

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Education, Children and Adult Services Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 26 October 2016 at 10.05 am.

Present:

Highland Council:

Mr A Baxter (Substitute)	Mr D Mackay
Mrs I Campbell (Vice Chair)	Mr W Mackay
Miss J Campbell (Substitute)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr A Christie	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs M Davidson	Mr D Millar (Chair)
Mr H Fraser	Mrs M Paterson
Mr S Fuller	Mr G Rimell (Substitute)
Mr K Gowans	Mrs F Robertson (Vice Chair)
Mr A Graham	Mr G Ross
Mrs D Mackay	Ms K Stephen

NHS Highland:

Ms M Newdick
Ms A Pascoe
Dr H van Woerden

Religious Representatives:

Ms M McCulloch
Mr A MacLean
Mr G Smith

Youth Convener:

Mr C MacLennan

Non-Members also present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mrs L MacDonald
Ms J Douglas	Ms A MacLean
Mr D Fallows	Mr T MacLennan
Mr G Farlow	Ms L Munro
Mr L Fraser	Mr M Reiss
Mr M Green	Mr A Rhind
Mr A Henderson	Mrs T Robertson
Mr Laird	Mr R Saxon
Mr B Lobban	Mr B Thompson (video conferencing)

In attendance:

Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning
Mrs B Cairns, Head of Additional Support Services, Care and Learning Service

Ms S Campbell, Head of Children's Services, Care and Learning Service
Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service
Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Care and Learning Service
Ms B Brown, Strategic Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr J McTaggart, Educational Psychologist, Care and Learning Service
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Mr J Cook, Raising Attainment in Literacy Officer: Northern Alliance
Ms J Pickering, Occupational Therapist, Care and Learning Service
Ms R Castelo, Speech and Language Therapist, Care and Learning Service
Ms P Duncan, Birchwood Highland (Third Sector)
Ms G Newman, Highland Children's Forum (Third Sector)
Ms K Morris, Highland Parent Council Forum
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Ms D Stewart, Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership Co-ordinator
Ms S Calder, Head of Service, Substance Misuse, NHS Highland
Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life Highland
Mr JP Sieczkarek, South Area Manager, NHS Highland
Mr S Steer, Head of Strategic Commissioning, NHS Highland
Ms C Maitland, Development Officer, Scottish Care

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 D Millar in the Chair

Business

Preliminaries

The Chair welcomed Ms M Newdick and Ms A Pascoe, NHS Highland representatives, to their first meeting of the Committee. He also welcomed Ms K Morris, Highland Parent Council Forum, who was substituting for Mr F Weir.

1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs C Caddick, Mr M Finlayson, Mr B Gormley, Mr M Rattray and Ms J Slater.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 3 – Ms J Douglas (financial)

Item 6 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial)

Item 7 – Mr A Baxter, Mrs I Campbell, Ms J Douglas, Mr D Fallows, Mr M Green, Mrs B McAllister, Mr W Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr A MacLean, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs F

Robertson, Mr G Ross, Mr R Saxon, Mr G Smith (all non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial)

Item 8 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial)

Item 9 – Ms J Douglas (financial)

Item 10 – Ms J Douglas (financial)

Item 11- Ms J Douglas (non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial)

Item 12 – Ms J Douglas and Ms L Munro (both financial)

3. Presentation: Drug and Alcohol Services – The Road to Recovery

Taisbeanadh: Seirbheisean Dhrogaichean is Deoch Làidir – An Rathad gu Ath-shlànachadh

Declaration of Interest: Ms J Douglas declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the Specific Exclusion in Section 5.18(2)(i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, remained to participate in discussion.

The Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) was the multi-agency strategic partnership focussed on alcohol and drugs misuse issues in the Council area. It was responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing the local strategy, to ensure that recovery was supported, health was maximised and children, families and communities were protected.

Debbie Stewart, HADP Co-ordinator, and Suzy Calder, Head of Service - Substance Misuse, NHS Highland, gave a presentation which focused on outcomes and achievements from the strategy including recovery pathways, treatment options, challenges and current trends.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- people in rural areas often felt isolated and lonely and turned to alcohol as a companion;
- reference was made to a recent meeting of the Caithness Alcohol and Drugs Forum and Members commended the confidence of the speakers who had told their personal stories of addiction and recovery and were enjoying facing the challenges ahead;
- concern was expressed regarding the negative impact on recovering addicts of trolling on social media;
- the work being undertaken in relation to children affected by parental substance misuse was welcomed;
- concern was expressed regarding the high incidence of benzodiazepine misuse in Wick and the availability of drugs online;
- prescription medication misuse and functional alcoholism were equally as worrying as stereotypical alcohol and drug misuse and concern was expressed that, as long as the perception persisted that someone had to be at rock bottom to have a problem, those who were not quite at that stage would not come forward to get the support they needed; and
- Members commended the Rock Challenge, the value of which was that it was a “lived” experience for the young people involved that was free of drugs and alcohol. It was a soft, age-appropriate approach and, now that it was being delivered in primary schools, it was possible for young people to experience it over a 12 year period. Members were encouraged to go and see it when it came

to Eden Court or to visit their local schools to watch the rehearsals and it was suggested that information on the initiative be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

Information was sought and provided on:-

- the initial steps taken to help people in rural communities rid their system of alcohol so they could get the treatment they needed;
- the most important thing those in recovery had learned through addiction and rehabilitation;
- what could be done to eliminate the stigma associated with alcohol and drug misuse;
- the steps being taken to prevent the sale of drugs online and to help people with an addiction who were in receipt of universal credit;
- the “alcohol bracelet” referred to in the HADP Strategy Group Minutes of 3 May 2016; and
- how the system could be changed to help those in need of psychiatric assessment but whose self-destructive behaviour only manifested itself when under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** that information on the Rock Challenge initiative be circulated to Members of the Committee.

4. Outstanding Achievements Coileanaidhean Air Leth

There had been tabled a list of outstanding achievements by people and groups, as well as a list of winners from the Highland area in the Royal National Mod 2016.

During discussion, Members commended all those involved in the outstanding achievements, particularly Ashton Road Children’s House, Caitlin Jupp from Tain Royal Academy, the Council’s Educational Psychology Service and Stephen Pennington, Managing Director of Highland Home Carers.

In relation to the Mod, Members congratulated the numerous winners from Highland, particularly Dingwall, Inverness and Lochaber Gaelic Choirs. It was highlighted that Dingwall Male Voice Gaelic Choir had also won a major prize and it was requested that this be added to the list of competition winners. The Chair of the Gaelic Implementation Group highlighted that the Council had sponsored the under 13s folk group which had been won by a Lewis group, Na Rudhaich. He also welcomed the announcement that the Mod would be returning to Inverness in 2020.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outstanding achievements and **AGREED** that the Director write to all those involved in recognition of their success; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Dingwall Male Voice Gaelic Choir be added to the list of competition winners from Highland in the Royal National Mod 2016.

5. Emerging Literacy Litearrachd a' Tighinn am Bàrr

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/61/16 dated 10 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which described work done by a range of services, including teachers and Allied Health Professionals, to provide resources that enabled teachers in P1 onwards to adapt literacy teaching to the developmental status of their pupils. It covered the rollout of the approach to Emerging Literacy, early evaluation data and the extension of the work to the Northern Alliance local authorities.

James McTaggart, Educational Psychologist, James Cook, Raising Attainment in Literacy Officer: Northern Alliance, Jennifer Pickering, Occupational Therapist, and Rebecca Castello, Speech and Language Therapist, gave a presentation in amplification of the report, during which information was provided on literacy attainment in the most and least deprived areas and the short and long term impact of skills gaps. Detailed information was also provided on the Emerging Literacy model including the aims from the Emerging Literacy Improvement Plan; developments during the 2016/17 session; Emerging Literacy Networks; handwriting; oral language; phonological awareness; the resources available to support learning and teaching; the impact on teachers and children; and the Northern Alliance.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Members commended the integrated holistic approach and congratulated all those involved on the excellent work taking place;
- the attainment gap between the most and least deprived areas was stark and it was necessary to break the cycle of deprivation;
- reference was made to the roll pressures in Inverness schools and it was suggested that it would be helpful, as matters progressed, to involve the Emerging Literacy team in the discussions;
- involving a parent in the presentation would have added a different dimension;
- it was worrying that, unless there were interventions, a child's future educational success was determined from a young age;
- parents of children in deprived areas often had literacy challenges themselves and it was necessary to address those so that the interventions taking place in the classroom could be reinforced in the home environment;
- in the past, children had been set up to fail by being given tasks they were not ready for which, in turn, affected their self-esteem;
- the quality and depth of the resources available to teachers was commended;
- the need for a strong evidence base was emphasised and it would be helpful to receive a further report as soon as possible. In response, the Chair confirmed that a further report would be presented to the Committee in June 2017;
- it would be interesting to see a similar approach in Emerging Literacy to that employed in Gaelic medium education whereby parents were learners in tandem with children;
- Members had discussed the model with teachers, who had commented that it was important to have time away from the classroom to develop strategies and teaching methods, welcomed the teaching materials and emphasised the importance of sharing good practice;
- the real value of the model was that it met children at their own level and allowed them to thrive to be the best they could be;
- After School Clubs had a role to play in helping children with homework; and

- whilst the presentation had been full of life and enthusiasm, the recommendations in the report were quite passive. In that regard, the Chair suggested that recommendations i to iii be amended from note to embrace, celebrate and welcome, respectively.

