

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely on 12 August 2024 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr C Birt
Mrs I Campbell
Mrs E Kraft

In attendance:

Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Manager
Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector Calum Smith, Police Scotland (Item 4)
Mr C MacPherson, Chief Executive Officer (ICFGF) (Item 7)

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

Mrs I Campbell in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr P Logue.

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

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 27 June 2024 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee.

4. Police – Area Performance Report Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Coileanaidh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/11/24 by the Chief Inspector - Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- clarification was sought, and provided, on what Police Scotland (PS) referred to as North Highland area;
- it was queried if there was a perceived connection between shoplifting foodstuffs and an increase in the cost of living;
- regarding missing children from care homes, it was confirmed that in many cases children were found to have been out wandering the streets and socialising with friends. However, some vulnerable children had been victims of exploitation with County Lines. In this regard Members were pleased that Police Officers were working alongside Social Work Officers to try and stop missing children cases at source;
- regarding house break-ins and burglary statistics, it was queried if cases could be listed in towns or villages where they had occurred;
- Members expressed thanks to PS for their helpful work on cases and providing guidance when requested by Members;
- regarding driving and speeding offences, it was queried if PS increased patrols for traffic on the North Coast 500 route;
- regarding hate crimes, it was queried if the National Inspection report had been published yet;
- the creation of the Harm Prevention Officer post was welcomed. In this regard it was queried if this post funding was secure or if funding was only available on an annual basis; and
- Members expressed thanks to the Chief Inspector and wished him well in his new role.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023-2026 Year 1, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

5. Winter Service Plan 2024/25 Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2024/25

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/12/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- information was sought regarding the ages of the snow ploughs in the WRSL area, especially the one posted in Lochalsh;
- concern was raised that the nearest vehicle workshop for the Lochalsh area was in Dingwall;
- the need to update local communities of the winter service plan was highlighted;
- an update on staffing was sought, and provided, that vacancies were being prioritised and backfilled; and
- Members expressed thanks to the service for the improvements made to the roads network over the summer period.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2024/25.

6. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Budget

Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird Rois an Iar, Shrath Pheofhair agus Loch Aillse

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Fund applications had been approved since 20 May 2024.

- Coigach Community Development Company Ltd - Growing Achiltibuie - £500.00
- Strathpeffer Community Council - Improvements to Strathpeffer Square - £300.00
- Sheildaig Community Association - Maintenance of Multi Use Games Area - £400.00
- Gairloch Museum - Improve signage for Gairloch Museum and the Achtercairn Archaeology Trail - £590.00
- Gairloch Community Council - Replacement Automatic Emergency Defibrillator - £800.00.

7. Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport Update (ICFGF) Cunntas às Ùr mu Shaor-phort Uaine Inbhir Nis agus Chaolas Chromba

An update was provided by Mr C MacPherson, Chief Executive Officer, (ICFGF) on some of the activity relating the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members expressed thanks for the report and the progress that had been made on the project;
- it was queried if the new UK government had been supportive of the project so far; and
- it was stressed that local communities should be updated on the Green Port project to clarify how it operated, how it was governed and that it would benefit the whole Highland population.

The Committee **NOTED** the update.

8. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 20 May 2024 which had been approved by the Council on 27 June 2024.

The meeting concluded at 11:50am