

The Highland Council

**South Planning Applications
Committee**

Council Chamber, HQ, 4 October 2023, 10.30am

Minute / Action Note

Listed below are the decisions taken by Committee at their recent meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: <https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this action note.

Committee Members Present:

Mr C Aitken (remote)	Mr B Lobban
Mr C Ballance	Mr A MacDonald (remote)
Mr M Cameron (remote) (except item 6.2)	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr D Fraser	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr L Fraser (except 6.3)	Mr T MacLennan
Mr R Jones	Mr P Oldham

Substitutes:

Mr J Grafton (for Mrs L Siggers)
Mr D Macpherson (for Mr K Gowans)

Officers participating:

Mr D Mudie, Area Planning Manager – South (DM)
Mr P Wheelan, Strategic Projects Team Leader (PW)
Mr B Robertson, Team Leader (BR)
Mr K Gibson, Principal Planner (KG)
Mr M Fitzpatrick, Planner (MF)
Mr I Meredith, Acting Principal Solicitor
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Ms M Reid, Ms L Siggers	
		n/a
2	Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt None.	
		n/a
3	Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais	

	There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the action note and minute of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 August 2023 which was APPROVED .	n/a
4	Major Development Update Iartasan Mòra	
	There had been circulated Report No PLS/53/23 by the Area Planning Manager - providing an update on progress of all cases within the “Major” development category currently with the Infrastructure and Environment Service for determination. Attention was drawn to a formatting glitch which had caused some information to be entered twice in the report. The Committee NOTED the current position with the applications.	PW
5	Major Developments – Pre-application consultations Leasachaidhean Mòra – Co-chomhairle Ro-iarrtais	
5.1	Description: Development of site for new whisky distillery, blending centre, visitor centre, maturation warehousing, landscaping, site access and all associated infrastructure (23/02738/PAN) (PLS/054/23) Ward: 21 Applicant: Compass Box Whisky Site Address: Land 175M North East Of Roads Depot, Carrs Corner, Lochybridge, Fort William. Members emphasised the importance of appropriate pollution controls in relation to discharge into the estuary, though it was explained this was the responsibility of SEPA.	
	NOTED the application and AGREED Members’ comments would be provided to the applicant.	PW / DM
5.2	Description: Replacement of existing Aigas Substation (23/03651/PAN) (PLS/055/23) Ward: 12 Applicant: Lovat Estates Limited Site Address: Land 340M SW Of Balblair Quarry, Balblair, Beauly. It was clarified that the title of the report and item should have been ‘Installation of a 49.9 MW Battery Energy Storage System.’ Matters raised by Members included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noise levels, which would be considered by Environmental Health as part of the application process; • concerns about fire risks were expressed but were not currently a planning consideration, however national discussions were underway on adopting the approach used in England to consult with the Fire Service; and • it was hoped that the public consultations on 14 September and 2 October 2023 had gone ahead as planned. 	

	NOTED the application and AGREED Members' comments would be provided to the applicant.	PW /DM
6	Planning Applications to be Determined Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh	
6.1	<p>Applicant: Upland Developments Ltd (22/02306/PIP) (PLS/056/23) Location: Land 230M SW of The Ranch, Inshes, Inverness. (Ward 19) Nature of Development: Residential development of 165 houses and associated infrastructure. Recommendation: Grant.</p> <p>The applicant was Upland Developments Ltd, and not Davall Developments Ltd, as stated in the report.</p> <p>Questions and debate took place on a variety of issues including primary and secondary school capacity, expected numbers of children per house, school and public transport, the protection of ancient woodland, the possible loss of parking spaces, protecting biodiversity, community benefit, traffic to and from the development and its impact on the Inshes corridor, infrastructure issues, the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, the need for additional Affordable Housing in Inverness, and the recent removal of improvements to the Inshes roundabout from the Council's capital programme.</p>	
	Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report, and an amendment to Condition 13 to place an obligation on the developer to liaise with bus service providers to discuss the possibility and likelihood of providing bus services through the application site, including the design and implementation of any requisite infrastructure.	MF
6.2	<p>Applicant: Mr & Mrs Graham-Read/Mr & Mrs MacLennan/Mr & Mrs Eckersley (21/01593/PIP) (PLS/057/23) Location: Old Mill, Dores, Inverness, IV2 6TR. (Ward 12) Nature of Development: Demolition of Old Mill house and formation of 3 house plots Recommendation: Refuse.</p> <p>Mr T MacLennan, seconded by Mr L Fraser, moved to refuse the application as recommended.</p> <p>Mr D Fraser, seconded by Mr P Oldham, moved as an amendment, to approve the application on the basis that the site could accommodate 3 properties, and subject to appropriate conditions, including on the height and spacing of the houses, the wording of which to be delegated to Planning officials in consultation with local Members.</p> <p>On a vote being taken, there were 8 votes for the motion and 5 for the amendment, with no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>Motion: Mr A Aitken, Mr C Ballance, Mr L Fraser, Mr B Lobban, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Macpherson, Mr J Grafton</p> <p>Amendment: Mr D Fraser, Mr R Jones, Mr A MacDonald, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr P Oldham</p>	

	Agreed: to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.	KG
6.3	<p>Applicant: Boyd Brothers Haulage Ltd (22/05450/S42) (PLS/058/23)</p> <p>Location: Annat Pier, Corpach, Fort William PH33 7NB. (Ward 11)</p> <p>Nature of Development: Section 42 application to vary Condition 1 of planning permission 99/00458/FUL to allow berthing and disembarking of vessels on Sundays but maintain no operational use is allowed.</p> <p>Recommendation: Grant.</p> <p>During discussion, Members spoke in favour of the creation of a Community Liaison Group to facilitate communication between local residents, the community council, and all operators at and in the vicinity of Annat Pier.</p>	
	Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report.	DM
	The meeting ended at 2.10pm.	

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS
COMMITTEE

1 November 2023, 10.30AM

MINUTE / ACTION NOTE

Listed below are the decisions taken by Committee at their meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: <https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this action note.

Committee Members Present:

Ms S Atkin
Mr M Baird
Mr R Bremner
Ms I Campbell (Remote)
Ms T Collier (Remote)
Mr R Gale
Ms L Kraft
Mrs A MacLean
Ms J McEwan (Remote)
Mr D Millar
Mrs M Paterson
Mr M Reiss
Mr A Rhind
Mr K Rosie (Remote)
Ms M Smith

Non-Committee Members Present:

Substitutes:

Apologies:

Mr R Stewart

Officers participating:

Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager – North (DJ)
Mr M Harvey, Planning Team Leader (MH)
Mr M Kordas, Planner (MK)
Mr C Simms, Planner (CS)
Mr M Clough, Senior Engineer, Transport Planning (MC)
Ms R Banfro, Solicitor (Planning)
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan	
	Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mr R Stewart.	n/a
2	Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt	
	None.	n/a
3	Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais	
	There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the action note and minute of the meeting of the Committee held 12 September 2023 which was APPROVED .	n/a
4	Major Development Update Iarrtasan Mòra	
	<p>There had been circulated Report No PLN/001/23 by the Area Planning Manager - providing an update on progress of all cases within the “Major” development category currently with the Infrastructure and Environment Service for determination.</p> <p>Members’ attention was drawn to the application for the Distillery in Dornoch which had been considered and approved by the Committee at its previous meeting, it was confirmed that Scottish Ministers had advised that they wouldn’t call in the application so it would be approved in due course.</p> <p>During discussion information was sought and provided on the status of several applications in Muir of Ord and the Black Isle.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the current position with the applications.</p>	Peter Wheelan
5	Major Developments – Pre-application consultations Leasachaidhean Mòra – Co-chomhairle Ro-iarrtais	
5.1	<p>Description: Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm, Construction and operation of a wind farm, comprising 5 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation and ancillary infrastructure. (23/03842/PAN) (PLN/071/23)</p> <p>Ward: 10 – Eilean A’ Cheò</p> <p>Applicant: Wind Harvest Limited</p> <p>Site Address: Land 1600M NE Of Sumardale Croft, Struan.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the application.</p>	Mark Fitzpatrick

6	Planning Applications to be Determined Iartasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh	
6.1	<p>Applicant: Vonin Scotland Ltd (23/00061/FUL) (PLN/072/23) Location: Land 180M SE Of Mowi Scotland Ltd, Feed Mill, Kyleakin (Ward10). Nature of Development: Erection of a cage fish farm net washing, servicing and treatment facility. Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT the application subject to the Conditions detailed in the report.</p>	MH
6.2	<p>Applicant: Tulloch Homes Ltd (23/00300/FUL) (PLN/073/23) Location: Land 215M North Of Riverford, Conon Bridge (Ward 08). Nature of Development: Proposed mixed use development including 75 residential units and 1.3 ha allocated for business use, with all associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping. Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>During discussion the following points were raised:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing was desperately needed in the area especially with the development of the Inverness Cromarty Firth Green Freeport; • concern was expressed over the safety of the A835 junction as there had been many accidents including pedestrian fatalities at this junction and the increased traffic caused by this development would cause the junction to become more congested and could potentially increase the likelihood of accidents; • there were many options including, lengthening of feeder lanes, widening of the roads and installation of lighting at the junction, for increasing the safety of this junction; and • it was clarified that when the Committee made tough decisions such as granting this application it did not mean that members were dismissive of the concerns of local people; <p>Cllr Paterson, Cllr Reiss and Cllr Smith expressed a wish to refuse this application but were unable to provide planning reasons to overturn the recommendation.</p> <p>There was an amendment moved by Mr M Reiss and seconded by Ms Smith to defer the application to obtain further information from Transport Scotland and Police Scotland. Following legal advice on the competency of the amendment, the amendment was withdrawn by Mr M Reiss.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT the application subject to a section 75 agreement being concluded before planning permission is issued and subject to the conditions listed in the report. The Committee also AGREED to write to Transport Scotland about their concerns around the A835 junction.</p>	MK

6.4	<p>In terms of Standing order 9 members AGREED to take item 6.4 at this stage.</p> <p>Applicant: Tulloch Homes Ltd (23/02147/FUL) (PLN/075/23) Location: Land 155M South Of Rowan Gardens, Conon Bridge (Ward 08). Nature of Development: Residential Development of 160 affordable and private dwelling houses with infrastructure, open space and landscaping at Braes of Conon (South), Conon Bridge. Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>During discussion Mrs M Paterson raised the same points detailed at 6.2 of this note, and expressed a wish to refuse this application but was unable to provide planning reasons to overturn the recommendation.</p> <p>There was an amendment moved by Mr R Gale seconded by Mr M Reiss to refuse the application for the following reason:</p> <p><i>This application is contrary to policy 56 of the HwLDP. Local knowledge of the area and the most affected junction appreciates the inherent dangers presented to the travelling public and goes against the Council's duty of care to residents and other road users.</i></p> <p>Following legal advice on the competency of the amendment, the Amendment was withdrawn by Mr R Gale.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT the application subject to a section 75 agreement being concluded before planning permission is issued and subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p>	MK
6.3	<p>Applicant: Dr W Fraser (23/01034/PIP) (PLN/074/23) Location: Land 105M SW Of 1 Matheson Drive, Fortrose (Ward 09). Nature of Development: Erection of 12no dwellings (Renewal of 18/03570/PIP). Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT the application subject to a section 75 agreement being concluded before planning permission is issued and subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p>	MK
6.5	<p>Applicant: Mrs R. Gulay (23/01298/FUL) (PLN/076/23) Location: Former Job Centre Plus Office, Girnigoe Street, Wick (Ward 03). Nature of Development: Change of use from Class 2 (Financial and Professional Services) to Class 7 (Hotels and Hostels). Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT the application subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p>	CS
	<p>The meeting ended at 2.35 pm.</p>	

The Highland Council

**Continued Joint North & South Planning Applications
Committee**

Council Chamber, HQ, 8 November 2023, 2.30pm

Minute / Action Note

Listed below are the decisions taken by the joint Committees at the meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: <https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this action note.

