

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 3 November 2016 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr D Kerr
Mrs J Barclay	Mrs L MacDonald
Mr A Baxter	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs G Coghill	Mr K MacLeod
Dr J Davis	Mrs B McAllister
Mr N Donald	Mr H Morrison
Mr G Farlow	Mr B Murphy
Mr A Graham	Mr A Rhind
Mr R Greene	Mrs F Robertson (Substitute)
Mr A Henderson	Ms T Robertson

Non-Members also present:

Mrs I Campbell	Mrs I McCallum
Mr B Fernie	Mr D Millar
Mr K Gowans	Mrs M Paterson
Mr D Mackay	Mr T Prag
Mrs A MacLean	Mr R Saxon

In attendance:

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance
Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport
Mr R Pope, Roads and Community Works Manager
Mr A Yates, Environmental Health Manager
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

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

Mr A Henderson in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Clark, Mr G Phillips and Mr J Rosie.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 9 – Mr B Murphy (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 reported:-

- Best Kept War Memorial 2016 – Drumnadrochit

Drumnadrochit War Memorial had won the Champion of Champions category by the National Board of Trustees of the Royal British Legion Scotland. In addition, Nairn War Memorial had won the Large Community with Gardens category. These awards were welcomed, particularly in the lead up to Remembrance Day.

- Funding for Ice Plant, Lochinver

Following a successful application to the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, a grant contribution of £300k had been awarded to the Highland Council to construct a modern 15 tonne per day ice plant at Lochinver harbour to replace the existing plant constructed in the 1980s. The new plant would provide larger quantities of higher quality flake ice whilst reducing the Highland Council's carbon footprint. The ice would be sold to fishing vessels and fish graders to create a financially sustainable service to the industry without incurring revenue costs for the Council. Not only would this benefit the local west coast economy but had international benefit with many of the vessels using Lochinver coming from continental Europe.

- FCC Environment Outstanding Contribution Award

At the recent Scottish Resources Awards, Dr Colin Clark had won the FCC Environment Outstanding Contribution Award. This was in recognition of over 30 years' experience during which time he had made a significant contribution to the development of waste and resources policy, thinking and practice, including in his roles as Chair of the Waste Management Officers' Network and a member of the CIWM Scotland Centre Council.

- Apprentice Mechanics Scheme

Following a recent recruitment drive for apprentice mechanics, over 270 applications had been received and 9 new apprenticeships had started a 4 year training programme. Not only would the scheme help with

succession planning allowing workshop services to be delivered across Highland, it would also help sustain local communities.

- Sconser Quarry

Bear Scotland were now extracting aggregate from the previously redundant quarry at Sconser. Given its strategic location, this would lead to a reduction in haulage.

- Property Purchasing

Reference was made to the purchasing of properties to help address issues with housing shortages. This innovative and flexible approach would be explored further in later reports to the Committee.

The Committee **NOTED** the items of Good News.

4. Revenue Budget Monitoring - 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Sgrùdadh - 1 Giblean 2016 gu 30 Sultain 2016

There had been circulated Report No COM/39/16 dated 20 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services inviting Members to approve the revenue budget monitoring position for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- an explanation was sought, and received, of the charges included in the Roads and Community Works Trading Account and also Trading Operations;
- assurance was sought that the Car Parking income would be achieved by the year end;
- although income was being received from Decriminalised Parking Enforcement it was feared that there would be a loss of income due to the sale of the single decked car park on Rose Street;
- insufficient consultation had been undertaken with local Ward Members regarding Car Clubs and it might have been more appropriate to have advertised it as a separate Traffic Order;
- given that the deadline for 'Right to Buy' had passed, figures should be available on the amount of properties sold and a report was sought which showed the income by area. In this connection, it was highlighted that many properties were non-standard build. This made it difficult for some tenants to secure a mortgage and leeway should be given to the consideration of 'Right to Buy' applications from these tenants;
- staff were working hard to process 'Right to Buy' applications as quickly as possible but, due to the volume of sales, they were taking longer to finalise and it was possible that the specific time frame to process 'Right to Buy' applications might not be met;
- an explanation was sought, and received, of the expenditure included in the Non-Housing Revenue Account specifically for Supporting People and Anti-Social Behaviour;
- a breakdown of the annual budget for Roads Maintenance was sought so that it could be scrutinised;
- employment had suffered in North West and Central Sutherland and there was a need to advertise job vacancies;

