

The Highland Council

Minute of Meeting of the **Ross and Cromarty Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Wednesday 3 August 2016 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mrs I Campbell	Mrs M Paterson
Dr I Cockburn	Mr M Rattray
Mr M Finlayson	Mr A Rhind
Mr C Fraser	Mrs F Robertson
Mr R Greene	Dr A Sinclair
Mr G MacKenzie	Mr J Stone
Mrs A MacLean	

Officials in Attendance:

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Ms A Clark, Acting Head of Policy, Chief Executive's Office
Mr J Robertson, Programme Manager City-Region Deal, Chief Executive's Office
Mr G MacKenzie, Roads Operations Manager (Caithness and Sutherland), Community Services
Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North), Community Services
Mr A Webster, Principal Regeneration Officer, Development and Infrastructure Services
Mrs H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Dr R Bain, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms S Tarrant, Public Relations Officer, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in Attendance:

Chief Inspector I MacLennan, North Highland Area Commander
PC Daniel Sutherland, Police Scotland

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Mrs M Paterson in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs J Barclay, Mr A MacKinnon, Mrs I McCallum, Ms M Smith and Mrs C Wilson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no Declarations of Interest.

The Committee AGREED in terms of Standing Order 18 to take Item 9 after Item 3 but the minutes will remain in their correct numerical order for ease of reference.

**3. Police – Area Performance Summary
Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas an Dèanadais Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No RC/018/16 by the Area Commander for Police which updated Members on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

PC Daniel Sutherland gave a presentation on wildlife crime during which he explained his role as Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer which included providing expert advice and assistance in relation to wildlife and environmental crime, being a single point of contact to other partner agencies, developing rural watch and tackling rural crime (a text alert for farmers and people living in rural areas to alert them to any crimes that had occurred in their area) and public engagement, education, awareness and trust.

The Area Commander responded to Members queries as follows:-

- figures for theft from farms were not available due to the way these crimes were reported and the current software;
- the anomaly in the figures from the numbers of thefts by housebreaking in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh was due to the reporting period;
- on whether there was a link between vandalism in the Cromarty Firth area and areas of multiple deprivation, one person had been responsible for 13 crimes in one area, with another person responsible for 7 crimes in another area. Often one person could cause a considerable increase the figures;
- the CCTV cameras were still in operation;
- Members were delighted to see the increase in tourism in the area with the promotion of the NC500 but concerns were expressed over the related volume of traffic in Applecross. Members were reassured that if the Ward Members or the Community Council contacted the Area Commander directly then the Police could respond accordingly;
- a leaflet on “Driving in Scotland”, for road users in Highland, had been produced and distributed to hotels and tourist stops within the area. Copies of this leaflet were available and more could be made available on request; and
- Sergeant M Fowler had been charged with delivering Counter Terrorism (CONTEST), the UK Government’s Counter terrorism strategy across the region, and if Members wished he could give a presentation on his role to Members at future Ward Business Meetings.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the progress report and updates in relation to the 4 Priorities;
- ii. **NOTED** the presentation on Wildlife Crime by PC Daniel Sutherland and that his contact details would be circulated to Members;
- iii. **AGREED** that copies of Transport Scotland’s North Coast 500 advisory leaflet entitled “Driving in Scotland” be available after the meeting for Members and further copies could also be made available; and
- iv. **AGREED** to invite Sergeant M Fowler, CONTEST Liaison Officer to give a short presentation on his role to future Ward Business Meetings.

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

There had been circulated Report No RC/019/16 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development concerning the creation of addresses, following consultation with the respective Community Councils and Local Members, for new housing developments at Invergordon, Alness, North Kessock and Dingwall.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the naming of the development at Invergordon as Dewdale Court;
- ii. **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of the new 6 property development in Novar Road, Alness as Bridgend Court;
- iii. **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of a new 40 property development in North Kessock as Farmhouse Court, Sgriodan Crescent and Tor Gorm Road; and
- iv. **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of a new 4 property development at the site of the old Gospel Hall in Dingwall as MacGillivray Court.

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

There had been circulated Report Nos RC/020/16 – RC/024/16 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which provided information on the following Common Good Funds:-

- a. Cromarty Common Good Fund RC/020/16
- b. Dingwall Common Good Fund RC/021/16
- c. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund RC/022/16
- d. Invergordon Common Good Fund RC/023/16
- e. Tain Common Good Fund RC/024/16

The Committee **NOTED** the updated information provided in relation to each Fund and, in relation to the Tain Common Good – Net Salmon Fishing Rights:

- i. **AGREED** that the terms of the net salmon fishing rights lease under negotiation be varied to include provision to suspend the rent charge during any periods when fishing bans were imposed by legislation; and
- ii. **NOTED** the work being undertaken to progress the lease of the fishery and also the updated information regarding the boat's location and inspection.

6. **Community Partnerships** **Dealbhadh Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No RC/025/16 by the Acting Head of Policy and Reform which provided Members with an update on the next steps for establishing local community partnerships within Ross and Cromarty.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Council had a role in community partnerships and had to be careful of any erosion of their responsibilities;

- in response to Members' concerns companies, for example power companies, who had a big part to play in community planning, could be invited to meetings even though they were not a named partner; and
- community partnerships needed to produce results to avoid just becoming a talking forum.

The Committee **NOTED** the next steps to taking forward local community partnerships within the Ross and Cromarty area.

7. **Community Services Disaggregated Budgets** **Buidseatan Roinnte Sheirbheisean Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No RC/026/16 by the Director of Community Services which provided details on the current position agreed by Council with the disaggregation of Community Services budgets to Ross and Cromarty Committee, the real sums involved and the powers available to the Local Committee through the current Scheme of Delegation.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- although it was acknowledged that Members would prefer to have costings for each area, this was not possible due to reduced staffing levels and the fact that funding was prioritised across all the areas. Funding for this year could be shown but it would only show where monies had been prioritised for this year across the whole of Highland;
- Members were reassured that if there was an overspend on the winter maintenance budget for areas, this would be met by The Highland Council;
- following discussion on how the figures could be broken down, it was suggested that a meeting/workshop be held in September to take discussion forward, with the Community and Democratic Engagement Manager also in attendance;
- it was difficult to see how things could move forward and how consultations with the community councils could be had without having a specific budget to set a wish list against; and
- the criteria for the budget split would be helpful with details of how the budget was divided ie length of road, quantity of council housing, population or other factors.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a workshop be organised to discuss costs per ward in Ross and Cromarty of the key Community Services functions identified in Paragraph 1.2 of the report and to discuss the options for participatory budgeting.

8. **Housing Performance Report** **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No RC/027/16 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 up to 31 March 2016.

In discussion, it was noted that although the removal of the facility to make cash payments at Service Points might have contributed to the increase in arrears across Highland when it was introduced, payments by debit cards could still be made at Service Points so this is not considered an ongoing factor. Also, the reported rise in arrears was likely to continue due to the increasing roll-out of Universal Credit.

The Committee **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

9. Area Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges Prògram Càraidh Sgìreil airson Rathaidean agus Dhrochaidean

There had been circulated Report No RC/028/16 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to scrutinise the proposed Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges for the Ross and Cromarty Area for 2016/17.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- several roads had been identified for maintenance and repair following meetings and discussions with the Ward Business Meetings and a very successful recycling process would be used for these roads;
- Ward 8 (Tain and Easter Ross) Members had concerns as this had not been brought to their Ward Business Meeting and the roads that had been prioritised were not roads which Ward 8 Members would have chosen to prioritise;
- mentioned in the priority list at Ward 8 was the Balinluig to Balnaha road and Members requested clarification as to the location of this road;
- the Quebec Bridge in Tain was in need of repair as the parapet stones had fallen off;
- in Ward 6 (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh) urgent repair was required for the roads at Garden House Brae and Tarvie Lochs, Strathpeffer and the wall at the Duirinish Bridge, although not included in the appendix, these required urgent attention; and
- in relation to the NC500 route, talks were ongoing with the promoters for additional signage for the route.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the proposed Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges in the Ross and Cromarty Area for 2016/17; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the Roads Operations Manager would attend a Ward Business Meeting with Ward 8 (Tain and Easter Ross) Members to discuss the programme.

10. Inverness City and Highland Region Deal Cùmhnant Baile Inbhir Nis agus Roinn na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No RC/029/16 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided Members with an update on the City-Region Deal, set out expected benefits of the programme and provided an overview of the governance to Inverness City and the region.

In this regard, Item 3.3 of the report was amended to show the STEMMD £3 million funding.

Mr J Robertson, Programme Manager, City-Region Deal, gave a short presentation on the projects and the specific funding in each case, as well as identifying the names of the project leads for the City-Region Deal.

In this respect, Members were re-assured that, although several partner agencies were involved, reports would be made to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee and they would have a major influence on the projects.

It was the Programme Manager's role to co-ordinate the programme and, in relation to the individual projects, to ensure that individual project leads were aware of their inclusion as part of a larger programme.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

11. Invergordon Brownfield Regeneration Ath-nuadhachadh Fearann Donn Inbhir Ghòrdain

There had been circulated Report No RC/030/16 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided details on Vacant and Derelict Land Fund brownfield regeneration activity in Invergordon and outlined future proposals.

During discussion, Members noted that building work had started on the Victoria Garage site but were disappointed that whilst funding money was available to remove the tanks in the Cromlet area, the landowners had been reluctant to move forward.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress on Vacant and Derelict Land Fund brownfield regeneration activity in Invergordon; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Principal Regeneration Officer re-engage with the landowners.

12. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the Ross and Cromarty Committee meeting which had been held on 27 April 2016 and which had been approved by the Highland Council on 12 May 2016.

13. Local Priorities

The Chair confirmed that a number of Areas had already begun discussing their key issues and strategic priorities and in that regard the Leader and Depute Leader of the Council were to attend the next Ross and Cromarty Committee meeting on 11 October 2016.

A briefing paper on "Developing Local Priorities" would be circulated in advance suggesting that each Ward Business Meeting should discuss local priorities for their Ward and which strategic priorities they would wish to consider for the Ross and Cromarty area, including:

- local priorities for their ward;
- priorities that were common throughout the area;
- priorities that reflected the geographical diversity of the area; and
- Council priorities and any distinction that would be required for partnership discussion and agreement.

Members were then invited to agree to a workshop/briefing in September to provide an opportunity to come together and discuss the priorities developed during the separate Ward Business meetings. The aim of this would be to agree a set of priorities for the area as a whole which could then be discussed at the next meeting with the Leader and Depute Leader of the Council.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** that a number of areas had begun discussing the key issues and area strategic priorities and that a briefing paper on developing local priorities would be circulated for discussion at Ward Business meetings – the Chair and Vice-Chair would be willing to come to those Ward Business meetings; and
- AGREED** that a Workshop be held in late September to discuss the priorities developed during the separate Ward Business meetings and that priorities for the area as a whole should then be discussed at the next Committee meeting in October with the Leader and Depute Leader.

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm.