

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 4 February 2016 at 10.30am.

### **Present:**

Dr D Alston	Mr D Kerr
Mr R Balfour	Mrs L MacDonald
Mrs J Barclay	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr A Baxter	Mr K MacLeod
Mr B Clark	Mr B Murphy
Mrs G Coghill	Mr G Phillips
Mr N Donald	Mr A Rhind
Mr G Farlow	Mrs F Robertson (Substitute)
Mr A Graham	Mr J Rosie
Mr R Greene	
Mr A Henderson	

### **Non-Members also present:**

Miss J Campbell	Mr D Millar
Mr K Gowans	Mr T Prag
Mr J Gray	Mr R Saxon
Mrs D MacKay	Ms M Smith
Mr D MacKay	Mr J Stone
Mrs I McCallum	

### **In attendance:**

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services  
Dr C Clark, Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Mr R Evans, Head of Roads and Transport  
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing  
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager  
Ms C Campbell, Performance and Building Maintenance Manager  
Mr C Kemp, Area Community Services Manager (Lochaber, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)  
Mr R Pope, Roads and Community Works Manager  
Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer  
Mr S Manning, Traffic Support Officer  
Mr S Graham, Project Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Services  
Mrs R Daly, Committee Administrator, 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 Committee.**

**Mr A Henderson in the Chair**

### **Business**

- 1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs B McAllister, Mr H Morrison and Mrs J Slater.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 10 – Mr N Donald (financial)

Item 13 – Miss J Campbell, Mrs L MacDonald and Mr R Balfour (non financial)

In terms of the general dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, Mr G Farlow and Mr D Kerr declared financial interests in any items which might arise during discussion in regard to Council housing on the grounds of being Council House tenants.

## **3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha**

The following areas of good news were **NOTED**:-

- Multi-agency day of action to tackle illegal vehicles in East Ross and Ross-shire
- The Highland Housing Register application form - now available on-line
- Staff Successes
  - Sheila Nairn had completed the CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice
  - Mark Smith completed The Association for Project Safety's Course "The Principal Designer Role"
  - Brian Fraser, Colin Morrice and Joanne Sutherland passed RSTA 2 Day Surface Dressing Course

## **4. Revenue Budget 2015/16 – Monitoring 1 April – 31 December 2015 Buidseat Teachd-a-steach 2015/16 – Sgrùdadh 1 Giblean – 31 Dùbhlachd 2015**

There had been circulated Report No COM/01/16 dated 26 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services inviting Members to approve the revenue budget monitoring position for the period 1 April to 31 December 2015.

During discussion, comments were made as follows:-

- information was sought on the shortfall in income on the car parking budget, which was the result of a historical shortfall in Inverness, and the timing of the Highland-wide review of car parking charges, which was currently subject to political discussion;
- information having been sought on the lack of permanent housing to tackle homelessness, the Housing Demand Assessment calculation would be distributed to all Members;
- repairs to damage to Council housing stock should be recharged to tenants to encourage respect for the properties;
- concern was expressed about the continued use of vacancies to achieve savings and the effect this would have on service delivery;
- attention was drawn to various items of expenditure to date which already

- exceeded the budget to date but were predicted for a year end variance of zero and explanations for some of these were provided. Members asked for more detailed explanations of such anomalies in future reports;
- concern was expressed at the underspend on the flood alleviation budget and Ms MacDonald sought an assurance after the meeting that planned work at Balmakeith would still go ahead;
  - concern was expressed that inaccurate weather forecasting resulted in winter maintenance officers being despatched unnecessarily on occasions. The Head of Roads and Transport offered to meet with local Members as required and explain the weather forecasting process for winter maintenance, including the tendering process for the company used;
  - in relation to the shortfall on Harbours revenue, attention was drawn to the planned strategic review of Harbours with the aim of increasing revenue. Frustration was however expressed at the slow pace of change;
  - concern was expressed at the high level of outstanding debt relating to ex-tenants in temporary accommodation and action on this was urged;
  - concern was expressed at the impact the Right to Buy scheme had on the levels of housing stock and on housing income streams;
  - reference was made to recent headlines complaining about winter maintenance in the Assynt area and whether there was equity of service across all areas. A review of winter maintenance policy was to be considered at the Committee in May 2016;
  - in relation to the overspend on lighting services despite energy costs reducing, consideration should be given to dark sky initiatives. Decisions on the installation of lighting columns should be delegated to local Committees in future; and
  - it was disappointing that waste going to landfill had increased by 4%, after years of reductions, and continued emphasis on recycling was vital. It was thought the increase was due to the upturn in the economy.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the report and the monitoring statements which showed the revenue position for the period 1 April to 31 December 2015 and the actions which had been put in place to manage the budget over the remainder of the financial year; and
- ii. **AGREED** to circulate to all Members the calculation for the Housing Demand Assessment.

**5. Capital Expenditure 2015/16 – Monitoring 1 April – 31 December 2015  
Caiteachas Calpa 2015/16 – Sgrùdadh 1 Giblean – 31 Dùbhlachd 2015**

There had been circulated Report No COM/02/16 dated 21 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2015 for both the Community Services element of the Council's approved capital programme and the HRA capital programme.

During discussion, Members made the following general comments:-

- there had been good progress with capital spending with all projects meeting forecasts and savings on contingencies;
- the work carried out at Thurso Princes Street was particularly welcomed. This was now 80% complete and had made a significant improvement to

- the area;
- the actual spend to date on structural and environmental works for Lochaber, Badenoch and Strathspey and Nairn was very low compared to budget, the reasons for which would be provided to Mrs MacDonald; and
- it was queried whether the Council would meet its Council house building target of 688 new Council houses by 2017.

In particular, Member raised concern in relation to progress on SHQS compliance:

- concerns were raised about properties being missed out of contracts and about the nature of the property survey on which the programme was based – which appeared to be desk based. In response it was explained that the survey had been undertaken by locally based in-house staff and that over 80% of the Council's housing stock had been physically surveyed. The survey results had been "sense checked" by local staff when developing area programmes;
- disappointment was expressed that many tenants had refused new heating systems. It was felt this might be due to problems with "experimental" heating systems in the past. Clarification was sought on whether tenants who had opted out would be followed up. Many tenants were now in fuel poverty and had also refused the new heating system on financial grounds. It was suggested that cases be addressed on a one to one basis;
- the £10m underspend on £40m budget was of concern, particularly if the underspend related to the energy efficiency element of the budget. In this connection there were concerns as to the overall attainability of the budget and potentially significant underspends were cited, e.g. properties at Glenurquhart Road, Craigton Avenue and Tannery Court, Inverness;
- if tenants opted out of receiving new heating systems, clarification was sought on whether the budget for this was retained within the ward and reallocated;
- information was sought on the proportion of tenants that had declined heating replacements and what follow-up arrangements were in place to address this. In response Members were informed that tenant "opt outs" were reported annually and this would be an end of programme review and would include lessons learned;
- there was a need to learn lessons from the difficulties experienced in installing different heating systems. This had been a big project and it was suggested that management principles had not been adequately followed. There was a need to ensure that sub-contractors understood the systems, that systems were tested widely in advance and that the Council was in a position to advise tenants regarding tariffs;
- as the project had been managed from Inverness, there had been criticism of communication with staff in areas. This had been dealt with and considerable improvements made;
- many tenants had incurred unnecessary expense as they had not received information on how to use heating systems efficiently. There were known cases where new systems had been removed because of this expense and there was a need to check how many had been installed in unsuitable properties;
- acknowledging the differences in build, insulation and lifestyles, it might be useful to compare the energy consumption and heating costs of new houses with those that were receiving new heating systems;
- it was anticipated that Area Committees would have more scrutiny over

- disaggregated budgets and it was hoped that this would also include the Capital budget; and
- there were some Highland communities where 90% of the population was in fuel poverty. The Sutherland District Partnership had set up a fuel poverty task force and was working with partner agencies to address fuel poverty in individual communities.

Members having been supplied with responses as appropriate, the Committee otherwise **APPROVED**:-

- the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period 1 April to 31 December 2015; and
- the match-funding for the lighting upgrade project as an addition to the HRA Capital Programme 2016-2017.

## 6. **Proposed Amendments to Service Structure** **Atharrachaidhean a Thathar a' Moladh do Structar Seirbheis**

There had been circulated Report No COM/03/16 dated 24 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which sought to amend the Service structure and align teams under four Heads of Service. The report was to be read in conjunction with the previous report on this subject to the Community Services Committee on 5 November 2015.