- the term 'abandonment' in relation to housing was unfamiliar and an explanation was provided;
- clarification was sought in relation to the disaggregated area budgets as different figures for the total budgets for Roads and Amenity Services and Housing Revenue Account had been reported to the Caithness Committee;
- it was queried whether there would be an opportunity to change the spend when the disaggregated area budgets were reported in detail to Local Committees and, specifically for Local Committees with multiple wards, whether it could be ring-fenced per ward;
- as Housing Associations also made use of Anti-Social Behaviour Services they should contribute to the cost;
- a breakdown of 'Other Costs' was sought and received;
- the high figures associated with house voids in Caithness, along with the length of time houses remained void, was queried and it was suggested an in-depth investigation was needed. In response it was confirmed that the houses which were causing the major problems and skewing the figures were now up for sale;
- the downward trend and less variation in the figures progressing towards a more efficient Service was welcomed; and
- it was suggested that loading bays in the Town Centre could be used by blue badge holders at weekends.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- APPROVED** the report and the monitoring statements which showed the revenue position for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 (including the £27m that was disaggregated) and the actions which had been put in place to manage the budget over the remainder of the financial year; and
- AGREED** a briefing note be provided to Members detailing the current position regarding the processing of Council house sales following the end of the Right to Buy Scheme.

5. **Capital Expenditure Monitoring – 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016** **Caiteachas Calpa Sgrùdadh - 1 Giblean 2016 gu 30 Sultain 2016**

There had been circulated Report No COM/40/16 dated 20 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services inviting Members to approve the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period from 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 for both the Community Services element of the Council's approved capital programme and the HRA capital programme.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- details of the number of new build completions which the Council would achieve by the end of 2016/17 were requested;
- confirmation was sought if the 3 Janitor's houses at Charleston were new builds;
- some houses had been inherited from other Services and were often in poor condition. The costs of renovating some of these properties could be considerable and, although it was argued that this would be met from rental income, this could take some time to recoup;
- the Council was also buying back ex-Council properties and information

- was sought if these too were classified as new builds;
- concern was expressed that the environmental improvement works identified by Members at Ward level would not take place until the following financial year; and
- when compared to the budget allocation, concern was expressed at the low levels of expenditure incurred in some areas in relation to Equipment and Adaptations, Environmental Improvements and Insulation works and confirmation was sought that these budgets would be fully utilised.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016; and
- AGREED** that information be provided to Committee Members detailing how many new build completions had taken place in 2016/17.

6. **HRA Capital Plan 2017/18** **Prògram Calpa HRA 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No COM/41/16 dated 5 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services outlining the resources required to undertake capital investment to the Council's housing stock and recommending capital investment projects for approval in 2017-18 in line with the approved HRA Capital Plan.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- as a result of the introduction of Scottish Housing Quality Standard many tenants had been unhappy about the lack of work carried out on their properties. Members therefore welcomed the proposed projects for window, door, bathroom and kitchen replacements and that older properties would be prioritised. In this connection, confirmation was sought as to how specific works were added to the list in practice;
- it was important to keep tenants and Local Members informed about what works were to be undertaken and when;
- it was suggested that wooden clad properties did not need to be entirely repainted. Painting and/or recladding only those gable ends affected by weather would be sufficient. As well as making savings, there were possibly Government Grants available to do this work;
- there was no programme in place for dealing with the external fabric of pebble-dashed and wooden clad Council houses in the Tain and Easter Ross Ward;
- £7.5m of the Capital Plan budget came from Grants/Landbank. Information was sought as to the relative split between these two components and the sources of the Grants;
- clarification was sought regarding the rationale of using Capital Funded from Current Revenue for the programme rather than using it for housing repairs;
- as the Capital Programme relating to Council house building had already been approved by the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee, the Community Service Committee was required only to approve the remaining elements. Disappointment was expressed that, although having responsibility to manage housing on a day-to-day basis and with much of the programme being funded through Council house

rents, the Community Services Committee did not have the authority to approve the house building programme. If Community Services had control over the house building programme it would enable the needs of those people on the Council house waiting list to be better addressed;

