

**The Highland Council
No. 6 2022/2023**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 27 October at 10.35 am.

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

Present:

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

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

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

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr M Green, Mr A MacDonald, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr J McGillivray Mr H Morrison, Ms S Rawlings and Mr M Reiss.

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

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

Item 8: Ms B Jarvie and Mrs M Reid

and the following Transparency Statements:-

Item 7 (i): Ms L Johnston

Items 7(iii): Mr A Christie

Item 8: Mr A Christie, Mr K Gowans and Ms J Hendry

Item 11: Mr R Stewart

Item 12: Mr A Christie

**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 22 September 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 the Volume circulated separately as undernoted:-

The Minutes, having been moved and seconded were, except as undernoted, **APPROVED** – matters arising having been dealt with as follows:-

***Education Committee 29 September 2022**

*Starred Item 12 – Review of the statutory consultation exercise on the relocation of St Clement's School, Dingwall – **AGREED** that St Clement's School be re-located to the site off Dochcarty Brae

*Starred Item 13 - Review of the statutory consultation exercise on the establishment of a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Glenurquhart Primary School – **AGREED** that a Gaelic Medium catchment area be created for Glenurquhart Primary School on the basis set out at paragraph 1.2 of the report.

*Starred Item 14 - Review of the statutory consultation exercise on the closure of Roy Bridge Primary School – **AGREED** that it discontinue education at Roy Bridge Primary School, transferring its catchment to that of Spean Bridge Primary School.

*Starred Item 15.iii – Appointments to Other Bodies – **AGREED** that Mr G MacKenzie be appointed to the Highland Football Academy Trust

Minutes not included in the Volume were as follows -

- i. Investment Sub-Committee held on 21 October 2022 – **APPROVED** and **AGREED**, in relation to Duncraig Educational Trust Scheme 1999, that trust funds be invested with Adam & Co.
- ii. Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board held on 20 June 2022 (approved by the Board on 23 September 2022) **NOTED**.

5. **Membership of Committees, etc** **Ballarachd Chomataidhean, msaa**

The Council **AGREED**:-

- i. Ms S Atkin replace Mr B Lobban and Mrs McAllister replace Mr J Grafton on the Housing and Property Committee;
- ii. Mr A Christie replace Ms S Rawlings on the Education Committee; and
- iii. Mrs T Robertson replace Ms S Rawlings on the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

6. **Question Time** **Àm Ceiste**

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

Public Questions

Ms C MacRae

To the Leader

“Will Highland Council give the PVI sector a fair rate in line with funding they have received from The Scottish Government?”

The response had been circulated.

Ms N Richards

To the Leader

“What analysis has Highland Council undertaken to assess the impact upon working parents and carers in Highland in the event that ELC partners exit the 1140 hours provision due to failure of Highland Council to agree a mutually acceptable partner rate?”

The response had been circulated.

Member Questions**(1) Mr A Christie****To the Leader**

“By vacant post please could you detail, explain and provide key statistics including the impact on service users for the Health and Social Care and Wellbeing Service as well as the Education Service for pupil support and specialist non-teaching staff in relation to the current situation on staff vacancies?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried how it was possible that there would be no impact on service users from the seventy-five vacant posts.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he would come back to Mr Christie with further information in due course.

(2) Mr A Christie**To the Leader**

“With regard to the new Council Programme, at the September Council meeting we were informed that the final Programme would come back to Council for approval on 27th October following engagement with Members, staff and communities. The report to the September Council meeting defined this engagement as sessions with community groups and local engagement visits across Highland localities following September Council and into the first week of October. As at the 13th October I am not aware of any engagement sessions being in place, could the Leader update as to what is actually happening?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried in what broad general areas did the Leader of the Council think that the 6.9% saving targeted by the Administration could be made.

In response, the Leader of the Council deemed it inappropriate to give his personal opinion and stated the importance of listening to others and understanding the priorities and challenges in different areas.

(3) Ms J McEwan**To the Leader**

“With regard to expenditure on road maintenance could the Leader detail the amounts spent versus original budget differentiating between capital and revenue whilst using the Area Committees as geographic boundaries?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried what could be done to alleviate problems caused by roads not being fit for purpose and the health and safety risks associated with this.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that this was a problem that had been developing over a long period of time and that a remedy had been sought as part of a collaborative process over the past two years.

(4) Ms K Willis

To the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee

“The EV charging network in Highland, although growing, continues to experience operational problems with many EV chargers, both old and new, regularly breaking down and often remaining out of service for extended periods. How does Council plan to improve maintenance and repair of EV chargers to increase confidence in the EV charging network in Highland?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried what was the remaining 20%, in the data received, covering as it appeared there was not a plan for ongoing maintenance and repair.

In response, the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee stated that EV charging fell within the remit of the Climate Change Committee which was meeting on 3 November 2022. However, a full report would be considered at the next Economy and Infrastructure Committee to look at this in more detail and allow Members to contribute.

(5) Mr R MacKintosh

To the Chair of the Communities and Place Committee

“In 2019, Council agreed to ban glyphosate use in certain areas (all sports and recreation facilities) and to develop a business case for a complete ban on the use of glyphosate-containing products. Please can you provide an update on progress regarding development of the business case for a complete ban, including data on the quantity of glyphosate containing weed killers purchased and used by Council since January 2020?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

(6) Mr R Gale

To the Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee

“Following the Council’s decision on the 22nd of September to prevent Members from having access to printed copies of the papers, can you give details on when a full Display Screen Equipment assessment will be carried out on the desks, chairs, workspace, and lighting in the chamber to ensure that Members’ health does not suffer as a result of prolonged DSE use?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, given the original answer only addressed obligations of the User and not the context of the question relating to chairs, workspace and lighting in the Chamber, it was queried if a Display Screen Equipment assessment would be arranged to be carried out in accordance with Health and Safety Executive guidance.

In response, the Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee advised that this request would be discussed with Officers and a response provided to all Members.

(7) Mr A Graham**To the Leader**

"What percentage of all Highland premises have access to the fibre network and what percentage are able to order superfast broadband speeds of 30mbps and above?"

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried whether the Administration thought it was good enough that one house in six in Highland did not yet have access to superfast broadband or fibre broadband.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that there was a desire to see the whole of the Highland Council area provided with improved broadband and broadband efficiency.

(8) Mr M Baird**To the Leader**

"Can the Leader confirm that the planned North West Sutherland Care Facility will receive a funding allocation by the Administration for building works to start in line with original projected dates?"

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

(9) Mr C Aitken**To the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee**

"Given the current roll pressures at existing secondary schools in Inverness, can the Chair give the Council a fixed timeline for construction of a new secondary school in the east of Inverness?"

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

(10) Mrs H Crawford**To the Chair of the Education Committee**

"During the Early Years Briefing on 6th October 2022 in Chambers, a slide was presented entitled ELC Budget/Funding. It discloses the ScotGov ringfenced funding for ELC and it discloses the funding allocated to ELC from the Council's General Budget.

Why has Highland Council reduced the allocation for ELC provision from the General Budget from £15.6 million in 2017/18 to £6.8 million in 2022/23?"

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried whether, given there was confirmed ringfenced funding for the expansion element, was it fair on ELC partners that the Council had reduced the net budget contribution from £15.6m to £6.8m.

In response, the Chair of the Education Committee stated the services were being delivered within the required envelope, and that ELC were being funded appropriately using Council budget and the ringfenced funds from the Scottish Government.

(11) Mrs I MacKenzie

To the Chair of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee

“It has been UK Malnutrition Awareness Week recently. Malnutrition is a key public health problem that has a significant impact on individuals' health and wellbeing and costs the NHS billions per year. It is often a silent and hidden issue, with low awareness amongst the public and health professionals. There are 1 in 10 older people who are at risk or have malnutrition in Scotland. Although we need less food/energy as we age, older people still need a nutrient rich diet. Since the onset of the pandemic this will have had a huge impact on health and social care services and third sector organisations. What measures can you take to improve this situation?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried what would be done within Highland with the variety of relevant stakeholders to raise awareness of the prevalence, signs, symptoms and consequences of malnutrition in older people.

In response, the Chair of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee confirmed that the Council would be working with all partners, including the Champions for Younger and Older People and Community Planning Partnerships to continue to disseminate relevant information.

(12) Mr P Logue

To the Chair of the Education Committee

“Highland Council receives ringfenced funding from the Scottish Government to enable it to fully fund the provision of the Scottish Government's 1140 early learning and childcare policy. Is it your understanding that this ring-fenced funding is intended to cover the full cost of the implementation of said policy or is it intended to cover the cost of the additional 540 hours element?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

(13) Ms M Nolan

To the Leader

“Will the Leader of the Council confirm that a new campus for Park Primary School will remain a priority in the Administration's Capital Programme in the event that the Highland Council's LEIP bid is unsuccessful?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question the timeline for rebuilding Park Primary School was queried.

In response, the Leader of the Council indicated an absolute timeline could not be given but confirmed that the Council would try and deliver on those commitments within the Capital Programme.

(14) Mr A Jarvie

To the Chair of the Education Committee

“What would the budget shortfall be, or how would the Council deliver 1140 hours of childcare on a budget of £5.43 per child an hour?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was indicated that the Council’s equivalent budget was more than £5.43 per child per hour and it was queried if the Council could run the service itself for that budget.

In response, the Chair of the Education Committee confirmed that ELC had many other overheads and Highland was a diverse community therefore the costs of delivering ELC across Highland varied.

(15) Mrs A MacLean

To the Chair of the Communities and Place Committee

“At a meeting of The Highland Council on 22 September 2022, Councillors approved the creation of a Highland-wide grant fund of up to £450,000 to help alleviate the cost-of-living crisis for vulnerable households through community-led initiatives.

Third Sector voluntary and community organisations are invited to apply for grants under the value of £10,000.

The Council launched this fund on World Health Day as we recognise the marked impact that the cost-of-living crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic and wider global factors are having on everyone’s health. In addition to the provision of food, we are encouraging community groups to use this funding to provide practical solutions that will help protect our vulnerable residents’ physical and mental health. The supports being provided by voluntary and community groups with this grant funding must complete before the end of June 2023 where practicable. Applicants must demonstrate that they will achieve one or more of the following:

- provide community support initiatives that provide food/activities;
- enhance existing provision through extending local hours or introducing/increasing food provision;
- adapt existing provision to meet identified local needs;
- strengthen or establish food larders or food table provision.

Application forms are available from www.highland.gov.uk/costoflivinggrant and should be submitted by email to policy6@highland.gov.uk with applicants encouraged to contact their Ward Manager for advice and guidance in advance of applying as this could help progress applications quickly.

I welcome the introduction of this grant funding as it will make a huge difference to our local communities. However, since its launch there have been a number of questions raised with me that I would seek clarification on which I am unable to find in the online guidelines. Given that Highland Council is committed to the Community Empowerment Act and that decisions should be

taken as close as possible to the communities that are affected and that the application is an amended ward discretionary budget form –

What role with local Councillors have in deciding which of their local community groups are successful in receiving funding?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, it was queried if this fund happened again, would the Council be looking for lived experience being involved in the decision-making rather than just Council officials.

In response, the Chair of the Communities and Place Committee confirmed that, if there was a recurrence of this particular fund, that he would be willing to consider this if time permitted.

(16) Mr J Bruce

To the Chair of the Education Committee

“In the event that the Highland Council is unable to agree a mutually acceptable rate with our ELC partners, what third party dispute resolution provision exists to enable independent, third party arbitration in this matter?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

**7. Notices of Motion
Brathan Gluasaid**

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

- (i) “Carers Rights Day is on the 24th November 2022 and aims to ensure carers are aware of their rights, the help and support that is available to them and promote the needs of carers.

Transparency Statement: Ms L Johnston made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item on the basis of her employment in giving support to unpaid carers. However, having applied the objective test, she did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

This Council meeting notes that:

- Carers – young and old, paid and unpaid whether in receipt of Carers Allowance and Carers Supplement or not do a truly remarkable and vital job. They are an integral part of our Highland community. They deserve our thanks and support, but are far too often forgotten, ignored and unrecognised.
- Carers across the country face big challenges every single day, challenges that have been made even harder by the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis. Most are having to spend more time looking after loved ones as we emerge from the pandemic and many haven’t been able to take a single break since it started and as a consequence are simply exhausted.
- Life changing events requiring care interventions can happen suddenly with little or no warning. Often the care givers have to reduce their working hours or give up work totally to adapt and cope with competing demands.
- The pressures on young carers can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances.

- All too often carers are unaware of their entitlement to financial support, a carers' assessment or break, and the support services available.
- A significant number of full-time unpaid working-age carers in across Highland rely on Carer's Allowance.
- At just £69.70 a week, Carer's Allowance is totally inadequate.
- Many unpaid carers are facing extreme financial hardship brought on by the cost of living crisis. A recent survey by Carers UK found that Just under half (45%) of unpaid carers reported that they are currently unable to manage their monthly expenses and that any further increases in energy bills will negatively affect their own physical and mental health or that of the person they care for. They are often relying on foodbanks to feed themselves and the people they care for.
- The Carers UK survey found that 43% of carers felt that a rise in Carer's Allowance would help them, given the financial pressures they are facing.

Council resolves to:

- Recognising the importance of embracing the culture and aims of being a Carer Friendly Organisation and Council and undertakes to bring a detailed report to the March meeting of Council on how this can be achieved with support from the Community Planning Partner Organisations.
- Asks the Chief Executive to ensure that Highland Carers are made aware of Carers Rights Day and also made aware of existing support that is available including improving the information available through the council's own website and other resources.
- Write to the Chancellor requesting an increase Carer's Allowance and other benefits so they rise in line with current inflation predictions.
- Write to the Scottish Government and UK Government requesting an immediate extension of the Warm Home Discount scheme to ensure that it include carers on the lowest incomes. This would recognise the additional energy costs often faced by unpaid carers and provide targeted support to those most in need.
- That COSLA be lobbied with a view to achieving a campaign to see a rise in the earnings limit for those claiming Carer's Allowance, so that it is at least equal to 16 hours work at the National Living Wage."

Signed: Ron Gunn Alasdair Christie Richard Gale
 Angela MacLean David Gregg Trish Robertson

Ms L Johnston suggested the following amendment: to note that Connecting Carers are commissioned by NHS Highland to provide Carer Services across Highland and welcomes the fact that the organisation is holding a series of public open sessions and online events to mark Carers Rights Day on 24th November.

While initially Ms Johnston proposed that her amendment replace the original motion, in response to several Members speaking against this proposal, and suggesting that the amendment was not incompatible with the motion, Ms Johnston and Mr Gunn both agreed to the amendment being amalgamated into the original motion.

Other points raised during discussion included the following:

- the contribution made to society by both paid and unpaid carers was commended, and attention was drawn to the rising number of carers, largely due to the increasing pressures on Adult Social Care. It was important to improve career opportunities for carers and to support the social care sector to future-proof their services;
- the particular needs of young carers were highlighted and should be appropriately funded; and
- attention was drawn to the value of an organisation such as the Council having a carers' register for staff who were carers, to support them in their duties.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the amended Notice of Motion as detailed, with the addition of Ms Johnston's amendment to note that Connecting Carers were commissioned by NHS Highland to provide Carer Services across Highland and welcomed the fact that the organisation was holding a series of public open sessions and online events to mark Carers Rights Day on 24 November 2022.

(ii) "Energy Crisis

Following the refusal of the Westminster Government to offer any advice to UK residents to help reduce their energy bills, Highland Council;

Regrets that no action is being taken to recoup some of the vast profits being made this year by energy companies;

Notes that the cost of generating renewable energy is the same this year as last year;

Notes that there are more opportunities for households to receive energy advice in Scotland than in England;

Agrees that Highland Council should provide an information campaign over the next four months to advise households of ways of reducing energy bills and to give sources of advice in the Highlands on how to do this, through social media, the press, and information for councillors to disseminate,

And requests that all relevant officers take immediate action to reduce energy use and maximise energy efficiency across the Highland Council buildings estate and report back on progress to Properties and Housing Committee."

Signed: Chris Balance Kate Willis

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- disappointment was expressed at the lack of government financial help towards energy efficiency with neither of the two Energy statements received from Westminster in 2022 mentioning it;
- many constituents would face poverty this winter in cold homes and the Council had to work towards alleviating that by ensuring residents had access to information to reduce their energy bills;
- Highland Council currently spent around £15m per annum on fuel bills and predictions were that this would increase by £8m over the next 2-3 years. By turning heating down by one degree and/or fixing faulty radiator valves it would help to reduce costs and enable the Highland Council to contribute towards minimising climate change;
- the accuracy of statements contained in the first four paragraphs was questioned;
- the Motion reinforced much of the hard work already underway in the Council;
- Scotland – and particularly Highland – produced a lot of energy and yet this was unable to be put on the grid and this had been raised with Senior Government Ministers and Ofgem. It was disappointing that such Motions had to come forward to support the population of the Highlands and the Leader undertook to raise this issue with the UK Government; and
- to demonstrate the help available from the Welfare team within the Council it was proposed that this form part of the Motion.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion – subject to the deletion of the first four paragraphs and the addition of the following information highlighting the support and information the Council’s Welfare team offered:-

Contact Highland Council's Welfare Team:

Tel: 0800 090 1004

Email: welfare.support@highland.gov.uk

Energy Advice

- Home Energy Scotland
- Energy Advice Scotland
- Energyadvice.scot
- Citizens Advice

Welfare Advice

- Welfare Support Team
- Citizens Advice

Money/Debt advice

- Citizens Advice
- Stepchange
- Christians Against Poverty

Housing Advice

- Shelter
- Citizens Advice

Access to Food

Localised advice on food access in each service user's area.

(iii) “The new Belford Hospital was opened in 1965; 47 years ago.

Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

In 2006, following the Kerr report, the Belford was designated a ‘Rural General Hospital’. In November 2009 the surgical and medical wards were merged to form a combined assessment unit.

In 2015 the site for a new hospital was purchased by Highland Council. The announcement stated that this “would be the site of a new hospital to replace the crumbling Belford in Fort William which is Scotland’s busiest rural general and the main centre for mountain trauma.”

In 2017 – then Health Secretary Shona Robinson said – “The work on a planned new hospital in Fort William is progressing.”

Recently it was revealed by the Scottish Government that the Belford Hospital is not on the current Capital Programme which takes us up to 2026.

Council recognises:

The period of time that has passed since the idea of a new hospital was first discussed and the discouraging effect this delay may have had on the communities which are relying on this.

The excellent work that has been done by the stakeholder group to deliver a project of this size and importance to the area which will greatly improve health outcomes for all residents.

The only clear way that Lochaber communities can be assured that the hospital is going to become a reality and provide upgraded health facilities is through a clear statement from the Scottish Government.

To progress the project it is agreed that:

Council will write to Scottish Government requesting that the building of the new Belford Hospital is included in the current programme of capital projects. That an update report be provided at an early meeting of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.”

Signed: John Grafton Ron Gunn

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in moving the terms of the Notice of Motion, reference was made to the fact that there had not been progress with the building of the new Belford Hospital in the seven years since the Council had purchased the site. The Scottish Government had approved the building and the NHS Highland Project Design Board had been progressing the work, which had included undertaking detailed consultation and engagement, and it was anticipated that this work would be concluded by 2025 which was one year prior to the end of Government’s current Capital Programme to the period to 2026. There was a need for the building of the new Belford Hospital to be included in the Government’s current Capital Programme and thus give assurance to the people undertaking the work and the local community that the project was coming to fruition. Support was therefore urged for the motion;
- it was acknowledged that many local residents must feel disappointed that this Capital Project had not been further progressed. Raigmore Hospital was at capacity and there was a desire for NHS Highland to use rural hospitals to alleviate pressures. A new hospital in Fort William would help with this. A quote was read out from the Health Secretary indicating that the Scottish Government recognised the challenges facing remote and rural Health Boards and worked to ensure services were developed in a flexible way whilst recognising local population needs and geographical challenges;
- the Belford Hospital was very old fashioned and antiquated. Concern was expressed at the message this portrayed to tourists who generated over £60m to the local Lochaber economy. Support was expressed for the motion and the need for a modern hospital prior to 2026;
- this was not just about building a new hospital but about reorganising the health services in Fort William. This was a very ambitious project. It was explained that the project was currently at the design stage but it was acknowledged that progress had been slow. There was a need to engage in order to ascertain how the project could be accelerated and seek regular updates from NHS Highland on the business model. Whilst being sympathetic to the aims of the Motion, it was suggested that the Motion was premature as the project was not yet ready for the capital stage, therefore, an amendment was put forward;
- support was expressed for the amendment during which it was indicated that the priorities for health service development were improved services for prevention and long term care for the chronically ill. However, there was a need to maintain treatment and diagnostic services to modern standards. The developments in diagnosis and treatment had led to increased demand for services which caused delays/waiting lists. It was suggested that the way forward was not large scale general hospitals but to have smaller diagnostic and treatment centres within local communities with online support to specialist consultants and a smaller hospital for accident and emergencies. It was hoped this could be achieved over time but,

to make this a success, attention was drawn to the need for more health professionals in Highland and growing our own;

- further information was provided on the background to the project during which it was indicated that initially the hospital was going to be relocated to Oban until the geography of the wider area for which it served was highlighted. It was also indicated that Fort William and Lochaber was the outdoor capital of the UK and population levels trebled due to the high volume of visitors to the area;
- it was acknowledged that, although very experienced in trauma care, the current hospital was particularly outdated. The Council was commended for its foresight in securing the site for the new hospital and the development opportunities that would arise for the old site once the new hospital was built were highlighted. Tribute was paid to the local stakeholder group for their diligent and steadfast efforts and in view of their progress to date, it was felt that they should be entrusted to bring the project to fruition;
- reference was made to the need for more collaborative working and further information was sought on the role of the agency working through the Community Planning Partnership. Also, the amendment made reference to Members working with partners and it was queried who these Members would be and if the amendment was a duplication of work that was already undertaken by the Council;
- the frustration to bring the new Belford Hospital to completion was recognised and there was common cause for the communities of Caithness, Lochaber and Skye and Rassay to support each other in regard to health care provision. The Belford Hospital also supported residents in the wider west Highland area of Skye and Rassay. However, it was felt that the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee should be kept informed of progress and scrutinise NHS Highland's redesign of health care services. The mutual benefits of doing this were highlighted;
- the wording of the Motion and Amendment were very similar in terms of sentiment and outcome. It was felt that the final paragraph of the Motion, to ensure the project was included in the Scottish Government's Capital Programme, was key and it was suggested that the Motion and Amendment should be combined so the Council had a unified position. However, the proposer of the Amendment was not supportive of this approach;
- it had taken Caithness a very long time to secure investment for two new health care facilities and redesign of the local hospital services. It was felt that asking the Scottish Government to add the building of the new Belford Hospital to the Capital Programme was not an effective way forward. It was explained that it was the work of the local stakeholder group and they process that they had followed that had been key to getting the project recognised and achieving qualification from the Scottish Government for investment funding.

Mr J Grafton, seconded by Mr R Gunn, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed above.

Ms S Fanet, seconded by Dr C Birt, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that Council agree that Members would work as partners with NHS Highland consultees and stakeholders and request regular updates on the progress of the business model which was key to delivering and securing funding for this project currently referred to as "The New Belford" in Fort William.

Council noted that more clarifications and guidance were expected to emerge from future discussions including a meeting scheduled on 1 November in Fort William which the Vice Chair of the Health and Well-being Committee would be attending.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 25 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 38 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr J Bruce, Mrs H Crawford, Mr A Christie, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mrs B Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Ms M MacCallum, Mr W MacKay, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms J McEwan, Ms M Nolan, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Saggars, Mr A Sinclair, Ms M Smith and Mr R Stewart.

For the Amendment

Ms S Aitkin, Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Ballance, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, 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 G MacKenzie, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs M Reid, Mr K Rosie and Ms K Willis.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** that Members would work as partners with NHS Highland consultees and stakeholders and request regular updates on the progress of the business model which was key to delivering and securing funding for this project currently referred to as "The New Belford" in Fort William.

Council noted that more clarifications and guidance were expected to emerge from future discussions including a meeting scheduled on 1 November 2022 in Fort William which the Vice Chair of the Health and Well-being Committee would be attending.

(iv) "The A9 north is the main arterial route to and from Caithness. In recent weeks there have been two consecutive days when the road between Brora and Helmsdale has been closed for more than 6 hours due to life threatening accidents. This stretch of road consists of many blind bends and a narrow bridge that cannot accommodate two commercial vehicles and as such has a high accident rate.

To be clear, the closing of this road results in the virtual isolation of the north from Helmsdale to Wick, Thurso and indeed Orkney as there are no practical means of diversion. The result is that essential services cannot reach their destinations in either direction.

The A9, Scotland's second most dangerous road and part of the NC 500, is very busy with tourists and locals.

There are over 6000 appointments in Raigmore for Caithness residents each year, which is an average of 24 appointments per day and in this scenario that equates to 48 people who could not attend their appointment, many of which may have involved a wait of more than a year to get.

The Scottish Ambulance Service have over 500 patient transfers a year between Wick and Inverness. That's more than one trip a day and these are patients who need transportation in an Ambulance often requiring a 'blue light' journey.

Wick has a CMU (maternity unit) but very few mothers give birth there with over 90% of mothers having to travel to Inverness or further to give birth. Last year alone 170 mothers had to travel to Inverness and 5 further afield. The majority, over 60%, have to travel south in a private car as very few go by Ambulance. As a result, any delay could have serious consequences for a woman in labour, as they could be forced to give birth at the side of the road with no medical support.

