

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 7 February 2022 at 12 noon.

Present:

Mr A MacKinnon
Mrs A MacLean

Mr G Mackenzie
Mrs M Paterson

In attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, ECO Property and Housing
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager (Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth), Communities and Place
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure
Mr R MacLeod, Area Housing Manager, Property and Housing
Mr C Sharp, Repairs Manager, Property and Housing
Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Property and Housing
Mr A Webster, Principal Regeneration Officer
Mr A Coyle, Corporate Communications and Engagement Officer, Performance and Governance
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Group Manager R Dibble, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Dr E Robertson, Project Manager at the Science Skills Academy, Dingwall Newton Room

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/001/22 dated 24 January 2022 together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- UFAS, the Unwanted False Alarm Signals policy is triggered in stages,
 - Stage 1- normal attendance,
 - Stage 2 – 5 + incidents in 3 months
 - Stage 3 – 10+ incidents in 6 months
 - Stage 4 – 20 + incidents in 9 months.The fire service will continue to monitor number of incidences and work with the premises to reduce the quantity of false alarms;
- the first female recruit in Dingwall joined the Crew in September following successful completion of her initial training course;
- there had been occasional pinch points with traffic congestion at the station due to the Covid-19 testing, this had been managed locally and resolved. The fire service were more than happy to continue to help during the covid outbreak;
- the home fire safety checks had been impacted due to the Covid-19 restrictions, however checks were still being carried out amongst high-risk groups;
- the new smoke detector legislation has had an impact on the supply and fitting of linked smoke detectors. The Service is still continuing to conduct visits to High Risk premises and fit detection as necessary; and
- in relation to anti-social behaviour, the fire service join in the Safer Ross Committee who meet weekly with the police. In terms of visiting schools and nurseries these had been impacted due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The Committee thanked staff for being at the forefront of keeping everyone safe.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

4. **Dingwall Newton Room, Science Skills Academy – Presentation Seòmar Newton Inbhir Pheofharain, Acadamaidh Sgilean Saidheans – Taisbeanadh**

There was a presentation by Dr Emma Robertson, Project Manager of the Science Skills Academy at the Dingwall Newton Room.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- there was to be a visit by the MSP Kate Forbes which would trigger a Press Release, unfortunately the visit had been postponed several times due to the Covid-19 restrictions. A press release in advance of the official launch is now being considered;

- a virtual tour of the premises for local people to see the work of the Skills Academy was an excellent idea and this would be investigated, pending on Covid-19 restrictions;
- happy to arrange a visit from Councillors to view the Newton Room;
- feedback for the facility had been excellent and feedback would be distributed to Members; and
- the Stem Engagement Officer would continue to work with schools to encourage all schools to visit the Skills Academy. The uptake from schools had been very good.

The Committee thanked Dr Robertson for her presentation and wished her well as the project developed.

5. Housing – Garages Taigheadas – Garaidsean

There had been circulated Report No DSA/002/22 by the Executive Chief Officer - Housing and Property dated 1 February 2022.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- extensive works on the subsidence and ground works at Chestnut Road and Millbank Road was to be undertaken;
- a site meeting with Councillors would be arranged to visit the Fraser Road garages;
- repairs would be prioritised to void garage in areas where there was demand for the garages;
- the process for reporting garage repairs was the same as the process for reporting repairs to Council houses and this was through the service centre;
- specific garage sites would be brought to the Members Weekly Business Meeting for discussion; and
- once garages were demolished and marked out as parking these would be removed from the list of garages.

The Committee **AGREED** a 1% rent increase to apply to Dingwall and Seaforth garages and garage sites.

6. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No DSA/003/22 by the Executive Chief Officer dated 1 February 2022.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- the relet times for Council houses due to Covid-19 restrictions had reduced from a 72 hour restriction on entry to 24 hours;
- there had been ongoing challenges for repairs due to people in isolation and the availability of contractors, the performance however was still very good and improving;

- the call centre had pressures due to Covid-19 restrictions and call centre staff having to isolate; and
- sub-contractors were in place for complaints in relation to damp, the contractors then reported any works required to both the tenant and the Maintenance Officer and the works relating to repairs required were undertaken.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

7. Dingwall Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Pheofharain

There had been circulated Report No DSA/004/21 dated 31 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place and the Executive Chief Officer – Resources and Finance.

The Committee:

- NOTED** the Dingwall Common Good Fund Annual Report for 2020/21;
- NOTED** after scrutiny the position of Dingwall Common Good Fund as shown in the 2021/22 Quarter Three monitoring statement; and
- APPROVED** the proposed budget for 2022/23.

8. Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations Maoin Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite

There had been circulated Report No DSA/005/22 dated 26 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place.

Members had talked through these allocations at length during Ward Business Meetings.

The Committee **AGREED** the proposed allocations of Place Based Investment Funds as follows:

- Muir of Ord Development Trust in collaboration with Maryburgh Amenities Company – The Clean and Green Initiative: £35,000;
- The Dingwall Community Development Company – The Clean and Green Initiative: £30,000;
- The remaining funds of £15,000 to be used to support any further applications received for Village and Town Amenities and Maintenance.

9. St Clement’s School, Dingwall Sgoil Naomh Chliamhainn, Inbhir Pheofharain

There was a verbal report by the Estate Strategy Manager. A report would go to the Education Committee on the 24 February 2022 and this would start the consultation for the relocation of the school to the new site. The stakeholder meeting would then be held on 7 March 2022. Following the report to the Education Committee a press release would be issued to give reassurance on progress.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

10. Place Based Investment Programme Prògram Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite

There had been circulated Report No DSA/006/22 dated 24 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Place Based Investment Programme was not the Town Centre Regeneration Fund and all areas were eligible to apply.

The Committee **AGREED** to invest £140,777 in the refurbishment of Dingwall Town Hall.

11. Area Roads Capital Programme 2022/23 Prògram Calpa Rathaidean Sgìreil 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No DSA/007/22 dated 11 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- many of the rural roads in our area have not been engineered and were little more than cart tracks that have been widened and surfaced, the heavier HGVs on our roads caused a lot of damage;
- the Seaforth Road and Distillery Bends roadworks are due to be completed this financial year;
- the disaggregation of Capital budgets within Ross and Cromarty to the individual areas would be welcomed;
- the damage to the road at the bottom of Kinnairdie Brae would be included in the Kinnairdie Brae/Craig Road works;
- the Knockfarrel road would be completed this year;
- the Heights of Dochcarty works included the surface dressing for Stoneybrae; and
- the Kinnairdie Brae works would likely be undertaken during school holidays to minimise the traffic impact and would likely involve a road closure with the necessary consultations.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2022/23 Area Roads Capital Programme for Dingwall and Seaforth Area.

12. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee held on 9 November 2021 which were approved by the Council on 10 December 2021.

The meeting closed at 2.10 pm.