Only Committee Members present at the previous joint meeting on 22 March 2023 were entitled to participate.

Committee Members present and entitled to participate:

South Planning Applications Committee

Mr C Aitken (remote)
Mr M Cameron
Mr D Fraser
Mr A Graham
Mr R Jones
Mr B Lobban

Mr A MacDonald (remote)
Mr A MacKintosh
Mr T MacLennan (**in the Chair**)
Mr P Oldham
Mrs M Reid

North Planning Applications Committee

Ms S Atkin
Mr M Baird
Mrs I Campbell (remote)
Ms T Collier (remote)
Mr R Gale

Ms L Kraft
Mr D Millar
Mrs M Paterson
Mr Stewart

Committee Members not entitled to participate, and non-Committee Members, also present:

Mr J Finlayson (remote)
Mr L Fraser (remote)
Mr K Gowans (remote)
Mrs B Jarvie (remote)

Mr D Macpherson
Ms J McEwan (remote)
Mr C Munro (remote)
Mr M Reiss (remote)

Officers participating:

Mr D Mudie, Area Planning Manager – South (DM)
Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager – North (DJ)
Mr P Wheelan, Principal Planner (PW)
Ms K Lyons, Principal Solicitor
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	Chair Cathraiche	
	NOTED that the Chairs of the South and North Planning Applications Committees had agreed that Mr T MacLennan would chair the joint meeting.	n/a
2	Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan Mr R Bremner and Ms A MacLean.	
		n/a
3	Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt	
	There were none.	n/a
4	Planning Applications to be Determined Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh	
	<p>Applicant: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (22/04580/S37) (PLS&N/02/23)</p> <p>Location: Ardmore Sub-Station, Ardmore, Hallin, Dunvegan. (Wards 5, 10, 11 & 12)</p> <p>Nature of Development: Skye Reinforcement Project - Construct and operate approximately 110 kilometres (km) of new double circuit steel structure 132 kV overhead transmission line and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>Recommendation: Raise no objection</p> <p>A presentation was provided, and questions from Members were addressed on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the purpose of the meeting and the status of the additional information being presented, which had been supplied by the applicant in response to an objection to the application by NatureScot; • the continued status of the Council's previous decision to raise no objection, conditional on the use of route 3a; • the processes around the possible calling of a Public Local Inquiry by the Scottish Government; • the detail of the objection by NatureScot, and the possible impact of the overhead transmission line on the environment, with particular reference to the bird species, the Common Scoter, and the height and separation distance of the towers; • community benefit, economic benefit from capital investment and employment opportunities, compensation for landowners, community wealth building processes, and the need to consult with other countries to find out how these were dealt with elsewhere; • the extent to which the existing overhead transmission line required to be replaced with an increased capacity line rather than a like-for-like replacement; • the role of the Council as a statutory consultee, with the application being decided by Scottish Ministers; • the possible connection between the proposed overhead transmission line and increased renewable energy activity; 	PW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of various policies from National Planning Framework 4 on the application; and the importance of Skye as a scenic location for tourists and residents. <p>Members were reminded that their decision required to be based on the additional information that had been provided and, following debate, Mr D Millar, seconded by Mr R Stewart, moved that the Council object to the application for the following reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the application is not supported by Policies 4 and 11 of National Planning Framework 4 because NatureScot's objection has not been resolved due to the impacts of the development on the designated sites – the Kinloch & Kyleakin Hills Special Area of Conservation and the West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area. <p>Mr T MacLennan, seconded by Mr B Lobban, moved as an amendment, to raise no objection as detailed in the report.</p> <p>On a vote being taken there were 11 votes for the motion and 9 votes for the amendment, with no abstentions, and the motion was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>For the motion: Mr M Cameron, Mr A Graham, Mr A MacDonald, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr M Baird, Mrs I Campbell, Ms T Collier, Mr R Gale, Mr D Millar, Mrs M Paterson, Mr R Stewart.</p> <p>For the amendment: Mr C Aitken, Mr D Fraser, Mr R Jones, Mr B Lobban, Mr T MacLennan, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Reid, Ms S Aitkin, Ms L Kraft.</p>	
	<p>AGREED: to OBJECT to the application for the following reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the application is not supported by Policies 4 and 11 of National Planning Framework 4 because NatureScot's objection has not been resolved due to the impacts of the development on the designated sites – the Kinloch & Kyleakin Hills Special Area of Conservation and the West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area. 	PW
	<p>The meeting ended at 4.55pm.</p>	

The Highland Council

**South Planning Applications
Committee**

**Council Chamber, HQ, 22 November 2023, 10.30am
Minute / Action Note**

Listed below are the decisions taken by Committee at their recent meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: <https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this action note.

