



**Highland**  
Community  
Planning  
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas  
Dealbhadh  
Coimhearsnachd  
**na Gàidhealtachd**

Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board held remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 10.00 am.

**Present:**

**The Highland Council:**

Councillor Graham MacKenzie, Chair of Communities and Place Committee  
Derek Brown, Chief Executive

**Highlands and Islands Enterprise:**

Stuart Black, Chief Executive  
Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland (also representing Caithness Community Partnership)

**NHS Highland:**

Sarah Compton-Bishop, Chair, NHS Highland Board  
Fiona Davies, Chief Executive  
Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

**Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:**

Miles Stubbs. Group Commander (Substitute)

**Community Partnership representative:**

Eann Sinclair, Chair of Caithness Community Partnership (also representing HIE)

**High Life Highland:**

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

**Highland Third Sector Interface:**

Cath Wright, Chair of HTSI Board  
Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer

**Skills Development Scotland:**

Roddy Bailey, Area Manager

**University of the Highlands and Islands:**

Professor David Worthington, Interim Dean, UHI Faculty of Arts, Humanities, Business and Education (Substitute)  
Chris O'Neil, Principal and Chief Executive, Inverness College UHI

**In attendance:**

Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive – People, The Highland Council  
Fiona Duncan, Chief Officer - Health and Social Care, The Highland Council  
Ian Kyle, Chair, Community Learning, Development and Engagement Delivery Group  
Jenny Valentine, Chair, Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group  
Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group  
James Maybee, Chair, Community Justice Partnership  
Elisabeth Smart, Vice Chair, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership

Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager  
Melanie Murray, Principal Committee Officer, The Highland Council

**Also in attendance:**

Dan Jenkins, Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Highland  
Helena MacLeod, Community Learning and Development Support Officer, The Highland Council

**Sarah Compton-Bishop in the Chair**

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair expressed thanks to her predecessor, Stuart Black, for his chairmanship of the Board during his tenure and his support in handing over to her.

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Raymond Bremner, Michael Humphreys, Donna MacKinnon, Graham Neville and Vicki Nairn.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3. Minutes of Meetings**

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership Board – 20 September 2024;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 19 June 2024; and
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 20 August 2024.

**4. Action Tracker**

The Board was asked to review progress of its agreed actions as set out in the Action Tracker which had been circulated.

In relation to Cost of Living Workshop Feedback and the proposal to invite a representative of Social Security Scotland to a future meeting of the Board, it was explained that circumstances and priorities had changed, and a meeting would be arranged with the Council's Chief Officer – Revenues and Commercialism and a representative of Social Security Scotland to discuss how best to proceed. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

With regard to the National CPP Self-Assessment, thanks were expressed to those who had responded, and it was confirmed that an invitation had been issued for the follow-up Development Session on 23 April 2025.

The Board **NOTED** the Action Tracker and the updates provided.

