

AGENDA ITEM 11

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 Siggers
Ms K Willis

Officials in Attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber), Communities and Place
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
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
Foillseachaidhean 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.