

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in **Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey/Remotely** on 3 June 2024 at 10.30 am

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Mr R Jones
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Mr M MacKay, Community Development Manager
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Manager
Mr L Marchi, Principal Housing Officer
Mr A Lawrie, Principal Repairs Officer
Ms A Tanner, City Heritage Project Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr N Nethercott, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following transparency statement:-

Item 9 – Mr B Lobban

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Report Aithisg Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/04/24 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

Mr N Nethercott, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service provided a brief introduction highlighting the key points of the report and drawing Members' attention to additional items of good news including the successful Anthony Nolan Trust event at Kingussie High School and an event with local rangers concerning wildfire safety and community engagement.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- in response to a question, an update was provided on wildfires in the area as well as upgrades to equipment and training being undertaken to improve the ability of stations to respond to wildfires;
- the youth development programme, working with young people around driving safety, was commended and it was queried whether these sessions should take place more than once a year;
- in response to a question concerning the recruitment of women to the service it was clarified that the physical test remained the main obstacle to recruitment and that some aspects of the test were more suited to men while some were more suited to women. It was also confirmed that capital funding was being sought to update changing facilities within stations as they were originally designed for single gender use;
- information was sought and provided on recruitment and sustainability in the area; the three tiers of station classification regarding wildfire response, and the use of the Community Asset Register; and
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that the first of the new style light-weight fire engines was due to be delivered to the Highlands in July 2024 and would hopefully be used by the station at Carrbridge.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the report.

4. Grantown on Spey Common Good Fund – consultation on proposal to change the use of the Market Square to allow for mandatory charging for events, pitches and stalls

Maoin Math Coitcheann Bhaile nan Grandach – co-chomhairleachadh mun mholadh gun tèid cleachdadh Ceàrnag na Margaidh atharrachadh airson 's gun urrainnear cosgaisean a bhuileachadh airson thachartasan, làraich is stàlaichean

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/05/24 by the Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place and the Acting Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- surprise was expressed at the recommendations as they seemed to be based on a small number of consultation responses;
- it was highlighted that only 23 people out of Grantown on Spey's approximately 2500 residents had responded to the consultation, which called into question how such consultations were conducted;
- the recommendations were based on the views of only 16 Grantown on Spey residents;
- although some responses to the consultation warned against commercialisation of the square, it was highlighted that it was already used for a commercial purpose as most of the stall holders who used the square, for example as part of the farmers market, were commercial businesses looking to make a profit;
- the village green in Aviemore which was much smaller than the square in Grantown made a profit of £5,000 last year from stall holders;

- any money raised from use of the square would be accumulated into a Common Good Fund which would be used for the benefit of the people of Grantown on Spey;
- doubt was expressed that the very small number of consultation responses was representative of the wider community;
- it was confirmed that requests for charitable use of the Square would be decided by the Community Development team in consultation with Local Members;
- on the point being raised it was confirmed that there would be no charge for educational use of the Square;
- disappointment was expressed concerning the reporting around this issue, particularly in relation to the suggestion that money raised from use of the Square would go to Highland Council, and it was once again confirmed that any money raised would be used for the benefit of people in Granton on Spey;
- it was emphasised that only Badenoch and Strathspey Committee members would be trustees of the Grantown on Spey Common Good Fund; and
- Mr B Lobban, seconded by Ms M Cockburn moved that the Committee agreed to proceed with the process to introduce mandatory charging for the use of the Square in Grantown on Spey and all Members were in agreement.

Thereafter the Committee :-

- NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as contained in the analysis at Appendix 1 to the report;
- APPROVED** the responses to the representations received within the consultation period for publication on the Council's website as contained in the table in Appendix 2 to the report;
- NOTED** and balanced the representations received together with the responsibilities for the Grantown on Spey Common Good fund in order to decide whether to *Agree* the proposal should proceed or *Should not* proceed;
- AGREED** to proceed with the process to introduce mandatory charging for the use of the Square in Grantown on Spey; and
- NOTED** that it would be necessary to seek Sheriff Court approval because The Square was considered to be inalienable

5. Kingussie High Associated School Group Overview Foir-shealladh air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Àrd-Sgoil Cheann a' Ghiùthsaidh

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/06/24 by the Area Education & Learning Manager, Education & Learning.

During discussion disappointment was expressed that no one from the Education Service was available to answer questions on the report and it was asked that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

The Committee **AGREED** this item be deferred to the following meeting of the Committee on 26 August 2024.

6. Grantown Grammar Associated School Group Overview
Foir-shealladh air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Sgoil Ghràmair Bhaile nan Grandach

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/07/24 by the Area Education & Learning Manager, Education & Learning.

The Committee **AGREED** this item be deferred to the following meeting of the Committee on 26 August 2024 as no officer was present at the meeting to answer questions on the report.

7. Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) Assessment of Applications
Measadh Iartasan na Maoin Ath-bheòthachaidh Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/08/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Committee **AGREED** the approved CRF grant award to Highland Council for the Glenmore Subway Footway Link up to the value of the ring-fenced funds of £80,000 as set aside.

8. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2023 gu 31 Màrt 2024

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- in response to a question, it was explained that Badenoch and Strathspey had longer waiting times for urgent repairs and shorter waiting times for non-urgent repairs than the Council average due to not having an in-house repairs team and having to employ contractors;
- information was sought and provided on the action being taken to help tenants in rent arrears, the monitoring of anti-social behaviour, the rates of rent for people in emergency accommodation, and plans to upgrade heating and insulation in older properties;
- the quick re-let times were commended;
- in response to a request, the Principal Housing Officer undertook to provide figures on the age demographics of people experiencing homelessness;
- it was queried whether the shortage of available sub-contractors in Badenoch and Strathspey was a result of the frame-work agreement;

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

9. Ward Discretionary Budget
Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Fund applications had been approved since the previous Committee:-

Organisation	Project	Amount
Cairngorm Mountain Trust	Badenoch & Strathspey School Skiing	£2,568
Newtonmore Tennis Club	Tennis Table Costs	£126.08
Grantown Grammar School	Winter Jackets and Waterproof Shoes	£2,000
Newtonmore Business Association	Community Defibrillator	£1,000
Badenoch Shinty Memories	Supporting Social Activities	£850
Feis Spe	The Gaelic Names and Legends of our Mountain and Landscape	£900
Badenoch & Strathspey Food Hub	Supporting Food Poverty in B&S	£971.92

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for noting Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 12 February 2024 which were approved by the Council on 14 March 2024 which were **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 11.45am.