The Director provided a detailed presentation of the report with particular reference to local service delivery and localism. He referred to financial efficiency measures, the voluntary redundancy scheme and the need for management savings across all directorates. He summarised the appendices to the report and outlined the planned processes for implementing the changes.

During discussion, comments were made as follows:-

- this had been a major piece of work and a difficult time for staff;
- at Section 5 of the report a further key principle should be added – Support and/or focus on Member/Community involvement;
- concern was expressed about the process for incorporating the localism agenda when area management posts were being deleted. With a proposed emphasis on a specialist structure, Members asked what generalist support would be provided to local area committees and the Director explained that key officers would be in place to ensure integration of services. Once the outcome of the Voluntary Severance scheme was known a further report would be presented to the Committee; and
- the locations and geographic spread of the road operation managers was queried and it was explained that these were indicative but flexible.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the new four Heads of Service structure for Community Services;
- AGREED** that appointment to the four new Heads of Service posts take place as a matter of priority;
- NOTED** the indicative structure below Heads of Service, as outlined in appendices 1-4 of the report;
- AGREED** the key principles that should help shape final structures below Head of Service, as outlined in Section 5 of the report;

- v. following agreement of (i) and (iii), **AGREED** that a further report be presented to the April Community Services Committee outlining firmed up details of the structure below Heads of Service, taking into account outcomes from the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme and the Council's budget, which would be set on 25 February 2016; and
- vi. **AGREED** that a sixth key principle be added: Support and/or focus on Member/Community involvement.

## 7. **Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2016/2017** **Tibhadh Sgioba-obrach Slàinte Àrainneachd agus Ath-sgrùdadh air** **Structar Sgioba**

There had been circulated Report No COM/04/16 dated 18 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which presented draft Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2016/2017 together with recommendations on the level of increase to be applied to Council house rents, other rents and service charges.

During discussion, comments were made as follows:-

- several Members voiced support for the work of community wardens and anti-social behaviour officers;
- continued tenant participation was important;
- the model for funding Council house building that was cost neutral to existing tenants was welcomed;
- the implications on rent arrears as a result of direct payments to tenants under the Universal Credit system was a worry;
- a verbal update on the recently undertaken 3-yearly tenant consultation was sought, and provided, with a full analysis to be provided at the next meeting;
- concern was expressed that as increased numbers of houses were released under the Right to Buy scheme, the existing housing debt was being spread among existing tenants, and was affecting borrowing. Discussion on this, particularly on the writing off of historical housing debt, with MPs was urged. The Chairman offered to circulate a response to a letter he had written on the matter;
- the fragility of some remote and rural areas was not taken into account when rent levels were set;
- caution was urged in relation to borrowing to support new housing as interest rates could rise;
- almost half of Council tenants received no housing benefit and would be affected by excessive rises in rent;
- more should be done to recoup expenditure on rechargeable repairs;
- in response to a suggestion to use Housing Revenue Account reserves to offset rent increases, it was explained that a certain level of contingency was required and therefore this would not be recommended; and
- concern was expressed about the sanctions imposed on people receiving Universal Credit by the Department of Work and Pensions and it was recommended that the officers liaise with the Benefits and Welfare Manager on this.

At this juncture, Mr D Kerr, seconded by Mr A Baxter, **MOVED** that the council house rents for 2016/2017 be increased by RPI plus 1%. However, following an adjournment to further consider the position, the motion was withdrawn.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. a 1.9% increase for council house rents for 2016/2017;
- ii. that this percentage increase (1.9%) was applied to all HRA rents and service charges and to Gypsy/Traveller site pitches;
- iii. that non-HRA rents for leased property should increase as stipulated in existing contracts;
- iv. that the estimated HRA surplus of £2.790m in 2016/2017 be applied as Capital from Current Revenue to fund HRA capital investment; and
- v. to investigate holding discussions on historical housing debt and borrowing with MPs.

**8. Additional Capital - Roads, Bridges and Pier Funds**  
**Maoin Calpa a Bharrachd airson Rathaidean, Dhrochaidean agus Chidheachan**

There had been circulated Report No COM/05/16 dated 20 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve the allocation of the additional funding for Roads, Bridges and Piers in 2016/17 and that the allocation for future years be discussed with Members at Ward Business Meetings over the next few months.