Given that this vital link is prone to disruption at any time and that Transport Scotland have allocated zero funding for improving this section of road, the Leader of this Council will write to and arrange meetings with Transport Scotland and Scottish Government Transport Ministers and press them to commit to an urgent upgrade of the road between Brora and Helmsdale as a matter of priority.”

Signed: Richard Gale Matthew Reiss Ron Gunn

Mr K Rosie, while supporting that the A9 be upgraded between Brora and Helmsdale, was of the view that the Council could not limit its desire to see improvements only to this section of the A9 and should seek an updated timescale for the completion of the Dualling Works between Inverness and Perth along with an understanding of the trunk road upgrade and maintenance programme.

During discussion, some of the points raised by Members were as follows:-

- there was a need to tackle depopulation and attract young people to come and live and work in the Highlands and improving road infrastructure would assist with this;
- over the last few months the Badenoch and Strathspey area had seen an appalling number of accidents on the A9 resulting in deaths and injuries and there was a need to know when the long awaited dualling works between Inverness and Perth would be completed;
- further road building was not going to address climate change and instead there should be an upgrade of the far north railway line as a matter of priority;
- there was not an infinite amount of money available and there were choices on whether to improve the public transport network or the road network. Improving public transport was key to the future enjoyment of the Highlands and had to be the first priority;
- drivers were getting confused from moving from single carriageway to dual carriageway along the A9 and this was causing accidents;
- when there were accidents road closures were often lengthy and diversion routes along the A9 were significant;
- there were improvements that could be made to roads alongside dualling that could make road travel better and safer. The policy of the Scottish Government to improve active travel would require significant investment, for example, to provide proper cycle paths;
- if electric vehicles were to be stopped by road accidents for lengthy periods of time, it was queried how this would affect the range of these vehicles and whether emergency vehicles would have priority thereafter to re-charge; and
- all roads in Highland were in need of an upgrade and the issues with the A9 in Caithness were the same as in other areas along the A9.

Mr R Gale, seconded by Mr R Gunn, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed above.

Mr K Rosie, seconded by Mr A Baldrey, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that, given the vital importance of the A9 to the economy of the Highlands and the role the road played in terms of road safety as has been recently demonstrated by the appalling death toll in Badenoch & Strathspey, the Leader engage with Transport Scotland, Scottish and UK Government Ministers and press them to receive an updated timescale for the completion of the Dualling Works between Inverness and Perth along with an understanding of the trunk road upgrade and maintenance programme and the upgrade of the far north railway line as a matter of priority.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 25 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 35 votes, with 4 abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs B Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Ms M MacCallum, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mrs A MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms J McEwan, Ms M Nolan, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Saggars, Mr A Sinclair, Ms M Smith and Mr R Stewart.

For the Amendment

Ms S Aitkin, Mr A Baldrey, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr L Fraser, Mr K Gowans, 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, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs M Reid and Mr K Rosie.

Abstentions

Mr C Ballance, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms L Niven and Ms K Willis

Decision

The Council **AGREED** that given the vital importance of the A9 to the economy of the Highlands and the role the road played in terms of road safety as has been recently demonstrated by the appalling death toll in Badenoch & Strathspey, the Leader engage with Transport Scotland, Scottish and UK Government Ministers and press them to receive an updated timescale for the completion of the Dualling Works between Inverness and Perth along with an understanding of the trunk road upgrade and maintenance programme and the upgrade of the far north railway line as a matter of priority.

8. Financial Crisis – Valuing Partners Through Collective Budget Strategies, Redesign and Co-production

Èiginn Ionmhasail – A' Cur Luach air Com-pàirtichean tro Ro-innleachdan Buidseit, Ath-dhealbhadh is Co-sholarachadh Coitcheann

Declarations of Interest: Mrs M Reid declared an interest in this as a commissioned partner of Highland Council who would be affected by ELC partner funded rates and Mrs B Jarvie as an employee of an ELC partner provider and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, they left the meeting for this item.

Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-

Mr A Christie – as a non-executive director of NHS Highland, as a director of Eden Court and as general manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau

Mr K Gowans – on the basis that a close family member was an employee of Highlife Highland

Mrs J Hendry – on the basis that a close family member was an employee of Highlife Highland

Suspension of Standing Orders – the Council **AGREED to suspend Standing Order 34 to allow consideration of this item.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/36/22 dated 17 October 2022 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the economic crisis and the impact of reductions in public expenditure on the Council including the possibility the forecasted budget gap of at least £40.9m in the next financial year might increase depending on national decisions. Services across the Council had been asked to identify plans to reduce their budgets by 6.9%;
- it was recognised that many of the Council's partners would be experiencing similar cost pressures and an update was provided on partner discussions being held with the Early Learning Childcare (ELC), High Life Highland, NHS Highland in respect of care home provision, and Eden Court and officers were commended on their hard work in this regard;
- funding for ELC partners in 2023/24 would continue to form part of the Council's ongoing financial planning and formal budget setting for next year and considered in the context of the wider budget envelope and pressures;
- the Council remained committed to working proactively, constructively and in partnership with ELC partners to co-produce and redesign services that were sustainable into the future;
- the recommended ELC rates had been developed in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines and through partner engagement using information that partners had presented on the approach of other Councils to their funding rates;
- concern at any approach to close the budget gap by applying a 6.9% reduction in Service budgets across the Council uniformly given that some budgets were statutory and others optional, specific concerns being expressed the impact this approach would have on Education and schools and the Adult Social Care budgets;
- the requirement to suspend Standing Orders to consider an uplift to ELC partner rates was due to the action of the Opposition in requisitioning a special Council meeting which had been withdrawn following assurances from the Administration there would be a substantive paper presented to full Council;
- the need for more meaningful engagement and collaboration with Opposition Members going forward to ensure a collective response to the financial crisis. In turn, the Opposition was willing to engage, help and offer advice and guidance;
- the paramount importance of early education in a child's development and the role of ELC providers in this regard and in enabling the Council to deliver its statutory obligations could not be overemphasised. ELC partners wished the Council to engage with them in a fair and transparent way that met the aims of Scottish Government guidance, recognised the agreement in place with CoSLA, used the full funding available and ensured that the one off payment was the starting point for further negotiations for 2023/24;
- the opportunities to learn from best practice in other local authorities to improve processes and engagement. A significant number of other local authorities paid higher rates, noting they were facing similar challenges to the Council;
- this was a positive report and the fact that a fair uplift in ELC rates was being proposed in the financial climate should be welcomed. If further uplifts were agreed then other budget savings would have to be identified to fund the additional cost;
- the engagement process to this point had been agreed with partner providers and it was unfortunate that some providers had chosen to express discontent at this stage of the process. Officers were commended to their diligence and work with the sector for over a year;
- the paramount importance of the ELC sector in early education of children was recognised and there was a clear commitment in the report recommendations that engagement with the ELC Sector would continue;
- a significant number of local authorities were paying lower ELC rates at the current point in time and confirmation that all the ring fenced monies and additional funds from the Council's reserves had been allocated to the sector;
- the Scottish Government was awaiting confirmation of its settlement from the UK Government and therefore the uncertainty around the Council's settlement was impacting on discussions with the ELC sector in terms of future funding rates;

- the Council should explore all options to deliver more for less, working together with partners to address the financial challenges including investigating all options to achieve efficiencies and consider new ways of working before focusing on partner rates or setting the tone for cuts to services;
- the potential collapse of the care home sector in the Highlands represented a serious risk and concern that a reduction in the Adult Social Care budget of the level proposed would make this more likely and have a significant impact across NHS Highland and the need for collaborative dialogue on this matter;
- within the term of the Council it was anticipated there would be a significant increase in the over 75s population which would require an additional 240 spaces in care homes. Risks to ongoing service delivery included the inability to recruit and retain staff which resulted in high agency costs, accommodation affordability issues, short notice closures and insufficient capacity to relocate;
- the cost of living crisis was adding to an already difficult situation and there had been managed care home closures and ownership transfers, with others known to be on the market. There were also issues around the loss of health and social care staff as a result of Brexit and pay rates for care workers;
- a significant amount of work was being undertaken by officers in partnership with NHS Highland and the Scottish Government to develop at pace the strategic redesign for adult social care with a report being brought to a special Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee in November/December 2022 and thereafter brought to the full Council at the earliest opportunity;
- concern at the impact of budget reductions in terms of taking communities further away from the Council. A wider network of collaborators was required to work with communities and to take a different approach and to involve communities more in delivering outcomes;
- there was potential for High Life Highland to generate significantly more income through smarter working and exploring new business opportunities, for example, by offering incentives and discounts to the Council staff, partners and tenants and also local employers and businesses; and
- the work to achieve savings in a targeted and sustainable way was immense and there must be collaboration and engagement across the Council and with partners to manage expectations, find solutions and achieve a balanced budget in the current and next financial year.

The Chair of the Education Committee proposed an additional recommendation that in keeping with the ethos of partnership that the Council had promoted in recent weeks, an additional and significant 30% uplift backdated from August 2022, be provided until the end of the financial year with regard to meals' provision. This would mean the current rate of £2.30 per meal would rise to £3.00 per meal at a total additional cost to the Council of £98,000 which would be paid for from reserves.

Thereafter Members indicated that they were content with the additional recommendation proposed by the Chair of the Education Committee and detailed above. Members also indicated that in terms of the recommendations the additional ELC payment should apply from August 2022, at a cost of £365,000. In the course of further discussion, Members confirmed they were content that an update on progress with the review of ELC re-design to be taken forward be brought to the Education Committee in November 2022 prior to further reports being brought to the Committee in February 2023.

Decision

The Council:-

NOTED:-

- that the Council's grant funding settlement from the Scottish Government was unlikely to be known before December 2022;
- that the pay awards for 2022/2023 were not concluded and the associated financial pressure unknown;
- the ELC budget position set out in 4.6 of the report;
- that further engagement with the Early Learning and Child Care (ELC) Sector would continue, and that further recommendations relating to the ELC funding rate for the 2023/24 financial year would be considered as part of the Council's budget for next year;
- the steps High Life Highland were taking to mitigate their in-year and ongoing budget pressures;
- the work to be taken forward in partnership with High Life Highland in relation to redesign and contract review (this included legal involvement);
- the work completed by Eden Court to mitigate in year pressures in light of the financial crisis and the consequential impact on their income (Appendix 2 of the report);
- that Council officers would be reviewing all payments to external providers – whether grants, procured or commissioned services – with the Council's ongoing financial sustainability in mind;

and **AGREED:-**

- i. the principles for partnership working set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report;
- ii. in the light of budget uncertainty and the potential impact on all aspects of the Council's operations, whether delivered internally, externally or arms' length, recurring funding commitments should be avoided in advance of the budget setting meeting of the Council in March 2023;
- iii. one-off support funding for ELC Partners in the current financial year based on the payment of an additional funding amount calculated as 32p per hour for 3-5 year old provision, and 53p per hour for 2 year old provision;
- iv. for the additional ELC payment to apply from August 2022 at a cost of £365,000;
- v. in keeping with the ethos of partnership that the Council had promoted in recent weeks, an additional and significant 30% uplift backdated from August, would be provided until the end of the financial year with regard to meals' provision. This would mean the current rate of £2.30 per meal would rise to £3.00 per meal at a total additional cost to the Council of £98,000 which would be paid for from reserves;
- vi. to conclude the current review of ELC partner rate funding for August 2022;
- vii. recommendations would be considered by the Council in March 2023 relating to ELC funding for 2023/24;
- viii. a review of ELC re-design to be taken forward, with an update on progress being brought back to the Education Committee in November 2022 and further reports back to the Committee in February 2023;
- ix. to increase the Council's earmarked balance held to support HLH by £0.4m to £1.4m. This funding to be drawn down at financial year end to ensure HLH avoid entering a negative reserves position and provide assurance that they could implement the SJC pay award for HLH own staff in the current year;
- x. that work would be taken forward in partnership with HLH in relation to redesign and contract review (this includes legal involvement); and
- xi. that redesign work would move forward at a pace regarding Adult Social Care and be reported in detail at an exceptional JMC Committee in November 2022.

9. Capital Programme Update Cunntas às Ùr mun Phrògram Chalpa

There had been circulated Report No. HC/37/22 dated 17 October 2022 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- there were a multiplicity of issues impacting on the Capital Programme as a result of Brexit, Covid, fall in the value of the pound, rise in inflation to its highest level in over 40 years, and higher interest rates. There were problems with the availability of contractors and sub-contractors, staff and materials;
- the reality was that the current Capital Programme might not be affordable now and into the future. The review being brought forward would be realistic and consideration was being given to the approach in terms of whether to remove projects or whether to extend the life of Programme;
- the need for collaboration and dialogue with Members across the Chamber as part of the review as soon as possible and prior to the report being brought back to the Council meeting in December 2022;
- in terms of the review, it should be recognised that a large Capital Programme stimulated the economy, instilled life into the communities, created jobs and tackled depopulation in the Highlands;
- clarification was sought on the Administration's proposals for delivering improvements to schools in Inverness to address capacity issues and the impact of new housing development and to ensure children in the area had first class facilities and learning environments which was key to improving attainment. An update to the Education Committee was requested on the position with Inverness schools going forward;
- all possible options for capital schemes for schools across the area should be investigated including the opportunities for modular construction;
- concern at the impact of the review on the school building projects at St Clement's School, Dingwall and Park Primary School, Invergordon on the basis that both projects were critical for the pupils, teachers, parents and carers;
- clarification was sought in relation to Thurso High School where part of the campus had been closed to staff and pupils and where this would fit into the capital programme if funding was required to resolve the issue. It was confirmed there would be continued engagement between officials with local Members in regard to this issue;
- all possible options be explored in collaboration to minimise the impact on the Capital Programme and to deliver current Programme. Specific suggestions included Members being more involved in the scrutiny of capital projects to ensure best value, private bonds for investments, private sector borrowing, role of the pension fund, potential measures within the control of the Council to alleviate the issues with the poor availability of trades and reducing material costs;
- it was important Members remained optimistic and positive and that the Council was ambitious, courageous and creative in addressing the challenges with a focus on commercialisation, spend to save, investment to generate income, innovation and reducing building costs through modular construction to deliver all of the essential projects contained in the Programme. This included harnessing opportunities around the significant income being generated through renewables and cruise ships including investment in the quayside;
- local authorities had managed with much higher than the recent historic low interest rates for many years and it was hoped rates would stabilise in the coming months;
- a request that the report on the Capital Programme review to be brought back to the Council in December 2022 include details of the impact of inflation on the Council's borrowing;
- the Administration's ambition was to deliver the Capital Programme as agreed, however cognisance had to be taken of the financial and other pressures and therefore it was important to be prudent and responsible and review the Programme in collaboration; and
- the crucial role of the Redesign Board in relation to the report and the importance of its work being taken forward at pace.

Decision

The Council **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress with the review of the Capital Programme;
- ii. the challenges affecting the affordability and delivery of capital projects;
- iii. the impact of rising interest rates on the cost of funding capital spend;
- iv. the future revenue budget pressures of funding capital spend;
- v. the ongoing risks within the Capital Programme;

and **AGREED**:-

- vi. that the capital programme was brought back to December Council meeting following a full review.

10. Highland Council Programme - Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais mu Phrògram na Comhairle

There had been circulated Report No. HC/38/22 dated 12 October 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

The Leader of the Council summarised the report, and the following issues were raised during discussion:-

- the Leader of the Opposition suggested the Administration was not being sufficiently proactive in seeking engagement on the Programme. It was disappointing that finalisation of the Programme was being postponed until December 2022, and it was suggested the survey did not use 'plain English' and was too vague;
- a strategy for the retention of young people in Highland was required, with particular reference to the care sector;
- there was insufficient reference in the Programme to the climate and ecological crisis, which should be at the heart of everything undertaken by the Council. Reuse and repair should be encouraged ahead of recycling, and there should be reference to community-owned renewable energy in the final document;
- consideration should be given to producing an audio version of the Programme and to ensuring it was suitable for people from diverse neurological backgrounds;
- partnership working with the third sector should be included;
- the importance of community transport initiatives, local priorities and place-based plans was emphasised;
- the source of funding for essential road repairs should be clarified;
- clarity on partnership working for visitor management, especially in relation to the NC500, would be welcomed;
- local Members should be involved in the planned walkabouts in November 2022;
- connectivity was welcomed as a principle, and information was sought, and provided, on whether the Council had detailed information on the current status of fibre networks and broadband initiatives;
- attention was drawn to the importance of giving local communities a voice and reference was made to roles of the Champions for Young and Older People in this regard. Accessible housing and transport issues required attention and it was hoped Highland could become the first 'age friendly' community in Scotland;
- the need to encourage young people to stay in, or return to, the Highlands was emphasised;
- it was important to build schools and other infrastructure to service new housing developments;

- traffic calming was required in many communities and local solutions should be sought as often as possible. Reference was made to the poor state of many Highland roads;
- it was important to have specific, measurable actions in the Programme; and
- the effect of rising sea levels on coastal communities was a concern that should be taken into consideration.

Decision

The Council **NOTED**:-

- the approach and work to date in developing the Programme;
- the next steps including the ongoing programme of engagement;
- that the final Programme would come forward to Council for approval on 8 December 2022; and
- that the Corporate Plan would also come forward to Council for approval on 8 December 2022, and Directorate Service Plans would be updated thereafter, aligning outcomes with the Programme priorities.

11. People Strategy Ro-innleachd Dhaoine

Transparency Statement: Mr R Stewart made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item on the basis that a family member is an employee of Highland Council. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. No. HC/39/22 dated 17 October 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the Human Resources (HR) team and the Trade Union representatives were thanked for their work to find creative and consensual solutions for the future;
- concern was expressed at the potential far-reaching repercussions of the report and whether the HR team were sufficiently well resourced to manage the proposals. The resource implications would be brought back to the Council in due course;
- the importance of having a cohesive strategy was emphasised and support was voiced for the proposals;
- Members praised the Council staff and urged full engagement with them, with appropriate cognisance of their safety and wellbeing;
- information was sought, and provided, on current staff turnover and possible timescales for implementation of the strategy, which was still evolving;
- protecting jobs remained a priority for the Administration, using natural turnover, strict vacancy management and the promotion of agility to reduce the workforce; and
- the Chief Executive outlined planned staff engagement activities.

Decision

The Council:-

- APPROVED** the People Strategy as contained in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- AGREED** the approach and immediate priorities and focus for People Services in sections 4.2 and 5 of the report.

12. Review of Scheme of Delegation Ath-sgrùdadh dhen Sgeama Thiomnaidh

Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. HC/40/22 dated 13 October 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief officer, Performance and Governance.

Members having reviewed and commented on the Scheme of Delegation, the Council:-

- i. **AGREED** the changes to the Scheme of Delegation as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report, subject to the following points of clarification being included or provided to Members separately:-
 - Corporate Resources Committee remit para 2.6 – reference to welfare related matters related to national welfare system and national welfare strategy;
 - Climate Change Committee – Terms of Reference be updated as agreed at the full Council meeting on 22 September 2022;
 - Any repetition in the Scheme be reviewed and brought forward to the next review on the Scheme;
 - The reason for large scale planning applications no longer being submitted to full Council be provided to all Members;
 - Joint Monitoring Committee/Integration Scheme – greater clarity required on delegation for the next review of the Scheme;
- ii. **AGREED** that amendments to post titles could continue to be made without recourse to Council as long as the level of delegation remained unchanged; and
- iii. **NOTED** that page references would be updated once the substantive changes to the Scheme had been approved.

13. Member Attendance at Meetings Làthaireachd Bhall aig Coinneamhan

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 required that if a Member of a Local Authority failed, throughout a period of six consecutive months, to attend any meeting of the Authority, they should, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Authority, cease to be a Member of that Authority.

The Council **APPROVED** Ms S Rawlings ongoing absence as a result of illness on the basis that the position would continue to be reviewed and an update provided for the Council meeting on 9 March 2023.

14. Deeds Executed Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh

The Council **NOTED** a circulated list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 22 September 2022.

15. Special Meeting of the Council Coinneamh Shònraichte dhen Chomhairle

The Council **AGREED** that a Special Meeting of the Council be scheduled to consider the Capital Programme, the date to be determined following consultation with Senior Officers and Political Group Leaders.

The meeting was concluded at 5pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held remotely on **Monday, 31 October, 2022 at 10.30 am.**

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr D Millar

Mr C Munro
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr N Young, Transportation Officer, Economy & Infrastructure
Ms M MacDonald, Area Education Manager, Education & Learning
Mr I Meredith, Solicitor, Regulatory Services, Performance & Governance
Mr G Somers, Solicitor, Performance & Governance
Mr R MacLeod, Housing Manager (North), Housing & Property
Ms J Bruce, Principal Housing Officer, Housing & Property
Mr M Bailey, Team Manager, Transformation, Depute Chief Executive
Ms A Smith, Transformation, Depute Chief Executive
Mr M Crowe, Skye, Lochalsh & West Lochaber Access Officer, Economy & Infrastructure
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance & Governance

Also in Attendance:

Inspector R McCartney, Police Scotland
Mr A Danter, Skyeconnect

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

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statement:-

Item 7 – Mr C Munro

**3. 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 15 August, 2022, which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 22 September, 2022, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

4. **Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report** **Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba**

There was circulated Report No. SR/11/22 by the Area Commander for Police Scotland.

In particular, it was highlighted that Police detection rates were positive and Officers were thanked for all their hard work and commitment on this. An increase in drug/drink driving could be related to proactive policing detection rates when stopping vehicles, rather than the drug/drink driving causing more road traffic collisions. The Police would continue to be proactive in educating the public on the dangers of drug/drink driving. There were also Police liaison officers for each school area and Officers would give educational talks to young people in schools on matters such as drugs.

Continuing, a Preventions and Interventions Officer had been appointed to cover South Highland and the Officer would travel to local areas to support the work of local Officers in engaging with the public and communities to reduce and prevent crimes and liaison with young people in schools.

There had been no reduction in the local staff establishment and recently 3 vacant posts had been advertised and 2 appointments made so far. The Police continued to be proactive in encouraging people to join the Police Service.

Police Officers did show visibility by walking amongst the public as much as possible for example in Town Centres and in licensed premises. However, there was a balance to be had with such a large area to cover and Officers required to be mobile in their vehicles as well. Officers were encouraged to park their vehicles and walk and engage with the public and attend community events. In addition, Officers had received training on a Police bicycle course to further engage with the public.

In relation to the problem of drivers not having vehicle insurance, Officers would regularly stop and do vehicle checks to try and address this concern. Any information that the public had on this offence or concerns about a vehicle should be shared with the Police.

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.

5. **Portree Active Travel Master Plan and Skye & Raasay Integrated Transport Plan**

Prìomh Phlana Siubhal Gnìomhach Phort Rìgh agus Plana Còmhdhail Amalaichte an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Siorrachd

The Transportation Officer gave a presentation on the Portree Active Travel Master Plan which would act as a framework for supporting people to make healthier, low carbon travel choices.

It was recommended to Members:-

i the use of the Portree Active Travel Masterplan as material consideration when dealing with development proposals and as supporting documents for funding bids; and

ii to delegate to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy to liaise with other bodies, including Transport Scotland, with a view to identify funding opportunities and a delivery programme to target early improvements across the Portree active travel network.

It was noted that a briefing on the Skye & Raasay Integrated Transport Plan would be provided to Members at a future Ward Business Meeting

Members were overall in support of the masterplan, albeit a view was expressed that further consideration be given to the plan for Wentworth Street as there may be opposition to full pedestrianisation of this street given that businesses relied on the public having access to their vehicles. Also, a proposed shared cycle track along the A87 trunk road between Aros and Sluggans was welcomed and Bun Sgoil Ghaidhlig Phort Rìgh were looking at options for a safe route along Struan Road to the A87 Trunk Road. Somerled Square was a great space but very vehicle focused at present and should be redesigned and the Portree Link Road was a key priority for the town. The plans should all be consulted with the community. Tourism was very important and an environment should be created where tourists can feel safe walking around Portree.

The Scottish Government had given a commitment to spend at least £320m or 10% of the total transport budget for Active Travel by 2024/25. In terms of timescales for implementing safety interventions on roads and accessing funding to implement the masterplan, designs for projects across the Highland Council area required to be finalised following consultation and interventions prioritised on the basis of best value for money. Some of the safety interventions could take place this financial year.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

i the use of the Portree Active Travel Masterplan as material consideration when dealing with development proposals and as supporting documents for funding bids; and

ii to delegate to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy to liaise with other bodies, including Transport Scotland, with a view to identify funding opportunities and a delivery programme to target early improvements across the Portree active travel network.

ii **NOTED** that the ECO Infrastructure, Environment & Economy and Transportation Officer would be invited to a future Ward Business Meeting to discuss with Members priorities for the Portree active travel network.

iii **NOTED** that a briefing on the Skye & Raasay Integrated Transport Plan would be provided to Members at a future Ward Business Meeting.

6. Area Education Manager's Introduction – Associated School Group Priorities
Ro-ràdh Manaidsear Foghlaim na Sgìre – Prìomhachasan Buidhne Sgoile Co-cheangailte

The Area Education Manager gave a presentation on priorities for the associated school group which was in line with raising attainment.

Schools would work closely with Collaborative Lead Officers looking a literacy and numeracy in particular. There were now 2 Collaborative Lead Officers for West Highland area which would provide more stability for schools in Skye and Raasay and help schools focus on strategic aims as well as operational matters.

Attainment reports would be submitted to future Local Committee meetings. In terms of supporting small rural schools, there was good liaison by schools to work with each other and Education Scotland had been involved in rolling out the moderation training across Highland.

