

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Black Isle Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 15 February 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam
Mrs J Barclay
Mr C Fraser

In attendance:

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

Also in attendance:

Ricky Dibble, SFRS
Miles Stubbs, SFRS
Dr Emma Robertson, Project Manager, 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

An urgent item of business would be discussed at the end of the meeting.

Item 6 was taken after item 10, for ease of reference the minute has remained in numerical order.

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulans

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 9: Mr G Adam (non-financial).

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

There had been circulated Report No BI/001/22 dated 27 January 2022 together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- Members were asked to aid in local recruitment campaign by notifying the Local Station Manager of any third-party organisations or groups who could be contacted with a view to promoting recruitment. There were two new recruits, who had undertaken and passed their Point of entry and fitness tests and were scheduled to attend a training course in April. They will then join the Volunteer crew in Cromarty;
- SFRS has undertaken a lot of work to produce the new reporting format and this had been well received; and
- reporting of deliberate fires included wild fires, there had been no noticeable increase in deliberate fires during the covid period.

The Committee thanked the fire service for their work on the Black Isle.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

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

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

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- students attended one day in the Science Skills Academy in P6, P7, S1 and S2. Once all schools had attended the Science Skills Academy, additional extra-curricular activities at the Newton Rooms were a possibility. The Dingwall and Inverness rooms however were currently at full capacity so additional extra-curricular activities hosted at those Newton Rooms are less likely. The Science Skills Academy was still in the very early stages of a separate collaboration and funding with the Glasgow Science Centre and once the programme is established if a teacher requested, a school could sign up to a 6-12 week programme where a pack could be given to the school to undertake further work at the school;
- there was a salmon and aquaculture module and as part of the complementary aquaculture film two employees had been featured, one from the diagnostic side and one from the environmental monitoring side. It was intended to cover aquaculture from as many angles as possible; and
- it would be a challenge to monitor and track the impact of any single STEM programme, including the Science Skills Academy, on young people and whether there was an increase in young people choosing science as a

career. There was currently a post event valuation completed by both pupils and teachers. There would be a full external review via teachers linked to the goals of the Science Skills Academy.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and thanked Dr Robertson for her informative presentation.

**5. Visitor Management Strategy as applied to Chanonry Point
Ro-innleachd Rianachd Luchd-tadhail mar a tha a' buntainn ri Rubha na Cananaich**

There was an oral report on the Visitor Management Strategy as applied to Chanonry Point.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- agree that a Ranger is essential as it greatly benefitted the area. There was also additional information gleaned from the Rangers and used to inform a National panel, this helped to understand the circumstances in this area;
- another role undertaken was to engage with business groups throughout the Highlands. Chanonry Point was of interest on a national level and was recognised as such, tourist businesses were assisted with pushing this fact to increase business in the area; and
- the dedicated ranger would start on 6 June 2022. The funding for rangers had been topped up from a national source in 2021, this funding was unlikely to be available for 2022. There was a dedicated ranger for Chanonry Points but there were also other rangers who could be diverted to cover Chanonry Point as part of their patrols before the the dedicated ranger started and this could cover other busy times, for example Saturday afternoons.

The tourism team and their colleagues were due credit for the work they undertook.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

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

There had been circulated Report No BI/002/22 dated 11 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- The capital schemes include for patching works which will be undertaken ahead of the surface dressing. Some schemes will be patched using the paver and regulating tar to fill in any small potholes. More significant potholes will require to be excavated and then reinstated.
- the ditching at Ord Hill Road would be looked at;

- there was good news in that the Capital Programme approved by Highland Council in December had identified a capital allocation for minor road repairs and junction improvements. This funding starts in the next financial year. Once proposals for the junction had been identified this funding could be used. The design for the junction was advanced and land acquisition was now being moved forward. The Roads Operations Manager was confident these works would go ahead subject to land acquisition and
- it was important for Members to identify and approve works to enable works to be delivered.

Members thanked the Roads Operations Manager for work starting at Braehead, Cromarty. The Roads Operations Manager was thanked for his perseverance as the issue that arose was not of his making.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2022/23 Area Roads Capital Programme for Black Isle Area.

7. Housing – Garages Taigheadas – Garaidsean

There had been circulated Report No BI/003/22 by the Executive Chief Officer - Housing and Property dated 8 February 2022.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- Members should send the Repairs Manager information on any garages requiring repairs. Repairs would be undertaken in areas where garages were in most demand as repairs could be expensive;

The Committee **AGREED** a 1% rent increase to apply to Black Isle garages and garage sites for 2022/2023.

8. Common Good Funds Maoin Maith Choitchinn

There had been circulated Report Nos BI/004/22 – BI/005/22 dated 3 and 7 February 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

a. Cromarty Common Good Fund BI/004/22

The Committee:

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

b. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund BI/005/22

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund Annual Report for 2020/21;
- ii. **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the position of Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund as shown in the 2021/22 Quarter Three monitoring statement;
- iii. **APPROVED** the proposed budget for 2022/23.

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

Declaration of Interest: Mr G Adam declared a non-financial interest as a Director of the Black Isle Partnership and left the room during discussion of this item.

There had been circulated Report No BI/006/22 dated 10 February 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place.

- * The Committee **AGREED**, as the meeting was no longer quorate, to recommend that the Highland Council **APPROVE** the proposed allocation of Place Based Investment Funds as follows:

- i. Black Isle Partnership – Development of Local Based Plan: £30,000

10. Place Based Investment Programme/Town Centre Fund
Prògram Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite/ Maoin Meadhan a' Bhaile

There had been circulated Report No BI/007/22 dated 8 February 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the following responses were given:-

- ongoing discussions on carrying over the 2021/22 award of the programme into 2022/23 had been very positive with the Scottish Government, due process had still to be undertaken with formal approval being required; and
- it was hoped that the Town Centre Fund underspend for Black Isle projects and the Place Based Investment Programme underspend would be given permission by the Scottish Government to merge.

The Committee:

- i. **AGREED** to investing £40,000 of the PBIP grant in the Cromarty Community Campsite;
- ii. **AGREED** to investing £30,000 of the PBIP grant in the Culbokie Green Shelter;
- iii. **GRANTED** delegated authority to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy in consultation with the Area Committee Chair to allocate any uncommitted PBIP grant to approved PBIP beneficiaries in the event that additional investment is required;

- iv. **AGREED** that the Council write to the Scottish Government to request permission to carry over the value of any uncommitted PBIP grant into 2022/23;
- v. **AGREED** to investing an additional £14,269.56 TCF grant in the refurbishment of the public toilets in Rosemarkie and Fortrose to address unforeseen eligible expenditure incurred by the Grantee; and
- vi. **AGREED** that the Council write to the Scottish Government to request permission to carry over the TCF underspend of £31,877.81 into 2022/23 and that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Black Isle Committee outlining the Scottish Government's decision and any associated recommendations if response favourable.

11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Black Isle Committee held on 16 November 2021 which were approved by the Council on 10 December 2021.

12. Urgent Business

* Following the Forum held on 2 February 2022 between the Highland Council's Road Safety officers and Black Isle community groups during which widespread concern about the dangers of speeding traffic was expressed, the Black Isle Area Committee **AGREED** to call on Council to:

1. Find required resources to increase the number of road safety officers from 2 to 6, so that the introduction of additional measures to make our roads safer can be undertaken as quickly as possible. It was noted that at present the 2-person team is dealing with 70 projects throughout the Highlands, and that Borders Council have a road safety team of 8.
2. In response to the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council's request, a survey of traffic speed in Rosemarkie is undertaken as soon as possible, with a view to introducing traffic calming measures, including a 20 mph speed limit, as required.
3. Initiate surveys and other research involved in assessing whether a maximum 50 mph limit on the Highland Council roads on the Black Isle would enhance road safety.
4. Make representations to the Scottish Government to speed up its planned legislation to make 20 mph the default maximum speed in built up areas, emphasising support on the Black Isle for this measure to be law sooner than the proposed date of 2025.

As this was the last Area Committee the Chair thanked the Members of the Black Isle Committee and stated that it had been a privilege to chair this Committee and further wished his successor good fortune in this important work.

The Chair hoped the close work of the community groups and the Black Isle Committee would continue. He also thanked officers and the Ward Manager who had been a great support during the Members' term.

The meeting closed at 12.35 pm.