

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held remotely on Tuesday 9 November 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Ms P Hadley
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Ms K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Mr D Wood, Principal Housing Officer, Housing and Property
Mr E McIntosh, Localism and Engagement Coordinator, Communities and Place
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance
Miss M Zavarella, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr G Miles, Head of Strategic Planning, Cairngorms National Park Authority (Item 3)
Mr M Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development, Cairngorms National Park Authority (Item 3)
Inspector V Tough, Police Scotland (Item 4)

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

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 3 – Ms P Hadley (financial)
Item 6 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

3. Cairngorms National Park Authority: Consultation on the National Park Partnership Plan Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh: Co-chomhairle mu Phlana Com-pàirteachais na Pàirce Nàiseanta

Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to take part in the discussion.

There was a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) on the consultation on the National Park Partnership Plan. During the presentation, Mr Miles reviewed the role and aims of the Park Authority along with the steps of the process for the National Partnership Plan 2022-2027. It was highlighted that the consultation process was underway and they were encouraging as many people as possible to engage.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- partnership working between the Council and the CNPA had vastly improved in recent years and it was hoped that this was a mutual perspective;
- appreciation was expressed for the presentation and the evaluation of the responses to the consultation were highly anticipated;
- in response to a question about local responses to the consultation compared to those of visitors, it was explained that there was no particular mechanism to differentiate these responses and the focus would be on the quality and depth of responses rather than the quantity;
- information was sought, and provided, on the influence of COP26 and initiatives within the CNPA. It was highlighted that it was premature to understand the influence at this stage however, the enthusiasm around COP26 was timely for the consultation work around the Partnership Plan and based on pre-consultation feedback it was clear that addressing the climate challenge and biodiversity was important to people;
- it was hoped that the responses to the consultation would show the importance of affordable housing as it was futile to address employability if there was insufficient affordable housing in the area and this was one of the most important pieces of work that had to be done; and
- Members were encouraged to become involved in the consultation process and to encourage others to do so.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that a copy be circulated to Members.

In accordance with Standing Order 9, the Committee **AGREED** to proceed with the agenda and to return to item 4 on the agenda once the Area Commander was able to join the meeting.

5. Community Asset Transfer: Burnfield Public Toilets and Car Parking, Grantown on Spey
Iarrtas Gluasad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd: Taighean-beaga Poblach is Parcadh Chàraichean Burnfield, Baile nan Grandach

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**18**/21 dated 14 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- clarification was sought on whether the purpose of use, provision of public convenience, would remain if the property was sold and who would be responsible for the water supply;
- appreciation was expressed to staff for the work undertaken in respect of the project; and

- the project was welcomed and it was indicated that community toilets were often maintained to a very high standard.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. that clarification be sought on:-
 - a. in the event the property was sold, there would not be a change of use and it would continue to remain as provision for public convenience;
 - b. Grantown Initiative would be responsible for all utilities which would include water supply; and
- ii. the sale of Burnfield public toilets with a footprint of approximately 210 sqm of land to Grantown Initiative for £1, if asked. Terms of transfer to include:
 1. There was a right of pre-emption to Seafield Estates and the Council's ability to sell was conditional on Seafield Estates not taking up the pre-emption;
 2. Toilets were to remain available for use as a public convenience (an existing burden on the legal title for the property);
 3. Highland Council reserves rights for drainage inspection and repair;
 4. Grantown Initiative covers all reasonably incurred property and legal costs associated with the asset transfer process – both the Council's and its own;
 5. Should Grantown Initiative seek to sell the property, Highland Council reserves a right of pre-emption for market value at the time of the event; and
 6. Any other terms to be agreed by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place in consultation with the Area Committee Chair.

6. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 30 September 2021
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean gu 30 An t-Sultainn 2021

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 to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/19/21 dated 26 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, further information was requested on the number of tenants that were living in accommodation that was too small and further information was provided on how this key challenge was being addressed. It was indicated that Badenoch and Strathspey did not have a large housing stock and therefore the only way to overcome this was to build more housing and to ensure that this comprised of a range of different types and size of accommodation to suit the needs of the area. In conclusion, staff were commended for their efforts which had been reflected in the excellent performance results set out in the report.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**20**/21 dated 19 October 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the team was commended for the delivery of the Roads Programme and ensuring that the budget was committed and spent;
- a request was made for clear messaging to the public in respect of what/where the Winter Maintenance Plan covered; and
- discussions with the Strategic Timber Transport Authority were welcome but the need to recover this funding was emphasised. Further information was provided on the lack of officer time to progress projects more speedily but confirmation was provided that work was being undertaken to secure funding for the Boat of Garten Sawmill Link road and the B970 road.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress achieved with the prioritised 2021/22 Roads Programme for the Badenoch & Strathspey Area.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**17**/21 dated 26 October 2021 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Members expressed appreciation for the update;
- information was sought, and provided, on the ongoing training for police around hate crimes and terrorism and also on the use of drug wipes;
- further information was sought on the use of the non-emergency contact telephone number (101) in the area; and
- in response to a question about drug driving offences, the process to determine levels of drug use in a person's system was explained. It was also confirmed that following testing, a full analysis could be provided of the types and level of drugs contained in the person's system.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020 – 2023 Year 2, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2021 – 30 September 2021.

8. Badenoch & Strathspey Ward Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations Maointean Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite Uàrd Bhàideanach is Shrath Spè – Riarachaidhean Maoineachaidh gam Moladh

In accordance with Standing Order 8, this item was presented as urgent on the basis that Committee approval was required to establish the Ward Place Based Investment Fund and enable the funds to be allocated/committed within the current financial year.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/21/21 dated 3 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, confirmation was provided that a press release was being prepared in order to inform the public of the fund and seeking expressions of interest. It was emphasised that the press release should use plain English/language and encourage innovative projects to come forward.

In terms of criteria, it was explained that projects had to address the four harms of Covid and focus on recovery. With regard to the funding, it was clarified that the Place Based Investment Programme was capital funding that would be in place for five years thus enabling a phased approach to deliver projects. However, the current funding tranche (£129,222) had to be contractually committed by the end of the current financial year.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that the remaining balance of the Ward Place Based Investment fund be combined with the Place Based Investment Programme funding to create a challenge fund for Badenoch and Strathspey focusing on community regeneration projects; and
- ii. **NOTED** that reports would be brought back to the Committee as required for future budget allocation in terms of the projects identified.

9. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

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

The meeting concluded at 11.45am.