## 5. Highland Housing Challenge

The Chief Executive, The Highland Council, gave a presentation on the Highland Housing Challenge during which information was provided on regional population projections, the number of new homes required over the next 10 years, and potential solutions. Information was also provided on the Housing Summit that had taken place in Aviemore in October 2024, including the background, the attendees, the structure of the day, feedback and next steps. Partner feedback was sought on the suggestions received and proposed actions for increasing land supply, increasing finance for housing development and increasing capacity for delivering new housing.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- at a recent consultation event, businesses in the Inner Moray Firth area had cited housing and skills as their two main issues of concern;
- the work taking place with the Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB) and CBRE was welcomed. There was scope to work with SNIB on mid-market rent schemes in particular, and reference was made to a scheme they had funded in Lerwick, Shetland;
- the construction sector in Highland was constrained in terms of availability of people, and there was a need for a skills pipeline;
- modern and graduate apprenticeships were a growth area for UHI, particularly UHI Inverness which was now the biggest provider of public sector apprenticeships in Scotland. However, provision was only two-thirds of where it needed to be to meet the immediate local demand, and there was a job of work to be done to expand it;
- in relation to the anticipated growth associated with the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, a coordinated effort was required to manage the aspirations and expectations of young people and businesses in Highland, and to start to attract people into the area;
- accommodation for students coming to Highland from outwith the region was an immediate concern;
- there was a need for multinational corporations to take the same approach to housing development as had been taken in the past when hydroelectric power plants had been constructed;
- housing was a significant issue for several partner organisations, and the proposals were welcomed from the perspective of increasing the availability of housing for key workers and reversing depopulation in rural areas;
- information was sought, and provided, on how the proposals aligned with climate change issues, and how supported housing, such as the Housing First model, fit with the Highland Housing Challenge agenda;
- UHI had excellent researchers who could bring a social science perspective to the discussions regarding the demographic challenges;
- it was necessary to understand the impact of the anticipated rise in population in terms of demand for GP services, hospital infrastructure etc and plan accordingly;
- it would be useful to have a discussion with relevant partners regarding the scope for a single public estate;
- the need for more social housing was emphasised, there currently being approximately 9000 applicants on the Highland Housing Register;
- the aging population was a challenge in its own right, and a housing solution was needed in that regard;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the anticipated impact of the potential forthcoming visitor levy on rental properties, and, in relation to the Green Freeport, whether there was scope to borrow against anticipated monies; and

- it was proposed to re-establish Local Development Forums to look at the different needs in different areas, and the importance of partner participation was emphasised.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the presentation.

## 6. Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Performance Framework

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/24/24 by CPP Senior Officers.

In introducing the report, the Partnership Development Manager proposed, based on feedback received, that the indicator “Increase number of children and young people more active more often” be moved from Place to People and amended to “Increase number of people more active more often” to cover all ages including older people. This tied into the Scottish Health Survey, the Active Highland Strategy and the prevention work taking place.

During discussion, support was expressed for the proposal. However, it was suggested that, when reporting on progress, it was necessary to particularly bear in mind the impact on young people given there were no indicators specifically related to children and young people. It was added that it would also be useful to focus on the aging population, which would help with the development of the Active Highland Strategy and Action Plan. If older people were more active they became less frail and more capable of independent living, which linked to the aspiration to increase the number of older people experiencing care at home as opposed to in a care home.

In relation to the Prosperity indicator “Reduce number of 16-19 year olds with unconfirmed status”, the Area Manager, Skills Development Scotland, commented that it was not entirely within the CPP’s gift, and he undertook to liaise with the Partnership Development Manager following the meeting

The Board:

- i. **AGREED** that the indicator “Increase number of children and young people more active more often” be moved from Place to People and amended to “Increase number of people more active more often”; and
- ii. otherwise **NOTED** the updated Performance Framework and that work would be undertaken with performance officers from across the partnership to finalise baseline indicators.

At this stage, the Board **AGREED** to consider item 7 at the end of the meeting as it was confidential.

## 8. Active Highland Strategy and Action Plan

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/26/24 by the Head of Health Improvement, NHS Highland, on behalf of the Active Highland Strategy Partnership Group.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the importance of partnership commitment was emphasised;
- a number of actions sat jointly with High Life Highland and NHS Highland, and the Chief Executive, High Life Highland, emphasised his commitment to a joint post which was crucial in terms of taking forward and upscaling social prescribing and providing a link between the two organisations;

- information was sought, and provided, on the involvement of the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS);
- in terms of access to opportunities for activity, a lot of older people were reliant on public transport which was limited in many areas of Highland, and an assurance was sought that partners were working as collectively as possible to mitigate that. It was added that it was also necessary to consider where community transport linked into this and other agendas;
- activity was not just about the direct physical benefit but the psychological and social benefits;
- information was sought, and provided, as to whether there was enough focus on areas of deprivation and getting young people more active. In relation to the latter, reference was made to diversionary activities, such as midnight football, run by Police Scotland in other parts of the country. It was added that, whilst cost was the barrier that was most often talked about, adherence to social and cultural norms could be a barrier to participation in physical activity in areas of deprivation; and
- it was highlighted that there had been a retrenchment in the funding available for activity-based activity in the third sector, and the challenge was not only increasing activity but sustaining what was already in place.