Information was sought and provided on:-

- the provision of libraries in schools and whether working with High Life Highland to have libraries in new build schools open to the public would be a way to address the imbalance in provision between the most and least deprived areas;
- what could be done to take the Emerging Literacy model to the next level so that, in the future, a child's educational outcomes were not predetermined;
- how children could be encouraged, at an early age, to keep up the art of handwriting;
- what steps were being taken to reach smaller schools;
- the possibility of rolling out to other schools the project being delivered in Dingwall Academy whereby S6 pupils were undertaking a professional qualification to allow them to support S1 and S2 pupils; and
- whether the funding from the Education Scotland Innovation Fund was ongoing.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** to:-

- i. embrace the work done to support developmentally appropriate teaching and learning in literacy in the early level;
- ii. celebrate the unique partnership of education, health and other professionals in improving literacy outcomes for young children;
- iii. welcome the developments across the Northern alliance and the lead role played by Highland staff in this; and
- iv. endorse the direction of travel and to receive further reports on progress and effectiveness of the approach to Emerging Literacy.

6. High Life Highland Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh High Life na Gàidhealtachd

Declarations of Interest:

The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item 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:-

Ms J Douglas – Director of High Life Highland

Mr K Gowans – Director of Eden Court Theatre and High Life Highland

Mr K Gowans also declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee of High Life Highland and advised that if there was any specific discussion affecting his wife's employment he would leave the room.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/62/16 dated 14 October 2016 by the Chief Executive of High Life Highland (HLH) presenting information on the performance of HLH during the operating period April to October 2016 and providing

general updates since the last report in May 2016 and information on the High Life leisure and library membership schemes.

Ian Murray, Chief Executive, HLH, gave a presentation in amplification of the report, during which statistics were provided on customer numbers and memberships, both for leisure facilities and libraries, as well as percentage increases in participation and income in respect of the High Life Leisure Scheme. The background to the Leisure Scheme was summarised and information was provided on the number of members in each Mosaic Profile Group, which went some way to evidencing that HLH was achieving its aim of attracting predominantly low/mid earning families. Plans to extend the Scheme included the development of a cross-service HLH card; a target of 80% of Highland households to have a HLH card within five years; further discount for HLH services and activities; a discount card for local and regional businesses; discussions with local Chambers of Commerce to develop/promote member discounts; and development of a single customer database for communications/marketing.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the writing competition that had been run in partnership with Moray Firth Radio was a good example of working with external partners and information was sought and provided on the type of engagement that had taken place;
- the Council currently contributed £180k per year to Aviemore Highland Resort to provide public swimming facilities and it was suggested that the Council and HLH work together to explore the provision of a swimming pool under HLH's auspices, taking into account the potential future income from such a facility. The Chief Executive, HLH, confirmed that he would be happy to enter into discussions in that regard. However, it was recognised that the Council faced significant capital challenges;
- Members welcomed the libraries app which allowed people to renew their library books online, as well as the hubs that had been provided in some areas to allow people without access to a smartphone or computer to renew their books outwith opening hours;
- whilst the Mosaic Profile Group findings were interesting, concern was expressed that there was insufficient evidence to use it as a basis for business decisions. Members were assured that it was simply an attempt to confirm that HLH was reaching its target market of low/mid earning families;
- the Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, commended the impact HLH had on public health in terms of reaching a large proportion of the population; and
- information was sought, and provided, on whether there was any long-term strategy in relation to the provision of a 50m pool for stronger swimmers.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. that High Life Highland had met or exceeded the outcomes expected in the Service Delivery Contract with the Council for the period April to October 2016;
- ii. the general updates since the last report in May 2016; and
- iii. the reach of the High Life Highland leisure and library membership schemes in serving an estimated 51% of the Highland population and in reaching mid to low earning families and individuals in Highland.

**7. Revenue Budget - Monitoring 2016/17
Buidseat Teachd-a-steach – Sgrùdadh 2016/17**

The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item 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:-

Mr A Baxter – Parent of two pupils at Lochaber Music School

Mrs I Campbell - Board Member of Strathpeffer Pavilion

Ms J Douglas – Member of the Girl Guides Association and Director of High Life Highland

Mr D Fallows – Trustee and Director of Society of Badenoch and Strathspey Artists

Mr K Gowans – Director of Eden Court and High Life Highland

Mr M Green – Director of Nairn Community Centre

Mrs B McAllister – Member of Highland Disability Sport and Inverness Area Sports Council and Board Member of the Senior Citizens Network Group

Mr W Mackay – Director of Caithness Horizons, Chair of Caithness Disability Sport and Member of Highland Disability Sport

Mr G MacKenzie – Board Member of Strathpeffer Pavilion and Puffin Pool

Mr A MacLean - Clerk to the Ballifeary Care Home Committee

Mrs M Paterson – Member of Puffin Pool

Ms F Robertson – Member of the Duthac Centre Management Committee

Mr G Ross – Office Bearer of Highland Disability Sport (but would leave the room if there was any specific discussion on this organisation)

Mr R Saxon – Chair of Thurso Youth Club and Board Member of Caithness Horizons

Mr G Smith – Board Member of Step It Up Highland

Mr K Gowans also declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interests did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/63/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning providing an update on the Care and Learning revenue budget position to the end of September 2016, including in relation to Looked After Children/Out of Authority Placements, 3rd sector Leisure and Culture funding, Special School Budgets and staff resources for Early Learning and Childcare expansion.

In considering the matter of 3rd sector Leisure and Culture funding separately, the Chair reminded Members that the situation had arisen as a result of a budget saving decision taken at a Council meeting in December 2014 to cut 3rd sector grants by 5% in 2016/17 and by 45% in 2017/18. He thanked the Members who had participated in the Sub Group which had considered the grant applications and explained that, with health, wellbeing and children as an agreed priority, as well as the need to protect facilities in more rural areas, there had been limited funds remaining. The Sub Group had also tried to give some protection to village halls and had retained money for Sports Councils, for sport development, by creating a central fund which would be administered by High Life Highland (HLH). Similarly, funding for Adult Education organisations been combined and would also be administered by HLH. However, the impact these cuts would have had been recognised, with some applicants receiving no

grant, and consequently an additional £200,000 had been allocated. This additional funding would result in a budget pressure.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- there was concern that the Sub Group's deliberations had not been open and transparent in that no minutes of the Group's meetings had been circulated and Members were therefore unable to gauge how the Group had reached its decisions and whether or not consideration of applications had been robust and thorough. Accordingly, there was a need to revisit the applications and a request was made for a Special Meeting of the ECAS Committee to be arranged where the applications, criteria, scoring templates and minutes of Group meetings could be considered. It might be that similar decisions would be reached but a further Special Meeting in this regard would demonstrate that the process had been fair and open and that full and proper governance had been in place which would be an important consideration should any future internal audit focus on this issue;
- comparison was made with the Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee (whereby all minutes of these meetings were submitted to the City of Inverness Area Committee) and it was suggested that a similar process should have been undertaken in this instance;
- it was understood that there had been three meetings of the Sub Group but that Committee staff had only been asked to be in attendance at the latter two meetings and this required explanation, particularly as it appeared that the first meeting had been where the criteria had been set out and the letters from voluntary organisations considered;
- the potential impact of these cuts on voluntary organisations could be severe and as such it was important to have as much information as possible before taking a final decision. It was also essential for clarification to be obtained on whether equalities impact assessments had been undertaken;
- there was a need for further information on the criteria and scoring system which had been used to allocate funding in each case;
- it had been proposed that some 3rd Sector and voluntary organisation projects might better be addressed in future at Ward level but it was pointed out that Ward Discretionary budgets could only be used for one-off funding projects and not to provide ongoing support;
- it was suggested that Eden Court Theatre was at an advantage as they had made a presentation to a recent Committee meeting where the impact of budget cuts on their work had been highlighted whereas other voluntary groups had not been given the same opportunity. However, it was now understood that Eden Court had been included in the list in error and that their funding came from another source;
- the Sub Group had been informed of existing funding commitments in relation to Caithness Horizons, Strathpeffer Pavilion Association and the Highland Resort in Aviemore and it was queried how the Group had taken this into account when deciding other funding commitments;
- there was a lack of sport facilities in Caithness which meant that many people had to travel to Inverness. It was also highlighted that the Boys Brigade and Youth Club in Caithness provided young people with somewhere to go in the evenings. In response, the Chair explained that the Sub Group had agreed that there were insufficient resources available to fund national organisations;
- it was pointed out that Members of the Sub Group had been encouraged to report back to their political groups on how discussions were progressing;

- the Sub Group had had difficult decisions to reach as a result of the budget decision to cut 3rd sector grants and any further delay could exacerbate this situation;
- the criteria which had been used had been discussed at the Council meeting in December 2014 and had been included in the letters sent to the 3rd sector voluntary organisations inviting them to apply for funding. These letters had also set out the timeframe in which applications were to be received and, despite reminders also being issued, there were some organisations who had failed to submit applications timeously;
- the proposed cuts had been known about for some time and making the decision now would enable voluntary organisations to plan and prepare for the future. It also had to be borne in mind that these cuts had been made against a backdrop of reductions in Local Government funding;
- it was acknowledged that the initial proposals would have had a major impact on some voluntary groups and, consequently, advice had been sought about directing more funding to alleviate this situation. Whilst directing an additional £500k had initially been considered, the Director of Finance had advised against incurring such a large budget pressure. As a result, the Sub Group had met for a third time to consider how best to allocate an additional £200k although this was still a considerable budget pressure;
- disappointment was expressed that the Liberal Democrats had not taken part in the Sub Group meetings;
- in relation to funding for the Nairn Community Centre, it was hoped that discussions could take place to ensure that they could reach a sustainable position. In the meantime, a plea was made for transition funding for some tapered relief to allow parity with elsewhere for 2017/18;
- in relation to Caithness Horizons, the Chair explained that their funding would continue meantime as their Service Level Agreement was due for renewal and negotiations about future funding would form part of that discussion; and
- in recognising the importance of supporting small community groups, such as Sports Councils, where possible, Members were reminded of the ring-fenced monies which had been given to HLH to administer in relation to sports development.

Thereafter, the Chair, seconded by Mrs M Davidson, **MOVED** the funding allocations for 3rd sector culture and leisure services as detailed in the report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr A Baxter, moved that a Special Meeting of the ECAS Committee should be held to determine funding for 3rd sector culture and leisure services and that complete comprehensive paperwork should be made available to complete the process with appropriate evaluation criteria.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 11 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 8 votes, with 3 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs I Campbell, Miss J Campbell, Mrs M Davidson, Mr H Fraser, Mrs M McCulloch, Mr W MacKay, Mr A MacLean, Mr D Millar, Mr M Paterson, Mr G Ross and Mrs F Robertson.

For the Amendment:

Mr A Baxter, Mr A Christie, Mr S Fuller, Mr A Graham, Mr D Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr K Gowans and Ms K Stephen.

Abstentions:

Mr G Smith, Mrs E McAllister and Mrs D Mackay.

Decision

The **MOTION** therefore became the finding of the meeting.

During discussion of the remaining sections of the report, the following issues were raised:-

- confirmation was sought as to the capacity for each of the Council's special schools and if this had now been reached. In relation to St Duthus School a waiting list had previously existed but information now suggested that this was no longer the case. Details of where these children had now gone, and whether or not they could return to St Duthus, were requested;
- information was sought as to which ECAS Committee would consider the Review of Gaelic Transport and if the Gaelic Implementation Group would be consulted;
- in relation to the Black Isle Education Service, an update of progress in considering Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs provision in Easter Ross was requested;
- it was projected that Looked After Children/Out of Authority Placements budgets would be overspent by £1.487m by the end of the financial year but confirmation was sought as to which lines in the Monitoring Statement this related to;
- details were requested as to the discussions which had taken place with NHS Highland on funding young people still in Children's Services residential care who were over 18 years old. In particular, information was sought as to their aim, when it was anticipated they would be completed and what benefit there would be for service users;
- whilst the increase in early learning and childcare hours was welcomed, concern was expressed that this put pressure on the capital budget in terms of the need to provide physical accommodation. It was important that the Committee considered how the Council would address this as early year expansion continued in the future; and
- clarification was sought in regard to Unallocated Corporate Savings and how these would be off-set.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the forecast out-turn for the 2016/17 financial year;
- ii. **AGREED** the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) status of budget savings;
- iii. **NOTED** the update provided in relation to Looked After Children;
- iv. **AGREED** the funding allocations for 3rd sector culture and leisure services.
- v. **NOTED** the update in relation to Special School budgets and the actions being taken to review budget and spending;
- vi. **AGREED** the post to provide additional support for expansion of Early Learning and Childcare; and
- vii. **AGREED** that responses to Members' questions regarding Special School capacity/St Duthus School; Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs provision in Tain and Easter Ross; Looked After Children/Out of Authority Placement

budgets; and the Gaelic school transport review be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

8. Care and Learning Capital Programme - Monitoring Report Caiteachas Calpa – Sgrùdadh

Declarations of Interest:

Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of High Life Highland 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.

Mr K Gowans also declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee of High Life Highland and advised that if there was any specific discussion affecting his wife's employment he would leave the room.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/64/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning advising on the position of the Care and Learning capital programme as at the end of September 2016. It also outlined the current status of the major projects that were underway and updates on progress with identifying future capital investment priorities. Finally, the report also sought approval for recommendations on several specific matters.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Local Members expressed concern regarding the possibility of Broadford Primary School being extended/refurbished. Refurbishing a building that was not fit for purpose was not prudent use of funding and it was emphasised that a new build would be preferable. Of particular concern was the condition of the hut that accommodated P3/4 Gaelic medium pupils. It was understood that a plan was in place to move the pupils into the school on a temporary basis and an assurance was sought, for health and safety reasons, that this would take place as soon as possible. In response, the Chair confirmed that the Area Care and Learning Manager had given an assurance that the children would be moved into the school building as quickly as possible and the removal of the hut was being given the highest priority;
- the refurbishment of the Wade Centre was a good example of integrated work achieving a result. All parties had been kept informed of progress and thanks were expressed to the management team;
- in relation to Aviemore Primary School, concern was expressed that four years on from its opening there were still issues with the heating system. The Chair explained that the matter had been raised with the Development and Infrastructure Service, a response would be sought and Local Members would be kept informed;
- on behalf of Local Members and the local community, thanks were expressed to officers for their continued work in relation to Strontian Primary School;
- in relation to the Tain 3-18 campus, information was sought on the reasons why the stakeholder group did not wish the Service Point to be incorporated into the campus and concern was expressed that an opportunity was being missed to co-locate services and make savings. Having both the library and the Service Point as part of the campus worked well in Lochaber and it was hoped this would be adopted as a standard model wherever possible. In response, Councillor

Robertson, Ward Member for Tain and Easter Ross, explained that the stakeholder group was against the Service Point being incorporated into the new campus for a number of reasons. In particular, the existing Service Point, which provided a range of services, was in the centre of the high street and moving it would lead to yet another empty building as well as loss of footfall. In addition, it serviced eight villages and many people travelled in by bus. There would not be buses to the new campus site. Finally, there was insufficient space on the new site, with creative thinking already having to be employed to accommodate the library;

- Members welcomed the allocation of funding in respect of Gairloch and Ullapool synthetic pitches and hoped that maintenance would improve in the future. In response, the Chair confirmed that would be the case, with a maintenance contract for all synthetic pitches being put in place;
- information was sought on when the feasibility study in respect of Charleston Academy would be available. The Head of Resources undertook to respond to Ward Members outwith the meeting;
- Members welcomed the progress in relation to Inverness High School and emphasised that the pupils deserved the best possible education and facilities. In response to concerns regarding the lengthy timescale, the Chair explained that this was due to the sensitive nature of the building and the need to consult with Historic Scotland;
- in relation to the Inverness Schools Review, thanks were expressed to officers for the communication that had taken place with Local Members, Parent Councils etc and it was hoped that, by working together, the issues could begin to be resolved. However, there were widespread concerns that £48m was not sufficient and there was a need to set out all the projects that needed to be carried out and their estimated costs to determine what the scope of the whole operation would be. Concern was expressed that the situation was worsening, with more schools raising issues in terms of condition or capacity, and it was necessary to pick up the pace of progress. Reference was made to a meeting of Lochardil Primary School Parent Council, where parents had raised concerns regarding the pressure on schools on that side of town and that children would not be able to go to their catchment school if they relocated from another part of Inverness. It was suggested that a seminar be arranged to allow Members to discuss the issues in more depth. In response, the Chair explained that business cases, including costings, would be presented to the December Council as part of the review of the Capital Programme and the Director of Finance had undertaken to brief the various political groups. In relation to the suggestion of a seminar, further briefings for Inverness Members were in the process of being arranged and it was suggested that an extended briefing take place to allow the in-depth discussion requested, particularly in relation to funding and timelines;
- it was requested that updated school roll projections be circulated to Members of the Committee as soon as they were available;
- concern was expressed that developer contributions to new schools were insufficient and, whilst recognising that the Council could not ask so much that building and selling houses would be uneconomical, it was suggested that the matter needed to be reviewed. Concern was also expressed regarding instances of overdevelopment. However, the close working between the Care and Learning and Development and Infrastructure Services was welcomed and it was hoped it would continue and increase;
- an update was sought and provided regarding Estates Team staffing;

- it was hoped that improving school buildings and facilities would help to reduce the number of placing requests and retain children in their catchment area;
- thanks were expressed to officers and school staff for their efforts in addressing the issues in relation to Inverness Royal Academy and Wick Community Campus. With regard to Alness Academy, it was suggested that there was a need to examine the methodology behind the funding from the Scottish Government and not take shortcuts that might lead to problems that would have to be resolved at a later date. In response, the Chair confirmed that lessons had been learned from the Inverness Royal Academy project and assured Members that officers would not take possession of Wick Community Campus until they were completely satisfied that it was up to standard; and
- the Leader of the Council reminded Members that she had spoken to the Chief Executive regarding the performance of Hub North Scotland (the Hub) and the Council's capacity to deliver its extensive Capital Programme. Robust discussions had taken place with the Hub and she had asked them to come and speak to the Council regarding the underperformance issues and the complicated funding process.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. additional funding up to £100,000 be allocated from the Adult Services budget for additional roofing and other works at the Wade Centre as detailed in Paragraph 2.6 of the report;
- ii. to delegate responsibility to either the Director of Care and Learning or the Director of Finance, in consultation with either the Chair of the Resources or Education, Children and Adult Services Committees, for the completion and submission of a New Project Request for Alness Academy as detailed in Section 2.8 of the report;
- iii. funding be drawn down from the Life Cycle Investment and Roll Pressures budgets to allow detailed design work to commence on several schools projects as detailed in Section 3.1 of the report;
- iv. a letter of comfort be provided to Strontian Community School Build Ltd outlining the Council's willingness in principle to lease the facility on the broad terms as outlined within the report (exact lease terms would be subject to detailed negotiation) as detailed in Section 3.5 of the report;
- v. the allocation of funding to the projects referred to in Section 3.6 of the report;
- vi. the former janitor's house at Grantown Grammar School be declared surplus to operational requirements as detailed in Paragraph 4.1 of the report;
- vii. a response be sought from the Development and Infrastructure Service regarding the issues with the Aviemore Primary School heating system and that Local Members be kept informed;
- viii. updated school roll projections be circulated to Members of the Committee as soon as they were available;
- ix. information on the availability of the feasibility study in relation to Charleston Academy be provided to Ward Members; and
- x. an extended briefing on Inverness Schools take place in advance of the full Council in December 2016 to allow more in-depth discussions to take place, particularly in relation to funding and timelines.

In terms of Standing Order 18, the Committee **AGREED** that agenda item 12 be considered at this juncture.

12. Care at Home Development Fund Maoin Co-iomraid Ionnsachadh Coimhearsnachd

Declarations of Interest:

Ms L Munro declared a financial interest as an employee of NHS Highland Care at Home Service and left the room.

Ms J Douglas also declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the Specific Exclusion in Section 5.18(2)(i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, remained to participate in discussion.

There had been circulated Joint Report No ECAS/68/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Strategic Commissioning, Planning and Performance (NHSH) and the Director of Care and Learning describing the development of an innovative approach to developing community based care at home services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the fund which had been made available to support the development of Community Care at Home initiatives was welcomed as this enabled the spread and share of practise to assist communities that were providing care or who wanted to learn about implementing this model. This represented communities taking control and there were already excellent examples where communities aspirations and ambitions had grown in providing Care at Home locally;
- NHS Highland's co-operation in carrying out Self Directed Support assessments was key to the success of local Care at Home initiatives. Any such delays with assessment would hinder access to the fund and the delivery of the service;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that Members were in receipt of contact details for the officers administering this fund. A leaflet had also been prepared which Members could distribute in their communities; and
- reference was made to the Minute of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee where clarification had been sought on the process for people in the larger rural areas making representation for additional payment to be included in the tariff for mileage. This fund, it was suggested, would be of limited benefit to rural communities if the tariff was insufficient to cover the needs of a community-based service provider.

The Committee **NOTED** the development of a Community Care at Home Development Fund and **AGREED** to support local initiatives.

9. Performance Report - Children's Services Aithisg Choileanaidh - Seirbheisean Chloinne

Declaration of Interest: Ms J Douglas declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the Specific Exclusion in Section 5.18(2)(i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, remained to participate in discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/65/16 dated 13 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning providing an update on the performance framework for Children's Services.

The Committee **NOTED** the performance information.

10. Children's Services - Assurance Report Seirbheisean Chloinne – Aithisg Bharantais

Declaration of Interest: Ms J Douglas declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the Specific Exclusion in Section 5.18(2)(i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, remained to participate in discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/66/16 dated 12 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning providing assurance to NHS Highland in relation to services commissioned and delivered through Highland Council. The content of each assurance report was informed by the Highland Health and Social Care Committee and discussion with the Child Health Commissioner.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the breastfeeding rate had increased to 39% and this was welcomed. There had been considerable work undertaken in terms of peer support and it was hoped this trend would continue. However, more work was required in areas of deprivation and a graph setting out breastfeeding rates in such areas was requested so Members could ascertain the extent of this gap. Improvements in breastfeeding rates in deprived areas would have a greater impact than improvements in more affluent areas; and
- in addition to School Nurses and Guidance Teachers it was hoped greater use could be made by schools of other teams that supported young people, such as Youth Work Teams, as this provided a wider variety of people for young people to contact about problems/issues.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the issues raised in the report and that Members' comments would be incorporated into a report to NHS Highland as part of the revised governance arrangements; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a graph setting out breastfeeding rates in deprived areas be circulated to Committee Members.

11. Standards and Quality Report 2015/16 Aithisg Inbhean agus Càileachd 2015/16

Declarations of Interest:

The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item 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:-

Ms J Douglas – Director of High Life Highland

Mr K Gowans – Director of Eden Court Theatre and High Life Highland

Mr K Gowans also declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee of High Life Highland and advised that if there was any specific discussion affecting his wife's employment he would leave the room.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/67/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning introducing the Standards and Quality Report and identifying next steps and areas for improvement across the Service.

During a detailed presentation it was explained that the purpose of the summary report was to consider educational progress across the Service, to provide an initial evaluation of SQA performance and Insight data relating to a Virtual Comparator authority.

During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- whilst the data provided was welcomed, it was essential that it was acted upon;
- it was important to drill down into the data to get a clear picture of what was happening in education in Highland;
- disappointment was expressed at Government proposals for standardised testing as it was felt this measured a child's educational attainment at a specific point of time. This could have long term implications for the pupil and the child and the money would be better used for initiatives such as Emerging Literacy;
- there were a number of areas in the Summary Report suggesting that Highland was performing below the Virtual Comparator or where performance was mixed. In addition, it highlighted that significant measures were required to be taken as regards Care Experienced pupil attainment. This was contrary to the view that Highland Schools were in fact doing well and assurances were sought that this was the reality;
- as it was suggested that 52% of young people either did not know or disagreed that their Pupil Council had input into decisions regarding their school, it was suggested a workshop be held at a Highland Youth Voice Area Parliament to gather views on education;
- all Secondary Schools had too big an attainment gap and detailed information needed to be considered at Local Committees and discussions held with Head Teachers as to how this could be improved;
- given the complexity of the data, consideration needed to be given as to the best way to present this to Members. Ward Members would still want to be able to scrutinise the performance for schools in their area as well as Parent Councils but guidance and/or training would be needed;
- the education and Looked After Children had been trailing behind for some time and it was important work was undertaken on address this. Often it was the schools themselves who knew the reasons for this and therefore more funding for this should go to individual school. If educational performance and outputs for this cohort was improved not only would this be reflected in statistics but also in the lives of Looked After Children;

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the Standards and Quality Report 2015/16; and
- ii. **AGREED** that consideration be given to the best way to present detailed information on specific schools to Members.

13. Achfary Primary School - Outcome of Statutory Consultation Bun-Sgoil Achadh Fairidh – Toradh na Co-chomhairle Reachdail

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/69/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning setting out, following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, a recommendation to discontinue the provision of education at Achfary Primary School and to re-assigning its catchment area to that of Scourie Primary School. The full proposal and associated appendices had been circulated separately as Booklet A and additional representations, received following publication of the agenda and papers, were tabled.

- * Having considered the proposal, the Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that education provision at Achfary Primary School be discontinued, reassigning its catchment area to that of Scourie Primary School.

14. Dunvegan Primary School - Proposal to Proceed to Statutory Consultation on Relocating the School Bun-Sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Moladh airson Co-chomhairle Reachdail

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/70/16 dated 18 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning seeking agreement to proceed to a statutory consultation, under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to relocate Dunvegan Primary School.

The Chairman suggested that this relocation proposal offered an opportunity to provide a modern school environment for the children of Dunvegan and Glendale. It was also an opportunity to work in partnership with local organisations and agencies to benefit the community as a whole and, in particular, the North West Skye Recreation Association was eager to work with the Council as they moved forward with their project. The Recreation Association had helped to facilitate a meeting with the landowner, who was fully supportive of a community school facility, and indications from representatives of the local Parent Council and Community Council were that they too were supportive of the proposal to relocate the school.

Having considered the report and attached proposal, the Committee **AGREED** to proceed to statutory consultation, per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, regarding the proposal for relocating Dunvegan Primary School.

15. Staffing in Family Teams in Children's Services Luchd-obrach Sgiobaidhean Teaghlaich

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/71/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning providing detail on the staffing pressures within the Family Teams, further to information provided at the last meeting of the Council.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the list of vacancies provided, compared to that submitted to the Highland Council on 8 September 2016, showed a variance of five posts and this highlighted further attrition affecting services for vulnerable clients. To continue to monitor the situation it was important that Member were kept regularly informed;

- the various initiatives to improve staffing levels were welcomed and it was suggested that, particularly when trying to recruit to senior posts and those in remote areas, consideration be given, in conjunction with the Council's Community Planning Partnership, to joint recruitment campaigns and employment opportunities for other family members;
- unless workforce planning was addressed across the public sector there was a danger the situation would deteriorate further. In this regard, the Leader undertook to have further discussions about how best to take this forward;
- it was essential that attractive work packages were developed to attract suitable staff;
- access to housing in rural areas was also a detrimental factor. This was a particular problem in the Cairngorm National Park area and it was suggested that legislation regarding the allocation of housing needed to be reviewed;
- the "grow your own" approach adopted by Children Services was commended but there needed to be a balance of newly qualified and experienced staff; and
- providing information to schools highlighting where there would be skill shortages in future would enable pupils to make informed career choices.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the information provided; and
- AGREED** that regular updates be provided on staffing in Family Teams and that consideration be given to the best way of doing so.

16. Self-Directed Support Taic Fèin-Stiùirichte

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/72/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning providing an update on Self Directed Support (SDS), including the development of brokerage services for children and young people and making recommendations on this, the possibility of introducing charges and a change to the SDS decision making process in high cost cases.

During discussion, while support was expressed for not charging for social care services for children, it was important that costings were provided to enable parents to make informed choices about SDS. In addition, in relation to the £6,729 of reclaimed Direct Payments, disappointment was expressed that these funds were unspent and it was suggested that a brokerage arrangement would go some way to address this.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- that charges should not be introduced for families accessing Self Directed Support, respite or other directly provided services from Highland Council;
- that further work be carried out to develop a Community brokerage proposal to be brought to a future committee meeting; and
- to endorse the arrangement that high cost packages over the Resource Allocation System limit required the approval of the Care and Learning Manager.

17. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee – 19 April 2016;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 3 May 2016;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Child Protection Committee – 24 May 2016;
- iv. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Duncraig Trust Scheme Sub-Committee – 31 August 2016;
- v. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of Community Justice Partnership – 1 September 2016; and
- vi. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 16 September 2016.

Arising from the Minutes of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held on 19 April 2016, the Chairman undertook to investigate if it would have been possible for this Minute to be considered at an earlier meeting of the Committee and report back to Mr A Christie.

The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm.