

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely on 11 November 2024 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr C Birt Mr P Logue
Mrs E Kraft

In attendance:

Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Manager
Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Group Commander Mr M Colliar, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 3)

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 E Kraft in the Chair

Business

Preliminaries

As this was Remembrance Day, the Chair highlighted the impact of wars which had wiped out generations of young folk from Highland communities and stressed the importance of remembering them and their sacrifice.

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs I Campbell.

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

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - Performance Report – Q2 Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba – Aithisg Choileanaidh – R2

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/13/24 by the Local Senior Officer for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- thanks were expressed to the SFRS for their hard working in keeping communities safe;
- regarding the recruitment of retained fire staff within communities, Members confirmed they would reach out to community councils to promote recruitment, and allow the SFRS to communicate directly with those interested; and

- reassurance was sought regarding the ability to react to any outbreak of fire at battery storage areas. In this regard it was stressed that knowledge and information was key and it was welcomed that the SFRS would send over information to alleviate community concerns. In addition, Members would signpost communities to the SFRS for further discussion.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

4. Review of the Allocation Process for Area Share of Invitation to Pay Income Ath-sgrùdadh air a' Phròiseas Riarachaidh airson Cuibhreann Sgìreil dhen Teachd-a-steach bho Chuireadh airson Pàigheadh

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

Thanks were expressed to officers for answering questions and queries from communities. Members welcomed the review in a year's time once place plans were in position.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the proposed change to the process for applications to read as – “a joint application from the Community Council and Development Trust or other eligible Community Group”;
- NOTED** that correspondence would be sent to Community Councils annually, at the start of the Financial Year, outlining the invitation to pay funds that were available for their Area; and
- NOTED** that a further review of the allocation process would take place next year when the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Place Plan was complete, as it might identify agreed community priorities.

**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 WRSL/15/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- information was sought, and provided, on how housing benefits were paid to claimants and how this impacted on rent arrears;
- it was felt that the new arrangements for tenants to take full responsibility for pay rent charges had impacted on vulnerable people. In this regard it was confirmed that local housing teams would offer support to those who sought assistance;
- it was queried if officers could provide a detailed analysis of the housing report specific to Lochcarron area within Ward 5 for Lochcarron Community Council;
- information was sought on the relationship between the Housing and Planning Services in regards to new housing developments; and
- thanks were expressed to officers for their support for Member queries and supporting local housing tenants.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024 and **AGREED** to provide a detailed analysis of the housing report specific to Lochcarron area within Ward 5.

**6. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Budget
Buidseat fo Ughdarras Uàird Rois an Iar, Shrath Pheofhair agus Loch Aillse**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Fund applications have been approved since 12 August 2024:

- Dornie and District Community Trust - community shop and café: £796.79
- Achmore Community Hall Association - Hall energy efficiency measure: £750.00
- Contin Community Trust - Seniors festive lunch and kids Christmas parties: £700.00.

**7. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 12 August 2024 which were approved by the Council on 19 September 2024.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am