Recruitment in schools was challenging as was finding suitable affordable housing for staff. The Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning had met with the Portree Associated School Group to listen to their concerns on staffing and recruitment which was a national problem. There was a desire to retain Probationer Teachers who wanted to stay on Skye/Raasay, but this was dependant on jobs being available for them after the probation term ended.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation on Associated School Group priorities.

7. Introduction of Short Term Lets
Ro-ràdh Leitichean Geàrr-ùine

Transparency Statement: Mr C Munro made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as both himself and his wife have a self-catering business and the Short Term Let Licensing legislation will directly affect them. However, as this item is providing a general overview of the legislation and is for noting, Mr Munro wished to record a connection but having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

The Solicitor, Regulatory Services provided an overview of the short term lets legislation and how it was being implemented by The Highland Council. This was a new mandatory licensing regime brought in by the Scottish Government which local authorities are required to establish by 1 October 2022

The licensing scheme was brought in by the Scottish Government with the aim to ensure short term lets are safe, address issues faced by neighbours, to facilitate local authorities in knowing and understanding what is happening in their area and handling complaints effectively. It also enables local authorities to ensure the people providing short term lets are suitable. The legislation aims to make sure that the economic and tourism benefits from short term lets are balanced with the needs and concerns of local communities. The short term let licensing scheme would cover a wide range of residential accommodation including, but not exclusively, self catered properties, B&B's, glamping pods and yurts.

In discussion, it was advised that Officers had worked with Corporate Communications and tourism organisations in communicating information on short term lets legislation with the trade. It was advised that there were still some operators who were unaware of this legislation and there was still work to do to communicate information and it was suggested an advertisement in the West Highland Free Press would help.

If a house had planning permission and had been operating as a B&B for a while it was unlikely to need planning permission for a short term let in the Skye/Raasay area.

Information on the number of applications received for short term lets licenses in the Skye & Raasay area would be provided to Members.

Any premises which had an alcohol license would not require a short term let license as this would be seen as double licensing.

It was highlighted that operating a short term let without a license was a criminal offence and therefore it was likely that the vast majority operating short term lets will seek to do so lawfully.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

i the presentation on Short Term Let Licensing; and
ii that information on the number of applications received for short term let licenses in the Skye & Raasay area would be provided to Members.

8. Housing Reports

8a Housing Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais

There was circulated Report No. SR/12/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing.

In discussion, it was highlighted that there could be considerable investment required to bring some properties up to a standard so that they could be re-let which was a result of the age of the properties and tenancy issues where costs were recovered if possible. The lack of available contractors and material had an impact on the time it took to re-let properties. The right type of support required to be provided to vulnerable tenants and the Housing Service worked with partners in adult social care to help them. The money for repairs to properties came from all tenants rents and like rent arrears early intervention was key.

Information would be provided to Members on the number of social housing in Skye & Raasay that did not meet the minimum energy efficiency standards.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

i the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022; and

ii information would be provided to Members on the number of social housing in Skye & Raasay that did not meet the minimum energy efficiency standards.

8b – Homelessness in Skye & Raasay at 30 September 2022

There was circulated Report No. SR/12a/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing.

In discussion, Officers were working hard to provide accommodation to those people presenting themselves as homeless and the Council was building new affordable housing on Skye. The Council did look to purchase private homes and had advertised that the Council was looking to purchase homes. There was a desire to reduce the amount of homelessness presentations in the area and affordable social housing and a vibrant private rented market had a key role.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on homelessness in Skye & Raasay at the end of September 2022.

9. The Storr – Progress Update An Stòr - Adhartas ùrachadh

There was circulated Report No. SR/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

In discussion, Officers were commended for the work on the Storr project. This had been a team effort involving Members, with the Project securing external funding from a number of sources to achieve the ambitious aims for developments at the Storr. Looking to the future, there was commitment to identify further developments and initiatives to continue to enhance the: iconic site; visitor experience; and increased income delivering benefits to the local community and economy. Further, the project provides a model approach to site development that could be applied across other suitable sites across Highland, in particular with regard to site management and income generation.

The Committee:-

i. **NOTED** the achievements and progress made as detailed in this report such as:-

- a. established governance via a Project Board
- b. continual local Member involvement
- c. creation and appointment of 2 full time equivalent (FTE) posts at the Storr for improved visitor experience and improved site management
- d. installation of welfare facilities for the on-site staff
- e. ongoing development of digital solution including logo, website, and social media, with prominent Gaelic
- f. successful funding application of £440k to the Islands Infrastructure Fund for the installation of a retail unit and electric vehicle (EV) chargers on site.

ii. **APPROVED** £60k investment from disaggregated Ward funds, as agreed in principle, pending the funding grant from the Islands Programme, towards the delivery of on-site management and income generation at the Storr, through this report to the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee; and

iii. **APPROVED** the updated parking charges for the Storr.

**10. Skye & Lochalsh Local Access Forum
Fòram Ruigsinneachd Ionadail an Eilein Sgitheanaich & Loch Aillse**

The Access Officer gave a presentation on Local Access Forums and outdoor access on Skye and Raasay.

In discussion, Members thanked the Access Officer for the presentation which highlighted the significant work being undertaken in Skye and Raasay on outdoor access and working in partnership with Community Groups. The presentation highlighted how quickly erosion of paths could happen and the need for investment to maintain them.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation on Local Access Forums & Outdoor Access in Skye & Raasay

The meeting ended at 1.40 p.m.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 2 November 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken (remote)	Mr D Millar (remote)
Mr I Brown	Mr C Munro
Mr P Logue	Mrs M Paterson
Mr W Mackay (remote)	

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
 Miss R Ross, Committee Administrator

Also in attendance:-

Mr J Whannel, Director of Education, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

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 R Bremner, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Grafton, Ms L Niven, Ms M Nolan 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:-

- The Scottish Government Gaelic Capital Fund had awarded £594,000 for the Gaelic Unit at Broadford Primary School and £800,000 for the delivery of a 3-18 Gaelic Unit at Tain Academy.
- Scottish Government had made commitments to Gaelic and Scots with a Scottish Languages Bill: Consultation - a Members' Workshop would take place, on-line, on 8 November 1.30pm – 3pm.
- Perth Royal National Mòd Successes - almost 70 awards were attained by Highland competitors including 27 first, 29 second and 13 third prize winners. The

Gold Medal Winner was Annie Catriona MacDonald, originally from Skye, who was educated through Gaelic Medium at Sgoil Stafainn and Portree High School.

- Loganair National Gaelic Schools' Debate has returned with Nairn Academy, Lochaber High School, Portree High School, Gairloch High School, Ardnamurchan High School, Inverness Royal Academy B, Inverness Royal Academy A all participating.
- Gairloch Gaelic Language and Culture Event had taken place to provide parents with information and advice on the benefits of bilingualism and Gaelic medium education.
- Staffin and Kilmuir Primary Schools had received £4,000 funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Taic Freumhan Grant funding scheme to support a programme of events and activities for both schools, including a series of after school clubs and cultural events. The project would finish in June 2023.
- Leugh Is Seinn le Linda Highland Tour - Linda Macleod had visited approximately 20 Highland schools and communities as well as visits to Pàrant is Paisde and Croileagan groups.
- Two Gaelic Awareness Training Sessions were organised and delivered for Elected Members. The sessions would be available online for two months.
- Bilingual Interpretation panels were to be installed at the new Visitor Centre at the Old Man of Storr on the Isle of Skye.

Members welcomed the list of Good News, particularly the Royal National Mòd successes and it was suggested that the winners should be sent a letter of congratulations. These successes showed that the Gaelic language was in good health. However, Members also expressed disappointment that the Gaelic Committee no longer had simultaneous translation but were assured that officers were investigating compatible IT solutions.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Good News; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Council congratulate the Royal National Mòd winners.

4. **Presentation - Bòrd na Gàidhlig - Gaelic Language Planning for Local Authorities**

Mr Jim Whannel, Director of Education at Bòrd na Gàidhlig, gave a presentation on Gaelic Language Planning for Local Authorities where he outlined the process and priorities for Gaelic Language Plans (GLP) and reminded Members that Highland Council had been the first Local Authority to develop a GLP and was now in the process of looking forward to its fourth edition. He emphasised the importance of GLPs and the need to ensure that Gaelic was embedded in all policies, procedures and workplaces to increase the normalisation of Gaelic. Furthermore, it was important to work with other public authorities, private organisations and Third Sector organisations to promote awareness of the relevance of Gaelic Language and Culture. Members were then informed of the current position of Highland Council's GLP4 which, it was hoped, would be supported to Bòrd na Gàidhlig by June 2023.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- Gaelic teacher numbers were now at crisis level and Highland Council was having difficulty filling some positions and Bòrd na Gàidhlig assistance was

critical. It was important to encourage Gaelic Medium teachers to come forward otherwise Gaelic would stagnate or, worse, go backwards;

- making Gaelic mainstream was supported;
- preserving Gaelic was important as it was part of Highland's heritage;
- Gaelic remained vibrant but targets needed to be appropriate and realistic; and
- much could be achieved by collaborative working.

Having thanked Mr Whannel, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a summary of the measures used by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to encourage more Gaelic Medium teachers be circulated to the Committee.

5. Performance Against Gaelic Language Plan 3 (GLP3)

There had been circulated Report No. G/10/22 dated 28 September 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

Gaelic Awareness sessions had been provided at the start of October and which was open to all Elected Members. Those who attended had enjoyed the sessions but numbers were relatively low. However, the training sessions would be made available on the Members' intranet to allow for individual training to be accessed so it was important to promote this to fellow Members.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

6. Community Learning and Development Key Developments

There had been circulated Report No. G/11/22 dated 18 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the work undertaken by the Community Learning and Development team was commended. However, particularly in relation to Gaelic Adult Learning classes it was suggested more could be provided online, especially as we came out of Covid with many still anxious about in-person gatherings;
- the use of Gaelic in Care and Residential Homes was strongly supported and it was suggested that perhaps Gaelic Medium schools might like to be involved and interact with the older Gaelic speakers;
- information was sought, and provided, as to how the Highland Council engaged with parents interested in enrolling their children into the Gaelic Medium Education system;
- it was important Gaelic featured prominently on the Council's website and was promoted, particularly through social media; and
- the previous Ùlpan course used by the Council had now been replaced with the Speak Gaelic course. There was support available for any Elected Member wishing to take part, either in-person or online.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

7. Gaelic Development

There had been circulated Report No. G/12/22 dated 24 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

Referring to the National Gaelic Plan, the Chair highlighted that Bòrd na Gàidhlig had gone out to consultation and 65% of organisations and individuals who responded had agreed with the direction of the draft plan. However, he sought, and was provided with, information as to the content of the responses from the remaining 35%.

The Committee otherwise:-

- i. **NOTED** the annual return to Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- ii. **NOTED** Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Strategic Priorities which needed to be included in Highland Council's refreshed Gaelic Language Plan; and
- iii. **AGREED** to have a workshop to consider the draft response to the Gaelic and Scots and Scottish Languages Bill consultation.

8. Gàidhlig Medium Education and Gaelic Learner Education – The Highland Council

There had been circulated Report No. G/13/22 dated 18 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- reference was made to the provincial Caithness Gaelic Mod and it was reflected how pleasing it was to hear children conversing in Gaelic. However, Members were being asked to consider what actions could be taken to support the development of Gaelic Education as this historically had been considered by previous Council Gaelic Committee. Information was sought, and provided, as to how this was actually being progressed;
- it was important to reflect how far Highland had come, especially over the last 30 years. Gaelic could now be heard in the playground, even by pupils who were not in Gaelic Medium Education;
- learning Gaelic at an early age helped individuals to learn other languages; and
- it was important for the Council to support GME and communities.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the provision of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Education across Highland; and
- ii. **NOTED** the areas of current and future development.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 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 Diciadain 2 Samhain 2022 aig 10.30m.

An làthair:

Mgr C Aitken (air astar)

Mgr I MacIlleDhuinn

Mgr P Logue

Mgr U MacAoidh (air astar)

Mgr D Mac a' Mhuilleir (air astar)

Mgr C Rothach

A' Bh-uas M NicPheadrais

A' Bh-uas I Chaimbeul (air astar)

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 NicIllinnein, Prìomh Rianaire

A' Bh-uas R Ros, 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 R Bremner, na M-uas S Fanet, Mhgr J Grafton, na M-uas L Niven, na M-uas M Nolan agus Mhgr R Stiùbhart.

2. Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Cha robh foillseachaidhean com-pàirt sam bith ann.

3. Naidheachdan Matha

Thug an Cathraiche seachad na naidheachdan matha a leanas:-

- Bha Maoin Calpa Gàidhlig Riaghaltas na h-Alba air £594,000 a thoirt seachad airson Aonad Gàidhlig aig Bun-Sgoil an Àth Leathainn san Eilean Sgitheanach agus £800,000 airson Aonad Gàidhlig 3–18 aig Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich.
- Bha Riaghaltas na h-Alba air grunn gheallaidhean a dhèanamh a thaobh na Gàidhlig agus Albais le Co-chomhairleachadh air Bile nan Cànan Albannach. Dheidheadh Bùth-obrach Bhall a chumail, air-loidhne, air 8 Samhain eadar 1.30–3f.

- Soirbheachasan Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail Pheairt – chaidh faisg air 70 duais a bhuannachadh le farpaisich bhon Ghàidhealtachd agus sin a’ gabhail a-steach 27 ciad duais, 29 dàrna duais agus 13 treas duais. B’ i Anna Catrìona NicDhòmhnaill às an Eilean Sgitheanach a bhuannaich Bonn Òir a’ Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich. Fhuair Anna Catrìona Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig ann an Sgoil Stafainn agus ann an Àrd-Sgoil Phort Rìgh.
- Tha Deasbad Nàiseanta Loganair nan Àrd-Sgoiltean Gàidhlig air tilleadh airson 2022 agus bidh na sgoiltean a leanas bhon Ghàidhealtachd a’ gabhail pàirt: Acadamaidh Inbhir Narann, Àrd-Sgoil Loch Abar, Àrd-Sgoil Phort Rìgh, Àrd-Sgoil Gheàrrloch, Àrd-Sgoil Àird nam Murchan, Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis A agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis B.
- Bha tachartas Cànan is Cultar Gàidhlig Gheàrrloch air a chumail gus fiosrachadh is comhairle mu bhuannachdan dà-chànanais agus mu Fhoghlam tron Ghàidhlig a thoirt do phàrantan.
- Bha Bun-Sgoiltean Stafainn agus Chille Mhoire air maoinachadh £4000 fhaotainn tro sgeama maoinachaidh Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Cuiridh am maoinachadh taic ri prògram thachartasan is chleasan dhan dà sgoil, eadar clubaichean às dèidh sgoile agus tachartasan cultarail. Bidh am pròiseact a’ tighinn gu crìch san Ògmhios 2023.
- Cuairt Leugh is Seinn le Linda sa Ghàidhealtachd – thadhail Linda NicLeòid air mu 20 sgoil is coimhearsnachd sa Ghàidhealtachd agus air buidhnean Pàrant is Pàiste agus Cròileagain.
- Chaidh dà sheisean trèanaidh Mothachadh mun Ghàidhlig a chur air dòigh do Bhuill Thaghte uile. Bhiodh an dà sheisean rim faotainn air-loidhne airson dà mhìos.
- Bha pannalan fiosrachaidh dà-chànanach gu bhith a’ dol an-àird aig an Ionad Luchd-tadhail ùr aig Bodach an Stòir san Eilean Sgitheanach.

Chuir na Buill fàilte air an liosta de Naidheachdan Matha, gu h-àraid soirbheachasan a’ Mhòid Nàiseanta Rìoghail agus chaidh moladh gun deidheadh litrichean meal an naidheachd a chur chun an luchd-buannachaidh. Bha na soirbheachasan seo a’ sealltainn gun robh cànan na Gàidhlig ann an deagh shlàinte. Chuir Buill cuideachd an cèill briseadh-dùil nach robh eadar-theangachadh mar-aon aig Comataidh na Gàidhlig tuilleadh, ach chaidh innse dhaibh gun robh oifigearan a’ sgrùdadh dè na modhan ICT a dh’obraicheadh gus am b’ urrainnear seo a thabhann fhathast.

Às dèidh sin:-

- THUG** a’ Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dha na Naidheachdan Matha; agus
- DH’AONTAICH** a’ Chomataidh gun cuireadh a’ Chomhairle meal an naidheachd air luchd-buannachaidh a’ Mhòid Nàiseanta Rìoghail.

4. Taisbeanadh – Bòrd na Gàidhlig – Planadh Cànan Gàidhlig do dh’Ùghdarrasan Ionadail

Thug Mgr Jim Whannel, Stiùiriche Foghlaim Bhòrd na Gàidhlig, seachad taisbeanadh air planadh cànan Gàidhlig do dh’ùghdarrasan ionadail. Thug e iomradh air a’ phròiseas is air na prìomhachasan airson phlanaichean Gàidhlig agus chuir e an cuimhne nam Ball gur e Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a’ chiad ùghdarras ionadail a bha air plana Gàidhlig a leasachadh agus gun robh a’ Chomhairle a-nis a’ coimhead air adhart ris a’ cheathramh deasachadh. Chuir e an cèill gun robh planaichean Gàidhlig fìor chudromach agus gun robh e riatanach dèanamh cinnteach gun robh a’

Ghàidhlig air a daingneachadh ann am poileasaidhean, modhan-obrach is àiteachan-obrach air fad gus an cànan a dhèanamh àbhaisteach. Cuideachd, bha e cudromach obrachadh còmhla ri ùghdarrasan poblach eile, buidhnean prìobhaideach agus buidhnean san Treas Roinn gus mothachadh a thogail mu iomchaidheachd cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig. Chaidh fiosrachadh a thoirt an uair sin do Bhuill mu shuidheachadh làithreach PnG4 aig Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd agus gun robhar an dòchas gun cuireadh Bòrd na Gàidhlig taic ris san Ògmhios 2023.

Rè an deasbaid, thog na Buill na puingeann a leanas:-

- Bha àireamhan thidsearan a-nis aig ìre èiginneach agus bha e doirbh do Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd cuid de dhreuchdan a lìonadh. Bha cuideachadh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig riatanach. Bha e cudromach tidsearan Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig a bhrosnachadh gus tighinn air adhart no cha dèanadh a' Ghàidhlig adhartas no, na bu mhiosa, dheidheadh i air ais;
- Chaidh taic a chur ri bhith a' toirt na Gàidhlig am measg a' mhòr-shluaigh;
- Bha e cudromach a' Ghàidhlig a ghleidheadh seach gun robh i na pàirt de dhualchas na Gàidhealtachd;
- Bha a' Ghàidhlig fhathast beothail ach dh'fheumadh targaidean a bhith freagarrach agus fìor-reachdail; agus
- Dh'fhaodadh mòran a bhith air a choileanadh tro cho-obrachadh.

Às dèidh taing a thoirt do Mhgr Whannel:-

- i. **THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dhan taisbeanadh; agus
- ii. **DH'AONTAICH** a' Chomataidh gun deidheadh geàrr-chunntas de na ceumannan a bha air an cleachdadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig gus barrachd thidsearan a bhrosnachadh airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig a chuirteachadh chun na Comataidh.

5. Coileanadh mu Choinneamh Plana na Gàidhlig 3 (PnG3)

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/10/22 le ceann-latha 28 Sultain 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghniomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

Chaidh seiseanan Mothachadh mun Ghàidhlig a thoirt seachad aig toiseach na Dàmhair agus bha iad fosgailte do Bhuill Thaghte uile. Bha na seiseanan air còrdadh ris na bha an làthair ach bha na h-àireamhan gu math ìosal. Bhiodh na seiseanan trèanadh rim faotainn air eadra-lìon nam Ball gus cothrom a thoirt do dhaoine an trèanadh a dhèanamh aig àm freagarrach agus bha e cudromach seo a chur an cuimhne nam Ball.

THUG a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dhan aithisg.

6. Prìomh Leasachaidhean Ionnsachadh is Leasachadh Coimhearsnachd

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/11/22 le ceann-latha 18 Dàmhair 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghniomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

Rè an deasbaid, thog na Buill na puingeann a leanas:-

- Chaidh moladh a dhèanamh air obair an sgioba Ionnsachadh is Leasachadh Coimhearsnachd. Ach, gu h-àraid a thaobh chlasaichean Ionnsachadh Gàidhlig Inbheach, chaidh moladh gum b' urrainnear barrachd a thoirt seachad air-loidhne, gu h-àraid seach gun robh daoine fhathast iomagaineach mu bhith a' tighinn còmhla às dèidh Covid;
- Chaidh taic làidir a chur ri bhith a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig ann an dachaighean cùraim is còmhnaidheach agus chaidh moladh gum faodadh sgoiltean Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig com-pàirt a ghabhail agus ceangal a thogail le daoine nas sine a bha a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig;
- Chaidh fiosrachadh iarraidh, agus a thoirt seachad, a thaobh mar a bha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' togail ceangal le pàrantan aig an robh ùidh ann a bhith a' clàrachadh an cuid chloinne ann am Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig;
- Bha e cudromach gum biodh a' Ghàidhlig follaiseach air làrach-lìn na Comhairle, gu h-àraid tro na meadhanan sòisealta; agus
- Bha cùrsa SpeakGaelic a-nis air tighinn an àite a' chùrsa Ulpan a bha a' Chomhairle air a chleachdadh roimhe. Bha taic ri fhaotainn do Bhuill sam bith a bha airson com-pàirt a ghabhail, an dàrna cuid gu pearsanta no air-loidhne.

THUG a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dhan aithisg.

7. Leasachadh na Gàidhlig

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/12/22 le ceann-latha 24 Dàmhair 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghniomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

A' toirt iomradh air Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig, dh'innis an Cathraiche gun robh Bòrd na Gàidhlig air co-chomhairleachadh a chumail agus gun robh 65% de na buidhnean is na daoine fa leth a bha air freagairt a thoirt seachad air aontachadh le slighe an dreachd phlana. Ach dh'iarr agus fhuair e fiosrachadh mu shusbaint freagairtean an 35% eile.

Às dèidh sin:-

- THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** dhan tilleadh bhliadhnail a chaidh a chur gu Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** do Phrìomhachasan Ro-innleachdail Bhòrd na Gàidhlig a dh'fheumadh a bhith air an gabhail a-steach do Phlana Gàidhlig ùraichte Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd; agus
- DH'AONTAICH** a' Chomataidh gun deidheadh bùth-obrach a chumail gus beachdachadh air an dreachd fhreagairt dhan cho-chomhairleachadh air Gàidhlig agus Albais agus na Cànanan Albannach.

8. Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig agus Foghlam Luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig – Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Chuartaicheadh Aithisg Àir. G/13/22 le ceann-latha 18 Dàmhair 2022 leis an Àrd-Oifigear Ghniomhach – Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas.

Rè an deasbaid, thog na Buill na puingeann a leanas:-

- Chaidh iomradh a thoirt air Mòd Ionadail Ghallaibh agus chaidh meòrachadh gun robh e tlachdmhor clann a chluinntinn a' còmhradh sa Ghàidhlig. Ach,

chaidh iarraidh air Buill beachdachadh air dè na gnìomhan a dh'fhaodadh a bhith air an dèanamh gus taic a chur ri leasachadh Foghlam Gàidhlig seach gun robh Comataidh na Gàidhlig air beachdachadh air a seo roimhe. Chaidh fiosrachadh iarraidh agus a thoirt seachad a thaobh mar a bhathar a' cur seo air adhart;

- Bha e cudromach meòrachadh air cho fada 's a bha a' Ghàidhealtachd air tighinn, gu h-àraid sna 30 bliadhna mu dheireadh. B' urrainnear a-nis a' Ghàidhlig a chluinntinn san raon-chluiche, fiù 's aig sgoilearan nach robh ann am Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig;
- Bha a bhith ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig aig aois thràth a' cuideachadh chloinn gus cànanan eile ionnsachadh; agus
- Bha e cudromach gun cuireadh a' Chomhairle taic ri FtG agus coimhearsnachdan.

Às dèidh sin:-

- i. **THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** do sholar Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig agus Foghlam Gàidhlig thar na Gàidhealtachd; agus
- ii. **THUG** a' Chomataidh **FA-NEAR** do na raointean leasachaidh làithreach agus teachdail.

Chrìochnaich a' choinneamh aig 12.30 f.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Climate Change Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday 3 November 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken
 Ms S Atkin
 Mr J Bruce
 Mrs B Campbell
 Ms S Fanet
 Mr D Fraser
 Mr J Grafton

Mr P Logue
 Mr D Louden (remotely)
 Mr R MacKintosh
 Ms M Nolan (remotely)
 Mr K Rosie
 Ms K Willis

Non-Members also present:

Mr C Ballance
 Mr C Birt
 Mr B Boyd
 Mr R Bremner
 Mr K Gowans
 Mr A Graham

Mr D Gregg
 Ms M Hutchison
 Mr D Macpherson
 Mr J McGillivray
 Mrs T Robertson

Officials in Attendance:

Mrs K Lackie, Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance
 Ms N Wallace, Service Lead -Environment, Development and Active Travel
 Mr N Osbourne, Climate Change & Energy Team Manager, Performance and Governance
 Ms Roslyn Clarke, Climate Change Co-ordinator, Performance and Governance
 Mr J Perry, Climate Change Co-ordinator, Performance and Governance
 Ms F Daschofsky, Project Manager, Performance and Governance
 Ms I MacMillan, Project Manager, Performance and Governance
 Ms R Anderson, Mechanical Design Engineer, Performance and Governance
 Mr R MacDonald, Energy Manager, Performance and Governance
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance
 Mrs O Bayon-Vazquez, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr P Rawcliffe. Head of People and Places, NatureScot

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 Rosie in the Chair

BUSINESS

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs P Munro.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Presentation – National Parks
Taisbeanadh – Pàircean Nàiseanta

There was a presentation by Mr Pete Rawcliffe, Head of the People and Places Activity, NatureScot, on the Scottish Government’s National Parks Consultation.