During discussion, comments were made as follows:-

- Members welcomed the programme and the local input that was outlined in the report;
- it was hoped that both sides of the A836 Ardgay to Ardchronie road would be treated, and gratitude was expressed to the officer who had negotiated a satisfactory outcome in relation to the long term traffic lights that had been in place;
- confirmation was sought that the resurfacing of the A839 The Lochies to Rosehall road would continue as far as the war memorial and would be done with tar rather than chips;
- information on the extent of the project to resurface the Dornoch to Embo road was sought;
- referring to the use of the words 'considered' and 'discussed' in relation to future years' allocation, Members expressed a preference for decisions to be 'agreed' in the areas;
- some road surface problems, such as water trapped beneath the carriageway, identified by the survey, were not visible on the surface of the road;
- concern was expressed at the number of potholes that were not being addressed on both rural and urban roads and the move for this to be considered at an area level in future was welcomed;
- the economic benefits of yachting and other boat-based commerce were voiced and discussions with others, such as Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils, on this was suggested. Attention was drawn to the planned Harbours Review which would look at the development of yachting tourism among other things;
- concern was expressed that the allocation method for the fund was on usage which disadvantaged rural roads which were in great need of attention and many of which had not been constructed for current volumes of traffic. In response, it was explained that a pan-Highland scoring matrix was used to allocate funds;
- attention was drawn to the B862 from Dores to Foyers which was in a

- poor state of repair; and
- reference was made to community companies funds, although many such funds were ring-fenced and could not be used for road repairs.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** that the proposed programme for Roads and Bridges would be coordinated on a pan Highland basis;
- AGREED** to change the remit of the Harbours Management Board to approve and monitor the Piers (and Harbours) element of the programme;
- APPROVED** the proposed infrastructure investment for 2016/17 using the additional capital funds; and
- NOTED** that the proposed programme for future years would be discussed at Ward Business Meetings over the next few months.

**The Committee adjourned for lunch at 1.00pm and resumed at 1.30pm.**

## **9. Roads Innovation Fund Maoin Ùr-ghnàthachaidh Rathaidean**

There had been circulated Report No COM/06/16 dated 25 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which invited the Committee to note progress against the Action Plan, agree the recommendation to purchase a “Jetpatcher” and continue to develop partnership arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and made the following comments:-

- a suggestion was made for GPS and data logging to be rolled out to all vehicles and not just to fleet vehicles of 7.5 tonnes and over;
- the Jetpatcher had been a success and the recommendation to purchase another one was supported. Given the geographical area that needed to be covered, there might be benefit in purchasing two Jetpatchers with the option to hire it out;
- it was regrettable that at the end of the last financial year the original proposal had not included the provision of materials;
- clarification was sought on whether the Council had access to equipment and resources to address road lining for the next financial year;
- a request was made for the comparative costs for road repairs using the traditional method and using the Jetpatcher; and
- a suggestion was made that manholes be located between tyre lines rather than on the driving line.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** progress against the Action Plan; and
- AGREED** to purchase a “Jetpatcher”.

## **10. Grass Cutting and Ancillary Works Specification and Priorities Sònrachadh agus Prìomhachasan Gearradh Feòir agus Obraichean Taice**

**Declaration of Interest**



**Mr N Donald declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds of a family member being employed by a sub-contractor and left the room for this item.**

There had been circulated Report No COM/07/16 dated 22 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which presented an update on progress of the tender of grass cutting and ancillary services including the specification for grass cutting service standards.

The Chairman drew attention to a series of ward business meetings at which this issue had been discussed.

During discussion, concerns raised at the Skye meeting regarding timescales were highlighted and Members had sought additional time to allow community consultation on this matter. Alternatively, it might be helpful for the current contract to be extended for a period of six months. Either way, more consultation would enable communities to express a preference as to how the devolved budget might be spent in Skye. Clarification was offered that the timetable was now fixed due to procurement legislation. The content of the contract could, however, be varied to accommodate community wishes during the life of the contract.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the programme of Ward Business Meeting briefings and the proposals for involving communities; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the revisions of grass cutting standards.

## **11. Corran Ferry Aiseag a' Chorrain**

There had been circulated Report No COM/08/16 dated 20 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which followed up on recommendations and actions from the Community Services Committee of 5 February 2015 and the Highland Council meeting of 12 March 2015. A fares increase of 2% was recommended.

Prior to discussion, the Chair clarified that there had never been consideration of a 25% fare increase. During discussion, Members expressed their general agreement to support a 2% fare increase and made the following observations:-

- the Area Community Services Manager was thanked for the work done in consulting and responding to queries, particularly from Lochaber Members;
- it was accepted that this had been a difficult balance to achieve and that fuel prices had been central to the overall consideration. Public ideas had been sought and had raised the option to pursue sponsorship and advertising. This was now being followed up by the Council's Commercial Manager. It would be essential to ensure that income generated should not be retained centrally to the Corporate Communications budget but directed back to the local area. Specific clarification for Members on the management of income from sponsorship was sought;
- there had been a long-held aspiration for a bridge across the Corran Narrows which warranted more detailed assessment than had been presented in the appendix to the report. A long-term view should be taken comparing the whole life cost of a bridge with the capital and revenue

costs of future replacement ferries. It was acknowledged that the option of a bridge would impact on employment associated with the ferry operation in the short term but it would, in turn, open up economic opportunities across the peninsula, making the area a more attractive place to live and increasing job opportunities for the future. It was suggested that the Council should pursue funding options for a fixed crossing with a report back to the Lochaber Area Committee in August;

- one of the most important aspects of the report was the acknowledgement that capital charges for the cost of a replacement ferry were not included above the line;
- the option for smart ticketing needed to be further explored;
- it was welcomed that the issue of state aid had been addressed; and
- information on the financial performance of the ferry was welcome but there was a need for similarly detailed 5 year financial forecasts. There was also a need to manage costs closely in the short term and to undertake a STAG appraisal of the running of the ferry compared with a fixed link to be undertaken. This should include consideration of economic and social benefits to the local area.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the legal position;
- ii. **NOTED** the extent of the financial information made available to the community;
- iii. **NOTED** the outcome of the community consultation and **AGREED** the proposed responses;
- iv. **NOTED** the position regarding Equalities and Rural Impact;
- v. **NOTED** the position regarding future options and the need to produce whole life costings;
- vi. **AGREED** to a fares increase of 2% for 2016/17; and
- vii. **AGREED** to pursue options for funding for a fixed crossing with a report back to the Lochaber Area Committee in August 2016.

## 12. **Cromarty-Nigg Ferry Aiseag Chromba-Neig**

There had been circulated Report No COM/09/16 dated 22 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which described work done towards replacing the contract for the Cromarty–Nigg ferry and recommended granting delegated powers to award a contract should the tenders received come within the available budget.

During discussion, a specific request was made that Local Members be involved in discussions in the event of any difficulties being encountered. Also, it was suggested that the report should have indicated the importance of the ferry to the local area and the impact of its absence. It was acknowledged that there had been significant impact on local businesses and that the route was an important part of Route 500 and passenger numbers had been increasing.

The Committee **APPROVED** the granting of delegated powers to the Director, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to award a contract subject to prices received in the current tender exercise being within the available budget.

## 13. **Transport Programme Còmhdhail Coimhearsnachd**

## **Declarations of Interest**

**Non-financial interests were declared in relation to this item by Miss J Campbell as a Director of the Partnership for Wellbeing and Mrs L MacDonald and Mr R Balfour as Directors of Local Community Transport Association but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No COM/10/16 dated 22 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which presented applications for the award of Community Transport Grants for the 3 year period 1 April 2016-31 March 2019.

During a presentation of the report and explained that paragraph 2.6 of the report, relating to State Aid notification, was no longer relevant. He highlighted two amendments which had resulted from the totals exceeding the available budget and which had been subject to a rigorous process.

During discussion, comments were made as follows:-

- confirmation was sought and received that there was scope for Ross-shire Voluntary Action to be expanded to cover Tain;
- having highlighted the zero award to the Partnership for Wellbeing, Miss Campbell sought, and received, a comprehensive explanation for this, having first outlined the importance of the service being provided. An assurance was also given that the organisation could apply for an award the following year. There was no appeal process due to the finite amount of funds available and to allocate funds to a further organisation would involve the reduction of the awards to some or all other organisations;
- reference was made to the additional transport problems faced by rural residents and the detrimental effect lack of transport could have on their health; and
- discussions should be ongoing with the NHS in relation to aspects of Adult Social Care.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the grant award recommendations;
- ii. **NOTED** there might be a delay in release of grant awards to certain organisations as they completed the process of securing Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation or Company Limited by Guarantee status; and
- iii. **NOTED** there might be a delay in release of grant awards to certain organisations subject to clarification on State Aid issues which were identified during the State Aid assessment undertaken on each application.

## **14. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Cur an Gnìomh Parcadh Dì-eucoirichte**

There had been circulated Report No COM/11/16 dated 21 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which informed Members that the Highland Council had committed to the implementation of a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Scheme for our Statutory Boundary and that officers had been analysing and amending all the existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO)

in place across the Highlands. This was to ensure continuity for refurbishment of all on-street lining & signing, thus ensuring that these TROs were fully enforceable under DPE. A Draft Application had been made to Transport Scotland for authorisation of DPE in Highland. Remedial works had started and would continue during 2016. The conclusion of this exercise would lead to the establishment of a new service being delivered by the Highland Council. This report updated Members on progress and sought authorisation for the next stages of the implementation process.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the progress was welcomed although reference was made to the current chaotic situation where there were significant periods in Inverness with no traffic wardens;
- in relation to the new traffic orders, Members queried what would happen if there were objections. Reference was also made to the length of time that some traffic-related legislation could take to become fully operational;
- many road markings in Inverness required renewal and it was thought that some of the current lining material was of lower quality than had been used in the past;
- a supportive approach to enforcement was recommended and could be combined with a community warden or other similar role, with an emphasis on helping people and keeping traffic flowing;
- with reference to the traffic congestion experienced in Portree from Easter onwards, concern was expressed that there was no indication in the report of where the 10 parking wardens would be based. There was concern that it could be well into the summer before the traffic orders would be in place and traffic management was essential in Portree. Some of the parking meters were unsuitable for the weather conditions and required frequent repair, causing loss of income while they were out of action;
- discussion ensued on whether income from parking charges could be retained in the area in which it was collected but the Director explained it was Council policy for all income to be added to the corporate fund. Further discussions on this could be held outwith the meeting with the Council's Commercial Manager;
- the case for a parking warden in Invergordon was voiced, especially in light of the economic importance of the oil and cruise liner industries;
- similar traffic problems in Tain were highlighted, including the need for renewed road markings. It was suggested that the roles of parking, dog and litter wardens could be combined, as was the importance of educating drivers in sensible driving and parking behaviour;
- more should be done to tackle drivers who abused disabled parking bays;
- in response to a request for a timetable for the traffic orders and road linings, the Director confirmed they would be completed by October 2016;
- Mr Kerr asked for information outwith the meeting on restricted parking zones in Inverness; and
- clarification was sought that efforts were to be made to make parking permit hours more consistent and to provide a 7-day per week enforcement service, roughly from 8am and 10pm.

The Director having responded to queries, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress on the scheme delivery;
- ii. **NOTED** the risk of alternative implementation dates subject to Scottish Parliamentary timetables;

- iii. **AGREED** that officers begin the process of implementing the new Traffic Regulation Orders and report back to committee if any unresolved objections exist;
- iv. **NOTED** that discussions with Trade Unions and staff continue to affect a Parking Enforcement Team, presenting to the Scrutiny panel for structure change as and when required to ensure appropriate delivery of posts required; and
- v. **AGREED** to start active publicity of the scheme through a communications program with stakeholders and the media.

**15. Scottish Cremations and Burials Bill Consultation**  
**Co-chomhairle Bile Losgaidhean-cuirp agus Thiodhlacaidhean na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No COM/12/16 dated 21 January 2016 by the Director of Community Services which informed Members of the call for written evidence by the Scottish Government. The report also provided details of the work required to implement the forthcoming legislation.

During discussion Members expressed concern that there might be plans to re-use lairs when they had been promised to people in perpetuity and the Chairman pointed out that this had been responded to in the report. Members, however, felt the response could have been more strongly worded.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to homologate the response of the Director to the Scottish Government call for written evidence; and
- ii. **NOTED** the development of the draft action plan for implementing the forthcoming legislation.

**16. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED**, Minutes of the Education Transport Entitlement Review Sub Committee of 2 December 2015; and
- ii. **APPROVED**, Minutes of the Harbours Management Board of 4 December 2015.

**Tribute**

The Chairman informed the Committee that former Councillor Mr John Green had passed away that morning after a long illness. Members paid tribute to Mr Green who had done much for his local area and who would be sadly missed.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.