

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Black Isle Committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 15 August 2023 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Ms S Atkin
Ms L Johnston

Ms M MacCallum

In attendance:

Mr B Cameron, Interim Head of Housing and Building Maintenance
Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manger
Mr C Sharp, Repairs Manager (North)
Mr M Greig, Ward Manager (Inverness)
Mr D Martin, Area Education & Learning Manager
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager
Mr A Coyle, Corporate Comms & Engagement Officer
Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer
Mr A Coyle, Corporate Communications and Engagement Officer
Ms J Wileman, Assistant Ward Manager
Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

R Ross, Police Scotland
P Young, 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

The Committee expressed their appreciation to Ms Diane Agnew, former Ward Manager for her hard work preparing the Common Good Fund reports and for all her excellent work over the years and wished her well in her retirement.

1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2023 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Black Isle Committee.

4. Police – Area Performance Report Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No BI/7/23 dated 10 August 2023 by the Area Commander (North Highland Area Command).

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- Members thanked Mr R Ross for the Police report, including the visual graphs;
- Members were informed that Chief Inspector Scott Macdonald had retired and Stuart Fitzpatrick had been appointed as Acting Chief Inspector in the interim;
- it was queried if the Police felt the rollout of 20mph zones across Highland had improved driver behaviour and reduced speeding offences;
- it was disappointed and saddening to note the increase in drink and drug driving offences;
- reassurance was sought on how break-ins would be dealt with moving forward taking into consideration the reduction of Police resources in the Black Isle;
- in terms of missing persons, it was queried how many missing adults had conditions such as dementia or if it was a case of persons simply not wanting to be found;
- regarding sexual offenses, it was queried what grades of offenses were encompassed within the overall statistics for Black Isle;
- as there had been an increase in stalking cases, information was sought, and provided, on what proactive steps persons could take to protect themselves and what action to take. In this regard, the Police definition of stalking was requested;
- it was queried if the Police had a strategic approach towards certain hotspot areas of reported anti-social behaviour;
- information was sought, and provided, on whether the CEDAR approach was engaged only after persons had committed an offense;
- it was queried how prevalent knife crime and county lines were on the Black Isle; and
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that the PREVENT strategy was specific to counter-terrorism and would not include other issues such as misogyny. In this regard, misogyny would be included under a Police Scotland strategy in relation to violence against women and girls.

The Committee **NOTED** the 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 01 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

5. Black Isle Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since 31 January 2023 Iarrtasan Buidseit fo Ùghdarras Uàird an Eilein Duibh air an Aontachadh bho 31 Faoilleach 2023

The Committee **NOTED**;

i. that the following Black Isle Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since 31 January 2023:-

- Culbokie Primary School - Play and Enquiry in Learning - £1,500
- Culbokie Community Trust Ltd - Health & Safety work on Culbokie Green - £1,500
- Ferintosh CC - Community Resilience - Maintenance of Landscaped Areas beside B9169 in heart of Culbokie IR Amenities - £250
- Cromarty Community Development Trust - Cromarty Campsite – £2,998
- Fortrose Academy Parent Council - Duke of Edinburgh Awards Expedition - £1,000
- Chanonry Sailing Club SCIO - Quest to Develop: Purchase of two RS Quest Sailing Dinghies - £500
- Knockbain Community Council - North Kessock Underpass Community Artwork & Youth Competition - £2,300
- Highland Rugby Club - Under 16 Legacy Tour to Italy in October 2023 - Multi Ward - Lead Officer Mark Greig - £400
- First Scottish Searching Services - Legal Report Munloch Tennis Court - £76

and;

ii. that the funding for the discretionary budget for the Ward would now only accept applications £1000 or under due to the limited remaining funds.

**6. Black Isle HRA Capital Programme Update and 2023-27 Programme
Cunntas às Ùr mu Phrògram Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais an Eilein Duibh agus Prògram 2023–27**

There had been circulated Report No BI/8/23 dated 3 August 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- Members thanked officers for the report and for their efforts in taking forward energy efficiency improvements to the Black Isle housing stock as keeping tenants warm was a major concern. Thanks were also expressed for assisting tenants with aids and adaptations;
- it was confirmed that the Black Isle Capital Programme would take a fabric first approach and include the upgrading of doors and windows. In this regard, the specific detail of the programme would be shared with Members at a Ward Business Meeting in due course;
- Members and officers acknowledged that costs within the construction industry had increased and this would impact on the HRA Capital Programme. Officers reassured Members that they would take efforts to deliver improvements as efficiently as possible and seek external funding where available to support the HRA investment; and
- it was hoped that an updated HRA Capital Programme would be submitted to the Housing and Property Committee within this financial year.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the update on the HRA Capital Programme at section 5 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the resources available to Black Isle at 6.6 paragraph of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed investment priorities in the HRA Capital Programme for Black Isle 2023-27 as set out in appendix 1 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the housing revenue account Capital Programme would continue to be provided through ward briefings and at future local committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to Housing and Property committee.

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

There had been circulated Report No BI/9/23 dated 24 July 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- as difficult to access grit bins were filled earlier in the season, it was queried if any were recorded as being empty or requiring to be topped up or would it take place on a request only basis;
- appreciation was conveyed to the roads team working out of Greenhill depot for their hard work despite limited resources and being a compact team;
- information was sought, and provided, why the Service hired a professional weather forecast provider;
- Members felt that 6 gritters and 5 footpath tractors were insufficient for the size geographical area being covered; and
- it was queried if the Roads Section had any staff vacancies which required to be backfilled at present.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2023/24.

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

**a. Cromarty Common Good Fund – Quarter One Monitoring Report
Maoin Math Coitcheann Chromba – Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cairteil a h-Aon**

There had been circulated joint Report No BI/10/23 dated 25 July 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- it had been established that the Cromarty Victoria Hall was not part of the Common Good Register and, as a result, clarification was sought on what this change would mean for the Hall, the Community Council and the Common Good Fund moving forward. In this regard, it was queried if the

local community could contest the decision or if the decision was viewed as non-negotiable; and

- an update was requested on East Hall, Cromarty as the Hall continued to be unused and the building appeared to be in decline.

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

b. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund – Quarter One Monitoring Report
Maoin Math Coitcheann na Cananaich agus Ros Maircnidh – Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cairteil a h-Aon

There had been circulated Joint Report No BI/11/23 dated 25 July 2023 by the Executive Chief Officers Communities and Place and Resources and Finance.

Members discussed 5.2 paragraph of the report concerning whether the high interest rates were being passed onto savings and investments to gain more interest payments. In this regard it was confirmed that an accountant from Corporate Finance would review the query and update Members in due course.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the position of Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund as shown in the 2023/24 Quarter One Monitoring Statement; and
- ii. **AGREED** that information would be sought from the Corporate Finance team regarding 5.2 paragraph of the report if high interest rates would be passed onto savings and investments to gain increased interest payments.

9. Ross & Cromarty Educational Trust Report
Aithisg Urras Foghlaim Rois & Chromba

There had been circulated Report No BI/12/23 dated 22 May 2023 by the Education & Learning Manager.

The award payments from The Ross & Cromarty Educational Trust Scheme were welcomed. It was confirmed that whilst there was no formal request for feedback on the awards, some individuals had made contact to communicate their personal appreciation on receiving an award.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to give delegated authority to the Area Education & Learning Manager to explore options to improve investment income.

10. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Black Isle Committee held on 31 January 2023 which were approved by the Council on 9 March 2023.

The meeting ended at 11:40 am