

**The Highland Council  
No. 3 2022/2023**

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday, 29 June 2022 at 10.30 am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence  
A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

**Present:**

Mr C Aitken (remote, not item 3.2)	Ms L Kraft
Ms S Atkin	Mr B Lobban
Dr C Birt	Mr P Logue
Mr B Boyd	Mr D Louden (remote)
Mr R Bremner	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr M Cameron	Mr R MacKintosh
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mrs A MacLean
Mr A Christie (not item 3.2)	Ms K MacLean
Ms T Collier (remote)	Mr T MacLennan
Ms S Fanet	Mr D Macpherson
Mr D Fraser	Ms M MacCallum
Mr R Gale	Ms J McEwan (remote, not item 3.2)
Mr K Gowans (not item 3.2)	Mr D Millar
Mr A Graham	Mr H Morrison (remote)
Mr M Green (remote, not item 3.2)	Mr C Munro
Mrs J Hendry	Ms L Niven (not item 3.1)
Ms M Hutchison (remote)	Mr P Oldham (remote)
Mr A Jarvie (remote)	Ms M Reid
Mrs B Jarvie	Mrs T Robertson (not item 3.1)
Ms L Johnston (remote)	Mr K Rosie
Mr R Jones	Mr R Stewart
Mr S Kennedy	Ms K Willis

**In Attendance:**

Mr D Jones, Acting Head of Development Management  
 Mr S Hindson, Team Leader – Strategic Projects Team  
 Mr P Wheelan, Planner  
 Ms C Farmer, Planner  
 Mr M Clough, Senior Engineer, Transport Planning  
 Mr G MacCormick, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
 Ms K Lyons, Principal Solicitor / Clerk  
 Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

**Also in Attendance:**

Four representatives from Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc, Applicants:  
 Lauren Riach, Simon Johnstone, Simon Hall and Rob Slaughter.

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence  
Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr M Baird, Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Balance, Mr I Brown, Mrs I Campbell, Mrs M Cockburn, Mr J Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr J Grafton, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Ms A MacDonald, Mr W MacKay, Mrs I

MacKenzie, Mr J McGillivray, Ms S Rawlings, Mr M Reiss, Mrs L Saggars, Ms M Smith.

## 2. **Declarations of Interest** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Council **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 3.2 – Ms J McEwan

## 3. **Planning Applications to be Determined** **Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh**

3.1

**Applicant:** Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (21/04988/FUL) (HC/10/22)

**Location:** Land West Of Beaully Sub-station, Wester Balblair, Beaully. (Ward 12)

**Nature of Development:** Beaully Substation - Reinforcement and extension of existing 132kV substation, including decommissioning and replacement of key equipment including provision of 3 new transformers with noise enclosures, associated platform extension and GIS building, access, landscaping and ancillary work.

**Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission**

As there were no Community Council or third party representatives present, a partial Hearing process was undertaken and the applicants were invited to present their application, making the following key points:

- a summary of the proposal and the two key drivers for it were provided, these being to facilitate a grid connection for the Loch Luichart wind farm extension II by October 2024, and to tackle the sustained increase in generation in the Beaully area which was pushing the Beaully busbar beyond its existing rating;
- operational noise mitigation measures had been undertaken and further measures were proposed as part of a continuous programme of improvements to reduce the overall noise from the substation;
- the proposed package of road mitigation works were outlined, as were developer contributions of £133,000 towards improving road safety;
- the landscape plan was summarised, including screening along the northern perimeter, increased planting along the boundary, and compensatory planting offsite for trees that required to be felled to ensure the development secured a biodiversity net gain; and
- the operation of the well-established community liaison group for Beaully substation.

Clarification was sought and provided on the following issues:

- the operation of the existing Community Liaison Group;
- the management of noise concerns from the local community, including the baseline noise levels;
- the Abnormal Indivisible Load Route Assessment from the Port of Entry to the site, which was to be covered by conditions;
- the use of diesel versus zero emission generators on site;
- whether there would be an impact on residential properties bordering the Beaully-Denny power line; and
- engagement with the community council before and after amendments had been made to the application.

The Hearing process ended, and the Planning Officer presented the report and rationale behind the recommendation to grant planning permission. Additional visualisations were tabled.

No further clarification was sought from Members and, during debate, reference was made to the impact of previous development at the application site experienced by the community over the previous eight years and the further disruption that was likely during the four year construction period. Particular areas of concern included monitoring of noise levels during and post-construction, the monitoring of the traffic management plan implementation, road and verge damage to the local road network, the Saturday start time of 8am, and community benefit issues. Officers responded to the points raised.

The Council **AGREED** to grant planning permission as recommended in the report, subject to conditions being amended to allow the Community Liaison Group to input into any review of the construction working hours related to post completion noise monitoring of the overall site.

### 3.2

**Applicant:** Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (21/05536/FUL) (HC/11/22)

**Location:** Land 500M West Of Philips Mains, Mey (Ward 03)

**Nature of Development:** Construct and operate a 132 kilovolt (kV) switching station and associated infrastructure

**Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission**

**Declaration of Interest: Ms J MacEwan declared an interest in this item and left the chamber for the remainder of the meeting.**

The Planning Officer presented the report and, during discussion, areas of concern raised by Members included the impact the development was likely to have on the surrounding roads, especially the main access road, which required strengthening and additional passing places, the size of the trees that were to be replanted, with assurance provided that a condition required them to be checked after 3-5 years, and the need for a new Community Liaison group to be established by the Ward Manager for relevant stakeholders.

The Council **AGREED** to grant planning permission as recommended in the report.

The meeting ended at 12.55pm

**The Highland Council  
No. 4 2022/2023**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 30 June 2022 at 10.30 am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence  
A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

**Present:**

Mr C Aitken (remote - am)	Mr S Kennedy
Ms S Atkin	Mr P Logue
Mr M Baird (remote)	Mr D Louden (remote)
Mr A Baldrey	Mr W MacKay (remote)
Mr C Ballance	Mr G MacKenzie
Dr C Birt	Mrs I MacKenzie (remote)
Mr B Boyd	Mr S Mackie
Mr R Bremner	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr I Brown (remote)	Mr R MacKintosh
Mr M Cameron	Mrs A MacLean
Mrs I Campbell (remote)	Ms K MacLean
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr T MacLennan
Mr A Christie	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs M Cockburn (remote)	Ms M MacCallum
Ms T Collier	Ms J McEwan
Ms H Crawford	Mr J McGillivray (remote)
Ms S Fanet	Mr D Millar
Mr J Finlayson (remote)	Mr H Morrison
Mr D Fraser	Mrs P Munro
Mr L Fraser	Mr C Munro
Mr R Gale	Ms L Niven
Mr K Gowans	Mr P Oldham
Mr J Grafton	Mrs M Patterson
Mr A Graham	Ms M Reid
Mr M Green	Mr A Rhind
Mr R Gunn	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs J Hendry	Mr K Rosie
Ms M Hutchison	Mrs L Saggars
Mr A Jarvie	Mr A Sinclair (remote)
Mrs B Jarvie	Mr R Stewart
Ms L Johnston	Ms K Willis
Mr R Jones	

**In Attendance:**

Chief Executive

Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning

Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care

Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Executive Chief Officer, Property and Housing

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Mr D Gregg, Mr A MacDonald, Mrs B McAllister, Ms M Nolan, Ms S Rawlings, Mr M Reiss and Ms M Smith.

## 2. **Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Council **NOTED** the following Declarations of Interest:-

Item 9: Ms T Collier

Item 10: Mr K Rosie and Mr R Stewart

Item 10.i: Mr R Bremner, Mr M Green, Mr D Macpherson, Mr C Munro and Mrs T Robertson

Item 11: Mr S Mackie

Item 12: Mr D Gregg

Item 15.i: Mr J Finlayson, Mr K Gowans and Mr D Louden

and the following Transparency Statements:-

Item 7: Mr A Christie

Item 8: Mr A Jarvie

Item 10.ii: Mr C Munro and Mrs T Robertson

Item 11: Mr A Christie

Item 20: Mr D Macpherson

Item 21: Mr G MacKenzie

## 3. **Confirmation of Minutes** **Daingneachadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais**

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 26 May 2022 and 9 June 2022 as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately - which were **APPROVED**.

## 4. **Minutes of Meetings of Committees** **Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan Chomataidhean**

There had been submitted for confirmation as correct records, for information as regards delegated business and for approval as appropriate, the Minutes of Meetings of Committees contained in Volume circulated separately as undernoted:-

City of Inverness Area Committee 8 June 2022

The Minutes, having been moved and seconded were **APPROVED**.

### **Minutes of Meetings not included in the Volume were as follows**

Investment Sub Committee held on 11 March 2022- **APPROVED**; and  
Community Planning Board held on 20 December 2021 (approved by the Board on 8 April 2022) - **NOTED**.

## 5. **Question Time** **Àm Ceiste**

The following Questions had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance.

## Public Question

### Mr Ewing

To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure

“Despite having it in print that funding is available for a Pelican Crossing on the B9006 near the bus stops at Brinckman/Cradlehall, why has it not been installed, instead, why has money been wasted on pavement alterations which only encourage the public to cross at a more dangerous spot?”

The response had been circulated with the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure also intimating that he would provide Mr Ewing with additional technical data (*additional technical data response provided below*).

Highland Council understood that some members of the community desired for both a lights-controlled crossing on the B9006 in the vicinity of Brinckman Terrace and a 30 mph limit to be put in place to cover this stretch of road. Requests of this nature were subject to assessment and as an Authority these assessments were based on guidance set out in Road Safety GB ‘School Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines Rev 2018’ and ‘Setting Local Speed Limits: Guidance for Local Authorities: ETLLD Circular 1/2006’ along with good practice. This ensured that safe and consistent decisions were made across the Local Authority Area.

Highland Council were committed to, and in the process of, delivering a wider road safety strategy for the area of the B9006 from Woodside of Culloden to the existing 30 mph limit gateway near Caulfield Road North. This included the area of the B9006 at Brinckman Terrace. The Council were in the process of promoting a 50mph limit Road Traffic Regulation Order for the B9006 at the Woodside of Culloden. In addition to this the signalisation of the B9006/Tower Road junction, which was being funded by developer contributions, would be delivered to support road safety and active travel. As an Authority, again to support active travel and road safety in the wider area, officers were keen to see the implementation of a 30 mph speed limit on the B9006 from Tower Road junction to the existing 30 mph limit gateway to the West, again this covered the area in question. An independent Road Safety Audit highlighted the fact that the existing mean average vehicle speeds in the area were too high for the implementation of a 30 mph speed limit at present and therefore work was ongoing to achieve a reduction in the existing mean average speed of vehicles in this area to allow this 30 mph limit to be implemented. To provide improved pedestrian crossing facilities on the B9006 in the area of Brinckman Terrace an uncontrolled drop kerb crossing scheme with clear visibility for pedestrians waiting to cross was due to be installed to the East of the existing Bus Stops. This scheme would be supported via signing and lining to increase the conspicuously of the location pedestrians were being encouraged to cross.

Before the installation of any formal (lights controlled or zebra) crossing can take place in any location guidance dictated that a formal assessment, known as an ADPV<sup>2</sup> Assessment, should be carried out. The numerical assessment value was calculated using the following data; the existing accident history, difficulty factor (road width and vehicle speeds), pedestrian and vehicle volumes at the site. The Assessment criteria a site should meet was as follows:

For sites where the value of Assessment Value was equal to or exceeded **0.5**, detailed site evaluation would be carried out to determine a suitable solution which might include a central refuge; a zebra; or a signal controlled crossing

where the Assessment Value was greater than 1 then consideration would be given to a signal controlled pedestrian crossing.

In 2018, when the concerns were first raised by Mr Ewing, the Road Safety Team undertook all necessary road safety investigations and fed the results back to the Mr Ewing. The results of the 2018 site investigation showed an Assessment Value of **0.219**. Although nothing had materially changed at this site in terms of housing/vehicle numbers an up to date Assessment was carried out in April 2022 with the new Assessment value coming out at **0.218**. This site fell short of the requirements that needed to be met in order for the implementation of a lights-controlled crossing. A key reason for having specific criteria was to ensure that any crossing that was installed was not underused due to a lack of pedestrians crossing as this could create road safety issues e.g. vehicles failing to stop at the formal crossing (red light running) as vehicles were simply not used to seeing the crossing being triggered by pedestrians. In addition, to the assessment requirements not being met at this location, it was also engineering wise not a suitable location for the installation of a lights-controlled crossing. This was due to the desired location being in the middle of 2 lay-by style bus stops meaning it was not physically possible to fit in a crossing on the desire line. It should also be noted that there was an existing lights-controlled crossing on the B9006 440m or thereby to the West of the requested site and an existing pedestrian refuge island 95m or thereby to the East of the site. There had been extensive correspondence with Mr Ewing, Ward Members and constituents explaining why it was an inappropriate location for a formal pedestrian crossing.

During the assessment process it became apparent that the operation of the School Crossing Patroller at this location had been problematic due to illness. As a result, the Authority's Education and Roads Service are currently working together to ensure there was a replacement service supplied. As a consequence of these findings it was recommended that there was a review of operating procedures for School Crossing Patrollers to ensure a closer working relationship between the Education and Roads Services and proposals would be brought to a future Strategic Committee.

### **Member Questions**

#### **(i) Mr A Christie**

##### **To the Leader of the Council**

"Please could the Leader share with us either estimated or clear timescales, the process by which the Administration intends to formulate, debate, and approve the new Administration Programme which will become the Highland Council Programme?"

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried what the Leader considered to be the best practise in engaging with Members, staff and communities.

In response, the Leader of the Council hoped, referring to the previous Administration's Programme's submission to Council and engagement, to speed that up so that a similar process could be followed and to put in place the ability for public, Members and staff to engage. He was happy to meet with the Leader of the Opposition to ensure he had full input as far as a feed-in process was concerned.

**(ii) Mr A Christie****To the Chair of Corporate Resources**

“Could the Chair of Corporate Resources (or Budget Lead) please detail the impact both operationally and in financial terms that the Scottish Government Resource Spending Review published on 31 May 2022 will have on the Council with particular regard to the Fraser of Allender Institute assertion that the local government budget will decline by 7% in real terms between 2022/23 and 2026/27?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried, as CoSLA had stated the real-time reduction in the Scottish Government grant over the next four years would result in fewer jobs and cuts to service, what action would the Chair take to lobby the Scottish Government to reverse the damaging financial plan for the Council.

In response, the Chair of Corporate Resources gave a reassurance that the Administration would be in touch with the Scottish Government on a regular and on-going basis to try and secure additional funding for the Council. The Administration did have some ideas it would put to the Scottish Government. He intended to undertake this role in exactly the same way as Councillor Christie had in the previous Administration and he was open to any suggestions and ideas that Councillor Christie had and, as part of the budget setting process, the Administration would be working across the Chamber to try and make sure every idea was given full consideration in the weeks and months ahead.

**(iii) Mrs T Robertson****To the Chair of Housing and Property Committee**

“Artificial grass pitches are a significant source of microplastic pollution. The number of these is growing across HIGHLAND.

The weather, pitch maintenance and the shoes and clothes of players can dislodge and transport the microplastic granules away from the field. Each pitch requires replacement of up to 5 tonnes of micro crumb infill on a yearly basis to maintain the standard.

Microplastic pollution has an impact on the soil, waterways and ultimately the ocean.

What practical steps are being taken to reduce or prevent microplastic loss from artificial pitches across our estate?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried what practical measures were in place or were planned to prevent microplastic loss across the Council’s estate.

In response, the Chair of Housing and Property Committee pointed out that KIMO and Fidra had long been promoting the Pitch In Pledge which was designed to tackle artificial pitch pollution. This project aimed to reduce harmful microplastic emissions into the environment from artificial grass pitches. The Council would address the issue of microplastic pollution. The problem was increasing because artificial pitches were becoming increasingly popular as a year-round alternative. Given the concerns raised officers had been asked to undertake a review to consider further measures



such as adding low level perimeter boarding around artificial pitches, installing silt traps to avoid infill being lost down storm drains, boot brushing stations within the pitch perimeter to avoid granules being dispersed outwith the pitch and installing filters in shower drains. All reasonable steps would be taken to reduce the emission of microplastic from artificial playing fields into the environment. The very clear message from KIMO and Fidra, which addressed microplastic pollution, would have to be considered by all owners and operators of artificial grass pitches throughout the Highland area. The Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee had also been asked to take up this environmental challenge through his Committee and membership of KIMO.

**(iv) Mr A Jarvie**

**To the Chair of Corporate Resources**

“How many employees have taken the Council to employment tribunal in each of the last 5 years, broken down by high level reasons for lodging the action”.

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried, as over 50% of employees who had brought employment tribunal claims against the Council had been on the grounds of disability discrimination every year, why the Council was not learning from its lessons and making changes to reasonable adjustment policies, not only to stop these claims but to help employees too.

In response, the Chair of Corporate Resources pointed out that historically there had been a very small number of claims. In 3 of the last 5 years there had only been one single claim. Ideally, the Council would want to see no claims at all but that had to be set in the context of 10,000 employees. He did accept the concern raised regarding claims on the grounds of disability and would look into that further and provide a follow-up response.

**6. Notices of Motion  
Brathan Glusaid**

The following Notices of Motion had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance –

(i) This Council recognises that proficiency in learning the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy is a core foundation of primary education.

This Council recognises that children who do not learn such skills at primary school are less likely to have a positive destination when they leave school.

Noting that Highland Council currently benchmarks poorly in Scotland for literacy and numeracy at stages Primary One, Four and Seven, this Council instructs that an Improvement Report be presented by the Executive Chief Officer of Education to the next full Council Meeting following discussions at the Education Committee. This Council instructs that thereafter regular progress updates be submitted to each Education Committee by the Executive Chief Officer of Education, and biannually to Council.

Signed: Ms H Crawford Mr A Christie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- as school staff and pupils began their summer holidays, Members expressed their appreciation to everyone who worked in and attended Highland's schools for their hard work and resilience during what had again been a challenging year;
- whilst there was much to be proud of in Highland, pupils and teachers had been under immense pressure during Covid. One area that had been particularly impacted was literacy and numeracy, specifically at Primary School level where Highland, according to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, was now ranked lowest in Scotland at Primary 1, 4 and 7, and it was questioned why these core fundamentals of education were not considered at full Council. There was also minimal reporting at ward level of this most basic and essential of skill sets;
- whilst it was reassuring that much work had taken place "under the radar", it was imperative that it was monitored and scrutinised at the highest level involving all 74 Elected Members;
- a request was made for a Recovery Plan to be presented at the next full Council, following discussion with the Education Committee, with biannual updates thereafter;
- the Council had a responsibility to ensure children had proficiency in literacy and numeracy as, if they had these fundamentals, they were more likely to access skilled jobs and enjoy good health and wellbeing outcomes;
- this was a top priority for many Members, parents and carers and it was hoped the Council would elevate the status of these learning fundamentals to reassure parents that this was also a top priority at Highland Council;
- it was important to listen to the views of young people and this did not always correlate to what was said in the Chamber;
- Education represented a quarter of the Council's revenue expenditure and, as such, it was essential that this money was spent properly and wisely. Attainment was one aspect that could be measured but the results showed Highland to be failing. It was essential pupils received the literacy and numeracy skills they needed and this was the responsibility of policy makers;
- the Council was accountable to parents, who needed reassurance that action was being taken quickly to turnaround the Council's poor ranking in literacy and numeracy;
- teachers new to Highland were predominantly only offered a one-year contract and this was a disincentive for many. It was hoped that an addition to the Motion would be accepted whereby the Education Committee would be instructed to consider whether offering new teachers a one-year contract guaranteed that the best teachers applied, with a report back to the Full Council on this and any budgetary implications;
- all Members wanted to see attainment improve, as did the Education Service. A lot of work was taking place to improve literacy and numeracy attainment and the priority given to health and wellbeing had already been reported to both Full Council and the Education Committee;
- an action plan to improve attainment had already been brought to the Education Committee in February and, since the publication of last year's data, there had been a significant increase in the combined outcomes for children with regards to literacy and numeracy attainment with indicative figures demonstrating a 10% increase across both measures;
- staff had also undergone training and feedback was that there was increased confidence in the planning and moderation of high-quality assessments and their ability to support moderation practices in their own school and further afield. Furthermore, Primary Head Teachers had attended primary-focussed attainment meetings with their collaborative leads in their Associated School Groups;

- there had been a number of other advances supporting other aspects of learning and teaching and attainment including; an increased confidence in the development of children's cognitive skills, health and wellbeing; the development of a mental health and wellbeing website with pupils, parents and practitioners; a counselling service was now being embedded in all schools across Highland; and positive destinations were also improving with Highland now in line with the national average;
- assessment was an ongoing process and the most important means of evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching was formative assessment;
- it was important teaching time was spent on learning and teaching and not on excessive data collection and reporting;
- discussions about attainment would get more focus at the Education Committee. In addition, all Members were permitted to attend the Education Committee and, at the discretion of the Chair, able to speak. Bringing Strategic Committee business to Full Council would set a precedent for other Committees;
- language development started at a very early age and therefore parents and carers had a significant impact on this. It went beyond just Education, and the wider factors involved needed to be explored at the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee;
- it was contended that Highland was not at the bottom of the league table as the data had been affected by the Covid pandemic; and
- the Council had a commitment to take on probationer teachers and offering one-year contracts would have a detrimental impact on the Council's ability to do that.

Thereafter, Ms H Crawford, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed with the addition of instructing the Education Committee to consider whether offering new teacher to Highland a one-year contract guaranteed the best teachers applied to move to the Highlands with a report back to the Full Council on its findings and any budgetary implications.

Mr J Finlayson, seconded by Mr D Millar, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the Highland Council was committed to improving literacy and numeracy attainment and, as was outlined at the February Education Committee, there was a plan in place to support this whilst also taking account of the Council's decision to prioritise Health and Wellbeing during the two years of Covid. Updates would continue to be presented to the Education Committee in relation to the Attainment Improvement Plan, which would coincide with the accepted and annual reporting calendar that was in place for all schools. Reporting of Key Performance Indicators relating to attainment would continue to be reported annually to Full Council.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 27 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 35 votes, with 1 abstention, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Ballance, Mr A Christie, Ms H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr R Gunn, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs B Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Ms M MacCallum, Mr J McGillivray, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr R MacKintosh, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Ms J McEwan, Mr H Morrison, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Saggars, Mr R Stewart, Ms K Willis.

**For the Amendment:**

Ms S Atkin, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, , Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L

Johnston, Mr R Jones, Mr S Kennedy, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Loudon, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, , Mr D Millar, Mrs P Munro, Mr C Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Ms M Reid, Mr K Rosie.

**Abstention:**

Mr A Rhind

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** that it was committed to improving literacy and numeracy attainment and, as was outlined at the February Education Committee, there was a plan in place to support this whilst also taking account of the Council's decision to prioritise Health and Wellbeing during the two years of Covid. Updates would continue to be presented to the Education Committee in relation to the Attainment Improvement Plan, which would coincide with the accepted and annual reporting calendar that was in place for all schools. Reporting of Key Performance Indicators relating to attainment would continue to be reported annually to Full Council.

(ii)The SNP Government committed to dualling the A96 Inverness to Aberdeen by 2030.

Specific trunk road interventions emerging from the review included upgrading the A96 between Inverness and Nairn to dual the carriageway and build a Nairn bypass.

The intention to fully dual the A96 was thereafter announced in December 2011, when Scottish Ministers published their Infrastructure Investment Plan, which contained the commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities.

The public enquiry was held in 2018 and the Inverness to Nairn section has ministerial approval.

Council directs the administration to write to the Government to request the works to upgrade the Inverness to Nairn (including bypass) begin without further delay and to report back to Council on the condition and congestion on the A96.

Signed: Mrs T Robertson Mr L Fraser Ms B Jarvie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- frustration was expressed at the lack of progress and any timetable for construction. The dualling of the Inverness to Nairn section was environmentally necessary and long overdue;
- dualling would improve journey time and reliability, deliver economic growth, improve connectivity and reduce the rate and severity of accidents;
- to anyone driving through Nairn, it was obvious that there was an urgent need for a bypass. There was severe congestion and pollution along a route which passed a school and along pavements heavily used by pedestrians;
- transport choices throughout Highland were limited and therefore there would continue to be a reliance on cars. The recent rail strike had highlighted this, and bus services were infrequent or non-existent;
- the responses to the consultation for the dualling of the A96 from Nairn to Aberdeen were largely in favour with many citing safety concerns about the present situation;

- what was important now was to concentrate on getting some concrete action from the Scottish Government and an alternative Motion was proposed, as follows:-

“Council notes and welcomes recent statements that the Scottish Government remain wholly committed to the dualling of the A96 from Smithton to Hardmuir including the Nairn bypass.

Council urges the Government to take all necessary steps to make the swiftest further progress and to commit the required funding necessary to carry out the whole work in that project, including the cost of the construction itself, but also the land purchase, and all other preliminary works such as tree felling, archaeological work, as well as the necessary and complex alterations to placement and layout of utilities, cables, pipelines and the like.

Council further asks the Government to provide a detailed timetable setting out when this project will be completed, and stating when each necessary component part of the project is expected to commence and be delivered; and to demonstrate that priority will be attached to this roads project by the Government”.

This Motion was accepted by the signatories of the original who agreed to retract theirs and become co-signatories to this one.

- others argued that dualling the A96 did not support Scotland’s Net Zero target or the National Transport Strategy which encouraged targeted investment in infrastructure which encouraged low carbon transport options; and
- new road building increased carbon emissions so, instead of dualling the A96, it was argued the Inverness-Aberdeen railway line should be duelled.

Thereafter, Mrs T Robertson, seconded by Mr L Fraser, **MOVED** the terms of the Revised Notice of Motion as detailed above.

Ms K Willis, seconded by Mr C Ballance, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the Council notes and welcomes recent statements that the Scottish Government remain wholly committed to the dualling of the A96 from Smithton to Hardmuir including the Nairn bypass. The Council urges the Government that, in view of the commitments to carbon reduction, the Government should urgently bring forward plans to dual the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line and improve services in order to reduce congestion by achieving modal shift from road to rail.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 53 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 5 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr C Aitken, Ms S Atkin, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Christie, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms H Crawford, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr M Green, Mr R Gunn, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs B Jarvie, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Mr S Kennedy, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr P Logue, Mr D Loudon, Ms M MacCallum, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mrs A MacLean, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Macpherson, Ms J McEwan, Mr J McGillivray, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Ms M Reid, Mrs T Robertson, Mr K Rosie, Mrs L Sagers, Mr R Stewart.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Ballance, Dr C Birt, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K Willis

**Decision**

The Council **NOTED** and welcomed recent statements that the Scottish Government remain wholly committed to the dualling of the A96 from Smithton to Hardmuir including the Nairn bypass. The Council urges the Government to take all necessary steps to make the swiftest further progress and to commit the required funding necessary to carry out the whole work in that project, including the cost of the construction itself, but also the land purchase, and all other preliminary works such as tree felling, archaeological work, as well as the necessary and complex alterations to placement and layout of utilities, cables, pipelines and the like. The Council further asks the Government to provide a detailed timetable setting out when this project will be completed, and stating when each necessary component part of the project is expected to commence and be delivered; and to demonstrate that priority will be attached to this roads project by the Government”.

(iii) This Council congratulates the organisers, volunteers and funders who helped stage celebratory events for Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.

Given the years of COVID-19 restrictions, which severely limited community interactions and curtailed so many events and celebrations, it was encouraging to see so many communities coming together to mark such a historic moment.

From the lighting of beacons to street and garden parties, quizzes and sports nights, the Highland Council recognises the unique role that Highland events played in marking seventy years of dedication and service to our Country and The Commonwealth.

Signed: Mr S Mackie Mr A Jarvie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- pleasure was expressed at being an Elected Representative and a Civic Leader in Caithness and being able to mark this historic achievement with fellow Local Members, communities, local groups and youth organisations;
- whilst there were major events held in London, local communities in the Highlands had also marked this milestone in their own way to thank Queen Elizabeth II for 70 years of public service and commitment, not only to her country but to the Commonwealth;
- it was important to thank the individuals, organisers, volunteers and funders who helped create events for the Jubilee. These events didn't just happen: they required careful planning, funding, organising and working with local bodies and other organisations;
- multiple generations had come together along with family, neighbours, friends and even complete strangers to celebrate events, all in different ways. This was especially welcomed given its inclusivity after the Covid pandemic;
- Inverness itself had lit the Town House and the Ness Bridge in red, white and blue;
- it was hoped that it wouldn't just be a one weekend event but that other events would take place throughout the Jubilee year;
- the Platinum Jubilee was a once in a lifetime event;
- reference was made to the opinion poll produced at the time of the Jubilee by British Futures which reported that only 45% of Scotland wanted a continuation of the monarchy. This percentage was much lower among younger people and those

from ethnic and diverse backgrounds. This was in contrast to England where support for the monarchy was much greater;

- the recognition of the Queen's service was unquestionable but a whole year of celebrations was debatable when there was a high number of families now relying on food banks; and
- it was important to bear in mind Councillors were elected to represent everyone in their ward and not just to promote a political agenda.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

## **7. Annual Accounts 2021/22 Cunntasan Bliadhna 2021/22**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that he had a connection to this item a Non-executive director of NHS Highland, General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau and the parent of a child in secondary education in relation to extra-curricular activities. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/12/22 dated 17 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- tribute was paid to Mr A Christie for working in a collegiate and consultative way in his role as Budget Leader and the former Chairs and Vice Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee were also thanked for their work in relation to the budget. This work was reflected in the strong position outlined in the Annual Accounts and on there being a robust medium-term financial plan in place;
- the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism and staff were commended on the large volume of work involved in producing the Annual Accounts, particularly given the additional pressures faced during the Covid period;
- concern that the Finance Team was under resourced and confirmation that there would be the opportunity to review this matter as part the Programme for the Council;
- the increase in the Council's reserves was welcomed on the basis this would place the Council in a stronger position in terms of the significant challenges faced going forward;
- concern at the lack of time Members had been afforded to scrutinise the Annual Accounts before the Council meeting in terms of good governance;
- a projected overspend had been reported to Members throughout the year and whether this had represented a true reflection of the financial position given the year-end figures. It was confirmed that more detailed information on the factors that had led to the year-end position would be reported to the next cycle of strategic committees;
- concern at the brevity of the report and that it would be helpful to have information on the total income generated and expenditure incurred in tabular form;
- an assurance was sought that, going forward, Members would receive financial reports on progress with the budget against the significant risks and challenges set out in the report at each Corporate Resources Committee and Council meeting;

- the budget process and discussions over the past two years had been positive and productive and it was important to continue this process going forward. There would be the opportunity for Member discussions on the Council's finances at the Corporate Resources Committee and on an individual basis;
- clarification was sought and provided that more detailed information on the underspend shown on the Health and Social Care budget would be reported to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee in addition to an All Member seminar on 4 August 2022;
- the report represented the start of the Member scrutiny process of the Annual Accounts and there would be the opportunity for more detailed discussions at the next Corporate Resources Committee and strategic committees and thereafter at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee;
- highlighting that the context around the allocation of General Fund earmarked, non-earmarked and other useable reserves was clearly stated in the report; and
- the opportunities for Members to further develop their knowledge in terms of the financial information provided and in facing the significant risks and challenges ahead.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to receive the unaudited Annual Accounts for the Highland Council, Highland Charities Trust, Highland Charitable Trust and the Highland Council Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2022 and **NOTED** that these would be presented to the appointed auditor by the prescribed date of 30 June 2022.