Committee Members Present:

Mr C Ballance (except 6.2, 6.3, 6.4)
(remote for 6.6 and 6.1)
Mr M Cameron
Mr D Fraser
Mr L Fraser (except 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 and
6.1)
Mr A Graham (except 6.8, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6
and 6.1)
Mr R Jones

Mr B Lobban (except 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 and
6.1)
Mr A MacDonald (remote) (except 6.2 and
6.1)
Mrs I MacKenzie (except 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6
and 6.1)
Mr A MacKintosh
Mr T MacLennan (remote)
Mr P Oldham (**in the Chair**)
Ms M Reid (except 6.8)

Non-Committee Members Present:

Mrs T Robertson

Substitutes:

Mr D Macpherson (for Mr K Gowans) (except 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 and 6.1)

Officers participating:

Mr D Mudie, Area Planning Manager – South (DM)
Mr P Wheelan, Strategic Projects Team Leader (PW)
Mr B Robertson, Team Leader (BR)
Mr W Langdon, Planner (WL)
Mr M Fitzpatrick, Planner (MF)
Mr M Kordas, Planner (KK)
Ms C MacLeod, Planner (CMacL)
Mr R Dowell, Planner (RD)
Mr I Meredith, Acting Principal Solicitor (IM)
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

	Preliminaries	
	The Committee AGREED to consider the applications for Item 6 in a different order, as detailed.	
ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	Apologies for Absence	

	Leisgeulan Ms L Sagers, Mr K Gowans, Mr C Aitken	
		n/a
2	Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt Item 6.1 – Mr A MacDonald – as the applicant is involved in Mr MacDonald’s political campaign he will declare an interest and leave the meeting for that item. Item 6.8 - Mrs M Reid – Mrs Reid is heavily involved in the Inverness Caledonian Thistle Women’s team and as the club would directly benefit from the development she will declare an interest and leave the meeting for that item. Item 6.8 - Mr A Graham – Mr Graham is a season ticket holder at Inverness Caledonian Thistle and involved in the supporters club, so will declare an interest and leave the meeting for this item.	
		n/a
3	Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a’ Gheàrr-chunntais	
	There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the action note and minute of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 October 2023, and of the continued joint North and South Planning Applications Committee held on 8 November 2023, with the latter also being submitted to the North Planning Applications Committee - APPROVED .	n/a
4	Major Development Update Iarrtasan Mòra	
	There had been circulated Report PLS/59/23 by the Area Planning Manager - South which provided a summary of all cases within the “Major” development category currently with the Planning and Development Service for determination. The report also detailed progress on proposals submitted under S36 or S37 of the Electricity Act 1989 on which the Council is consulted The Committee NOTED the current position with the applications.	PW
5	Major Developments – Pre-application consultations Leasachaidhean Mòra – Co-chomhairle Ro-iarrtais	
5.1	Description: Provision of circa 380 houses with associated infrastructure (23/04170/PAN) (PLS/60/23) Ward: 13 Applicant: Robertson Homes Ltd Site Address: Land 150M SE Of 22 Bowmore View, Inverness.	
	NOTED the application.	
6	Planning Applications to be Determined Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh Due to planning officer availability, and to allow Members to attend the funeral	

	of previous Member, Mr G Ross, the Committee AGREED to consider items in the following order: 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.1.	
6.5	<p>Applicant: Blackpark Energy Storage Limited (23/04254/S42) (PLS/65/23)</p> <p>Location: Blackpark Farm, Nairn, IV12 5HY (Ward 18).</p> <p>Nature of Development: Application under s42 to vary condition 12 (decommissioning) (20/02589/FUL) for battery energy storage system comprising steel containers, GRP substation and fencing (output of up to 49.9MW).</p> <p>Recommendation: Grant</p>	
	Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report.	RD
6.7	<p>Applicant: Hazledene (Inverness) Ltd And HHA (22/03219/PIP) (PLS/67/23)</p> <p>Location: Land South of the A9 Interchange, West of the A9 Including Field on South of Macaskill Drive, Inverness (Ward 19).</p> <p>Nature of Development: Mixed use development comprising up to 400 residential units, business / commercial and community uses and supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Recommendation: Grant</p> <p>Amendments to the report were highlighted to Members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Scotland had removed their objection on drainage grounds; • Conditions would be reviewed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Condition 1 - Implementation of permission, would be reviewed and amended where necessary to better reflect that the application is for a phased development; and, - Conditions 2., 3., 8., and 23 - to ensure that Transport Scotland's interests in the lighting scheme, landscaping and boundary treatments are covered, and to clarify that no drainage connections are made to the trunk road network. 	
	Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report, as amended under delegated authority to the case officer for the conditions listed above, and the conclusion of a Section 75 legal agreement.	MF
6.8	<p>Applicant: Intelligent Land Investments Group Plc (23/00497/FUL) (PLS/68/23)</p> <p>Location: Land 75M SE Of Camas House, Fairways Business Park, Inverness (Ward 19).</p> <p>Nature of Development: Battery energy storage facility comprising access track, compound of battery and electrical equipment, meter building, stores, fencing, security cameras, and associated landscaping.</p> <p>Recommendation: Refuse</p> <p>Declarations of Interest:</p> <p>Mrs M Reid, as a member of the Inverness Caledonian Thistle Women's Football Club Academy Committee, and Mr A Graham, due to his longstanding connections to ICT (as season ticket holder and member of the supporters' club), declared an interest in Item 6.8 and left the chamber for the duration of the item.</p>	

	<p>The Council's Flood Risk Management Team has removed its objection following receipt of satisfactory information in support of the indicatively proposed surface water drainage arrangements, and was removed as one of the reasons in support of the recommendation to refuse the application.</p> <p>The officer advised that conditions should not be applied to secure enhancement or mitigation measures where it has not been demonstrated that such measures are achievable.</p> <p>An error at section 8.38 of the report was corrected to read as follows: the noise assessment has not "<i>demonstrated that mitigation measures would reduce noise impacts "to within acceptable levels."</i></p>	
	Agreed: to DEFER the application pending a site visit to enable the Committee to assess the impact of the proposal on the green space at the application site.	MF
6.2	<p>Applicant: Ardersier Port Ltd (23/00499/MSC) (PLS/62/23) Location: Ardersier Port Approach, Ardersier, Inverness, IV2 7QX (Ward 17). Nature of Development: Approval of Matters Specified in Condition 4 of planning permission 18/04552/PIP for Phase 1a, new entrance gateway, security office, heritage centre and cafe (Use Class 3), access and associated infrastructure. Recommendation: Approve</p>	
	Agreed: to APPROVE the application subject to the conditions recommended in the report.	PW
6.3	<p>Applicant: Tulloch Homes Ltd (22/03833/FUL) (PLS/63/23) Location: Land 160M SW of 1 Parks of Inshes, Old Edinburgh Road South, Inverness (Ward 19). Nature of Development: Change of house types and plot layouts for erection of 43 residential properties and associated infrastructure (previously consented under reference 19/05179/FUL). Recommendation: Grant</p>	
	Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report and the conclusion of a minute of variation to the existing Section 75 legal agreement covering the site.	MK
6.4	<p>Applicant: Dipper Development Ltd (21/03060/FUL) (PLS/64/23) Location: Land 35m North of Birdston, Kirkhill (Ward 12). Nature of Development: Change of use of site from storage and distribution (Landscaping and construction operations (class 6)) and office (class 4) to include storage and distribution for leisure equipment including caravans, campervans, boats and kayaks. Recommendation: Grant</p>	
	Agreed: to REFUSE planning permission because the applicant had not provided information to demonstrate that there would not be a significant impact on road safety to satisfy the extant objection from Transport Planning. Accordingly, the Committee were not satisfied that the application complied with Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 28 as the applicant had not shown that the nature and number of vehicle movements could be safely accommodated without the recommended visibility splays to the site entrance.	RD

6.6	<p>Applicant: WD Stephen and Company (23/03361/FUL) (PLS/66/23) Location: Land 635m NE of End Cottage, Upper Balfreish, Cawdor (Ward 18). Nature of Development: Erection of house. Recommendation: Grant</p>	
	<p>Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report.</p>	CMacL
6.1	<p>Applicant: Patterdale Property Ltd (23/02786/FUL) (PLS/61/23) Location: Plot 3 to Rear of Former Filling Station, Onich, Fort William, PH33 6RY (Ward 21). Nature of Development: Erection of house (amended proposal ref 21/05525/FUL - relocated footprint of house). Recommendation: Grant</p> <p>Declaration of Interest: Mr A MacDonald declared an interest in this item as the applicant was involved in his political campaign, and he left the meeting for the duration of the item.</p> <p>A minor issue in Condition 2 would be rectified to the following:</p> <p>No development shall commence on the construction of the house hereby approved until the access and parking layout (including signage and lining) as shown on plan 479-100-105 Rev B approved under planning ref. 21/05525/FUL and in accordance with plan 100 Rev F approved under planning ref. 16/03023/FUL, has been fully formed in accordance with the approved details. For the avoidance of doubt, the "no exit" sign at the western access shall comprise a red circular sign with white horizontal bar to indicate no entry. Thereafter the access and car parking arrangement shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details for this use in perpetuity.</p>	
	<p>Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions recommended in the report.</p>	WL
7	<p>Decision of Appeals to the Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division Co-dhùnadh mu Iarrtas do Bhuidheann-stiùiridh Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson Lùth agus Atharrachadh Aimsir</p>	
7.1	<p>Applicant: Perle Hotels (LBA-270-2015) (23/01594/LBC) Location: Glencoe House Hotel, Glencoe, Ballachulish PH49 4HT (Ward 21) Nature of Development: Internal alterations to ground-floor accommodation to form restaurant and spa facilities and erection of additional hotel accommodation wing.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the decision of the Reporter appointed by the Scottish Ministers to allow the appeal in part and grant listed building consent for proposed alterations to the original hotel building. He did not grant consent for the hotel extension, the proposed changes to the listed retaining wall and the works attaching to it, including the stairs to the garden and platform. The consent is subject to the 6 conditions listed at the end of the decision notice. Attention is also drawn to the advisory note at the end of the notice; and • AGREED this decision also be reported for noting to the Planning Review 	IM

	Body.	
	The meeting ended at 2.15pm.	

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS
COMMITTEE

6 December 2023, 10.00AM

MINUTE / ACTION NOTE

Listed below are the decisions taken by Committee at their meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: <https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this action note.

Committee Members Present:

Mr M Baird (except item 6.2)
Mr R Bremner (Remote)
Ms B Campbell
Ms T Collier (Remote)
Mr R Gale
Mrs A MacLean – Item 6.1 onwards
Ms J McEwan (Remote) (except item 6.3)

Mr D Millar

Ms M Paterson
Mr M Reiss
Mr A Rhind – until item 6.5

Mr K Rosie

Ms M Smith
Mr R Stewart (except item 6.7)

Non-Committee Members Present:

Ms M Ross

Substitutes:

Mr C Birt
Ms M MacCallum

Apologies:

Ms S Atkin
Ms L Kraft

Officers participating:

Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager – North (DJ)
Mr P Wheelan, Planning Team Leader (PW)
Ms G Pearson, Principal Planner (GP)
Ms E McArthur, Principal Planner (EM)
Mr M Kordas, Planner (MK)
Mr C Simms, Planner (CS)
Ms E MacIver, Principal Engineer (EM)
Ms R Banfro, Solicitor (Planning) and Clerk
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Mr A MacDonald, NatureScot

ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	<p>Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan</p> <p>Ms S Atkin, Ms L Kraft</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt</p> <p>The Committee noted the following declarations of interest:-</p> <p>Mr M Baird – Item 6.2 Mr R Stewart – Item 7.6</p>	
3	<p>Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a’ Gheàrr-chunntais</p> <p>There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the action note and minute of the meeting of the Committee held on 01 November 2023 which was APPROVED.</p>	
4	<p>Major Development Update Iarrtasan Mòra</p> <p>There had been circulated Report No PLN/001/23 by the Area Planning Manager - providing an update on progress of all cases within the “Major” development category currently with the Infrastructure and Environment Service for determination.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the current position with the applications.</p>	PW
5	<p>Major Developments – Pre-application consultations Leasachaidhean Mòra – Co-chomhairle Ro-iarrtais</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the pre-application consultations detailed at 5.1 to 5.5.</p>	
5.1	<p>Description: Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm for a period of 40 years, comprising of 9 Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure (amendment to the consented Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farms) (23/04717/PAN) (PLN/078/23) Ward: 10 – Eilean A’ Cheò Applicant: Ben Sca Wind Farm Limited Site Address: Land 2800M SW Of Edinbane Primary School, Edinbane, Isle Of Skye</p>	Mark Fitzpatrick
5.2	<p>Description: Development of a Battery Energy Storage System with a capacity of 49.9MW consisting of battery storage containers, electrical control building, transformers, security fencing, CCTV, access, landscaping and associated works. (22/06244/PAN) (PLN/079/23) Ward: 02 – Thurso and North West Caithness Applicant: Ecocel Energy (Storage) Ltd Site Address: Land 500M east of Glengolly Farmhouse, Thurso</p>	PW

	<i>Following the meeting it was highlighted that the application number was 23/04766/PAN and not 22/06244/PAN.</i>	
5.3	<p>Description: Grid connected battery energy storage facility of up to 200MW, comprising of electrical equipment including batteries, access track, transmission compound, switchgear, control buildings, stores, fencing, security, landscaping, parking, and ancillary structures. (23/03736/PAN) (PLN/080/23)</p> <p>Ward: 05 – Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh</p> <p>Applicant: Isenau Energy Storage Recourses Four Limited</p> <p>Site Address: Land 700m east of Ardachy, Lochluichart, Garve</p>	PW
5.4	<p>Description: Swarclett Wind Farm - erection and operation of a wind farm, comprising 2 turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, battery storage and ancillary infrastructure. (23/03944/PAN) (PLN/081/23)</p> <p>Ward: 02 – Thurso and North West Caithness</p> <p>Applicant: Swarclett Wind Energy Limited</p> <p>Site Address: Land 975M SE of Mains of Durran Castletown.</p>	PW
5.5	<p>Description: Extension of existing wind farm at Lochend to encompass a further 21 MW of wind generation capacity through 5 wind turbines each of up to 149.9 m to tip height, plus battery energy storage. Related infrastructure including circa 1.5 km of access track and turbine foundations. (23/04748/PAN) (PLN/082/23)</p> <p>Ward: 02 – Thurso and North West Caithness</p> <p>Applicant: The Highland Council</p> <p>Site Address: Land 600M NE Of 10 Lochend Holding, Barrock, Caithness</p>	Claire Farmer
6	Planning Applications to be Determined Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh	
6.2	<p>In Accordance with Standing Orders paragraph 9 the Committee AGREED to consider item 6.2 at this stage.</p> <p>In addition to the report an Appropriate Assessment was circulated to all members of the Committee in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994.</p> <p>Applicant: Communities for Coul Ltd (23/00580/FUL) (PLN/084/23)</p> <p>Location: Land 1700M NW Of Embo Community Centre, School Street, Embo (Ward 04).</p> <p>Nature of Development: Construction of an 18-hole golf course, practice area, access, parking, ancillary infrastructure and the change of use of existing buildings to form clubhouse, pro shop, maintenance shed and ancillary facilities.</p> <p>Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>Motion: Mr R Gale seconded by Mr R Stewart</p> <p>While Members acknowledge that the following concerns, namely,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the significant adverse effects on sand dune habitats within the Loch Fleet Site of Special Scientific Interest; • the significant effect on SPA waders (oystercatcher, bar-tailed godwit, curlew, dunlin, and redshank), teal, wigeon, greylag goose and the waterfowl assemblage of Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA; • significant effect on the Moray Firth SPA eider as result of disturbance 	GP

- during construction and operation of the proposal; and
- the development proposal's ability to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity; and
- the impact of the amenity value of the core path

are in conflict with policy 3 of NPF4 and policies 28, 57 and 77 of the HwLDP, Members consider policies 4 (c) (ii), 9 (d), 21, 25 (a) and 30 of NPF4 to support the proposed development. Members weighed up all relevant policies and came to the view that a number of significant material considerations outweighed the assessment of the application against the Highland wide Local Development plan and therefore justified the granting of planning permission subject to conditions drafted by officers in consultation with Ward 4 Members of the Committee.

These considerations were:

- the potential significant economic benefits and its contribution to the local area of East Sutherland which accords with policy 4 (c) (ii), policy 25 and 30 of NPF4.
- The securing of the positive long-term management of the site through the control of invasive species and the cessation of seasonal wildfowl shooting.
- the securing of a Recreation Access Management Plan within the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA and Ramsar Site;
- a reduction of biodiversity impacts presented through the provision of an enhancement plan of a level proportionate to the site.
- The long-term management of biodiversity enhancement measures through a Habitat Management Plan; and
- the positive re-use of redundant buildings in accordance with policy 9 (d) of NPF4.

In coming to this view, Members considered all the relevant planning issues, including giving equal consideration to all designations covering the site, that is the Loch Fleet Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Ramsar site and the Natura designations (Dornoch Firth Special Protection Area and proposed Moray Firth Special Protection Area). Members had regard to the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994, as amended, which specify that an Appropriate Assessment is required for Natura sites. In this instance the Appropriate Assessment, which had been undertaken by the Highland Council as the competent authority, concluded that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on Moray Firth SPA either as result of disturbance during construction and operation of the proposal, however, it also concluded that it would not adversely affect the integrity of Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Special Protection Area if the proposed mitigation including the mitigation proposed by NatureScot was strictly implemented.

Amendment: Mr D Millar seconded by Mr R Bremner to refuse the application as recommended in the report.

