

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, on Thursday, 11 June 2015, at 2.15 p.m.

Present

Mr H Fraser	Mr G Rimell
Ms J Campbell	Mr G Ross
Mr L Fraser (substitute)	Mr R Saxon
Mrs D MacKay	Dr A Sinclair
Mrs A MacLean	Ms J Slater
Mr H Morrison	
Mr I Renwick	

Non-Members also present:

Mr A Baxter	Mrs L Munro
Mrs G Coghill	Mrs F Robertson
Mrs M Davidson	Ms K Stephen

Officials in attendance:

Ms C McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform, Chief Executive's Office
Ms L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Ms L Lee, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Chief Superintendent J Innes, Highland and Islands Divisional Commander, Police Scotland
Mr S Hay, Local Senior Officer for the Highland Area, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr G MacLeod, Head of Ambulance Services Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service
Mr R Iffla, Board Member, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Dr M Foxley, Board Member, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr I Ross, Board Member, Scottish Police Authority
Item 3: Ms A Pyott, Ms R McKechnie, Mrs H Minhas, Mrs S Chaudry and Mrs A Ali of Highland Multi-cultural Friends Group
Item 4: Ms C McCullagh – Curator – Collections Engagement, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, and Ms E Stewart – story teller and ambassador for Gaelic and the Traveller tradition.

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 H Fraser in the Chair

Preliminaries

The Chair thanked Mrs A MacLean, as outgoing Chair, for her work and input to the Committee over recent meetings.

1. Apologies for Absence Liesgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Duffy, Mrs M Paterson, Ms G Ross and Mr M Reiss of Highland Council, and Mr J Beresford, Community Accountability Coordinator, Scottish Police Authority.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 5 - Mrs A MacLean and Ms J Campbell (Non-Financial)

Equalities Co-ionannachdan

3. Presentation – Highland Multi-Cultural Friends Taisbeanadh – Caraidean Ioma-Chultarach na Gàidhealtachd

A presentation was given by members of the Highland Multi-cultural Friends group, informing the Committee of the work carried out by the Friends, and the activities the group was involved in. The group's aim was to celebrate cultural diversity through bringing together different traditions, so that the minor and major cultures could learn from each other and benefit from the best that each had to offer. The Group provided classes in English, sewing, fitness and cooking. Child care was also provided, and much valued, - people new to Inverness often had no family or friendship support networks.

Individual group members told of their own experiences, and provided information on outreach activities. Sharing of food and sewing had been found to be practical and successful ways of bringing people together. Other activities included presentations to schools to disseminate information on different cultures, and contact with the armed services in Inverness – the barracks were home to people from 26 nations. Whilst the group's focus was largely on sharing the positives, issues such as Islamophobia could also be tackled. Those from other cultures were happy to contribute to the community in Highland, and felt supported by it.

Members warmly thanked the Friends for their presentation, and spoke highly of the work they did in bringing people together. It was hoped that the Friends would be able to cook for the Committee on a future meeting day.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

4. The Cultural Contribution of Gypsy/Travellers in the Highlands Tabhartas Cultarach nan Siopsach/Luchd-siubhail sa Ghàidhealtachd

A presentation was given by Inverness Museum and Art Gallery (IMAG) staff and Essie Stewart, a Gaelic storyteller from a Sutherland Travelling family who had a background in Gaelic and Traveller tradition. The presentation informed

Members of a forthcoming exhibition at IMAG. There had also been circulated Report No. CPE8/15 dated 2 June 2015 by High Life Highland (HLH) which provided additional information on the role of HLH in promoting Scottish Gypsy/Traveller heritage and culture.

The Curator (Collections Engagement), Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, spoke about the work underway to prepare for the IMAG exhibition on 2 July 2015, which aimed both to preserve Gypsy/Traveller culture and to bring it alive for people. Artefacts, including photographs, held at IMAG and the museums at Kingussie and Newtonmore numbered around 500,000. People from the traveller community were engaged with the project and brought additional knowledge. Contact had also been made with HUG, (a local community group promoting mental health across the Highlands), as a similarly excluded and stigmatised group, for their input. Activities had included story-telling and artistic creation in response to the stories.

Ms E Stewart spoke about the traditional way of life of Gypsy/Travellers, including tin-smithing, horse trading, besom making and story-telling. The Gypsy/Traveller tradition was largely an oral tradition - some of the stories could be traced back to the 5th Century. However, the way of life was disappearing and there was a real risk that Gypsy/Traveller culture and heritage would be lost. The work being carried out by IMAG was invaluable. Ms Stewart saw herself as a tradition bearer, as younger generations appeared disinterested in the traditional culture.

In discussion, Members welcomed the report and the information given. The work being carried out to preserve Gypsy/Traveller culture and heritage was of international importance. Individual Members also recalled interaction with travellers in years gone by.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the valuable work undertaken by HLH staff to conserve and promote the historic contribution of Scottish Gypsy/Travellers to Highland culture, and the current involvement of Highland Travellers in activities; and
- ii. the potential for further opportunities for HLH to work with young Travelling people to explore what culture and heritage means to them.

The Committee **AGREED** that future annual reports to CPE committee on Gypsy/Traveller issues included updates from HLH on the promotion of the cultural contribution of Gypsy/Travellers to the Highlands.

5. Violence Against Women Strategy Group – Minutes Buidheann Ro-innleachd Fòirneart An Aghaidh Bhoireannach– Geàrr- Chunntas

Declarations of Interest: Mrs A MacLean and Ms J Campbell declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of Ross-shire Women’s Aid and Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Women’s Aid respectively but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, each concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

The Minutes of the Violence Against Women Strategy Group meeting held on 4 February 2015 were **NOTED**.

Community Safety Com-pàirt Phoblach

6. Fire and Rescue Service Reports Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn

i. Quarterly Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais Ràitheil

There had been circulated Report No. CPE9/15 dated 29 May 2015 by the Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue (LSO), together with accompanying quarterly performance report (QPR) for Quarter 4, 2014/15, which provided detail on Fire and Rescue Service performance across a range of Intervention, Prevention and Protection activities for Quarter 4, and year-end totals for 2014/15.

The LSO drew attention to the main points of the report, in particular the continuing downward trends in non-fatal accidental dwelling fires, non-fatal fire casualties, deliberate fires and road traffic collisions. The fire safety audit programme was also progressing well. However, there had been four fatalities in Highland over the year. Partnership working continued with a view to identifying those at greatest risk, and so target preventative action. A recent recruitment drive had resulted in 56 applications for the wider Northern service delivery area; these were currently being processed.

In discussion, Members gave consideration to:

- the link between retained fire fighter numbers and station availability;
- recruitment: recent successful campaigns; the shorter recruitment process; and that fire fighters were now able to train more locally;
- unwanted fire alarms and the actions taken by Fire Officers in response;
- the increase in accidental dwelling fires: there was no clear trend which could be targeted, but statistically, 40% started in the kitchen; this informed the focus of post-incident Home Fire Safety Visits; and
- the presentation of Ward statistics: measuring performance against the average meant that all stations below average were graded red – this could be misleading where a station was in fact improving.

In answer to questions raised regarding stations at Kinlochewe and Torridon, which for a number of years had had temporary planning permission only, the LSO advised that as all stations were included in the current national review of emergency cover which included risk profiles, operational activity and assets, and that temporary permission would continue meantime. He also gave assurances that where fire safety was a concern at construction sites, SFRS staff would make contact with the responsible person or duty holder; that Thurso Fire Station was on the capital expenditure programme, and that the SFRS property department was aware of the need to address the provision of female facilities; timescales in these two latter regards were not known, however the LSO advised that he would provide an update on these items as soon as practicable.

The Committee **NOTED** service delivery and performance contained within the Report and accompanying QPR for Quarter 4 and year-end totals for 2014/15.

**ii. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2016/19
Plana Ro-innleachdail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-
Alba 2016/19**

There had been circulated Report No. CPE 10/15 dated 29 May 2015 by the Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue (LSO) providing an update on the development of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Strategic Plan 2016/19. A presentation was given setting out the background, operating context and key timeline for the development and delivery of the new Strategic Plan. Members were asked to provide responses to four key stakeholder questions which would support the early development of the Strategic Plan 2016/19:

- what were the key strengths of the SFRS?
- as a local partner, what were our shared challenges and opportunities?
- what did Members think SFRS can do to help improve matters at a local partnership level or nationally?
- what really mattered to our communities?

The LSO drew attention to factors which would be taken into account in the preparation of the new Plan, including ongoing public sector finance pressures; staffing and station numbers; Community Planning reform and the need to tackle inequalities and promote social and economic justice. The emerging direction of travel was that the Service would need to be more outcome-focussed, more effective and flexible, and work with partners towards prevention across a range of negative outcomes in a more imaginative way.

Dr Foxley stressed the importance of responding to the questions. The position had changed even in the past five years, with the emphasis moving to improving community safety as a whole, rather than focussing on responding to emergencies. It would, however, be important to keep the current footprint across Highland.

In discussion, Members put forward some initial responses to the questions, including that: the imposition of VAT on the Police and Fire and Rescue Services was unfair; “blue light” cover should be considered; the Scottish Police Authority’s practice of webcasting its meetings should also be adopted by the SFRS Board; and that the approachability of the Services was excellent. In general, however, the Committee was minded that there had been insufficient time for them to formulate a full response, and that a Member workshop, open to all Members and attended by Dr Foxley and Mr Iffla, should be arranged in late June or early July 2015. Whilst it was desirable that the views of communities were obtained, it was accepted that this might be difficult to achieve in the time available.

The LSO then presented further information on the work being undertaken by the SFRS, including: identifying what kind of risks there were, and where these were located – this analysis would identify gaps in service provision as well as over provision, therefore informing locations of assets and fire stations; identifying capacity over a range of skills; recruitment; and partnership working. There would be full consultation should changes be proposed.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the contents of the paper, the supporting presentation, and the information provided; and
- ii. that although the response deadline was the end of June, it would be possible to submit comments during early July 2015.

The Committee **AGREED** that:

- i. in view of the short timescale for responses, possible dates prior to the end of June or early July 2015 would be explored for a Member workshop (to be open to all Councillors), to consider and prepare a full response to the questions; with Mr Iffla and Dr Foxley of the SFRS Board being invited to attend; and
- ii. the four questions be also considered at Ward Business meetings, as preparation for responding to the SFRS consultation when this was issued in the Autumn.

7. Police Reports Aithisgean Poilis

i. Performance Against the Highland Local Policing Plan 2014-17 Sgìre Poilis Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd 2014-17

There had been circulated Report No. CPE11/15 dated 27 May 2015 by the Divisional Commander (Highlands and Islands) for Police providing an update on the progress with reference to the objectives outlined in the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

The Divisional Commander highlighted the main points of the report, including the decrease over the past year in: people killed or seriously injured on the roads, antisocial behaviour and vandalism and crimes of dishonesty; and the increase numbers caught for drug dealing. Whilst sexual and domestic offences and hate crime showed a fall, there were concerns that these areas were under-reported; work with Community Planning Partners was ongoing to address this. He drew attention to the clear focus on local priorities, which had been identified through communication with communities in the Highlands, and were different from national priorities. Good detection rates were being maintained.

Members welcomed the positive report and commended the outstanding achievements, and that priorities were geared to issues of importance in the Highland. Appreciation was expressed in particular for the attendance of Officers at Community Council meetings, the annual Driving Ambition programme at schools, innovative ways of working with and empowering communities to address specific issues, such as speeding, the effectiveness of the Inverness multi-agency response team, and the actions being taken to raise the profile of child sexual exploitation. However, more needed to be done to address alcohol and drug misuse, and frustration was expressed regarding delays in filling gaps in staffing.

In response to the above points and to questions raised, Members were provided with information on matters relating to recruitment and the support available from specialist units; the process for apportioning proceeds of crime to Police Forces,

and the proposed future roll-out of the Inverness response team initiative in Caithness, and thereafter elsewhere. The Divisional Commander also undertook to take forward actions relating to: consistency of officers attending community council meetings; the distribution of road safety leaflets for foreign drivers and motorcyclists; the provision of a 3D scanner for the Fort William area; and the new Council Leader's stated expectations and priorities with regard to drug and alcohol misuse.

Mr Ian Ross expressed his appreciation at positive comments and constructive contributions made by Members and highlighted the effective engagement taking place with partners. He also informed Members that a protocol for communication and engagement had recently been agreed between Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority; local scrutiny had an important role to play in this regard.

The Chairman having thanked the Divisional Commander and his staff for their work, the Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the Year 1 Review of the Highland Local Policing Plan 2014-2017 (Appendix 1);
 - ii. performance report against Policing Plan Objectives – April 2014-March 2015 (Appendix 2); and
 - iii. end of year Complaints Against Police report (Appendix 3).
- ii. National Child Abuse Investigation Unit
Aonad Sgrùdaidh Nàiseanta airson Droch Dhìol air Cloinn**

The Committee **NOTED** that the item had been withdrawn and would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

**8. Independent Advisory Group on Stop and Search: opportunity to respond to the call for evidence
Buidheann Comhairleachaidh Neo-eisimeileach mu Stad is Sgrùd: Cothrom freagairt a thoirt dhan ghairm airson fianais**

There had been circulated Report No. CPE12/15 dated 2 June by the Head of Policy and Reform informing Members that a call for evidence by 3rd July 2015 had been made by the Scottish Government's Independent Advisory Group on Stop and Search.

Prior to discussion, the Head of Policy and Reform advised that the focus on the call for evidence had principally been around consensual stop and search; in particular, whether it should continue and if so, whether a code of practice should be designed to reinforce it. She also advised that, despite a request at the previous meeting of the Committee for data on stop and search practice in Highland, figures for 2014/15 were currently unavailable. The Divisional Commander (Highlands and Islands) advised that he would encourage Police Scotland to continue reporting on the same level of detail in the previous year's format for 2014/15.

The Divisional Commander (Highlands and Islands) gave a briefing on the practice used by officers in Highland in relation to stop and search, in particular the concept of consensual stop and search, and advised that 25% of stop and searches were undertaken in this manner. Whilst the vast majority of these were

cases of officers taking alcohol from individuals on account of local by-laws, other consensual searches were down to what he considered good policing whereby officers engaged with individuals if necessary because they felt it was the right thing to do. He highlighted that officers were well briefed from the information provided by communities which enabled them to get things done in areas where there were particular issues around drugs and legal highs.

During discussion, the view was expressed that young people should be included as part of the call for evidence. In response, the Head of Policy and Reform advised that the Highland Youth Parliament could be asked for their views on the consultation.

In response to points raised in discussion, the Divisional Commander advised that there had been no consensual stop and searches of children in Highland during 2015 since the change in policy by Police Scotland. He confirmed that, in the circumstance, such as possession of alcohol, young people would be searched. He also explained that for consensual and statutory types of searches, the vast majority were done under law such as the Misuse of Drugs Act and legislation in relation to firearms and stolen property.

The Committee **AGREED** a response to the call for evidence, by the deadline of 3 July 2015 to include:

- that no Police Scotland data for 2014/15 was available for Members on the use and impact of stop and search in Highland;
- the earlier comments submitted regarding children and young people in Highland;
- the points made in paragraph 2.3 of the report regarding the need for good reporting on stop and search, the need to be mindful of people's protected characteristics and different community safety contexts (rural, urban and events and festivals) and the importance of partnership working for community safety; and
- if consensual Stop and Search was to continue, there should be a code of practice developed, drawing on the points raised in the report and based on the practice in Highland as verbally reported by the Local Police Commander.

The Committee also **AGREED** to ask the Highland Youth Parliament to respond directly to the Independent Advisory Group on Stop and Search.

9. Scottish Ambulance Service Report Aithisg Seirbheis Charbadan-eiridinn na h-Alba

i. Quarterly Report Aithisg Ràitheil

There had been circulated performance report by the Scottish Ambulance Service for the Highland area for the period April 2014 to May 2015.

During discussion, a request was made for performance statistics throughout the report to include physical numbers instead of percentages.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the report and the information given.

**ii. First Responders
Ciad Luchd-freagairt**

A presentation was given by the Scottish Ambulance Service, informing the Committee of the work undertaken by First Responders and providing background information on their role in the context of the “Chain of Survival”. The presentation highlighted the three main types of First Responders and provided an overview of the 25 schemes currently taking place within Highland, as well as schemes currently being developed in four locations. Information was also provided on the Public Access Defibrillator scheme and where defibrillators could be accessed publicly in the Highlands.

In discussion, information was requested on how communities could set-up a Public Access Defibrillator scheme in their area. In response, interested communities were advised to contact the Scottish Ambulance Service, who would be able help to co-ordinate this

The Chairman thanked Mr MacLeod for his presentation and commended the Scottish Ambulance Service in its efforts to further develop the First Responder service.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and the information given.

**Public Engagement
Com-pàirt Phoblach**

**10. Community Planning Board – Minutes
Bòrd Dealbhadh Choimhearsnachd – Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated minutes of meeting of the Community Planning Board held on 4 March 2015, which had been approved by the Board at its meeting on 3 June 2015.

During discussion, the low survival rate from cardiac arrest outside of hospitals was highlighted and that communities should be made more aware of the opportunities available to install public access defibrillators. In response, the Scottish Ambulance Service advised that funding was available for communities to apply for public access defibrillators. The Head of Policy and Reform also advised that communities could be informed of the Public Access Defibrillators Scheme by the following means:-

- asking Ward Managers to contact groups that they were aware of in their area;
- contacting groups registered for the Council’s Communities Panel; and
- asking Highland Third Sector Interface to distribute information to their groups.

A request was also made for information to be distributed to all Members on the Scheme and that the availability of defibrillators in Council buildings, especially at Headquarters be considered.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the minutes of meeting of the Community Planning Board held on 4 March 2015 and **AGREED** that:

- i. means of informing communities through Ward Managers, Council's Communities Panel and Highland Third Sector Interface about the Public Access Defibrillators Scheme be explored; and
- ii. that information on the Public Access Defibrillators Scheme be distributed to all Members.

The meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.