

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 26 April 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mrs I Campbell
Dr I Cockburn

Mr A MacInnes
Mr D MacLeod

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr D Martin, Area Care and Learning Manager
Ms H Cameron, Early Learning Commissioner
Mr D Esson, Area Care and Learning Manager – West Area
Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North), Property and Housing
Ms F Cameron, LEADER and Development Programme
Ms W Anderson, LEADER and Development Manager
Miss S Tarrant, Corporate Communications and Engagement Officer, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector Wilson, Police Scotland
Inspector R Ross, Police Scotland

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 Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 14 January 2021 which were approved by the Council on 25 March 2021

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

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/007/21 dated 1 April 2021 by the North Area Commander. Chief Inspection Jamie Wilson advised that Inspector Richard Ross had replaced Inspector Kevin MacLeod who was on secondment for 7 months.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

Policing of on-line and email fraud was difficult. Fraud was rife across the country with an increase during the Covid 19 restrictions. Police Scotland had a Prevention and Intervention department that monitor, detect and maximise the warning messages to the public. Police Scotland asked that each and every case is reported so each case can be identified and preventative measures taken. The Prevention and Intervention Department within Police Scotland could maximise messaging by informing Community Councils within the area of ongoing email fraud to enable them to add warnings to their websites to better inform the general public.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. Progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 1, attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 01 April 2020 - 31 January 2021
- ii. Police Scotland to inform Community Councils of ongoing email fraud to enable them to add warnings to their websites to better inform the general public.

4. Early Years provision in WRSL – Delivery and Construction Solar Thràth-bhliadhnaichean ann an WRSL – Libhrigeadh agus Togail

There were verbal reports by the Area Care and Learning Managers. Mr D Martin commended Hayley Cameron's work in relation to expansion of hours in Early Years provision. There was an agreement with the community in Strathpeffer where significant funding would go to the community centre for early years expansion.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:

- discussions regarding the future use of the Lochcarron demountable building had been ongoing but the future use had yet to be decided;
- in relation to Shieldaig a meeting would be arranged once findings on bat activity at the school had been delivered. There had been communications with the parents and confirmation on the bat activity was awaited. There was specific advice relating to the bats and there would be a delay to the works if the bats were active; and
- the anticipated date for completion of the Gairloch nursery was December this year.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

5. Education Overview Foir-shealladh Foghlaim

There was a verbal report by Don Esson.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- The last inspection report for Badcaul Primary had been in December 2017. As Badcaul Primary had had no youngsters in the nursery, the nursery was not in operation and therefore there had been no reports; and
- Ullapool High School was working at 35% roll capacity. Pupils going on to higher education stood at 32% when the average in Scotland was 40%. In rural schools, particularly in the West, the employment figures which were linked to tourism, tended to be very high in comparison to others, although this did fluctuate from year to year.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

6. Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/008/21 dated 22 March 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning which provides an update of key information in relation to the schools within the Ullapool Associated School Group (ASG).

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

7. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/009/21 dated 31 March 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer – Housing and Property which provides Members with information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators during the period up to 31 December 2020.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- in relation to the house at Plockton, there had been a follow up call with Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association who were managing the project and the tender had gone out. Only one bid had come back which was significantly higher than anticipated. Discussions were ongoing and Members would be advised of the outcome; and
- there was only a small number of properties denying access for repairs. If staff had to travel a long distance and the person does not allow entry it has a significant impact on the delivery of services. This had a greater impact in rural areas but it was not a very significant problem at the moment.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** to approve the garage rent increase at 2%.

8. Highland Coastal Communities Fund
Maoin Coimhearsnachdan Cladaich na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/010/21 dated 26 March 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure and Environment which outlined the new Highland Coastal Communities Fund.

During discussion, the following responses had been given:-

- Gairloch Area Development Company automatically received a score of 1 as match funding had not been confirmed. The match funding from the Rural Tourism and Infrastructure Fund would be decided in May.

The Committee **AGREED**:

- i. to ringfence £40,000 to support young entrepreneurs. The detail of this should be brought back to a future Area Committee for a formal decision; and
- ii. to **APPROVE**:
 - Ullapool Unpacked funding in the sum of £22,806.02;
 - Gairloch Area Development Ltd funding in the sum of £52,605;
 - Gairloch EcoCentre funding in the sum of £5,500.

The meeting closed at 11.30 pm.