

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Sutherland County Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drumbuie, Golspie on Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr M Baird

Mr R Gale

Ms M Hutchison

Mr J McGillivray

Mr H Morrison (remote)

Ms L Niven

In attendance:

Ms P Tomalin, Community Development Manager

Ms I Percy-Bell, Principal Waste Management Officer

Mr M Dent, Access Officer

Ms A Macrae, Senior Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Station Commander D Bell, 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.

Mr R Gale in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 6: Mr J McGillivray (Transparency statement)

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report

Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No SCC/16/24 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an explanation was sought and provided on the new terms and conditions for retained staff to be implemented early in 2025 to provide for more flexibility in contractual hours;
- it would be helpful for Members and community councils to receive a summary of the above changes for sharing with potential recruits, schools and communities;

- concern that the level of station availability had reached a critical point across Sutherland and reflected the effects of depopulation particularly in relation to young people;
- in response to a query, an update was provided on the number of candidates currently going through the recruitment process at stations across Sutherland;
- the range of activity being undertaken by the Service to engage with local communities to promote recruitment and also highlighting the importance of local knowledge in identifying potential recruits;
- the importance of encouraging more females to join the Service and noting the Station Commander would provide details of the number of females currently going through the recruitment process; and
- concern at the zero station availability at Lochinver and Scourie over the period and an explanation was sought and provided on how the Service would respond to a serious road traffic collision in the area. It was explained this would involve the deployment of the nearest fire appliance or joint mobilisation as appropriate.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report

4. Waste and Recycling Service Changes Atharrachaidhean dhan t-Seirbheis Sgudail is Ath-chuairteachaidh

The Principal Waste Management Officer gave a verbal and video presentation on this item.

In discussion, Members welcomed the presentation and raised the following main points:-

- it would be helpful for Members to view the process of recycling through to the final product after the waste had been sorted and bailed;
- in response to a query, confirmation that Ms L Niven would be provided with a definitive answer on how many times plastics could be recycled;
- issues in North and West Sutherland as a result of some households not having received their bins and cross-communication as to what should be done with recycling in the meantime. It was confirmed these issues would be followed up with the Operations Team;
- it would be helpful for Members to be provided with a supply of the booklets produced on the changes to the service for distribution in communities;
- concern some packaging had to be taken to a large supermarket for recycling and the challenges this presented for rural areas; and
- it would be helpful for Members to receive a copy of the presentation for sharing with community councils.

5. Adoption of the Modified Core Paths Plan (Caithness and Sutherland) Amended Gabhail ri Plana nam Prìomh Cheuman Atharraichte (Gallaibh agus Cataibh) air Atharrachadh

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

In response to questions, it reported that the main reason for the deletion of a section of the Armadale – A836 core path was due to the collapse of a bridge on the route.

The potential for the Council's Rangers to undertake improvements to the path would be considered, albeit it was unlikely the bridge could be replaced. In relation to the core path in Elphin, not to be adopted into the Core Paths Plan, as directed by Scottish Ministers, the potential to work with the community on future paths in this locality would be considered. It was understood the gates on the Achinduich path had been unlocked but this would be confirmed.

The Committee **AGREED** to **ADOPT** the:

- i candidate core paths as consulted upon, and not objected to, under the amended plan December 2017 to March 2018;
- ii candidate core paths as consulted upon under the modified amended plan April 2019 – May 2019;
- iii candidate core paths into the plan as directed by Scottish Ministers by letter on the 2 September 2024; and
- iv Sportsmans Walk – A9 candidate core path SU12.25(C) with the exception of the level crossing at Dunrobin Station.

6. Allocation of Invitation to Pay Income 2022/23 and 2023/24
Cuireadh gus Pàigheadh: Riarachadh Teachd-a-steach 2022/23 -2023/24

Transparency Statement: Mr J McGillivray made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as Chair of Sutherland Sports Council. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

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

In discussion, there was a consensus that the process for the distribution of Invitation to Pay income in Sutherland for 2022/23 and 2023/24 be as set out in Option 2 in the report on the basis Ward 4 be allocated £6,428 and Ward 1 allocated £12,019 with funding of £1,000 from each Ward being ring fenced for the Sutherland Sports Council. It would then be open to the Sports Council to come back with any further funding applications as required.

Thereafter, it was noted that mandatory charging was to be introduced at Achmelvich Car Park and that confirmation would be sought as to whether the income generated would continue to be allocated to the Sutherland County Committee.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the options for distributing the Invitation to Pay income which had been allocated to the Sutherland County Committee;
- ii. **APPROVED** the proposed process for the distribution of Invitation to Pay income in Sutherland for 2022/23 and 2023/24 funds as set out in Option 2 in the report on the basis Ward 4 be allocated £6,428 and Ward 1 allocated £12,019 with funding of £1,000 from each Ward being ring fenced for the Sutherland Sports Council; and
- iii. **NOTED** that the delegated powers for the authorisation of spend up to £10,000 would be assigned to the Community Development Manager in

- consultation with local Members while spend over £10,000 would be subject to Sutherland County Committee approval; and
- iv. **NOTED** that the distribution process will be reviewed in a years' time.

7. Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Report
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ràitheil Maoin Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich

There had been circulated Report No SCC/19/24 by the Chief Officer Community and Housing and Chief Officer Corporate Finance.

In discussion, all parties involved in the work undertaken in relation to the Dornoch Burn were commended on their efforts.

Thereafter, it was clarified that the income generated from invitation to pay on Common Good Land was allocated to the Common Good Fund.

The Committee **NOTED** the Quarter 2 monitoring statement for the Dornoch Common Good Fund.

8. Ward Discretionary Awards
Duaisean fo Ùghdarras Uàird

North, West and Central Sutherland Ward Discretionary Budget applications for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024

The Committee **NOTED** that the following North, West and Central Sutherland Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved over the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024:

Assynt Dev. Trust – Menopause Chats	£1,425.00
Community Food Initiatives North East – FareShare in Highland	£5,050.00
Bradbury Centre – Medical Bath Replacement	£500.00
North Sutherland Community Forestry Trust – First Aid Training	£500.00
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust – Kyle Feeds	£500.00
Lairg & District Community Initiatives – Lairg War Memorial Upkeep	£400.00
North West Training Centre – Learning programme 24-25	£500.00
Total Spend to Date	£8,875.00
Current Available Balance	£5,525.00

Additionally, the Committee **NOTED** there was a balance of £1,718.53 available from a pre-existing Cost of Living Fund. This could be drawn down by submitting a Ward Discretionary Fund application.

The Committee **NOTED** that the following East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved over the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024:

East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Community Food Initiatives North East – FareShare in Highland	£2,179.00
Embo Trust – Old School Transition – Final Step	£780.00
The Dornoch Area CIC – Dornoch Transport Project	£999.00
Bradbury Centre – Medical bath Replacement	£1,500.00
Dornoch Cricket Club – Practice Nets Extension	£500.00
Dornoch Youth Service Summer Programme	£1,000.00
Youth Highland – Golspie RESPECT Project	£1,000.00
Embo Football Club – Essential Works to Changing Rooms	£900.00
Engaging with Activity CIC – Hub Outings	£1,000.00
Timespan – Gutting Girls	£1,000.00
Total Spend to Date	£10,858.00
Current Available Balance	£3,542.00

Additionally, the Committee **NOTED** there was a balance of £948.02 available from a pre-existing Cost of Living Fund. This could be drawn down by submitting a Ward Discretionary Fund application.

**9. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated and **NOTED** the Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 27 August 2024, which were approved by the Council on 19 September 2024.

The meeting concluded at Noon.