- while the proposed heating replacement projects were welcomed, many of the least efficient systems were in fact some of the most recently installed systems;
- reference was made to properties where the wrong sized radiator had been fitted and it had been hoped that this would have been rectified before the winter. In instances where problems had arisen it was important that these were addressed timeously;
- when entering into new heating contracts it was important to learn from previous mistakes and to only consider proven heating systems;
- information was sought on the timescales involved in meeting requests for equipment and adaptations to properties. In this regard, information was also requested as to when the policy had been last reviewed as there were reported instances where different criteria had been applied;
- the proposal to involve tenants more in what was happening in their communities was welcomed;
- a more holistic approach needed to be adopted rather than carrying out projects individually. The example used was the installation of new heating systems where, for maximum benefit to be achieved, consideration needed to be whole fabric of the building and the lifestyles of tenants;
- where two projects were listed for the same area for the same component replacement this was because it represented two different contracts; and
- when undertaking door replacements, back and front doors of tenement properties should also be considered for replacement to ensure that the building was wind and watertight.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the element of the HRA Capital Programme 2017-2018, which fell within the remit of Community Services, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that an analysis of unit costs associated with recent major component replacements be provided to Committee Members.

7. Review of Arrangements for Grass Cutting Cùmhnant Gearradh Feòir

There had been circulated Report No COM/42/16 dated 11 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services providing information on the Options Appraisal carried out by Community Services on the options for in-house, privatised and mixed service provision of grass cutting in the Highlands.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the speed with which the Service had completed the Options Appraisal for the Council's grass cutting service was welcomed;
- it was questioned why the in-house provision costs were the same as those for the mixed provision arrangement. In this regard, when considering improvements in productivity and working practices, it was essential that employees carrying out the work were consulted;

- with a number of small businesses providing similar grass cutting services there was a danger, when looking at opportunities for income generation, that the Council did not end up in direct competition with them;
- it was hoped that the benefits of bringing the grass cutting service back in-house would be recognised during the budget setting process. Whilst the competitive tendering of the service had generated savings this had been to the detriment of quality;
- the new arrangement provided flexibility to the Service, especially as it moved forward in uncertain financial times. Also, it was acknowledged that bringing the service in-house could make a significant contribution to local economies;
- clarification was sought in relation to procurement arrangements;
- it was essential that there was a system in place for measuring performance but it was also important that it was not complaint led. It was suggested that part of the inspection regime could include “community” walk-rounds with Community Councils being encouraged to identify local priorities;
- the opportunity to revise the specification for amenity services was welcomed and it was hoped that this would fit in with the localism agenda rather than a Highland-wide approach. However, when disaggregating grass cutting budgets, difficulties might arise in the large Local Committees where decisions would need to be taken across a number of Wards taking into account a range of factors whilst also endeavouring to maintain monitoring and consistency;
- the TUPE arrangements proposed were questioned taking into account the relatively few Council employees who transferred to contractors when the service was originally out-sourced;
- it was important to establish exactly what grass cutting and grounds maintenance was paid for out of the HRA and to confirm that this did not extend to non-housing land. In addition, when the Right to Buy Scheme had been introduced, no factoring arrangements had been put in place for communal areas of land where grass cutting should have been transferred to home owners;
- the poor delivery of Garden Aid services needed to be considered;
- it was hoped that grass cutting and grounds maintenance staff could also give attention to weed control in housing estates together with the management of trees; and
- it was important that equipment, suitable for the local environment, was used. In this regard, it was hoped such equipment could be repaired and sourced from local businesses.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the Director of Community Services establish an in-house operation that could provide Amenity Services, including grass cutting, throughout the Highlands for Financial Year 2017/18 onwards;
- ii. a revised management structure within Amenity Services be prepared to position the service to respond dynamically, flexibly and positively to changing National, Council and Service priorities;
- iii. that a new performance management system was identified to improve scrutiny and decision-making for Amenity Services throughout the Highlands; and
- iv. that details regarding the TUPE arrangements of the staff involved be provided to Committee Members.

