

**The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in **Kingussie Courthouse /Remotely** on **25 November 2024 at 10.30 am**

**Present:**

Mr J Bruce  
Ms M Cockburn

**Mr R Jones**  
Mr B Lobban

**In attendance:**

Mr L Hannah, Community Development Manager  
Ms D Sutton, Strategic Lead Community Operations and Logistics  
Mr D Lamont, Amenity Services Manager  
Mr L Marchi, Principal Housing Officer  
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee 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.**

**1. Apologies for Absence**  
**Leisgeulan**

There were none.

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

Item 6 – Mr Lobban and Mr Jones (Transparency Statements)

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/17/24 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- information was sought and provided on the nature and frequency of prevention work being undertaken with partner agencies, with particular reference to home fire safety visits. It was possible an officer from SFRS could meet with Members to discuss the matter further, if required. The means and process for requesting fire safety visits was summarised;

- in response to a query about non-domestic buildings, the focus on ‘sleeping risks’, e.g. care homes, hospitals, hotels, was summarised, as was the process for commercial self-auditing of fire risks;
- clarification was sought and provided on the rationale for the locations of appliances, and a summary was provided of recent recruitment successes in various stations that meant no relocation of appliances was being currently considered;
- information was sought on the cost implications of false alarms, and it was explained that while there were associated costs, it was important people did not switch off alarms for fear of charges. The work undertaken with affected premises was summarised;
- clarification was sought and provided on when an automatic call-out might not be triggered. For example, if there was no sleeping risk and a single detector was triggered, a company might be asked to investigate prior to an appliance being dispatched. The successful statistics around this policy nation-wide were summarised, and Members suggested that the policy would benefit from wider publicity to raise awareness, following reports of misunderstandings of the policy;
- Mr Jones asked for information on the drivers’ virtual reality scheme and this would be provided outwith the meeting. Information was provided on other education and prevention programmes; and
- Members emphasised the value of educational courses for young people, including those not in education.

The Committee **NOTED** the attached Area Performance Report and that Mr Nethercott would ask the Station Commander to attend a future ward or area meeting.

**In terms of Standing Order 9 it was agreed that item 4 be considered at the end of the agenda.**

## **5. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/18/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- although rent arrears were relatively low, the level had increased, therefore close monitoring and early intervention was important;
- in relation to the monitoring of homes to check if inability to afford heating was causing higher levels of condensation damage, assurance was provided on joint working with the repairs team, with Allied Energy, and with tenants to provide advice, and assistance on energy tariff and grants;
- an explanation was sought and provided for the downward trend in homelessness in the area, which was partly the result of considering housing options with applicants prior to them becoming homeless, improved signposting and advice, and local development initiatives;

- with reference to the potential purchase of private homes by the Council, attention was drawn to budget challenges, including for the renovation of potential properties;
- attention was drawn to the considerable number of people on the housing waiting list;
- the frontline housing staff were commended for their work and assurance was sought they were provided with appropriate support, including training on being trauma informed; and
- assurance was sought and provided that the Housing team worked closed with housing associations.

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

**6. Cairngorms National Park Authority CEO Report and Convener Update to Board 22 November 2024**  
**Aithisg Àrd-Oifigeir Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh agus Cunntas an Neach-ghairm dhan Bhòrd 22 Sult 2024**

**Mr B Lobban and Mr R Jones declared a connection to this item as members of the CNPA Board but, having applied the objective test, did not feel they had an interest to declare.**

The Park Authority Board Paper from the CNPA Chief Executive Officer and Convener could be found at the following weblink - [241122Paper1CEOReport.pdf](#). The paper provided an information update on the work of the Park Authority as well as significant projects in the National Park area. The paper would be of particular interest to Members who were not also Park Authority Board members.

The Committee **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** that representatives of the CNPA be invited to the next meeting.

**7. Scottish Government Play Park Funding**  
**Maoineachadh Phàircean-cluiche Riaghaltas na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/19/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Chair requested that instead of allocating £19k to Campbell Crescent Play Area, and £19K Ardvonie Park Play Area, both in Kingussie, the allocation of £38k for Kingussie Play Parks be delegated to local Members. Members expressed their disappointment that Burnfield Play Park had been vandalised shortly after opening.

The Committee **AGREED** that in Ward 20, £108,768 was to be allocated to the agreed projects as outlined at paragraph 6.4 of the report, with the allocation of £38,000 for Kingussie Play Parks to be delegated to local Members.

## 8. Grantown Public Conveniences Goireasan Poblach Bhaile nan Grandach

There is circulated Report No BSAC/20/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, Members welcomed the refurbishment of Burnfield public conveniences. It was suggested that equipment from Grantown public conveniences be re-used elsewhere if possible. The security measures in place to protect the Burnfield facilities from vandalism were queried and explained.

The Committee **AGREED**:

- i. The closure of the Grantown High Street public convenience from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024;
- ii. formal disposal of the asset, to allow the Grantown High Street public convenience be marketed for sale; and
- iii. to support a Comfort Scheme with the Grantown Initiative for the Grantown Burnfield public convenience from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

## 9. Ward Discretionary Budget Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird

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

Highland Council: Amenities	Ellanwood Rd Play Area: Spinner Board Replacement	£500
Highland Council: Amenities	Mossie Rd Play Area: Replace Timber Boards on Climbing Unit	£300
Highland Council: Amenities	Dulaig Play Area: Replacement Slide	£1200
Nethybridge and Vicinity Community Council	Grass-Cutting Equipment	£2000
Newtonmore Association	Leaflet Reprint	£820
Available balance		£9110 remaining

## 4. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 26 August 2024.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.