### **8. Embedding Trauma-informed Practice in Highland Council Stèidheachadh Cleachdadh Trauma Fiosraichte ann an Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Jarvie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that he had a connection to this item as an employee of the Mental Welfare Commission. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/13/22 dated 20 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure Health and Social Care.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need to understand and demonstrate the principles of being trauma-informed, as outlined in the report, across all levels and services within the Council and Members were encouraged to accept responsibility in terms of their key role in ensuring the Council became a trauma-informed organisation;
- through a commitment to being trauma-aware and trained, Council Members and staff had an important role to play in understanding and responding to people affected by trauma;
- while this was an excellent report, concern was expressed as to how the work set out in the report could be achieved within the sum of £50k allocated to the Council by the Scottish Government for this initiative;
- an assurance was sought and provided that the report would be remitted to the next Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee for more detailed consideration of how this initiative was to be adequately funded and resourced, going forward, to achieve the required outcomes;



- it was important to recognise that the number of people in Highland affected by trauma would have increased significantly as a result of the impacts of Covid and this emphasised the importance of having a trauma-informed approach embedded across Highland; and
- the commitment to a trauma-informed approach had to be for the lifetime of the Council to underline the Council's support for those experiencing both short and longer-term effects of trauma.

### **Decision**

The Council:-

- NOTED** the Improvement Service document 'Elected Member Briefing Note – Trauma was Everybody's Business' at Appendix 1 to the report;
- AGREED** to communicate their support for Highland Council to become a trauma-informed organisation and to supporting a trauma-informed workforce;
- AGREED** to support and promote the implementation of the national training programme for officers and Elected Members;
- AGREED** to commit to implement a network of trauma-informed Champions tasked to collaborate across services and teams to make the necessary connections across the organisation; and
- AGREED** that this report be submitted to the next meeting of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee on 24 August 2022.

## **9. Family Leave for Elected Members Fòrladh Teaghlaich airson Buill Thaghte**

**Declaration of Interest: Ms T Collier declared an interest in this item due to personal circumstances and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting for this item.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/14/22 dated 1 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed that there was no provision for dependents/carers leave for Elected Members and that COSLA had not recognised the important role carers played in society and in looking after vulnerable people within the guidance;
- the Council should therefore lobby on introducing dependents/carers' leave for Elected Members and an assurance was sought and provided that the Leader would have discussions with the Leader of the Opposition on taking this forward with COSLA;
- the salary for the average Elected Member acted as a disincentive to potential candidates coming forward for election given the workload involved. The Council should lobby the Scottish Government and COSLA at the earliest opportunity to make the case for realistic salaries for Elected Members and to encourage a broader and more diverse range of candidates at the next election that was more representative of the population;
- the potential for Elected Members to benefit from carers' packages for dependants in common with the conditions of Scottish Government employees;
- it was hoped the adoption of the Family Leave guidance would encourage more women to stand for election; and
- confirmation was sought and provided that the Council was actively considering facilities for Elected Members who were new mothers.

## **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to adopt the COSLA Family Leave Guidance.

### **10. Short Term Lets Màil Gheàrr-ùine**

**Declaration of Interest:** Mr K Rosie as a Short Term Let provider and Mr R Stewart as a close family member ran a tourism business and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, they left the meeting for these items.

#### **i. Short Term Let Licensing Regime Reim ceadach**

**Declaration of Interest:** Mr R Bremner as a Short Term Let provider, Mr C Munro and Mrs T Robertson as a part owner of a Short Term Let, and Mr M Green and Mr D Macpherson as a close family member was a Short Term Let provider and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, they left the meeting for this item.

There had been circulated Report No. HC/15/22 dated 7 June 2022 by the Principal Solicitor, Regulatory Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the new legislation, which it was felt would be beneficial, was welcomed. It was clarified that this would be cost neutral as it was governed by the Civic Government (Scotland) Act and fees would therefore require to be set at a level which covered the Council's costs to manage the licensing scheme;
- it was confirmed that the six-week consultation period had already commenced. Robust engagement with stakeholders and the responses to date were welcomed;
- although ensuring that properties met the mandatory safety standards was welcomed, there was a need to ensure that the licensing scheme was not an added burden to operators given the significant importance of the tourism industry across the Highlands;
- the licensing scheme would not impact on permanent housing including rentals;
- neighbours/residents could raise concerns through the complaints process;
- the work of the staff was commended given the significant challenges ahead in implementing the scheme within the required timescales. Confirmation was provided that additional staff resource would be required to administer the scheme; and
- given the high impact of this legislation across the Highlands, there was a need for Highland Council to lead on implementation of the scheme to ensure that the best and most efficient licensing regime was adopted.

## **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** the position given the scale of and potential impact of the proposed licensing regime across the Council area.

**ii. Establishing a Short-Term Let Control Area for Ward 20:**

**Badenoch & Strathspey**

**A' Stèidheachadh Raon Smachd Màil Ghearr-ùine airson Uàrd 20:  
Bàideanach & Srath Spè**

**Transparency Statement: Mr C Munro and Mrs T Robertson made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that they had a connection to this item as the part-owner of a self-catering business. However, having applied the objective test they did not consider that they had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/16/22 dated 13 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the application to designate Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey) as a Short-Term Let (STL) Control Area was being made in response to the requests from local residents and businesses to address the significant lack of availability of affordable accommodation. There was an imbalance between holiday homes/rental properties and it was hoped that the STL Control Area would enable the balance to be shifted. The scheme would also be used as a tool to manage current and future housing needs for both locals and businesses, particularly in the smaller geographical areas;
- the Members of Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey) were complimented for their approach - recognising the issue, investigating and examining the options, and putting forward a potential solution. Members should utilise the tools available to adopt appropriate solutions that addressed housing needs in their local areas;
- the lack of affordable housing (to buy or rent) was the most significant issue in Badenoch and Strathspey and although the STL Control Area would aid this issue it would not resolve it in full. Tourism was vital to the local economy and it was therefore important that the concerns raised by local businesses regarding implementation of the STL Control Area were recognised. However, concern was raised at the large volume of empty properties across the area and it was hoped that some of these properties could be used as permanent housing which would help to retain and attract people to live and work in the local area. Overall, it was felt that the STL Control Area would not have a negative impact on tourism but it would have a positive impact on the local housing crisis;
- implementation of the STL Control Area would require careful balance as tourism was vital to the local economy but the need to ensure the provision of affordable housing for the workers that supported this industry was also recognised. A single policy would not address the housing needs issue alone and there was a need to build more affordable homes. It was necessary to ensure that the STL Control Area did not have a negative impact on the area as a whole and it was therefore proposed that a review should be undertaken after 12 months to determine if it had met expectations and delivered on the outcomes without having an adverse impact on the tourism sector. It was essential that the policy was adaptable and potentially repealed if it was not having the desired effect. Concerns were raised at the implementation of the STL Control Area, particularly as it was managed through the Planning Applications process which required each application to be considered on individual merits, and the impact of this on existing operators;
- this was new and emerging legislation and there would therefore be much to learn. The consultation responses highlighted a number of concerns regarding holiday homes and it was requested that further information be provided, at the Members' Workshop, on the total number of second homes in Highland. It was further requested that the Workshop be expanded to include increasing the provision of affordable housing for key workers;

- further information was sought and provided on the process to be undertaken to enable these control measures to be adopted in other pressurised areas across the Highlands;
- confirmation was provided that in order to avoid market saturation, new builds for STLs would be managed through the planning applications process;
- the need to ensure economic and tourism benefits from STLs were balanced with the needs and concerns of local communities was recognised. However, the need to increase housing was evidenced through school rolls and the need for key workers across a number of vital sectors. This was a tool which could be utilised to increase housing and local populations and thus creating sustainable communities; and
- additional housing was being built in the area but this was being purchased directly off plan with a view to being utilised as a STL. It was impossible for local people to secure homes and as a result there was a housing crisis in Badenoch and Strathspey which needed to be addressed.

Thereafter, Mr K Gowans, seconded by Mr C Munro **MOVED** the recommendations as set out in the report. As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr A Christie, moved that an additional recommendation be included that should the Scottish Ministers approve this STL control area application, to review the policy after 12 months, assessing the outcomes against the initial expectations.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 43 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 20 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

#### **For the Motion:**

Ms S Atkin, Mr C Balance, Mr A Baldrey, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Ms T Collier, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Mr S Kennedy, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mr W Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr R Mackintosh, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr J McGillivray, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Mrs P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Paterson, Ms M Reid, Ms K Willis, Mr A Rhind, Mr K Rosie.

#### **For the Amendment:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr R Gunn, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs B Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Mr M MacCallum, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackintosh, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Ms J McEwan, Mrs L Sagers, Mrs T Robertson.

### **Decision**

The Council:-

- NOTED** the new and emerging legislation to control and manage short-term lets as summarised in Section 4 of the report;
- NOTED** the consultation feedback and the potential implications that a Short-Term Let Control Area would have on communities within Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey) as set out in Appendix 1 and summarised in Section 5 of the report; and
- based on the consultation feedback and available evidence, **AGREED** to apply to Scottish Ministers to designate Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey) as a Short-Term Let Control Area and to delegate authority to Officers to:-

- a. submit the Short-Term Let Control Area proposal to Scottish Ministers;
- b. following the decision by Scottish Ministers, bring back a further report to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee confirming the outcome and outlining the next steps, including the date of the commencement of the Control Area; and
- c. arrange a Members' workshop to discuss the differing planning policy options for considering and determining planning applications for secondary letting within the Short-Term Let Control Area.

## **11. Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery (LACER) Funding Maoineachadh Ath-shlànachadh Eaconamach Covid Ùghdarrais Ionadail**

**Declarations of Interest: Mr S Mackie declared an interest in this item as a non-Council appointed Director of Caithness Citizens Advice Bureau and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, he left the meeting for this item.**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that he had a connection to this item as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau. The report proposed as part of a much more significant package of measures totalling £3.69m but allocating £25,000 to Highland Citizens Advice Bureau to support energy advice. Having sought advice from officers and having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare. However, he had also discussed this with the Convener and in the event that there was discussion of this specific award or its level to the CAB then he would leave the Chamber for the duration of that discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/17/22 dated 15 June 2022 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- everyone was aware of the impact of Covid on Highland Communities and while there was a return to normality the adverse impact and legacy of Covid remained. The proposals contained in the report were endorsed and welcomed. The proposals would build on the existing and planned support for businesses and much needed financial help for vulnerable people, young children and adults. The cost of living impact on households would hit the vulnerable and low income households hardest of all. The proposals would put much needed money into the pockets of those in most need of it;
- the work the Welfare team had undertaken over the last few years had been tremendous. It was particularly welcomed that using welfare records already held by the Council, households who are eligible to receive the proposed Cost of Living Support and the Living Support for Vulnerable Children and Young People will receive payments automatically without the need to complete and submit application forms;
- there was a concern that the LACER funding was non recurring as it was felt the cost of living crisis would not be short term and it was hoped that there would be additional support in future to continue with this much needed financial support for those most in need;
- it was queried why Environment Health had been targeted to receive funding when other business support could be offered. It was advised that businesses had to comply with Environmental Health and Trading Standards. It was intended to streamline these functions to support businesses but there was not the capacity to do this within the existing teams. Therefore LACER funding would be invested in

these teams to streamline processes making it easier for businesses to work with these teams and free staff time to support businesses better;

- Members were being inundated with requests for help with poverty and Members needed to address this by being observant to signs of poverty when meeting people and to look to make LACER recurring funding. This issue should also be a regular item on all Ward Business meetings to address what can be done locally to help people; and
- the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Welfare teams did a fantastic job throughout the Covid period. Staff had attended Community Hubs and were able to assist people in person. There were many different funding streams and there was a need to work with the various community groups to direct support to those who needed it. Community Support Co-ordinators had been very effective in supporting communities.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED**:-

- i. that the Highland Council's LACER funding was non-recurring;
- ii. that the proposed support for business was in addition to business grant provision for economic recovery, growth and resilience;
- iii. the ongoing measures and activities being undertaken to maximise households' incomes. This includes removing complex application processes, using well-established referral pathways, making best use of social media and the Council's website, and through the effective and well-established collaboration between the Council's Welfare Support team and Citizens Advice;

and **AGREED**:

- iv. that £0.210m be provided on a non-recurring basis for regulatory compliance by businesses through increased support and online services from Environmental Health and Trading Standards;
- v. to provide a non-recurring £3.429m package of welfare support for households most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic; and
- vi. the welfare eligibility criteria, payment arrangements and timescales for making payments, as set out in section 9 of this report.

## **12. Levelling Up Fund Maoin Dèanamh Co-ionann**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr D Gregg declared an interest in this item as a relative was employed in the Civil Service Department dealing with Levelling Up Funds.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/18/22 dated 15 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Levelling Up Fund was a great opportunity for Highland and the efforts of Officers in preparing the Round 2 bids was acknowledged and work had already commenced on bids for the next round;
- the Portree Harbour bid, if successful, would potentially be transformational for the area and thanks were extended to Portree and Braes Community Trust and all those involved in this work over many years. The partnership working with the community in this strong bid was acknowledged;

- the bid for funding for the North Coast 500 if successful would make a huge difference to the area and thanks were extended to all those involved in preparing the bid;
- in terms of the North Coast 500 bid, there were concerns expressed regarding the proposed significant investment in roads infrastructure and tourism site access, with less investment proposed in active travel which supports Scotland's net zero targets and national transport strategy. Therefore, it would be preferable to see more spend on low carbon transport in the application rather than the roads aspect of the bid. It was also highlighted that there had been numerous complaints from locals on the level of traffic and speeding on the North Coast 500. Any investment that would encourage more traffic and speeding was going in the wrong direction. Therefore, there should be more investment on Active Travel. In particular, it was queried if the bid included the high priority active travel route between Inverness and Beaulieu and, if not, it was requested this be included at least to feasibility level;
- it was advised that, if the bid for funding was successful, this would allow the flexibility for the Council to spend more of its resources in other areas. There were some communities on the North Coast 500 who would welcome this bid to support the infrastructure and boost the economy in their area;
- there would be real benefits to local communities on the North Coast 500 if traffic calming measures could be introduced;
- there was disappointment that there was no mention of proposed investment in Sutherland or Ross in Round 3 Levelling up Fund bids. There were a number of investment opportunities in these areas that would make an enormous impact to the various communities. It was therefore proposed that there be an amendment to the report to request that a review of the application to Round 3 of the levelling up fund for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross be carried out to include investment opportunities in Sutherland and Ross;
- it was intended to put more resources into identifying projects in Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Lochaber areas so that there were projects ready for consideration for various funding streams. However, it was not possible to guarantee projects would be ready for submission in certain areas and there were specific criteria to be met in what could be applied for;
- all areas of the Council would have investment opportunities in communities for levelling up funding and it would be useful to know the number of projects currently being worked on. Also, there should be a programme of projects ready for any future funding streams that might become available; and
- the importance of maintenance of electric vehicle charges was highlighted. Also, the bid for Electric Vehicle charging points would be shared with all Members.

Thereafter, Mr K Gowans, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, **MOVED** approval of the recommendations in the report.

As an Amendment, Mr R Gale, seconded by Mr J McGillivray, moved as an **AMENDMENT** an additional recommendation to the report to request that a review of the application to Round 3 of the levelling up fund for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross be carried out to include investment opportunities in Sutherland and Ross.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 46 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 9 votes, with 4 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Ms S Atkin, Mr A Baldrey, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms H Crawford, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mr

R Gunn, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Mr S Kennedy, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Loudon, Ms M MacCallum, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mrs A MacLean, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Ms J McEwan, Mr D Millar, Mrs P Munro, Mr C Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Paterson, Ms M Reid, Mr A Rhind, Mrs T Robertson, Mr K Rosie, Mr R Stewart.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr C Atkin, Mr A Christie, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr W MacKay, Mr D Macpherson, Mr J McGillivray, Mr H Morrison.

**Abstention:**

Mr C Balance, Mr A Jarvie, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K Willis.

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** that:

- i. bids were submitted in Round 2 of the Levelling Up fund for the North Coast 500 (Transport Bid) and Portree Harbour (standalone Heritage bid);
- ii. that the submission of the finalised bids was delegated to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the Council Convener, the Council Leader and the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy and Infrastructure Committee as outlined in paragraph 6.1 of the report; and
- iii. work continues on the preparation of bids for the Caithness and Sutherland and Ross, Skye and Lochaber Constituency bids over the coming year to ensure readiness for Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund process.

**13. Shared Prosperity Fund  
Maoin Soirbheachais Co-roinnte**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/19/22 dated 15 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the funding was an opportunity to help communities develop plans/projects they might have but did not know how to progress further. It could provide capacity to develop local place plans or high-end feasibility studies, Nairn Harbour redevelopment being cited as a potential example of the latter. It was a good news story and it was important to communicate it to communities as soon as possible and to not miss the opportunity to take advantage of it;
- there was no reference to poverty in the report and it was suggested that the Investment Plan should, as much as possible, try to address poverty and inequality. The funding could be used to build up and sustain communities and to benefit vulnerable people - eg through the provision of learning opportunities. Community Link Workers were due to finish in July and some of the funding could potentially be used to continue their contracts;
- it had been left to a small group of people to decide how the funding was spent and, given that the Investment Plan did not have to be submitted until 1 August 2022, a request was made that it be circulated to all Members for comment prior to final approval. The Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee confirmed that he was happy for the draft Investment Plan to be circulated to Members;
- European Social Fund funding for the Move On project would cease at the end of the year and the Communities and Place team would be coming forward in due course with a proposal in that regard and with a view to building on the success of



the project. In addition, the Communities and Place team would be looking at plans to provide local funding for local projects along the lines of the place investment policy;

- reference was made to the lack of independent garages in Highland that were trained to repair electric cars. UHI West Highland's college in Fort William had indicated that it could hire equipment and personnel to train local independent engineers but it did not have the money to do so, and it was suggested the Shared Prosperity Fund might be a source for the funding required; and
- whilst the Shared Prosperity Fund was an exciting opportunity for Highland, many of the lead officers were also involved in the LACER funding and the Levelling Up Fund, and an assurance was sought, and provided, that there was sufficient capacity and projects would not be held up.

## **Decision**

The Council:

- i. **AGREED** the proposed approach and activities to be included in the Investment Plan;
- ii. **NOTED** the process underway and timelines associated with the finalisation and submission of the Investment Plan;
- iii. **AGREED** the approval of the final Investment Plan for submission to the UK Government would be delegated to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the Council Convener, the Council Leader and the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy and Infrastructure Committee for the reasons outlined in paragraph 6.5 of the report; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Investment Plan be circulated to all Members for comment prior to final approval.

## **14. Opportunity Cromarty Firth – Green Freeport Bid Cothrom Linne Chromba – Tairgse Saor-phuirt Uaine**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/20/22 dated 15 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Mr Roy MacGregor, Chairman of Global Energy Group, and officers were thanked for their work in preparing what was an outstanding bid submitted to the Scottish and UK Government on 20 June 2022;
- this bid, one of the most exciting in decades, would have the potential in unlocking a transformational economic boost for the Highlands and would put Highland on the world stage and cross party support was called for;
- whilst the development focused on the Cromarty Firth, it would influence the wider economy of the Highlands in terms other services such as education, health, further education and the arts;
- the Council had been a member of the Opportunity Cromarty Firth Consortium from an early stage. It was a major project for Highland that would deliver against national outcomes, delivering national energy security and addressing climate change;
- independent reports had already shown that the Cromarty Firth was the only area in Scotland able to deliver on the ambitions for offshore wind of the magnitude required in the UK Energy Security Strategy;
- in addition to offshore energy, all the components were there for the production of Green Hydrogen at scale, probably nationally, with no CO<sub>2</sub> being produced;

- the supply chain was also there from manufacture to operation to maintenance;
- the wider economic spend in communities, but particularly Invergordon, was highlighted;
- Highland had the potential to generate one third of Europe's energy demand which would secure Highland's position as a power-house for Europe;
- the aim was to present a Global Centre for Excellence with skills and innovation in renewable energy. It would be a showcase of what high quality training and job creation could do, providing genuine job opportunities for young people who then could stay, work and thrive in Highland;
- a Green Freeport in the Cromarty Firth had the potential to generate up to 25k quality, sustainable long term jobs and such opportunities needed to be seized;;
- the bid had the backing of major players in the global energy industry;
- it was important to have similar shovel ready projects in place so that when funding came along they could be taken forward;
- this offered not just a regional, national but a continental and international opportunity but it was important to future proof and build on this to ensure a sustainable way forward for generations to come;
- this proposal would reverse the depopulation of Highland;
- on behalf of Cromarty Firth Rising, a call was made for Highland Council to be in charge of any consultation following on from any successful bid. It was vital communities were consulted on all aspects as it developed and that benefits generated were fed down to all;
- the decision making mechanism for the selection of the successful bids was questioned and it was hoped it would not be politically biased; and
- without doubt, the Cromarty Firth Freeport bid was viewed as the best bid submitted and it was hoped that both Scottish and UK Governments would support it. The transformational change it would bring would far outweigh any of the others and, in wake of a successful announcement, there were other opportunities which would arise.

## **Decision**

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** the summary and update on the OCF Project including the OCF Consortium's bid for Green Freeport status, as outlined in Section 4 of the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to homologate the Council's support for the OCF project and Green Freeport bid as set out in the letter of support prepared and signed by the Leader of the Council at Appendix A;
- iii. **AGREED** for the Council to continue its support for the Consortium and relevant communities in enabling the delivery of OCF and promoting its benefits to the region and Scotland/UK; and
- iv. **NOTED** that the result of the Green Freeport competitions due to be announced later in 2022 and next steps would be reported to a future Committee.

## **15. Appointments Cur an Dreuchd**

### **i. Senior Strategic Chairs**

**Declarations of Interest:** Mr J Finlayson, Mr K Gowans and Mr D Louden declared an interest in this items as postholders of positions under discussion and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, they left the meeting for this item.

Following agreement to the establishment of two Senior Strategic Chairs at the meeting on 9 June 2022, the Council was invited to agree that the Chair of Education and Chair of Economy and Infrastructure be appointed.

During discussion, it was commented that, whilst there was no opposition to appointing two Senior Strategic Chairs, there was no information provided as to what cross-cutting Council-wide responsibilities they would have. It was important to evidence the reasons for the proposed appointments, the additional responsibilities that merited the increase in salary, and how the Senior Strategic Chairs would be scrutinised and held to account. In response, the Administration undertook to provide detail of what this would involve.

In addition, given the overarching responsibilities of the post of Chair of Corporate Resources it was proposed that this should be one of the Senior Strategic Chairs especially given its prominence in every aspect of the Council and having financial oversight of Council budgets.

Thereafter, Mr R Bremner, seconded by Mr D Fraser, **MOVED** that the Senior Strategic Chairs be those of the Education Committee and the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr Gale, seconded by Mr A Christie, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that, given the overarching aspect of the Corporate Resources Committee, that the role of Chair of Corporate Resources should be one of the two Senior Strategic Chairs.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 36 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 17 votes, with 1 abstention, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Ms S Atkin, Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Ballance, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr D Fraser, Mr L Fraser, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Mr S Kennedy, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mrs P Munro, Mr C Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mr A Rhind, Mr K Rosie, Ms K Willis.

**For the Amendment:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr A Christie, Ms H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr R Gunn, Mr A Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Ms J McEwan, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Sagers.

**Abstentions:**

Mr J McGillivray

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** that the Chair of the Education Committee and the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee be appointed as Senior Strategic Chairs.

ii. **South Planning Applications Committee**

The Council **NOTED** additional membership to the South Planning Applications Committee to that submitted to the Council's last meeting on 9 June 2022 as follows:-

Substantive Members – Mr D Fraser, Mr A Graham and Mr K Gowans (latter was formerly a Substitute Member)

Substitute Member – Mr D Macpherson

In relation to the Redesign Board, the Council **AGREED** that the membership would be formed from nominations from the Leaders of the Independent, SNP, Liberal Democrat and Scottish Conservative Groups.

### iii. **Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee**

The Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee was a Joint Committee established by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Moray Council, and The Highland Council (the “Constituent Authorities”) under sections 56 and 57 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The Joint Committee appointed two named representatives from each Constituent Authority to its membership. The creation of the Joint Committee represented the joint commitment of the Constituent Authorities to work collaboratively for the joint discharge of road and road-related functions, including ports and harbours (the “Roads Collaboration”).

The Council **AGREED** to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee with Mrs T Robertson and Mr K Rosie as substitute Members to represent the Highland Council on the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

### iv. **Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees**

The full Scottish Joint Council (SJC) met once a year in November. Each Council had been invited to nominate one Member to the SJC. Where the nominated councillor was unable to attend a meeting, the constitution allowed another councillor to substitute. Councillor representatives on the SJC Steering Group met 3-6 times a year and were drawn from the group of councillors nominated to the SJC at the COSLA Convention.

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr B Lobban to the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees.

### v. **Scotland Excel Joint Committee**

Scotland Excel was governed by a joint committee and was formed under section 57 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to carry out a range of procurement functions on behalf of Councils and associate members. The Joint Committee was made up of Elected Members from each of Scotland’s local authorities.

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr D Loudon to the Scotland Excel Joint Committee.

### vi. **Community Planning Partnership Board**

The remit of the Community Planning Partnership Board was to provide collective strategic leadership and oversight of service delivery with the aim of improving services and outcomes for Highland communities; to promote and develop improved partnership working; to provide vision, direction and governance for community

planning activity; and to provide oversight and scrutiny of partnership activity and priorities.

The importance of the Board having been emphasised, the Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr R Bremner and Mr G MacKenzie to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

vii. **NHS Highland Health & Social Care Committee**

At its last meeting the Council appointed Mrs M Cockburn, Mr D Fraser and Mr R Gunn to the NHS Highland Health & Social Care Committee. However, Mrs Cockburn had a place on this Committee by virtue of being appointed by the Council to the NHS Highland Board.

Accordingly, the Council **AGREED** to appoint Dr C Birt to the Health & Social Care Committee.

**16. Timetable of Meetings for the remainder of 2022**  
**Clàr-ama Choinneamhan airson na tha air fhàgail de 2022**

The Council **AGREED** the amended circulated timetable of Meetings for the remainder of 2022, subject to the Licencing Committee and Board moving from 9 August to 3 August.

The Council also **NOTED** that a proposed Timetable for Meetings in 2023 would be circulated for consideration at the September Council meeting.

**17. Recess Powers**  
**Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Council **AGREED** that, during the recess period, powers should be granted to the Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officers, in consultation with the Convener, Leader of the Council, relevant Committee Chair and the Leader of the Opposition, to deal with issues arising during that time and that a report should be prepared for the first meeting of the Council or relevant Committee following the period where these powers had been exercised.

**18. Deeds Executed**  
**Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh**

Members **NOTED** that a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 26 May 2022 was available on the Council's Website.

**19. Exclusion of the Public**  
**Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Council **AGREED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**20. Commercial Property Investment Opportunity  
Cothrom Tasgadh Seilbh Coimeirsealta**

**Transparency Statement:** Mr D Macpherson made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that a relative was an investor in property in Fort William. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare because the properties were not connected to those under discussion. He requested that this Statement be recorded in the Minutes.

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. HC/21/22 dated 16 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

**Decision**

Following private discussion, the Council **AGREED** the recommendation as detailed in the report with approval of negotiation to be determined under Recess Powers.

**21. Tain 3-18 Campus Project  
Pròiseact Àrainn Bhaile Dhubhthaich 3-18**

**Transparency Statement:** Mr G MacKenzie and Mrs L Niven made Transparency Statements in respect of this item in that close family members were employed by the developer of the Tain 3-18 Campus. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that they had an interest to declare because the family members were not employed on the Tain 3-18 Campus. They requested that this Statement be recorded in the Minutes.

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. HC/22/22 dated 16 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

**Decision**

Following private discussion, the Council **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 5.40pm.

**The Highland Council  
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held remotely on Friday, 1 July 2022 at 10.30am.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr R Gunn  
Mr A Jarvie  
Mr W MacKay

Mr S Mackie  
Ms J McEwan  
Mr K Rosie

**Officials in attendance:**

Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support and Engagement, Community and Place  
Mr M Sutherland, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Performance & Governance

Miss J MacLennan in the Chair for Items 1-3.

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

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Liesgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr M Reiss.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

Item 6ii – Mr R Gunn

Items 6ii & 6iv – Mr S Mackie (Transparency Statement and Declaration of Interest respectively)

**3. Appointment of Chair of Caithness Committee  
Cur Cathraiche Chomataidh Ghallaibh an Dreuchd**

Mr R Gunn was nominated by Mr A Jarvie and this was seconded by Ms J McEwan.

There being no further nominations, Mr R Gunn was appointed as Chair of the Committee and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**Point of Order**

Prior to the consideration of items 4 and 5 on the agenda, disappointment was expressed by Mr Mackay that the roles of Provost of Wick and Provost of Thurso were being combined with the position of Vice Chairs. It was contended that these were two different positions and should be recognised as such. Mr MacKay and Mr Mackie had been appointed to these positions during the last session of Council but they had not been able to undertake their civic duties due to the Covid pandemic. It was suggested that Mr MacKay and Mr Mackie be allowed to continue in the roles of

Provost of Wick and Provost of Thurso for the full term of 5 years. If this was agreeable then nominations would be sought for 1 or 2 Vice Chairs to support the Area Chair.

Whilst being sympathetic to these comments, others were of the assumption that the terms of office of Provosts of Wick and Thurso would end at the recent Local Government Election and that the agenda should remain as it was.

Thereafter, Mr S Mackie seconded by Ms J McEwan **MOVED** to continue with the Agenda as published.

Mr W MacKay, seconded by Mr K Rosie, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the posts of Vice Chair and Provosts, as detailed in items 4 and 5 of the Agenda, be separated and the Provosts elected for Wick and Thurso in the previous Council continue.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** was carried by 4 votes to 3, with no abstentions, the votes having being cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr R Gunn; Mr A Jarvie; Mr S Mackie; Ms J McEwan

**For the Amendment:**

Mr R Bremner; Mr W MacKay; Mr K Rosie.

**4. Appointment of Vice-Chair and Provost of Thurso**

Mr S Mackie was nominated by Mr R Gunn and this was seconded by Ms J McEwan.

Mr K Rosie was nominated by Mr R Bremner and this was seconded by Mr W MacKay.

On a vote between the two candidates, Mr S Mackie received 4 votes and Mr K Rosie received 3 votes and there were no abstentions.

The Committee therefore **AGREED** that Mr S Mackie be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee and Provost of Thurso, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**Votes for Mr S Mackie**

Mr R Gunn; Mr A Jarvie; Mr S Mackie; Ms J McEwan

**Votes for Mr K Rosie**

Mr R Bremner; Mr W MacKay; Mr K Rosie.

**5. Appointment of Vice-Chair and Provost of Wick**

Ms J McEwan was nominated by Mr A Jarvie and this was seconded by Mr S Mackie.

Mr W Mackay was nominated by Mr R Bremner and this was seconded by Mr K Rosie.

In a vote between the two candidates, Ms J McEwan received 4 votes and Mr W Mackay received 3 votes and there were no abstentions.



The Committee therefore **AGREED** that Ms J McEwan be appointed as Vice- Chair of the Committee and Provost of Wick, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**Votes for Ms J McEwan**

Mr R Gunn; Mr A Jarvie; Mr S Mackie; Ms J McEwan

**Votes for Mr W MacKay**

Mr R Bremner; Mr W MacKay; Mr K Rosie.

**6. Member Appointments  
Cur Bhall an Dreuchd**

**i. Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership – Advisory Board  
Com-pàirteachas Ath-bheothachaidh Ghallaibh agus Chataibh a Tuath –  
Bòrd Comhairleachaidh**

The Committee had been asked to appoint 2 members to serve on the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Advisory Board.

Mr R Bremner was nominated by Mr S Mackie and this was seconded by Mr R Gunn.

Mr M Reiss was nominated by Mr S Mackie and this was seconded by Ms J McEwan.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr R Bremner and Mr M Reiss to the Advisory Board of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership.

**ii. Dounreay Stakeholders Group  
Buidheann Luchd-ùidh Dhùnraih**

**Transparency Statements – Mr S Mackie and Mr R Gunn made Transparency Statements as Chair and member of Dounreay Stakeholders Group respectively. However, having applied the objective test, they did not consider they had to declare an interest and would therefore would stay and take part in this item.**

Members were advised that the primary purpose of the Dounreay Stakeholders Group was to be the main interface between the community, the site operator at Dounreay and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) in areas such as programme delivery, safety, environment and security and to play an important role in the economic regeneration of the area. It was part of a network of site stakeholder groups across the United Kingdom with each site group represented at meetings of a national stakeholder group set up by the NDA.

The Council was required to appoint 4 Members to the Dounreay Stakeholders Group comprising 3 Members from the Caithness area and 1 Member from the Sutherland area.

Mr W MacKay was nominated by Mr A Jarvie and this was seconded by Mr R Bremner.

Mr K Rosie was nominated by Mr S Mackie and seconded by Mr R Bremner.

Mr A Jarvie was nominated by Ms J McEwan and this was seconded by Mr R Bremner.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr W MacKay, Mr K Rosie and Mr A Jarvie to the Dounreay Stakeholders Group.

**iii. Caithness & North Sutherland Fund  
Maoin Ghallaibh & Chataibh a Tuath**

Members were advised that the Caithness & North Sutherland Fund was established by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd to distribute funding to community organisations for projects that would increase the attractiveness of Caithness and North Sutherland as a place to live, work and invest with particular emphasis on achieving environment, social, culture and infrastructure improvements.

The Fund required 3 Members to be appointed – 2 Members from the Caithness Wards and 1 Member from the North West & Central Sutherland Ward.

Mr W MacKay was nominated by Mr S Mackie and seconded by Mr R Bremner.

Mr M Reiss was nominated by Mr S Mackie and seconded by Mr R Gunn.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr W MacKay and Mr M Reiss to the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund.

**iv. Caithness Citizen's Advice Bureau – Board  
Biùro Comhairleachaidh Pobaill Ghallaibh – Bòrd**

**Declaration of Interest - Mr S Mackie declared an interest in this item as a Director of Caithness Citizen's Advice Bureau and removed himself from consideration for this position.**

The Committee was asked to appoint 1 Member to serve as a Director of Caithness Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Ms J McEwan was nominated by Mr R Bremner and seconded by Mr K Rosie.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Ms J McEwan to the Caithness Citizen's Advice Bureau.

**v. Caithness Local Access Forum  
Fòram Cothrom Ionadail Ghallaibh**

The Council had a statutory duty under Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to establish Local Access Forums for its area. There were currently six Local Access Forums in the Highland area which advised on matters in relation to the exercise of access rights, the existence of delineation of rights of way or the drawing up and adoption of the Core Path Plan. In addition, they also offered and gave assistance to parties in terms of the resolution of any disputes in this respect. The Committee were asked to appoint 2 Members to the Caithness Local Access Forum.

Mr K Rosie was nominated by Mr S Mackie and seconded by Ms J McEwan.

Mr A Jarvie was nominated by Ms J McEwan and seconded by Mr R Gunn.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr K Rosie and Mr A Jarvie to the Caithness Local Access Forum.

**vi. Chair of Caithness Poverty Action Group**

The Committee was asked to appoint 1 Member as Chair of Caithness Poverty Action Group.

Mr R Bremner was nominated by Mr K Rosie and seconded by Mr W MacKay.

Mr A Jarvie was nominated by Ms J McEwan and seconded by Mr R Gunn.

*At this point, the meeting was adjourned for a short period to resolve IT connectivity issues and the meeting resumed at 11.25 a.m.*

In a vote between the two candidates, Mr R Bremner received 3 votes and Mr A Jarvie received 3 votes and there were no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**Votes for Mr Bremner**

Mr R Bremner; Mr W MacKay; Mr K Rosie

**Votes for Mr A Jarvie**

Mr R Gunn; Mr A Jarvie; Ms J McEwan

On there being an equal number of votes cast, lots were drawn and **Mr A Jarvie** was appointed as Chair of Caithness Poverty Action Group.

**vi. Your Police, You Decide Steering Group (Caithness)**

The Committee was asked to appoint 1 Member to the Steering Group.

Mr W MacKay was nominated by Mr R Bremner and seconded by Mr R Gunn.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr W MacKay to the Your Police, You Decide Steering Group (Caithness).

In this regard, reference was made that there might be other Member appointments that needed to be filled. It was suggested that if there were such Boards/Organisations where returning Elected Members had previously been appointed to then they continue to attend these meetings in the interim. Formal appointments would be made at the next Caithness Area Committee.

The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Black Isle Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday 8 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Ms S Atkin  
Ms L Johnston  
Ms M MacCallum

### In attendance:

Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Ms L MacAllister, Roads Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

### Also in attendance:

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. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Black Isle Committee.

### 4. Appointment of Chair of Black Isle Committee Cur an Dreuchd Cathraiche Comataidh an Eilein Duibh

Ms L Johnston was nominated by Ms S Atkin and this was seconded by Ms M MacCallum.

There being no further nominations, Ms Johnston was appointed as Chair of the Committee and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**5. Appointment of Vice Chair of Black Isle Committee  
Cur an Dreuchd Leas-Chathraiche Comataidh an Eilein Duibh**

Ms M MacCallum was nominated by Ms S Aitkin and this was seconded by Ms L Johnston.

There being no further nominations, Ms MacCallum was appointed Vice Chair.

**6. Police – Area Performance Report  
Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No BI/8/22 by the Area Inspector, Police Scotland. Inspector Richard Ross highlighted several key areas of the report.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- County Lines was a very serious issue that affected a lot of young people and that members of the community did not necessarily know that this issue existed. It was suggested that there should be a meeting with police and community councils to discuss this issue and inform people of how the police were tackling it;
- in response to a question about numbers of alcohol related driving offences it was stated that numbers of these offences were probably not higher in the Black Isle than in other areas of Highland. It was also suggested that an increase in these numbers was likely due to having new and better equipment with which to test people driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and.
- the “coffee with a cop” initiative in Avoch was very welcome and that it was hoped this could continue.

The Committee **NOTED** 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 to 30 March 2022.

**7. Black Isle Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved since 1 April 2022  
Iarrtasan Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàrd an Eilein Duibh air an aontachadh bho Ghiblean 2022**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Black Isle Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since 1 April 2022:

- Cromarty Camera Club: Highland Challenge Photographic Competition - £800
- Avoch Primary School: Improving Play and Learning experiences P1 and P2 - £1,500
- Highland Historic Trust (HBT): Churches Heritage Trail - £400

**8. Common Good Funds  
Maoin Maith Choitchinn**

**a. Cromarty Common Good Fund**

There had been circulated Report No BI/10/22 dated 26 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

During discussion clarification was sought, and received, concerning the landlord for the Townlands Playpark.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the position of Cromarty Common Good Fund as shown in the 2022/23 Quarter One monitoring statement; and
- ii. the budget for 2022/23 approved by Committee on 15 February 2022.

#### **b. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund**

There had been circulated Report No BI/11/22 dated 26 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

During discussion clarification was sought, and received, on the terms of the Fortrose Bay lease.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the position of Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund as shown in the 2022/23 Quarter One monitoring statement; and
- ii. the budget for 2022/23 approved by Committee on 15 February 2022.

### **9. Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No BI/11/22 dated 13 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

Following a detailed explanation of the winter service plan, both regionally and locally, the following issues were raised:-

- in response to a question it was confirmed that there were plans in place to deal with problems arising from staff absences due to Covid;
- it was explained that it could take anywhere from one hour to a full day to treat all the roads on the Black Isle depending on conditions;
- Information was sought, and received, surrounding the procurement of salt for the treatment of roads; and
- In response to a request information was provided concerning how the Community Resilience plan was promoted and monitored. In particular, it was commented that the uptake of this scheme on the Black Isle had been very good.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. **NOTED** that Covid-19 and drivers' hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

**10. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

The Minutes of Meeting of the Black Isle Committee held on 15 February 2022, which had been approved by the Council on 10 March 2022, were **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 am

## Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held remotely on Tuesday 8 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr L Fraser  
Mr M Green

Ms B Jarvie  
Mr P Oldham

### In attendance:

Mrs K Lackie, Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer, Performance & Governance

Mrs A Clark, Head of Service Community Support and Engagement, Communities and Place

Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer, Performance & Governance

Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance

### Also in attendance:

Mr R Chapman, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**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. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Nairnshire Committee.

### 4. Appointment of Chair Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd

Mr L Fraser, seconded by Mr P Oldham, nominated Mr M Green for the position of Chair of the Nairnshire Area Committee.

There being no other nominations, Mr M Green was duly appointed as Chair of the Nairnshire Committee.



**At this point in the meeting, Mr M Green assumed the position as Chair.**

Mr M Green, seconded by Mr L Fraser, proposed that Mr P Oldham be appointed as Vice Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr P Oldham was duly appointed as Vice Chair of the Nairnshire Committee.

**5. Appointment of Provost  
Cur an Dreuchd Pròbhaist**

Mr M Green, seconded by Mr P Oldham, nominated Mr L Fraser for the position of Provost of Nairn.

There being no other nominations, Mr L Fraser was duly appointed as Provost of Nairn.

**6. Appointments to Sub-Committee, Working Groups etc  
Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean, Buidhnean-obrach is eile**

In order to avoid any conflicts of interest, the Chair proposed that, with the exception of the Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership, there should not be any formal appointments to sub-committees and working groups and that Members attend meetings as and when required/requested.

The Committee **AGREED** not to make any formal appointments to sub-committees and working groups and that Members attend meetings as and when required/requested subject to the following exception:

- Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership – Ms B Jarvie

**7. Appointments to Outside Bodies  
Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean on Taobh A-muigh**

The Chair proposed the same principle to that taken at Item 6 be adopted in that there should be no appointments to Outside Bodies with the exception of the Nairn District Salmon Fishery Board.

The Committee **AGREED** not to make any formal appointments to Outside Bodies and that Members attend meetings as and when required/requested subject to the following exception:

- Nairn District Salmon Fishery Board - Mr Laurie Fraser and Ms Barbara Jarvie.

**8. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report  
Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No NC/06/22 dated 22 July 2022 by the Local Senior Officer.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Further information was sought and provided on false alarms and the process undertaken in response to these. Assurance was provided that these incidents were responded to and treated seriously. In addition, preventative engagement was undertaken with the premises holders to eliminate what caused the false alarms and avoid this repeating in future;
- it was clarified that availability of the station's second fire appliance (69.56%) was due to staffing availability. Assurance was provided that efforts were being made to recruit more staff to provide cover during specific time slots to ensure 100% availability for both appliances. Further assurance was provided that there was an active engagement and recruitment campaign to recruit more female fire fighters;
- further information was sought and provided on the school driving initiative during which was it confirmed that this was a virtual programme which would target 16/17 year school pupils in Nairn and include driver and passenger safety education; and
- it was confirmed that the fire at the side of the railway on the B9091 was not deliberate.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance report.

## 9. **Winter Service Plan 2022/23** **Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2022/23**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/07/22 dated 19 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion it was requested that the winter route priority map be updated to reflect the current position in that the service and school bus route had been extended in line with the development of Montgomerie Drive and this should therefore be upgraded to a Secondary priority group; as they were no longer on a bus route, Lyle Road, Osprey Crescent and Sutors Park should be downgraded to priority group Other; and the map should also be amended to indicate that all residential roads in the new housing estates were being gritted. It was also queried when the Community Councils had last been contacted regarding the collaborative community self-help initiative Winter Resilience and the Roads Operations Manager advised he would investigate this and issue a new contact if necessary.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 subject to the winter route priority map being updated to reflect the current position as follows:
  - a. the bus route along Montgomerie Drive be upgraded to a Secondary priority group;
  - b. Lyle Road, Osprey Crescent and Sutors Park be downgraded to priority group Other;
  - c. the map be amended to indicate that all residential roads in the new housing estates were being gritted; and
- ii. **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

**10. Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF)  
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann**

Prior to discussion of the undernoted reports, the Chair explained that the NCGF had an important role for the people of Nairn and it was vital they were involved in the decision-making process. He therefore welcomed the establishment of a pilot scheme to achieve this outcome, the details of which would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

**a. Consultation on proposal to dispose, by sale, of Grant Street workshop and yard, Grant Street, Fishertown, Nairn  
Co-chomhairle mu mholadh gus faighinn cuidhteas, le reic, de bhùth-obrach is lios Sràid nan Granddach, Sràid nan Granddach, Baile an lasgaich, Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/08/22 dated 6 July 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points had been raised:

- Members indicated that they were supportive of the property being leased as opposed to being sold. It was felt that the asset should be retained and an income generated from the lease and that the tenant might also be able to make improvements;
- It was thought the site was for commercial use only but if it was to be sold for housing then it would require to be offered to the Housing Service in the first instance; and
- this was a secluded area and the site would benefit from the overgrowth being cleared and drone footage/photographs being taken to enable the full potential of the site in terms of the lease options to be explored.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as contained in the analysis at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the responses to the issues raised in connection with the proposal for publication on the Council's website as contained in the table in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- iii. **AGREED** the property be leased instead of being sold and that the proposal go ahead on that basis.

**b. Consultation on disposal and associated change of use at West Links, Nairn  
Co-chomhairle mu fhaighinn cuidhteas agus atharrachadh cleachdaidh aig Machair an Iar, Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/09/22 dated 6 July 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members indicated their support for this proposal and recognised that extending the seating area would help to boost business, particularly in the winter, and continue to attract many visitors to the area. It was noted that this was a lengthy lease (30 years) and it was suggested and confirmed that the lease would revert to Common Good in the event that the business was no longer trading.

In respect of the consultation concerning the existing and proposed additional land to be leased at West Links, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as contained in the analysis at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the responses to the issues raised in connection with the proposal which could be found at Appendix 1 to the report for publication on the Council's website;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposal to dispose, by lease, of the area of 178m<sup>2</sup> of land at West Links, Marine Road, Nairn;
- iv. **AGREED** to change the use of the additional 40.5m<sup>2</sup> area from public amenity to kiosk seating; and
- v. **NOTED** that, if agreed, it would be necessary to seek Sheriff Court consent in respect of the proposal.

**c. Consultation on potential future development of Sandown Lands – Consultation Outcome**  
**Co-chomhairle mu leasachadh san àm ri teachd aig Fearann Sandown – Toradh Co-chomhairle**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/10/22 dated 7 July 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Officers were commended for the report and the effective consultation that had been undertaken and the proposals accurately reflected the views of the community. The importance of consultation and continuous improvement and the role of the Reference Group to achieve this was also emphasised. Appreciation was expressed for the time and contributions from the members of the Reference Group;
- further information was sought and provided on community growing opportunities during which it was confirmed it could include working in partnership with the Council's Community Food Growing Officer in respect of community growing/agriculture, expansion of the existing allotments and education in a green space. However, it was explained that this would need wider engagement and community involvement to develop and determine what aspects should be taken forward. It was indicated that the Community Supported Agriculture ideas were welcomed and consideration should be given to developing these;
- the proposal to undertake a feasibility study to establish the community growing opportunities was welcomed and it was hoped that this would have diverse engagement with a wide range of ages and family involvement;
- self-build plots had been considered previously but there had not been a great demand and a green energy project had also been tried but failed due

- to being unable to connect to the grid. If properties were no longer used for Airbnb then there would be sufficient housing to meet needs; and
- there was a need for agricultural land and given the importance of this in the current climate, it was felt that the two large fields should currently be retained for agricultural use.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the key outcomes from the work of the short life Reference Group at paragraph 4.4 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the representations received in respect of the second phase of the consultation as contained at Appendix 1 to the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the responses to the representations received within the additional period of consultation also outlined at Appendix 1 to the report;
- iv. **APPROVED** the publication of Appendix 1 to the report on the Council's website and to notify those who had responded within the full consultation period, where contact details had been provided;
- v. **NOTED** the analysis and key themes outlined in Section 5.2 of the report which was based upon the feedback from the two consultation periods;
- vi. in terms of the future use or development for the Sandown Lands, **NOTED** the options contained within the report and **AGREED** the officer recommendation as follows:
  - **AGREED** not to proceed with disposal of Sandown lands at this time and **AGREED** the following next steps:
    - a. that options to establish further community growing opportunities on the Sandown Lands field (hatched in pink on the site plan contained in Appendix 2 to the report) be explored through a feasibility study, which would include further engagement with the community. The scope for commissioning this feasibility study would be brought before a future meeting of this Committee; and
    - b. that further work to consider uses for the remainder of the Sandown Lands would be led by the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership, and relevant sub-groups, in an Area Place Planning process. Any future proposal would be subject to a further Community Empowerment Act Consultation and reports to meetings of this Committee.

#### **d. Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF) Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/11/22 dated 29 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- there was a need for more detailed financial information to give more transparency and Members a greater understanding of the fund. Having greater detail would enable income and expenditure to be fully scrutinised i.e. examine costs, ensure rents were fair and identify potential efficiency savings. There was also a need to look for potential opportunities to secure external funding to make improvements such as to insulation. It was

suggested that management accounts, perhaps presented on an annual basis with detailed information on each property, was required but it was recommended that further work be undertaken to determine the most appropriate format that would provide Members with the required level of detail whilst ensuring commercial sensitivity. It was recognised that this would require extra work and thus result in additional costs however this could potentially be offset against any efficiency savings which might be generated;

- a future report on the invitation to pay parking scheme was welcomed. It was requested that a breakdown of income by car park be provided in order to ascertain which meters were delivering a return and how many visitors were taking up the invite to pay which would assist with determining future policy;
- with regard to the Annual Surplus, concern was expressed at the proposed cost (£5,000) for the removal of the Links store and the Committee was advised that the Ward Manager would investigate this to ensure that the best price was secured. The development of the Links area including progress with Phase 2 of Team Hamish and expansion of the seating area at the West Links was welcomed;
- although supportive of the award, the Nairn Book and Arts Festival should be aware that the Ward Discretionary Fund was for one-off funding. It was suggested that there might be a need to identify financial support from an alternative fund in future. The need for successful events to continuously secure funding was an ongoing issue across the Highlands and perhaps there was a need for a central events fund;
- Members were supportive of a Common Good Fund award for Nairn town centre Christmas lights and tree. However, it was expensive and further information was sought and provided on the range of costs that this would be utilised to support. It was reported that a full breakdown of costs was provided annually;
- there was a need to examine the income from the Common Good Fund and how it should be dispersed, particularly if there was a desire for the fund to be operated in a more commercially orientated manner;
- the Committee welcomed the proposal for an Events budget line in the 2023/24 Nairn Common Good Fund budget and each application could be determined on its individual merit. It was suggested that there should be engagement and consultation with the community in order to determine how the fund would be operated and at which level the budget should be set; and
- concern was expressed that the NCGF Investment portfolio was not performing well. It was suggested that this might be due to it being a managed fund rather than a tracked fund. It was indicated that the NCGF replicated the model used by Inverness Common Good Fund but there was a need for further information to enable a greater understanding. It was therefore requested that a report be presented to a future meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the position of the NCGF as shown in the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Statement against Budget for 2022/23;
- ii. **AGREED** the use Nairn Common Good Fund cash reserves in 2022/23 to support Nairn events:

- Nairn Book & Arts Festival £2,000
  - Nairn Christmas lighting £3,000
- iii. **AGREED** that proposals for an Events budget line in the 2023/24 Nairn Common Good Fund budget be presented to a future meeting of the Committee;
- iv. **NOTED** that a report on the Invitation to Pay Parking Scheme at NCGF sites would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee and **AGREED** that this include a breakdown of income by car park; and
- v. **AGREED** that:
- a. there be further investigation to determine how the accounts could be presented in more detail;
  - b. the cost of the removal of the Links store be investigated by the Ward Manager to ensure value for money; and
  - c. there be a report to a future meeting on the NCGF Investment portfolio.

## 11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 8 March 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

The meeting was concluded at 11.45am.

## The Highland Council

**Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair)** held remotely on **Monday, 15 August, 2022 at 10.30 am.**

**Present:**

Mr J Finlayson  
Mr D Millar

Mr C Munro  
Mr R Stewart

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr G Macdonald, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy  
Mr G Smith, Service Lead – Infrastructure, Environment & Economy  
Ms J Wileman, Assistant Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance & Governance

**Also in Attendance:**

Mr M Colliar, Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Ms K Stevenson, Local Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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

***The Clerk took the Chair for items 1 to 4***

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations on interest.

**3. Recess Powers  
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee.

**4. Appointment of Cathraiche (Chair)  
Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd**

Nominations were invited for the post of Cathraiche (Chair) of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair).

Mr J Finlayson was nominated by Mr C Munro and this was seconded by Mr D Millar.



There being no further nominations, Mr J Finlayson was appointed Chair of the Committee and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

At this point, the Chair referred to the shock and sadness at the tragic events that took place on the Isle of Skye and Lochalsh on Wednesday, 10 August. As well as the communities of Sleat and Dornie, the whole of the Isle of Skye and Lochalsh and beyond were trying to come to terms with the terrible events that unfolded. The thoughts and deepest sympathies were extended to all those affected directly and with the wider communities. Members, Officers and Officers of other agencies, churches and community groups were there to support in whatever way was necessary.

As a mark of respect for all those affected, the Committee observed a two minute silence.

**5. Appointment of Vice Chair & Civic Lead  
Cur an Dreuchd Iar-Chathraiche & Ceannard Catharra**

Nominations were invited for the post of Vice Chair & Civic Lead of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair).

Mr C Munro was nominated by Mr D Millar and seconded by Mr J Finlayson.

There being no further nominations Mr C Munro was appointed Vice Chair and Civic Lead of the Committee.

**6. Member Appointments  
Cur an Dreuchd Bhall**

**i Skye & Lochalsh Citizen's Advice Bureau – Board  
Biùro Comhairleachaidh a' Phobail airson an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Loch Aillse – Bòrd**

The Committee was invited to appoint 1 Member to serve as a Director of Skye & Lochalsh Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Mr J Finlayson was nominated by Mr C Munro and seconded by Mr R Stewart.

There being no further nominations, Mr J Finlayson was appointed to serve as Director of Skye & Lochalsh Citizen's Advice Bureau.

**ii Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Fòram Inntreigeadh Ionadail an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Loch Aillse**

The Committee was invited to appoint 1 Member to attend meetings of the Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Mr C Munro was nominated by Mr J Finlayson and seconded by Mr D Millar.

There being no further nominations, Mr C Munro was appointed to attend meetings of the Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations.

**iii Skye & Lochalsh Local Access Forum**

## **Fòram Inntreighadh Ionadail an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Loch Aillse**

The Council had a statutory duty under Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to establish Local Access Forums for its area. There were currently six Local Access Forums in the Highland area which advise on matters in relation to the exercise of access rights, the existence of delineation of rights of way or the drawing up and adoption of the Core Path Plan. In addition, they also offer and give assistance to parties in terms of the resolution of any disputes in this respect.

The Committee was asked to appoint 1 Member to the Skye & Lochalsh Local Access Forum.

Mr D Millar was nominated by Mr J Finlayson and seconded by Mr R Stewart.

There being no further nominations, Mr D Millar was appointed to the Skye & Lochalsh Local Access Forum.

### **7. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 21 February, 2022, which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 10 March, 2022, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

### **8. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There was circulated Report No SR/9/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- Concern was expressed regarding station availability which had deteriorated and it was noted there were recruitment challenges and challenges faced by personnel when combining primary employment and their operational availability and time away for training. It was queried if it was now time for a new staffing model for retained personnel. It was requested that the number of days stations were available for the months of June, July and August be provided for Members.
- It was advised that social and demographic changes and Brexit had impacted on recruitment not just locally but nationally as well, and therefore the area's station availability was becoming increasingly challenging which required innovative ways of supporting operational responses to be adopted, some of which were highlighted. There was continued active recruitment, but there were significant challenges in recruiting and retaining personnel with a desired progress for a more locally based approach supporting candidates and providing training locally where possible. Work was ongoing with colleagues in Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland areas on an improved retained model which would hopefully support improved recruitment processes. The Service worked extremely hard to improve station availability and thanks were extended to fire crews for the dedication in undertaking their duties and helping resolve operational issues.

- A point was made that the Portree Fire Station was no longer fit for purpose given its location and there may be land available on the Portree Industrial estate which would be a far better location. It was advised that the Service was making an application for funding to Scottish Government to look at the viability of a tri partite arrangement in Portree for the Fire, Police and Ambulance Services to be located in the one premises. If this happened then an alternative staffing model would also be considered.
- It was queried what could be done to encourage former members of the service to re-join, such as ensuring training was relevant and locally based to reduce time away from the Island. It was advised that exit interviews were held with staff leaving the service and feedback from these showed that there was a need to focus on localised requirements, such as training, to reduce impacts and burdens on personnel. In terms of training, this was continually reviewed to ensure it was appropriate for each station and to reduce burdens on personnel. However, it was important that personnel had the skills and training on equipment for their own safety and for the safety of the community they served.
- Efforts to recruit and retain personnel at Staffin station were highlighted and in particular, there was a need for a manager to take charge of the appliance.
- In terms of the 8 deliberate fires reported in quarter 4, this was a result of an increase in wildfires in the area and the dedication of crews in responding to these was acknowledged as was the assistance to crews from local communities. Raising awareness for people to be careful when out and about in the countryside was important to try and prevent wildfires.
- It was noted that the age for joining the service was 17. This had not changed given the safety aspect of children working in a potentially dangerous situation. However, there would be a Fire Skills Cadet Scheme introduced in the area next year and this would hopefully encourage young people to come forward and join the service when they reached the required age.
- A brief update was provided on a salmon farm barge that had sank, and it was highlighted that there was no risk to the public at this time.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the Area Performance Report and that the number of days stations in the area were available for the months of June, July and August would be provided for Members.

**9. Isle of Skye and Raasay Winter Maintenance Plan 2022/23  
Plana Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Ratharsair  
2022/23**

There was circulated Report No. SR/10/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The hard work and commitment of staff over the winter period was recognised;
- In terms of vacancies within the team, a post of Roads Inspector had now been filled and recruitment for a Technician post was ongoing;
- It was confirmed that the Braebost and Totescore depots would be available this winter to store salt, and thereby reducing 'dead mileage' by lorries having to return all the way to Sconser to recharge with salt;

- The Quiraing road between Staffin and Uig did get occasional treatment when resources were available. Given the height of this road, it could potentially be closed in the winter, as there was an alternative primary route around the coast.
- The price of salt continued to rise as did shipping costs for transporting the salt;
- Reference was made to 5 roads in Portree that were not adopted. At the end of one of these streets was a block of flats owned by the Council and it was queried if these would be gritted. If not, perhaps grit bins could be provided for use by residents and mini tractors could be used to spread grit on the pavements. It was advised that the 5 streets referred to had not been built to a standard that the Council could adopt and historically there had been an issue with the contractor going out of business. In terms of the unadopted road with the block of flats, the Housing Service could request a salt bin to be provided for that specific road. In terms of the other streets, if there was a request for grit bins, this would be reviewed and grit bins would likely be placed at the end of those streets.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23;
- NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided; and
- NOTED** that the Roads Operations Manager would report back to a Ward Business meeting with an update on his review of the provision of grit bins and use of mini tractors to spread grit on pavements on the 5 unadopted roads in Portree referred to at the meeting.

#### 10. **Presentation – Portree Harbour Levelling Up Fund Update** **Taisbeanadh – Fios às Ùr mu Mhaoin Àrd-ìreachaidh Caladh Phort Rìgh**

The Service Lead (Infrastructure) gave a presentation on the Portree Harbour Levelling Up Fund bid.

It was highlighted that the Council had been working with community groups to improve the Portree Harbour and provide improved cruise ship opportunities and a new breakwater to provide shelter for an improved harbour. The Levelling Up Fund bid had been submitted in early August and the overall package of works totalled £55.4m and a 90% grant bid was sought from the Levelling Up Fund, with the remainder of funding sought from the Council. The main aspects of the bid included:- a fixed link cruise berth; a breakwater to provide shelter and a new access road around the 'lump'; proposals for 100 berth pontoons and small boat slipway; an extended pier, harbour office and RNLI berth; and removal of the tank farm and clear this area for future development. A decision on the bid by the UK Government was expected by October, 2022 and if successful the project could be completed by 2026.

Members expressed their thanks to Officers for their work in preparing the bid and acknowledged the engagement and importance of working with the community in partnership that enabled such a strong bid. Members welcomed what was a fantastic project.

In terms of the junction at Bridge road, it was suggested this was not fit for purpose, particularly during the busy tourist season. It was a narrow junction and narrow road to Bayfield and the new proposed road around the 'lump'. It was advised that the upgrading of this junction had not been included in the bid. If the bid was successful, the issues of access would be addressed through the detailed design.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the Portree Harbour Levelling Up Fund bid.

**11. Ward Discretionary Grants 2022/23**  
**Tabhartasan fo Ùghdarras Uàird 2022/23**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Grants had been Awarded in the 2022/23 financial year to date:

- i. Staffin Primary School Parent Council – Staffin Beach Path, funding to support repairs to the path that will improve access to the beach £1000 Awarded;
- ii. Headway Highland – Multi Ward Application to support vulnerable adults with an acquired brain injury (ABI) and their families/carers throughout the Highland Region - £71 Awarded; and
- iii. Portree & Braes Community Trust - Light Up Portree Autumn Fling, funding to support the running costs of the family fun day of music, community stalls and children's play area - £1410 Awarded.

The meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.

**The Highland Council  
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held remotely on Monday 15 August 2022 at 10.30am.

**Present:**

Mr M Baird  
Mr R Gale  
Ms M Hutchison

Mr J McGillivray  
Ms L A Niven

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Ms J Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

**Also in Attendance:**

Chief Inspector S Macdonald and Inspector C Murray, Police Scotland

**Mr R Gale in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mr H Morrison.

**2. Declarations of Interest  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

Item 9 (recommendation 5 only) - Mr J McGillivray

**3. Appointment of Chair  
Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr R Gale as Chair.

**4. Appointment of Vice Chair  
Cur Iar-Chathraiche an Dreuchd**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr H Morrison as Vice Chair (subject to his acceptance of the position)

**5. Member Appointments  
Cur Bhall an Dreuchd**

i. **Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership – Advisory Board**  
**Com-pàirteachas Ath-bheothachaidh Ghallaibh agus Chataibh a Tuath – Bòrd Comhairleachaidh**

The Council was required to appoint 3 Members to serve on the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Advisory Board. In this regard, it was confirmed that 2 Members should come from the Caithness Wards and 1 Member from the North West Sutherland Ward.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Ms M Hutchison**.

ii. **Dounreay Stakeholders Group**  
**Buidheann Luchd-ùidh Dhùnraath**

The primary purpose of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group was to be the main interface between the community, the site operator at Dounreay and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) in areas such as programme delivery, safety, environment and security and to play an important role in the economic regeneration of the area. It was part of a network of site stakeholder groups across the United Kingdom with each site group represented at meetings of a national stakeholder group set up by the NDA.

The Council was required to appoint 4 Members to the Dounreay Stakeholders Group comprising 3 Members from the Caithness area and 1 Member from the Sutherland area.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Mr M Baird** as detailed.

iii. **Caithness & North Sutherland Fund**  
**Maoin Ghallaibh & Chataibh a Tuath**

The Caithness & North Sutherland Fund was established by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd to distribute funding to community organisations for projects that would increase the attractiveness of Caithness and North Sutherland as a place to live, work and invest with particular emphasis on achieving environment, social, culture and infrastructure improvements.

The Fund required 3 Members to be appointed – 2 Members from the Caithness Wards and 1 Member from the North, West and Central Sutherland Ward.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Mr H Morrison**, (subject to his acceptance of the position).

iv. **Sutherland Local Access Forum**  
**Fòram Intriageadh Ionadail Chataibh**

The Council had a statutory duty under Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to establish Local Access Forums for its area. There were currently six Local Access Forums in the Highland area which advised on matters in relation to the exercise of access rights, the existence of delineation of rights of way or the drawing up and adoption of the Core Path Plan. In addition, they also offered and gave assistance to parties in terms of the resolution of any disputes in this respect.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Mr J McGillivray** and **Ms L A Niven** to serve on the Local Access Forum.

v. **Sutherland Sports Council**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Mr J McGillivray** and **Ms M Hutchison** to serve on the Sutherland Sports Council

**vi. Trustees of Recreational Ground in Royal Burgh of Dornoch  
Urrasairean Talamh Cluiche ann am Baile Rìoghail Dhòrnaich**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Mr J McGillivray** as a Trustee of Recreational Ground in Royal Burgh of Dornoch.

**vii. East and Central Sutherland Citizen's Advice Bureau  
Biùro Comhairleachadh a' Phobail airson Chataibh an Ear agus  
Meadhan Chataibh**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Ms L A Niven** and **Mr M Baird** to serve on the East and Central Sutherland Citizen's Advice Bureau.

**viii. North West Sutherland Citizen's Advice Bureau  
Biùro Comhairleachadh a' Phobail airson Chataibh an Iar-thuath**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Ms M Hutchison** to serve on the North West Sutherland Citizen's Advice Bureau.

**6. Police – Area Performance Summary  
Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/10/22 by the North Area Commander.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Police officers were thanked for their work;
- information was sought and provided on the rates of drink versus drugs driving offences, with drugs being more prevalent but this was aided by the roll out of the use of drug wipes to detect usage. Information was provided on the procedures for undertaking drug searches;
- assurance was sought and provided about police officer cover for prevention and detection based in Caithness but covering a wider area, which was welcomed; and
- Ms L A Niven requested information on County Lines, which would be provided outwith the meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023, for the period covering 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

**7. Community Asset Transfer – Migdale Playing Field  
Glusad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd – Raon-cluiche Mhigein**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/11/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

The Committee **APPROVED** the following Community Asset Transfer:-



The lease of Migdale Playing Field, <sup>57</sup>Bonar Bridge to Bonar Bridge Football Club for 25 years at rental of £1p.a. on the terms set out at section 2.1 of the report.

## 8. Roads - Winter Service Plan 2022/23 Rathaidean – Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No SCC/12/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, the following issues were raised;

- information was sought and provided on responsibility for pavements on the A9, which lay with Bear Scotland;
- it was confirmed that several small pavement tractors were available in various depots around the wards. Gritting started at 6am and it was intended for all primary routes to be gritted by 8.30am. Pre-gritting generally took place between 5pm and 9pm. There was a link on the Council's website for communities to apply for community resilience equipment, such as grit bins, shovels and visibility vests;
- work was being undertaken to fill the various vacancies in the service and applications from female candidates were being encouraged as females were under-represented; and
- the service was commended for its response times to queries.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 and **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

## 9. Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ràitheil Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich

**Declaration of Interest: Mr J McGillivray declared an interest in Recommendation 5 of this item as a Director of the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company for the Dornoch BID project and he left the meeting during discussion and decision of that application.**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Finance and Resources.

The Committee discussed recommendations 1 to 4, and 6 initially, then considered recommendation 5 once Mr J McGillivray had left the meeting.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the position of Dornoch Common Good fund at the end of the first quarter FY 22/23;
- ii **NOTED** the update on current Dornoch Common Good issues;
- iii **AGREED** to delegate to the Ward Manager power to approve expenditure up to £10,000 in relation to Dornoch Common Good within the annually set budget and following consultation with relevant Ward Members. This delegated power will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process;
- iv **AGREED** to homologate community grants totalling £9,921.76 awarded in the current Financial Year;
- v **APPROVED** a grant of £9,999 to Dornoch Area Community Interest Company for the Dornoch BID project, subject to match funding being in place; and

vi **APPROVED** a grant of £1835.60 to Dornoch Area Community Council for the Asset Maintenance & Improvement Projects (Phase 5) project.

**10. Ward budget grants**  
**Tabhartasan Buidseat Uàird**

**North, West and Central Sutherland Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved since 1 April 2022**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following North, West and Central Sutherland Ward Discretionary Budget applications have been approved since 1 April 2022:

Loch Shin Sailing Club: Sailing Equipment – £1,155.00  
Naver Telecentre Centre: Service Development and Community Outreach – £1,528.00

North West Training Centre: Adult Learning Programme 2022-2023 – £1,500.00  
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust: Sutherland Wellbeing Promotional Plan – £415.00

**East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved since 1 April 2022**

The Committee is asked to note that the following East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Discretionary Budget applications have been approved since 1 April 2022:

Clyne Heritage Society: Greeanan Community Archaeological Excavation – £2,500.00

Highland Historic Buildings Trust: Easter Ross Churches Trail – £350.00

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust: Sutherland Wellbeing Promotional Plan – £415.00

Highlife Highland: Youth Zone Summer Activities, Holiday Hunger & Safe Space Drop Ins – £2,900.00

**11. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 28 February 2022, which had been approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Committee **AGREED** they would prefer future meetings to be held in person, with a hybrid option to allow the use of MS Teams and / or Bluejeans videoconferencing.

The meeting ended at 11.40am.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Communities and Place Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 17 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr A Baldrey	Mrs B Jarvie
Mr M Cameron	Mr B Lobban
Mr A Christie (substitute)	Mr P Logue
Ms T Collier (via Teams)	Mr W MacKay (via Teams)
Mr J Finlayson (via Teams)	Mr G MacKenzie (Chair)
Mr L Fraser	Ms L Niven
Mr A Graham	Ms M Nolan
Mr R Gunn	Ms M Reid (substitute)
Mrs J Hendry	

### Non-Members also present:

Mr R MacKintosh	Mrs M Paterson
Mr D Macpherson (via Teams)	Mr A Rhind
Mr D Millar (via Teams)	Mrs T Robertson (via Teams)
Mr C Munro (via Teams)	Mr K Rosie (via Teams)

### In attendance:

Ms D Manson, Chief Executive  
 Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place  
 Ms C Campbell, Head of Community Operations and Logistics  
 Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support and Engagement  
 Mr A McKinnie, Strategic Lead, Waste Strategy and Operations  
 Mr A Yates, Strategic Lead, Environmental Health and Bereavement Services  
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator  
 Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator  
 Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

### Also in attendance:

Chief Superintendent C Trickett, Police Scotland  
 Group Commander M Humphreys, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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

### Mr G MacKenzie in the Chair

#### Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair extended his best wishes to the Vice Chair, Mr Hugh Morrison, who was currently recovering from a recent bout of ill health.

He emphasised the importance of the Communities and Place Committee and the need to strive for excellence in all service areas within its remit. There were an equal number of new and returning Elected Members on the Committee, which he hoped would be

beneficial, and he intended to work as collaboratively as possible.

He went on to inform Members that, as they may have heard through the media, two unions, Unite and GMB, had announced strike action in waste, street cleaning and recycling services which was due to commence from 24 August 2022. It was important staff were recognised and rewarded at a time of significant economic challenges. Staff were valued and continued to deliver public services following what had been a very difficult period over the last couple of years.

Negotiations were being conducted nationally through COSLA on the pay award. Work was also taking place with key Council officers, which involved trade union colleagues, regarding the announcement on the proposed industrial action. Information would be made available to the public, staff and Members regarding how strike action would affect the Highlands and they would all be kept informed of developments.

## **Business**

### **1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Mr R Gale and Mr H Morrison.

### **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

### **4. Police Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Poileis**

There had been circulated Report No CP/07/22 dated 9 August 2022 by Chief Superintendent Conrad Trickett, Police Scotland.

Prior to handing over to Chief Superintendent Trickett, the Chair referred to the tragic events that had taken place in Skye and Dornie the previous week and extended his thoughts to the families and communities affected. Whilst the Police role and response to the events was important, it was not the focus of the Police Performance Report and he reminded Members that it was not appropriate to ask Chief Superintendent Trickett any questions related to the events on what was an ongoing investigation.

Chief Superintendent Trickett then provided a detailed summary of the report during which he spoke to each of the local policing priorities in turn, namely: Road Safety and Road Crime; Antisocial Behaviour, Violence and Disorder; Acquisitive Crime; Protecting Vulnerable People; Serious Organised Crime; and Terrorism and Public Order.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- thanks were expressed for the comprehensive report;
- speeding was one of the most common issues raised by constituents, one observation being that there was not enough enforcement by traffic police. The majority of offenders were people who lived locally and it was felt that issuing speeding tickets would be more of a deterrent than an educational approach and would get the message around the community more quickly;
- clarification was sought regarding the reported detection rates of 101% for speeding offences and 203% for drug supply;
- concern was expressed that members of the public were experiencing difficulty reporting non-emergency crimes via the 101 number, and it was queried whether there were any improvement plans in that regard;
- in relation to serious road accidents, lengthy road closures caused further issues and it was queried whether there were any way roads that could be re-opened more quickly when there was not a fatality;
- reference was made to recent national coverage regarding an increase in LGBTI-related hate crime, and comment was sought from a Highland perspective;
- Chief Superintendent Trickett having commented in his introduction that assaults were lower because the night-time economy was not in full swing due to Covid, it was suggested that it was necessary to factor out the Covid years to get a true comparison. It was concerning that serious assault figures were more or less flat whereas other crimes were down, and information was sought as to the reasons for that;
- police stations in Wick and Thurso had previously been open to the public 24/7. Many people did not have internet access and, given the previous comments regarding the difficulties reporting non-emergency crimes via the 101 number, it was queried whether there was any possibility of increasing the hours during which police stations were manned;
- information was sought as to how successful the introduction of the Naloxone spray as an emergency antidote to overdose had been. Chief Superintendent Trickett undertook to obtain figures in respect of the rollout in Caithness and feed back to Members;
- in relation to the increase in theft by shoplifting, and with reference to the difficult economic times, information was sought as to the types of goods commonly stolen and whether a further increase was anticipated. In addition, it was queried whether it was possible to capture the reasons for shoplifting;
- concern was expressed that fraud was becoming more sophisticated, and information was sought as to what was being done nationally to get ahead of that and stop the spoofing of legitimate phone numbers;
- concern was expressed regarding the increasing number of Looked After Children and, given that such children were a vulnerable group, it was queried whether there were any links with the statistics on acquisitive and drug crime and, if so, how that was being addressed;
- in the past, children's care homes would receive regular visits from community police which had been a good way to build trusting relationships, and information was sought as to what happened now that more children were placed in foster homes;

- in relation to CCTV, information was sought as to how contact was made with the monitoring centre to request that cameras be directed at an ongoing incident; and
- Members having read that applications to join Police Scotland were down by 50%, information was sought on the position in Highland.

In relation to children's residential care, the Chief Executive highlighted that, in the last year, external reports had been commissioned, looking at provision across the Highlands, which would be presented to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee. In addition, two different types of external review had been carried out which would be submitted to the Corporate Parenting Board and there would be feedback on inspection so there would be a lot of detail coming forward in the next six to twelve months.

Chief Superintendent Trickett having responded in detail to the issues raised, the Committee **NOTED** 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 to 31 March 2022.

The Chair thanked Chief Superintendent Trickett for his time and, on behalf of the Committee, extended best wishes and admiration to his staff for the good work they did throughout Highland.

He explained that he had spoken to Chief Superintendent Trickett about the possibility of upgrading guidance for Members around signing applications for shotgun licences. Chief Superintendent Trickett had agreed to do so and would come back in due course and address the understandable anxiety Members might feel about signing such documents.

## **5. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Highland Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No CP/08/22 dated 1 August 2022 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Group Commander Humphreys, SFRS, provided a detailed summary of the report during which he spoke to a number of Key Performance Indicators, namely: All accidental dwelling fires; All fatal accidental dwelling fire casualties; Non-fatal accidental dwelling fire casualties; All deliberate fires; Special Services – Road Traffic Collisions; False Alarms; Non-domestic fire safety; Domestic fire safety activities; Proportion of station hours available for emergency response; and Injury Accidents.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- thanks were expressed for the comprehensive report;
- information was sought on the current situation at Thurso Fire Station, where a number of experienced firefighters had resigned, and there had been instances of appliances having to be brought in from Wick;
- reference was made to a day in July when there had been no fire appliances available in Skye and Lochalsh, the only appliances covering everywhere west of Fort Augustus having been on the Isle of Raasay and in Gairloch. Concern was expressed that this could happen on any given day and, whilst there were

very few instances when the SFRS was needed, the public would be alarmed if they knew of the situation. An assurance was sought that the matter would continue to be rigorously looked at. However, the efforts that had been made by the SFRS thus far were welcomed and it was hoped that the trial taking place in Tongue and Bettyhill could be extended to Skye. It was added that it was an aspiration to have a full-time fire service on Skye, particularly if there was a resumption of air services from Broadford, which would provide a local full-time career and attract people to the SFRS;

- in relation to domestic fire safety, it was queried whether it was hoped to expand the targeting of at risk homes; and
- an update was sought as to the health of Community Response Units, particularly those in Balintore and Cromarty.

Group Commander Humphreys having responded to the issues raised, the Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the Highland Performance Report.

The Chair thanked Group Commander Humphreys for his time and, on behalf of the Committee, extended thanks to his staff for all they did.

It was confirmed that, in future, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would report to alternate meetings of the Committee.

## **6. Communities and Place Draft Directorate Service Plan 2022/23 Dreachd Phlana Seirbheis Buidheann-stiùiridh Choimhearsnachdan agus Àite 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No CP/09/22 dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- many communities were asking when the permanent re-opening of Service Points and extended availability of Registration facilities would take place and it was requested that this be taken into consideration when finalising the draft Service Plan. The Chair confirmed that discussions were already taking place in that regard and he expected to be able to report back in the near future;
- the Service Plan in its current form could not be measured as it did not specify inputs in terms of financial and human resources or what the outcomes would be if improvement actions were achieved. In addition, it was questioned whether the introduction was comprehensive enough and it was suggested that a column for challenges and risks be included. However, the column on how success would be measured was welcomed;
- particular reference was made to the improvement action to continue to progress the 6 workstreams set out in the amenities review, and it was queried whether the poor standard of grass cutting across the city of Inverness at present was because of staff shortages and recruitment challenges in which case it was questioned how the development of a strategy and delivery of the standard of grass cutting required could be achieved. Grass cutting was one of the most common issues raised by constituents and the need for improvements was emphasised. Reference was made to the poor state of prominent banks in parts of Inverness and to the remote-control mower that had been purchased for such banks and sloping areas, which Members had not seen this year and hoped would be available for the autumn and next year. Further information

- was sought, and provided, on the amenities review, and the Chair confirmed that a report in that regard would be presented to the full Council in September;
- it was questioned whether a member of the public looking at the Service Plan would get a full picture of the range of services it covered and how they were being provided, and it was suggested that more detail was required in that regard and in the section on resources; and
  - human resources were an important input, and it would be helpful to provide more detail on how recruitment might be enhanced and new ways of working to give the public confidence that recruitment challenges were being addressed. The Chair confirmed that this was under review and would be addressed at the full Council in September.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the draft Directorate Service Plan for 2022/23 and **AGREED** that the points raised during discussion would be taken into consideration; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the draft plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of the report.

**7. Revenue Budget Monitoring Report: 2021/22 Outturn and 2022/23 Quarter 1  
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach: Fìor Shuidheachadh 2021/22 agus Cairteal 1 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No CP/10/22 dated 5 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to the 2022/23 Revenue budget, information was sought, and provided, as to when the line by line review referred to would be completed and, with regard to the projected overspend, what expenditure would be controlled, how it would be controlled, what the impact would be, and whether any account had been taken of a pay settlement that was beyond the amount identified in the Council budget at present;
- with regard to the re-opening of Service Points, it was understood that they would be looked at on an individual basis and decisions made based on demand;
- in relation to the underspend on staff costs set out in Appendix 3 of the report, it was necessary to understand where these vacancies were and, more importantly for robust scrutiny, the impact on service provision of not being able to recruit to them. The Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place, explained that amending the revenue monitoring appendix template to provide more detail by subjective would be applicable to all services, not just Communities and Place, and he undertook to raise the matter with the Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee and the Head of Corporate Finance. Additionally, he confirmed that work would be undertaken as to what further information could be provided on vacant posts;
- the overall annual budget was much bigger than the net total on Appendix 3 would suggest as this did not include income;
- in relation to the Bereavement Services, Burials and Cremations budget, it was queried whether it was the case that income exceeded expenditure. The



- Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place undertook to obtain further information and respond to Mr A Graham outwith the meeting; and
- information was sought, and provided, as to what type of vehicles were being purchased or repaired.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the final outturn for the 2021/22 Revenue budget for the Communities and Place Service of £691k underspend;
- NOTED** the forecasted outturn for the 2022/23 Revenue budget for the Communities and Place Service as at Quarter 1 was £1.225m overspend;
- NOTED** the principal reasons for the 2022/23 forecasted overspend were higher costs pertaining to fuel and parts including vehicle components, spares and tyres;
- AGREED** the Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place would ask the Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee and the Head of Corporate Finance to consider the appendix template as part of the overall monitoring report; and
- AGREED** that work be undertaken as to what further information could be provided on vacant posts.

#### **8. Capital Budget Monitoring Report: 2021/22 Outturn and 2022/23 Quarter 1 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Buidseat Calpa: Fìor Shuidheachadh 2021/22 agus Cairteal 1 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No CP/11/22 dated 8 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the previous Administration had agreed to review the Capital Programme so that the total capital cost for each project was included rather than just the amount allocated for the year. It was requested this information be provided across all Committees so Members had an idea how far along specific projects were;
- it was questioned if the column heading in the Capital Budget for 2022/23 should be changed from “2022/23 Approved Budget” to “2022/23 Approved Budget plus any over or underspend from 2021/22” or whether the column should be separated out so Members had the information across the totality of the project;
- information was sought, and provided, as to how the replacement of the Service’s HGVs would reduce carbon emissions; and
- in relation to the increased forecasted budget for the Residual Waste Management Facility at the Longman, it was explained that this was due to a material change and the increased construction costs.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- the capital outturn position for the Communities and Place Service for 2021/22;
- the forecasted capital outturn for the Communities and Place Service for 2022/23 as at Quarter 1; and
- the current forecasts for the major projects in the Communities and Place Service.

## 9. Playpark Funding Update

### Fios às Ùr mu Mhaoineachadh Pàirce-cluiche

There had been circulated Report No CP/12/22 dated 3 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- it was queried if the Scottish Government's funding for playparks would accelerate and if it was sufficient, in Highland, to meet the Scottish Government's manifesto commitment to renew every playpark. Indications were that there was a need to identify external sources of funding;
- whilst additional funding was to be welcomed, its drip feeding was questioned. This resulted in all local authorities trying to purchase equipment at the same time, thus causing issues surrounding available supply, and, given the cost of play equipment, only a limited amount of work could be done at one time. Furthermore, equipment would continue to deteriorate and the point might be reached when some of it needed to be removed on grounds of health and safety. The Chair was therefore requested, and he agreed, to lobby Scottish Government for larger allocations to be made;
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that the Scottish Government funding could not be used to meet installation costs;
- there was a need for additional personnel trained to inspect play equipment; and
- the focus on replacing play items rather than purchasing additional items, given the maintenance backlog, was to be welcomed.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the full details of the Scottish Government grant as set out in the report to the Communities and Place Committee in November 2021;
- ii. the allocation and distribution of funding for 2022/23;
- iii. £232k of the Scottish Government grant had been carried forward from 2021/22 to spend in 2022/23;
- iv. the Scottish Government had stated that the remaining £50 million of funding required to be allocated to local authorities by the end of this parliamentary term in May 2026;
- v. funding was for capital works relating to refurbishing playparks, and not intended for ongoing maintenance costs;
- vi. the additional funding from Area Committees for 2021/22;
- vii. progress made in improving playparks during 2021/22;
- viii. playparks were within the scope of the amenities review being considered by the Redesign Board and that as the play parks strategy developed progress reports would be considered by the Board before being finalised;
- ix. a time-limited post with full costs recovered from the award had been approved by the Communities and Place Committee on 10 November 2021. The allocation of £15k for 2021/22 had not been spent and had been rolled forward to 2022/23. Estimated costs for 2022/23 were £22.5k reflecting that the recruitment process was not yet complete;

and **AGREED**:-

- x. that the Scottish Government be lobbied to accelerate the distribution of playpark funding.

## **10. Update on Service Enhancements from Visitor Management Plan Funding Fios às Ùr mu Leasachaidhean Seirbheis bho Mhaoineachadh Plana Stiùiridh Luchd-tadhail**

There had been circulated Report No CP/13/22 dated 8 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- although not part of the Visitor Management Scheme, information was sought as to the current position regarding the Wick Public Convenience (PC) refurbishment;
- in response to a question it was confirmed that a report regarding the new modular unit, replacing the old Glenmore PC, would be presented to the Badenoch and Strathspey Committee on 29 August 2022;
- there were refurbished toilet facilities in places like Alness and Melness, not requiring significant capital investment, and it was questioned if these would be brought on line. Members were reminded that a strategic review had taken place in 2018 when a number of sites such as these had been closed;
- when looking for new Comfort Schemes it was important to give early notice in areas with high tourist numbers;
- communities in Elgol and Broadford were currently building their own toilets, with support from disaggregated budgets, and this demonstrated that partnership working and community engagement was the way forward
- it was queried if there were any recruitment difficulties for Visitor Management Operatives at waste management visitor sites as there were reports of overflowing bins. In response, it was confirmed that there was only one vacancy and the incidents of overflowing bins were likely due to a matter of timing; and
- given the need to reduce residual waste overall, the possibility of providing mixed recycling containers at litter bins was raised. It was confirmed that these were provided at some sites but the quality of the recycling was poor.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the Visitor Management Plan was not recurring funding;
- ii. the investment in public conveniences and waste services would be fully committed this year;
- iii. the enhanced public convenience service with 75 Council operated facilities, infrastructure improvements for 40 facilities, 15 new comfort scheme providers now taking the total to 52, and support for a community group running portaloos; and
- iv. any new funding streams would be pursued.

## **11. Waste Management Service Update Fios às Ùr mun t-Seirbheis Rianachd Sgudail**

There had been circulated Report No CP/14/22 dated 3 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the amount of hard work being undertaken for the Council to meet its obligations under the forthcoming new regulations was acknowledged;
- it was queried how it was proposed to transfer waste once the landfill sites were closed. Rail transport was suggested as this would remove a considerable amount of lorries from the roads each day, particularly the A9, thus reducing road carbon emissions and alleviating congestion on what were already busy roads;
- information was sought, and provided, as to discussions taking place between the Council and the Scottish Government regarding Energy from Waste sites; and
- there were reports of confrontations at recycling centres as a result of individuals who were unaware of restrictions regarding vehicle types such as vans and trailers and perhaps the time was now right to revisit the rules so as to avoid waste either ending up in landfill or being fly-tipped.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the significant work being undertaken to deliver Waste Management Services, both current and looking to the future;
- ii. the Aviemore waste transfer station construction had been completed;
- iii. the construction programme for Inverness waste transfer station was well underway;
- iv. Heads of Terms were awaited for the preferred site upon which to develop the Fort William waste transfer station and the new lease for the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre in Fort William;
- v. the progress to expand garden waste collection services with support from the Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF);
- vi. the use of digital technology (Route Optimisation) supporting the implementation of changes in service delivery;
- vii. a strategic options appraisal examining future waste and recycling collection possibilities was being undertaken with the aim to determine how Highland Council might align with Scotland's Household Recycling Charter;
- viii. progress with site investigation studies in support of the Longman Green Energy Hub ambition;
- ix. the award of disposal services for residual waste, as a medium-term solution, becoming effective from 2023 reduced the Council's reliance on landfill from 2023 and would be fully compliant with the ban on biodegradable waste entering landfill which would come into effect as from the 31 December 2025;
- x. key recommendations from the independent review instructed by the Scottish Government into the role incineration played in Scotland's waste hierarchy;
- xi. key work being undertaken by Waste Management;

and **AGREED**:-

- xii. that recycling centre restrictions be reviewed.

## **12. Annual Community Asset Transfer Report 2021/22 Aithisg Bhladhnaid Glusad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd 2021/22**

There had been circulated Report No CP/15/22 dated 3 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

It was disappointing that a number of Asset Transfers had not been concluded due to delays with conveyancing and it was hoped these could be expedited to allow communities to progress with their projects. There was a variety of reasons for such delays but one of the changes that had been made, which would hopefully avoid this in future, was for a full title check to be made when a community group made an expression of interest. In addition, access rights could be given on a temporary basis and, ideally, community groups should have their own independent expert legal advice.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the annual community asset transfer report and the update on transfers that had taken place over the previous 12 months;
- ii. **AGREED** the proposed response to the questions on learning from the Community Empowerment Act outlined in section 5; and
- iii. **AGREED** the annual report on Community Asset Transfer as detailed in the report and at Appendix 1 of the report, for submission to the Scottish Government.

### **13. Community Participation and Involvement Update** **Fios às Ùr mu Chom-pàirteachadh is Chom-pàirteachas Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No CP/16/22 dated 3 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- while some participation requests had been very successful in the past, Highland Council should aim to take an inclusive and broad approach to community engagement;
- information was sought, and provided, as to how many of the 10 temporary Community Support Officers were still in post and the recruitment measures to fill the vacant posts; and
- in response to a question concerning the resourcing of community partnerships it was confirmed that funding to recruit to the agreed posts was being finalised and that a Development Manager and five Development Officers would be recruited to support partnerships across the area.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update on the work ongoing to increase participation and involvement of communities in Council activity across Highland; and
- ii. **AGREED** the Annual Participation Request report for the Scottish Government set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

### **14. Enforcement Policy for Environmental Health and Waste Services** **Poileasaidh Cur an Gníomh airson Seirbheisean Slàinte Àrainneachd agus Sgudail**

There had been circulated Report No CP/17/22 dated 3 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

The Committee **APPROVED** the updated Enforcement Policy for Environmental Health and Waste Services.

### **15. Appointment of Members to the Waste Strategy Working Group Cur an Dreuchd Bhall chun na Buidhne-obrach Ro-innleachd Sgudail**

The remit of the Waste Strategy Working Group was to oversee the key actions in relation to the Council's Waste Strategy.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint 8 Members to the Waste Strategy Working Group, in accordance with the agreed formula, as follows:-

Mr A Baldrey, Mr J Bruce, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr A Graham, Mrs J Hendry, Mr G MacKenzie and Mr H Morrison.

At this stage, the Chair highlighted a number of items of good news as follows:-

- The Community Operations and Logistics section had been shortlisted for three categories in the 2022 Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards:
  - Best Public/Private Partnership Working Initiative - for the work done to expand the Highland Comfort Scheme by working with local businesses to open up their toilet facilities to the public in return for a monthly payment.
  - Best Collaborative Working Initiative - for the work to convert three artic units to create mobile clinics to deliver the Covid community testing and vaccination programmes for NHS Highland.
  - Best Team, Transport and Fleet Maintenance Services - throughout the pandemic, maintenance staff across the workshops had embraced the challenges and delivered excellent services to internal customers, supporting other Council colleagues to deliver critical services across the Council.

The winners would be announced at the APSE Annual Charity Awards Dinner on 15 September 2022.

- The Community Operations and Logistics section had recruited two Stores Assistants (Modern Apprentices), one in Fort William and one in Portree, and congratulations were expressed to Tonia Harvey, who worked in the Inverness Stores and had completed her Modern Apprenticeship in Clerical and Admin Studies. The Fleet Workshop team had also recruited four apprentice mechanics for Wick, Brora, Inverness and Fort William, and it was intended to recruit an apprentice mechanic in Aviemore shortly.
- As part of the fleet transition to net zero, the latest delivery of refuse collection vehicles had been fitted with electric bin lifts, the use of which provides a practically silent operation and reduced fuel consumption by around 9%. Each lift provided a potential reduced carbon footprint annually of around 3.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (3500kg) when measured against traditional fuel operated lifts.

The Chair having expressed his appreciation for the sterling efforts of all involved, the Committee **NOTED** the good news items.

The meeting concluded at 2.45 pm.

**The Highland Council  
Caithness Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held REMOTELY on Monday 22 August 2022 at 10.00am.**

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr A Jarvie  
Mr W Mackay  
Mr S Mackie

Ms J McEwan  
Mr M Reiss  
Mr K Rosie

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr M Sutherland, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Ms J Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Mr R Bartlett, Technician, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms L MacKellaich, Road Safety Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Mr A Puls, Principal Officer – Building Conservation, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms S James-Gaukroger, Townscape Heritage Assistant Project Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer, Performance and Governance  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

**Also in attendance:**

Station Commander P Farrell, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**Mr S Mackie in the Chair**

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b> <b>Leisgeulan</b></p> <p>An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr R Gunn.</p> <p>The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, extended best wishes to Mr Gunn and his family.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b> <b>Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b> <b>Geàrr-chunntas</b></p> <p>There was circulated for noting Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 9 February 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.</p>

4.	<p><b>Matters Arising – Action Tracker</b> <b>Gnothaichean Ag Èirigh – Tracair Ghnìomhan</b></p> <p>Following discussion, the Committee <b>AGREED</b> that Members review the format and content of the proposed revised action tracker, a copy of which would be circulated to Members following the meeting.</p>
5.	<p><b>Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report</b> <b>Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba</b></p> <p>There had been circulated Report No CC/08/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.</p> <p>In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the reduction in the number of wild fires in the area compared to the previous year was welcomed;</li> <li>• the link between the Service and the NHS Home Telecare Service was extremely important for elderly people in the area;</li> <li>• clarification was sought and provided on the contributory factors which impacted on station availability, concern being expressed at the figures for Thurso for the second appliance and the impact on response times to incidents. It was reported there were a number of new applicants for Thurso and it was hoped staffing levels would improve significantly going forward; and</li> <li>• Members would endeavour to support the Service in any way possible in terms of recruitment in the area.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee <b>NOTED</b>, following scrutiny the Area Performance Report.</p>
6.	<p><b>Roads – Winter Service Plan 2022/23</b> <b>Rathaidean – Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2022/23</b></p> <p>There had been circulated Report No CC/09/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.</p> <p>In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Winter Maintenance Plan be circulated to the Association of Caithness Community Councils to provide for a more coordinated approach in terms of community support. In addition, it would be helpful if the Roads Operations Manager could attend a future meeting of the Association;</li> <li>• confirmation was sought and provided that the Manager would investigate the potential to acquire more secure salt bins;</li> <li>• the need to develop a better understanding with communities in terms of the properties of salt/grit in the freeze/thaw conditions that had been increasingly experienced in the area;</li> <li>• the winter service provided by the Council on Whitechapel Road, Wick should mean there was no reason that Stagecoach could not to return to the Riverside Bus Stance The Manger confirmed she would check the status of this route and report back to Members;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in regard to the above, Member support be provided to the Roads Team for a submission to the Caithness Transport Forum on this matter and to seek a commitment from Stagecoach in this regard;</li> <li>• the potential for staff from other Teams within the Council to assist with roads maintenance over the winter months. It was reported this issue was to be discussed at the Redesign Board and Members were encouraged to attend; and</li> <li>• confirmation was sought and provided that the Roads Operation Manager would report back to local Members in relation to the Pothole Pro being deployed on Trinkie Road, Wick.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>APPROVED</b> the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23;</li> <li>ii. <b>AGREED</b> to provide Member support to the Roads Team for a submission to the Caithness Transport Forum; and</li> <li>iii. <b>AGREED</b> that the Ward Manager circulate the Plan to the Association of Caithness Community Councils.</li> </ol>
7.	<p><b>Noss traffic calming and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points</b>  <b>Socrachadh trafaig agus àiteachan-choisichean neo-riaghailte Nòis</b></p> <p>There had been circulated Report No CC/10/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.</p> <p>In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal be endorsed on the basis of the safety improvements it would deliver in this area of Wick and around Noss Primary School;</li> <li>• a reduction in vehicle speeds was important in terms of removing barriers to active travel choices and it was hoped more projects of this type would come to fruition in Caithness;</li> <li>• It was important to understand that the project was being funded through additional external grant funding from Transport Scotland specifically for 'Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes' and not through the Council's budget for the maintenance of roads and footpaths; and</li> <li>• clarification was sought and provided that it was intended to undertake the works by the end of the financial year.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>NOTED</b> following consideration, the objection made in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn; and</li> <li>ii. <b>APPROVED</b> the construction of the traffic calming on Henrietta Street and Willowbank, Wick.</li> </ol>

**8. Castletown traffic calming and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point  
Socrachadh trafaig agus àite-choisichean neo-riaghailte Bhaile a' Chaisteil**

There had been circulated Report No CC/11/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the scheme addressed an issue in a specific area of the village and could be built on going forward through wider interventions to make Castletown as safe as possible;
- the level of engagement by the public in response to the proposal be recognised and it was considered the objections received had been addressed appropriately;
- the proposal would deliver positive benefits throughout the village including around the Primary School. It was confirmed that in response to speed surveys further remedial measures were being considered around the School;
- road safety was paramount and Castletown should be a priority candidate for a 20mph speed limit given the accident history in this area;
- confirmation was sought and provided that 20mph limit schemes were being rolled out in Highland on a priority basis and the proposal for Castletown would help support the implementation of a 20mph scheme. It would have no implications for the decision-making process on a 20mph limit for the village;
- concern that the proposal for the pinch point at the play park would adversely impact on cyclists. It was confirmed that overrun areas for cyclists had been built into the scheme. A cycling bypass was not feasible due to the physical constraints of the road and the measures to improve pedestrian safety;
- debate as to whether there would be displacement of traffic onto side streets as a result of the scheme and confirmation that it was hoped to undertake works to a small section of an adjacent street without a footpath in future funding years;
- an explanation was sought and provided that the evidence showed a lights controlled crossing with lower pedestrian demand of the level predicted in Castletown encouraged red light running;
- Council officers continue to explore future interventions in Castletown in light of the average speed surveys and lack of suitable pedestrian walkways in some parts of the village with the intention that any interventions support future 20pmh limit ambitions; and
- to state the Committee's support for a 20pmh limit for Castletown and that it would engage in any suitable consultation on this matter as it arose.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** following consideration, all objections made in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn;
- ii **NOTED** following consideration, all representations received during statutory consultation;
- iii **APPROVED** the construction of the traffic calming on Main Street, Castletown;
- iv **AGREED** to request Council officers to continue to explore future interventions in Castletown in light of the average speed surveys and lack of

	<p>suitable pedestrian walkways in some parts of the village with the intention that any interventions support future 20pmh limit ambitions; and</p> <p>v <b>AGREED</b> to state the Committee's support for a 20pmh limit for Castletown and that it would engage in any suitable consultation on this matter as it arises.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Thurso 20 mph Speed Limit</b> <b>Crìoch Astair 20 msu Inbhir Theòrsa</b></p> <p>There had been circulated Report No CC/12/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.</p> <p>In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• while there was popular support for the principle of a 20pmh speed limit in Thurso, there were concerns around the need to improve compliance and that some level of enforcement by Police Scotland would act as an effective deterrent;</li> <li>• the culture and attitudes of drivers towards compliance with the 20mph limit would change overtime and the need for drivers to take responsibility and recognise that these schemes were designed to improve road safety and encourage active travel;</li> <li>• the opportunity to educate further on the benefits of active travel, for example through a presentation to the Association of Community Councils; and</li> <li>• the potential to make representations to Transport Scotland on the need for a more cohesive 20mph limit through Thurso within the town boundaries.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee:-</p> <p>i <b>NOTED</b> the background to the proposed 20mph speed limit order for Thurso;</p> <p>ii <b>NOTED</b> following consideration, the 1 objection made in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn;</p> <p>iii <b>NOTED</b> following consideration, the 2 representations of support received during statutory consultation;</p> <p>iv <b>NOTED</b> there were 2 resolved objections and one letter of support received during the consultation for the associated traffic calming on Janet Street;</p> <p>v <b>APPROVED</b> the making of the Road Traffic Regulation Order; and</p> <p>vi <b>NOTED</b> the intention the intention to carry out after speed counts to determine effectiveness of the new reduce speed limit; and</p> <p>vii <b>AGREED</b> to make available a Member representation to Transport Scotland in respect of harmonising a 20pmh speed limit in Thurso within the town boundaries.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Thurso Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan – Update</b> <b>Measadh agus Plana Stiùiridh Sgìre Glèidhteachais Inbhir Theòrsa – Fios às Ùr</b></p> <p>There had been circulated Report No CC/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.</p> <p>In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-</p>

- a detailed explanation was sought and provided on the flexibility allowed in relation to the range and type of replacement windows permitted within conservation areas in view of public concerns regarding affordability and increasing energy costs. It was confirmed that while timber windows were more expensive than uPVC, it was rare in circumstances where timber windows were required in conservation areas for complaints to be received;
- clarification was sought and provided that Old St Peter's Church was a scheduled monument and therefore benefited from the highest level of protection whether or not it was included in the Conservation Area. Its inclusion in the Conservation Area would not give the building any additional protection or access to funding;
- concern at the lack of support the community had received from national organisations in terms of making Old St Peter's Church more of an asset to Thurso. It was confirmed that Council officials, Historic Environment Scotland, a structural engineer and community representatives were due to meet to discuss the opportunity for stabilisation works to be carried out to the building;
- confirmation there was the potential for Old St Peter's Church to be retained as an island within the Conservation Area with the adjacent residential properties being excluded in view of concerns around the affordability of window replacements and given the unprecedented increase in energy prices;
- an explanation was sought and provided as to the rationale for Springbank House being included in the Conservation Area; and
- more frequent reviews of conservation areas were required to protect buildings and retain the local character of settlements in the area;

Thereafter, Mr S Mackie seconded by Mr K Rosie **moved** that Springbank House be retained in the Conservation Area.

Mr M Reiss seconded by Mr W Mackay moved as an **amendment** that Springbank House be removed from the Conservation Area.

On a vote being taken, the motion received 3 votes and the amendment received 2 votes, with 2 abstentions, and the motion was therefore carried, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**Motion (3):** Mr A Jarvie, Mr S Mackie, Mr K Rosie.

**Amendment (2):** Mr W Mackay, Mr M Reiss.

**Abstentions (2):** Mr R Bremner, Ms J McEwan.

### **Decision**

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the public comments and the Council response; and
- AGREED** to recommend that the Economy & Infrastructure Committee formally approve and adopt the Thurso Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, including the amended Conservation Area boundary, on 10 November 2022, subject to the retention of Old St Peter's Church within the Conservation Area.

11.	<p><b>Wick Common Good Fund – Update</b>  <b>Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Ùige - Fios às Ùr</b></p> <p>There had been circulated Report No CC/14/21 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place.</p> <p>The Council Leader advised that he had listed a number of specific detailed questions in regard to this item in an email to the Ward Manager/Common Good Fund Officer. It was suggested that substantive answers be provided to those questions outwith the meeting and included as an addendum to the Minute in due course.</p> <p>In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this was an initial report on the new Common Good Fund and there would be more substantive reports brought forward in future;</li> <li>• a proper financial report was required which also provided detailed information on income, including forecasted income;</li> <li>• the need to have a structured business plan for increasing and growing the Fund noting that maximising the benefit of Common Good land and assets was the priority of the community;</li> <li>• the need to grow the Fund through investment over a significant period of time before incurring expenditure to ensure the Fund was more sustainable in the longer term and could deliver more significant benefits for Wick;</li> <li>• the potential to improve signage at Council car parks to specify that voluntary payments would be used only for the benefit of Wick on the basis this would encourage the public to pay; and</li> <li>• the potential to use local contractors rather than the Council to undertake the repair and maintenance of Common Good assets to support the local economy and potentially reduce costs.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>NOTED</b> the position of Wick Common Good fund at the end of the first quarter; and</li> <li>ii. <b>NOTED</b> the update on current Wick Common Good issues; and</li> <li>iii. <b>AGREED</b> that the Ward Manager/Common Good Officer provide a detailed response to the points listed in the Council Leader’s email in relation to the Fund and this be circulated to Members and included as an addendum to the Minute in due course.</li> </ol>
12.	<p><b>Wick Common Good Fund – Consultation on proposal to dispose, by lease, of Bignold House to Wick Academy Football Club</b>  <b>Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Ùige – Co-chomhairle mu mholadh airson faighinn cuidhteas, le aonta-màil, de Thaigh Bignold gu Club Ball-coise Acadamaidh Inbhir Ùige</b></p>

There had been circulated Report No CC/15/21 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive/Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an explanation was sought and provided as to why the valuation placed on the property had decreased due to the existence of the 50 year lease and the rationale for the proposed rent;
- the proposed rent did not represent a fair and reasonable return for the Fund and the people of Wick. A higher rental income would be more appropriate based on a standard way of assessing return. A full repair, maintenance and insurance lease was standard terms for a commercial lease;
- reference to the history and condition of Bignold House which was substandard, not fit for purpose as a dwelling and likely to become derelict. The proposed lease would deliver holistic benefits for the community in terms of the improvements to be undertaken to the building by the tenants, development of the asset and the amenity of the whole area. The Football Club was aware that the rent would be subject to review every five years.

Thereafter, Mr A Jarvie moved that the consultation be re-issued on the basis of an annual rent of £3,000 but on failing to find a seconder the motion fell.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as detailed in paragraph 4 below and contained in the analysis at **Appendix 1**;
- ii. **APPROVED** the responses to the representations raised in connection with the proposal for publication on the Council's website as contained in the table in **Appendix 1**.
- iii. **AGREED** the proposal to dispose, by lease, of Bignold House, Bignold Park, South Street, Wick to Wick Academy Football Club; and
- iv. **NOTED** that, if agreed, it will be necessary to seek Sheriff Court consent in respect of the disposal because the land is considered inalienable.

\* Mr A Jarvie asked that his dissent from this decision be recorded.

**13. Ward budget grants  
Tabhartasan Buidseat Uàird**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Budget application had been approved since 1 April 2022:

- Joint award from Wards 2 and 3 - new flagpole for Wick - £1500

The meeting ended at 1.50pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held remotely on 22 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mrs A MacLean  
Mr G Mackenzie

Mrs M Paterson  
Mr S Kennedy

### In attendance:

Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager (Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth), Communities and Place  
Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer, Property and Housing  
Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber, Communities and Place  
Ms C McIver Community Support Officer, Policy and reform, Communities and Place  
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms J Wileman, Assistant Ward Manager, Policy and Reform, Communities and Place  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Governance  
Ms R Ross, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Governance

### Also in attendance:

Inspector Richard Ross, Area Inspector, Police Scotland

**Miss J MacLennan in the Chair for Items 1-4.**

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

### 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. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee.

**4. Appointment of Chair of Dingwall and Seaforth Committee  
Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd airson Comataidh Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort**

Nominations were sought at the meeting for the position of Chair of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee.

Mr G McKenzie was nominated by Mrs M Paterson, seconded by Mr S Kennedy. There were no further nominations.

Mr G Mackenzie was elected as Chair of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee.

**5. Appointment of Vice Chair of Dingwall and Seaforth Committee and Civic Leader  
Cur Iar-Chathraiche an Dreuchd airson Comataidh Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort**

Nominations were sought at the meeting for the position of Vice Chair of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee and Civic Leader.

Mrs M Paterson was nominated by Mr G Mackenzie, seconded by Mrs A MacLean. There were no further nominations.

Mrs M Paterson was elected as Vice Chair of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee and Civic Leader.

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

There has been circulated Report No DSA/8/22 by the North Area Commander.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:-

- in response to a question about low detection rates in some areas it was stated that in the case of sexual crimes inquiries can take a long time to complete which led to figures appearing lower;
- following a concern raised about the number of missing persons, especially looked after children missing from care, it was confirmed that these figures related to the whole of the North Area Command and not just the Dingwall and Seaforth area;
- in regard to the increase in numbers of scams, it was welcomed that Police Scotland were undertaking regular preventative work to keep the public safe;
- the post of Harm Prevention Officer was welcomed and hopes were expressed that this post would continue to be funded after the initial 18 months;
- concerns were raised about road safety and the number of people driving recklessly;
- assurance was sought, and given, that police officers would be asked to be vigilant on the issue of littering and to ensure that action was taken when people were seen dropping litter;



- in response to the vandalism of public toilets in Dingwall, Members welcomed that officers would be asked to patrol the area in the evenings. This was not a problem that was unique to Dingwall and that the installation of CCTV cameras might help to solve this problem;
- assurance was sought, and given, that the police were aware of drug related issues in Dingwall and that control plans were in place; and
- it was hoped, in regard to police presenting reports to Community Councils, that officers would try to attend Community Council meetings but it was acknowledged this was subject to available resources. In relation to twice yearly meetings between police officers and Community Council chairs being trialled in the Black Isle area, it was hoped this pilot could be extended to other Council Wards.

The Committee **NOTED** 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 – 31 March 2022.

**7. Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since 1 April 2022**  
**Iarrtasan buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàrd Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort air an aontachadh bho 1 Giblean 2022**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since 1 April 2022:

- Headway Highland – to support vulnerable adults - £71.43
- Dingwall Players – Summer Arts Festival - £1,500
- Black Isle Farmer Society – Category Sponsorship - £500

**8. Common Good Fund - Dingwall**  
**Maoin Maith Coitcheann - Inbhir Pheofharain**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/10/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

The Committee **NOTED** and **SCRUTINISED** the position of Dingwall Common Good Fund as shown in the 2022/23 Quarter One monitoring statement.

**9. Development Infrastructure Dingwall Update**  
**Fios às ùr mu Leasachadh Bun-structar Inbhir Pheofharain**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/11/22 dated 18 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

As there had been no discussion of the contents of this report before the meeting with Local Members, there was no officer present to discuss the report and that, overall, more information was needed, the Committee **AGREED** to **DEFER** this item until its following meeting.

## 10. Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No DSA/12/22 dated 13 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion the following issues were raised;

- in response to a question it was stated that grit bins should be filled by mid-October; and
- a request for further information was made regarding Community Resilience. It was explained that the Community Resilience Plan was a top up measure that could be very effective for treating crucial areas which could make a big difference to residents. Whilst community volunteers would be provided with basic equipment, no plant would be used but they would have access to push spreaders.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23.
- ii. **NOTED** that Covid-19 and drivers' hours regulations will potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

## 11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee held on 7 February 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness** on Wednesday 24 August 2022 at 10.30am.

### Present:

Mr C Aitken (remote)	Ms L Kraft
Dr C Birt (remote)	Mrs I Mackenzie
Mrs M Cockburn	Mrs A MacLean
Mr D Fraser	Ms K MacLean
Mr R Gunn	Mr T MacLennan
Mrs B Jarvie	Ms J McEwan (substitute)
Ms L Johnston	Mrs M Paterson
Ms E Knox	Ms M Reid

### Non Members also present:

Mr J Bruce	Mr D Louden (remote)
Mr A Christie (remote)	Mr D MacPherson (remote)
Ms S Fanet	Mrs T Robertson (remote)
Mr J Finlayson (remote)	

### Participating Officials:

Ms F Duncan, Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care and Chief Social Work Officer  
 Ms F Malcolm, Head of Integration Adult Social Care, Health and Social Care  
 Mr I Kyle, Lead for Improvement and Performance, Health and Social Care  
 Ms J Park, Strategic Lead Child's Health  
 Ms M McIntyre, Head of Social Work  
 Mr B Porter, Head of Support Services, Health and Social Care  
 Ms C McLaughlan, Programme Manager (The Promise)  
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
 Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

### Also in Attendance:

Dr T Allison, Director of Public Health, NHS Highland  
 Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance

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

**Mr D Fraser in the Chair**

### Preliminaries

The Chair acknowledged the recent tragic events on Skye and Lochalsh and paid tribute to the emergency services and Council teams for their professional responses and ongoing work. The Committee's thoughts and prayers were with the families and communities affected.

He also thanked the Committee's previous Chair, Mrs L Munro, for her leadership and commitment to the work of the Committee.

## **Business**

### **1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms S Rawlings (substituted by Ms J McEwan), Mrs L Saggars, and Mr K Walker (third sector rep).

### **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

### **4. Appointments Cur an Dreuchd**

The Committee **APPROVED** the following appointments:

- 1. Highland Community Justice Partnership – Ms Emma Knox
- \* 2. Family Nurse Partnership Board – Ms Leslie-Anne Niven\*
- 3. Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership – Ms Kate MacLean

### **5. Good News Deagh Naidheachdan**

The Committee **NOTED** the Good News on two topics: the Home to Highland Programme, and the Highland Advance Nurse Training Programme – Getting it right for our workforce.

### **6. Review of Residential Childcare in Highland – Presentation by Fred McBride Ath-sgrùdadh air Cùram-chloinne Còmhnaidheach sa Ghàidhealtachd – Taisbeanadh le Fred McBride**

To help inform Service redesign, an independent review of Children's Residential Services had been commissioned and this presentation provided Members with a summary of these findings.

The Head of Service (Social Work) summarised the engagement process and two key areas - the development of a detailed improvement plan to deliver on the recommendations, and the workstream to capture children and young people's lived experiences.

The Chair explained there would be an opportunity for discussion and debate of the review at the next meeting of the Committee when more information on the outcomes would be available.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

## 7. **Delivery of Adult Social Care in Highland** **Libhrigeadh Cùrain Shòisealta Inbheach sa Ghàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/09/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## 8. **Children's Services Update Report** **Aithisg às Ùr air Seirbheisean Chloinne**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/10/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the role of the Committee to scrutinise was emphasised, with particular reference to Members' role as Corporate Parents, and the role of the Corporate Parenting Board;
- information was sought and provided on the Lundy Participation Model, referenced in the report;
- information was sought and provided on work being undertaken by the Council and in partnership with the third sector to support young carers and their communities;
- it was important to integrate plans with other agencies and to focus on outcomes;
- young people should have their own space and voice to detail their lived experiences, and their views should be actioned. Particular reference was made to young carers in this regard, including the importance of identifying young carers. The role of the school nurse in this was emphasised;
- wherever possible, participatory local-based budgeting should be standard;
- assurance was sought and provided that online GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) training was still available;
- with reference to issues overlapping committees, information was sought on where oversight for child poverty lay, and attention was drawn to the planned workshop for Members at which such issues and priorities would be considered. Reference was also made to the annual child poverty report which would be brought to the Committee;
- an increased focus in future reports on the important role played by the third sector would be welcomed, including their ability to apply for match funding for partnership projects, and their work to combat child poverty;
- the importance of timescales and deadline for plans and actions was emphasised; and
- it was intended a further report would be provided to the Committee in November 2022.

The Committee **NOTED** the work undertaken:

- i. by the children's services planning partnership in delivering the Highland Integrated Children's Services Plan 2021 – 2023; and
- ii. in other partnership areas.

## 9. Revenue Budget Monitoring – Q1 Reporting and Near Final Out-turn for 2021/22

### Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach – Aithris Cairteal 1 agus Fìor Shuidheachadh Faisg air Deireannach airson 2021/22

There had been circulated Report No HCW/11/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- information was sought and provided on reported underspends, with particular reference to Self-Directed Support (SDS) payments. Further detail on specific areas could be provided to Members outwith the meeting and more detailed analysis would be available with the Quarter 2 figures. The Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care, clarified that payments were from this budget so the stated underspend included these figures;
- concern was expressed that some service point centres were open for only limited periods, and this could be impacting people's ability to access support for SDS services. The Chair indicated that the Committee was not responsible for service points and Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care, gave an assurance that cross-service issues such as this were picked up at Executive Leadership Team meetings;
- low rates of pay for some SDS services (eg personal assistants) was of concern and this was being investigated to ensure fairness and equity. Reference was made to proposals to develop an SDS Children's Strategy; and
- care home refurbishment had been delayed due to Covid restrictions but work was underway to tackle the backlog.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. final out-turn position for the 2021/22 financial year;
- ii. forecast revenue position as at Quarter 1 of the 2022/23 financial year; and
- iii. progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery.

## 10. Trauma Informed Practice Cleachdadh Fiosraichte Mòr-chiùrraidh

There had been circulated Report No HCW/12/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the report was welcomed, and assurance sought and received that funding was in place for two years.

The Committee:

- i. **AGREED** to sign up to and undertake Level 1 of the National Trauma Training Programme (guidance on how to do so will be provided);
- ii. **AGREED** to appoint **Ms M Reid** and **Ms L Kraft** to be Trauma Champions to represent the Council on both local and national Trauma Champion networks

- (see 2.1 point IV in previous report) and for these two Champions to attend the Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training (STILT);
- iii. **NOTED** the publication of The Quality Framework (published by The Improvement Service) and its use in supporting Highland advance its commitment to a Trauma Informed council; and
  - iv. **AGREED** to continue to communicate their support for Highland Council to become a trauma-informed organisation and to supporting a trauma informed workforce.

## 11. Health and Social Care Directorate Service Plan (2022-2027) Plana Seirbheis Buidheann-stiùiridh Slàinte agus Cùraim Shòisealta (2022-2027)

There had been circulated Report No HCW/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion:

- the vision statement was welcomed, and the draft nature of the plan acknowledged, with a more detailed plan to be brought to a future meeting. Challenging measurable targets were important to facilitate scrutiny;
- reference was made to the importance of digital transformation to organisations and communities, as long as there were no access issues;
- the importance of early engagement with third sector partners and communities was emphasised; and
- information was sought and provided on the budget allocation process, and more detail on this would be included in future revenue reports.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the draft Health and Social Care Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. that the draft plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of the report.

## 12. Appointment of Champions for Older People and Children Cur Ghaisgeach an Dreuchd do Dhaoine nas Sine agus do Chloinn

There had been circulated Report No HCW/14/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

The Chair thanked the outgoing Children's Champions and welcomed the Older People's Champion initiative. Ms J Douglas, as third sector representative, offered to meet with the Champions in due course.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report and approve the future development planned to develop Older People's Champions and Children and Young People Champions for Highland Council; and
- \* ii. **AGREED** to appoint Mrs Isabelle MacKenzie, Mr Bill Boyd\*, and Mr Thomas MacLennan as Older People's Champions and appoint Ms Lyndsey Johnston,

Mrs Pauline Munro, and Dr Chris Birt as Champions for Children and Young People.

### **13. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

The following Minutes were circulated and **NOTED**:-

- i. Highland Child Protection Committee held on 17 February and 5 May 2022;
- ii. Highland Violence Against Women Partnership Group held on 1 November 2021, 28 February 2022 and 25 May 2022 and
- iii. Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held on 16 March 2022.

The meeting ended at 1.15pm.



## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Economy and Infrastructure Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on **Thursday, 25 August 2022 at 10.30 am.**

### Present:

Mr C Aitken (remote)	Mr W MacKay (remote)
Mr M Baird	Ms J McEwan
Mr I Brown	Ms L Niven (remote)
Mrs I Campbell (substitute)	Mr A Rhind
Mr M Cameron	Mrs T Robertson
Mr K Gowans	Mr K Rosie (remote)
Mr M Green	Mr R Stewart
Mr R Jones	Ms K Willis
Mr P Logue (remote)	

### Non-Members also present:

Mrs B Jarvie (remote)	Mr J McGillivray (remote)
Mr D Loudon (remote)	Mr D Millar (remote)
Mr A MacKintosh (remote)	Mr P Oldham (remote)
Mrs A MacLean (remote)	Mrs M Paterson
Mr D MacPherson	

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure & Environment  
 Ms C Campbell, Head of Community Operations  
 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 A McKinnie, Strategic Lead (Waste Services)  
 Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager (North)  
 Ms D Sutton, Amenities Services Manager  
 Mr S Hindson, Planning Team Leader  
 Mr A Puls, Principal Officer (Building Control)  
 Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer  
 Ms L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Corporate Governance  
 Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Corporate Governance  
 Mrs Olalla Bayon-Vazquez, Committee Administrator, Corporate Governance

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

**Mr K Gowans in the Chair**

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Ms H Crawford (substituted by Mr J Bruce) and Mr H Morrison (substituted by Mrs I Campbell).

## 2. **Declarations of Interest** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following:-

Item 6c: Mrs T Robertson (Declaration of Interest)

## 3. **Recess Powers** **Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

## 4. **Good News** **Naidheachdan Matha**

The Chair informed Members of a list of good news on the following topics:-

- 20mph early adoption for the roll out of the National Strategy.
- Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund Review
- Blar Mhor, Fort William, Phase 1 Housing

\*

## 5. **Appointments to Sub-Committees/Working Groups** **Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean/Buidhnean Obrach**

### i. **Education Transport Review Committee** **Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh Còmhdhail Foghlaim**

The remit of the Education Transport Review Committee was to determine

The Committee **AGREED** that the following be established:-

- Education Transport Entitlement Review Sub Committee – 5 Members

In accordance with the above, nominations from the respective Groups had been tabled at the meeting.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the remit; and
- ii. **AGREED** the membership of the Education Transport Review Committee as detailed - Mr W MacKay; Mr R Jones; Mr D Millar\*; Ms J McEwan; Mr R Stewart

### ii. **Harbours Management Board** **Bòrd Stiùiridh nan Calaidhean**

There was circulated the remit of the Harbours Management Boards remit.

The Committee **AGREED** that the following be established:-

- Harbours Management Board – 10 Members

In accordance with the above, nominations from the respective Groups had been tabled at the meeting.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the remit; and
- ii. **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Council the Harbours Management Board membership as follows - Ms S Atkin\*; Mr I Brown; Mr M Green; Ms J McEwan; Mr C Munro\*; Ms L Niven; Mr K Rosie; Mr R Stewart; Mrs T Robertson; Vacant.

## 6. Appointment to Outside Bodies

### Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean air an Taobh A-muigh

- a) HITRANS Tier 1 Ferry Users Consultation Groups  
Buidhnean Co-chomhairleachaidh Luchd-cleachdaidh Aiseagan Ìre 1 HITRANS

The interests of ferry users had previously been represented by the Scottish Executive's Ferry Users Consultation Group. However, this had been disbanded and a three-tier system had been set up to cover issues at all levels from local through to national.

The three levels of Consultation Groups were: Tier 0 which covered local issues, Tier 1 which covered regional groups and Tier 2 which covered national issues.

The Scottish Government had asked HITRANS to set up the Tier 1 Ferry Users Consultation Groups.

The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council the membership of:-

- i. the Argyll Ferry Users Consultation Group which covered services operated in Oban, Colonsay, Iona, Lismore, Coll, Tiree, Barra, South Uist and Ardnurchan – Ms S Fanet\*;
- ii. the Lochaber and Skye Ferry Users Consultation Group which covered the Small Isles, Mallaig, Armadale, Raasay, Kilchoan and Lochaline – The following nominations, having been duly nominated and seconded, were received as follows:- Mr D Millar; Mr C Munro; Mrs T Robertson and Ms K Willis.

On a vote being taken, Mr Millar received 10 votes, Mr Munro received 15 votes, Mrs T Robertson received 7 votes and Ms Willis received 11 votes, with no abstentions, the votes cast having been as follows:-

#### Votes for Mr D Millar

Ms L Niven, Mr W Mackay, Mr K Rosie, Mr M Cameron, Mrs I Campbell, Mr R Jones, Ms K Willis, Mr I Brown, Mr M Green, Mr K Gowans;

#### Votes for Mr C Munro

Mr P Logue, Ms L Niven, Mr C Aitken, Mr W Mackay, Mr K Rosie, Mr M Cameron, Mrs I Campbell, Mr R Jones, Ms K Willis, Mr M Baird, Ms J McEwan, Mrs T Robertson, Mr I Brown, Mr M Green, Mr K Gowans

### Votes for Mrs T Robertson

Mr P Logue, Mr C Aitken, Mrs I Campbell, Mr R Stewart, Mr M Baird, Ms J McEwan, Mrs T Robertson

### Votes for Ms K Willis

Mr P Logue, Ms L Niven, Mr C Aitken, Mr W Mackay, Mr K Rosie, Mr M Cameron, Mr R Jones, Ms K Willis, Mr I Brown, Mr M Green, Mr K Gowans

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr D Millar\*, Mr C Munro\* and Ms K Willis to serve on the Lochaber and Skye Ferry Users Consultation Group.

- iii. the Hebrides Ferry Users Consultation Group which covered Barra, North and South Uist, Harris, Lewis and links to Skye – Mr C Munro\*.

- b) Highland Tourism Partnership  
Com-pàirteachas Turasachd na Gàidhealtachd

The Council was a member of the Highland Tourism Partnership, a strategic group that brought together representatives from the tourism industry with the main public sector organisations involved in tourism.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr K Gowans to represent the Council on this group.

- c) Directorship of Inverness Airport Business Park  
Dreuchd-stiùiridh Pàirc Gnothachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs T Robertson declared an interest in this item as a Director on the Board of Inverness Airport Park and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the online meeting for this item.**

Inverness Airport Business Park (IABP) was a joint venture company set up in May 2005 between Moray Estates, Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highland Council.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr M Green to represent the Council on the IABP Board of Directors and that the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy attend board meetings in an advisory capacity.

- d) Local Access Fora  
Fòrain Inntrigeadh Ionadail

The Committee **AGREED** to delegate the appointment of Councillors to the Local Access Fora to the respective Area Committees.

- e) European Maritime & Fisheries Fund – Highland Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG)  
Maoin Mara & Iasgach na h-Eòrpa – Buidheann-gnìomha Ionadail Iasgach na Gàidhealtachd is Mhoireibh

The Committee **NOTED** the progress of the Highland Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

The Committee had been asked to appoint 2 members to the Highland Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

In this regard, nominations were received as follows:-

Mr K Gowans, Mrs T Robertson and Mr K Rosie

On a vote being taken Mr K Gowans received 10 votes, Mrs T Robertson received 7 votes and Mr K Rosie received 9 votes, the votes cast having been as follows:-

#### **Votes for Mr K Gowans**

Mr P Logue, Ms L Niven, Mr W Mackay, Mr K Rosie, Mr M Cameron, Mr R Jones, Ms K Willis, Mr I Brown, Mr M Green, Mr K Gowans

#### **Votes for Mrs T Robertson**

Mr P Logue, Mr C Aitken, Mrs I Campbell, Mr R Stewart, Mr M Baird, Ms J McEwan, Mrs T Robertson

#### **Votes for Mr K Rosie**

Ms L Niven, Mr W Mackay, Mr K Rosie, Mr M Cameron, Mr R Jones, Ms K Willis, Mr I Brown, Mr M Green, Mr K Gowans

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr K Gowans and Mr K Rosie to the Highland Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

- f) Flood Area Risk Management – Local Plan District Executive Steering Groups  
Rianachd Cunnairt Cheàrnaidhean Thuiltean – Buidhnean Stiùiridh Gníomhach Sgìre a’ Phlana Ionadail

The Highland Council were designated as the Lead Local Authority for the “Highland and Argyll Local Plan District” and as a Responsible Authority within the “Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District”, the latter Local Plan District being led by Moray Council. Executive Steering Groups for each Local Plan District helps to direct and facilitate all work that results on the agreement of the Flood Risk Management Strategy and the delivery of the Flood Risk Management Plan.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to split the membership so an individual member was appointed to each of the Executive Steering Groups for the “Highland and Argyll Local Plan District” and the “Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District”;
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council to appoint Ms S Fanet\* to the “Highland and Argyll Local Plan District” Steering Group; and
- iii. **AGREED** to appoint Mr M Green to the “Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District” Steering Group.

## **7. Revenue Monitoring Final Outturn 2022 and Quarter 1 to 30 June 2022 Fìor Shuidheachadh Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach 2022 agus Cairteal 1 gu 30 Ògmhios 2022**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/9/2022 dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the more detailed reporting of gross income and gross expenditure to improve scrutiny of net budgets as set out in the Appendices of the report;
- ii. the revenue budget final outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2022;
- iii. the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 June 2022;
- iv. net spend at the end of Quarter 1, totalled £4.413m;
- v. based on the best available information to date, a service budget gap of £1.580m was forecast to end of 2022/23;
- vi. many areas of the Service rely on income to pay for services, and this continued to improve;
- vii. the budget gap might change positively or negatively depending on applying expenditure and recruitment controls, aligning services to meet budget savings agreed and continuing income recovery in 2022/23; and
- viii. further adjustments would be made in future quarterly reporting to reflect the updated apportionment of costs and savings across the new structure.

#### **8. Capital Monitoring – Quarter 1 2022/23 Sgrùdadh Calpa – Cairteal 1 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/10/2022 dated 12 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

Members thanked staff for their work on various projects and welcomed the move to electric vessels for the Corran Ferry, the completion of the West Link, Inverness, and the detailed design work for the Inshes junction.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial position as at 30 June 2022 and the estimated year end forecast.

#### **9. Dingwall Business Park Flood Bund Leasachadh Bhancaichean Tuile Pàirc Gnothachais Inbhir Pheofharain**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/11/2022 dated 28 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, attention was drawn to the importance of the Flood Bund to the Dingwall Business Park and the economy of the town. Reference was made to recent planning applications that had been approved by the North Planning Applications Committee and called in by Scottish Ministers as a result of flooding issues. Reference was also made to the importance of seeking funding for major projects from all appropriate sources.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update relating to the Dingwall Business Park flood bund; and
- ii. **APPROVED** in principle the adoption of the flood bund subject to agreement over the construction and delivery of the upgrade to the flood bund and also agreement for the resulting liabilities associated with adoption.

## 10. School Street Zones Trial Deuchainn Sònaichean Sràide Sgoile

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/12/2022 dated 1 June 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outcomes of the School Street Zones in other Local Authorities in Scotland;
- ii. **AGREED** that the sites identified in paragraph 9.2 of the report were selected as the pilot locations;
- iii. **APPROVED** an 18-month trial of School Streets Zones at four locations in Highland as per paragraph 9.1 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** that the findings of the trial and a recommended policy position would be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

## 11. Planning Enforcement Charter Cairt Cur an Gnìomh Dealbhaidh

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/13/2022 dated 21 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- the Planning Enforcement Charter was required to be reviewed, updated and published every 2 years at intervals not exceeding 2 years. It was last reviewed in 2019 and the reason for this was queried. It was explained that the Charter had not been brought to Committee for renewal in 2021 due to restructuring relating to planning enforcement and resourcing issues due to Covid-19;
- the target for responding to initial reports that might require enforcement action was within 5 days. It was felt the target in the Charter was lacking ambition and all targets set should be striving for continual improvement. It was advised that the target date had been reduced from 7 days to 5 days in response to changes to the structure of enforcement that had been put in place. The Service was currently working to a response time of 2.8 days and this would be kept under review;
- before the Charter was published it was requested it be checked for spelling, grammar, punctuation;
- it was disappointing that the Council used retrospective planning to resolve problems as this was not the best way forward; and
- the Council had considered over 3000 planning applications last year despite limited resources with the Planning Service. If the Charter was adopted there was a need to increase the number of Enforcement Officers and Planning Officers. This would increase revenue and improve timescales for considering planning applications.

The Committee **AGREED** to adopt the Charter as set out in Appendix 1 to the report as the Council's statement of planning enforcement policy and procedure.

## 12. Nature Restoration Fund 2022/23 Maoin Ath-stèidheachadh Nàdair 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/14/2022 dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- following discussions with farmers along the A96 trunk road, it was queried if any consideration had been given to using some of the Nature Restoration Fund to install a hedge along some sections of the A96 to prevent sand and wash coming onto the road causing blockages of the road during periods of heavy rain. An undertaking was given to speak to farmers and landowners concerned and provide them with details of the fund;
- it was welcomed that the report referred to restoration on land and sea. However, there were no examples of seabed restoration projects in the report. Therefore, it was queried, why there were not more projects for the restoration of maritime assets as restoring the seabed played an important part in the efforts to stop climate change. It was advised that the Nature Restoration fund relied on projects coming forward for consideration and it was a very small fund to target projects between £2.5k and £20k. The larger Scottish Government Nature Scot fund was more suited to bigger projects and efforts would be made to target organisations that deal with the coastal environment and restoration of the seabed; and
- it was highlighted that the coastline the Highland Council was responsible for was larger than the coastline of France and almost as big as Argentina and this should be emphasised to the UK and Scottish Governments so that they are fully aware of all the issues the Council had with harbours, ports and slipways. The benefits Crown Estate funding could have to the regeneration of coastal areas was also highlighted.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the funding proposals as set out in paragraph 6 of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that funding decisions in respect of the grant scheme be delegated as set out in paragraph 7 of the report .

### **13. Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Consultation Co-chomhairle Ro-innleachd Bith-iomadachd na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/15/2022 dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- it was highlighted that responses to the consultation were excellent and welcomed an action plan in due course;
- whilst there were no Gaelic implications arising from the report, as this was a Scottish Government strategy, they would have their own Gaelic requirements to be met. In the consultation responses, all headings and main titles would also be translated into Gaelic; and
- improving biodiversity was closely linked with land reform measures and consideration should be given to including reference to land reform in the consultation responses.

The Committee:-



- i. **AGREED** the response to the consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** the key points outlined in the draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy set out in the report.

#### **14. Visitor Management Plan Plana Rianachd Luchd-tadhail**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/16/2022 dated 8 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- in terms of hand dryers being installed in public toilets, with the current cost of electricity, how were community groups operating these toilets going to be able to cope with significant increases in energy costs; and
- there was good awareness of the pressures on infrastructure along the North Coast 500. If there were operational priorities which Members felt required addressed then they were advised to contact Officers to look at how these could be implemented within the Visitor Management budget. In particular, efforts had been made to engage with privately owned caravan sites to try to get them to open up their waste disposal facilities for general use and there had been some success with this. Further, the Council had submitted a bid to the UK Government's Levelling up Fund for improvements along the NC500 route.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided by each Service on progress in delivering the 2022 Visitor Management Plan actions and associated budget spend for Q1 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

#### **15. Tourism Infrastructure Bun-structar Turasachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/17/2022 dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the background to and criteria for the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the current position with all funded projects in Highland; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan and its designed purpose to best direct future national and local area-based tourism infrastructure spend.

#### **16. Employability Services Seirbheisean So-fhastachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/18/2022 dated 3 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- it was important to develop a young workforce;
- disappointment was expressed that some Council apprentices had not been enrolled for college timeously; and

- ideally those looking for employment could be matched to sectors where there was a workforce shortage.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** and welcome the No One Left Behind policy and financial agenda which was supporting the design and development of a Highland unique employability service;
- APPROVED** the attached Delivery Plan 2022-25 and Activity Budget for 2022/23; and
- AGREED** that a Members Employability Workshop be arranged to explain further the services offered, the range of clients benefitting from these services and their progression. The Workshop would also outline the development and improvement actions underway by the Council and its HEP partners.

### **17. Inverness and Highland City Region Deal Cùmhnant Baile Roinne Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/19/2022 dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

It was good to see the wide variety of projects throughout Highland coming on stream. However, given the rise in inflation, it was important to keep a tight control on costs.

The Committee **NOTED** progress with the City Region Deal during the first quarter of 2022/23.

### **18. Community Regeneration Funds Maoinean Ath-bheòthachadh Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/20/2022 dated 5 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the aspiration to develop a Highland approach to Community Regeneration including Place Based Plans for all parts of Highland, representative local decision-making structures and multi annual, multi fund grant allocations;
- AGREED** to petition the Scottish Government to seek the required flexibility to roll over and combine annual financial allocations as required from the various external grant funds received;
- AGREED** arrangements, as detailed in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report, for the management of the Highland Coastal Communities Fund, the Place Based Investment Programme and the Community Led Local Development Programme;
- AGREED** to appoint Mr I Brown to represent the Council on the Highland Strategic Local Advisory Group; and
- AGREED** the proposed Change Request process as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

### **19. Draft Directorate Service Plan 2022/23 Dreachd Phlana Seirbheis Buidhinn-stiùiridh 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/21/2022 dated 10 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the draft Directorate Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the draft plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of this report.

## **20. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC): -

- i. North Planning Applications Committee held on 25 January 2022, 15 March 2022, 26 April 2022, 15 June 2022 and 29 June 2022; and
- ii. South Planning Applications Committee held on 8 February 2022, 22 March 2022 and 28 April 2022.

## **21. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** 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 involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

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

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/22/2022 dated 26 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

## **23. Affordable Housing Development Leasachadh Taigheadais Neo-chosgail**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/23/2022 dated 25 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

## **24. Land and Property Fearann agus Cuid-seilbh**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/24/2022 dated 27 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

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

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey/remotely on Monday 29 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr J Bruce  
Mrs M Cockburn

Mr R Jones  
Mr B Lobban

### In attendance:

Mrs K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance  
Mr L Hannah, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms D Sutton, Amenity Services Manager, Communities and Place  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance

### Also in attendance:

Ms M Dickson, Area Manager, NHS Highland  
Chief Inspector A MacLeod, Police Scotland  
Inspector C Johnstone, Area Commander, 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. Appointment of Chair Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd

Mr R Jones, seconded by Mrs M Cockburn proposed that Mr B Lobban be appointed as Chair of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee. There being no other nominations, this was duly **AGREED**.

It was further **AGREED** that Mr Lobban would be Chair for a limited period of time and thereafter, Mr R Jones would take over the position.

At this point, Mr B Lobban assumed the position of Chair.

Mrs M Cockburn, seconded by Mr J Bruce, proposed that Mr Jones be appointed as Vice Chair of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee and this was duly **AGREED**.

### 2. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

### 3. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 9 – Mr B Lobban

#### 4. **Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.

#### 5. **Appointments to Sub-Committee, Working Groups etc Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean, Buidhnean-obrach is eile**

The Committee **AGREED** that Mrs M Cockburn be appointed to the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Partnership.

#### 6. **Appointments to Outside Bodies Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean on Taobh A-muigh**

The Committee **AGREED** the following appointments to Outside Bodies:

- i. Badenoch & Strathspey Local Access Forum – Mr R Jones
- ii. Explore Abernethy – Mr B Lobban

#### 7. **Police Area Performance Report Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**10**/22 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the need for drivers to be more mindful and respect of cyclists was welcomed, however it was indicated that cyclists also had a duty to take personal responsibility to ensure that they were cycling safely. Confirmation was provided that provision was being made for Police Scotland to attend and engage with local schools on cycling safety;
- concern was expressed that there had been five fatalities on the A9, three of which had been at the same junction, and assurance was provided that Police Scotland would work collaboratively with the Council and Transport Scotland in order to improve safety, particularly in respect of this junction;
- confirmation was provided that there was a local Domestic Abuse Taskforce which was fully resourced;
- there was a need to promote and encourage the public use of the 101 telephone service which also enabled local data to be collated and trends to be identified. This point was acknowledged and it was reported that another alternative option was to complete and submit an online form which could be accessed on the Police Scotland website. This was a very effective option which was prioritised and dealt with reportings in the same manner as a telephone call. A media release could be issued to promote both of these methods;
- it was thought that drugs would have had a dedicated heading within the report. Concern was expressed at the volume of class A drugs in the community and the consequences of this in respect of mental health. Further information was provided in response to this and the action that was being taken to prevent the supply of drugs whilst recognising there was scope to improve this target. The difficulties in policing the supply of drugs,

which were now often sourced online/via mobiles was recognised. It was acknowledged that the trend for drug driving was increasing and there was a testing procedure for this;

- community policing, particularly outwith Aviemore was welcomed. The importance of Police officers attending community council meetings was emphasised and assurance was provided that the Police would endeavour to attend and each area would have a designated officer;
- the Fraud advice initiative was welcomed and further information was provided in regard to this along with assurance that this could be extended to other areas; and
- confirmation was provided that the Area Commander and Area Committee Members would exchange their contact details.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **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 to 31 March 2022; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Area Commander and Area Committee Members exchange contact details.

## 8. **Adult Social Care Provision in Badenoch & Strathspey Solar Cùraim Shòisealta Inbheach ann am Bàideanach & Srath Spè**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/11/22 dated 15 August 2022 by the NHS Highland Area Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- confirmation was provided that it was felt that the 14 places per day at the Glen Centre would be sufficient to meet demand for day care but this would continue to be monitored. The increasing energy prices could cause an upsurge in demand and thus services might need to be scaled up. The creative and flexible approach with other initiatives such as community led hubs and Shared Lives being adopted was welcomed. The Shared Lives pilot had been working well in other parts of the country and the feasibility study for the Highlands was due to be published in September 2022;
- further information would be provided to Mrs M Cockburn on the number of out of Area Placements that were being supported in different NHS areas that needed be returned to the local area;
- it was clarified that it was not possible to provide day care from the Wade Centre and Grant House at present due to the risks with cross-infection and that access to services was currently being provided with users being transported to the Glen Centre in Aviemore. However, concern was expressed that services were being transferred to Aviemore and at the environmental impact of operating buses to transport service users. It was explained that the situation would be reviewed subject to a change in Government advice in respect of Covid-19. It was further clarified that as a result of the pandemic, planned respite had been ceased but that provision for emergency respite continued. It was hoped that guidance would be issued soon on resuming planned respite and there was a desire to ensure that as part of this priority would be given to local residents.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the changes to Care Home and Care at Home provision;
- ii. a change to Day Care provision; and
- iii. the ongoing challenges in recruiting to adult social care posts across all sectors.

**9. U2284 Coire Na Ciste Road Partial Deletion**  
**U2284 Dubhadh Às Pàirt de Rathad Choire Na Ciste**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr B Lobban declared an interest in this item as he was a director of Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Limited and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, he left the meeting for this item.**

**Mr R Jones assumed the position of Chair for this item.**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**12**/22 dated 16 May 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, a number of points were confirmed including that there would be no cost implication to the Council in respect of this; that Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Limited would be responsible installing the motor home facilities; and the Council had co-ownership and first priority access to the snow-blower which would be retained at the Council's depot.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the proposed partial deletion of the U2284 Coire Na Ciste Road, Cairngorm.

**10. Winter Service Plan 2022/23**  
**Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2022/23**

There had been circulated Joint Report No BSAC/**13**/22 dated 8 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

In response to a question, the Committee was advised that Transport Scotland's trunk road operator Bear Scotland was responsible for the winter maintenance of trunk road pavements in Kingussie, Newtonmore, Cromdale and the mainline in Dalwhinnie. It was felt that clear messaging was required to ensure that the public was aware of the Council's responsibilities in respect winter maintenance. It was further indicated that the public communications also needed to include messaging on the importance of ensuring that residential streets were kept clear to enable access for winter maintenance vehicles. Confirmation was also provided that there was sufficient staff for the Duty Officer rota.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

## 11. Glenmore PC Update Fios às Ùr mu Ghoireas Poblach a' Ghlinne Mhòir

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/14/22 dated 10 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place. A further update was provided at the meeting by the Amenity Services Manager and in summary she advised that there were three options to overcome the drainage blockage. Namely, a full replacement at an estimated cost of £25,000; to install a pumping station approximately £7,000 plus an annual maintenance charge that would be dependent on the level of use; and installation of a treatment block which would cost approximately £10,000. The Project Team felt that the treatment block was the most viable option. However, there was also a further option of changing the modular unit to a composting system, i.e. without any drainage.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- in regard to option 3, it was felt that £10,000 was a reasonable sum for the project;
- the timeline demonstrated that this was a lengthy process and in view of this it was recommended that a Lean review should be undertaken;
- it was confirmed that composting toilets would require maintenance. The view was expressed that composting might not be a popular choice with the public however a further view was expressed that there were many misconceptions with composting toilets. It was queried whether this should be discussed with the National Park as composting toilets would align with their environmental values and therefore might be the best solution; and
- disappointment was expressed at the difficulties being experienced with the project and any potential landownership issues were concerning. However, these needed to be overcome and it was essential that the toilets were operational by Spring 2023.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the progress made to date with the Glenmore PC project;
- ii. **AGREED** to consider supporting additional funding for the unexpected drainage works; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the toilets must be operational by Spring 2023.

## 12. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 15 February 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.



## The Highland Council

Minutes of Special Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely on 29 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mrs I Campbell  
Dr C Birt

Mrs E Kraft  
Mr P Logue

### In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Ms M Gray, Project Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Governance  
Ms R Ross, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Governance#

### Also in attendance:

Inspector Richard Ross, Area Inspector, Police Scotland

### Miss J MacLennan in the Chair for Items 1-4.

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

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED**:-

Item 10: Mr P Logue (Transparency Statement)

#### 3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee.

#### 4. Appointment of Chair Cur an Dreuchd Cathraiche

The Committee **AGREED** that the post of chair and vice chair be shared and, in this instance, between Councillors Campbell and Kraft with each swapping roles for a 12 months period. After 4 years, the remaining term would be shared equally.

With lots being drawn to decide who would serve for the initial period, Mrs I Campbell was duly appointed and took the Chair with Ms E Kraft serving as Vice Chair.

At this point, the Chair referred to the shock and sadness at the tragic events that took place on the Isle of Skye and Lochalsh on Wednesday, 10 August. As a mark of respect for all those affected, the Committee observed a two minute silence.

## **5. Appointment of Vice Chair Cur an Dreuchd Iar-Chathraiche**

This item had been dealt with as detailed above.

## **6. Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba**

There had been circulated a Report No WRSL/9/22 by the North Area Commander. Area Inspector Richard Ross gave a summary of the report highlighting the key areas of interest.

During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- the post of the Harm Prevention Officer was welcomed;
- information was sought, and provided, on whether the general trend in crime numbers was replicated nationally;
- further detail was sought concerning the possibility of hidden domestic crimes during Covid; and
- the links forged between Police Scotland and visitor management groups were welcomed.

## **7. Member Appointments Cur an Dreuchd Bhall**

### **i. Skye & Lochalsh Local Access Forum Fòram Inntreigeadh Ionadail an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Loch Aillse**

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to establish Local Access Forums for its area. There are currently six Local Access Forums in the Highland area which advise on matters in relation to the exercise of access rights, the existence of delineation of rights of way or the drawing up and adoption of the Core Path Plan. In addition, they also offer and give assistance to parties in terms of the resolution of any disputes in this respect.

Mrs I Campbell was nominated by Mr C Logue and seconded by Ms E Kraft. There were no further nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mrs I Campbell to the Skye and Lochalsh Local Access forum.

## ii. **Wester Ross Biosphere Limited**

Wester Ross was recognised as a Biosphere Reserve in 2016 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the breadth of landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage that the region offers. Biospheres house dynamic local partnerships, rooted in communities that work collaboratively with Biosphere teams in a global network, to explore how – through education, science, culture, communication and information – people can learn to live in harmony with their environment.

The Committee **AGREED** to ratify Ms E Kraft's appointment as a Director of the Wester Ross Biosphere Limited.

## 8. **Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/10/22 dated 13 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:-

- it was queried if the requirements of the Winter Service Plan had changed over the past decade as a result of milder winters and how the service was dealing with the problems that this caused;
- information was sought, and provided, on the effects of the change in supplier for the emulsion used for surface dressing;
- information was also sought, and provided, on the effectiveness of precautionary treatments carried out in the evenings; and
- it was understood that, whilst it was disappointing, road treatments could not be carried out after 9.30pm due to drivers' hours regulations and a lack of alternative resources available locally.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations will potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

## 9. **Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Assessment of Application Maoin Coimhearsnachdan Cladaich na Gàidhealtachd – Measadh Iarrtais**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/11/22 dated 11 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee had been invited to consider the application presented for funding and to determine whether to approve, defer or reject the application. An approval of funding would require detail of the amount approved and outline any conditions of funding that Members wish to attach to the approval over and above the required technical conditions. A deferral would allow an applicant to resubmit the current application at a future date with updated information. A rejection would mean that the application would not proceed and any future application to the fund would be brought forward initially as a new expression of interest.

In discussion, the refurbishment of the Coigach Public Convenience was welcomed as it was a well-run facility that was essential to the area. Confirmation was sought, and given, that the proposed upgrades to the facility would make it more accessible.

Accordingly, the Committee **AGREED** to award Coigach Community Council a grant of £20,148 towards the Coigach Public Convenience Refurbishment project, subject to the conditions detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

#### **10. Ward Discretionary Grants 2022/23 Tabhartasan fo Ùghdarras Uàird 2022/23**

**Transparency Statement: Mr P Logue made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that a family members was involved with the Balmacara Community Trust. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare. This was because the item was solely for noting. He requested that this Statement be recorded in the Minutes.**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved since 1 April 2022:-

- Headway Highland – to support vulnerable adults - £71.43
- CALA Integrated Services – development of school aged child care in Ullapool - £2,700
- Lochalsh Community Council – floral displays across Lochalsh area - £445
- Wester Loch Ewe – Aesthetic improvements to area - £1,047
- Auchtertyre Primary School Parent Council – install play equipment - £1,300
- Balmacara Community Trust – Gala Day - £510

#### **11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

The committee **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 9 February 2022 and 7 March 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Lochaber Committee** held remotely on **Tuesday, 30 August, 2022 at 10.30 a.m.**

### Present:

Mr A Baldrey  
Ms S Fanet  
Mr J C Grafton  
Mr A MacDonald

Mr T MacLennan  
Ms L Siggers  
Ms K Willis

### Officials in Attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber), Communities and Place

Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Mr E McIntosh, Localism & Engagement Coordinator, Communities & Place

Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager Community Regeneration, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Ms M Gray, Project Officer Community Regeneration, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance Service

### Also in attendance:-

Mr M Colliar, Group Commander, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Mr C Robb, Local Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

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

The Clerk was in the Chair for items 1 to 4

## 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. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Lochaber Committee.

**4. Appointment of Chair  
Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd**

Nominations were invited for the post of Chair of the Lochaber Committee.

Ms K Willis was nominated by Mr A Baldrey and this was seconded by Ms S Fanet.

Mr A MacDonald was nominated by Mr J C Grafton and this was seconded by Ms L Siggers.

On a vote between the two candidates, Ms K Willis received 4 votes and Mr A MacDonald received 3 votes and there were no abstentions.

The Committee therefore **AGREED** that Ms K Willis be appointed as Chair of the Committee, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**Votes for Ms K Willis**

Mr A Baldrey; Ms S Fanet; Mr T MacLennan; Ms K Willis

**Votes for Mr A MacDonald**

Mr J C Grafton; Mr A MacDonald; Ms L Siggers

**5. Appointment of Vice Chair  
Cur Iar-Chatraiche an Dreuchd**

Nominations were invited for the post of Vice Chair of the Lochaber Committee.

Mr J C Grafton was nominated by Ms S Fanet and this was seconded by Mr A MacDonald.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** that Mr J C Grafton be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee.

**6. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Committee Performance Report  
Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There was circulated Report No LA/12/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, it was queried what the breakdown was between retained and permanent staff in the Service. It was advised that Highland had one wholetime station based in Inverness and there were also wholetime staff who carried out duties such as legislative fire safety and community safety training, etc. There were also commanders for each area and on call support watch commanders. Wholetime personnel in Highland were a relatively small number compared with central belt colleagues and therefore, the staffing model for Highlands was very much a retained and volunteer model.

It was noted that there had been 11 deliberate fires in March, these were mainly wildfires instigated through muirburn and there had also been a toilet block and rubbish fire.

The Fort Augustus Fire Station responded to a number of incidents in the Lochaber area and it was queried if information on this station's availability and incidents it responded to could be shared. It was advised that this station was not within the Lochaber operating area but was available for support when required.

In terms of muirburn fires it was queried if the Service was required to be notified before the fires were started and how many became out of control. It was advised that under muirburn legislation, the Service should be notified before the fire was started. The Officer advised that he would discuss at a later date with Members some of the investigative work carried out in respect of these fires. The Service did engage fully with landowners and forestry commission etc to raise awareness of their responsibilities prior to lighting these fires.

It was queried that with the cost of living crises, whether there was any indication that people were using equipment that was less safe and if so, how could help be provided. It was advised that there may be increased risks whereby people take shortcuts and this would be discussed at a strategic level within the Service. The Service would work with community partners and identify vulnerable members in communities, so that preventative help can be provided. The effects of the cost of living crises would be closely monitored to see if there were any upward trends on incidents that required to be addressed.

Having scrutinised the report, the Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

**7. Lochaber Area Roads Winter Service Plan 2022/23  
Plana Seirbheis Rathaidean Geamhraidh Sgìre Loch Abar 2022/23**

There was circulated Report No. LA/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, it was advised that the A889 road from Kinlochlaggen to Dalwhinnie was in the Badenoch and Strathspey operational area. This was a trunk road and received a 24 hour service in winter.

There were 2 vacancies within the local team at present and the Service was actively trying to recruit to fill these posts.

In terms of the process for refilling grit bins during snowfall, it was advised that if the winter maintenance team were unable to do this, colleagues in Amenity Services or Cleansing would assist and refill grit bins. Occasionally, other resources, such as contractors, had been hired to do this, as during spells of heavy snow resources could become very stretched. There were also footway tractors based in Fort William for clearing snow in the town and outlying areas.

It was advised that Bear Scotland's main salt stockpile was in Corpach and there was a second one in Ballachulish. These were covered stockpiles which kept the salt dry and historically these supplies were available to the Council to share. Work was underway for the Council to have its own covered salt stockpile in Carr's Corner, Fort William and there was also a covered salt stockpile in Strontian. This would mean the Council was self sufficient with its salt supplies and less reliant on Bear Scotland, but both organisations would still share salt supplies if necessary.

It was queried how often footpaths leading to Invergarry and Spean Bridge schools were treated in winter. It was confirmed that these locations would be treated as required and in terms of the target treatment times within the Winter Service Plan. Further information on this would be provided to Councillor J Grafton.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for the Lochaber Area; and
- ii **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations will potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

**8. Asset Transfer Request – Tougal Car Park (Change Request)  
Glusad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd – Pàirc Chàraichean an Taoibh Ghil**

There was circulated Report No. LA/14/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

Following consideration, the Committee **AGREED** the following recommendation for transfer of the asset:

19-year lease of Tougal public toilets and car park by Morar, to Road to the Isles Facilities Group, at no annual charge. Conditions of the transfer to include:-

- The lease will be restricted to community use, including provision of public toilet facilities and chargeable parking.
- The lease will be on a Full Repairing and Insuring basis (the tenant will be responsible for maintenance and insurance).
- Evidence of Planning approval for the proposed development.
- Evidence of security of tenure over additional land for development of additional parking.
- Road to the Isles Facilities Group covers all reasonably incurred property and legal costs associated with the asset transfer process – both the Council's and its own.
- Any transfer will be subject to existing burdens / conditions in the Council's title to the property (e.g. 3rd Party access rights, etc.). The Council may also impose further burdens / conditions if they consider this expedient (e.g. economic development burdens, etc). The Council will only transfer property for which it has title to do so.
- Any other terms to be agreed by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place in consultation with the Chair of Lochaber Committee.

**9. Applicant Change Request  
Iarrtas airson Tagraiche Atharrachadh**

Place Based Investment Fund Programme (PBIP)

The Scottish Government allocated the Highland Council £1,963,000 ring-fenced Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) funding for 2021/22. On 1 September 2021, Members of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee Members agreed an area distribution of the grant. Lochaber Committee was allocated £154,144.

In discussion with Ward 11 and 21 Members at the joint Ward Business Meeting held on 11 October 2021, Members expressed a desire to invite bids for the



available PBIP grant. The process opened on 29 December 2021 and closed 21 January 2022. On the 7th February 2022 the Lochaber Committee approved four applications.

#### Island Infrastructure Fund (IIF)

The Highland Council received an award of £510,000 from the Scottish Government to be allocated to deliver infrastructure projects across Skye, Raasay and the Small Isles through the Islands Infrastructure Fund. On the 7th March 2022, Lochaber Committee Members unanimously agreed to funding four Small Isles Projects.

#### Applicant Change Request for both funding Streams

The Isle of Canna Community Development Trust which has been funded by both these funding streams has since approached the Highland Council for a change request of the preferred delivery partner on their project (letters which had been circulated). Due to internal resource, VAT considerations and the ownership of the land belonging to the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), it has been agreed between the Trust and NTS that it was more appropriate for NTS to receive the PBIP and IIF funding and deliver this project. Upon completion of the building, a long lease (20+years) would be instated and the property would be managed by Isle of Canna Community Trust on behalf of the community. The Trust had several different funding streams involved in this project and measures had been taken to ensure NTS as the delivery partner on all approved applications. The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund by example had already approved the change request.

A comment was made that the National Trust for Scotland had circa. £350m in assets and that this should be taken into account in future when considering giving money to this organisation. NTS should be asked what assets they have which could be made available to projects.

The Committee **APPROVED** the applicant change request of the preferred delivery partner on the project to National Trust for Scotland.

#### **10. Town Centre Fund Request for Reallocation of Funding Iarrtas Maoin Meadhan a' Bhaile airson Maoineachadh Ath-riarachadh**

There was circulated Report No. LA/15/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

In discussion, it was advised that the request for variation to the approved Town Centre funding for the Fort William Marina & Shoreline Community Interest Company project had arisen due to increased costs associated with the project. The increased costs were in relation to bad weather, higher volumes of rock and clay being dredged, higher fuel costs, delays due to a Cruise ship in port and all these were deemed to be fair increased costs. The total cost of the project was now £112k.

It was highlighted that a number of projects that the Council were dealing with were experiencing unexpected higher costs which was proving to be very difficult.

This Community Interest Company had provided pontoons which encouraged Cruise liners to visit the area and provided income to the Highland Council, so their work was of great benefit to Fort William and the wider area.

It was advised that the Town Centre fund programme was now closed and if the request for variation was not approved, there would be an underspend in the Town Centre fund programme and the money would be returned to the Scottish Government. Therefore, approving the variation would ensure the money was kept locally.

The Committee **APPROVED** a variation to the Town Centre Fund grant for a total of £25,314.41 towards the cost of dredging works, in line with the approved objectives of the Highland Coastal Communities Fund project.

## 11. **Appointments to Outside Bodies**

### **Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean air an Taobh A-muigh**

The Committee **AGREED** the following Member appointments to companies, groups or organisations:-

#### **Company appointments**

Isle of Rum Community Trust – **Councillor J C Grafton**

Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust – **Councillor A Baldrey**

Knoydart Foundation – **Councillor A Baldrey**

Loch Shiel Jetties Trust - **Councillor A MacDonald**

Lochaber Care & Repair Board – **Councillor A Baldrey**

Lochaber Housing Association Board – **Councillor S Fanet**

Martin Ferguson Memorial Trust - **Chair of the Lochaber Committee and Councillor T MacLennan**

Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust – **Councillor S Fanet**

West Highland Museum Trust – **Councillor S Fanet**

#### **Non – company appointments**

Aonach Mor Liaison Group – **Councillor S Fanet**

Fort William 2040 Stakeholder group (Ward 11 Member) – **Councillor J C Grafton**

Fort William 2040 Stakeholder group (Ward 21 Member) – **Councillor A MacDonald**

Linnhe Leisure (Nevis Centre) – Advisor to the Board – **Councillor K Willis**

Nevis Landscape Partnership – Advisor to the Board – **Councillor K Willis**

Lochaber District Fisheries Trust – **Councillor K Willis**

Lochaber District Salmon Fishery Board - **Councillor A MacDonald**

Lochaber Environmental Group – **Councillor A Baldrey**

Lochaber Music Festival Association – **Councillor J C Grafton**

Lochaber Health & Social Care redesign stakeholders' group (Ward 11 Member) – **Councillor J C Grafton**

Lochaber Health & Social Care redesign stakeholders' group (Ward 21 Member) - **Councillor T MacLennan**

Lochaber Community Partnership – Kinlochleven Community Action Group – **Councillor S Fanet**

Lochaber Community Partnership – Caol Community Action Group – **Councillor L Saggars**

Lochaber Community Partnership – Upper Fort William Community Action Group – **Councillor K Willis**

Lochaber Community Partnership – Ward 11 Member – **Councillor L Sagers and substitute Councillor J C Grafton**

Lochaber Community Partnership – Ward 21 Member – **Councillor T MacLennan and substitute Councillor A MacDonald.**

**12. Ward Discretionary Budget  
Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Fund applications have been approved since 1st April 2022:-

Ward 11 & 21

Mallaig Ardnamurchan & District Pipe Band - Venue hire costs - £789.75

Headway Highland – Support for core organisation costs - £142.86

Highland Council - Cruise ship welcome plaques - £115

Highland Council – Deer warning signs, Kinlochleven - £147.48

Ward 11

Mallaig Community Council – for phase 1 circular path works - £5000

**13. Minutes  
Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated for information, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lochaber Committee held on 7 March, 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March, 2022, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

The meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Housing and Property Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 31 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Ms S Atkin (substitute)	Mr A Jarvie
Mr B Boyd	Mrs I Mackenzie
Mr R Bremer (remotely)	Mr R MacKintosh
Mr I Brown	Mrs A MacLean
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Ms J McEwan
Mr L Fraser	Mrs M Paterson
Mr A Graham	Mr K Rosie (remotely)

### Non-Members also present:

Mr J Bruce	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr A Christie	Ms K MacLean
Mrs B McAllister	Mr T MacLennan
Mr J McGillivray	Mrs T Robertson

### Also in Attendance:

Mr A Dick, Tenant Representative  
Ms L Richardson, Tenant Representative

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property  
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Housing and Property  
Mr F MacDonald, Head of Property and Facilities Management, Housing and Property  
Mr B Cameron, Housing Policy and Investment Manager, Housing and Property  
Mr R Campbell, Estates Strategy Manager, Housing and Property  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

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

**Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair in the Chair**

## BUSINESS

### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Grafton, Mr B Lobban, Mr C Munro, Mr A Rhind and Mr A Sinclair.

**2. Declarations of Interest  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statement:-

Item 7: Mr L Fraser

**3. Recess Powers  
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

**4. Highland Small Communities Housing Trust  
Urras Taigheadais Choimhearsnachdan Beaga na Gàidhealtachd**

The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust was a registered charity set up to help rural communities secure long term solutions to their local housing needs. They represent a wide range of interests including communities, local government, landowners, crofters and housing associations, and were funded by the Scottish Government and various charitable trusts and foundations.

In this regard, nominations were received as follows:-

- Mr B Boyd
- Mrs M Paterson
- Mrs A MacLean

On a vote being taken, Mr Boyd received 9 votes, Mrs Paterson received 9 votes and Mrs MacLean received 6 votes, the votes cast having been as follows:-

**Votes for Mr B Boyd**

Ms S Atkin, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr L Fraser, Mr A Graham, Mr R MacKintosh, Mr K Rosie.

**Votes for Mrs M Paterson**

Ms S Atkin, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr L Fraser, Mr R MacKintosh, Mrs A MacLean, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie.

**Votes for Mrs A MacLean**

Mr B Boyd, Mr A Graham, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mrs A MacLean, Mrs M Paterson.

The Committee **AGREED** Mr B Boyd and Mrs M Paterson be appointed to represent the Highland Council on the Highland Small Communities Trust.

**5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Non-HRA Budget: Final Outturn 2021/22 and Monitoring Statement to 30 June 2022**  
**Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais agus Buidseat Neo-Theachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach 2021/22 agus Aithris Sgrùdaidh gu 30 Ògmhios 2022**

There had been circulated Report No HP/06/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the impact on the budget in cases where a property had not been looked after by the tenants and the processes in place to identify risk tenants and focus support. It was confirmed that an analysis would be brought back to Members on the volume and the costs involved;
- noting that while there had been an increase in the volume of homeless presentations, there had been a reduction in numbers in temporary accommodation due to the work of staff through the rapid rehousing transition plan and engagement with longer term tenants;
- an update was sought and provided on the impact on loan charges and levels of borrowing associated with cost of living increases and the significant investment required to meet energy efficiency standards and net zero carbon targets. Difficult decisions would be required in terms of affordability and prioritisation and in relation to rent levels for the next financial year;
- clarification was sought and provided that the Service had caught up with the backlog of day to day repairs and was making good progress with cyclical repairs; and
- concern as to why some Housing Association properties had been vacant for a significant period of time when there was such a high demand for housing. The Head of Housing & Building Maintenance confirmed that if Mrs B McAllister could provide him with details of the specific properties he would contact the Housing Associations at a senior level on this matter.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the final outturn figures for the Housing Revenue Account and non-Housing Revenue Account 2021/22, including the use and movement in reserves; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the budget position on the Housing Revenue Account and non-Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 for the period to 30 June 2022.

**6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring: Outturn Report for 2021/22 and Quarter 1 Monitoring Report to 30 June 2022**  
**Sgrùdadh Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Aithisg Fìor Shuidheachaidh airson 2021/22 agus Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cairteal 1 gu 30 Ògmhios 2022**

There had been circulated Report No HP/07/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the potential to fast track works to properties without insulation in response to rising energy costs and before the onset of winter. In response, reference was made to the challenges in progressing priority insulation works due to delays in the construction industry, high tender costs and lack of tender returns;
- the challenges around growing the workforce and increasing the contractor base in the Highlands. Reference was made to the opportunities to work with UHI, other local authorities and the construction industry to achieve a better balance between having an inhouse skills base and relying on external contractors where availability was currently a significant issue;
- an update was sought and provided on the progress being made with energy efficiency works. A report would be brought to a future Committee on the volume and type of works required and costs. Different ways of procuring and delivering works and potential new technologies for heating were also being considered;
- the need for a joined up approach across the Council in response to the cost of living crisis. The Chair provided an assurance that a report was being brought to the full Council on 22 September 2022 on this issue and also referred to the work of the Council's welfare team in providing support to the public;
- the Council had been working in partnership in relation to the Opportunity Cromarty Firth bid and discussions were continuing with UHI. The Council Leader advised that he could keep Members informed regarding the outcome of those discussions;
- there should be more reference to regeneration in reports to the Committee going forward with a particular focus on tackling the voids situation in some areas. It was confirmed that the role of housing in economic regeneration and driving economic growth was a theme in the draft local housing strategy to be brought to a future meeting;
- Members be provided with more detailed information on new build developments in relation to locations, completions, spend, mix of housing, including a breakdown of the numbers of affordable housing, and clarifying the reporting arrangements between the Housing and Property Committee and the Economy and Infrastructure Committee;
- an assurance was sought and provided that officers would attend the next Inverness West Ward Business Meeting to discuss potential environmental improvements within HRA estates in the area;
- an assurance was provided that the Chair and Executive Chief Officer Housing & Property were in discussions with the Scottish Minister for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government on securing additional funding to support affordable housing and a report on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting; and
- the focus of Members and officers on climate change and achieving net zero carbon targets in the discussion was encouraging and housing was a priority area in this regard.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the final outturn figures for the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2021/22;

- ii. **APPROVED** the budget position on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2022/23 for the period to 30 June 2022; and
- iii. **NOTED** that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on additional funding to support affordable housing and that a briefing paper would be circulated to Members providing more detailed information on new build developments in relation to locations, completions, spend, mix of housing including a breakdown of the numbers of affordable housing and clarifying the reporting arrangements between the Housing and Property Committee and the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

**7. Property & Facilities Management Services Revenue Budget: Final Outturn for 2021/22 and Monitoring Statement to 30 June 2022**

**Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Sheirbheisean Seilbh & Ghoireasan: Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach airson 2021/22 agus Aithris Sgrùdaidh gu 30 Ògmhios 2022**

**Transparency Statement: Councillor L Fraser made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item on the agenda in that he had a connection to this item by reason of he provided minor maintenance work in the Nairn area. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare. This is because the work only related to the Nairn area and is a minor allocation of the overall Nairn Area budget. He had requested that this Statement be recorded in the Minutes.**

There had been circulated Report No HP/08/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an explanation was sought on progress with the delivery of the Corporate Landlord model in terms of there being an overarching approach to the Council's buildings and assets. It was proposed that a review be undertaken of the implementation of the Corporate Landlord model and the outcome reported to a future meeting;
- clarification was sought and provided on the potential to reduce the cost of utilities in Council buildings and drive behavioural change across the Council and High Life Highland as users in relation to energy consumption;
- in regard to the above, the Service was working with the Climate Change Energy Team on the performance of buildings and to identify the highest users and improve or replace building management systems to reduce costs for the Council;
- the Service's catering and cleaning staff be commended for their excellent work in difficult circumstances throughout the pandemic;
- clarification was sought and provided on the challenges in retaining staff within the Service, at a time when the private sector was offering higher salaries;
- the potential for the Council's investment in training to be clawed back if a member of staff left the Council for another post; and
- the need to sense check with Member input proposals to rationalise buildings and consider occupancy rates given the shift to working from home as a result of Covid and the opportunity to share buildings with public sector partners.



The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the revenue outturn position for the 2021/22 financial year;
- ii. that based on the best available information to date, a service budget gap of £1.261m to the end of 2022/23 was presently forecast;
- iii. that the budget gap might change positively or negatively depending on the application of expenditure and recruitment controls, filling fee earning posts in an extremely challenging job market, adjusting services to meet previously agreed budget savings; in-year income recovery, identifying new income and procurement opportunities, and any new Covid related recovery costs;
- iv. the progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery; and
- v. that further adjustments would be made in future quarterly reporting to reflect the updated apportionment of costs across the new Service structure.

The Committee also **AGREED** that a review be undertaken of the Corporate Landlord Model and the outcome reported to a future meeting.

## 8. **Property Capital Monitoring Statement and Progress Update** **Aithris Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seilbhe agus Cunntas às Ùr air Adhartas**

There had been circulated Report No HP/09/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- difficult decisions would be required on the Capital Programme in terms of investment in schools due to significant uplift in costs and associated constraints on funding. However, it was hoped the current position would improve going forward and any slippage would be recovered;
- highlighting the excellent key Education/Early Learning & Childcare projects that had been completed and the quality of work undertaken. In particular, the excellent work achieved through collaboration at Crown Primary in conjunction with Crown Church was commended;
- confirmation was sought and provided that the exercise to assess the capacity pressures facing the school estate over the coming years would be completed in September/October 2022. This would feed into any review of the Capital Programme and help establish priorities for investment in future years;
- an assurance was sought and provided that design work and stakeholder engagements was progressing in respect of major projects;
- a holistic approach was required across the Council in relation to the additional pressures new housing development placed on the Council for example on schools and infrastructure; and
- confirmation was sought and provided that the RAG system for reporting was being adopted and would be applied to all major projects once there was further clarity on the Capital Programme.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the final position for the 2021/22 financial year;

- ii. the position for the first quarter of the 2022/23 financial year, and the estimated year-end position; and
- iii. the progress made with the projects referred to in the report.

**9. Draft Directorate Service Plan 2022/23  
Plana Seirbheis Taigheadais is Seilbhe 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No HP/10/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

The ECO Housing and Property advised that if Members wished to consider the draft Plan in more detail they could submit comments and observations outwith the meeting.

In discussion, the Directorate Vision was welcomed with specific reference to the importance of protecting the vulnerable. It was hoped the key objectives could be achieved over the term of the Council.

Thereafter, the ECO advised that he would have discussions with Mrs A Maclean outwith the meeting in regard to where the '20 minute neighbourhood' concept should sit within the draft Plan.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the draft Directorate Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. that the draft Plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of the report.

**10. Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator  
Aithris Bharantachaidh Bhliadhnaidh gu Riaghladair Taigheadais na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No HP/11/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- it was disappointing that some residents were restricting access to Council properties in relation to the new legislation for the fitting of smoke and heat alarms;
- an assurance was sought and provided that provision had been made for deaf tenants in the specification for electricians fitting smoke and heat alarms; and
- an explanation was sought and provided on the arrangements for customer surveys and tenant feedback during the year, including on the presentation and format of information. Discussions would be held at tenants forums in regard to the timing of the next tenant survey and consideration was being given to the mechanisms for the annual rent consultation with tenants due to commence in November 2022.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Annual Assurance Statement for 2022 detailed at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** that a Tenant Engagement Update would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on 17 November 2022.

**11. Annual Monitoring Report 2021/2022: Highland Housing Register  
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Bhliadhnail 2021/2022: Clàr Taigheadais na  
Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No HP/12/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the report highlighted the significant pressure on housing in Badenoch and Strathspey and this validated the Council's decision to apply for the area to be designated as a Short Term Let Control Area. The application was with Scottish Ministers and if approved it would take a period of time to monitor the impacts on the Register;
- noting that the issues around private sector landlords selling properties and making their tenants homeless and the Council's policy on purchasing private sector properties would be picked up in more detail in the discussion on the Highland Housing Register Allocation Policy review at a future Committee;
- it would be helpful if unfurnished temporary accommodation could be provided so that tenants did not have to pay for storage and in light of complaints about the quality of furnishings provided by the Council. It was confirmed that the feasibility of providing unfurnished temporary accommodation would be investigated;
- the assistance provided to young people to help them secure their first tenancy given the lack of suitable properties. It was confirmed there was a focus on one bedroom properties in terms of purchases on the open market. There was also a shared tenancy initiative and additional level of support provided to young people; and
- it would be helpful to have further discussion and a briefing on the report at the City of Inverness Area Committee.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. information contained in the Annual Monitoring Report on housing allocations which demonstrated that the policy was achieving its objectives;
- ii. main issues being considered as part of the Highland Housing Register Allocation Policy review which would be reported to a future Committee; and
- iii. feasibility of providing unfurnished temporary accommodation would be investigated.

**12. Housing Performance Report 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022  
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais 1 Giblean 2021 – 31 Màrt 2022**

There had been circulated Report No HP/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- information be provided on the number of pre-payment electricity meters in Council properties;
- noting that it was hoped the Tenant Grant Fund established by the Scottish Government would continue this year, although this had not yet been confirmed;
- the support being provided by the Council to some of the agencies offering energy advice and the ongoing discussions with AliEnergy who provided more specialist energy advice support to tenants;
- the potential for the sum of £80,000 to fund additional support to assist tenants directly with specialist, independent energy advice and access to financial support to be increased. It was confirmed that investigations would be undertaken to determine the feasibility of increasing this support up to the value of £160,000; and
- the impact of the cost of living crisis on rent arrears going forward. It was explained that this was difficult to predict and would also depend on the level of external funding and support available and ensuring this was targeted to the right tenants.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022; and
- ii. **AGREED** to fund additional support to assist tenants directly with specialist, independent energy advice and access to financial support as described in paragraph 7.10 of the report. The cost of £80,000 would be met from within the existing Housing Revenue Account budget however investigations would be undertaken to determine the feasibility of increasing this support up to the value of £160,000.

The meeting was closed at 1.45pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 1 September 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr C Aitken (remote)	Mr W Mackay (remote)
Mr R Bremner (remote)	Mr D Millar (remote)
Mr I Brown	Mr C Munro
Ms S Fanet	Ms L Niven (remote)
Mr J Grafton	Ms M Nolan

### In attendance:

Ms K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance  
 Ms L Walker, Gaelic Development Manager  
 Ms M A MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer  
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator  
 Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

### Also in attendance:-

Mr J Whannel, Director of Education, Bòrd na Gàidhlig (remote)

**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 C Munro in the Chair

#### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr P Logue and Mr R Stewart.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Good News

The Chair conveyed the following items of good news:-

- Praise for Skye Sgoil-àraich
- Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh had won the National Primary Schools Football Competition (Cuach na Cloinne)
- Glenurquhart Primary School Gold Languages and Employability Award
- Gairloch Gaelic and Culture Open Day
- The Blas Festival
- North Area summer fun with Gaelic activities
- Gaelic Summer Playscheme Week held at Stramash Fort William

- Gaelic Drama Workshop in Nairn
- Highland pupils experience Seachdain Dhùn Èideann 2022
- Gaelic Football Camp had been a success in Skye
- Gaelic Language and Culture Training for Elected Members

The Committee **NOTED** the Good News.

#### 4. Appointments

##### (a) An Comunn Gaidhealach

The Council has a Service Delivery Contract with An Comunn Gàidhealach which provided for the Royal National Mod to be held in the Highland area in 2025.

In this regard, the Service Delivery Contract contained the following clause in relation to representation - the Service Provider is required to permit an elected representative from the Purchaser to sit on the Board of the Service Provider's organisation and participate fully in all discussions and decisions relating to the Royal National Mods taking place in Highland, to provide the elected representative with all relevant Board agendas, papers, reports and minutes, to invite the elected representative to attend and participate in Board-led reviews, evaluations or other appraisals and to invite the elected representative to sit on both the National and Local Organising Committees.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mrs I Campbell as the representative on An Comunn Gaidhealach.

##### (b) Board of Governors for Catherine McCaig's Trust

The Board of Governors for Catherine McCaig's Trust was established to disburse bursaries to students from the Highlands, Argyll and Bute and the Western Isles to assist them in attending university.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr C Munro to the Board of Governors for Catherine McCaig's Trust.

#### 5. Presentation - Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Mr Jim Whannel, Director of Education at Bòrd na Gàidhlig, gave a presentation on the next National Gaelic Language Plan, including timescales and processes, national budgeting and funding issues, learning resources and initiatives, and usage.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- information was sought, and provided, on Stòrlann, a national resource for Gaelic Medium Education;
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig was working closely with the Highland Council and Argyll & Bute Council on teacher recruitment challenges, especially in remote and rural areas. Members emphasised the importance of creative recruitment solutions, for example working in partnership with other services and/or organisations to recruit couples and to help resolve housing and transport challenges;

- the focus on Gaelic in the home and workplace was welcomed and should continue into the Council's Gaelic Language Plan 4 (GLP4). It was hoped that information gathered for the latest census would be taken into consideration in the development of the next National Gaelic Language Plan. It was explained that timescales for the census information were unlikely to fit with the timetable for the next Gaelic Language Plan though it was explained this would be a flexible document that could take into account new information that emerged during its five years duration;
- it was hoped that national conversations were taking place about the possible impact of the current economic challenges on Gaelic. Attention was drawn to the wide range of consultations to which Bòrd na Gàidhlig had responded; and
- the main focus for Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be on the creation of fluent Gaelic speakers, including those from households without a traditional Gaelic background, to ensure their use of the language through education and into the workplace and communities.

The Committee thanked Mr Whannel and **NOTED** the presentation.

## 6. Progress Against Gaelic Language Plan 3

There had been circulated Report No. G/6/22 dated 23 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- having English translations displayed on the screen while Gaelic was being spoken was welcomed;
- tribute was paid to the various ambassadors for Gaelic, especially in schools, who were demonstrating the positive outcomes of the investments being made, and this was reflected in the Good News item;
- information was sought, and provided, on work being undertaken to tackle the challenging task of identifying, encouraging and supporting the uptake of Gaelic in the community;
- the online Gaelic tuition was welcomed and assurance sought that no groups were disadvantaged in their ability to access these courses;
- the importance of providing Gaelic activities outwith the school setting, and providing a variety of levels and types of learning opportunities, was emphasised; and
- assurance was sought, and provided, that Gaelic in care homes was being encouraged, noting the value of this to older people who spoke Gaelic. Examples were provided of initiatives that were underway and planned as part of Gaelic in the Community.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress made in both monitoring and implementing GLP3 on a quarterly basis utilising the (PRMS) support delivery of GLP3; and
- ii. the progress and challenges regarding the implementation of some enabling actions in the Plan.

## 7. Gaelic and Gàidhlig Medium Education Update

There had been circulated Report No. G/7/22 dated 17 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the progress reported was welcomed;
  - a visit to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis was proposed and it was agreed that this could be arranged;
- it was disappointing that more progress was not being made to develop a 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education campus in Inverness;
- the benefits of bi-lingualism, including improved literacy and empathy, were emphasised, as was the importance of offering Gaelic experience in all primary schools. Reference was made to the Scottish Government's 2+1 language model for schools; and
- creative solutions to teacher recruitment challenges were being worked on with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the paper and recognised the significant improvement trends in attainment and presentation numbers for Gàidhlig and Gaelic in S4, S5 and S6;
- ii. **AGREED** to formally congratulate the young people, their families and the school staff for such significant improvement in Gàidhlig SQA attainment and presentation in the Highlands in August 2022;
- iii. **NOTED** that a report would be brought back to the Gaelic Committee on progress on the 3-18 feasibility study; and
- iv. **AGREED** to give consideration to arranging a visit for Members to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

## 8. Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund

There is circulated Report No. G/8/22 dated 19 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The Committee **NOTED** :-

- i. the applications submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig had been awarded a total of £101,675;
- ii. the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund projects that the Highland Council Gaelic Team were managing, leading, and participating in; and
- iii. that one application was still awaiting decision from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

## 9. Bòrd na Gàidhlig Annual Return Gaelic Language Plan 3

There had been circulated Report No. G/9/22 dated 22 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, it was pointed out that some of the reported figures from 2015 were now seven years out of date and it was felt there had been significant cultural change in outlook in relation to Gaelic. Attention was drawn to plans for a targeted consultation in relation to Gaelic in advance of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan 4.



The Committee **NOTED** the annual return.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm

## Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Geàrr-chunntas coinneamh **Comataidh na Gàidhlig** a chumadh ann an Seòmair na Comhairle, Prìomh Oifis na Comhairle, Rathad Ghlinn Urchadain, Inbhir Nis air Diardaoin 1 Sultain 2022 aig 10.30m.

### An làthair:

Mgr C Aitken (air astar)  
Mgr R Bremner (air astar)  
Mgr I MacIlleDhuinn  
A' Bh-uas S Fanet  
Mgr J Grafton

Mgr U MacAoidh (air astar)  
Mgr D Mac a' Mhuilleir (air astar)  
Mgr C Rothach  
A' Bh-uas L Niven (air astar)  
A' Bh-uas M Nolan

### A' frithealadh na coinneimh:

A' Bh-uas K Lackie, Àrd-Oifigear Gnìomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas  
A' Bh-uas L Walker, Manaidsear Leasachaidh na Gàidhlig  
A' Bh-uas M A NicLeòid Mitchell, Oifigear Leasachaidh na Gàidhlig  
A' Bh-uas S NicIlleDhuinn, Prìomh Rianaire  
A' Bh-uas F NicBheathain, Rianaire Comataidh

### Cuideachd a' frithealadh na coinneimh:-

Mgr S Whannel, Stiùiriche an Fhoghlaim, Bòrd na Gàidhlig (air astar)

**Tha rionnag air iomall na duilleige a' comharrachadh moladh a thèid chun na Comhairle. Tha co-dhùnidhean gun chomharra fo ùghdarras na Comataidh.**

### Mgr C Rothach anns a' Chathair

## Gnothach

### 1. Leisgeulan

Ghabhadh leisgeulan às leth Mhgr P Logue agus Mhgr R Stiùbhairt.

### 2. Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Cha robh foillseachaidhean com-pàirt sam bith ann.

### 3. Naidheachdan Matha

Thug an Cathraiche seachad na naidheachdan matha a leanas:-

- Moladh airson Sgoil-àraich san Eilean Sgitheanach

- Bha Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh air Farpais Ball-coise Nàiseanta nam Bun-sgoiltean (Cuach na Cloinne) a bhuannachadh
- Duais Òir Fastadh Chànanan na h-Alba do Bhun-Sgoil Ghlinn Urchadain
- Latha Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig ann an Geàrrloch
- Fèis Blas
- Spòrs samhraidh san Sgìre a Tuath le cleasan Gàidhlig
- Seachdain Sgeama-cluiche Gàidhlig an t-Samhraidh aig Stramash anns a' Ghearasdan
- Bùth-obrach Dràma Gàidhlig ann an Inbhir Narann
- Sgoilearan às a' Ghàidhealtachd aig Seachdain Dhùn Èideann 2022
- Campa Ball-coise Gàidhlig soirbheachail san Eilean Sgitheanach
- Trèanadh ann an Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig do Bhuill Thaghte

**THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** do na Naidheachdan Matha.

#### 4. Suidheachadh Dhreuchdan

##### (a) An Comunn Gàidhealach

Tha Cùmhnant Lìbhrigeadh Seirbheis aig a' Chomhairle leis a' Chomunn Ghàidhealach agus tha seo a' ciallachadh gun tèid am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail a chumail ann an sgìre na Gàidhealtachd ann an 2025.

Ri linn seo, tha an Cùmhnant Lìbhrigeadh Seirbheis a' gabhail a-steach an clàs a leanas a thaobh riochdachadh – tha e mar riatanas air an t-Solaraiche Seirbheis cead a thoirt do riochdaire taghte bhon Cheannaiche suidhe air Bòrd de bhuidheann an t-Solaraiche Seirbheis agus làn chom-pàirt a ghabhail ann an còmhraidhean agus co-dhùnaidhean a' buntainn ri Mòdan Nàiseanta Rìoghail a bhith a' gabhail àite sa Ghàidhealtachd, na clàran-gnothaich, pàipearan, aithisgean agus geàrr-chunntasan buntainneach uile a thoirt dhan riochdaire taghte, cuireadh a thoirt dhan riochdaire taghte a bhith an làthair agus com-pàirt a ghabhail ann an ath-sgrùdaidhean, luachaidhean no measaidhean eile air an stiùireadh leis a' Bhòrd, agus cuireadh a thoirt dhan riochdaire taghte suidhe air na Comataidhean Eagrachaidh Nàiseanta agus Ionadail.

**DH'AONTAICH** a' Chomataidh gun deidheadh a' Bh-uas I Chaimbeul a chur an dreuchd mar riochdaire air a' Chomunn Ghàidhealach.

##### (b) Bòrd nan Urrasairean airson Urras Catriona NicCuaig

Chaidh Bòrd nan Urrasairean airson Urras Catriona NicCuaig a stèidheachadh gus bursaraidhean a thoirt seachad do dh'oileanaich às a' Ghàidhealtachd, Earra-Ghàidheal is Bòd agus na h-Eileanan Siar gus an cuideachadh a' dol dhan oilthigh.

**DH'AONTAICH** a' Chomataidh gun deidheadh Mgr C Rothach a chur an dreuchd mar riochdaire air Bòrd nan Urrasairean airson Urras Catriona NicCuaig.

#### 5. Taisbeanadh – Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Thug Mgr Jim Whannel, Stiùiriche an Fhoghlaim aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig, seachad taisbeanadh mun ath Phlana Nàiseanta Gàidhlig, le fiosrachadh mu raointean-ama is

pròiseasan, cùisean a' buntainn ri buidseatan nàiseanta is maoineachadh, goireasan ionnsachaidh agus iomairtean, agus cleachdadh.

Rè an deasbaid, thog na Buill na puingeann a leanas:-

- chaidh fiosrachadh iarraidh agus a thoirt seachad mu Stòrlann, goireas nàiseanta airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig;
- bha Bòrd na Gàidhlig ag obair gu dlùth le Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd agus Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid gus dèiligeadh ri dùbhlain a thaobh a bhith a' fastadh thidsearan, gu h-àraid ann an sgìrean iomallach agus dùthchail. Thog Buill cho cudromach 's a bha e fuasglaidhean cruthachail a lorg a thaobh fastadh, mar eisimpleir a bhith ag obair ann an com-pàirteachas le seirbheisean agus/no buidhnean eile gus càraidean fhasadh airson cuideachadh le dùbhlain taigheadais is còmhthalach;
- chaidh fàilte a chur air fòcas air a' Ghàidhlig san dachaigh agus san àite-obrach agus bu chòir dhan a seo leantainn air adhart gu Plana na Gàidhlig 4 (PnG4) aig a' Chomhairle. Bhathar an dòchas gun deidheadh fiosrachadh a chaidh a chruinneachadh sa Chunntas-shluaigh mu dheireadh a thoirt an lùib obair-leasachaidh air Plana Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2023-28. Chaidh mìneachadh gun robh raointean-ama airson fiosrachadh mun Chunntas-shluaigh a' ciallachadh nach biodh seo a' freagairt air clàr-ama a' Phlana Nàiseanta ùir, ach gur e sgrìobhainn sùbailte a bh' ann agus gum b' urrainnear aire a thoirt do dh'fhiosrachadh ùr a thigeadh am bàrr tro na còig bliadhna a mhaireadh e;
- bhathar an dòchas gun robh còmhraidhean nàiseanta a' dol air adhart mun bhuaidh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig dùbhlain eaconamach làithreach air a' Ghàidhlig. Chaidh aire a tharraing chun an raoin fharsaing cho-chomhairlean dhan bheil Bòrd na Gàidhlig air freagairt; agus
- bu chòir dha a bhith na phrìomh amas aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig luchd-labhairt fileanta Gàidhlig a chruthachadh, a' gabhail a-steach feadhainn bho dhachaighean anns nach robh Gàidhlig gu traidiseanta, gus dèanamh cinnteach gum bithear a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig tro fhoghlam agus a-steach dhan àite-obrach agus do choimhearsnachdan.

Às dèidh taing a thoirt do Mhgr Whannel, **THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dhan taisbeanadh.

## 6. Adhartas mu Choinneamh Plana na Gàidhlig 3

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/6/22 le ceann-latha 23 Lùnastal 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghniomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

Rè an deasbaid, chaidh na puingeann a leanas a thogail:-

- chaidh fàilte a chur air na h-eadar-theangachaidhean Beurla a bha air an taisbeanadh air an sgrìon fhad 's a bhathar a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig;
- chaidh luaidh a dhèanamh air diofar thosgairnean na Gàidhlig, gu h-àraid ann an sgoiltean, agus iad a' sealltainn nan toraidhean matha a bha a' tighinn às na bhathar a' tasgadh anns a' Ghàidhlig, agus chaidh seo a thogail anns na Naidheachdan Matha;
- chaidh fiosrachadh iarraidh, agus a thoirt seachad, mun obair a bhathar a' dèanamh gus cleachdadh na Gàidhlig sa choimhearsnachd a chomharrachadh is a bhrosnachadh;

- chaidh fàilte a chur air oideachadh Gàidhlig air-loidhne agus chaidh barantas a shireadh nach robh cion ceangal eadar-lìn a' cur bacadh air buidhnean sam bith bho bhith a' faighinn cothrom air na cùrsaichean;
- chaidh cuideam a chur air cho cudromach 's a bha e cleasan Gàidhlig a thoirt seachad taobh a-muigh na sgoile, agus a bhith a' toirt seachad grunn sheòrsachan is ìrean de chothroman ionnsachaidh; agus
- chaidh barantas a shireadh, agus a thoirt seachad, gun robhar a' brosnachadh Gàidhlig ann an dachannan-cùraim, a' toirt fa-near gun robh luach an lùib seo do dhaoine nas sine a bha a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig. Chaidh eisimpleirean a thoirt seachad de dh'iomairtean a bha a' dol air adhart agus a bhathar a' cur air dòigh mar phàirt de Ghàidhlig anns a' choimhearsnachd.

#### **THUG a' Chomataidh FA-NEAR:-**

- i. dhan adhartas a chaidh a dhèanamh ann a bhith a' sgrùdadh is a' buileachadh Plana na Gàidhlig 3 air stèidh ràitheil, le bhith a' cleachdadh PRMS airson taic a thoirt do lìbhrigeadh PnG3; agus
- ii. dhan adhartas is dha na dùbhlain a tha an lùib a bhith a' buileachadh cuid de ghnìomhan comasachaidh a' Phlana.

#### **7. Cunntas às Ùr air Foghlam Luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig agus Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig**

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/7/22 le ceann-latha 17 Lùnastal 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghnìomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

Rè an deasbaid, chaidh na puingeann a leanas a thogail:-

- chaidh fàilte a chur air an aithisg adhartais;
  - chaidh turas gu Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis a mholadh agus chaidh aontachadh gum b' urrainnear seo a chur air dòigh;
- bha e na bhriseadh-dùil nach robh barrachd adhartais ga dhèanamh gus campas Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig 3-18 ann an Inbhir Nis a leasachadh;
- chaidh cuideam a chur air buannachdan dà-chànanais, a' gabhail a-steach litearras agus co-fhaireachdainn nas fheàrr, agus bha e cuideachd cudromach gun deidheadh eòlas mun Ghàidhlig a thabhann ann am bun-sgoiltean uile.
- chaidh iomradh a thoirt air modail cànan 2+1 Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson sgoiltean; agus
- bhathar ag obair còmhla ri Bòrd na Gàidhlig gus fuasglaidhean cruthachail a lorg do na dùbhlain a bh' ann a thaobh a bhith a' fastadh thidsearan.

Às dèidh sin:-

- i. **THUG a' Chomataidh FA-NEAR** do shusbaint a' phàipeir agus thugadh cuideachd fa-near gu bheil leasachadh cudromach an dà chuid ann am buileachadh agus anns na h-àireamhan a tha a' dol air adhart airson deuchainnean Gàidhlig Luchd-fileanta agus Gàidhlig Luchd-ionnsachaidh ann an ÀS4, ÀS5 agus ÀS6;
- ii. **DH'AONTAICH** a' Chomataidh meal an naidheachd a chur gu foirmeil air na daoine òga, an teaghlaichean agus luchd-obrach na sgoile airson leasachadh cho mòr ann am buileachadh agus anns na h-àireamhan a bha a' dol air

adhart airson deuchainnean Gàidhlig Luchd-fileanta SQA sa Ghàidhealtachd san Lùnastal 2022;

- iii. **THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** gun deidheadh aithisg a thoirt gu Comataidh na Gàidhlig mu adhartas air sgrùdadh comasachd 3-18; agus
- iv. **DH'AONTAICH** a' Chomataidh gun deidheadh coimhead air turas a chur air dòigh do Bhuill gu Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

## 8. Maoin Buileachaidh Achd na Gàidhlig

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/8/22 le ceann-latha 19 Lùnastal 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghnìomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

**THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR**:-

- i. gun deach sùim iomlan de £101,675 fhaotainn mu choinneamh nan tagraidhean a chaidh a chur a-steach gu BnaG;
- ii. do na pròiseactan GLAIF a tha Sgioba Gàidhlig Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' stiùireadh agus anns a bheilear a' gabhail com-pàirt; agus
- iii. gun robhar fhathast a' feitheamh co-dhùnadh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig mu aon iarrtas.

## 9. Tilleadh Bliadhnail Bhòrd na Gàidhlig – Plana na Gàidhlig 3

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/9/22 le ceann-latha 22 Lùnastal 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghnìomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

Tron deasbaireachd, chaidh a thoirt am follais gun robh cuid de na figearan a chaidh aithris bho 2015 a-nis ro aosta agus bhathar dhen bheachd gun robh atharrachadh susbainteach ann an seallaidhean a thaobh na Gàidhlig. Chaidh aire a tharraing gu planaichean airson co-chomhairle a bhiodh a' buntainn gu sònraichte ris a' Ghàidhlig air thoiseach air Plana Gàidhlig 4 na Comhairle.

**THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dhan tilleadh bhliadhnail.

Chrìochnaich a' choinneamh aig 12.20 f.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Easter Ross Area Committee** held remotely on Monday, 5 September 2022, at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Ms T Collier  
Mr D Louden  
Ms P Munro

Ms M Nolan  
Mr A Rhind  
Ms M Smith

### Officials in Attendance:

Phil Tomalin, Ward Manager  
Iain Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager  
Fiona MacBain, Committee Administrator

### Also in Attendance:

Mr R Dibble, Group Commander for Highland North

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

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Ms S Rawlings.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were none.

#### 3. Appointment of Chair Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd

Mr A Rhind, seconded by Ms T Collier, proposed Mr D Louden as Chair. Ms M Smith, seconded by Ms P Munro, proposed Ms M Nolan as Chair. Votes were cast as follows:

**For Mr Louden:** Ms T Collier, Mr D Louden, Ms P Munro, Mr A Rhind.

**For Ms Nolan:** Ms M Nolan, Ms M Smith

There being four votes for Mr Louden and two for Ms Nolan, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Mr D Louden** as Chair of the Easter Ross Area Committee.

Mr D Louden took the Chair.

#### 4. **Appointment of Vice Chair Cur an Dreuchd Iar-Chathraiche**

Ms M Smith, seconded by Ms P Munro, proposed Ms M Nolan as Vice Chair. Ms T Collier, seconded by Mr D Louden, proposed Mr A Rhind as Vice Chair. Votes were cast as follows:

**For Ms M Nolan:** Ms P Munro, Ms M Nolan, Ms M Smith

**For Mr A Rhind:** Ms T Collier, Mr D Louden, Mr A Rhind

As there were three votes each, Mr Rhind withdrew and the Committee **AGREED** to appoint **Ms M Nolan** as Vice Chair of the Easter Ross Area Committee.

#### 5. **Fire – Area Performance Summary Report Smàladh – Geàrr Aithisg Coileanadh Sgireil**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/11/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Members expressed concern at the recent spike in incidents at Invergordon Tank Farm and welcomed the news that the perpetrator had been caught and was being dealt with by the Police. Preventative work was being undertaken with the owners and with the local school;
- staff at Invergordon Fire Station were thanked for their help at a recent open day;
- it was requested that recent fires in wood in Alness be investigated;
- concern was expressed at the low availability (48%) of the second appliance at Invergordon and a summary was provided of efforts being undertaken to address this. Significant recruitment challenges were being faced and Members were asked to encourage people to show an interest in careers with the SFRS. Information to help with this was requested; and
- assurance was sought and provided that efforts were underway to tackle increases in climate change issues such as wild fires and flooding.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

#### 6. **Roads - Winter Service Plan 2022/23 Rathaidean – Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/12/22 by Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- information was sought and provided on how adverse weather was dealt with, with particular reference to the need to be mindful of drivers' working hours when starting at 5am;
- it was intended that a similar level of service to the previous year would be provided. Although there had been no cutbacks, there were increased pressures including rising costs; and



- information was sought and provided on the depth of snow required for snow-ploughs to be able to safely lower their blade, this being around 20mm of snow.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 and **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

## 7. **Invergordon Common Good Fund** **Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Ghòrdain**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer, Resources and Finance and Executive Chief Officer, Community and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- information was sought on the reported £81,305 of unaudited usable reserves, and, in the absence of anyone with knowledge to explain, this would be provided to Members outwith the meeting; and
- information was sought on the current location of the Bouchardon Bust. Recent media reports had generated interest and concern among the local community and it was explained that information was being sought on the value of the Bust in order to put together an options appraisal which would be brought to Committee for consideration. Should any proposal to sell come forward in the future, this would be subject to a full public consultation under the Community Empowerment Act. Assurance was provided that Invergordon Community Council would be kept fully up to date. Corporate Communications officers were thanked for their recent communications with the media on this.

The Committee:

- NOTED** the Quarter 1 monitoring statement for the Invergordon Common Good Fund;
- NOTED** the update on current Invergordon Common Good issues;
- AGREED** information would be provided to Member on the unaudited usable reserves; and
- AGREED** the current location of the Bouchardon Bust be given to Members of the Committee.

## 8. **Tain Common Good Fund** **Maoin Math Coitcheann Bhaile Dhubhthaich**

There had been circulated Report No ERA14/22 by the Executive Chief Officer, Resources and Finance and Executive Chief Officer, Community and Place.

During discussion, Members welcomed the £4,837.93 that had been transferred to the Tain Common Good Fund as a half share of the sale of Unit 2b, Blarliath. Further information was requested on the reasons why 100% of rental income was being paid into the Council's General Fund, and only sales were being shared 50:50 with the Common Good Fund.

The Committee **NOTED** the Quarter 1 monitoring statement for the Tain Common Good Fund and **AGREED** that information be provided to them on why no rental income from Blarliath land ownership was being paid to the Tain Common Good Fund.

## 9. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Easter Ross Area Committee held on 17 February 2022.

Ms Collier referred to Item 5, Placed Based Investment Programme, and asked for information on the reasons behind the agreed investments of £2,887.64 to the TCF Shore Road project, Invergordon, and £35,000 in CCTV infrastructure in Invergordon town centre. Ms P Munro gave a summary of the discussions that had taken place in this regard.

Prior to the meeting ending at 11.20am, Mr D Louden paid tribute to his predecessor as Chair, Ms Fiona Robertson, for her hard and effective work as a Councillor for Tain and Easter Ross, and for the wider Easter Ross area. He wished her well for the future.

The Committee **AGREED** the Vice Chair be invited to future Area Committee pre-meetings.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Corporate Resources Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday 8 September 2022 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr M Baird	Mr A MacDonald
Mr R Bremner	Mr G Mackenzie
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (remotely)	Mr S Mackie (remotely)
Mr A Christie	Mr D Millar (remotely)
Mr M Green	Mr C Munro
Mr S Kennedy	Mr P Oldham
Mr B Lobban	Mr R Stewart
Mr D Louden	

### Non-Members also present:

Mr J Finlayson	Mr T MacLennan
Mr J McGillivray	Mr D Macpherson
Mr R MacKintosh	Mr M Reiss
Ms K MacLean	Mr K Rosie

### Officials in Attendance:

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive  
 Mrs K Lackie, Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance  
 Mr E Foster, Head of Finance, Resources and Finance  
 Mrs S McKandie, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Resources and Finance  
 Mr J Shepherd, Interim Head of ICT & Digital Transformation, Resources and Finance  
 Ms E Barrie, Interim Head of HR, Resources and Finance  
 Mr M Waters, FOI and Data Protection Manager, Performance and Governance  
 Mr M Bailey, Commercial and Efficiency Team Manager,  
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
 Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance  
 Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance  
 Miss R Ross, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance

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

**Mr D Louden in the Chair**

## BUSINESS

### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Mr R Gale and Mr A Rhind.

**2. Declarations of Interest  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:-

Items 5.a, 6, 7, 9.a and 12.i: Mr A Christie

**3. Recess Powers  
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Corporate Resources Committee.

**4. Appointments to Sub-Committees, Working Groups, etc  
Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean, Buidhnean-obrach is eile**

The Committee **APPROVED** the membership of the following Sub-Committees, Working Groups etc:-

**a. Appeals & Disputes Committee – 10 Members**

Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee, Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant Service Committee, Mr P Oldham, Mr B Lobban, Mr R Gale and two further members of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Group to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

**b. Central Safety Committee – 5 Members**

**Employer's Representatives** – Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee, Mr P Oldham, Mr Lobban and Mr R Gale.

**Staff Side Representatives** – Trade Union representatives from Unison (1 place), GMB (1 place), UNITE (1 place), UNITE/UCATT (1 place), Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (to act on behalf of the teaching unions - 1 place) and 1 representative from BDA, CSP or RCN to be confirmed on a rolling basis.

**c. Employment Release Sub-Committee – 10 Members**

Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee, Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant Strategic Committee, Mr D Millar, Mr M Green, Mr A Christie, Mr A MacDonald and two further members of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Group to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

**d. Highland Council Staff Partnership Forum – 9 Members**

**Elected Member Group** – Leader and Convener, Chairs of the Strategic Committees and the Leader of the Opposition (or their Deputies/Vice Chairs).

**Staff Side Group** – Trade Union representatives from Unison (2 places), GMB (2 places), UNITE/UCATT (1 place), UNITE (1 place) and RCN/CSP/BDA (1 place)

**e. Non Domestic Rates Appeals Committee – 5 Members**

Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee, Mr G Mackenzie, Mr S Kennedy and Mr A MacDonald.

**5. Corporate Revenue and Capital Monitoring Report to 30 June 2022  
Aithisg Teachd-a-steach Corporra agus Sgrùdadh Calpa gu 30 Ògmhios 2022**

**a. Corporate Revenue Monitoring to 30 June 2022**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as he had a connection in his capacity as a Non-executive director of NHS Highland and as General Manager of Inverness Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/10/22** by the Head of Corporate Finance.

The Chair paid tribute to the former Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee and Budget Leader on working collaboratively during the term of the previous Council and on leaving the Council's finances in a good position particularly given the challenges presented by the pandemic. He referred to the current challenges faced due to the cost of living crisis, and the importance of the Council doing as much as possible to support the public, businesses and charities in Highland. A paper on the cost of living crisis would be brought forward to the full Council on 22 September 2022. From a Council perspective, it was important to maximise commercial activities to generate income, manage assets better and consider new ways of working and workforce planning, and to redesign and re-prioritise services. In this regard, he commended the effective work of the Redesign Board over the last term of the Council and its continuing important role.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- concern at the challenges presented by the cost of living crisis, the pressure on pay awards and forecasted overspend on the budget and the need to explore as rapidly as possible the impact on the Council, its workforce and service users;
- related to the above, there was a need to improve financial systems and provide better and more up to date financial data to inform decision making, recognising this might require investment in technology;
- the need for Members to be provided with more information on the detailed timelines in relation to the delivery of savings;
- the Chair acknowledged the above points in relation to financial information and timelines for savings and confirmed that consideration would be given to both matters going forward. Group Leaders had been invited to meet with the Administration to discuss resolutions as to how to deliver the savings on the budget and it was hoped Members would work collaboratively on this matter;
- the current crisis could not have been predicted, however due to prudent financial management the Council was in a better position than many other local authorities to respond to the crisis and it was hoped that by working collaboratively there would be a positive response for the people of the Highlands and Council staff;

- an explanation was sought and provided in relation to the Council's borrowing in terms of the impact of rising interest rates and a reduction in funding from the Scottish Government, the sustainability of the current level of borrowing in the medium and longer terms, any feedback received from the UK Treasury on the level of debt, and risks associated with borrowing from other local authorities and where liability lay for the debt;
- whether the Scottish Government would be the counterparty to the Council's PWLB loan and the need for this to be confirmed in the current financial year. The Chair undertook to initiate advance discussions on this matter; and
- it was important to recognise that Members had a responsibility to provide assurance and confidence to Highland communities in terms of the action being taken to tackle the crisis and the work being undertaken to redesign services;

The Chief Executive advised that the key issue in responding to the cost of living crisis was one of collaboration and relationships, including at a national level. All the Chief Executives across Scotland were working together on this issue. The Council was also working with its community planning partners and there was assurance and confidence that the Council was in a strong position to respond to the challenges going forward. In terms of representing staff, the Council also had strong relationships with trade unions. Strategies and proposals for an extensive engagement process with staff and communities in the Highlands would be brought to the full Council for debate.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets as at 30 June 2022 and the estimated year end forecast;
- ii. status of budgeted savings in the year; and
- iii. Chair's commitment to undertake discussions with the Scottish Government regarding the Council's PWLB loan borrowings.

#### **b. Corporate Capital Monitoring to 30 June 2022**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/11/22** by the Head of Corporate Finance.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the report highlighted that it was highly likely the overall affordability envelope for capital might have to reduce from the current programmed level due to funding challenges. Members should therefore receive an early update on any slippage on the Capital Programme with reference to specific schools projects and impact on the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). It was confirmed that an update report on the Capital Programme would be brought to the next full Council in September 2022, including on LEIP 2 and 3, and there would be future reports to Council on the review of the Capital Programme; and
- the need for the total costs of capital projects to be provided to all strategic committees as had been requested by Members previously. The Chair provided a commitment that the information provided in reports would be improved for future meetings.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. final position for the 2021/22 financial year;
- ii. position for Q1 2022/23 and the estimated year end forecast;

- iii. progress made with the monitoring of major capital projects;
- iv. level of borrowing used to fund capital expenditure;
- v. challenges affecting the affordability of the capital programme; and
- vi. assurance provided by the Chair that the format of future capital reports would be reviewed with a view to providing improved information particularly in respect of the whole cost of capital projects.

**6. Revenue and Performance Monitoring Q1 – 01 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 and Near Final Revenue Out-turn for 2021 - 2022**  
**Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach agus Coileanadh C1 – 01 Giblean 2022 gu 30 Ògmhios 2022 agus Fìor Shuidheachadh Faisg air Deireannach airson 2021–2022**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as he had a connection in his capacity as General Manager of Inverness Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

**a. Depute Chief Executive's Service**  
**Seirbheis an Iar-Àrd-Oifigeir**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/12/22** by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. 2021/22 revenue and capital final outturn position;
- ii. monitoring statement and latest forecasted outturn for Quarter 1 2022/23;
- iii. Directorate was on track to deliver all approved savings by the end of the financial year; and
- iv. performance information.

**b. Resources and Finance Service**  
**Seirbheis nan Goireasan agus an Ionmhais**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/13/22** by Acting Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. revenue near final monitoring position for 2021/22 and the Quarter 1 period to 30 June 2022;
- ii. statutory performance indicators, local key performance measures and where available, comparisons to Scottish averages; and
- iii. effectiveness of the standard and level of services provided by the Resources and Finance Directorate and alignment with the Council's commitment to Best Value and continuous improvement.

**c. Performance and Governance Service**  
**Seirbheis a' Choileanaidh agus an Riaghlachais**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/14/22** by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. 2021/22 final outturn position for the Directorate;
- ii. revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022;
- iii. Directorate was on track to deliver all approved savings by the end of the financial year;
- iv. Directorate's performance information.

## **7. Draft Service Plans Dreachd Phlanaichean Seirbheis**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as he had a connection in his capacity as a Non-executive director of NHS Highland and as General Manager of Inverness Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

### **a. Depute Chief Executive's Service Seirbheis an Iar-Àrd-Oifigeir**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/15/22** by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- whether the Council's had a derogation from its obligations under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, and the current level of performance against the targets to improve performance. It was explained there was no such derogation and performance was reported to the Scottish Information Commissioner on a quarterly basis. Within the Council, performance was reviewed on a weekly basis by a Performance Board attended by the Chief Executive and all ECOs and a significant improvement in performance had been achieved, the intention being to reach and exceed the Service's target;
- concern that freedom of information requests were extremely time consuming for officers and should be a process of last resort and Members should reflect on the pressure such requests were placing on Council's resources, particularly as they had opportunity to contact officers directly for responses and build good relationships. The Chair indicated that he would have further discussion with Mr R Stewart in regard to any specific concerns outwith the meeting;
- the format of all draft Service Plans required to be more outcomes focused and referenced back to the Council and Corporate programmes to ensure they were interlinked and to allow the benefits for people in the Highlands to be measured and evaluated. The opportunity should therefore be taken to revise the format of the draft Plans while the Council Programme was being developed to ensure there was reference to inputs, outputs and outcomes. These comments also applied to items 7 (b) and 7 (c) below; and
- good progress was being made with the Council Programme and the input of all political groups in terms of the format of the draft Plans would be welcomed and the Administration Leaders would be content to have further discussions in this regard.



Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. draft Depute Chief Executive's Directorate Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. draft plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of the report.

**b. Resources and Finance Service  
Seirbheis nan Goireasan agus an Ionmhais**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/16/22** by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. draft Resources & Finance Directorate Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. draft plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of the report.

**c. Performance and Governance Service  
Seirbheis a' Choileanaidh agus an Riaghlachais**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/17/22** by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The Committee **NOTED** the draft:

- i. Performance and Governance Directorate Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. Plan would be subject to review following the approval of a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan and completion of development work outlined in section 5 of the report.

**8. Review of ICT Acceptable Use Policy  
Ath-sgrùdadh air Poileasaidh Cleachdadh Cothromach ICT**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/18/22** by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

In discussion, it was confirmed that the ICT Acceptable Use Policy applied to all Highland Council staff, elected members, pupils and any contractors using Council ICT systems. The policy did not state what would happen if someone were to breach the policy. If there was improper use, this would be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure when staff were involved and there would be different processes for elected members, pupils and contractors. The policy only referred to improper use in a general manner rather than detailing specific websites which could change frequently. Therefore, there was an element of judgement on improper use if an investigation was to be undertaken. In terms of the Council's disciplinary procedure, it was understood it did contain reference to unacceptable use of ICT policies, however, this would be checked and if required this would be reinforced in the disciplinary procedure.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:

- i. the revised ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP); and

- ii. that future updates to the ICT AUP be agreed by the ICT Strategy Board and would come back to Committee for approval where necessary.

## 9. ICT and Digital Strategies Ro-innleachdan ICT agus Didseatach

### a. ICT Strategy Review Ath-sgrùdadh Ro-innleachd ICT

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as he had a connection in his capacity as a Non-executive director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No **RES/19/22** by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

In discussion, the ICT strategy review document was commended and the hard work and professionalism of the ICT team was acknowledged. It was queried if there should be reference in the document recognising that not everyone engaged with the Council by digital means, had access to digital devices or the skills to use them. Having more people engage with the Council digitally could save the Council money and thought should be given to how to empower people to give them the confidence to go online, perhaps by opening up Service Points to provide training. A specific example was provided of bank closures meaning more people were being forced to bank online which was not easy for some people.

It was highlighted that digital inclusion was a key issue for both the public and Council staff. A digital champions network was being considered for staff and some thought would be given as to how this could be replicated in the wider community. In terms of the new Council's programme, it would be considered how to make digital technology and digital inclusion a more enhanced and educated experience for everyone.

The Committee **AGREED**:

- i. the ICT Strategy; and
- ii. that future updates to the ICT Strategy be agreed by the ICT Strategy Board and would come back to Committee for approval where necessary.

### b. Digital Strategy and High Level Implementation Plan Ro-innleachd Didseatach agus Plana Buileachaidh Àrd-Ìre

There had been circulated Report No **RES/20/22** by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

In discussion, it was highlighted that by making more of Council services digital enabled resources to be freed up to help people who felt excluded from this process.

In terms of digital inclusion for Members, it was planned to survey all Members soon asking about their digital capabilities and what they would like in terms of further training and development. There would also be information on the Members Intranet following this process with further guidance and help on this matter.

In relation to case load management, it was highlighted that at a recent meeting of the Redesign Board one of the projects agreed to take forward was improving customer engagement by ensuring the Council's systems and processes were helpful in terms of managing and tracking progress of public enquiries.

The Committee **AGREED** the Digital Strategy and associated High Level Implementation Plan.

## 10. Information and Data Strategy Ro-innleachd Fiosrachaidh agus Dàta

There had been circulated Report No **RES/21/22** by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

In setting the context to the report, it was highlighted that in terms of comments at the meeting on further requests for information on data, there had been significant improvements within the Council on this. More than half of the workforce were front line staff and therefore there was a need to get the right balance with data, targets and leadership. The Council was still dealing with the impacts of Covid and dealing with the Ukraine and cost of living crises. Therefore, as well as managing targets, data and outcomes, Council staff were heavily involved in responding to these significant issues. Member support was sought in terms of what was required in terms of legislation, leadership and data and this had to be balanced with the need to spend time with people and staff. Therefore, there was an opportunity to look at data and legislation and set out what data was important, such as for example the number of unaccompanied children coming to the Highlands. Therefore, there was a need for balance to the strategic approach to the Information and Data Strategy.

A point was made that data and information strategies were a management tool and supported the understanding of the Council's operations, to know if things were being done right and understand where improvements to service delivery and/or performance were necessary. Going forward, the information in the report had its place in supporting the understanding of Council operations, but there had to be a balance and it could not replace the practicalities of the human side of providing services and this should be recognised in the Council's programme.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the benefits and context for the Information and Data Strategy;
- ii. **AGREED** the Strategic principles set out in the Strategy; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the Information and Data Strategy.

## 11. Treasury Management Rianachd Ionmhais

### a. Summary of Transactions Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean

There had been circulated Report No **RES/22/22** by the Head of Corporate Finance.

A point was made that in terms of increasing interest rates, if non-essential expenditure could be reduced, then there would be more money for essential projects such as new schools. The Council's borrowing was one of the highest of any local authority in

Scotland, due to its unique geography and the Council had previously halved its capital plan in order to reduce borrowing costs. The Council's general reserves were also forecasted to be halved this year and practical ideas to reduce non-essential expenditure needed to be considered, such as three weekly bin collections and switching off streetlights during the night in some areas. It was queried what the appropriate mechanism was for Members and the public to submit ideas for savings. The Chair advised that further information would be provided offline on the most appropriate route to submit suggestions and indicated that all ideas would be welcomed.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions reports for the periods 1 January to 31 March 2022 and 1 April to 30 June 2022.

**b. Annual Treasury Management Report 2021/22**  
**Aithisg Stiùiridh Bhliadhna an Ionmhais 2021/22**

There had been circulated Report No RES/**23**/22 by the by the Head of Corporate Finance.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Annual Treasury Management report for 2021/22.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS**  
**GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN**

**12. Minutes of Meetings**  
**Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of item 12.i as he had a connection in his capacity as a Non-executive director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

The following Minutes of Meetings had been circulated for confirmation:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Central Safety Committee held on 4 February 2022;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Staff Partnership Forum held on 11 February 2022;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Recruitment Panel held on 1 March 2022 and 20 April 2022; and
- iv. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Appeals and Disputes Committee held on 22 April 2022.

The meeting was closed at 12.22pm.