund Phase 1 applications which had been submitted to Transport Scotland; and
- v. **NOTED** that Phase 2 applications to the Bus Partnership Fund would be required by 15 October for schemes which were accepted at Phase 1.

## **19. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings as follows:-

- i. South Planning Applications Committee held on 8 December 2020, 3 February 2021, and 9 March 2021 – **NOTED**;
- ii. Harbours Management Board held on 26 February 2021 – **APPROVED**; and
- iii. North Planning Applications Committee held on 26 January 2021 and 2 March 2021 – **NOTED**.

## **20. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a’ Phobail**

The Council **AGREED** to resolve that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the

following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

## **21. Property Transactions Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/28/2021 dated 14 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, Members highlighted the need in some areas for affordable housing but where often properties were sold as second homes. To avoid Council properties being sold as second homes in such areas the Head of Regeneration and Development was asked to consider how this might be controlled and to report back to a future Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the monitoring statements for General Fund and Property Account transactions as approved by the Head of Development & Regeneration under delegated authority as well the Budgeted Sales for 2021/2022 and beyond; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a report to be submitted to a future Committee on how Rural Housing Burden might restrict the sale of Council properties for holiday homes.

## **22. Housing Development Initiatives Iomairtean Leasachaidh Taigheadais**

**Declarations of Interest - Mr D Rixson and Mrs T Robertson declared non-financial interest in this item as the Council's representatives on the Lochaber Housing Association and Highland Housing Association respectively.**

**Having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Mrs Robertson concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

**Mr Rixson confirmed that he would take no part in the discussion and left the meeting.**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/29/2021 dated 26 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.