

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Monday 11 November 2024 at 12.00 noon.

Present:

Mr S Kennedy Mrs M Paterson
Mrs A MacLean

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager
Ms L Bauermister, Community Development Manager
Ms I MacMillan, Project Manager, Climate Change and Energy
Ms F Shand, Principal Housing Officer
Mrs G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr P Young, 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.

Mrs M Paterson in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There was an apology for absence intimated on behalf of Mr G MacKenzie.

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

There were no Declarations of Interests/Transparency Statements.

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn

There had been circulated Report No DSA/13/24 together with the Dingwall and Seaforth Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Members recently attended an open day at Dingwall Fire Station and had been impressed with the improvements to facilities and technology. There were a further two open days planned, focusing on recruitment, and there had already been a positive response to the local and social media advertisements. It was hoped that this might increase the number of female officers and second appliance availability.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- in response to a question regarding Home Fire Safety Visits, it was explained that the visits continued to focus on premises deemed higher-risk, with SFRS working in partnership with carers and other professionals;
- non-fire emergencies included water rescues, someone stuck in a lift, or assisting the Ambulance Service gain access to a property, and it was said that these incidences were on the rise;
- information was sought regarding Community Safety Advocates and it was confirmed these were non-operational SFRS staff who supported on-call crews by way of school visits and speaking with communities; and
- Members thanked the local crews for their continued dedication to Dingwall and Seaforth.

The Committee having scrutinised, **NOTED** the Dingwall and Seaforth Performance Report.

4. Utilising the Great British Insulation Scheme to tackle fuel poverty in Dingwall and Seaforth Social Housing
A' Cleachdadh Sgeama Mòr Teas-dhion Bhreatainn gus dèiligeadh ri bochdainn connaidh ann an Taigheadas Sòisealta Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shiophoirt

There had been circulated Report No DSA/14/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following items were raised:-

- it was asked if the Climate Change and Energy Team (CCET) would be liaising with Housing to capture properties reported as damp;
- in terms of paragraph 3.1 of the report, further information was sought regarding the costs associated with project management and it was said that the cost was paid under the project and coming from Council funds;
- it was asked if the CCET was on target to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate rating of B by the end of 2032;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding checking properties for insulation;
- in terms of paragraph 3.3 of the report, information was sought, and provided, regarding the review of the tenant opt-out policy;
- it was asked if the CCET had considered future costs, which might include a future tenant wishing to be involved in the scheme when a previous tenant had opted out;
- in terms of paragraph 5.1 of the report, it was confirmed that residents would be signposted to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Council's Welfare Support Team and Home Energy Scotland;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the number of responses received, what would happen if only a small number of properties were to

- be included in the scheme, if there were enough funds and how long it was going to take; and
- Members looked forward to an update at a future meeting, which would include the uptake and the costs.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of this report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to support the development of externally funded projects and the opportunity to scale up.

5. Housing Management Performance Report – 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 Aithisg Choileanaidh Stiùireadh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2024 gu 30 Sultain 2024

There had been circulated Report No DSA/15/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Members felt that homelessness was a concern, particularly when it originated through rent arrears;
- the number of homeless was rising and information was sought, and provided, regarding the availability of housing resources and restrictions;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the current rear arrears as recorded in paragraph 6.2 of the report;
- the importance of early intervention was expressed and an explanation was provided regarding the help offered to those experiencing difficulties due to the migration to Universal Credit;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding tenants required to take their private landlord to court, having presented themselves as homeless to the Council;
- anti-social behaviour was a big issue in many communities and it was asked if improvements could be made working alongside our community planning partners and other housing providers;
- it was asked how often homeless housing properties were rotated, for the wellbeing of other local tenants; and
- a breakdown of the numbers in table 9 of the report was requested and provided.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.

6. Place Based Investment Funds – Repurposing of Funding Allocation Maoinean Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite – Ag Ath-adhbhrachadh Riarachadh Maoineachaidh

There had been circulated Report No DSA/16/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In November 2021, this Committee had agreed to allocate £10,000 to support the business community, however, despite varying attempts to achieve this, no firm proposals had been brought forward. It was therefore felt appropriate in this meeting to reallocate the funds elsewhere.

A concern was raised as local businesses had been told that funding had been available and it was confirmed that there might be a funding opportunity for local businesses through the Community Regeneration Fund, which supported economic activity.

The Committee **AGREED** that £10,000 would be reallocated for events which would support the 800th anniversary of Dingwall as a Royal Burgh.

7. Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since last meeting
Iarrtasan buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàrd Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort air an aontachadh bho choinneamh mu dheireadh

The Committee **NOTED** the following Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved since its last meeting:-

- i. Highland Action for Little Ones (HALO), Keep ME Safe, £300.00
- ii. Maryburgh Community Council, Maryburgh in Bloom, £350.00

8. Dingwall Common Good Fund 2024/25
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Pheofharain 2024/25

There had been circulated Report No DSA/17/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Committee:-

- i. having scrutinised, **NOTED** the position of Dingwall Common Good Fund (DCGF) as shown in the 2024/25 Quarter Two Monitoring Statement; and
- ii. **AGREED** to increase the approved Dingwall Common Good Fund Budget line for Community Grants & Donations to £3,500 for 2024/25.

9. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee held on 12 August 2024 which were approved by the Council on 19 September 2024.

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm.