

## The Highland Council

Minute of Meeting of the **Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall, on Wednesday 18 November 2015, at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mrs A MacLean
Mrs B Campbell	Mrs I McCallum
Dr I Cockburn	Mrs M Paterson
Mr M Finlayson	Mr I Renwick
Mr H Fraser	Mrs F Robertson
Mr R Greene	Ms M Smith
Mr G MacKenzie	Mrs C Wilson
Mr A MacKinnon	

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms C McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform  
Ms D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Mrs T Luxton, Area Community Services Manager  
Mrs U Lee, Urban Designer, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr B Mackinnon, Employability Team Leader  
Ms C Devine, Employment Support Officer, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr D Paterson Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service  
Mrs H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager  
Mrs S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Officer, Revenues and Business Support  
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development 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 H Fraser in the Chair

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr D Alston, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr D Millar, Mr M Rattray and Dr A Sinclair.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following declaration of interest

- Item 3: Mrs A MacLean (non-financial)
- Item 5: Mrs A MacLean (non-financial)
- Item 6: Mrs A MacLean (non-financial)
- Item 7: Mrs C Wilson (non-financial)
- Item 10: Mr I Renwick (non-financial)

### 3. Tain Town Centre Action Plan Plana-gnìomh Meadhan Baile Bhaile Dhubhthaich

**Declaration of Interest:** Mrs A MacLean declared a non-financial interest in this item as she was involved in the local LEADER funding scheme and it was mentioned in the report but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No SRC/046/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure outlining responses to the public consultation on the Draft Tain Town Centre Action Plan which invited Members to approve the finalised version at Appendix A. A summary of comments received and recommended responses had been set out at Appendices B and C.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members had concerns that the action plan raised community aspirations and that the community of Tain mistakenly thought that this was an action plan to be funded by the Council and HIE;
- the support from HIE was disappointing, money for a development officer and for environmental and social projects was not forthcoming;
- HICEF to be contacted and invited to come to a Business Association meeting in the new year;
- local Members requested involvement during the discussion of the car scheme;
- traffic management problems could be sorted with some white and yellow lines painted on the road;
- congratulations to the developers of the new restaurant "1864" which had recently opened at the Station development and had transformed the area;
- there had been lots of volunteers but HIE was required to help access funding for a new Development Officer;
- members were reminded that there was £600,000 in the Council's Capital Budget for 2016/18 available for town and country regeneration that members could bid for;
- concern was expressed in regard to the filling of empty residential and commercial properties in the Tain area;

The Committee:

- **AGREED** that the Tain Community Town Centre Action Plan at **Appendix A** becomes non-statutory planning guidance and is treated as a material consideration in determining planning applications;
- **NOTED** the comments received during the consultation on the draft Tain Town Centre Action Plan and **AGREED** to the recommended Council responses presented in **Appendices B and C**; and
- **NOTED** that the Plan reflects shared priorities for the future of the town centre, in particular projects that could be delivered should funding opportunities arise.
- **AGREED** that enquires are made with the Director of Development and Infrastructure to provide practicable support for the Tain Town Centre Action Plan in respect of filling empty residential and commercial properties.

#### 4. Deprived Area Funding 2016 to 2017 Maoin Sgìre Bochd 2016 - 2017

There had been circulated Report No SRC/047/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure. The Deprived Area Fund was in its final year of a three year commitment in 2016-17. Most of the funding in SRC was being used to support activity for which it was considered there was an ongoing need and priority. There was therefore a need to either consolidate and sustain funding during 2016-17, or manage the closure of activity should that not prove possible.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members were proud of the achievements of the Deprived Area Fund in relation to young people which had been backed up by the crime figures for the Alness area;
- concern that there had been no consultation with members in the movement of funding and that there had been no police support for the revised funding;
- Highlife Highland was a large organisation that covered the whole of the Highlands and they had already received a large amount of funding from the Council; and
- insufficient detail had been given in the report of the 2016-17 budget and Members asked that detail be brought to the new area meetings for consultation with local Members.

The Committee:

- **NOTED** the use of the Deprived Area Fund in 2015-16 as shown in Appendix 1; and
- **DEFERRED** the applications listed for approval from the 2016-17 Budget to address concerns raised by Members, the applications subsequently being referred to the new Area Meetings for consultation with the Local Members with the appropriate remit for decision

#### 5. Education Scotland Reports Sgrùdaidhean le Foghlam Alba

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs A MacLean declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds that her sister was the Head Teacher within one of the schools at the time of the report and left the room during this item.**

There had been circulated Report No SRC/048/15 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided details of Education Scotland's inspections in Marybank Primary School and North Kessock Primary School for Members' scrutiny and monitoring.

Members requested that a letter be sent to both Primary Schools commending them for their achievements.

The Committee:

- **NOTED** the Education Scotland reports through this report.
- **AGREED** that the Area Committee Chair writes on behalf of members to the Marybank Primary School and the North Kessock Primary School commending them for their achievements and excellent Education Reports.

## 6. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs A MacLean declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Member of the Board of the Citizen's Advice Bureau but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No SRC/049/15 by the Director of Community Services which provided Members with information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators during 2014/15 and for the first half of 2015/16.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members were concerned that Ross and Cromarty had almost one third of the arrears in housing rents in Highland;
- there would be some reduction in the above figure following pending benefit awards and terminations of tenancies;
- it was a concern that people were in such poverty they had to be evicted through court actions, once evicted they are considered homeless and then have to be re-housed through the Council housing system;
- some houses were left in an appalling state following eviction and the people could be rehoused before the works were completed and the house made available for re-let;
- the Housing Development Team had been working hard to provide single bed units in the area so that people can decant from bigger houses to free up larger 3 bedroomed houses for families; and
- concern was also expressed when works orders were raised and closed without the work having been carried out, the management of repairs also had to be improved to consolidate requests

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2014 to 30 September 2015.

**7. Street Naming – New Housing Developments**  
**Ainmeachadh Sràide - Leasachaidhean Ùra Taigheadais**

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs C Wilson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a reference was made in the report to her late father but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report Nos SRC/050/15 and SRC/051/25 by the Head of Policy and Reform concerning the creation of addresses, following consultation with the respective Community Councils and local Members, for new housing developments at Harrapool in Broadford, Alness and Nigg.

The Committee:

- (a) **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of an address for a 12 flat development at Harrapool in Broadford as Old School Square, the Gaelic translation for the agreed name being Ceàrnag na Seann Sgoile;
- (b) **APPROVED** an address for 3 streets in the Dalmore area of Alness being: Hugh Mackenzie Avenue, David Oag Grove; and David Ross Street ; and
- (c) **APPROVED** a development of 4 properties at Nigg in the name of Drumdell Park.

**8. Common Good Funds**  
**Maoin Maith Choitchinn**

There had been circulated Reports Nos SRC/052/15 – SRC/056/15 by the Head of Policy and Reform which provided information on the following Common Good Funds: Cromarty, Dingwall, Fortrose and Rosemarkie, Invergordon and Tain.

The Committee:

- **NOTED** the updated information provided in relation to each Fund;
- **AGREED** that consultation be undertaken locally with Tain Community Council representatives on the performance of the mussel fishery and potential options with feedback to be brought back to Members for consideration.

**9. Fortrose Common Good – The Caravan Site, Fortrose**  
**Lease Assignment**  
**Math Coitcheann na Cananaich – An Làrach Charabhanaichean, a' Chananaich – Glusad Còir Fearainn**

There had been circulated Joint Report No SRC/057/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Head of Policy and Reform inviting homologation of the decision to consent to the present tenants assigning their interest in the existing lease to a new tenant.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the decision taken to consent to the present tenants assigning their interest in the existing lease to a new tenant and for Legal Services progressing with the lease assignation accordingly.

**10. Advice and Information Services: End of Year Monitoring**  
**Seirbheisean Comhairle agus Fiosrachaidh: Sgrùdadh Deireadh Bliadhna**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr I Renwick declared a non-financial interest in this item as a member of the Board of the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Skye but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No SRC/058/15 by the Director of Finance which explained that advice and information services was recognised as a critical approach in alleviating poverty in the Council's Programme and Single Outcome Agreement.

In this regard, the report provided Members with the end of year monitoring of advice and information services in Highland for 2014/15.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the level of support provided to customers across Highland in 2014/15, the continued increase in demand for these services and the pressures associated in delivering the intensive resource required to resolve complex cases;
- ii. the positive impact of the Mental Health Project in addressing issues presented by vulnerable clients which has current funding until the end of March 2016;
- iii. the positive impact of the Reaching the Unreached service in preventing households being evicted and avoiding additional pressures on the Council's homeless services. This service has Scottish Legal Aid Board funding until end of September 2016;
- iv. the potential of the Midwifery project to support new and expectant mothers in the Highlands to maximise their incomes which has funding until end of May 2016; and
- v. the outcomes being achieved in supporting Highland residents to mitigate the effects of poverty.

**11. Skye and Lochalsh Access Forum Membership**  
**Ballrachd Fòram Cothruim an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Loch Aillse**

There had been circulated Report No SRC/059/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure. Following the resignation of a member of the Skye and Lochalsh Local Access Forum the Eilean a' Cheo Members, at the Ward Business Meeting on Tuesday 13 October, approved the appointment of one new forum member to create a more representative Local Access Forum.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the decision of the Eilean a' Cheò Ward Members to appoint a new Local Access Forum member to the Skye and Lochalsh Local Access Forum.

**12. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee which had been held on 5 August 2015 and which had been approved by the Council on 3 September 2015.

**13. Valediction**  
**Soraidh**

The Chairman stated that this was the last meeting of the Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee. The Chair thanked members for their support over the last two years. Although this committee covered a large area, the meetings had been very harmonious and very productive and would be moving forward now to the new 'local' Committees. The Chair thanked officers, members and everybody involved in the Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee.

Mrs I Campbell, on behalf of members of the committee, thanked the Chair for his work on this area committee.

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm.