

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held remotely on Monday, 14 August, 2023 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr D Millar

Mr C Munro
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Mr G Smith, Service Lead – Infrastructure & Environment
Mr G Macdonald, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure & Environment
Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Ms M Gray, Project Officer Community Regeneration, Infrastructure & Environment
Mr A MacInnes, Interim Senior Committee Officer, Performance & Governance

Also in attendance:-

Mr T Lusink, Community Development Officer, Carbon Neutral Islands Project – Raasay
Ms R Macinnes, Community Development Officer, Carbon Neutral Islands Project - Raasay

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 J Finlayson in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were none.

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

Transparency Statement: Item 8 – Mr C Munro

**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 Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee.

**4. 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 22 May and 26 June, 2023 which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 29 June, 2023, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

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

There was circulated Report No SR/16/23 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland. The Senior Officer was unable to attend the meeting and Members were asked to consider the report and answers to any questions they had would be provided to Members after the meeting.

The following comments/questions were raised by Members:-

- in terms of Station availability, the data suggested that availability was good throughout the year but comments from local crews would say otherwise and clarity was sought on how accurate the Station availability data was;
- the Senior Officer be invited to an Area Business Meeting to give an update on any progress on the relocation of the Portree Station;
- in terms of the proposal to try and recommence flights from Broadford would this give more leverage to have a full time Station on Skye;
- there was a noticeable reduction of crew in Skye/Raasay over the last few years and perhaps a full time station providing careers in the Service would attract more people to join the Service. It was acknowledged that the Service was trying hard to recruit staff in the area;
- overall it was a positive report and particularly that the number of instances requiring a response was low. However, this did not negate the need to have good Station availability that was able to respond whenever it was needed; and
- the numbers of road traffic collisions (RTCs) in July and August, 2023 was sought. Also, Police Scotland would be asked to include in their next Performance Report to the Committee the number of RTCs that they had attended on Skye/Raasay in 2023.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report and that responses to questions raised at the meeting would be provided to Members following the meeting and should be included in the next Performance Report to Committee so that answers were a matter of public record.

6. **Infrastructure for Isle of Skye and Isle of Raasay Bun-structair airson an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair**

There was a presentation by the Service Lead, Infrastructure providing an update on key infrastructure for the Isle of Skye and Isle of Raasay. Updates were provided in relation to the Uig Ferry Terminal; Portree Link Road; Portree Harbour; Portree Cemetery Extension and the Small vessel replacement Programme for Sconser/Raasay.

Following the presentation, some of the main comments raised were as follows:-

- the works at Uig Ferry Terminal were progressing well and the work of both Council Officers and the private contractor, RJ Macleod on the project was commended. The community's forbearance during the construction period was acknowledged and it was hoped that there would be understanding from the public that the closure of the terminal at the end of the year to

allow a major stage on the project to be completed was necessary. Once completed the public would have a much improved and modern facility;

- in relation to the Uig Ferry terminal building, the contract had been re-tendered and the current completion date for the building was November, 2024. The Harbour works were due to be completed by August, 2024. In terms of the old terminal structure which would form part of the new terminal, it was queried if there were any concerns about the state of the old structure and that it would not compromise the new structure in any way;
- in terms of the Portree Link road, this would provide many advantages for the town, such as an alternative route for traffic rather than going through the centre of Portree. The land issues were nearly all complete, with only some decrofting of portions of land still to be approved and as there had not been any objections from the Crofters Commission to the new road, approval was expected;
- any investment in Portree Harbour was long overdue and would be welcomed by the community, particularly the businesses operating at the Harbour. Work on the programme to undertake repairs at the Harbour would commence once funding was confirmed;
- it was disappointing that progress was still required on the Portree Cemetery extension. The delay had resulted in costs being incurred by the Council and it was hoped that work on the extension could start soon. It was acknowledged that other communities were looking for cemetery extensions, such as Broadford, Skeabost and Dunvegan and work was ongoing on necessary cemetery extensions across Highland; and
- it was positive news that a new electric powered ferry was being considered for the Sconser to Raasay route.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation on key infrastructure for the Isle of Skye and Isle of Raasay.

7. Isle of Raasay Carbon Neutral Island – Community Climate Action Plan Eilean Ratharsair: Eilean Neodrach a thaobh Carboin – Plana-gnìomha Gnàth-shìde Coimhearsnachd

There was a presentation by Community Development Officers of the Carbon Neutral Islands Project on the Community Climate Action Plan; what the Carbon Neutral Island Project was; what that means for the Isle of Raasay; the work that had been done so far and what the project hopes to do going forward. The Isle of Raasay was one of six Islands that had been chosen for the Scottish Government's Carbon Neutral Islands project, to enable work so that Raasay and the other Islands could go carbon neutral by 2040, ahead of the rest of Scotland. The aim was to demonstrate the low carbon energy potential of Scotland's Islands as hubs of innovation of renewable energy and climate change resilience, whilst positively impacting on Island economies, population retention, growth and Islands based jobs.

Following the presentation, the main points raised in discussion were as follows:-

- the presentation highlighted the many challenges facing Raasay, which was replicated across many communities across Skye and Highlands;

- there was £160k of capital funding from the Scottish Government for the project this year and further funding would not be known until next year. Other sources of funding were continually being looked at so as not to be too reliant on Government funding. The Government funding would hopefully act as leverage to secure match funding from other sources;
- the partnership with Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association would hopefully enhance the housing stock across Raasay and Skye and also bring empty homes back into use. There was a significant challenge in providing energy efficient housing in order to meet net zero carbon neutral targets;
- the project fitted well with the Skye and Raasay Futures programme and its ambitions for the area;
- the majority of land on Raasay was Government owned with also Forestry Commission, Community and private crofts ownership. There should be potential to undertake projects given most of the land was Government owned;
- with the potential of an electric powdered ferry for the Sconser to Raasay route Calmac and CMAL had been contacted with the idea of supplying the electric power for the ferry through community renewable energy;
- it was encouraging that there had been consultation, audits and plans in place to meet the aims of the project; and
- work on repairs to the Community Hall was a priority for the Island and any financial support toward this would be very welcomed.

The Chair thanked the representatives from the Carbon Neutral Islands Project for their informative presentation, the impressive work that was being undertaken on Raasay, congratulations on the work undertaken so far and looked forward to a further update at a future meeting. Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation on the Community Climate Action Plan.

8. Community Regeneration Fund – Project Reports Maoin Ath-bheothachadh Coimhearsnachd – Aithisgean Pròiseict

Transparency Statement: Mr C Munro made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Trustee of a Trust that had previously received community regeneration funding. However, as this item was for information, Mr Munro wished to record a connection to the item but having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Ahead of the reopening of the Community Regeneration Fund, the Project Officer Community Regeneration, presented an update on projects supported by Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) in 2019-2023 on the Isle of Skye and Raasay. An update was also provided on the funds available in the upcoming round of funding.

Following the presentation, the following main points were raised:-

- The presentation showed the positive work happening across Skye and Raasay which was very encouraging. The CRF had made a huge difference to many communities in the area. The partnership working between Members and the CRF team was acknowledged

- 2 CRF projects from round 1 CRF had not yet commenced and it was requested that an update on these be provided at a future Area Business meeting. It was highlighted that these projects were being monitored by the CRF team, one of which had a shortfall in funding and the other was looking at match funding from various external sources.
- The match funding for some projects that had been achieved because of CRF was very positive and showed what could be achieved locally;
- The next round of CRF and the projects that would come forward for funding was welcomed. These projects would benefit the whole community in the area.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation on the Community Regeneration Fund projects and that an update would be provided at a future Area Business Meeting on 2 projects that had not yet commenced.

9. **Isle of Skye and Raasay Winter Maintenance Plan 2023/24** **Plana Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Ratharsair 2023/24**

There was circulated Report No. SR/17/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment, which detailed the 2023/24 Winter Service Plan for Isle of Skye and Raasay Area.

In particular, it was noted that the additional maps appended to the report would provide good information to the public on the primary, secondary routes and priorities for winter maintenance. Offering a community resilience scheme would provide a valuable additional winter maintenance resource in communities.

Continuing, the Route 10 Map did not show the Marishader to the Health Centre road as a secondary route and this would be corrected. Also, information would be provided to Councillor C Munro on why the Glenconon road was not a secondary route. It was also requested that a letter be sent to Bear Scotland seeking reassurance that Bear will fulfil their contractual obligation to provide winter maintenance on footpaths beside trunk roads in Portree, Broadford and Uig.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2023/24, subject to the Route 10 Map being corrected to show the Marishader to the Health Centre road as a secondary route;
- AGREED** that a letter be sent to Bear Scotland seeking reassurance that Bear will fulfil their contractual obligation to provide winter maintenance on footpaths beside trunk roads in Portree, Broadford and Uig; and
- NOTED** that information would be provided to Councillor C Munro on why the Glenconon road was not a secondary route.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward Discretionary Fund Grants for Ward 10 in the financial year 2023/24:-

Highlife Highland Skye & Lochalsh Archive Centre £500

Skye and Lochalsh Mental Health Association (2) £500
Skye Youth Pipe Band £1,000
Waternish Community Garden £500
Portree & Braes Community Trust £1,500
New Pads for Tigh na Sgìre Defibrillator £55

The meeting ended at 12.33 p.m.