

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held remotely on Monday, 25 November, 2024 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr D Millar

Mr C Munro
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer, Place Service
Mr G Smith, Service Lead – Infrastructure, Place Service
Ms H Cameron, Housing Development Manager, Place Service
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Place Service
Ms M A Gray, Project Officer, Place Service
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Officer (West & Mid Highland)
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate Service

Also in attendance:

Police Inspector A Mackenzie, Police Scotland

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

Mr J Finlayson in the Chair

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were none.

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

There were none.

**3. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated for information, minutes of meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 26 August, 2024 which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 19 September, 2024, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

**4. Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report
Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba**

There was circulated Report No SR/18/24 by the Area Commander for Police Scotland.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- It was noted this was a generic report for the South Highland Area Command rather than a specific report for the Skye and Raasay area given back office capacity issues in Police Scotland. Consideration would be given to providing an annual report for the Skye and Raasay Area, rather than the current two reports. This would provide local performance information for Members to scrutinise and free up Police resources.
- There had been an increase in visitors to the area and incidents such as road traffic accidents or missing persons out hill walking impacted on Police resources. There was also domestic crime in the area such as break ins, theft, drug misuse, sexual and domestic related crimes.
- An update on Police staffing in the area was provided.
- Members appreciated the work of Police Officers in the area.

The Committee **Noted**:-

- i. progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023–2026 Year 1 attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024;
- ii. the change in format necessitate by a reduction in back-office capacity to prepare additional area committee reports; and
- iii that consideration would be given to providing an annual local performance report for the Skye/Raasay Area.

**5. Community Payback Service - Presentation
Seirbheis Ath-Phàigheadh Coimhearsnachd – Taisbeanadh**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

**6. Housing Performance Report
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais**

There was circulated Report No. SR/19/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- In terms of homelessness presentations, expressions of interest had been received from some private landlords to change their properties from short term let, to long term lets, but they did not know how to go about this or who to approach for assistance. It was advised that the Principal Housing Officer would be the contact to offer guidance on this matter.
- Specific figures for homeless households/property types in the Skye/Raasay area would be provided to Members;
- The reduction in rent arrears was very positive and showed the benefits of the housing team in focusing on this issue. Also, it was good to see the number of evictions was very low, which reflected the professionalism of the housing team in engaging with tenants.
- The Council had a robust rent arrears escalation policy which was checked regularly to ensure it was fit for purpose.
- It was positive news that the serious and persistent incidents of anti social behaviour in this area was low. It was queried what the process was for people wanting to report anti social behaviour incidents. These incidents

could be reported to the Council's Service Centre or contact a Housing Officer.

- There needed to be a wider proactive discussion on how the Housing Allocations Policy works for people in Skye/Raasay given the difficulty some people who worked had in getting a property in the area. Some people could be on the housing waiting list for many years but did not have the points required to get a property.
- It was advised that owning a property or having recently sold a property was no barrier to someone being on the Council house waiting list. The list, was needs based, and the application form was assessed on someone's current housing need.

The Committee **Noted**:-

- i the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024; and
- ii that the Chair of the Committee would make representations to the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee for a review of the Housing Allocations Policy so it was more bespoke for the people on Skye and Raasay.

7. Portree Link Road Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Rathad-ceangail Phort Rìgh

There was circulated Report No. SR/20/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Portree Link Road project was now in a position to move forward with the earliest anticipated start date for construction being May 2025 with a 25 week construction programme. This was dependent on contract procurement processes and successful appointment of a principal contractor for the works.

The issue of decrofting of land for the link road was ongoing but the Council was seeking early access agreements from landowners to ensure there is no delay to construction.

Members were very pleased the project was now going ahead and would alleviate some of the challenges with the flow of traffic through Portree and into North Skye. The completion of the link road would also be a trigger for other projects to help recovery and regeneration in Portree and the wider region. It was requested that a progress report on the project be submitted to a future Committee.

The cost estimate of the project was £1.6m and Members were assured that this was sufficient to construct the road. The contract would go out to competitive tender and the Council did have the option to tender for this project.

The Committee **Noted**:-

- i. the funding position in respect of the Portree Link Road;
- ii. the proposed delivery programme; and
- iii that a progress report on the project would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

8. Parking Income Teachd-a-steach Parcaidh

There was circulated Report No. SR/21/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

Following commentary on the report by the Principal Traffic Officer, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- It was noted that income from pay and display (after VAT) did not all go to the local Committee. For example the local Committee did not get income from Somerled Square Car Park or the Green Car Park as the Council's parking policy for shared income did not cover legacy car parks.
- The parking services of the Council was fully funded from income received from parking charges.
- In terms of the parking income generated on Skye, the local Committee did not receive any on street parking income or penalty charge notice income. There were also capital borrowing costs to be paid for.
- The Committee did receive 50% of income from car parks (other than legacy car parks) after deductions;
- There was a cost per parking bay for maintenance and it would be useful to see a record of which car parks the maintenance was being undertaken, as for example, there was concern locally about the state of the Broadford car park. It was advised that a bid was required for any capital investment and maintenance on car parks, similar to the process of bidding for funding for roads maintenance. In terms of the Broadford car park, a bid would be submitted to the Capital Board for surplus funding to be reallocated to maintenance of Broadford car park.
- The high level of parking enforcement income at the Storr off street car park was highlighted. There were staff at the Storr who were monitoring the car park parking there, so it was surprising to see a lot of people still being charged for using the off street car parks. A detailed breakdown of parking contraventions at this site would be provided to Members.
- There was a strong view that all of the money after costs generated on Skye from off street parking income should be retained and spent on Skye. All local Members would like to see more of the income received from parking charges in the area, retained locally. There was wider discussion to be had on this matter to see if Council parking policy could be changed to support this. But one also had to be mindful that income going to the Council's general fund from parking income to fund other services, would need to be replaced somehow if all money raised locally stayed locally.
- Parking enforcement officers provided an important traffic management function and their work and that of the whole parking services team was commended.
- The money the area received for investment from parking income since the shared income policy was introduced in 2019/20 was circa £1.4m. This was welcome funding to improve the infrastructure around Skye/Raasay and was used as match funding for other income streams from other sources.

The Committee **Noted** the contents of the report.

9. **Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications** **Measadh Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd**

There was circulated Report No. SR/22/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place which detailed current funding requests to the Isle of Skye and Raasay Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) allocation for discussion and decision by Members.

In terms of the Uig footbridge project, this was a much used community facility and would be a great long term asset for the community. In relation to the Council's procurement and design process, it was felt this made costs higher than they might otherwise be. There was a need to ensure value for money for the CRF funding available.

Following consideration, the Committee **Agreed:-**

i. £40,000 CRF grant award for the application from The Highland Council, Uig footbridge, River Rha project;

ii. £100,000 of CRF as match funding to the Islands Programme application – IP011 Community and Public Access Improvements; and

iii. £100,000 of the local allocation of income generated from car parking charges in the 2023/24 financial year, as match funding for the Islands Programme application – IP011 Community and Public Access Improvements project.

10. **Ward Discretionary Budget** **Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

The Committee **Noted** the following Ward 10 Discretionary Fund Grants awarded since the last meeting of the Committee.

Viewfield Garden Collective SCIO	£2,800.00
Dunvegan Community Council	£1,393.80

The meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.