The Board:

- NOTED** the progress to develop a refreshed Active Highland Strategy and action plan; and
- AGREED** to endorse the proposed set of priority actions to deliver on the agreed outcomes for the refreshed Active Highland Strategy.

## 9. Developing the Care for People Response

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/27/24 by Superintendent Jen Valentine, Police Scotland.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the proposals, which had come out of challenging experiences in recent years, were welcomed, and thanks were expressed to the officers involved;
- information was sought, and provided, on the mechanisms for future learning;
- it was suggested there were opportunities for partner organisations to strengthen how they looked at their individual resilience planning arrangements and how they linked into the wider structures; and
- it was highlighted that there had been structural changes within the Council since the report had been written, and it was suggested that formal approval be postponed to the next meeting to allow the proposals to be reviewed to ensure they reflected the new structure and there was clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities.

The Board **AGREED** that the proposals be reviewed to ensure they reflected recent structural changes within the Council and there was clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities, and that they be brought back to the next meeting of the Board for approval.

## 10. Children and Young People Participation Strategy

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/28/24 by the Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- the importance of the Strategy was emphasised, and thanks were expressed to all those involved in its development; and
- it having been queried whether there was any benefit to be gained from engaging with UHI Students' Association, it was confirmed that there had been reach out to capture the voice of young adults as the Strategy had been developed. However, the Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board undertook to take the point back to the Strategy Group to ensure that alignment was properly in place.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy.

## **11. Community Learning and Development (CLD) Annual Report 2023-24**

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/29/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People, The Highland Council.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the progression that had been made in respect of the CLD Plan was commended;
- in relation to the volunteering component, local figures were available from the Council and HTSI that might be more relevant than the national figures that had been included. This was accepted, and it was confirmed that efforts would be made to include more local data in future iterations;
- a breakdown had been provided detailing which organisations had received funding from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund and, on the point being raised, it was acknowledged a similar breakdown should have been provided in respect of the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund;
- third sector representatives had observed that some of the data in the Annual Report had been taken from information they had published, and it was suggested that more engagement with the third sector might provide more nuance. In that regard, it was highlighted that there was third sector representation on both the strategic and operational CLD groups; and
- information was sought, and provided, on the steps being taken, at a strategic level, to mitigate the risk in terms of those with barriers to engagement and involvement being further disadvantaged if those barriers were not effectively addressed; and how the good work taking place was disseminated and replicated in small rural communities that did not have the same range of community assets available to them as larger more urban communities.

The Board **NOTED** the progress, including key delivery achievements, made in year three of the Highland CLD Plan 2021-2024.

## **12. Partnership Development Team Quarterly Update**

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/30/24 by the Partnership Development Manager and CPP Senior Officers.

The Board **NOTED** the updated Year 2 milestones in Appendix 1 of the report.

## **13. Review of Strategic Risk Register**

The CPP Senior Officers had reviewed and amended the Strategic Risk Register, as follows, based on the discussions at the Board on 20 September 2024:

- Pandemic/Influenza Resilience – Director of Public Health to review and rescope risk.
- Public Sector Funding – Risk Title updated to Public & Third Sector Funding as it was felt that the third sector was facing very similar if not the same risks as the public sector in terms of funding currently.
- Reinstated Support and Resourcing for People Fleeing Crisis.
- Removed Reputational and Communications, as previously agreed, as they were covered under Partnership Development Team.

In relation to Pandemic/Influenza Resilience, the Partnership Development Manager advised that the risk would be revised for the next meeting on 21 February 2025.

With regard to Public and Third Sector Funding, it was explained that, with the Board's agreement, it was intended to review the risk to ensure it took into account the Community Planning Improvement Board Fairer Funding for the Voluntary Sector Principles and the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2024/25 which touched on public sector and third sector funding. A meeting would be arranged with Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Place Director, and CPP Senior Officers, and an update would be provided at the February Board.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- information was sought, and provided, as to how and when the Partnership's risk appetite had been set, and it was suggested there was a need to formalise the arrangements in terms of reviewing risks, setting risk appetite and escalating risks. It was added that it was also necessary to consider how to align risk appetite to strategy, and how to use the Risk Register to inform the Board's agenda and workplan;
- in response to a query, it was explained that the Partnership Development Team and Public and Third Sector risks were still under development and work would be undertaken, for the next meeting, to populate the Management Plan column and score the risks appropriately; and
- given the discussions under item 5, it was suggested there should be a risk in respect of housing, both in terms of demand for housing for workers and the challenge highlighted by the Council.

The Board:

- APPROVED** the revised Strategic Risk Register;
- AGREED** that further revisions/additions be made, based on the points raised during discussion, and presented to the next meeting of the Board for consideration; and
- AGREED** that work be undertaken to formalise the arrangements in terms of reviewing the Partnership's risks, setting the risk appetite, and escalating risks.

#### 14. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Friday 21 February 2025 at 10.00 am.

#### 15. Any Other Business

The Chair of the Community Justice Partnership (CJP) referred to the CJP Annual Report 2023/24 which had been approved at the previous meeting, and explained that the CJP was also required, for the first time, to produce a community-facing Annual Report which would be complete within the next few days and had to be published by the end of December.

It was also highlighted that a development session had taken place on 30 November 2024 looking at the restructuring of the CJP, which would move to a more strategic footing. Two operational groups would be established that would focus on the four national aims for Community Justice, and further information would be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Following discussion as to the most appropriate means of approving the community-facing Annual Report, should the Scottish Government confirm Board approval was required, the Board:

- i. **NOTED** the update provided; and
- ii. **AGREED**, given the timescale for publication and subject to confirmation that Board approval was required, that the Community Justice Partnership Community-facing Annual Report be circulated to Board Members by email for approval, with final sign-off by the Board Chair.

**7. Confidential Item:  
Partnership Development Team – Resourcing Update**

There had been circulated separately, to Board Members only, Confidential Report No CPPB/25/24 by CPP Senior Officers.

Following discussion, the Board **AGREED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 12.00 noon.



**The Highland Council  
Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 18 December 2024 at 9.00 a.m.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr J Finlayson  
Mr R Gale (substitute)

Mr B Lobban  
Ms K MacLean (substitute)  
Mr R Stewart

**Officials in attendance:-**

Mr M MacLeod, Assistant Chief Executive – Place.  
Mrs L McGunnigle, HR Manager, Corporate

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie, Mr K Gowans and Mrs T Robertson.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement**

There were none.

**3. Exclusion of the Public**

The Panel **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**4. Minute of Last Meeting**

There had been circulated to Members only, for confirmation, minute of meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held on 19 November 2024, the terms of which were **Approved**.

**5. Appointment of Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet Management**

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

- a) A copy of the Job Specification and Person Specification for the post of Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet management.
- b) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates;
- c) Candidate scoring sheet;
- d) a scenario and interview questions.

One of the shortlisted candidates had withdrawn from the recruitment process. The panel proceeded to interview the remaining candidates.

Following consideration, the Panel **appointed Paul Reid** to the post of Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet Management.

## **6. Chief Officer Operations and Maintenance**

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

- a) the Chief Officer Operations and Maintenance job description and person specification.
- b) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates.
- c) Candidate scoring sheet.
- d) a scenario and interview questions.

The panel proceeded to interview the candidates.

Following consideration, **the Panel did not appoint.**

The meeting ended at 5p.m.

**The Highland Council**  
**Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief  
Officer Recruitment Panel held in  
Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart  
Road, Inverness on Thursday 19  
December 2024 at 9.00a.m.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr A Christie  
Mr J Finlayson  
Mr K Gowans

Mr B Lobban  
Mrs T Robertson  
Mr R Stewart

**Officials in attendance:-**

Mr M MacLeod, Assistant Chief Executive – Place  
Ms J Sikkema, Senior HR Business Partner, Corporate

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement**

There were none.

**3. Exclusion of the Public**

The Panel **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**4. Appointment of Chief Officer Planning and Economic Development**

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

- a) A copy of the Job Specification and Person Specification for the post of Chief Officer Planning and Economic Development.
- b) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates;
- c) Candidate scoring sheet;
- d) a scenario and interview questions.

Two of the shortlisted candidates had withdrawn from the recruitment process. The panel proceeded to interview the remaining candidates.

Following consideration, the Panel did not appoint.

The meeting ended at 11.50a.m.

**The Highland Council**  
**Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief  
Officer Recruitment Panel held in the  
Leaders Meeting Room, Council  
Headquarters, Inverness on  
Thursday 19 December 2024 at  
11.55a.m.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr A Christie  
Mr J Finlayson  
Mr K Gowans

Mr B Lobban  
Mrs T Robertson  
Mr R Stewart

**Officials in attendance:-**

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate  
Ms K MacDougall, Talent Manager, Corporate  
Ms J Sikkema, Senior HR Business Partner, Corporate  
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement**

There were none.

**3. Exclusion of the Public**

The Panel **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**4. Shortlisting for Chief Officer HR & Communications**

There had been circulated a copy of:

- i. the Chief Officer HR & Communications job description and person specification;
- ii. a summary sheet of applications; and
- iii. copies of the applications received for the Chief Officer HR & Communications.

It was noted that the Chief Officer HR & Communications post had been re-advertised following the meeting of the Panel on 28 October 2024. At that

meeting 2 candidates had been shortlisted for interview and did not need to reapply for the post.

The Panel considered applications for shortlisting for interview from the re-advertised post.

Following consideration, the Panel **Agreed** that a further two candidates be shortlisted for interview for the Chief Officer HR & Communications.

The Panel **Noted** that interviews for this post would be held on Thursday 16 January 2025.

The meeting ended at 12 noon.

**The Highland Council**  
**Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief  
Officer Recruitment Panel held in  
Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart  
Road, Inverness on Thursday 16  
January 2025 at 10.45a.m.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner  
Mr A Christie  
Mr J Finlayson  
Mr K Gowans

Mr B Lobban  
Mrs T Robertson  
Mr R Stewart

**Officials in attendance:-**

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate  
Ms J Sikkema, Senior HR Business Partner, Corporate

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement**

There were none.

**3. Minutes of Meetings**

There were circulated, for confirmation, minutes of meetings of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held on 18 and 19 December, 2024, the terms of which were **Approved**.

**4. Exclusion of the Public**

The Panel **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**5. Minute of Meeting of 19 December 2024**

There were circulated to Members only, for confirmation, minute of meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held on 19 December 2024, the terms of which were **Approved**.

**6. Chief Officer HR & Communications**

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

- a) the Chief Officer HR & Communications job description and person specification;
- b) Psychometric feedback report;
- c) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates;
- d) Candidate scoring sheet;
- e) a scenario and interview questions.

One of the shortlisted candidates had withdrawn from the recruitment process. The panel proceeded to interview the remaining candidates.

Following consideration, the Panel appointed Ruth Fry to the post of Chief Officer HR & Communications.

The meeting ended at 3.00p.m.

**The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Redesign Board of the Highland Council** held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on 20 March 2025 at 2pm.

**Members present:**

Mr M Baird	Ms B Jarvie (remote)
Mr B Boyd (remote)	Mr R Jones
Mr R Bremner	Mr B Lobban
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (remote)	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr A Christie (remote)	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs M Cockburn	Mrs T Robertson
Mr M Green	Mr J Gibson, UNISON
Mrs J Hendry	Mrs C A Stewart, GMB

**Non-Members present:**

Mr C Ballance	Mr A Graham (remote)
Dr C Birt (remote)	Mr R MacKintosh
Mr J Bruce	Mrs A MacLean (remote)
Mr R Gale	Ms K MacLean

**Participating Officials:**

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate  
Ms A Clark, Chief Officer, Housing and Communities  
Mrs S Armstrong, Chief Officer - Revenues and Commercialisation  
Mr J Shepherd, Chief Officer, Business Solutions  
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads & Infrastructure  
Mr E Gilbert, Project Manager (Strategic Improvement)  
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**Leisgeulan**

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mr D Fraser, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms L Sagers, and Ms M Smith.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

**Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were none.

**3. Minutes**

**Geàrr-chunntas**

The Board **NOTED** the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024, which had been approved by the Council on 12 December 2024.



#### **4. Redesign of Highland Council – Work Programme Update Ath-dhealbhadh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Cunntas às Ùr mun Phrògram Obrach**

There had been circulated Report No RDB/01/25 by the Chief Officer – Business Solutions.

Following a summary of the various programmes, the following issues were raised during discussion:

- in relation to the new website, assurance was sought that out of date information and pages would not be transferred. Services had been tasked with reviewing their web pages and a summary was provided of the processes being undertaken, with immediate priority being given to the most well-used pages. The reputational risk of transferring incorrect information was highlighted, as was the need for tight cyber security. A timeline for the transfer to the new site was requested and assurance was provided that there would be in-house capacity and ability to continuously update the new site
- clarity was sought on the contact details that would be available on the new site, and information was provided about the current and future process for the public to report, pay or request information and services. Support and contact details for members was different and assurance was provided that there would be Member training in April on how to access contact information, and on the current reporting tool;
- clarity was sought and provided on the funding situation for Project 3, MyHighland, with the need for further funding being currently uncertain; and
- the Convenor asked that the Board be kept update on progress with Asset Rationalisation and he referred to a number of other projects which had originated with the Redesign Board, which he would follow up with officers outwith the meeting.

The Board **NOTED** the work programme update and **AGREED** the Board be updated on progress with Asset Rationalisation.

#### **5. Roads Redesign Phase 1 Closure Report Aithisg Dùnaidh Ìre 1 Ath-dhealbhachadh Rathaidean**

There had been circulated Report No RDB/02/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

Following a presentation by the Head of Roads & Infrastructure, Members raised the following issues during discussion:

- the closure of Phase 1 was welcomed and, although it had taken a significant amount of time, attention was drawn to the amount of work that had been required over the previous three years. It was hoped the pace would be increased for the next phase;
- several areas of improvement were detailed, including new pothole filling technology, improved efficiency and use of resources, improved feedback to the public on issues reported, and a move to more pro-active planned maintenance;
- in relation to planning road maintenance and repairs, there was a need to balance flexibility versus complying with audited processes;

- in relation to the live mapping of potholes, it was queried whether this might lead to an increase in damages claims. Assurance was provided that robust policies had been put in place;
- it was clarified that bridges were considered part of the road network infrastructure;
- attention was drawn to the reported use of AI by some local authorities in England to predict where future potholes might occur;
- information was sought and provided on progress with the Road Marking team:
- it was queried when a computerised rather than paper-based manual job card system would be implemented and, in response, it was hoped some progress would be made with this in the coming 12 months; and
- information was sought and provided on how contractors would be used and how to balance the need to prioritise individual potholes versus the efficiencies gained by tackling several in the same vicinity. This issue was being considered by the Working Group.

The Board **NOTED** the Road Improvement Project – Phase 1 Closure Report.

The meeting ended at 2.45pm.