Key messages from the presentation were as follows:

- there would be at least one new national park by 2026 which could include coastal and marine areas;
- new national parks could be very different from existing ones;
- no areas had been identified at present but nominations would be sought against criteria in the second half of 2023;
- it was necessary for all parks to lead nature recovery and a just transition to net zero; and
- input was sought on the Naturescot consultation before 30 November 2022.

Other issues covered included key stages and timescales, the differences between new and current national parks, the proposed approach for selecting new areas, details on the consultation, and the impacts of park status on communities.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- information was sought, and provided, on how widely the consultation had been circulated, with particular reference to Community Councils, and a summary was provided on the full consultation process, which initially would concentrate on higher level, strategic topics, rather than detailed geographic issues. Naturescot would be happy to further discuss how best to engage with Community Councils;
- assurance was sought, and provided, that Highland Council’s position would not be weakened if more than one area was proposed as a national park;
- information was sought, and provided, on the criteria that would be used to longlist areas, how the proposals would be evaluated and the further consultations that would be undertaken; and
- concern was expressed about reported higher levels of bureaucracy that could result from national park status and information on this and the financial advantages and disadvantages of national park status were summarised, including, for example, increased ability to source long-term funding, increased investment in employment, and issues around the creation and governance of separate planning authorities.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** a workshop be held prior to the consultation closing date of 30 November 2022.

4. Edinburgh Declaration
Foillseachadh Dhùn Èideann

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/01/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The Committee **AGREED** that Highland Council sign the Edinburgh Declaration.

5. Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan Ro-innleachd agus Plana Gnìomha Net Zero

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/02/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:-

- support was sought and received for the risks section of the report to be strengthened to reflect that failure to proactively address the climate and ecological emergency across all Service delivery would result in catastrophic climate and ecological breakdown and extreme disruption to the systems people depended on for food, water, shelter and safety;
- an explanation was sought, and provided, on the scope of the work underway to develop a revised emissions baseline for the Council. The Scottish Government was currently developing guidelines in respect of area wide emissions and a steer would be taken from that as to the best approach;
- confirmation was sought, and provided, that the Climate Change and Energy Team would endeavour to circulate the Council's report for 2021/22 to Members for comment prior to submission;
- information was sought around the timeline in relation to the work being undertaken by the Shared Procurement Service. It was explained the work would be commissioned in the coming weeks and it was anticipated the analysis would be produced relatively quickly thereafter;
- confirmation was sought, and provided, that work was underway to develop a high level Net Zero Strategy and route map by the end of March 2023; and
- whilst the Council's revenue and capital budgets were under pressure, workstreams that required investment but earned a positive return in terms of improving the climate and the Council's financial position should be considered as an opportunity.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- progress to date, and **AGREED** that action plans detailing workstreams for each thematic group would be presented to the Climate Change Committee as part of Net Zero strategy workshops;
- that all employees and Elected Members would have a role to play in delivering Net Zero and that significant resources from across the organisation would be required to develop and deliver a Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan for The Highland Council;
- additional resource was now in place within the Climate Change & Energy Team to facilitate the accelerated effort of the Net Zero thematic groups; and
- workstreams to be prioritised over the coming months.

6. Net Zero Strategy: Workshop Programming Ro-innleachd Net Zero: Prògramadh Bùth-obrach

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/03/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:-

- support was expressed for a two-day all-Member workshop as detailed in Option 1 set out in the report and it was confirmed there would be the opportunity for Members to participate remotely and for the sessions to be recorded;
- the papers for the thematic groups should be circulated well in advance to allow Members sufficient time to read the documents and prepare questions;
- there was a need for a theme principally about food production on the grounds that this was responsible for a high percentage of global warming gases and the importance of the Council considering where it could influence this was seen as a critical aspect of its Net Zero Strategy. It was confirmed that a separate piece of work was being undertaken focusing on food production more widely than within the Council and this would be presented to Members in due course;
- there was also a need for clearer communication about the remit of the Committee with the wider public in terms of the initial focus being about the Council and its own operations but also the essential need to work with external stakeholders; and
- Audit Scotland should be invited to make a presentation on its recently published report 'Scotland's councils' approach to addressing climate change' to give Members an understanding of the wider context local authorities were working under with their net zero strategies and the challenges that lay ahead. It was confirmed that an approach would be made to Audit Scotland on this matter.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the proposals on net zero strategy workshops and **AGREED** Option 1;
- ii. **NOTED** the opportunities for further training requirements;
- iii. **AGREED** the need for Carbon Literacy training for Members;
- iv. **NOTED** the current proposal for knowledge sharing on National frameworks & strategy; and
- v. **NOTED** the current proposals for presentations from external partners and that Audit Scotland would be invited to make a presentation on its report 'Scotland's councils' approach to addressing climate change'

7. **Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Commercialisation Options** **Roghainnean Malairteachaidh Bun-structar Charbadan Dealain**

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/04/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- a position statement was requested as to what stage discussions had reached with the Council's public sector partners and, in relation to the Council's partnership working with private sector organisations (such as hotels restaurants etc), how options would be split up between them;
- the geographical distances between locations in Highland and the sparse population would inhibit many other providers from entering the market;
- it was questioned what incentives there were for private investors to provide mixed hubs, especially in remote and rural parts of the Highlands;
- clarity was sought as to the proportion of pure electric vehicles in Highland; and
- when building new charging hubs ideally these should be built off grid or powered by renewable energy to insulate the Council from increased energy prices as well

as being a more greener option.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the need to attract commercial investment to meet the surging demand in EV charging and changing funding landscape;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress to date on the Pathfinder Project which investigated alternative delivery models for EV public infrastructure; and
- iii. **APPROVED** progressing the project to Discovery Phase, and then to a formal procurement procedure, based on the findings and recommendations from the Discovery Phase.

8. **Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Network – Tariff Review** **Lìonra Bun-structair Charbadan Dealain – Ath-sgrùdadh Taraif**

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/05/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- concern was voiced at the level of the proposed tariff. Whilst the report suggested that the rate would bring it in line with other Scottish Local Authorities, a comment was made that the current highest tariff in Scotland was from East Lothian Council who were charging 50p per KW and Highland Council's proposal was just under 75% higher and similar comparisons were made to other local authorities. This was also a higher rate than the majority of tariffs in the private sector. Comparison was made to the average cost in the UK too for both the slow and rapid chargers and, whilst the Highland rate would be lower for the slow charger, it was considerably higher for the fast charger;
- even Option 2, which suggested a lower tariff than what was recommended, stated that that the tariff would be a higher unit price than fossil fuel vehicles;
- the higher outlay costs of electric vehicles meant that owners needed to recoup savings elsewhere. If Option 3 was approved there was a danger that the current momentum of increased use of electric vehicles would be halted. However, it was also pointed out that those buying electric vehicles were aware that free charging, as an incentive, would eventually come to an end but this would likely encourage more commercial competitors to come into the market;
- the tariff was also inequitable for those without home charging, consequently having a detrimental effect on the least affluent;
- in Highland, to go about on day-to-day business, you needed access to rapid charging;
- this was one of the main drivers of the Council's decarbonisation agenda and yet the tariff was being tripled;
- further information was sought on alternative options which were competitive with other local authorities and in line with the Council's environmental responsibilities;
- it was also acknowledged that Highland Council could not run EV chargers at a loss and subsidies would start to cease from 1 December;
- before setting a tariff, a plan and budget needed to be in place for the ongoing repair and maintenance of the chargers, especially if the network was to be expanded;
- information was sought, and provided, as to who was currently responsible for the maintenance of chargers. Concerns were raised about the reliability of the network and it was important to know what percentage of the network was

- operational as there was conflicting data; and
- many supermarkets now ran EV charging points and it was suggested that they be approached to bring them in line with ChargePlace Scotland. However, in response, it was explained that they were under no obligation to do so.

The Committee:

- NOTED** that Highland Council EV charge points current tariff had been in place since 1 June 2021;
- NOTED** the budget pressure the current tariff rate places on the Council;
- AGREED** that, as there were financial implications for the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, to recommend to that Committee to defer consideration of the report to the Climate Change Committee's next meeting and request that officers amend the report to include tariff options more competitive with other local authorities and in line with our environmental responsibilities.

9. Energy Benchmarking of Property Estate Comharrachadh-beinnse Lùtha na h-Oighreachd Seilbhe

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/06/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion Members felt that the March 2023 deadline appeared ambitious. In this regard it was queried if there were enough resources and staff available to achieve the outcome but it was confirmed that officers were comfortable with the timescale.

The Committee **APPROVED** the progression of the proposed project and the distribution/awareness of the associated information deliverables.

10. Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme Update Alba Lùth Èifeachdach: Cunntas às Ùr mun Sgeama Stèidhichte air Àite

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/07/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following comments were raised:-

- clarification was sought, and provided, on whether residents would receive advice on how to use their heating systems more efficiently;
- it was queried if external wall insulation would still be offered to residents in the future;
- it was questioned how the scheme engaged with persons experiencing extreme fuel poverty circumstances because of the difficulties surrounding them; and
- Members felt that the Council should provide an information campaign to advise households on ways to reduce their energy bills. In this regard it was confirmed that the Council would signpost residents to sources of advice according to their situation.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED** that the Climate Change & Energy Team should present at local committees to raise awareness of the Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme programme.

11. Salix Recycling Funding

Maoineachadh Ath-chuairteachaidh Salix

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/08/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

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

12. Climate Change Corporate Risk Aithris air Cunnart Corporra

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/09/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members questioned why a deadline date in appendix 1 of the report appeared to be substantially different in comparison to the other three. In this regard it was clarified that the Highland Adapts Partnership Board had agreed the deadlines dates.

The Committee:

- i. **AGREED** the revised risk template on Climate Change and Ecological Emergency at Appendix 1 of the report for inclusion in the Council's Corporate Risk Register;
- ii. **NOTED** the revised template would also come to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 30 November 2022;
- iii. **NOTED** a Service Risk Register would be developed detailing risks and actions at an operational level; and
- iv. **AGREED** Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Risks be considered by the Climate Change Committee on a quarterly basis.

13. Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies; Reporting) Atharrachadh Gnàth-shìde (Dleastanasan Bhuidhnean Poblach; Aithris)

There had been circulated Report No. CCC/10/22 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following comments were raised:-

- in terms of achieving net zero, it was questioned when Highland Council expected to achieve this by; and
- as the Highland Council had set the year 2025 to achieve net zero, it was queried if full Council would be updated if this could not be achieved.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. changes in reporting Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies; Reporting);
- ii. requirement to report a 'zero emission' target on direct emissions;
- iii. proposed place holder submission on scope 3 emissions until a full baseline exercise had been completed;
- iv. need for alignment of spend with targeted emission reductions;
- v. requirement for a Council adaptation strategy aligned with the Climate Change reporting; and
- vi. opportunity to use the reporting as a toolkit for the Council's wider delivery of net zero.

The meeting was closed at 12.30 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Special Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 4 November 2022 at 9.30 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken (Teams)	Ms E Knox (Teams)
Mr C Ballance	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr B Boyd	Mr R MacKintosh (Teams)
Mr I Brown (Chair)	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr M Cameron (Teams)	Ms K MacLean
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr D Macpherson
Mr A Christie	Mrs B McAllister
Mr D Fraser (Teams)	Mrs M Reid
Mr K Gowans (Teams)	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Graham	Mr A Sinclair (Teams)
Mrs J Hendry	

In attendance:

Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place
 Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support and Engagement
 Ms S McKandie, Head of Revenues and Customer Services
 Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
 Ms L Harrison, Accountant
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator
 Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator
 Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

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 I Brown in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms H Crawford and Mr D Gregg.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Inverness Common Good Fund: Financial Monitoring and Budget Allocation Report Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis: Aithisg Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail agus Riarachadh Buidseit

There had been circulated Report No CIA/25/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

The recommendations in the report were as follows:-

- i. consider the 2022/23 financial monitoring report for the six months to 30 September 2022; note the predicted outturn and associated underspend and note the potential discretionary areas of the budget where spending could be redirected;
- ii. consider utilising £0.100m of the predicted underspend from the 2022/23 budget to increase the single tier payment for those applicants that satisfied the eligibility criteria for the Winter Payment Scheme for 2022/23 to £150 in the light of the Cost of Living Crisis;
- iii. consider and agree any areas of the budget they may wish to repurpose for poverty alleviation measures;
- iv. consider and discuss the type of poverty alleviation measures they would wish to see proposed, noting any proposals would be subject to a report to CIAC on 24 November 2022, noting that this is subject to and dependent upon the type of proposals suggested and the associated work to develop these in sufficient time for the meeting on the 24 November 2022; and
- v. agree to a series of Members' workshops to be held in preparation of the ICGF Budget for 2023/24, with a focus on establishing priorities for the ICGF, planned to be presented to the first scheduled meeting of the CIAC in 2023.

The Provost of Inverness and Area, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, stated that, given the current financial uncertainty, the rise in inflation and interest rates, the recent budget statement by the Scottish Government's Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, and the financial turmoil at Westminster as Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's budget statement on 17 November 2022 was awaited, it was important that the Committee moved forward, as well-informed as it could be, under what were unprecedented circumstances.

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, seconded by Mr C Ballance, then **MOVED** that the Committee:-

- i. agree recommendation 2 on today's agenda to ensure that the winter payment of £150 was not delayed; and
- ii. defer all other business on today's agenda to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 24 November 2022.

Other Members expressed opposition to the proposal, commenting that the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss poverty alleviation measures ahead of the meeting of the Committee on 24 November. It was suggested that the Council's Political Administration did not want scrutiny of the budget or to discuss different proposals such as providing three support workers to help elderly people and check on their wellbeing rather than spending £150k on five hours of entertainment for Hogmanay. To spring such a proposal on Members at the meeting was unfair and was not a good look for any Committee to adopt. Members were urged to vote against the proposal, continue with the meeting and use the time to have the intended debate on the Inverness Common Good Fund, looking at different directions and strategies, that would help the Committee come to a consensus that would benefit the vulnerable people of the city.

Additionally, concern was expressed that the Scottish Conservative and Unionist group had not had a pre-Committee briefing and that matters were not being communicated correctly. Members had made an effort to come to Council Headquarters for the meeting and had expected a full agenda, and it was felt that nothing had been achieved during the current session due to the postponement/rescheduling of meetings.

Mr A Christie, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, then moved, as an **AMENDMENT**, to proceed with today's agenda as laid out and notified to the public and press.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 12 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 8 votes, with no abstentions. The **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr C Ballance, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K MacLean, and Mrs M Reid.

For the Amendment:

Mr C Aitken, Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister and Mrs T Robertson.

During further discussion, some Members expressed dissatisfaction at the manner in which business had been conducted and an assurance was sought that no money would be spent on festive lights between now and the meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee on 24 November 2022. In response, it was explained that the festive lights budget had been agreed by the Committee in February 2022 and advice was provided that there was no basis to change this position until the Committee had debated the matter.

Decision

**Notice of
Amendment**

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. recommendation 2 on today's agenda (as detailed above) to ensure that the winter payment of £150 was not delayed; and
- ii. to defer all other business on today's agenda to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 24 November 2022.

The meeting concluded at 9.50 am.

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 7 November 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Mr R Jones
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Mr L Hannah, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr R Bartlett, Road Safety Technician, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Mr J Mitchell, Principal Housing Officer, Housing & Property
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr B Milne, Group Commander 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.

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**15**/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- responding to concerns raised regarding staffing levels, it was acknowledged that recruitment was challenging with a key issue being a lack of availability of candidates due to their primary employment being out with the local area. However, assurance was provided that the Service was continuously working diligently to actively recruit to local communities to improve station and fire appliance availability. In addition, Member support was requested with promoting recruitment opportunities;
- there was a desire for people to relocate to the area and join the Fire Service but they were being hindered due to difficulties in securing rented

accommodation. The Fire Service was therefore encouraged to work collaboratively with the Council's Housing team. It was also suggested that the Fire Service reach out to the Ukrainians that had been relocated to the area and had expressed an interest in joining the Service;

- the initiatives Preparation 1 and 2 were commended. Confirmation was provided that Preparation 1 had been undertaken in schools but it was highlighted that school leavers were unable to join the Fire Service until they were aged 18;
- further information was sought and provided that there had been no responses required to any bonfire related instances across the area; and
- assurance was provided that equipment was strategically located across areas and that in the case of an emergency, resources were automatically mobilised by the Control Room to other stations to ensure appropriate cover.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the Area Performance Report.

4. **Grantown on Spey Traffic Calming in support of 20 mph Speed Limit Socrachadh Traftaig Bhaile nan Granndach mar thaic do Chasg Astair 20 msu**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**16**/22 dated 7 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Further information was sought and provided on the impact of the report to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee on 10 November 2022 on the early adoption of 20mph speed limits in Highland. It was explained that this report would result in 20mph speed limits being introduced across the Highlands and roads would be assessed thereafter to determine if fixed traffic calming measures were still required. On that basis, it was therefore proposed not to proceed with the construction of the traffic calming measures in Grantown on Spey as set out in the report. Members indicated they were committed to 20mph speed limits for towns and villages but it was felt that the impact of this should be monitored over the trial period in the first instance prior to implementing fixed traffic calming measures;
- it was indicated that slower speeds would be welcome on the High Street but it was explained that the fixed traffic calming measures being proposed in the report did not affect this area; and
- the reduction in speed limits to improve safety was welcomed. It was also proposed that discussions be held with the Chair of Education to ascertain if any further measures might be necessary at Grantown Primary School including exploring the pilot currently being conducted in respect of drop-off zones.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the objection made in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn and **AGREED**:

- i. not to proceed with the construction of the traffic calming in Grantown on Spey;
- ii. to support the early adoption of 20mph speed limits in Highland as being presented to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 10 November 2022; and

- iii. that further work be undertaken to support Grantown Primary School including exploring the pilot currently being conducted in respect of drop-off zones.

5. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean 2022 gu 30 An t-Sultainn 2022

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**17**/22 dated 18 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, concern was expressed at the increasing level of rent arrears and the need to make every effort to support tenants to ensure they did not lose their home was emphasised.

It was indicated that a number of local authorities were experiencing an increase in repairs due to maltreatment by tenants. It was explained that there was not a breakdown of this metric in respect of repairs but assurance was provided that support and advice was provided to tenants as part of the Tenant visits process. In addition, confirmation was also provided that all staff were trauma informed/trained.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

6. Street Names - Aviemore
Ainmeachadh Sràide – An Aghaidh Mhòr

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**18**/22 by Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, it was indicated that the name put forward for street 4 was not appropriate and it was therefore proposed that this should be named as Lairig Ghru View. It was also suggested that further advice should be provided to community councils regarding street naming. It was indicated that the change to the process, whereby community councils and developers propose names, had not been helpful and it would be better if the Council could have more direct involvement. The Ward Manager proposed that he discuss the content of the Street Naming Protocol with the Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG) Team to explore whether the Protocol could be strengthened regarding appropriate street naming.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that the:

- i. name for street 4 as shown on Appendix 1 to the report be Lairig Ghru View; and
- ii. Ward Manager discuss the content of the Street Naming Protocol with the CAG Team to explore whether the Protocol could be strengthened regarding appropriate street naming.

7. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 29 August 2022 which were approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

The meeting concluded at 11.10am.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Lochaber Committee** held remotely on **Monday, 7 November, 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 Sagers
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

Ms D Delonnette, Service Lead for Housing & Homelessness, Housing & Property

Ms D Sutton, Amenity Services Manager, Communities & Place

Mr A Lawrie, Principal Repairs Officer, Housing & Property

Mr M Culbertson, Fort William 2040 Project Manager, Communities & Place

Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance Service

Also in attendance:-

Chief Inspector A MacLeod, Police Scotland

Inspector I Campbell, Police Scotland

Mr A Nicolson, Chair Fort William 2040 Board

Dr M Foxley, Chair Fort William 2040 Stakeholders Group

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

Ms K Willis in the Chair

BUSINESS

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

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba

There was circulated Report No LA/16/22 by the Area Commander.

In discussion, it was advised that CCTV was operating well at present in Fort William and it also covered trunk roads. Members were welcome to visit the Police Station to see the system in operation.

It was queried if a drop in staffing levels had a bearing on a drop in detection rates such as speeding offences. In response, it was not entirely due to staffing levels and the deployment model in Lochaber had not changed in recent years and there were only a small number of vacancies in the Service at present. It was highlighted that there had been a drop in drug possession/supply offences. These were offences that generally rely on proactive policing, so it would be expected to see a drop in these offences if there was a drop in the number of Police Officers. There was a challenge across Highland and Islands in trying to increase detection rates to pre Covid levels by increasing the level of proactive policing.

It was noted that drug/drink driving offences had increased and it was explained that Officers, unlike before, now had the capacity to carry out Drugwipe tests at the roadside with quick results. Also, unmarked Police cars were rotated regularly so they were not recognised and there had been good detection rates with these cars.

Further, the drop in detection rate for housebreaking was a concern and this was being reviewed to improve the detection rate. Also, ongoing efforts were being made to raise awareness of the common methods of fraud in order to protect people and Members were welcome to observe the Police undertaking operational safety training.

Pub watch was still active in Fort William and pubs were still banning people, if necessary, from premises. The Police had been unable to provide pictures of those banned from pubs to the members of the pub watch scheme and there was work ongoing to see if a change in policy would allow these pictures to be shared to make it easier for bans to be enforced.

In terms of rural policing, the Police keeping in touch with Community Councils would be of benefit to local policing and Community Councils should be encouraged to allow Officers to attend their meetings remotely via digital technology to avoid long travel distances. It was advised that the Police had resolved their commitment to Strontian by renovating the Police Station and Police houses in Strontian and the Officers were engaging with Community Councils in that area and it was proposed to give a quarterly newsletter to all Community Councils. There was also a Lochaber wide review of Officer engagement with Community Councils, Schools and other agencies.

In relation to digital scanning technology of road traffic accident scenes, it was advised that while there were local Officers trained in the use of this equipment, it was still the case that the equipment was based outwith Lochaber. While the equipment could be quickly brought to the scene of an accident, it was the

accident investigation that took time and therefore roads could be closed for extensive periods and diversion routes could be extensive.

In relation to anti social behaviour in Caol, it was advised that over the Summer and Autumn, the Police had engaged with the Youth Action Team and HighLife Highland Youth Workers to arrange for the Lochaber High School sports pitch to be opened on Monday evenings to allow young people to play sports and this had proved to be a great success. The relationship with the young people and the Police had evolved from this. Also, the Preventions and Interventions Officer had been asked to look at what else could be done to address anti social behaviour in Caol.

There was still work to be done on people having confidence to report hate crime in the area. Across Highland there were third party reporting centres to encourage people to report hate crime without going direct to the Police. Hate crime was also covered as part of Police engagement with Schools.

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 01 April 2021 - 31 March 2022.

**4. Amendment to Speed Restriction Orders for Ardgour and Acharacle
Atharrachadh do dh'Òrduighean Crìoch-astair airson Àird Ghobhar agus Àth Tharracail**

There was circulated Report No. LA/17/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy which invited the Committee to approve proposed extension to the 30 mph limits on both Speed Restriction Orders for Ardgour and Acharacle. The proposals had community support.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed extension to the 30mph limits on both Speed Restriction Orders for Ardgour and Acharacle.

**5. Housing Performance Report
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais**

There was circulated Report No. LA/18/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

In discussion, it was advised that the Housing Allocations Policy and points system was based on a person or families housing need and waiting times would depend on the availability of the right type of property for their needs.

The poor condition of the Claggan Quadrangles was discussed and further consideration of maintenance, capital investment and asset management strategy for these properties would be discussed at a Ward Business meeting.

In terms of Scottish Government energy efficiency targets, it was queried what progress was being made to upgrade Council houses to meet these targets and the funding available to do this. An update on this would be provided at a Ward Business meeting.

A view was expressed that there was a need for routine planned maintenance on all Council houses with funding set aside to undertake these works. Also, the waiting time for materials affected how quickly repairs could be undertaken.

The process followed when a person refuses the allocation of a property was explained and this depended on the reasons for refusal.

In terms of supporting tenants with rent arrears, they would be directed, for example, to the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Council's Welfare team for support on income maximisation and budgeting.

In terms of homeless presentations, how quickly they would be allocated a home depended on where they were looking to be re-housed and the property type and size they require.

A hotel in the area had been nominated to provide accommodation for migrants, until such time as suitable accommodation could be provided for them. The Housing Resettlement team was working on the allocation of houses.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

i the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April, 2022 to 30 September, 2022;

ii that issues with the condition of the Claggan Quadrangles would be discussed at a Ward Business meeting; and

iii an update would be provided at a Ward Business meeting on progress with upgrading Council houses to meet energy efficiency targets set by the Scottish Government.

6. **Play Park Funding Update** **Fios às Ùr mu Mhaoineachadh Pàirc-chluiche**

There was circulated Report No. LA/19/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

In discussion, it was highlighted that a quote for the installation of a roundabout at Invergarry Play Park seemed to be very expensive and further information on this would be provided to Members. Also, further information was requested on progress with projects at Kilchoan Play Park; Camanachd Play Area; Acharacle Play Park and Strontian Play Park.

There was insufficient funding for maintenance of Play Parks in Lochaber, only £50 per play park per year. Further discussion would be held at a Ward Business meeting on revenue funding for Play Parks.