8. Workforce Planning Action Plan Plana-gníomh Dealbhadh Sgioba-obrach

There had been circulated Report No COM/43/16 dated 30 September 2016 by the Director of Community Services updating Members on progress with implementing actions in the Community Services Workforce Planning Action Plan.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Director and staff were commended for their high standard of service despite having experienced restructurings and lost staff through the voluntary release scheme;
- it was acknowledged that, due to its frontline nature, the Service would receive a significant number of complaints but it was suggested that some mechanism should be explored whereby customers using the service could be asked for feedback routinely;
- the recruitment of 7 apprentice mechanics was welcomed, bearing in mind the relatively high age profile of existing staff;
- it was suggested that a system be put in place whereby Local Members and Community Council enquiries were given higher priority on the basis that they were representing communities as a whole;
- details of when parts of Community Services would be looked at in the context of the Council's re-design work were requested; and
- officers were encouraged to consider more efficient ways of organising its manual workforce.

The Committee **NOTED** progress made with implementing the Plan.

9. Community Services Performance Report – 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016 Aithisg Coileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd – 1 Luchar 2016 gu 30 Sultain 2016

Declaration of Interest:

Mr B Murphy declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds of being the provider of homeless accommodation and left the room.

There had been circulated separately Report No COM/44/16 dated 11 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services providing information on how Community Services performed in relation to performance indicators to 30 September 2016.

- concern was expressed that the average time taken to complete medical adaptations was 100 days, against a Scottish average of 49. However, it was clarified that 100 had been the figure for Quarter 1 of 2015/16 and that the comparable figure for 2016/17 was 59 days. The indicators contained a wide range of adaptations, some more complex than others to install, and a more detailed breakdown would be reported in due course. It was pointed out that the cost of keeping someone in hospital was usually considerably higher than the cost of adapting their home;

- information on financial penalties imposed on ground maintenance contractors was requested;
- there was an increase in rent arrears and information was sought from officers on actions being taken to address this. In this regard, concern was expressed that diminishing staff resources had reduced the capacity to tackle arrears;
- it was hoped that suitably located sources of gravel for potholes had been established;
- in relation to the backlog of potholes it was pointed out that this would never be cleared completely as new ones were always being reported. Multiple potholes could be tackled on a single call out and the use of the new jetpatcher was welcomed;
- the number of homeless presentations and households in temporary accommodation was increasing, although the rise in homelessness might be due to the onset of winter. In response to requests for discussion on what was being done to tackle this, reference was made to the quarterly reports to the Committee and the previously agreed strategy that was in place; and
- it was disappointing that staff absences were not included in the report as it was important to establish any correlation between staff reductions and subsequent absences. Stress levels needed to be closely monitored.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April to 30 September 2016;
- AGREED** to dispose of 58 Foyers Road, Kinlochleven as outlined in paragraph 10.4 of the report; and
- AGREED** information regarding the level of financial penalties incurred at the end of Quarter 2 in terms of Grounds Maintenance and Public Convenience Cleaning be provided to Committee Members.

The Committee adjourned for lunch at 1.10 pm and resumed at 1.50 pm.

10. Winter Readiness 2016/17 Deiseil airson a' Gheamhraidh

There had been circulated Report No COM/45/16 dated 11 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services providing information on service readiness for the coming winter season.

Following a summary of the report, Members made the following comments:-

- the uptake of community winter resilience measures varied from area to area. Publicity and/or a media event should be undertaken to promote resilience where required. Methods used successfully by other Local Authorities should also be investigated;
- grit bin levels were currently being checked and any that had not been refilled should be reported;
- consideration should be given to locating a cutter head plough in Ullapool to service single track roads on the Coigach peninsula;
- the terrain of the Bealach na Ba road near Applecross meant it was not really suitable for snow ploughs/blowers;

- the use of adapting grass-cutting tractors for winter maintenance should be considered;
- concern was expressed that Lochaber had only two pavement gritters and reference was made to previous requests for a review of area allocations that had not yet been undertaken. In this regard, an assurance was given that a review of pavement gritter needs in Lochaber would be done and reported to the Ward Business Meeting;
- the length of the tender documents in relation to community resilience should be investigated to avoid discouraging potential contractors;
- consideration should be given to approaching the prison service community payback scheme for help with winter maintenance; and
- consideration should be given to putting the Council's weather forecast information online.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the contents of the report.

11. Road Asset Management Plan Version 4 Prògram Rianachd So-mhaoin Rathaidean 4

There had been circulated Report No COM/46/16 dated 25 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services presenting the fourth version of the Council's Road Asset Management Plan for approval, developed through participation in the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) joint project with Scottish Local Authorities and Welsh Unitary Authorities to continue implementation of a common asset management framework for road and bridge infrastructure.

Having commended the officers concerned for compiling such a comprehensive and detailed plan, Members also made the following comments:-

- there were suggestions elsewhere in the UK that 2p of fuel duty be ring-fenced specifically to meet road repair costs;
- confirmation was sought, and received that the Council's LED street lighting met national standards. In this regard, the £16m project for replacing lamps with LED was welcomed, given the associated reduction in annual energy costs, but disappointed was expressed that savings were usually cancelled out when energy suppliers then increased their charges;
- the pattern of street lighting in some older housing schemes resulted in insufficient lighting and this was sometimes compounded where trees obscured lights. Furthermore, it was disappointing that, as a result of reduced staffing levels, regular inspections were not being carried out;
- an update was sought, and received, regarding the branch liner at Kinbrace for the extraction of timber;
- the percentage of carriageways measured as green by the Road Condition Indicator had declined since 2012. In addition, the SCOTS financial model for carriageways in Highland reported that £17.6m was required annually for a "steady state" to be achieved and an indication was sought, and received, as to whether or not there was any prospect, based on current plans, of making significant improvements to the condition of the area's roads; and
- a map detailing which roads had been inspected was requested.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the fourth version of the Highland Council's Road Asset Management Plan 2016-2019; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a map of the areas which had been covered by the road condition indicator be provided to Committee Members.

12. Corran Ferry - Update Aiseag a' Chorrain - Fios às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No COM/47/16 dated 17 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services providing the latest information about the Corran Ferry and following up on actions and recommendations from the Community Services Committee of 4 February 2016.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- fuel prices were starting to increase and this could, in turn, lead to fare increases. However, it was important not to automatically apply a percentage increase but to base any increase on projected running costs, an approach more readily acceptable to the local community;
- in association with Calmac Ferries, work was progressing in relation to finding a suitable and reliable Smart ticketing system;
- there was a risk of the operation falling back into a deficit position given potential costs associated with the servicing of the ferry;
- the inclusion of the appraisal of the forecasted whole life costs of a fixed link versus a ferry at the Corran Narrows, by HITRANS, was welcomed. It was essential all factors were taken into consideration and a long term view adopted; and
- the Council had asked that the Corran Ferry be included in the National Transport Review.

The Committee **NOTED** the latest information with the Corran Ferry and the progress made in following up on previously agreed actions and recommendations.

13. Electric Vehicle - Cost for Charging Carbad Dealain – Cosgais airson Teairrdseadh

There had been circulated Report No COM/48/16 dated 11 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services informing Members that the Transport Scotland initiative to install Electric Vehicle Charging points at regular intervals across Scotland was under way and an update was provided on progress in 2016/17 within Highland. Proposals for recovering costs from drivers had been delayed at national level but were expected to be implemented by March 2017. To enable the Council to recover its operating costs it was recommended that charges were introduced from April 2017.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- clarification was sought, and received, regarding the method of operation of the charging points located in the Cathedral Car Park, Inverness. It was explained that power was supplied free in the year following installation but after this costs could be recovered;

- it was suggested that Transport Scotland be approached to explore the possibility of enabling charging points to be used by motorised wheelchairs. In this regard, it was also pointed out that in urban areas there were no parking facilities for motorised wheelchairs which took up significant amounts of space when parked on pavements;
- difficulties in using some charging points had been encountered when non-charging cars had parked in the bays and consideration needed to be given to amending Traffic Orders to address this;
- with car manufactures developing new models and the performance of electric cars improving, it was important to provide more charging points and the provision of such a facility in the Rose Street Car Park was suggested; and
- when introducing charges it was important that this was not at a level which acted as a deterrent.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the progress made and that Transport Scotland were expected to make proposals for recovery of electricity costs by Councils starting in 2017; and
- APPROVED** the introduction of charges for usage of the Council's electric vehicle chargers as from April 2017 of 15p per Kw/hr with a minimum total fee of £1.50 and that these were introduced for those sites where it was practicable to ensure a reliable level of continuous operation.

