

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on 14 August 2023 at 10.30 am.

### **Present:**

Mr G MacKenzie  
Mrs A MacLean

Mrs M Paterson

### **In attendance:**

#### **Business**

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager

Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager

Mr I Moncrieff, Area Roads Operations Manager

Mr B Cameron, Service Lead (Housing Policy & Performance), Housing and Property

Miss J MacLennan, Joint Democratic Services Manager, Performance and Governance

### **Also in attendance:**

Inspector R Ross, Area Inspector, Police Scotland

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

### **Mr G MacKenzie in the Chair**

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

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr S Kennedy.

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

There were no Declarations of Interests/Transparency Statements.

#### **3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaìdh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2023 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee.

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

There had been circulated Report No DSA/11/23 dated 10 August 2023 by the Area Commander, Police Scotland. Key points were highlighted and Members' attention was drawn to performance data with comparisons made to previous years. However, a note of caution was expressed that it would take

some time before accurate comparisons could be made as a result of the COVID pandemic.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the Chair was pleased to report that Rob Shepherd, the new Highland and Islands Divisional Commander, was to brief all Members on 23 August 2023. Many issues affecting Police Scotland could only be addressed nationally so questions for Mr Shepherd were being sought in advance;
- the budget cuts in Police Scotland affected everyone;
- a particular area in Dingwall had been a source of complaints about groups of people meeting but, due to the intervention of Police Scotland, this problem had reduced and Members expressed their appreciation for this;
- where there was an increased police presence in specific areas, Local Members should be informed so that they were in a position to respond to any queries;
- concern was expressed as to what might happen in the Autumn and Winter and it was important Police Scotland continued to work with partners to protect the most vulnerable;
- anti-social behaviour had seen a slight increase and information was sought as to what areas were affected. It was also important to highlight that instances could be reported to Crimestoppers, the role of which was outlined;
- in response to a query it was explained that there was no specific time period before a missing person could be reported. Each instance was considered in the context of their circumstances;
- there was an on-going review of the Police estate and Dingwall Police Station would be included as part of that;
- it was disappointing that the Driving Ambition initiative was not part of Operation CEDAR;
- although there had not been an increase, cuckooing was still taking place, and anyone with concerns should approach Police Scotland, Social Work Services and the Harm Prevention Officer;
- Rural Watch was important as a number of farms had had property stolen; and
- Inspector Ross was invited to the next Ward Business Meeting to discuss issues in more detail.

The Chair having emphasised the full support of Highland Council for Police Scotland, the Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 3, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

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

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

- i. Dingwall Community Development Company – Study into Creation of Allotments in Dingwall - £100
- ii. Maryburgh Community Council – Maryburgh in Bloom Project - £400
- iii. The Neil Gunn Trust – Neil Gunn Writing Competition 2023 - £650
- iv. Dingwall Community Council – Dingwall in Bloom Project - £1,500
- v. Black Isle Farmers’ Society – Black Isle Show 2023 - £600
- vi. Ross County Foundation – public access defibrillator - £787
- vii. The Muir of Ord Hub – room hire for accessible streets project - £120

In this regard, it was questioned when the Neil Gunn Writing Competition was to take place.

**6. Dingwall Common Good Fund – 2023/24 Quarter One Monitoring Report  
Maoin Math Choitcheann Inbhir Pheofharain – Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cairteil a h-Aon 2023/24**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/12/23 dated 25 July 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer - Communities and Place/Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

The Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the position of Dingwall Common Good Fund as shown in 2023/24 Quarter One Monitoring Statement.

**7. Ross & Cromarty Educational Trust Report  
Aithisg Urras Foghlaim Rois is Chromba**

The Committee **NOTED** that this report had already been discussed at the Committee’s last meeting on 22 May 2023.

**8. Winter Service Plan for 2023/24  
Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2023/24**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/14/23 dated 25 July 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- although the Winter Service Plan was broadly in line with last year’s, more houses had been built resulting in a greater requirement for gritting;
- Members sought information surrounding the number of staff, their age profile and what succession planning was in place;
- a map detailing where grit bins were located was requested;
- information was sought as to where vehicles and plant were located;
- ideally plant should be fully utilised but this was not always achievable;
- constituents had also raised concerns regarding flooding and problems after heavy rainfall and there needed to be a communication strategy in place to ensure that they were kept informed about progress;
- Members asked to be kept informed when the Pothole Pro was to be used in the Dingwall and Seaforth Ward;

- the resurfacing of Jubilee Park Road was commended and had made a huge difference, not just to the football stadium but to the Caravan Park as well;
- calls were made for additional resources to be allocated to the Dingwall and Seaforth Ward given the level of traffic in Dingwall;
- when potholes reached a certain point, they could no longer be patched and needed to be included in the Capital Programme; and
- Local Members wished to take time to view all the roads to enable a comparison to be made and to then prioritise which roads needed attention first.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2023/24; and
- ii. **AGREED** a grit bin map be circulated to the Committee.

## 9. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee held on 22 May 2023 which were approved by the Council on 29 June 2023.

The meeting ended at 11.35 am