There were 8 votes for the motion and 6 votes for the amendment, with no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the motion: Ms B Campbell, Mr R Gale, Ms J McEwan, Mrs M Paterson, Mr A Rhind, Mr K Rosie, Ms M Smith, Mr R Stewart

For the Amendment: Mr C Birt, Mr R Bremner, Ms T Collier, Ms M MacCallum, Mr D Millar, Mr M Reiss

The Committee **AGREED** to **GRANT** planning permission subject to

	conditions, the drafting of which to be delegated to officers in consultation with Ward 4 Members of the Committee.	
6.1	<p>Applicant: Intelligent Land Investments Group Plc (22/05167/FUL) (PLN/083/23)</p> <p>Location: Land 260M SW Of Alness Grid Sub Station, Mid Balnacraig, Alness (Ward 06).</p> <p>Nature of Development: Battery energy storage facility comprising access track, compound of battery and electrical equipment, meter building, stores, fencing, security cameras and landscaping.</p> <p>Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p><i>Following the meeting it was highlighted that the applicant was Balnacraig Battery Storage Limited and not Intelligent Land Investments Group Plc.</i></p> <p>During discussion it was emphasised that it was crucial for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to provide safety guidance concerning these types of application especially as they are becoming more common.</p> <p>Members AGREED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. to GRANT the application subject to the conditions laid out in the report; and ii. that the Leader of the Council write to the Scottish Government to request that health and safety guidance for this type of application is fast-tracked. 	PW
6.3	<p>Applicant: Colliemore Farms Ltd (22/04757/FUL) (PLN/085/23)</p> <p>Location: Land 100M NW Of Wester Coillemore Riding Centre, Invergordon (Ward 06).</p> <p>Nature of Development: Erection of 3 warehouses and shed with Associated access.</p> <p>Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>In a correction to the report it was confirmed that the site area amounted to just over 10,000 *sqm. The footprint of the building was 3,000 sqm and The area of felled trees was around 9,300 sqm.</p> <p>Motion: Ms M Smith seconded by Mr R Stewart.</p> <p>While it is acknowledged that the compensatory planting proposed by the applicant fails to comply with the requirements of Policy 3 and 6 of NPF4, the Control of Woodland Policy Removal and policy 52 of HwLDP, there are significant material considerations that are supported by policy 26 (d) and 29 of NPF4 and that outweigh the assessment of the application against the Development plan and therefore planning permission should be granted subject to conditions drafted by officers in consultation with Ward 6 Members of the Committee.</p> <p>These considerations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed site is situated next to an existing bonded warehouse, therefore the scale/nature if the operations is wholly compatible and the proposed development supports economic growth within a rural location and provides the support for tourism, recognising the importance of the whisky industry to tourism. • The proposed development will continue to deliver significant benefits through the diversification of the existing farm business; and • It is demonstrated that there are no suitable alternatives allocated in the LDP or identified in the employment land audit. The area of the 	Emma Forbes

	<p>application is the only area that is not agricultural or on a slope.</p> <p>Amendment: Mr D Millar seconded by Mr K Rosie, to refuse the application as recommended in the report.</p> <p>There were 8 votes for the motion and 7 votes for the amendment, with No abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>For the motion: Mr M Baird, Ms B Campbell, Mr R Gale, Ms M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr A Rhind, Ms M Smith, Mr R Stewart.</p> <p>For the Amendment: Mr C Birt, Mr R Bremner, Ms T Collier, Ms M MacCallum, Ms A MacLean, Mr D Millar, Mr K Rosie.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission subject to conditions, the drafting of which to be delegated to officers in consultation with Ward 6 Members of the Committee.</p>	
6.4	<p>Applicant: ITP Energised (23/02320/S36) (PLN/086/23) Location: Land 1500M SW Of Melvich (Ward 01). Nature of Development: Melvich Wind Energy Hub. Recommendation: RAISE OBJECTION</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to RAISE AN OBJECTION for the reasons detailed in the report.</p>	MK
6.5	<p>Applicant: J Waters Paint & Wallpaper (23/02275/FUL) (PLN/087/23) Location: 15 Riverside Place, Thurso, KW14 8BZ (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Erection of extension and change of use from derelict house to paint shop (amendment to previous approval ref: 21/01384/FUL). (In retrospect). Installation of solar panels. Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to REFUSE the application for the reasons detailed in the report.</p>	CS
6.6	<p>Applicant: J Waters Paint & Wallpaper (23/02276/LBC) (PLN/088/23) Location: 15 Riverside Place, Thurso, KW14 8BZ (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Erection of extension and change of use from derelict house to paint shop (amendment to previous approval ref: (21/01637/LBC). (In retrospect). Installation of solar panels. Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to REFUSE the application for the reasons detailed in the report.</p>	CS
6.7	<p>Declaration of Interest: Mr R Stewart declared an interest in this item as the applicant and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, he left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>Applicant: Mr Ruraidh Cameron Stewart (23/04610/FUL) (PLN/089/23) Location: Land 55M NE Of Willowbank the Square Balmacara (Ward 05). Nature of Development: Change of use of croft land to a caravan site with 7 stances for holiday use, associated roads, parking, drainage and water connections. Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>In a correction to the report it was confirmed there had been comments</p>	EM

	<p>received from 4 addresses and not 5 as previously stated.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to REFUSE the application for the reasons detailed in the report.</p>	
7	<p>Decision of Appeals to the Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division Co-dhùnadh mu Iarrtas do Bhuidheann-stiùiridh Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson Lùth agus Atharrachadh Aimsir</p>	
7.1	<p>7.1 (pp 253 – 389)</p> <p>Applicant: Renewable Energy Systems Ltd (21/00826/S36) (PLN/090/23) Location: Land 3450M North Of Kintradwell Lodge Brora (Ward 4) Nature of Development: Kintradwell Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm in perpetuity, comprising of 15 No. Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, battery storage infrastructure, switching station, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the decision of the Scottish Ministers to refuse consent under s36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the reasons indicated in the enclosed decision letter.</p>	
	<p>The meeting ended at 4.55 pm.</p>	

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS
COMMITTEE

17 January 2024, 10.30AM

MINUTE / ACTION NOTE

Listed below are the decisions taken by Committee at their virtual Microsoft Teams meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: <https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this action note.

Committee Members Present:

Mr M Baird
Ms B Campbell (Remote)
Ms T Collier (Remote)
Mr R Gale (Remote)
Ms L Kraft (Remote)
Mrs A MacLean
Ms J McEwan (Remote)
Mr D Millar (remote)
Ms M Paterson (Remote)
Mr M Reiss (Remote)
Mr A Rhind
Ms M Smith
Mr R Stewart

Non-Committee Members Present:

Mr D Louden

Substitutes:

Ms M MacCallum

Apologies:

Ms S Atkin
Mr R Bremner
Mr K Rosie

Officers participating:

Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager – North (DJ)
Ms G Pearson, Principal Planner
Mr G McCormick Senior Environmental Health Officer
Ms R Banfro, Clerk
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	<p>Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan</p> <p>Apologies were intimated on behalf of Ms S Atkin, Mr R Bremner and Mr K Rosie.</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3	<p>Planning Applications to be Determined Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh</p>	
3.1	<p>Applicant: Global Energy Groups Nigg Ltd (23/04662/FUL) (PLN/001/24) Location: Land 500M North of Nigg Welding School, Nigg, Tain (Ward 7) Nature of Development: Erect High Voltage Cable Manufacturing Plant Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT the application subject to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the conditions detailed in the report; 2. the additional condition relating to the establishment or continuation of a community liaison group; and 3. subject to conditions relating to forestry matters, the wording of which to be delegated to officers in consultation with Ward 7 NPAC Members. 	

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City Region Deal Monitoring Group** held remotely on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 2.00pm.

Present:

Mr I Brown

Mrs T Robertson

Mr K Gowans (Chair)

Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Mr A McCann, Economy & Regeneration Manager

Mr M Bailey, Programme Manager

Mr R Jackson, Project Manager

Ms A Macrae, Senior Committee Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mr D Fraser, Mr M Green, Ms L Niven, Ms M Reid.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated, and were **APPROVED**, the Minutes of the City Region Deal Monitoring Group held on 2 November 2023.

4. IHCRD Project Spotlight

Morven Fancey, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, gave a presentation on the Science Skills Academy (SSA), which covered a project overview, evaluation headlines, future sustainability, and the future relationship between the SSA and the Council and Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- acknowledging the funding contribution for the SSA through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the 23/24 academic year;
- the SSA was ideally placed to take advantage of provision of skills/development opportunities through the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. It was hoped this was recognised as a key area for investment in developing skills and helping to retain the population in Highland;
- concern at the impact of increased transport costs in relation to children attending the SSA's permanent and pop up rooms, reference being made to the need for a long term industry commitment towards the overall costs; and
- noting that the hands on experience for children was a key principle and benefit of the SSA.

The Group thanked Ms Fancey for her attendance and **NOTED** the presentation.

5. **UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Implementation Plan Update**

There had been circulated Report No. CRD/01/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Programme Manager advised that a summary would be provided in future reports on where there were exceptions shown as amber or red in the Delivery Plan, providing clarity on the reasons why and the mitigation action being taken.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- the importance of fully utilising the funding allocation of £5.53m in 2024/25 for the benefit of the Highlands; and
- further clarity was sought and provided on SLB S18: Support business infrastructure/ business units and potential roll out under the Challenge Fund for more remote rural units. An update was also provided on progress with site(s) or solutions for infrastructure to be identified in 2023/24.

The Group **NOTED** the UKSPF Delivery Plan update.

6. **IHCRD Key Risks, Challenges & Opportunities**

The Programme Manager gave a verbal update on this item in relation to the Longman Land Remediation, Northern Innovation Hub, Life Sciences Innovation Centre, Science Skills Academy, Transport Infrastructure projects, and reallocation of funds from the Digital Project to the Corran Ferry infrastructure project as previously reported to the Group. He provided a further update on progress with the production of the Benefits Realisation Plan and the work being undertaken with partners in this regard. A projects review was to be undertaken in terms of the risks and issues and responses required, and to ensure projects were aligned to initiatives such as the Green Freeport to maximise the opportunities.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- further clarity was sought and provided on the extent of the land covered by the Longman Land Remediation project; and
- continuing concerns in relation to progress with the A9/A96 link road and A9/A82 Longman Junction improvement schemes and the prospect of them being delivered before the end of the Deal. It was requested that officers provide feedback to Members on the outcome of the ongoing discussions with Scottish Government on the Transport Infrastructure projects.

The Group **NOTED** the update.

7. IHCRD Annual Conversation & 22/23 Annual Report

The Programme Manager gave a verbal update on this item during which he provided a summary of the Annual Conversation held with the UK and Scottish Governments on 8 November 2023. Key points included other funding opportunities for digital investment across the Highlands, potential timescale extensions for specific projects where there was a business justification, a commitment to resolve delivery timescales for the Transport Infrastructure projects and finalisation of the Benefits Realisation Plan for the Deal. The draft Annual Report 2022/23 had been well received at the Annual Conversation and would be presented to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 15 February 2024.

The Group **NOTED** the update.

8. IHCRD Programme Report

There had been circulated 2023/24 Q3 Dashboard Report.

The Programme Manager advised that a financial report would be provided to future meetings which would detail the latest position on actual spend, the forecast and profile of spend for the remainder of the Deal and highlighting any risks or issues.

In discussion, Members welcomed the provision of a financial report to the Group going forward.

The Group **NOTED** the report.

The meeting concluded at 2.45pm.