The Committee:-

i **NOTED** the funding available and the funding already committed to invest in play parks in the Lochaber Wards;

ii **AGREED**:-

- to split the allocation for the Lochaber Area for 2022/23 (£40,225) equally between the two Lochaber Wards;

- in Ward 21, allocate the 2021/22 remaining balance of £13,844.18 to the Amenities budget for use in maintaining play parks in Ward 21.

- iii **NOTED** that further discussion would be held at a Ward Business meeting on revenue funding for Play Parks.

- iv **NOTED** that information would be provided to Members on:-

- a) Costs associated with the installation of a roundabout at Invergarry Play Park;
- b) Updates on progress on the following projects – Kilchoan Play Park; Camanachd Play Area; Acharacle Play Park; Strontian Play Park.

7. **Fort William 2040 Annual Update Fios às Ùr mu An Gearasdan 2040**

There was circulated Report No. LA/20/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

It was highlighted that significant progress had been made with individual projects, and a number of wider developments had been implemented since the appointment of a dedicated Project Manager for FW2040 in March 2022. The report provided updates on the individual projects within the Masterplan, details the wider developments that have been implemented, and set out key work to be undertaken in the coming year. Both the Chair of FW2040 Programme Board and Chair of the FW2040 Community Stakeholders Group were in attendance and added further commentary on progress with FW2040 particularly in relation to the provision of a new Hospital in Fort William and the need to use the shared resources of partners to progress the FW2040 outcomes. In addition, the public consultation event at Caol Community Centre on 2 November, 2022 had gone really well, with good attendance, a positive environment and good feedback on the various projects on FW2040.

In discussion, reference was made to the public consultation event held at Caol at which Transport Scotland were in attendance who advised that engagement at Scottish Government Ministerial level was key to progressing transport issues in the area, such as the Corran Ferry. Also, in terms of the new Hospital provision in Fort William, it would be good if there was local member representation on the NHS Highland Board. Discussion would be held at a Ward Business meeting on how best to engage with NHS Highland on the new Hospital, Fort William.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress that had been made with the individual projects within the FW2040 Masterplan as summarised at Appendix 1 FW2040 Projects Update Oct 2022;

- ii. **AGREED** to support the proposal to develop a dedicated Regeneration Project Manager post for Fort William, as summarised in section 7 of the report;

- iii. **NOTED** the wider developments that have been implemented in 2022 to enhance the delivery of the programme, specifically:-

- a) the appointment of a dedicated Project Manager for FW2040;

b) the establishment of a FW2040 Community Stakeholders' Group- terms of reference provided at Appendix 2 - FW2040 Stakeholders' Group T.O.R;

c) the redevelopment of the FW2040 website in response to public feedback, which can be viewed at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/fw2040>

d) the production of a new Communications Plan for FW2040 - Appendix 3 - FW2040 Communications Plan; and

e) a public consultation event held in Caol Community Centre on 2 November, 2022.

iv. **AGREED** to support identified priority FW2040 work areas for the coming year as summarised in section 7 of the report.

v **AGREED** that discussion would be held at a Ward Business meeting on how best to engage with NHS Highland on the new Hospital, Fort William.

8. **Ward Discretionary Budget** **Buidseat Fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Fund applications had been approved since 1st April 2022 –

Ward 11

Mallaig, Ardnamurchan & District Pipe Band – venue hire costs - £394.87

Headway Highland – Support for core organisation costs - £72

Highland Council – Cruise ship welcome plaques - £57.50

Mallaig Community Council - Mallaig Circular path improvements - £5,000

Rotary Club of Lochaber – contribution to Christmas event - £1,000

Fort William Festive Fund – Contribution to High Street Christmas lighting scheme 2022 - £1,000

Ward 21

Mallaig, Ardnamurchan & District Pipe Band – venue hire costs - £394.87

Headway Highland – Support for core organisation costs - £72

Highland Council – Cruise ship welcome plaques - £57.50

Highland Council – Deer warning signs, Kinlochleven - £205.93

Rotary Club of Lochaber – contribution to Christmas event 2022 - £1,000

Fort William Festive Fund – Contribution to High Street Christmas lighting scheme 2022 - £2,000

9. **Minutes** **Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of the Lochaber Committee held on 30 August, 2022 which were approved by the Council on 22 September, 2022, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

The meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of hybrid meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held on Monday 7 November 2022 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr M Baird
Mr R Gale
Ms M Hutchison

Mr J McGillivray
Ms L A Niven

Officials in attendance:

Ms F Duncan, Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care
Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support & Engagement
Ms J Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer,
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator

Also in Attendance:

Station Commander M Leavey, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Mr R Gale in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr H Morrison.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report
Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh is
Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/14/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the increase in the number of accidental dwelling fires in the first six months of the year and whether there was a need for fire prevention training or information to be provided to households. It was confirmed this issue was being targeted by the Service's Community Action Team and through its seasonal action plans with a view to reducing the number of incidents;

- confirmation was sought and provided that more detailed information would be provided to Members in relation to the incidents of all deliberate fires in 2021/22;
- the Service be commended on the work undertaken by its crews around road traffic collisions in the area and whether it had the opportunity to feedback to Transport Scotland on road safety. It was noted the Service's Senior Management Team were proactively considering this issue, particularly in light of concerns at the number of fatalities over recent months;
- confirmation was sought and provided that the Service's Community Action Team continued to target those premises identified as vulnerable and high risk in relation to the fitting of domestic alarms under the new fire safety legislation. There had been an issue with the supply of detection equipment and this was being considered at a national level;
- concern at the number of unwanted fire alarms in the area, this having been an issue for a considerable period of time and a request by the Chair that a more detailed breakdown of the figures, including the types of premises, be provided to the next appropriate meeting;
- an update was sought and provided on the position with station recruitment in North and West Sutherland. It was confirmed there were several applicants for each station and it was hoped to fill vacancies within the next six months if the candidates successfully completed the recruitment and training process; and
- in relation to the continuing issues with recruitment at Lochinver, Bettyhill and Bonar Bridge the Service was proactively leaflet dropping, running local engagement sessions and encouraging those individuals in the community with the required availability.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** following scrutiny, the Area Performance Report; and
- AGREED** that a breakdown of Unwanted Fire Alarms be brought to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee.

4. **Bonar Bridge to Ardgay Speed Limit Proposal 2022 Moladh Casg-astair Dhrochaid a' Bhanna gu Àird Ghaoithe 2022**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/15/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

- an explanation was sought and provided in relation to the requirement to install traffic calming measures as part of a 40mph limit in accordance with current standards, guidance, and legislation;
- Creich Community Council had indicated they wished progress to be made as soon as possible and were supportive of the recommendation;

- there was a need to move forward on this matter. The extension of the 30mph limit had previously been agreed by the Committee and this together with the proposed reduction of the speed limit on remainder of the road from 60mph to 50mph should be accepted in the first instance. Thereafter, there would be the opportunity to consider and review the impact of those measures going forward through traffic speed assessments; and
- confirmation that the implementation of the relevant traffic regulation order would involve consultation with statutory consultees and the public and any objections received would require to be brought back to a future Committee.

The Committee **AGREED** that the remainder of the national speed limit between Bonar Bridge and Ardgay be reduced to 50mph.

**5. Achmelvich Car Park Mandatory Charging
Cosgaisean Èigheachail Pàirc Chàraichean Achadh
Mhealbhaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that in terms of the enforcement of the mandatory charging, an officer resource for the west coast was now in place, based in Ullapool, who would undertake regular visits to the car park. The local community was supportive of the concept of mandatory charging and regarded it as an additional controlling factor in terms of the operation of the car park.

Thereafter, the Principal Traffic Officer advised that an update on the income generated in relation to the Invitation to Pay car parks would be provided to the Committee at the end of the financial year. This would also include forecasted income for the next financial year.

The Committee **AGREED** the proposal to advertise the necessary amendment of the 2016 off-street Traffic Regulation Order which would prescribe enforcement of mandatory parking charges at the Achmelvich Beach Car Park in Sutherland.

**6. Repurposing Sutherland Place Based Investment Fund and
COVID 19 Funds for Cost of Living Support
Ath-chuimseachadh Maoin Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite
Chataibh agus Maoin COVID 19 airson Taic Cosgais Bith-
beò**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/17/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

In discussion, reference was made to the importance of utilising this funding to help alleviate the impacts of cost of living increases and support individuals and families over the winter months.

The Committee **AGREED** the repurposing of COVID Ward Discretionary and Place Based Investment Funding for cost of living support as detailed in the report.

7. Dornoch Common Good

(a) Consultation on proposal to dispose, by sale, of 56m² or thereby of land at Tigh Ruaraidh, 8 Well Street, Dornoch Co-chomhairle mu mholadh gus faighinn cuidhteas, le reic, de 56m² no mar sin de thalamh aig Tigh Ruaraidh, 8 Sràid an Tobair, Dòrnach

There had been circulated Report No SCC/18/22 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place.

Members commented that there had been a thorough consultation on the proposal, the income generated for the Common Good Fund by the sale would be carefully used and that the amount of common land in Dornoch had increased substantially through the acquisition of other sites in Dornoch for public occupancy. The area of land had been used for garden ground for a number of years and the land had served no purpose for the Common Good in terms of wider community benefit and therefore the disposal could proceed on this occasion.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as detailed in paragraph 4 and contained in the analysis at **Appendix 1**;
- ii. **APPROVED** the responses to the representations raised in connection with the proposal as contained in the table in **Appendix 1** for publication on the Council's website; and
- iii. **AGREED** the proposal to dispose, by sale, of 56m² or thereby of land at Tigh Ruaraidh, 8 Well Street, Dornoch.

(b) Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ràitheil Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich

There had been circulated Report No SCC/19/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Finance and Resources.

The Committee **NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good fund at the end of the second quarter of 2022/23.

8. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 15 August 2022, which were approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

The meeting ended at 11.20am.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely on 8 November 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mrs I Campbell
Dr C Birt

Mrs E Kraft
Mr P Logue

In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Ms J Wileman, Assistant Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr R MacLeod, Housing Manager, Housing and Property Service
Mr P Waite, Principal Planner, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Ms J Bain, Planner, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Governance
Ms R Ross, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr B Liversedge, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr M Colliar, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms S Walker, Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust

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** the following Transparency Statement:-

Item 9 – Mr P Logue

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 28 August 2022 which had been approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

The Committee **NOTED** the minutes.

**4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Committee Service Report
Aithisg Seirbheis Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/012/22 dated 26 October 2022 together with the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Performance Report by the Local Group Commander for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- it was suggested that Transport Scotland be encouraged to introduce signage to warn drivers of an adverse camber on a corner in Glensheil to help reduce the number of car accidents occurring in that location,
- Members were encouraged to speak with individuals in their communities to promote joining the SFRS;
- in response to a query about fire prevention and awareness, it was confirmed that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have worked in partnership with the Woodland Trust and other agencies on issues such as wildfires and that they have engaged heavily with schools and community groups;
- responding to a query about the roll out of new compulsory fire alarms in homes the Committee were reassured that, while this was proving a slow process, SFRS were focussing on insuring that the most vulnerable people were getting alarms fitted; and
- it was hoped that sprinkler systems, while difficult to retrofit to existing properties, would eventually be required in new homes.

**5. Housing Performance Report
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/013/22 dated 8 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer – Property and Housing which provided Members with information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 September 2022.

During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- ideally tenants should first be referred to the appropriate Housing Management Officer to seek help with rent arrears and council tax debts and, if non- council tenants had problems with rent arrears, they should be referred to the Housing Options team;
- evictions were a last resort and the actions taken following this were very much dependent on individual circumstances, and
- the Highland Council and Housing Associations shared a common housing register and were in regular contact regarding supporting homeless people and attended regular partnership meetings.

The Committee, having considered the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022, **NOTED** the report.

6. **WRSL Access Rangers Presentation**

Following a presentation from the Principal Planner on behalf of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Access Rangers the following issues were raised:-

- concerns were raised about the amount of outdoor toileting reported in the Lochalsh area and it was suggested that more comfort schemes could be used to tackle this issue;
- in response to a question about car parking, it was stated that the information collected would be used to decide where to implement 'invitation to pay' carparks, and
- concerns were raised about false information being shared by campervan companies and on apps and the Committee were reassured that Rangers would be working over the winter to research apps and websites and ensure the information they provided was correct

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that further information concerning visitor numbers in the Strathpeffer area of the ward be circulated to the Committee.

7. **Lochalsh Collaboration Development Plan Presentation. Taisbeanadh Plana Leasachaidh Co-obrachadh Loch Aillse**

Following a presentation on the Lochalsh Collaboration Development Plan, the following issues were raised:-

- the phenomenal work achieved by Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust was commended;
- some local people were not able to afford to live in the area and the Highland Council's Housing policy needed to reflect that affordable housing was built near existing services,
- there was no climate-change specific question included in the Lochalsh Collaboration's questionnaire so the responses did not necessarily reflect a lack of awareness about climate change;
- it was suggested that higher numbers of reported mental ill health among young people could be due to differing definitions of good or bad mental health across generations but could also be due to pressures such as seasonal working and lack of access to housing disproportionately affecting younger people;
- the importance of community transport was highlighted as was the difference between public transport and community transport;
- disappointment was expressed at the lack of sporting activities available, particularly for girls,
- the lack of opportunities for people using a plus one card was highlighted,
- attention was drawn to the lack of non-sports-based activities available for secondary school aged children; and

- attention was drawn to the need for safe cycling and walking routes between towns and villages,

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

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

**Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum
Fòram Inntreighadh Ionadail Rois agus Chromba**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Dr C Birt to the Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum.

**9. Ward Discretionary Budget
Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

Transparency Statement: Mr P Logue made a Transparency Statement in as a close family member involved with Balmacara Community Trust. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Fund applications have been approved since 1 April 2022:-

Ward 5

Contin Community Council - Transport for Elections in May 2022 - **£250**

CALA Integrated Services - Development of school aged childcare in Ullapool - **£2,700**

Headway Highland - Support vulnerable adults with an acquired brain injury (ABI) and families in the Highlands (Multi-ward grant All 21 Wards) - **£71.43**

Lochalsh Community Council - Local Planted Barrels - **£445**

Wester Loch Ewe Community Council - Improving WLECC area - **£1,047**

Auchtertyre Primary School Parent Council - Installation of equipment at Auchtertyre Primary School - **£1,300**

Balmacara Community Trust - Balmacara Gala - **£510**

Drumbuie Common Grazing - Drumbuie Bus Shelter - **£450**

Lady Haig Poppy Wreaths - 5 Wreaths at £32.40 each plus £12 carrier fee - **£174**

**10. Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2
Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail 2 ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/014/22 dated 8 November 2022 by Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

In discussion, the land allocated for housing in Strathpeffer was welcomed.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the issues raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as they related to place-specific matters within this Committee area and **AGREED** the recommended Council response to these issues as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **AUTHORISED** officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its Examination up to but excluding the Plan's adoption; and
- iii. **AUTHORISED** the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the chair of this Committee, to make any necessary factual or other non-material changes to the place-specific elements of Appendix 1 of the report prior to its submission to Scottish Government.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Easter Ross Area Committee** held remotely on Tuesday, 8 November 2022, at 10.30 am.

Present:

Ms T Collier
Mr D Louden
Ms P Munro

Ms M Nolan
Mr A Rhind

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property
Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support & Engagement
Mr J MacKay, Amenity Services Manager
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Development Plans Team
Ms J-A Bain, Planner, Development Plans Team
Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development Plans Team
Mr R Bartlett, Road Safety Technician
Ms D MacKenzie, Principal Housing Officer
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

Also in Attendance:

Chief Inspector S MacDonald, North Highland Area Command
Inspector C Murray, North Highland Area Command

**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 and Ms M Smith.

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

Item 4 – Mrs P Munro

3. **Police – Area Performance Summary Report** **Poileas – Geàrr-Aithisg Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/15/22 dated 27 October 2022 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- clarification was sought and provided on the reported increase in rape and domestic abuse cases, many incidents of which were historical and the result of one perpetrator, rather than several, and an increased number of victims willing to report such crimes;
- in response to concerns about drug-related crime, and what could be done by Members to support the police, the need for community support and witness intelligence was emphasised;
- Members were urged to attend a community event planned for February 2023 for an estate in Tain, for which details would be provided in due course;
- in relation to scams, Members requested information on current trends, and a brief summary was provided of prevention and intervention measures being undertaken;
- the reduced police presence on the streets was disappointing, and attention was drawn to changing patterns of policing, and the pressures on police resources, for which political pressure for additional funding was urged;
- in response to concerns about young people engaging in anti-social behaviour, attention was drawn to work being undertaken with schools; and
- Members were urged to encourage applications for people to become special constables, and it was hoped the council's corporate communication service could help to publicise this. The useful role of community wardens was highlighted.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

**4. Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2
Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh 2**

Declaration of Interest: Mrs P Munro declared an interest in this item and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and decision.

There had been circulated Report No ERA/16/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

A presentation was provided summarising the key points of the report. It was clarified that Highland Deephaven was not due for expansion over and above the allocation shown in the plan.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- information was sought on a possible central site for Kiltearn Primary School and it was explained the school was not currently on the Council's Capital Programme and any expansion would be as indicated on the land in EV03. Longer term discussions could be held at a future date with landowners and the Education Service, as part of a future review of the Local Development Plan. The land in question at EV03 was allocated for housing and community use, which could include school expansion;

- concern was expressed that further housing expansion between Tain and Evanton was being constrained by Transport Scotland and this required further discussion;
- an explanation was sought and provided for the proposed location in AL09 for retirement homes being rejected. The new policy in the Plan in relation to the provision of accommodation for assisted living was outlined;
- the proposal to re-open the rail halt at Eventon was welcomed;
- if the Opportunity Cromarty Firth bid was successful and a review of the Local Development Plan was forthcoming as a result, it was hoped the hinterland policy would be reviewed;
- in the section entitled 'Alternative Sites,' the issues marked 'XX' should be clarified;
- in the section entitled 'Landscape and visual impacts & tourism concerns', Pitcalzean was wrongly spelt;
- in the section entitled 'Mr Scott per Bidwells (1273028)', the final sentence should read. 'the Reporter sees merit; and
- the Chair thanked the Development Plans team for their work.

Mr D Louden, seconded by Ms M Nolan, **MOVED** the recommendations i to iv, as detailed in the report, and a further 3 points, as detailed below, v to vii. There was no amendment.

The Committee:

- i. **AGREED** the recommended Council response to the place-specific issues relevant to this Committee area raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as set out in **Appendix 1**;
- ii. **NOTED** the issues raised in representations as they relate to strategic matters that may have implications for this Committee area and note the working draft response to these issues as set out in **Appendix 2**;
- iii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its examination up to but excluding the Plan's adoption; and
- iv. **AGREED** to authorise the Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the chair of this Committee, to make any necessary Habitats Regulations Appraisal, factual or other non-material changes to **Appendix 1** prior to its submission to Scottish Government;
- v. **AGREED** to request the Leader of the Council enter a dialogue with Transport Scotland regarding what action will be needed to allow development of housing between Evanton and Tain;
- vi. **APPROVED** the commitment to review the IMFLDP2 within two years of a successful OCF bid to ensure adequate housing land is available to support economic growth; and
- vii. **AGREED** to highlight to the Reporter the view of the Easter Ross Area Committee that the IMFLDP2 must be flexible, adaptable and subject to timely and regular review.

5. Highland Council Place Based Fund – Update Maoin Stèidhichte air Àite Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Fios às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No ERA/17/22 dated 31 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, information was sought and provided on the reasons for the delays in the installation of play equipment in various location, all of which were in hand but had been held up due to supply and staffing challenges. In response to a query about community ownership of public toilets in Alness, this would be taken forward by community support coordinators and amenities officers, and a community meeting was planned, to which local Members would be invited.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on Place based Investment Funds in Wards 6 and 7.

**6. Invergordon 20 mph Speed Limit and the Supporting Traffic Calming
Crìoch-astair 20 msu Inbhir Ghòrdain agus an Socrachadh Traftaig mar Thacsa**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/18/22 dated 7 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

Ms Collier raised concern about speeding traffic on the shore road in Kiltearn and was advised to email her request for a speed survey to the Road Safety Technician.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the background to the proposed 20 mph speed limit order and supporting traffic calming in Invergordon;
- ii. **NOTED** the objections made to The Highland Council (Invergordon) (20 mph Speed Limit) Order 2022 in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn;
- iii. **NOTED** the objections made to the supporting traffic calming in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn;
- iv. **APPROVED** the making of the Road Traffic Regulation Order; and
- v. **APPROVED** the construction of the traffic calming in Invergordon.

**7. Housing Performance Report
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/19/22 dated 24 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members expressed appreciation of the work of the Housing team, particularly their work dealing with rent arrears. Concern was expressed that housing remained allocated to people who were not resident in them, and a summary was provided of actions being taken to investigate incidences of this. It was suggested that enquiries to neighbouring properties was a helpful starting point.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

**8. Invergordon Common Good Fund
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Ghòrdain**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/20/22 dated 6 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Community and Place.

During discussion, Members asked for information on the sale of Invergordon Town Hall, which was due to be on the market in 2-3 weeks, and timescales for the sale for the Bouchardon Bust.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Q2 monitoring statement for the Invergordon Common Good Fund;
- ii. **NOTED** the update on current Invergordon Common Good issues; and
- iii. **AGREED** to circulate the link with information on the sale of the Town Hall to Members, along with an indicative timeline for the sale of the Bouchardon Bust.

**9. Tain Common Good Fund
Maoin Math Coitcheann Bhaile Dhubhthaich**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/21/22 dated 6 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Community and Place.

It was clarified that at paragraph 4.2, it wrongly stated that income was expected to be on target for the year, when it was expected to be above target as a result of the proceeds from the sale of part of Blarliath Unit 2b. Members referred to the low rate of return being earned on the balances, and requested consideration be given to investment of the fund through the Pension Committee's Investment Sub Committee.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Quarter 2 monitoring statement for the Tain Common Good Fund;
- ii. **NOTED** the update on current Tain Common Good issues; and
- iii. **AGREED** to investigate whether the funds should be invested through the Pensions Committee Investment Sub-Committee, this to be reported to a future meeting.

**10. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Easter Ross Area Committee held on 5 September 2022, which had been approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

The meeting ended at 12.35pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness** on Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 10.30am.

Present:

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

Non Members also present:

Mr B Boyd	Mr R Gale (remote)
Mr A Christie (remote)	Mr R MacKintosh
Ms T Collier (remote)	Mrs B McAllister
Ms S Fanet (remote)	Mr J McGillivray (remote)

Also in Attendance (non-voting members):

Dr T Allison, Director of Public Health, NHS Highland
 Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland
 Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance
 Mr K Walker, Samaritans, Befrienders Highland, and Creativity in Care CIC

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
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance
 Ms F MacBain, 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.**

Mr D Fraser in the Chair

Preliminaries

The Chair explained that two significant items, the Chief Social Work Officer's Report and the Children's Services Improvement Plan, had been intended for consideration at this meeting, but due to unavoidable delays had been postponed to the next meeting. As the agenda for the next meeting was likely to be longer than usual, the Committee **AGREED** that for the next meeting of the Committee, reports would be circulated to Members as soon as they were ready.

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs M Paterson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no Declarations of Interest and the Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:

Item 5 - Ms L Johnston and Ms L Kraft

3. Good News Deagh Naidheachdan

The Committee **NOTED** the following Good News:

- the Trainee Mental Health Officer Scheme, in partnership with Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, had resulted in 3 trainee Mental Health Officers who had commenced their formal academic training in September 2022; and
- the attendance of an official at the Icelandic Model of Intervention Conference, as the model was rolled out across Highland, noting that in 1998, Iceland had the biggest alcohol and drug problem in Europe and now had the lowest, through use of this model.

4. Whole Family Support Strategic Report Aithisg Ro-innleachdail Taic Teaghlaich Iomlain

There had been circulated Report No HCW/15/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the word '*this*' was missing from the end of the first sentence in paragraph 5.1 of the report;
- the approach taken by Highland Community Planning Partnership to develop a whole system approach to family support was welcomed;
- information was sought and provided on the timescales for rolling out the pilot to other areas, and for how long the project manager funding would last;

- consideration was given to the delivery of the project, in particular its position in relation to children's plan meetings and their follow up, and to the monitoring and measuring of the project's outcomes, which would include reporting to the Scottish Government and to the Committee. A summary of the next steps was provided, and the importance of good governance was emphasised;
- the importance of keeping families together and reducing the stigmatisation of people facing life challenges was emphasised, as was the need for a holistic approach;
- information was sought and provided on the involvement of the local community, local Members, and the local Community Planning Partnerships;
- it was important that support for unpaid carers was taken into consideration;
- a workshop on the approach would be useful in due course;
- this approach built on the leading work undertaken in Highland to put children at the centre of services;
- the third sector voiced their support for the approach and pointed out that third sector agencies could be considered as the host employer for the project manager;
- it was important to have clear indicators of good practice to ensure appropriate evaluation was undertaken;
- the two year funding was insufficient to facilitate adequate training for a new role, and the current recruitment challenges in Highland were highlighted. It was queried whether there was adequate staff resource to measure the projects' outcomes;
- attention was drawn to the important role of the Citizen's Advice Bureau for people to obtain advice and support, especially for people with no or limited internet access. Drop-in centres for advice would also be helpful; and
- examples of good collaborative working with the Community Planning Partnership in Lochaber were provided.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report and the decision taken by the Community Planning Partnership Board to agree that the additional resource provided through the whole family wellbeing fund be utilised to drive forward the proposed programme as previously agreed by the CPP Board;
- ii. **NOTED** the decision taken by the CPP Board to Identify and fund a project manager post to plan and implement the Lochaber programme as a pilot, prior to rolling this out across Highland;
- iii. **NOTED** the decision taken by the CPP Board to establish a project and delivery team and plan to develop this partnership approach using the national principles for holistic whole family support that would report on progress to the Integrated Children's Service Board and ultimately to the CPP Board; and
- iv. **AGREED** a workshop be held for Members on the Whole Family Support approach at an appropriate time.

5. **Adult Social Care Assurance Report** **Aithisg Bharantachaidh Cùram Sòisealta Inbheach**

Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-

Ms L Johnston – on the basis of her employment in giving support to unpaid carers

Ms L Kraft – on the basis that she managed Self-Directed Support payments on behalf of a close family member

There had been circulated Report No HCW/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- concern was expressed at the staffing problems detailed in the report and Members did not feel assured that services were being delivered adequately, with particular reference to care home closures, ongoing covid issues, and information on how to tackle the number of empty beds in care homes. The challenges were acknowledged and attention was drawn to the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee Workshop that was due to take place on 21 November 2022 to consider these issues. The NHS Highland Director of Adult Social Care gave a summary of the complex causes and implications of delayed discharges from hospitals and work being undertaken to tackle this, as well as the staffing crisis facing the NHS and the work that was required to increase the pool of available staff, to avoid the Council, the NHS, the third sector and the independent sector recruiting staff from one another;
- information was sought and provided on the role of the Joint Monitoring Committee, which was a function of the integration model and considered both adult and children's services;
- attention was drawn by Members to the importance of keeping people in care homes in their communities and assurance was sought that large care homes were not going to be built to replace smaller homes in rural areas. The staffing problems, safety concerns, and higher costs of running smaller homes in remote areas were highlighted and would be further discussed by the Joint Monitoring Committee;
- an explanation was sought and provided for the rates paid to commercial care home operators, and their conditions of operation;
- the value of lunch clubs and similar for older people was highlighted;
- in response to a query about unmet need, this related mostly to care at home, and self-directed support could be used where appropriate;
- a summary was provided of the work of the covid response team during the pandemic, and plans to move towards a geographically flexible community response team;
- Mrs A MacLean requested the briefing notes from the Adult Social Care workshop held on 28 October 2022;
- attention was drawn to the number of unpaid carers who were struggling, and the value of the forthcoming Carers' Rights Day on 24 November 2022 was highlighted. Issues of key importance included the need for support and respite, including day services, the use of self-directed support, and the importance of including carers in the discharge process. It was thought that not all carers were aware of their need to self-identify as a carer;
- attention was drawn to the new model of 'age friendly' communities and the aspiration for Highland to have the first one in Scotland. Other key issues raised by the Older People's champion included the work of third sector and other partner organisations, the need to identify and prevent malnutrition in older people, and the value of encouraging people to arrange power of attorney;
- the value of care homes to communities and to the economy was highlighted;

- it was acknowledged that challenging decisions were required around the delivery of care home services, noting that the current model was not sustainable, with particular reference to delayed discharges and staffing problems. Attention was drawn to the value of sheltered or clustered housing as part of a housing strategy for social care clients, although issues such as the need for wardens, and the need for residents to have sufficient space for visitors, had to be considered;
- a workshop was planned for Committee Members on 14 December 2022;
- discussions should focus on the hours of care required rather than on numbers of beds, as beds could only be operational if adequately staffed;
- many of the issues in the report required crossover with other services;
- high turnover of social care staff could result in additional pressure, and the lack of accommodation, especially in remote and rural areas, was a concern for care workers; and
- day clubs and respite care were helpful but often required transportation arrangements.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- NOTED** the contents of the report;
- NOTED** the continued commitment and collaborative actions to sustain service provision, whilst responding to the ongoing operational pressures arising as a result of the ongoing covid response and winter pressures; and
- AGREED** the notes from the ASC partnership briefing on 28 October 2022 be provided to Mrs A MacLean.

6. Revenue Budget Monitoring – November 2022 Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach – Samhain 2022

There had been circulated Report No HCW/17/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- attention was drawn to the pressures faced by Social Work services, and it was queried whether social worker assistants would be helpful;
- more information on the risks and the implications of actions was required to facilitate proper scrutiny;
- in response to queries about the reported £900k underspend and staffing shortages, a summary was provided of the importance of service redesign to ensure staff were employed in the most appropriate positions and undertaking appropriate work. Budget realignment was also required; and
- the impact on service delivery of inappropriate or under-staffing was highlighted, including the increase in workload for other staff.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- forecast revenue position as at Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year; and
- progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery.

7. Champions Report – Update Aithisg nan Curaidhean – Fios às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No HCW/18/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the value of the positions was acknowledged. The Champions gave updates on their work to date, including the following:

- two of the Champions for Older People had attended the Scottish Older People’s Assembly in September 2022 where a variety of agencies had provided information including on the impact of loneliness, the work of Connecting Carers, age-friendly communities, the Highland Senior Citizen’s Network Board and the Old People’s Charter;
- it was hoped to set up a support network across Highland, which would include digital connectivity and link to formal and informal lunch clubs and events;
- linkage with related themed third sector forums was suggested;
- the Committee and NHS Highland were thanked for the vaccination work undertaken;
- some issues disproportionately affected older people, such as rurality, isolation, lack of public transport;
- it was important to ensure good conditions and recognition for all carers and to represent their views, and those of older people in general, to the Council;
- in relation to Children’s Champions, engagement with young voices, community councils and the youth convener were important. Many challenges affecting young people were being taken on board including education, transport, and nutrition;
- in relation to trauma, it was requested that the 3-hour online webinar on Scottish Trauma in Leadership training be emailed to all Members. Work would be undertaken with partner organisations and local businesses; and
- other suggestions included seeking out good practice elsewhere to emulate, and to examine the planning and delivery of services to identify areas for improvement, with local solutions likely to be required in certain areas.

The Committee thanked the champions for their ongoing work, **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** the link to the 3-hour online webinar on Scottish Trauma in Leadership training be emailed to all Members.

8. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

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

- i. Highland Child Protection Committee held on 25 May 2022; and
- ii. Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held on 3 August and 22 August.

During discussion, reference was made to the significant issues being considered by the Child Protection Committee and it was explained that for confidentiality, only redacted minutes were publicly available. There was Member representation on the Committee and issues could be discussed outwith the meeting.

Closing Remarks

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair thanked the Council, third sector and NHS Highland staff for their work, as well as all carers, paid and unpaid.

In response to a suggestion that some reports (such as the Highland Youth Work Strategy) that were considered by the Education Committee were also relevant to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, it was pointed out that all Members were able to attend any Committee meeting, but that it was not possible to bring the same report to two different Committees.

The meeting ended at 2.55pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Economy and Infrastructure Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on **Thursday, 10 November 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)
Mr M Cameron	Mrs T Robertson
Mr K Gowans	Mr K Rosie
Mr M Green	Mr R Stewart
Mr R Jones	Ms K Willis (remote)
Mr P Logue (remote)	

Non-Members also present:

Dr C Birt (remote)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr J Bruce (remote)	Mrs I MacKenzie (remote)
Mr A Christie (remote)	Mr T MacLennan
Ms S Fanet (remote)	Mr D MacPherson (remote)
Mr J Finlayson (remote)	Mr J McGillivray (remote)
Mr R Gale (remote)	Mr D Millar (remote)
Mr S Kennedy	Mr C Munro (remote)
Mr B Lobban	Mr P Oldham

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure & Environment
 Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration
 Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport
 Ms N Wallace, Service Lead, Environment, Development and Active Travel
 Mr M Bain, Project Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
 Ms D Sutton, Amenities Services Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
 Dr S Andrews, World Heritage Project Co-ordinator, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
 Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
 Ms L MacKellaich, Road Safety Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
 Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Performance & Governance Service
 Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance & Governance Service
 Mrs Olalla Bayon-Vazquez, Administrative Assistant, Performance & Governance Service

Also in attendance:

Mr S Reid, Santec
 Mr S Canning, Santec

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 Mrs H Crawford, Mr H Morrison and Mr A Rhind.

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

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3. Good News
Naidheachdan Matha**

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

- a pilot project was in place to expand inhouse school transport provision
- improvement road works on the A832 at Slatadale was completed
- the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund had approved 4 Highland tourism projects in Glencoe, Skye, North West Sutherland and Achmelvich
- on 13 September 2022 the Grade B Listed Dochgarroch Bridge was opened having been closed since March 2021 after a parapet had been hit
- the Annual Highland Tourism Conference was to take place in the Kingsmills Hotel on 27 November
- the Highland Council, in conjunction with the Inverness City Heritage Trust, had created a free downloadable guide to promote essential regular inspections and maintenance of traditional buildings
- Highland Council had been awarded £800,000 from the Place Based Investment Scheme for housing projects in Portree.

**4. Corran Ferry – Outline Business Case
Aiseag a' Chorrain – Tuairisgeul Cùis Gnothachais**

A presentation was undertaken by Stantec providing information on the Outline Business Case for replacement vessels and shoreside infrastructure for the Corran Ferry service, which can subsequently be taken through a Final Business Case. The presentation covered the business case process, the case for change, options and their benefits and disbenefits, the preferred option with the financial and commercial case. The preferred option was for two larger 32-vehicle capacity fully electric vessels and supporting shoreside infrastructure.

In this regard, there was circulated Report No. ECI/25/2022 dated 7 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

In discussion, the move to greener replacement ferries was welcomed. With regard to the potential use of Hydrogen technology on the ferries, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) had a Hy-seas project which aimed to build a sea going ferry powered by hydrogen fuel cells, but this was in its early stages. The specification for the replacement ferries required that they be able to be retrofitted to be powered by hydrogen when the technology was ready.

It was critical that the ageing diesel ferries were replaced and to ensure the Council met its net zero targets. The prospect of the ferries failing was real and the detrimental impact this would have would be significant for the area what was the busiest ferry service in Scotland with over 270,000 vehicles per annum using it. In terms of timeline for the delivery, it would take 3 to 4 years from the date that funding was in place to deliver new ferries with the supporting infrastructure. This project was not currently in the Council's capital programme, although it was recognised as a significant project. Efforts continued to be made with UK and Scottish Governments to look at external funding opportunities, such as the UK Governments Levelling up Fund or new/emerging sources of funding, including the project being included in the Council's capital programme review.

The Committee **AGREED** the Outline Business Case Final Report for replacement Vessels and shoreside infrastructure for the Corran Ferry service.

5. **Visitor Management Plan Plana Stiùiridh Luchd-tadhail**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/26/2022 dated 4 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

Members were very supportive of the Visitor Management Plan which brings many economic benefits to the area. In particular, the work of the Ranger Service was highlighted and commended and there was a need to publicise more the fantastic service they provided. This service was very much valued by communities and particularly for the work they did on the North Coast 500.

There were good opportunities to work in collaboration with external stakeholders to improve tourism infrastructure in Caithness. Also, in terms of public transport to the Fairy Pools, Isle of Skye, if this was to be continued next year consideration be given to including the village of Carbost on the route. It was advised that there would be a review on usage to see if public transport services were providing value for money.

It was suggested that the Highland Comfort Scheme should be continued. It was advised that there was one year funding for the Visitor Management Plan, it was not recurring. However, it was recommended that a further report on future proposals would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee when it should be known what funding was available for proposals in the Plan, such as the Highland Comfort Scheme.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided by each Service and the Access Rangers on progress in delivering the 2022 Visitor Management Plan actions and associated budget spend as detailed in Appendices 1 & 2 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** that there may be a need to vire funds between activities; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a further report on future proposals would be brought to the next Economy & Infrastructure Committee.

6. Revenue and Performance Monitoring - Quarter 2 to 30 September 2022 Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach – Cairteal 2 gu 30 Sultain 2022

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/27/2022 dated 19 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

It was highlighted that the report set out some of the key financial pressures being faced by the Service such as public transport commitments. The projected budget gap of £2.729m to the end of 2022/23 was expected to significantly reduce over the remainder of the financial year.

Hydro Ness had been a very successful project and helped with the electricity supply to the Inverness Leisure Centre and it was suggested if this scheme could be replicated on the Conon river for any future development on the banks of that river.

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 to the report;
- ii. the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 September 2022;
- iii. net spend at the end of Quarter 2, totaled £12.208m;
- iv. based on the best available information to date, a service budget gap of £2.729m was forecast to end of 2022/23;
- v. many areas of the Service rely on income to pay for services and this continues to improve;
- vi. the budget gap may 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;
- vii. further adjustments would be made in future quarterly reporting to reflect the updated apportionment of costs and savings across the new structure; and
- viii. the Directorate's performance information.

7. Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2022/23 Aithisg Sgrùdadh Calpa 2 2022/23

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

It was highlighted that there had been good progress on major schemes and the Service continued to design and deliver major schemes as detailed in the report. Some projects were more challenging than others on cost, price, inflation and technical difficulties, but overall progress on capital projects was positive.

In terms of the street lighting project, very good progress was being made on LED replacement products on street lighting. The review of the capital programme would look to reprofile the programme in order to complete this project and progress on the capital programme would be reported to Council.

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

8. Early Adoption of 20mph Speed Limits in Highland Gabhail gu Tràth ri Crìochan Astair 20msu anns a' Ghàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/29/2022 dated 23 September 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

It was advised that Transport Scotland had approached Highland Council's Road Safety Team to invite Highland Council to become their pilot Local Authority for the roll out of the National Strategy for the implementation of 20mph speed limits. This early adoption trial would see the widespread introduction of 20mph speed limits in around 130 settlements across the Highland Council Area by Summer 2023. This was a significant piece of work for the Council to undertake but as early adopters the programme of implementation will be fully funded by Transport Scotland.

Members welcomed the proposals in the report which would improve road safety through Highland communities and prevent deaths and injuries on Highland roads and in turn reduce pressures and costs for the health service.

It was hoped that Police Scotland would give their Officers the flexibility to enforce 20mph speed limits and that Transport Scotland would relax the conditions where Camera Partnership vans could be used as these measures would go a long way to help with enforcement. It was confirmed that Officers were working with Police Scotland on enforcement

Public communication on these proposals was important as this was all about changing driver attitudes, encouraging them to slow down and highlighting that a reduction in speed would also see a reduction in carbon emissions.

Having 20mph speed limits around schools, playgrounds and where communities have stated there were risks with speeding, was very welcomed. However, a concern was expressed on the economic impact in Highland from the proposals. Reference was made to a similar scheme in Wales where the cost to the economy was significant. It was advised that research from the Transport Research Institute estimated that the reduction to 20mph across Wales would result in savings of £100m per year. Further, evidence suggested that junctions, buses, traffic signals for example had more of an impact on speed than 20mph limits.

It was highlighted that Transport Scotland had a desire to see 20mph on trunk roads that passed through urban areas and Officers would work with Transport Scotland to see if these 20mph limits could be carried out at the same time as the pilot rollout.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the timeline for implementation that had been provided to Highland Council by Transport Scotland as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** that, as early adopters, the entire delivery of the widespread 20mph limits would be fully funded by Transport Scotland;
- iii. **AGREED** to homologate the Council's positive response to Transport Scotland in agreeing to their request for the authority to become an early adopter of the National 20mph implementation strategy;
- iv. **NOTED** that road assessments were ongoing and The Highland Council Road Safety Team had around 130 settlements around the Council area, with Council adopted roads, with existing speed limits of 30mph or below which were subject to assessment (see Appendix 3 of the report). Members were invited to put forward any additional settlements for assessment to the Road Safety Team;
- v. **NOTED** the early adoption implementation would utilise Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders; and
- vi. **NOTED** the information with regards to speed collection, communication and permanent implementation as detailed in paragraphs 5.6, 7.3 and 9 respectively.

9. Flow Country World Heritage Site Nomination Update

Cunntas às Ùr mu Ainmeachadh nam Flòbhaichean mar Ionad Glèidhteachais na Cruinne

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/30/2022 dated 4 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- thanks were expressed to the Officers for their professionalism and hard work for producing the report and getting the project to this stage;
- if the flow country site received world heritage status, it was felt that benefits would be realised not just locally but also on the world stage; and
- Members were excited and welcomed the potential of having a world heritage site within Highland. The opportunity of attracting more tourists to boost the economy was also highlighted

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

10. Update to Parking Policy

Cunntas às Ùr mu Phoileasaidh Parcaidh

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/31/2022 dated 29 September 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- it was suggested to add comments to paragraph 1.3 of the report regarding supporting local communities when it came to encouraging growth and investment in our tourist based economy;
- it was requested to receive a timeous indication of income for Skye parking charges and agree timescales on receiving regular indicators;
- regarding on-street parking income, it was requested to include in the Policy how these funds were to be reinvested in local roads infrastructure;
- its was requested that paragraph 1.4 of the draft Policy be updated as the Highland Council Tourism Committee no longer existed; and
- the report was welcomed as it focussed on ways to increase income for Highland in a fair, flexible and sustainable manner.

The Committee **AGREED** the amendments as detailed in section 4 of the report and to adopt as Council policy.

11. Thurso Conservation Area Appraisal & Conservation Area Management Plan Plana Measaidh & Stiùiridh Sgìre Glèidhteachais Inbhir Theòrsa

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/32/2022 dated 14 September 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- Members felt that was important to recognise the level of public engagement and the consultation process;
- the report was welcomed and Members thanked the officers concerned; and
- the inclusion of St Peters Kirk within the boundary was praised.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to adopt the Thurso Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as planning guidance; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the proposed amendments to the statutory Conservation Area boundary.

12. Roads Structures Annual Report Aithisg Bhliadhnaile Structaran Rathaidean

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/33/2022 dated 3 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the position of the Bridge Stock Condition Indicators in Highland; and

- ii. the current position in Highland in relation to the number of structures inspections undertaken.

**13. Cycle 1 Local Flood Risk Management Plans – Final Reports
Cearcall 1 Planaichean Stiùiridh Cunnart Tuile Ionadail – Aithisgean
Deireannach**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/34/2022 dated 5 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the Section 38 Final Report and progress made on the measures within the current Highland and Argyll Local Flood Risk Management Plan;
- ii. **AGREED** to make the Section 38 Final Report for the Highland and Argyll Local Plan District available to the public on the Council's website;
- iii. **NOTED** the contents of the Section 38 Final Report and progress made on the measures within the current Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Flood Risk Management Plan; and
- iv. **NOTED** that Moray Council would approve and publish the Section 38 Final Report for the Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District.

**14. Cycle 2 – Local Flood Risk Management Plans
Cearcall 2 – Planaichean Stiùiridh Cunnart Tuile Ionadail**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/35/2022 dated 5 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the content of the Highland and Argyll Local Flood Risk Management Plan allowing publication by The Highland Council to take place by 31 December 2022; and
- ii. the content of the Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Flood Risk Management Plan, allowing Moray Council to publish the Local Plan by 31 December 2022.

**15. Community Transport Grants
Tabhartasan Còmhdhail Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/36/2022 dated 5 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** continuation of funding Community Transport organisations for 2023/24 within the existing budget and in line with discussions held with each individual group; and

- ii. **NOTED** that a future report would be presented during 2023 on longer term proposals for community transport.

16. Inshes Junction Improvements – Stopping Up of U4403 Beechwood House Road
Leasachaidhean Ceangal-rathaid nan Innseagan – Stad Suas U4403 na Coille-Faidhbhile

The Committee **NOTED** that this item was to be considered by the City of Inverness Area Committee.

17. Achmelvich Car Park
Pàirc Chàraichean Achadh Mhealbhaich

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/38/2022 dated 19 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Committee **AGREED** £0.300m Highland Council loan funding with associated loan charges to be fully funded from income generated from parking charges from the car park.

18. Appointment of City Region Deal Monitoring Group
Cur an Dreuchd Buidheann-sgrùdaidh a' Chùmhnaint Baile Roinne

The Committee **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of Audit and Scrutiny Committee and to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy and Infrastructure and 6 other Member to the City Region Deal Monitoring Group as follow:-

Mr I Brown, Mr D Fraser, Mr P Logue, Mr J McEwan, Ms L Niven and Mrs M Reid.

18a. Transport assistance for Ukrainian Displaced Persons
Taic còmhdaidh do dhaoine eas-chruthach Ucràineach

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/42/22 dated 3 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the level of funding provided to the Council by central Government for the support of Ukrainian displaced persons was questioned;
- bus fares in the UK were expensive compared to what Ukrainian refugees had been used to and, when trying to find work, could prove prohibitive. By finding employment Ukrainian refugees could then become full members of the community. These refugees had faced trauma when escaping from war-torn Ukraine and many were still worried about family and friends still in the country so, it was suggested, any Service underspend should be redirected to funding this. However, it was pointed out that there would be competing priorities for any underspend and the Committee was not in a position to commit any such funds at this stage;

- if the Council were unable to fund transport assistance for one year then it should fund it for as long as it could;
- having the framework
- those on Universal Credit didn't get free bus travel and this again disadvantaged them from finding employment;
- there was a general lack of buses and bus drivers; and
- information was sought, and provided, as to how some other local authorities were funding similar schemes.

The Committee **AGREED** that a scheme be developed and implemented, should external funding be received as part of the overall support packages available from Scottish or UK Governments.

19. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There Committee **NOTED** the following Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC) for:-

- South PAC – 23 June 2022 (pp 1063-1068);
- North PAC – 10 August 2022 (pp 1069-1075);
- South PAC – 18 August 2022 (pp 1076-1084);
- North PAC – 27 September 2022 (pp 1085-1090);
- South PAC – 4 October 2022 (pp1091-1096).

20. 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.

21. Property Transactions Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/39/2022 dated 5 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

22. Land and Property Fearann agus Cuid-seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/40/2022 dated 7 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

23. Public and School Transport Retendering and Contract Awards
Ath-thairgseadh agus Duaisean Cùmhaint airson Còmhdhail Poblach is Sgoile

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/41/2022 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

24. Land and Property – Cromwell Road, Inverness
Fearann is Seilbh - Rathad Chrombail, Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/43/22 dated 2 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held remotely on 14 November 2022 at 11.35 am.

Present:

Mrs A MacLean
Mr G Mackenzie

Mrs M Paterson
Mr S Kennedy

In attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer, Property and Housing
Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber), Communities and Place
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Ms J Bain, Planner, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Governance

Also in attendance:

Group Manager R Dibble, 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.

Mr G MacKenzie in the Chair

Business

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulans**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There had been circulated Report No DSA/13/22 dated 21 October 2022 together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:-

- Members expressed their appreciation to all staff, having commented on the excellent report;
- the increase in appliances available was welcomed;

- previously there had been suggestions of setting up a creche at Dingwall Fire Station and this had evolved into a proposal for a Family Centre. However, this had fallen by the wayside, possibly due to the lack of support from the Council, but Members expressed concern as it had been understood that money had been allocated for this;
- there were recruitment difficulties with some areas being harder hit than others. This was a national problem and this compounded the difficulties in attracting personnel to Highland;
- there were a number of Station Managers who had/were about to retire and Local Members would be kept informed of changes;
- the Fire Brigade Union was in the middle of balloting its members about Industrial Action and Members were assured that arrangements were in place should a strike be called;
- it was reassuring that a proactive approach was being taken with regard to Home Safety checks with vulnerable individuals being prioritised; and
- the Fire Service had been keen to be involved with the Tele-Care Service but the Fire Brigade Union had rejected this proposal as it was not part of their terms and conditions.

Having scrutinised the report, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the Ross and Cromarty Area Performance Report; and
- AGREED** that officers investigate the current position regarding using Dingwall Fire Station as a Family Centre.

4. **Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2 Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh 2**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/14/22 dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:-

- Businesses moving into the area would undoubtedly wish to comment on the Plan;
- the Council had consulted well and it was good to see the responses generated;
- since the Draft Plan had first begun there had been a number of changes which would impact on it. In particular Climate Change was a serious issue and information was sought, and provided, as to how the Plan had taken this in to consideration;
- ideally there should be no more housing development until the necessary infrastructure was in place, bearing in mind the 20 minute neighbourhood approach, and this therefore had a bearing on developer contributions. It was important that communities and Local Members were involved;
- if the Opportunity Cromarty Firth bid was successful it would have a huge impact on the Plan;
- calls were made for a charette for the Ward which would take into account infrastructure;

- there would be concerns about further housing developments in Conon Bridge due to the accident blackspot at the A835 junction; and
- improvements to infrastructure were necessary elsewhere in the Ward, Muir of Ord being cited as one example and it was pointed out that it was not possible to keep building houses if facilities weren't there. This could be addressed if Community Planning Partnerships were included.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the recommended Council response to the place-specific issues relevant to this Committee area raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- NOTED** the issues raised in representations as they related to strategic matters that might have implications for this Committee area and **NOTED** the working draft response to these issues as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its examination up to but excluding the Plan's adoption; and
- AGREED** to authorise the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the chair of this Committee, to make any necessary Habitats Regulations Appraisal, factual or other non-material changes to Appendix 1 of the report prior to its submission to Scottish Government.

5. Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since last meeting
Iarrtasan buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàrd Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort air an aontachadh bho choinneamh mu dheireadh

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since its last meeting:-

- Ben Wyvis Primary School – Supporting Health and Wellbeing £500;
- Community Support and Information – Sheila's Café, community event space and garden £1,500;
- Killearnan Public Hall – Electrical Wiring - £500;
- Dingwall Players – Word on Street Festival - £2,500; and
- Dingwall Community Council – Community Events and Resilience - £2,500.

6. Common Good Fund - Dingwall
Maoin Maith Coitcheann - Inbhir Pheofharain

There had been circulated Report No DSA/15/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:-

- clarification was sought as to the expenditure costs incurred for telephone rental;

- Members welcomed the completion of the community hub/meeting room in Dingwall but did ask when it was to be opened, how the facility could be booked and the level of charges proposed; and
- Members were pleased to see that essential works at Dingwall Town Hall had commenced. However £800,000 was required and it was queried if this would all be available.

Officers having undertaken to respond to Members queries, the Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the position of Dingwall Common Good Fund as shown in the 2022/23 Quarter Two monitoring statement.

7. **Ward Capital Projects – Update** **Pròiseactan Calpa Uàrdan – Ùrachadh**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During the discussion the following issues were raised regarding the planned replacement building for St. Clements:-

- discussion took place surrounding the date of the Special Council which had been agreed to concentrate on the Council's Capital Programme. Although initially proposed to be in December, it was now thought to be in January as the outcome of the Scottish Government's LEIP funding would then be known;
- looking to Aberdeenshire Council's proposed new Special School building would offer an opportunity to follow best practice
- it was important that there were regular stakeholder meetings;
- it was understood design and building consultants had been appointed; and
- High Life Highland had vacated the Old Library building, adjacent to the current St Clement's building. This building was in a good state of repair. Once the new school was built it would be necessary to look at the whole site strategically and to consult with users as to its future. It would also be dependent on what SEPA would allow and it was understood that a previous proposal for flats had not met with community support. A Master Plan had been drawn up but this was now well out of date. In this regard, a site visit for Members was proposed with a detailed options appraisal.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress made in taking forward the St. Clement's School project; and
- ii. **AGREED** a Members' site visit, with a detailed options appraisal, be arranged.

8. **Community Asset Transfer – Lease of Land at Muir of Ord Industrial Estate to Muir of Ord Development Trust (Men's Shed Project)** **Maoin Coimhearsnachd a ghluasad - Fearann air mhàl aig Oighreachd Ghnìomhachais a' Am Bhlàr Dhubh gu Urras Leasachaidh a' Bhlàr Dhubh (Pròiseact Seada nam Fir)**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/17/22 dated 31 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

Members welcomed the proposal, highlighting the success of the Dingwall Men's Shed and it would undoubtedly be replicated here. In response to a question, it was confirmed that after the 20 year lease lapsed it was probable that it would simply be renewed.

The Committee **AGREED** the Community Asset Transfer request from Muir of Ord Development Trust to lease approximately 343 sqm of vacant land at Muir of Ord Industrial Estate for 20 years at £1 pa on the terms of transfer as detailed in the report.

9. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated for **NOTING** Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Committee held on 22 August 2022 which were approved by the Council on September 2022.

The meeting concluded at 1.15 pm

The Highland Council

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

Present:

Ms S Atkin
Ms L Johnston
Ms M MacCallum

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Mrs T Scott, Principal Planner, Planning Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance
Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr R Dibble, SFRS

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

Ms L Johnston in the Chair

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. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report
Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No BI/12/22 dated 31 October 2022 by the Local Senior Officer for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion the following comments were made;

- thanks were expressed for the hard work that went into producing the comprehensive report;
- it was reassuring that there had been no fatalities from dwelling fires and no non-fatal casualties from fire this year;

- it was acknowledged that firefighter recruitment was proving to be challenging;
- in relation to the ballot for industrial action within the fire service, it was queried what the current status was and what impact this would have on the fire service it went ahead;
- it was queried what factors were affecting the recruitment in Fortrose;
- attention was drawn to the high false alarm callouts this year. In this regard it was queried what were the main triggers;
- regarding deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour, information was sought, and provided, on how the Black Isle compared with other areas of Highland;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding youth firefighting qualifications and if there were still courses available; and
- Firefighters highlighting risks associated regarding using temporary heating with communities was welcomed.

The Committee **NOTED** the attached Area Performance Report.

4. **Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2 Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh 2**

There had been circulated Report No BI/13/22 dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion the following comments were made;

- it appeared that houses were being built without adequate community infrastructure. In this regard it was queried if there was a regulatory limit on building houses before appropriate infrastructure should also be built;
- whilst praise of the Black Isle local development plan was given, Members queried developer contributions towards certain areas of need, such as Tore. In this regard it was highlighted that whilst Tore had additional housing allocation on the plan its village hall was out of action, and it had a smaller school facility;
- it was felt that there was an absence of transparency with developer contributions and this was creating a lack of trust in the community. Therefore, Members requested an improved approach in this matter;
- concern was raised regarding the development plan for Avoch due to the impact this would likely have on Avoch Primary School. In this regard it was felt that more planning was needed taking the school facility into more consideration; and
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the 0.8-hectare site at Munloch if this site size was deemed adequate for a new school provision.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the recommended Council response to the place-specific issues relevant to this Committee area raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- NOTED** the issues raised in representations as they related to strategic matters that might have implications for this Committee area and **NOTED** the working draft response to these issues as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;

- iii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its examination up to but excluding the Plan's adoption; and
- iv. **AGREED** to authorise the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, to make any necessary Habitats Regulations Appraisal, factual or other non-material changes to Appendix 1 of the report prior to its submission to Scottish Government.

5. Black Isle Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since last meeting
Iarrtasan Buidseit fo Ùghdarras Uàird an Eilein Duibh air an aontachadh on choinneamh mu dheireadh

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Black Isle Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since 8 August 2022:

- i. Resolis Hall Committee – Defibrillator Battery Pad - £380
- ii. North Kessock Village Hall Committee – Hall Improvements - £3,000
- iii. Killearnan Public Hall – Electrical Wiring - £500

6. Common Good Funds
Maoin Maith Choitichinn

a. Cromarty Common Good Fund
Maoin Math Coitcheann Chromba

There had been circulated Report No BI/14/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

The Committee **NOTED** the position of Cromarty Common Good Fund as shown in the 2022/23 Quarter Two monitoring statement.

b. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund
Maoin Math Coitcheann na Cananaich agus Ros Maircnidh

There had been circulated Report No BI/15/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

During discussion it was queried on what date any rents would be renegotiated and if this could be supplied to Members.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund as shown in the 2022/23 Quarter Two monitoring statement; and
- ii. **AGREED** to provide to Members further clarification of when any rents would be renegotiated

**7. Culbokie Proposed 20mph and 40 mph Speed Restrictions
Criochan Astair 20 msu agus 40 msu gam Moladh airson Cùil Bhàicidh**

There had been circulated Report No BI/16/22 dated 24 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

Members thanked officers for the very thorough and detailed report and also commended the input from the Community Council in relation to the speed limit adjustment.

Thereafter, The Committee **NOTED** the objections and **APPROVED** the draft traffic regulation order.

**8. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Black Isle Committee held on 8 August 2022 which were approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

The meeting ended at 12:10pm

Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held in the Chamber, The Courthouse, High Street, Nairn on Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 10.40 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

Mr L Hannah, Ward Manager, Communities and Place

Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Mrs L Dunn, Principal 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 the Committee.

Mr M Green in the Chair

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. Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2 Plana Leasachadh Ionadail 2 ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh

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

A presentation was provided, summarising the process for the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP), the consultation responses, proposed adjustments, and the next steps.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Members were strongly of the opinion that there should be no further development on NA05 or NA06 until the A96 Nairn bypass had been completed and the importance of the bypass to the whole of the east coast was emphasised. Reference was drawn to the papers whereby it indicated that the Council would request that, if the Reporter was so minded, the

following statement be inserted at the beginning of the list of Development Requirements: *“Delivery of the A96 Nairn Bypass is a pre-requisite to the development of NA05: Nairn East & NA06: East of the Retail Park.”* In support of this, advice from the Principal Planning Solicitor was referred to, namely that it was important to note that the current Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) was adopted seven years ago. As plans aged, less weight was attributed to them when determining planning applications. One consequence of delay at this stage in the process to replace a plan was that a plan vacuum occurred and communities were exposed to the uncertainty caused by a planning by application/appeal approach to decision making. It was emphasised that having a plan which stated that there was to be no development at NA05 and NA06 prior to the completion of the Nairn Bypass would considerably strengthen the ability to prevent development ahead of the Bypass rather than having to rely on a seven year old plan;

- clarification was sought and provided on the longer term indicative housing capacity intended for NA05: Nairn East which was 650 to 850, noting that a Development Brief would be required to examine issues further and identify suitable land uses and final housing capacity. The process for the provision of the required Development Brief was summarised, and Members referred to the importance of having a Local Place Plan (LPP) in place, which would be an important mechanism to shape future planning and investment decisions. It was noted that the Council was ready to support the community in preparing its Local Place Plan, although there was some disappointment that the Council and Members could have been better represented at the recent local public meeting;
- considerable support was voiced for the need to expedite the development of an LPP for Nairn as a key priority, with reference to other Highland Council Areas which already had one in place. The value of a LPP to community empowerment and to enhance and work in tandem with the Local Development Plan was emphasised. It was of concern that the LPP would not be finalised in time to be considered alongside the preparation of IMFLDP2. The community-led nature of the LPP was explained, along with its complimentary role to the Development Plan. Even if the LPP was not finalised in time for this iteration of the IMFLDP, it could still be able to inform and influence the Development Brief for NA05/NA06 and other planning decisions;
- in relation to NA05, Nairn East, attention was drawn to concerns about residential allocation adjacent to existing industrial allocation and a summary was provided of relevant national and local policies which sought to protect existing businesses, as well as the ability to do so through the Development Brief process;
- in relation to AU01, Auldearn, rigorous assessment of any schemes proposed in relation to flooding and drainage issues was essential; and
- in relation to NA02, Showfield East, the proposed inclusion of community uses, alongside housing, and a potential bowling green were welcomed.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **AGREED** the recommended Council response to the place-specific issues relevant to this Committee area raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;

- ii. **NOTED** the issues raised in representations as they related to strategic matters that might have implications for this Committee area and the working draft response to these issues as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- iii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its examination up to but excluding the Plan's adoption; and
- iv. **AGREED** authority be delegated to the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to make any necessary Habitats Regulations Appraisal, factual or other non-material changes to Appendix 1 to the report prior to its submission to the Scottish Government.

At this point, the meeting was adjourned at 11.25am and reconvened at 11.35am.

4. **Common Good Math Coitcheann**

4.a **Parking on Common Good Land Parcadh air Talamh Maith Choitcheann**

There had been circulated Report No NC/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the additional income generated by the Scheme, 100% of which would be retained by the Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF), was welcomed;
- it was requested that Members be provided with a detailed breakdown of the proposed charges to be levied on the NCGF for the cost of operating the service prior to them being paid;
- a request was made for a general traffic management review to be undertaken of the wider Links area (including the Links and Harbour areas) and presented to a future meeting of the Committee;
- confirmation was provided that the contradictory campervan signage at Harbour Street had been corrected;
- further information was sought and provided about permit holder parking at the harbour during which it was explained that a permit scheme had been implemented as a courtesy measure to harbour users but that this could not be legally enforced. In order to enforce this site, a Traffic Regulation Order amendment would be required. This would require further discussion with Members prior to any further action being taken; and
- confirmation was provided that the anomaly with regard to £10 notes not being accepted at certain parking machines had been corrected. Further information could be provided to Mrs B Jarvie on which machines had been affected and the date this had been resolved. With regard to impact on income, it was indicated £21k had been collected in the first six months of 2022/23 and it was therefore anticipated that income would be in line with the previous year (2021/22) whereby £33k had been collected.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the success of the Invitation to Pay Parking Scheme in terms of income generation for the Nairn Common Good Fund and **AGREED**:

- i. the Invitation of Pay Parking Scheme continued in its current form at each of the three sites detailed for a further period of four years, subject to a review on an annual basis; and
- ii. that:
 - a. Members be provided with a detailed breakdown of the proposed charges to be levied on the Common Good Fund prior to them being paid; and
 - b. a general traffic management review be undertaken of the wider Links area and presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

4.b Harbour Street Public Toilets - Feasibility Brief Tàighean-beaga Poblach Sràid a' Chalaigh – Brath Comasachd

There had been circulated Report No NC/14/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the long term solution was welcome but it was proposed that investigations be made into using the Comfort Scheme as an interim measure and the outcome reported to a future meeting. Confirmation was provided that this would be further explored with neighbouring Common Good tenants by Property and Estates; and
- although supportive of the feasibility study, concern was expressed at the waste disposal facilities being located on the site.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:

- i. the draft feasibility study brief set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- ii. use of the Comfort Scheme being introduced as an interim measure be investigated and the outcome reported to a future meeting.

4.c Sandown Lands Community Food Growing - Feasibility Brief Fàs Bìdh Coimhearsnachd Fearann Sandown – Brath Comasachd

There had been circulated Report No NC/15/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, concern was expressed at the use of £18k from the NCGF to pay for the feasibility study and it was felt that it was difficult to justify the costs. However, although this point was recognised, undertaking the feasibility study was the desired outcome that had arisen as the result of effective engagement following a statutory public consultation. The study was necessary in order for all the options to be fully explored and would create an opportunity for third sector/voluntary organisations and individuals to work with new community run business models.

The Committee **AGREED**:

- i. the draft feasibility study brief set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- ii. use of £18k Nairn Common Good Fund cash reserves in 2022/23 for the costs of the feasibility study.

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

There had been circulated Report No NC/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- it was clarified that this related to monitoring of commercial activity of the NCGF, not the total value, i.e. the assets, which was reported in the annual accounts;
- it was highlighted that action agreed at the previous meeting in respect of presenting the annual accounts in more detail remained outstanding. It was reported that a suite of operational NCGF monitoring reports were being developed focussing on income and expenditure and would be presented on a quarterly basis for discussion at the Area Business Meeting;
- it was indicated that the Investment Sub Committee managed the investment of the NCGF based on the views of the Nairnshire Committee. At present, the fund was currently being invested based on growth rather than income. It was requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to review the recommendations to the Investment Sub Committee on how the NCGF funds were managed/invested;
- the surpluses were welcomed; and
- in regard to demolition and removal of the Links Store, it was reported that these works would be undertaken at a cost of around £5k, which was in line with the original budget, but discussions would be ongoing with Maintenance Services regarding this.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund as shown in the Quarter 2 Revenue Monitoring Statement against Budget for 2022/23; and
- ii. **AGREED** a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to review the recommendations to the Investment Sub Committee on how the NCGF funds were managed/invested.

5. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 8 August 2022 which were approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

Prior to concluding the meeting, best wishes were extended to Mr D Wilson with his retirement.

The meeting was concluded at 12.06pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Communities and Place Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

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

Non-Members also present:

Mr C Ballance	Mr J McGillivray (Teams)
Dr C Birt (Teams)	Mr D Millar (Teams)
Mr S Kennedy	Mrs M Paterson
Mrs A MacLean	Mr M Reiss
Ms K MacLean	Mr K Rosie (Teams)
Mr T MacLennan (Teams)	Mrs L Saggars

In attendance:

Ms K Lackie, Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance
 Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place
 Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support and Engagement
 Mr S Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance
 Mr A McKinnie, Strategic Lead, Waste Strategy and Operations
 Mr A Yates, Strategic Lead, Environmental Health and Bereavement Services
 Ms L Johnstone, Elections Manager, Corporate Governance
 Ms D Sutton, Amenity Services Manager
 Ms R MacKinnon, Principal Policy Officer
 Ms W Girard-Prudon, Project Coordinator
 Ms A Cameron, Customer Service Team Leader
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator
 Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator

Also in attendance:

Mr M Humphreys, Local Senior Officer for Highland, 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

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Baldrey, Mr L Fraser, Mr H Morrison and Ms M Nolan.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:-

Item 4: Mr A Christie

Item 7: Mr A Christie

Item 13: Mrs J Hendry

3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Chair spoke to two items of good news as follows:-

Amenities

Lynn MacGillivray had been appointed to the new fixed-term Support Co-ordinator post. She had started in post on 31 October 2022 and would help deliver the Council's Play Area Strategy and Play Sufficiency obligations to the Scottish Government.

She would be involved in community engagement regarding play areas and would provide important support as part of the overall funding from the Scottish Government for the next three years.

Lynn brought a great wealth of knowledge and understanding of all things play and had quickly understood what was required to develop the Highland Play Area Strategy and engage with communities.

War Memorials

As Members were aware, the Service did a lot of work in early November to support communities for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday by ensuring war memorials were in good condition for local events. This year had gone well with support including:

- specific improvement work funded to war memorials with the grade A listed memorial at Glenelg having pointing and professional cleaning undertaken, and on Skye, the Kilmuir War Memorial being pointed and having all lettering restored, and grounds improved around Sleat War Memorial.
- additional street cleaning and waste services had been provided to ensure litter was removed and areas kept clean around the war memorials.
- additional grounds work had been done the week before with shrub beds and grass areas tidied and checked

The staff had a very strong commitment to this support for communities and the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, recognised and thanked them for this work.

The Committee **NOTED** the good news.

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

Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test and reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No CP/18/22 dated 3 November 2022 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland, SFRS.

The Local Senior Officer for Highland, 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 – Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals; 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 report and the dedication and commitment of the Local Senior Officer and his crews who put their own safety at risk to protect people and communities across Highland;
- reference was made to two serious accidents on the A9 between Brora and Helmsdale on consecutive days, and appreciation was expressed for the work of the fire crews that had attended along with other emergency services. However, recruitment in north and west Sutherland had been an issue for some time. Limited availability of appliances raised an issue in terms of the safety of local communities, and it was queried what actions were in place to improve station availability in Caithness and Sutherland;
- information was sought regarding the requirement placed on the public to install interlinked heat and smoke alarms and whether there was any evidence yet of a reduction in the number of house fires;
- in relation to Thurso Fire Station, a number of experienced firefighters had recently left at one time, and information was sought on the associated impact. In addition, it was queried why Thurso 2nd Appliance availability was so much lower than Wick when staffing numbers were similar;
- it was queried whether the pilots to increase appliance availability could be extended to Cannich Fire Station where there were three dedicated firefighters training every week but unable to respond to any fires. It was added that the requirement to be within 10 minutes for 70 hours per week when the station was in such a small remote community presented difficulties;
- the SFRS, along with other emergency services, was held in high regard by the public in Highland and was the bedrock of community life. However, for the past six or seven years, Members had been aware of worries about the level of fire cover in different parts of Highland. Examples were provided, referring to SFRS charts, of several days when it was understood there had been no cover across large areas of north and west Highland. Particular reference was made to Thurso,

which had schools, a ferry service, Dounreay and the A9 and which, according to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, had had less than 50% availability for the 1st appliance over the past three months. Further FOI requests had been submitted, one of which was on the possible implications for commercial insurance cover in areas where the local station was off the run. However, a response had not yet been received. The Local Senior Officer for Highland had inherited a challenge that was not of his making, and it was questioned what could be done to help the SFRS get back to what had been an outstanding service. Numerous suggestions had been debated in the Council Chamber but very little had happened. These included making the training requirements less onerous for both recruits and employers, reducing the age limit, considering whether retained firefighters needed to be as fit as full-time firefighters and, crucially, whether crews of three could attend some incidents, which Members had previously been told would happen when rapid response units were implemented. Using a serious road traffic accident as an example, if the Ambulance Service only had one paramedic available that paramedic would be sent, and it was the same for the Police. It was understood that existing rules required four firefighters to safely reverse an appliance whereas HGV drivers did this on their own for much larger vehicles. The crews wanted to do their best, and it was suggested it was necessary to decentralise the SFRS and entrust rural areas to be more flexible in how they dealt with challenges. It was essential to address the lack of fire coverage in rural areas and Members emphasised their determination to try to improve the situation;

- in relation to the joint mobilising arrangement in respect of Tongue and Bettyhill, there was only one road between the two communities, parts of which were single track, and it was questioned how the arrangement would work in practice – eg if the road was blocked due to a serious road traffic accident;
- it was necessary to understand why people were not joining the retained fire service and it was queried whether a survey had been carried out in that regard. It was suggested that reducing the age at which people could join the SFRS should be considered at a national level. Young people were very responsible and, through the education system offered in Highland, had opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work. Many young people wanted to stay in rural areas and engage with what happened in their communities, and liaising with them in schools and at careers fairs would increase uptake;
- in relation to encouraging more woman to join the SFRS, reference was made to work that had been carried out at Dingwall Fire Station to ensure that facilities were suitable for both male and female firefighters. Reference was also made to previous proposals, in collaboration with the Council, to provide a creche, and an update on progress was sought;
- clarification was sought as to the difference between retained and on-call firefighters;
- the SFRS had previously been looking at providing local training for new recruits and an update was sought in that regard;
- in relation to the age profile of the SFRS, it was queried how the retirement or phased retirement of long-standing members of staff would impact on service provision and how new firefighters were being recruited – eg were steps being taken to recruit from outwith Highland and to target groups such as former armed forces personnel; and
- it was queried whether people involved in managing estates, forestry and farmlands were involved in training so they could provide backup in the event of serious moorland and forest fires.

The Local Senior Officer responded in detail to the points and queries raised. In relation to availability in north and west Highland, he questioned the source of the examples provided, some of which were not factually correct, and encouraged Members who had any questions about availability to contact the SFRS through formal routes. He provided information on availability on specific dates and explained the arrangements that were in place to increase appliance availability, including the joint mobilising process which had now been expanded across Highland. However, it was recognised that on call availability was transient, and there were a number of factors that played into that. That was why the trials described in the report had been introduced and, going forward, he was committed to looking at different methods of improving availability.

The Committee otherwise scrutinised and **NOTED** the Highland Performance Report.

In terms of Standing Order 9, the Committee **AGREED** to consider item 9 at this stage.

9. Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages – Annual Report Clàrachadh air Breith, Bàs is Pòsadh – Aithisg Bhliadhnail

There had been circulated Report No CP/23/22 dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- thanks were expressed for the useful and informative report, and it was suggested that it would be helpful to receive similar reports on other aspects of the Communities and Place Service to assist Members in providing oversight and scrutiny;
- on the point being raised, it was explained that, unlike other services which might have specific performance targets, the Registration Service aimed to achieve as near to 100% accuracy as possible;
- the Registration Service was similar to some other Council services that carried out statutory duties in that it was not recognised enough for the excellent work it did. It was not only about accuracy but about dealing with people at some of the happiest times of their lives as well as in difficult circumstances, which could be stressful for staff. The Chair concurred and assured Members that great care was taken at the time of recruitment to Registrar posts;
- in relation to Elected Members being asked to sign Statutory Declarations such as for a change of name, it would be helpful if standard documentation could be made available in Service Points/Registration Offices. It was confirmed that this would be looked at to support Members in their role, and it was suggested that information also be made available on the Members' Intranet;
- thanks, gratitude and admiration were expressed for the work of the Registration team;
- in relation to the popularity of Highland as wedding location, local Registration staff had a wealth of knowledge and experience as well as ideas as to how the Council could become more income-generating in terms of weddings, and it was important to tap into that;
- in terms of strategic planning and targeting efforts to stop the depopulation of remote and rural areas, it would be helpful to see, on an area basis, the correlation between the number of births and death and overall population projections; and

- the number of deaths was higher than the number of births, and it was queried whether that was the usual trend. It was confirmed that data could be provided to Members on this and the previous point.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the work of the Registration team across Highland and the changes to work patterns and services over the last three years;
- scrutinised and **NOTED** the performance of the Registration team based upon the most recently examined data from 2021 and outlined in Appendix 4 of the report;
- NOTED** the future developments for the service for the next year;
- AGREED** that information and standard documentation be made available on the Members' Intranet and in Service Points/Registration Offices to support Elected Members in their role in terms of signing Statutory Declarations; and
- AGREED**, in relation to the number of births and deaths in Highland, that information on trends and the correlation with overall population projections, on an area basis, be provided to Members of the Committee.

5. Revenue Budget Monitoring Report: 2022/23 Quarter 2 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach: Cairteal 2 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No CP/19/22 dated 30 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Members welcomed the provision of more detailed information on variances, as requested at the previous meeting of the Committee, which made it easier to get behind the numbers;
- further information was requested on the projected underspend in respect of staff costs;
- concern was expressed regarding the number of vacant posts in the Refuse and Recycling and Street Cleaning teams, and information was sought, and provided, on the impact of these vacancies on service provision. In addition, it was queried what percentage of the total staffing complement of each team the vacant posts represented and, in relation to the total service establishment, whether the number of vacancies was average or above/below what would be expected; and
- as more housing developments were built, demand for statutory services such as refuse collection and street cleaning continued to increase, which made it difficult for the Communities and Place Service to meet savings targets.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the forecasted outturn for the 2022/23 Revenue budget for the Communities and Place Service as at Quarter 2 was £1.150m overspend; an
- NOTED** higher costs pertaining to fuel and parts including vehicle components, spares and tyres were placing significant pressures on the budget.
- AGREED** that further information be provided on the projected underspend in respect of staff costs.

**6. Capital Budget Monitoring Report: 2022/23 Quarter 2
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Buidseat Calpa: Cairteal 2 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No CP/20/22 dated 2 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the Inverness Waste Transfer Station was one of the biggest capital projects the Council had undertaken for some time and it would be useful for Members to visit it on completion. It was confirmed that the proposed visit by Members of the Waste Strategy Working Group could be extended to all Members; and
- in relation to play parks, disappointment was expressed regarding the backloading of Scottish Government funding, two thirds of which would not be made available until 2024/25 and 2025/26. This, together with the fact that the Council's budget for play parks had historically been low, suggested that there was not a high enough importance placed on children's play and exercise.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the forecasted capital outturn for the Communities and Place Service for 2022/23 as at Quarter 2;
- ii. **NOTED** the current forecasts for the major projects in the Communities and Place Service; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the proposed visit to the new Inverness Waste Transfer Station be extended to all Members.

**7. Implementing the requirements of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 (the Act) in Highland
A' Buileachadh riatanasan Achd Bathar Fala-mìos (Solar An-asgaidh) (Alba) 2021 anns a' Ghàidhealtachd**

Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test and reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No CP/21/22 dated 24 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- inclusivity was of utmost importance and information was sought, and provided, as to what work was being done to improve LGBT+ inclusivity – ie those whose gender identity might not align to where period products were being made available;
- the implementation of the Act was warmly welcomed and thanks were expressed to officers for their efforts;
- the cost of living crisis had made it difficult for many people to survive, and period products were an expensive necessity;
- there was a piece of work to be done in terms of identifying where period products were being distributed – eg Trussel Trust gave out free products through their

foodbanks, and Highland Third Sector Interface had been distributing donations to groups such as tenants' groups. In that regard, it was suggested that it would be helpful for an officer to attend the next meeting of the Highland Poverty Action Network;

- given recent incidences of vandalism, making free period products available in public conveniences was not considered viable; and
- as menstruation became more normalised, more shops, restaurants, cafes and other businesses had period products freely available.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the arrangements that had been made to provide free period products in Highland;
- ii. **NOTED** the results of the community consultation on free period products in Highland;
- iii. **NOTED** the actions agreed by the Partnership Steering Group to further develop provision in Highland, based upon the consultation feedback; and
- iv. **AGREED** and adopted the Statement on Exercise of Functions found at Appendix 1 of the report.

8. Update on Service Enhancements from Visitor Management Plan Funding Cunntas às Ùr mu Leasachaidhean Seirbheis bho Mhaoineachadh Plana Stiùiridh Luchd-tadhail

There had been circulated Report No CP/22/22 dated 27 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Access Rangers dealt with thousands of people each year, addressing issues such as informal camping, littering, barbecue fires etc and, given they were only funded for one year, a call was made to bear the important work they did in mind when considering future funding. The Chair confirmed that Access Rangers came under the remit of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee and undertook to ensure Members' comments were relayed to the relevant Chair and Executive Chief Officer;
- information was sought, and provided, as to whether the role of Visitor Management Operatives was similar to that of Countryside Rangers as there appeared to be a degree of overlap between them;
- the comfort schemes in Skye had been warmly welcomed during the busy tourist season. Communities themselves were taking over toilets, and new toilets were being built in Elgol and Broadford. Local costs were sought so support for comfort schemes could be provided at a local level, through disaggregated budgets, if other budgets were unavailable;
- while providing toilet facilities was not a statutory obligation of the Council, the provision of the service was welcomed and it was important the public knew that these facilities were well used and valued;
- it was questioned, given pressure on budgets, if there was an opportunity for the comfort scheme to be increased and how communities could be involved; and
- there had been a degree of anti-social behaviour in toilets throughout Highland which had resulted, in some instances, in high repair costs. This was not sustainable and other more innovative and sustainable solutions were needed.

- CCTV was an important tool, and it was important cameras were functioning and focused on the buildings in question. The Amenity Services Manager undertook to check with colleagues in the Economy and Infrastructure Service that CCTV cameras were fully functioning. When, and how, the Police could be informed of incidents was also explained; and
- there were no comfort scheme facilities in Thurso, which was a cause of concern, and it was confirmed that the possibility of providing a comfort scheme until the Council public conveniences re-opened could be explored.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the Visitor Management Plan was not recurring funding;
- NOTED** the investment in public conveniences and waste services would be fully committed this year;
- NOTED** the enhanced public convenience service with 75 Council operated facilities, with infrastructure improvements for 40 facilities, 16 new comfort scheme providers now taking the total to 53, and support for 2 community groups running portaloos;
- NOTED** any new funding streams would be pursued;
- NOTED** a number of the Council's 3-year comfort scheme contracts would be renewed in April 2023 and seasonal providers would form part of that review to ensure footfall and geographical coverage was reflected within the current budget;
- AGREED** that the local costs in respect of the provision of comfort schemes be provided; and
- AGREED** that the possibility of providing a comfort scheme in Thurso until the Council public conveniences re-opened be explored.

10. Service Points and Connected Customer Update Ionadan-Seirbheis agus Cunntas às Ùr mu Luchd-cleachdaidh Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No CP/24/22 dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- tribute was paid to staff for the particularly hard work carried out during the Covid pandemic;
- by co-locating services, Service Point opening hours could be extended and provide greater customer access in the evening and at weekends. This could go further, and examples were cited of Citizens Advice Bureaux elsewhere providing Service Point functions;
- it was important to respond to the needs of the community and create a more modern and dynamic service. The Redesign Board's review of Service Points would, it was hoped, look at different ways of providing the service to fit in better with people's lifestyles;
- partner agencies could be invited to Service Points to provide advice, NHS Highland providing information on falls prevention being cited as an example;
- Service Points were vital, providing face-to-face contact and maintaining connectivity between the Council and communities, and the Service Point network should be grown;
- there was a distinction between rural and urban Service Points as the challenges, such as transport, were different;

- some communities felt that they were not being consulted and/or listened to and it was suggested they be involved in the review;
- whilst there was a strong emphasis on digitalising Council services, this did not work for those who did not have internet access and for the more complex enquiries;
- some had felt disconnected to the Council as phone calls had gone unanswered. This had improved as staff returned to offices but it was important that this means of contact was included in the review; and
- a lot of younger people did not like using the phone and preferred to use tools such as webchat. Webchat was more resource efficient and would be used by people with hearing or speech impairments or those who suffered from anxiety.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the update on the opening hours across the Council's Service Point network; and
- ii. the outline of the recently agreed Connected Customers and Digitisation Redesign Board review.

11. Update on Waste Strategy Cunntas às Ùr mu Ro-innleachd Sgudail

There had been circulated Report No CP/25/22 dated 28 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- splitting the recycling from paper and cardboard and other recyclates would involve another bin, resulting in some households having four bins;
- separating the recycling further would improve the quality and value of the recycling and reduce climate impact;
- if the bid to the Scottish Government Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) was successful, it was questioned whether it would cover the entire cost of bin upgrades and replacements or if there would be costs that would fall to the Council. In response, it was confirmed the RIF would cover all the capital costs but there would, looking forward, be some revenue implications for the Council;
- the reduced size of the residual waste bins might not be sufficient for some, particularly those with large families or specific medical needs, and it was hoped that the present discretionary approach would continue in such circumstances;
- information was sought, and provided, as to what would happen to the existing general waste bins;
- the change to daily time restrictions in relation to access to Household Waste Recycling Centres by small vans and trailers was welcomed;
- to reach a recycling centre for those living in the south of Skye or Lochalsh involved over a 100 mile trip and, bearing in mind the cost of petrol and diesel and the cost of living crisis, it was suggested that a recycling facility be provided at Council depots in Broadford and Dornie, even if it was only one or two days each month. Otherwise, some householders might not be able to recycle and this could result in an increase in fly tipping;
- extending the opening hours of the Gairloch and Ullapool recycling centres to weekends enabled some residents to use the facilities who would not otherwise be able to do so, and this was to be encouraged. It was important, in terms of equality, that all were able to access this key Council service and a commitment

- was sought, and provided, that the review of opening hours would include options relating to weekend access;
- it was questioned how the public would respond to a less frequent collection service, but it was pointed out householders would still have a weekly bin collection but it would be a collection of different matter. In this regard, it was also confirmed that the same vehicle could be used for each weekly collection;
 - it was hoped that the proposals would also reduce waste and encourage repair and re-use;
 - information was sought, and provided, as to how the public would be encouraged and informed of what could now be included in recycling bins and the reasons for the change;
 - in response to a query, whilst it was hoped that some of the recycling collection vehicles would be electric, it was difficult to say at this point if it would be economically viable;
 - investing in resources to extend what could be recycled, such as various types of batteries, lightbulbs and tyres, was encouraged; and
 - clarification was sought as to the reasons why some DIY materials could not be taken to recycling centres in trailers or vans and whether some form of declaration could be included whereby householders could confirm that it was non-commercial. However, in response, it was explained that restrictions had been required as a result of costly unnecessary unlawful commercial use of recycling centres.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the submission of a bid to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund for capital costs connected to the implementation of service changes aligned to the Household Waste Recycling Charter;
- iii. **NOTED** the changes in Household Waste Recycling Centre restrictions from December 2022 and that the outcomes from the review of opening hours would be considered by Members in early 2023; and
- iv. **NOTED** the updated position on Waste Transfer Station infrastructure in Aviemore, Inverness and Fort William.

12. Minutes of the Waste Strategy Working Group Geàrr-chunntas Buidheann Obrach Ro-innleachd Sgudail

The Minutes of the Waste Strategy Working Group held on 20 October 2022 were **APPROVED**.

13. Urgent Additional Item: Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies: Revised Proposals Ath-sgrùdadh de Roinnean-Pàrlamaid na RA: Molaidhean Ath-sgrùdaichte

In line with Standing Order 8, the Chair had agreed that this item be considered as an urgent item of business given the impending deadline (5 December) for responses to the Boundary Commission for Scotland's Revised Proposals relating to the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies

Transparency Statement: Mrs J Hendry made a Transparency Statement to the effect that she had a connection to this item in that a family member was currently the Member of Parliament for the Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and

Strathspey constituency. However, having applied the objective test, she did not consider she had an interest to declare as the Council was being asked to make comments within a consultation period, after which the Boundary Commission would present their recommendations on future constituency boundaries to the UK Government by July 2023. At this moment in time, any future Westminster election was not confirmed as changed.

There had been circulated Report No CP/26/22 dated 11 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members unanimously rejected the proposals and highlighted the following issues:-

- if the boundary proposals proceeded as laid out in the report four Council Wards would be split, namely, Wards 5, 12, 17 and 21. This would result in communities being divided and confusion. The example given was where a UK Government Fund was available for the Fort William area, the MP for Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber would only be able to represent the area of Kinlochleven southwards. They would consequently have to liaise with the neighbouring MP for Inverness-shire and Wester Ross for Fort William. Neighbouring MPs might have different values, priorities and political viewpoints. Furthermore, if a Councillor from one of these four Wards needed to contact their local MP for advice or help they would need to check which MP it was;
- Lochaber generally spoke with a unified voice and any move to split the area would diminish it;
- local families on either side of a village, with welfare issues could have very different outcomes as a result of contacting two different MPs;
- an election would need cross boundary co-operation with Argyll and Bute and Moray Councils leading to more staffing time and expense to Highland Council and more information as to the resource implications was sought, and provided;
- these proposals reduced the number of elected representatives, thus increasing the democratic deficit that remote communities already experienced;
- placing large parts of Highland into Argyll and Bute and Moray Council areas was unacceptable as there was no community association with these areas and with many wanting to remain as highlanders;
- localism had not been taken into account or of what people saw as already established communities. There needed to be a better understanding of Highland and what Highland communities expected;
- there were political ramifications from these proposals;
- the consultation period was relatively short and would mean that some Community Councils would not have had time to consider the proposals and to respond. Highland Council had issued a Press Release to encourage communities to participate;
- the proposed Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross constituency was so large it would take up nearly half of the Highland Council area and it was questioned how an MP would be able to engage with constituents in such a large area;
- similarly, the Inverness-shire and Wester Ross constituency included Ullapool and Cradlehall – two very different communities considerably far apart – while Cradlehall and Culloden, which did have local ties, were in two different constituencies. Families and friends who shared local facilities such as schools, play parks etc would find themselves in two different constituencies, just so electorate numbers could be balanced;

- rather than splitting communities, constituency boundaries should use natural features such as rivers or open countryside;
- Skye would be in the Inverness-shire and Wester Ross constituency and yet there was no mention of it and the terminology would appear to refer to previous historical names;
- Highland should be treated similarly to the Islands as it had its own distinct character and culture which needed to be maintained;
- Highland wasn't as densely populated as cities but it would appear the same rules had been applied;
- the Boundary Commission's principles were recognition of community ties, regard of special geographical considerations where appropriate, consideration of local geography (such as transport links, other electoral and administrative boundaries and natural features), not crossing a Council area boundary and minimising any disruption caused by boundary changes; and
- while criticising the proposals, it was important that the integrity of the Boundary Commission was not attacked.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the revised proposals detailed in section 8 and Appendices A-D of the report;
- ii. **AGREED** to reject the proposals on the basis that they did not follow the Boundary Commission's own criteria of respecting natural geographical, Electoral Ward and community boundaries and that the current constituency boundaries should remain;
- iii. **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Executive Chief Officer for Performance and Governance to draft a response, which would be circulated to all Members for information and homologated at Full Council, based upon the debate and outcome at Committee; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Council Leader lobby Highland MPs and the Secretary of State for Scotland to reject the Commission's proposals.

The meeting concluded at 2.50 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Housing and Property Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on **Thursday 17 November 2022** at 10.30 am.

Present:

Ms S Atkin	Mr A Jarvie (remotely)
Mr M Baird (substitute)	Mrs I Mackenzie
Mr B Boyd (remotely)	Mr R MacKintosh
Mr R Bremer (remotely)	Mrs A MacLean
Mr I Brown	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr C Munro
Mr L Fraser (remotely)	Mrs M Paterson
Mr R Gale (substitute)	Mr K Rosie (remotely)

Non-Members also present:

Mr C Birt	Ms T Collier
Mr A Christie	Mr P Oldham

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, Service Lead - Policy and Performance, Housing and Property
Mr R Campbell, Estates Strategy Manager, Housing and Property
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance
Ms O Bayon, 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 A Graham, Mrs J McEwan and Mr A Rhind.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:-

Item 6: Mr L Fraser
General: Mrs S Atkin

3. **Good News** **Naidheachdan Matha**

The Committee **NOTED** the following good news:

- **Catering Service. Employee of the Year Award:** on the 27 September 2022 Croy Primary School Cook, Anja Fuglestad, won the Employee of the Year Award at this year's Scottish School Food Awards;
- **Design Team. First class honours in BEng Programme Engineering (Design & Manufacture):** Dylan Nairn from the Property team recently graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University. He started on a Modern Apprenticeship with the Highland Council in 2018 and had progressed into an Engineer position in the Design Section within Property Services; and
- **Ness Hydro Project:** at the British Construction Industry Awards on 12 October 2022, the Hydro Ness Project won the Small Project of the year. In addition, The Council was one of 12 organisations across Scotland to be praised for its planet protecting efforts and had been recognised at the 2022 VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards. The Hydro Ness team was presented with the Engaging Scotland Award at the recent ceremony.

The Chair commended all staff who had promoted the Highlands with these significant achievements.

4. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Non-HRA Budget Monitoring Statement to 30 September 2022** **Aithris Sgrùdaidh Buidseat Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais agus Neo-thaigheadais gu 30 Sultain 2022**

There had been circulated Report No HP/14/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an assurance was sought and provided that the position with non-essential repairs would be kept under constant review and reported in the Q3 monitoring report to the Committee in January 2023. The HRA Revenue Estimates for 2023/24 would also be considered by the Committee in January at which Members would be invited to make decisions around the future management of the HRA;
- whether a review of garage sites and vacant garages was to be carried out with a view to disposal if not required as part of the Council's portfolio. It was confirmed that garages was a delegated function to Area Committees and that the position in Sutherland and communication with local Members would be reviewed;
- the Housing & Property Team be commended on their response to the challenges presented by the rising cost of materials and issues with recruitment;
- how expenditure on the HRA would be managed given that it was funded entirely by rental income from tenants and that a balanced budget had to be maintained. It was noted that consultation with tenants would commence in the

near future on the options for rents in the next financial year. A balance was required in terms of the affordability issues for tenants set against the investment requirements of the housing stock;

- the difficult issues around recruitment faced by the Service, noting this was reliant on the labour market within the construction industry and the rates the Council was able to offer compared to the private sector, and therefore the importance of the Council growing its own workforce. The successful apprentice programme within the Building Maintenance Team was highlighted in this regard, details of which would be shared with Members; and
- confirmation was sought and provided that a more detailed report would be brought to the Committee in due course on the Council's strategic approach to improving energy efficiency in its housing stock and in moving towards net zero targets.

The Committee:

- i **APPROVED** the budget position on the Housing Revenue Account and non-Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 for the period to 30 September 2022; and
- ii **AGREED** to spend non-essential housing repairs in order to address the projected overspend within the current year.

5. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September 2022**

Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais gu 30 Sultain 2022

There had been circulated Report No HP/15/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an update was sought and provided on the slippage shown on the heating/energy efficiency and external fabric budgets. This was due to problems within the construction industry with works taking longer than previously, and either no or higher than anticipated returns being received that did not constitute best value. It was planned to progress all projects next year, and the position would continue to be monitored with regular reports back to Committee;
- the Council's new build programme and the process for making decisions on the mix of housing provided. It was explained the new build programme was subject to the Strategic Housing Investment Programme, to be presented to the Committee early in 2023. The Housing Development Hub which comprised the Council and a range of partners worked together to consider the best mix of houses on individual sites;
- the organisation 'Age Friendly Communities' sought to promote inter-generational communities where people of all ages were able to live healthy and active later lives and it was hoped the first of such communities in Scotland could be in the Highlands. It was confirmed that further information would be sought on this matter, including the views of tenants;
- it was important there was also a focus on young people who experienced difficulties in accessing housing in the area;
- reference was made to the option to source external contractors from further afield who were willing to travel to and undertake works in Highland at a lower cost than could be done locally;

- there were significant opportunities for heating homes and energy efficiency in the Highlands which should be explored such as hydrogen, and the need to ensure alternatives were financially affordable and sustainable;
- in terms of recruitment, there were real opportunities for the Council through a commitment to work with other agencies to explore and create opportunities to grow talent in the Highlands and make progress with addressing the skills gap.

The Committee **APPROVED** the budget position on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Monitoring Report.

6. Property & Facilities Management Services Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2022

Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Sheirbheisean Rianachd Cuid-seilbh & Ghoireasan gu 30 Sultain 2022

Transparency Statement: Mr 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.

There had been circulated Report No HP/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the measures that could be considered to reduce the cost of utility consumption across the Council and High Life Highland if behavioural change could not be achieved. It was explained that consideration was ongoing as to how to drive behavioural change to reduce costs and there was need for a thematic discussion on this issue, with Members input, outwith the meeting;
- clarification was sought and provided on the number and roles of the fee earning staff vacancies and the reasons this continued to have a negative impact on the Service achieving its annual income targets;
- the condition of the Council's depots and the impact of current financial climate and demands on the Capital Programme on the ability to improve the working conditions for employees and ensure the best use of workspace. It was noted the Council in shaping the Capital Programme going forward had to consider the balance between investing in its existing assets and building new assets in relation to its depots and other non-housing stock; and
- the Redesign Board was considering workstreams in relation to asset rationalisation of buildings and depots and this included public sector co-location.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. that based on the best available information to date, a service budget gap of £1.546m to the end of 2022/23 was presently forecast. This was an increasing budget gap since the Q1 monitoring report where a budget gap of £1.261m was being projected;

- ii. 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;
- iii. the progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery; and
- iv. that further adjustments would be made in future quarterly reporting to reflect the updated apportionment of costs across the new Service structure.

7. Property Capital Monitoring Statement and Progress Update Aithris Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seilbhe agus Cunntas às Ùr air Adhartas

There had been circulated Report No HP/17/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

An update on Thurso High School was provided during which Members were advised that a decision on whether to refurbish or demolish Block A at the School would be taken once the costs had been established. Blocks B and C had been surveyed with no structural defects having been found. Survey work would be carried out on other concrete frame buildings of a similar construction across the Council's estate to give reassurance.

Members were advised that due to ongoing challenges with sub-contractor availability, the new Ness Castle Primary School building would now be handed over to the Council in December 2022. To provide for a smooth transition and taking account of the festive period, it had been decided to open the School to pupils on 27 February 2023. Parents would be advised of the revised opening date and weekly updates would be provided to the stakeholder group on progress.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the other schools of a similar construction and age to Thurso High School and confirmation they were subject to a regular inspection regime. These buildings had a 60 year design life and it had been highlighted by the Service that Thurso High School could be taken forward as part of the future LEIP funding bids. However, there were serious challenges in regard to the capital available to replace these buildings as was the case with the Council's depots;
- officers be thanked for their swift and professional response to the situation at Thurso High School and Members looked forward to further engagement once the surveys had been included and a conclusion reached on the way forward;
- Thurso High School was older than its design lifespan of 60 years and therefore it could be expected that this type of problems might unfold. There was a need for the Council to work in partnership with external stakeholders including the Northern Hub and the private sector and to be innovative in exploring possible solutions. The Chair advised that the points raised would be picked as part of the review of the Capital Plan; and
- an announcement on the outcome of the bidding process was expected before the end of December 2022 for LEIP Phase 3 funding and this might have an impact on the Capital Programme going forward. It was cautioned this was revenue funding for ongoing running costs and the Council would still require to borrow the capital costs of constructing the buildings.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the position for the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year, and the estimated year-end position;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress made with the projects referred to in the report;
- iii. **AGREED to HOMOLOGATE** the decision taken to retain and convert the modular classroom unit at Bun-Sgoil Shlèite; and
- iv. **NOTED** the current situation at Thurso High and that a further verbal update would be provided at the Committee meeting.

8. **Housing Performance Report** **Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No HP/18/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

In discussion, the Service's staff were commended on their hard work in achieving the performance levels set out in the report.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2021 – 30 September 2022.

9. **Review of Rent Arrears Management Policy** **Ath-sgrùdadh air Poileasaidh Fiachan Màil**

There had been circulated Report No HP/19/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- due to the cost of living crisis many tenants were already in arrears with the potential for those arrears to escalate and the action that would be taken if tenants were unable to maintain payments to prevent them becoming homeless;
- in regard to the above, reference was made to the importance of early engagement between tenants and officers so that support could be provided. There was also support for tenants available through the Council's Welfare Team in relation to income maximisation, and the Move on Project. Reasonable repayment packages would be accepted from tenants and the Council was one of the best performing local authorities for sustaining tenancies and the aim was to maintain this standard going forward;
- the Council's record in relation to the low number of evictions demonstrated the level of engagement and support provided to tenants in arrears and the staff be commended on their work in this regard;
- an offer be made to all new tenants to have an income maximisation meeting with the Council's Welfare Team, CABx or other money advice agencies to discuss budgeting and financial management. It was confirmed that discussions would be held with the Head of Revenues & Customer Services on the improvements that could be made to the Council's current new tenancy sign up arrangements; and

- clarification was sought and provided that the Tenant Participation and Engagement report below highlighted the need to improve relationships with other partner agencies in terms of referrals. The experience with locally based money advice workshops would be evaluated and consideration given to other outreach work that could be undertaken.

The Committee **NOTED** the ongoing support provided by the Housing Service to tenants struggling to pay their rent during the “cost of living” crisis.

10. **Tenant Participation and Engagement Update** **Ath-sgrùdadh air Com-pàirteachas is Gníomhan Ceangail Luchd-màil**

There had been circulated Report No HP/20/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- appreciation was expressed to the Tenant Participation Team for their diligent work and Members commended the organic growth of tenant groups;
- the Tenant Participation Team was commended for reaching out and engaging with tenants who had found it difficult to contact the Council. It was highlighted that often tenant groups were very happy with the outcome of Rate Your Estate works as they felt listened to and involved in the process. Each project could positively affect people’s lives and empowered them to make further improvements through collaborative working;
- it was queried if tenant participation meetings would fully return to face-to-face meetings as this was seen as more beneficial for interaction rather than online sessions;
- it was suggested that Members seek out their local tenant participation meetings and make efforts to join them to engage with tenants and become more knowledgeable. It was further suggested that there be more engagement with young people at tenant participation meetings;
- although digital communications were welcome, there was a need to include alternative methods as well;
- it was requested tenant participation outcomes be presented at ward business meetings;
- clarification was sought and provided on how the Council engaged with tenants or residents at properties which appeared to be empty or clearly unmaintained;
- appreciation was expressed for the Council’s early intervention work with tenants as this was seen as vital work;
- the three tenants that were representatives in Tenant Participation groups at a national level were commended; and
- further information was sought on which wards had a tenant participation group and how groups were established. A request was also made for local Members to be notified with any action points.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the ongoing progress in improving tenant participation in Highland.

**11. Homelessness and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
Cunntas às Ùr mu Chion-dachaigh: Plana Eadar-ghluasaid Luath gu Taigh Eile**

There had been circulated Report No HP/**21**/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the Council was not building enough new developments containing 3 and 4 bedroom properties to house larger families living in temporary accommodation and further information was sought and provided on how this could be addressed as demand for these types of properties was rising. However, it was highlighted that Appendix 1 to the report indicated that 90% of all homeless applicants required a 1 or 2 bedroom house;
- it was confirmed that the 120 empty properties under review referred to at paragraph 9.2 of the report was a Highland wide figure. Further information was sought on when these properties would be brought back into use;
- it was queried if any lobbying was being undertaken of the Scottish Government's newly established Prevention Review Group regarding the duties being placed on local authorities in respect of homeless prevention and whether these responsibilities could be shared with housing associations;
- it was queried what impact the changes to Local Connection in Homelessness Legislation would have on the Council;
- further information was sought and provided on whether the non-violent disputes, referred to at 4.6 of Appendix 1 to the report, was mostly due to family relationship breakdowns;
- the success of the Move on Project, particularly in regard to reducing arrears, was commended and it was hoped that this approach would be expanded; and
- Housing officers and their teams were praised for their hard work in dealing with homeless cases and the support they provided. Further information and detail regarding the reasons for homelessness was requested in order to help prevent homelessness in the first instance.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** progress on the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and actions undertaken to mitigate homelessness in Highland;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Annual Update of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report for submission to the Scottish Government; and
- iii. **AGREED** amendments to the Homelessness Appeals Process as detailed in the report.

The meeting was closed at 12.51pm.