14. Environmental and Amenity Services Enforcement Policy Poileasaidh Cur-an-sàs Sheirbheisean Àrainneachd is Goireis

There had been circulated Report No COM/49/16 dated 13 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services explaining the Scottish Government's Better Regulation agenda aimed to support the growth of Scotland's economy by eliminating obsolete and inefficient regulation, tackling inconsistencies in regulatory systems and enhancing Scotland's competitiveness. A key focus was championing the five principles of Better Regulation - Proportionate, Consistent, Accountable, Transparent and Targeted. Environmental and Amenity Services had developed a streamlined enforcement policy for the regulatory functions that they provided to support the Scottish Government's aims and Members were invited to approve the new streamlined policy.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the extensive range of duties carried out by Environmental and Amenity Services was acknowledged. This work was essential to ensure Highland was a safe and healthy place to live and therefore it was important that there was no diminution or relaxation of regulations;
- the policy aimed to ensure that the Service dealt with customers in a consistent manner; and
- in relation to the Service's duty regarding litter education, reference was made to the work being undertaken by the maritime organisation KIMO UK who were promoting an initiative whereby the public, when walking on beaches, were encouraged to pick up 3 pieces of litter. This was to be the subject of a presentation at a Sutherland County Committee meeting where it was hoped to roll out this initiative further and to promote the idea that small actions by individuals could make a significant difference.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Environmental and Amenity Services Enforcement Policy as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

**15. Licensing of Animal Boarding Establishments
Ceadachd Ionadan-còmhnaidh Bheathaichean**

There had been circulated Report No COM/50/16 dated 13 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services explaining that as a result of a number of recent incidents relating to animal welfare licensed by the Council it had highlighted the lack of enforcement options available to the Council in relation to animal welfare and licensing.

In noting recent incidents, reference was made to the work of officers and which had been commended by all concerned.

The Committee **AGREED** that, on behalf of the Committee, the Chairman would raise the problems with the legislation formally with the Scottish Government.

**16. Review of the Delivery of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Programme
Ath-sgrùdadh air Prògram Inbhean Càileachd Taigheadais na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No COM/51/16 dated 6 October 2016 by the Director of Community Services providing a summary of the experience of the delivery of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) through the HRA Capital Programme. It also provided information on the investment made to achieve this target and identifies lessons learned.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- information was sought as to the potential number of tenants who had “missed out” on new heating systems and, in response, an explanation of the main factor was provided;
- some tenants who had been missed out might be reticent in coming forward and it was important that there was some mechanism in place to identify them and for remedial works to take place. In addition, many elderly and/or disabled tenants were deterred from having work carried out as they feared it would result in major upheaval. In such instances, consideration might need to be given to decanting these tenants to other properties;
- an opportunity to identify “missed out” properties should arise when there was a change in tenancy;
- when “missed out” properties were identified it was important that there were sufficient resources in the Capital Programme to carry out the necessary works without delay;
- it was unacceptable to have properties with only partial central heating over the winter months;
- poor historic record keeping on property conditions had exacerbated the problem;
- where it had not been possible to gain access to properties, these had sometimes been classed as “refusals”;
- consideration should be given to using tenant-led inspections; and

- some of the difficulties encountered with SHQS had not been the fault of the Council, Furthermore, the progress which the Council had been made was acknowledged, especially given that no additional resources had been given to Local Authorities to carry out SHQS works.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the achievement in meeting the SHQS; and
- ii. the commitment to ensure effective programme delivery in the future HRA Capital Programme.

17. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **APPROVED** circulated Minutes of the Harbours Management Board of 7 September 2016.

Arising from the minute, the Chair drew Members attention to the work taking place surrounding the redevelopment of facilities at Uig Harbour. In addition, while the innovative proposals by CMal were recognised whereby the new ferry vessel for the Uig, Tarbet, Lochmaddy triangle would be able to run on diesel or liquid nitrogen, the work taking place by KIMO UK to promote the use by vessels of power supplies available on piers was highlighted.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm.