

**The Highland Council**  
**No. 5 2015/2016**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 13 August 2015 at 10.30 am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence**  
**A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

**Present:**

Dr D Alston	Mrs L MacDonald
Mr R Balfour	Mr N MacDonald
Mrs J Barclay	Mrs D Mackay
Mr A Baxter	Mr D Mackay
Mr I Brown	Mr W MacKay
Mrs C Caddick	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mr A Mackinnon
Miss J Campbell	Mr K MacLeod
Mrs H Carmichael	Mrs B McAllister
Mr A Christie	Mrs I McCallum
Mr B Clark	Mr D Millar
Dr I Cockburn	Mr H Morrison
Mrs G Coghill	Mr B Murphy
Mr J Crawford	Mrs M Paterson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G Phillips
Mr N Donald	Mr T Prag
Ms J Douglas	Mr M Rattray
Mr G Farlow	Mr I Renwick
Mr B Fernie	Mr A Rhind
Mr M Finlayson	Mr G Rimell
Mr C Fraser	Mrs F Robertson
Mr H Fraser	Mr J Rosie
Mr L Fraser	Ms G Ross
Mr S Fuller	Mr G Ross
Mr J Gordon	Mr R Saxon
Mr B Gormley	Dr A Sinclair
Mr A Graham	Mrs G Sinclair
Mr J Gray	Mrs J Slater
Mr M Green	Ms M Smith
Mr R Greene	Ms K Stephen
Mr A Henderson	Mr B Thompson
Mr D Kerr	Mr H Wood
Mr R Laird	
Mr B Lobban	

**In Attendance:**

Chief Executive	Director of Care and Learning
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development	Director of Finance
Director of Development & Infrastructure	Director of Community Services

**Mrs I McCallum in the Chair**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Bremner, Mr A Duffy, Mr D Fallows, Mr J Ford, Mr K Gowans, Mr J McGillivray, Ms A MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Ms L Munro, Mr F Parr, Mr M Reiss, Mr J Stone and Mrs C Wilson.

## **Preliminaries**

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Convener, on behalf of the Council, extended condolences to Mr J Ford and his family on their recent bereavement.

Reference was also made to correspondence which had been received from the President of the International Orienteering Federation which thanked Members and Officers from the Council for the help which had been given in relation to the recent World Orienteering Championships held in the Highlands.

### **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

It was **NOTED** that there were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Membership of the Council Ballrachd na Comhairle**

It was **NOTED** that Mr Drew Hendry had tendered his resignation as a Member of the Council with effect from 13 July 2015.

In this regard, a By-Election for Ward 13 (Aird and Loch Ness) had now been arranged and would be held on Thursday, 8 October 2015.

### **4. Vice Convener Iar-Neach-Gairm**

It was **AGREED** that Mrs Carolyn Caddick should be appointed to the second position of Vice Convener within the Council.

Mr Charles Kennedy – at this point in the meeting, and upon accepting the position of Vice Convener, Mrs Caddick advised all those present that a Memorial Service for the late Charles Kennedy was to be held on 24 August 2015 at 6.00pm in St Clement's Church, Dingwall.

### **5. Highland First - Programme for the Highland Council Prògram na Comhairle**

There had been circulated 'Highland First', the Programme for the Highland Council, which set out the Administration's priorities. In this regard, it was confirmed that these priorities would form the basis of the Council's Corporate and Service Plans.

Introducing the Programme, the Leader confirmed that this represented an evolution of 'Working Together for the Highlands' (which had been the Programme for the past three years) and highlighted a number of underlying principles for the Council within the references to 'A Community Led Highland', 'A Well Served Highland' and 'A Fairer Highland'. In addition, there was additional reference within the Programme to 'Inverness City – the Capital of the Highlands' and the intention was to agree this and then take it back to the City of Inverness Area Committee for further consideration. Discussion would also be undertaken within all other Areas on the

content of the proposed Programme in order to ensure that it was maintained as a 'live document' for the Council.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- much of the content had been based on the previous Programme but there was a need for further financial commitment to be added;
- the Programme for the Council would be stronger if it had unanimous agreement and it was hoped that this could be achieved between now and the next meeting in September;
- the commitment to a Living Wage was especially important and had to be carried forward as part of the new Programme;
- consideration should be given as to whether there might be a better title for the new Programme;
- there was a need to strengthen the wording around what the Council could achieve whilst working with partners;
- it would be helpful if reference could be made at the end of Committee reports as to how proposals linked with the commitments within the proposed Programme;
- it would be more appropriate for the issues highlighted under 'Inverness City – the Capital of the Highlands' to be submitted to and debated by the City of Inverness Area Committee as opposed to the full Council;
- in relation to affordable housing, the Council should aim to work with the Scottish Government, Registered Social Landlords and the private sector to help to deliver 5000 new homes by 2017, including at least 1000 Council houses and other affordable homes;
- in terms of connectivity, there was a need to maximise traditional and mobile broadband (3G and 4G) throughout the whole of the Highland area;
- in regard to development of local and national infrastructure, and specifically lobbying to increase investment, there was a need to also include reference to improving services to local stations;
- there should be inclusion of the need to undertake a review of service delivery to remote and rural communities and to identify a sustainable level of support necessary for the provision of services;
- there had been accusations that the previous Programme had lacked ambition but the new Programme contained far fewer commitments and there was a need for a more appropriate blend between campaigning and lobbying commitments;
- in terms of poverty and deprivation, the ambition for the Council needed to be that, when the next Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation was published, every Highland Datazone would have less deprivation and within the next five years no Highland Datazone would be within the most deprived 15% nationally;
- there was a need for clarity as to whether the meeting had been called to agree a new Programme or if this was just the beginning of a process which would be finalised at the meeting;
- it had to be recognised that the fundamental role of the Council was to ensure that proper budgets were in place in order to deliver the services which Highland residents expected and there was a need for more emphasis on this within the Programme;
- there was a need for a strong focus on how services were being delivered at a local level and for the Council to work in partnership with the private sector where this was most appropriate;

- with specific reference to the commitments on delivering social care, empowering communities and community works, it was imperative that there was no reduction in jobs, wages or working conditions;
- a matrix would be helpful in terms of highlighting previous commitments which had been achieved, current and proposed commitments; and
- it would be helpful if the wording could be strengthened in regard to the commitment to continue to deliver supported temporary accommodation for those who were homeless.

Thereafter, the meeting adjourned to allow consideration of specific amendments from the SNP Group, the Liberal Democrat Group and Ms J Douglas as follows -

### **From the SNP Group**

**31. Building the Local Economy** – add the following – Working with Scottish Government and other agencies, the Council will undertake a review of service delivery to remote and rural communities and identify a sustainable level of support necessary for the provision of services, thereby developing new approaches to service delivery and community resilience in our most remote and rural communities including North West and Central Sutherland.

**35. Connectivity** – add the following – We will work with Scottish Government and other partners and agencies to maximise traditional and mobile broadband (3G and 4G) throughout the whole of the Highlands.

**36. Developing Local and National Infrastructure** – amend as follows – Working with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, HiTRANS and HIAL, we will lobby to increase investment in infrastructure in the Highlands with a view to improving road, rail and air links from the area, whilst improving services to local stations. This will include.....etc.

**49. Poverty and Deprivation** – amend as follows – “With our partners, we will develop an anti-poverty strategy that also recognises the issue of poverty in rural areas, to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable within our communities. This will include maximising incomes.....to manage their money.

Add the following – When the next Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is published, every Highland Datazone WILL have less deprivation and, within the next 5 years, no Highland Datazone will be within the ‘most deprived 15%’ nationally.

**51. Affordable Housing** – add the following – The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Registered Social Landlords and the private sector to help deliver 5000 new homes by 2017. This will include at least 1000 Council houses and other affordable homes.

### **From the Liberal Democrat Group**

#### **New Commitments Proposed**

#### **Economy**

We will investigate new opportunities for non-domestic rate incentives for town centres/specified streets or localities where support is needed to help to reverse localised economic decline.

## **Caring Communities**

We will continue to lobby for measures that will mitigate the negative effects of Welfare Reform measures on individuals, providers of social housing and the rural economy. As the first Council in Scotland to work directly with the Department for Work and Pensions on Universal Credit mitigation for local claimants, the Council will also seek to improve communications, data sharing and local joint working with the Department.

## **Better Infrastructure**

We will devise a comprehensive strategy to bring about a reduction in energy costs in the Highlands, including particular support for fuel poor households and co-operative fuel buying.

We will adopt the principles of 'shared space' in order to find innovative solutions for reconciling traffic movement with quality spaces in our cities, towns and villages.

We will work with HiTRANS and rail operators to seek expansion of concessionary commuter fares to routes south and east of Inverness.

We will campaign for incentives from Scottish and UK Governments to reduce the negative impact that poorly maintained buildings have in our communities.

We will promote seaborne tourism by developing the network of harbours around our coastline through a partnership of Council harbours, trust ports, community owned or operated harbours and privately own facilities in order to generate income and employment for our coastal communities.

## **Empowering Communities**

Working with the UK and Scottish Governments and Electoral Bodies, we will encourage voter turn-out, especially among younger people.

We will reduce the volume of printed material produced by the Council building on a current initiative for paperless Council meeting options and developing further options for Members, customers and employees to conduct Council business online.

### **Changes to current Commitments in 'Working Together for the Highlands' Programme**

Amend the overarching Climate Change commitment to read as follows – The Council will maintain its commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration and work with everyone to achieve a Carbon CLEVER Highlands by 2025 (A Carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands)

Amend the overarching Equalities commitment to read as follows – The Council will aim to achieve its equality outcomes so that people are, and feel free to, live their lives without harassment and discrimination and can take part in community life, people benefit from public services in a fairer way and are able to have their say about them, and staff feel there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Amend Commitment 1.1 to reflect that it has been done and update it to include partnership involvement in its delivery as 'Working with partners and through the

Single Outcome Agreement, we will implement a comprehensive economic recovery and development plan’.

Amend Commitment 1.20 to reflect that it has been done and update it to allow progress to be monitored as ‘The Council will monitor implementation of its youth employment strategy’.

Extend Commitment 1.24 to include ‘We will develop new approaches to service delivery and community resilience in our most remote and rural communities and pilot these in North and West Sutherland’.

Amend Commitment 3.11 to take into account the feedback from the Citizens’ Panel as ‘Working with the NHS and other partners, the Council will support people, particularly older people, people with disabilities and Council tenants, to get the most out of technology for personal use, include tele-health, tele-care and online access to services’.

Amend Commitment 4.13 to reflect the new plan and initiative as ‘The Council will continue to reduce carbon emissions from its operations and work to meet the new target in the Carbon Management Plan of a 21% reduction between 2011/12 and 2020. We will realign the Carbon Management Plan to Carbon CLEVER Initiative’.

Amend Commitment 7.3 to reflect the arrangements put in place for local engagement as ‘The Council will effectively engage with and scrutinise the national services for Police, Fire and Rescue and the Scottish Ambulance Service. It will do this through its community planning arrangements, its Scrutiny Committee and a programme of self-evaluation’.

Maintain the previously agreed Commitments in relation to the Air Link at Dalcross, provision of 600 new Council houses, the Highland Housing Charter, Police Numbers, Community Payback, Champions and Community Resilience.

### **From Ms J Douglas**

**18. Enhancing Our Town Centres** – add the following – ‘We will work with partners on a joined up approach to ensure that barriers to small business growth and development are minimised’.

**28. Tourism** – add the following – ‘We will also ensure external organisations and partners recognise the importance of tourism for all the Highlands and encourage them to play their part in its promotion and development’.

**36. Developing Local and National Infrastructure** – fifth bullet point – amend as follows – ‘Reducing rail journey times and costs north and south of Inverness’.

Add New Commitment (after current Commitment 45) – **Positive Mental Health and Stigma** – ‘We will support work across all partners to reduce stigma around mental health and promote good mental health and wellbeing in our communities and our staff. We will have a particular focus on positive mental health for our young people and will support innovative ways to address this issue’.

**55. Tackling Empty Properties** – add the following – ‘We will also work with partners to improve and develop empty flats/properties above shops, recognising the negative impact their disrepair can have on our Town High Streets’.

**Inverness City – the Capital of the Highlands** – add further information on how the rest of the Highlands will benefit from the Regional Sports Hub as transport and the costs of accessing that from outside of Inverness will be high. In this regard, consideration to be given to a subsidised transport scheme, similar to that in place for Eden Court.

Upon re-commencement of the meeting, the Leader of the Council, seconded by Mr J Crawford, **MOVED** 'Highland First', the Programme for the Council, as circulated. In addition, to re-commit to the Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' and (between now and the Council meeting in September) to remove completed commitments and be clear about on-going commitments in that document. Also, to finalise 'Highland First' for the Council meeting in September - taking into account the additions suggested at the meeting by the SNP Group, Liberal Democrat Group and Ms J Douglas.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Ms M Smith, seconded by Mr R Laird, moved that all the proposed amendments which had been put forward should be debated now and added to the Programme.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 45 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 18 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Alston, D; Balfour, R; Barclay, J; Caddick, C; Campbell, I; Campbell, J; Carmichael, H; Christie, A; Coghill, G; Crawford, J; Davidson, M; Donald, N; Douglas, J; Fernie, B; Finlayson, M; Fraser, H; Fraser, L; Graham, A; Gray, J; Green, M; Greene, R; Henderson, A; Kerr, D; MacDonald, N; Mackay, D (W5); Mackay, D (W2); MacKay, W; MacLeod, K; McAllister, B; McCallum, I; Millar, D; Morrison, H; Murphy, B; Paterson, M; Prag, T; Rattray, M; Rimell, G; Robertson, F; Rosie, J; Ross, G (W14); Saxon, R; Sinclair, A; Stephen, K; Thompson, B; Wood, H

**For the Amendment:**

Baxter, A; Brown, I; Clark, B; Cockburn, I; Farlow, G; Fraser, C; Fuller, S; Gormley, B; Laird, R; Lobban, B; MacDonald, L; MacKenzie, G; Phillips, G; Renwick, I; Ross, G (W3); Sinclair, G; Slater, J; Smith, M

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the Programme, 'Highland First', as circulated and noted that the proposed Performance Framework would be taken to a future meeting.

In addition, it was **AGREED** to re-commit to the Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' and (between now and the Council meeting in September) to remove completed commitments and be clear about on-going commitments in that document.

It was further **AGREED** to finalise the Programme, 'Highland First', for the Council meeting in September - taking into account the additions suggested at the meeting by the SNP Group, Liberal Democrat Group and Ms J Douglas.

6. **Appointments to Committees, Sub Committees, etc**  
**Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean, Buidhnean-obrach, is eile**

The Council **AGREED** the following –

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee - Miss J Campbell  
to replace Mrs F Robertson

Planning Review Body – Mr M Reiss to replace Dr D Alston

Resources Committee – Dr D Alston to replace Mr H Wood

CoSLA Executive Groups –

Community Wellbeing – Mr H Fraser

Development, Economy and Sustainability – Dr A Sinclair

Education, Children and Young People – Mrs F Robertson

Health and Wellbeing – Mr M Green

Resources and Capacity – Mr B Fernie

Strategic Human Resources Management – Mr A Mackinnon

Nigg Skills Academy – Mr J Gray (Substitute – Mr A Rhind)

7. **High Life Highland**  
**High Life na Gàidhealtachd**

It was noted that, following his appointment as Chair of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, Mr Drew Millar had confirmed his resignation from High Life Highland with immediate effect. On that basis, and following an email to all Members seeking expressions of interest, there had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Appointments Panel held on 6 August 2015, together with copies of the Role Profile and Skills Set.

There had also been circulated copies of the applications received from the three candidates - Mr D Fallows, Mr M Green and Mr T Prag.

In a first vote, Mr Fallows received 18 votes, Mr Green received 30 votes and Mr Prag received 14 votes, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**Votes for Mr Fallows –**

Baxter, A; Brown, I; Clark, B; Cockburn, I; Farlow, G; Fraser, C; Fuller, S; Gormley, B; Laird, R; Lobban, B; MacDonald, L; MacKenzie, G; Phillips, G; Renwick, I; Ross, G (W3), Sinclair, G; Slater, J; Smith, M

**Votes for Mr Green –**

Balfour, R; Barclay, J; Campbell, I; Campbell, J; Carmichael, H; Coghill, G; Crawford, J; Davidson, M; Donald, N; Fernie, B; Finlayson, M; Fraser, H; Fraser, L; Green, M; Greene, R; Henderson, A; Kerr, D; Mackay, D (W5); Mackay, D (W2); Mackay, W; Mackinnon, A; McCallum, I; Millar, D; Morrison, H; Paterson, M; Robertson, F; Rosie, J; Ross, G (W14); Sinclair, A; Thompson, B

**Votes for Mr Prag –**

Alston, D; Caddick, C; Christie, A; Graham, A; Gray, J; MacDonald, N; MacLeod, K; Murphy, B; Prag, T; Rattray, M; Rimell, G; Saxon, R; Stephen, K; Wood, H

In a second vote between the two remaining candidates, Mr Fallows received 23 votes and Mr Green received 37 votes, with 2 abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:-



### **Votes for Mr Fallows –**

Baxter, A; Brown, I; Christie, A; Clark, B; Cockburn, I; Farlow, G; Fraser, C; Fuller, S; Gormley, B; Graham, A; Gray, J; Laird, R; Lobban, B; MacDonald, L; MacKenzie, G; Phillips, G; Renwick, I; Rimell, G; Ross, G (W3); Saxon, R; Sinclair, G; Slater, J; Smith, M

### **Votes for Mr Green –**

Alston, D; Balfour, R; Barclay, J; Caddick, C; Campbell, I; Campbell, J; Carmichael, H; Coghill, G; Crawford, J; Davidson, M; Donald, N; Fernie, B; Finlayson, M; Fraser, H; Fraser, L; Green, M; Greene, R; Henderson, A; Kerr, D; MacDonald, N; Mackay, D (W5); Mackay, D (W2); Mackay, W; Mackinnon, A; MacLeod, K; McCallum, I; Millar, D; Morrison, H; Murphy, B; Paterson, M; Rattray, M; Robertson, F; Rosie, J; Ross, G (W14); Sinclair, A; Stephen, K; Thompson, B

### **Abstentions –**

Prag, T; Wood, H

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Mr M Green to High Life Highland.

It was also **AGREED** that, to make the process more effective, the Panel should review its remit at its next meeting with the amended remit then being agreed by the full Council.

## **8. Timetable of Meetings 2015 Clàr-ama Choinneamhan 2015**

The Council was asked to agree that an additional meeting of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee should be held on Thursday, 8 October 2015.

In this regard, Mr R Laird, seconded by Ms G Ross, **MOVED** that, in order to avoid holding this meeting on the same day as the By-Election for Ward 13, it should be held on Thursday 22, October 2015 instead.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr D Millar, seconded by Mr D Kerr, moved that the meeting should be held on Thursday, 8 October 2015 as proposed on the agenda.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 22 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 40 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

### **For the Motion –**

Barclay, J; Baxter, A; Brown, I; Clark, B; Cockburn, I; Farlow, G; Fraser, C; Fuller, S; Gormley, B; Graham, A; Laird, R; Lobban, B; MacDonald, L; MacKenzie, G; MacLeod, K; Phillips, G; Renwick, I; Ross, G (W3); Sinclair, G; Slater, J; Thompson, B; Wood, H

### **For the Amendment –**

Alston, D; Balfour, R; Caddick, C; Campbell, I; Campbell, J; Carmichael, H; Christie, A; Coghill, G; Crawford, J; Davidson, M; Donald, N; Douglas, J; Fernie, B; Finlayson, M; Fraser, H; Fraser, L; Gray, J; Green, M; Greene, R; Henderson, A; Kerr, D; MacDonald, N; Mackay, D (W5); Mackay, D (W2); MacKay, W; Mackinnon, A;

McCallum, I; Millar, D; Morrison, H; Murphy, B; Paterson, M; Prag, T; Rattray, M; Rimell, G; Robertson, F; Rosie, J; Ross, G (W14); Saxon, R; Sinclair, A; Stephen, K

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED** an Additional Meeting of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee to be held on Thursday, 8 October 2015.

The meeting ended at 12.55pm.