

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Places Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 15 June 2017 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mrs L MacDonald
Mr R Balfour	Mr D MacKay
Mrs J Barclay	Mr W MacKay (by video conferencing)
Miss J Campbell	Mr C MacLeod
Dr I Cockburn	Mr D MacLeod
Mr M Finlayson	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr J Gordon	Mr H Morrison
Mr K Gowans	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Graham (substitute)	Mr A Sinclair
Mr J Gray	Mr C Smith (substitute)
Mr A Henderson	Ms M Smith

Non-Members also present:

Mrs M C Davidson	Mrs D Mackay
Mr A Jarvie	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr R Laird	Mr B Thompson

In attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure
Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Ms C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources, Community Services
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services
Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services, Community Services
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport, Community Services
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Mr S Graham, Project Manager, Chief Executive's Service
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
Ms H De Haas, Climate Change Coordinator, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr M Smith, Principal Engineer - Flood Risk Management Team, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr A Puls, Principal Officer – Building Conservation and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Mr S Taylor, 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 C Fraser, Ms A Maclean, Mr J McGillivray, Mr N McLean and Mr I Ramon

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 10 – Mr K Gowans (financial) and Mrs M Smith (non-financial)

Item 12 – Mr K Gowans (financial)

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 9 March 2017:-

- i. had been exercised in relation to the business of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee as follows:

Approval given for the following projects:-

- land at Glendoe Terrace, Inverness was purchased at an agreed price of £1m to allow the development of 53 new affordable homes, utilising funding available from the Scottish Government;
- land required for the development at Raining's Stairs, Inverness was purchased at the agreed price, which included fees and works to date, of £218,000 for affordable housing, utilising funding available from the Scottish Government;
- land at Old Evanton Road/Craigwood Street, Dingwall was purchased at the agreed price of £550k for affordable housing, utilising funding available from the Scottish Government; and
- in recognition of the above projects being high cost schemes, the Landbank contribution towards the new Council houses included within the proposed developments at Raining's Stairs, Inverness and Glendoe Terrace, Inverness was increased from £15k to £25k per unit.

- ii. had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Community Services Committee.

4. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The following areas of good news were reported:-

- Brown Bin Collection – Positive Uptake

There had been a positive response from the public to the introduction of charging for the uplift of brown bins (garden waste). At the time the agenda went to print 21,974 permits had been purchased and, to date, a total of 24,300 had now been bought, exceeding the estimated savings target. The new collection service was scheduled to start on 3 July.

- **Scottish Timber Transport Fund**

Highland Council had been successful in attracting funding of £1.42m for a total of 6 routes from the Scottish Timber Transport Fund. This in turn had released other sources of funding. The proposed schemes covered a variety of areas in Highland.

- **Corran Ferry**

The Chairman paid tribute to the staff of the Corran Ferry who had recently responded to a medical emergency, above and beyond the call of duty, by diverting the ferry to ensure the patient concerned reached hospital expeditiously.

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

5. Establishment and/or Appointment of Working Groups, Boards and Outside Bodies

Stèidheachadh agus/no Cur an Dreuchd Bhuidhnean Obrach, Bhòrd agus Bhuidhnean on Taobh A-muigh

a) Education Transport Entitlement Review Sub Committee and Harbours Management Board

Fo-Chomataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh Làn-chòir Còmhdhail Foghlaim agus Bòrd Rianachd nan Calachan

The Committee **AGREED** that the following be established:-

- Harbours Management Board – 10 Members
- Education Transport Entitlement Review Sub Committee – 5 Members

In accordance with the above, nominations from the respective Groups had been tabled at the meeting and were **APPROVED** as follows:-

Harbours Management Board

Mr M Finlayson (Independent)
Mr A Henderson (Independent)
Mr W MacKay (Independent)
Mr H Morrison (Independent)
Dr I Cockburn (SNP)
Mrs L MacDonald (SNP)
Mr C MacLeod (SNP)
Ms A MacLean (Lib Dem)
Mrs T Robertson (Lib Dem)
Mr A Sinclair (Conservative)

Education Transport Review Sub Committee

Mr A Henderson (Independent)
Mr W MacKay (Independent)
Dr I Cockburn (SNP)
Mr R MacWilliam (SNP)
Mr G Adam (Conservative)

It was **NOTED** that the first meetings of the Education Transport Review Sub Committee and the Harbours Management Board were scheduled for 27 and 28 June 2017 respectively.

b) HITRANS Tier 1 Ferry Users Consultation Groups
Buidhnean Co-chomhairleachaidh Luchd-cleachdaidh Aiseagan Ìre 1
HITRANS

The interests of ferry users had previously been represented by the Scottish Executive's Ferry Users Consultation Group. However, this was disbanded and a three-tier system was set up to cover issues at all levels from local through to national.

The three levels of Consultation Groups were Tier 0 which covered local issues, Tier 1 which covered regional groups and Tier 2 which covered national issues.

The Scottish Government had asked HITRANS to set up the Tier 1 Ferry Users Consultation Groups.

The Committee **AGREED** the membership of each of the following Ferry Users Consultation Groups as tabled at the meeting:-

- i. Argyll which covered services operated in Oban, Colonsay, Iona, Lismore, Coll, Tiree, Barra, South Uist and Ardnurchan – Mr I Ramon;
- ii. Lochaber and Skye which covered the Small Isles, Mallaig, Armadale, Raasay, Kilchoan and Lochaline – Mr A Henderson, Mr C MacLeod and Mr I Ramon; and
- iii. Hebrides Group which covered Barra, North and South Uist, Harris, Lewis and links to Skye – Mr C MacLeod.

c) Area Tourism Partnership
Com-pàirteachas Turasachd na Sgìre

The Council was a member of the Highland Area Tourism Partnership, a strategic group that brought together representatives from the tourism industry with the main public sector organisations involved in tourism.

Nominations were received as follows:-

Mr G Adam
Mr J Gordon
Mr K Gowans

On a vote being taken, Mr Adam received 12 votes, Mr J Gordon received 13 votes and Mr K Gowans received 8 votes, with no abstentions, the votes cast

having been as follows:-

Votes for Mr Adam

Mr G Adam, Miss J Campbell, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr A Henderson, Mr D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Mr H Morrison, Mrs T Robertson and Mr A Sinclair.

Votes for Mr Gordon

Mr G Adam, Mr R A C Balfour, Miss J Campbell, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr A Graham, Mr A Henderson, Mr D Mackay, Mr W MacKay, Mr D MacLeod, Mr H Morrison, Mrs T Robertson and Mr A Sinclair.

Votes for Mr Gowans

Mr R A C Balfour, Dr I Cockburn, Mr J Gray, Mr K Gowans, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr C MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam and Ms M Smith.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** to nominate Mr G Adam and Mr J Gordon to represent the Council on the Area Tourism Partnership with Mr H Morrison as a substitute.

d) Directorship of Inverness Airport Business Park Dreuchd-stiùiridh Pàirc Gnothachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis

Inverness Airport Business Park (IABP) was a joint venture company set up in May 2005 between Moray Estates, Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highland Council.

- * The Committee **AGREED** to recommend that the Council appoint Mrs C Caddick to represent the Council on the IABP Board of Directors and that the Director of Development and Infrastructure attend board meetings in an advisory capacity.

e) Highland Economic Forum Fòram Eaconamach na Gàidhealtachd

The Committee **AGREED** that, as previously, the Chair be appointed as the Council's representative on the Highland Economic Forum and **NOTED** that:-

- i. the Development and Infrastructure Service act as lead for the Council on the Highland Economic Forum;
- ii. the Forum previously agreed that the Council's representative chair the Forum; and
- iii. minutes of the Forum and any matters arising for Council consideration would be brought to the Committee for information.

f) Highland Small Communities Housing Trust Urras Choimhearsnachdan Beaga na Gàidhealtachd

The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust was a registered charity set up to help rural communities secure long term solutions to their local housing needs. They represented a wide range of interests including communities, local government, landowners, crofters and housing associations, and were funded by the Scottish Government and various charitable trusts and foundations.

Nominations were received as follows:-

Mr A Christie
Mr D MacLeod
Mr R MacWilliam

On a vote being taken, Mr Christie received 19 votes, Mr D MacLeod received 6 votes and Mr R MacWilliam received 13 votes, with no abstentions, the votes cast having been as follows:-

Votes for Mr Christie

Mr G Adam, Miss J Campbell, Dr I Cockburn, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray, Mr A Henderson, Ms L MacDonald, Mr W MacKay, Mr C MacLeod, Mr D MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr H Morrison, Mrs T Robertson, Mr A Sinclair, Mr C Smith and Ms M Smith.

Votes for Mr MacLeod

Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr D Mackay, Mr D MacLeod, Mr C Smith and Mr A Sinclair.

Votes for Mr MacWilliam

Mr G Adam, Miss J Campbell, Dr I Cockburn, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Graham, Mr A Henderson, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr W MacKay, Mr C MacLeod, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr H Morrison, Mrs T Robertson and Ms M Smith.

Decision

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to nominate Mr R MacWilliam; and
- * ii. to recommend that the Council nominate Mr A Christie

to represent the Highland Council on the Highland Small Communities Trust.

g) Highland Environment Forum Fòram Àrainneachd na Gàidhealtachd

The Committee **AGREED** that, as previously, the Vice Chair (Mrs T Robertson) be appointed the Council's representative on the Highland Environment Forum, and **NOTED** that:-

- i. the Development and Infrastructure Service acted as lead for the Council on the Highland Environment Forum; and

- ii. minutes of the Forum and any matters arising for Council consideration would be brought to the Committee for information.

**h) Local Access Fora
Fòraim Inntrigeadh Ionadail**

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/01/17 dated 2 June 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **AGREED** to delegate the appointment of Councillors to the Local Access Fora to the respective Area Committees.

**i) European Maritime & Fisheries Fund – Highland Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG)
Maoin Mara & Iasgach na h-Eòrpa – Buidheann-gnìomha Ionadail Iasgach na Gàidhealtachd is Mhoireibh**

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/02/17 dated 31 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** progress of the Highland Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) and **AGREED** to nominate Dr I Cockburn and Mr D Mackay as Highland Council representatives to sit on the FLAG panel.

**j) Tornagrain Conservation Trust – Appointment of Directors
Urras Glèidhteachais Thòrr na Grèine – Cur Stiùirichean an Dreuchd**

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/03/17 dated 31 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** progress and **AGREED** to nominate Mr R A C Balfour and Mrs T Robertson as Highland Council Directors to the Board of Tornagrain Conservation Trust.

**k) Highland (LEADER) 2014-2020 Programme
Buidheann-gnìomha Ionadail Ro-innleachdail na Gàidhealtachd (LEADER)**

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/04/17 dated 31 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the summary of the Highland LEADER 2014-2020 programme and progress to date; and
- ii. **AGREED** to nominate Mr J McGillivray as a voting member on the Highland Strategic Local Action Group (LAG).

**l) Flood Area Risk Management – Local Plan District Executive Steering Groups
Rianachd Cunnairt Cheàrnaidhean Thuiltean – Buidhnean Stiùiridh Gnìomhach Sgìre a' Phlana Ionadail**

The Highland Council were designated as the Lead Local Authority for the “Highland and Argyll Local Plan District” and as a Responsible Authority within the “Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District”, the latter Local Plan District being led by Moray Council. Executive Steering Groups for each Local Plan District helped to direct and facilitate all work that results on the agreement of the Flood Risk Management Strategy and the delivery of the Flood Risk Management Plan.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr A Henderson to serve on the Highland & Argyll Local Plan District Steering Group and Mrs T Robertson to serve on the Findhorn, Nairn & Speyside Local Plan District Steering Group.

6. Development and Infrastructure Service Revenue Budget – Final Outturn 2016/17

Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a’ Bhun-structair – Fìor Shuidheachadh Deireannach 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/05/17 dated 5 June 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue budget outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2017.

7. Development and Infrastructure Service Capital Expenditure – Final Outturn 2016/17

Caiteachas Calpa Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a’ Bhun-structair – Fìor Shuidheachadh Faisg air Deireannach 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/06/17 dated 5 June 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the importance of commencing development of the Auldearn Burn and River Nairn Flood Prevention Schemes to protect local housing which was currently at risk from flooding was emphasised;
- reassurance was sought, and received, that underspend from the Nairn Streetscape Scheme had been included within the Town and Countryside Regeneration budget;
- consideration should be made for the inclusion of Nairn Courthouse within the Capital Funding Programme as soon as possible due to serious rain water incursion through the roof of the building;
- concern was expressed regarding the impact of increased traffic flow through the Inshes and Milton of Leys areas onto the Southern Distributer Road during construction of the Inverness West Link, in particular through residential areas and neighbouring schools and it was emphasised that planning officers needed to take this into consideration during the design phase of the Inshes Roundabout;
- it was highlighted that, whilst a budget had been allocated for the redevelopment of the Inshes Roundabout, it would not be possible to ascertain an estimate figure for the total construction costs as no design solution had been brought forward;
- in welcoming the innovative solutions which had been considered during the STAG appraisal into Stromeferry Bypass, including the use of a tram

- system, it had been a number of years since the first rock falls occurred and that it was important to keep the project on the agenda;
- in highlighting the proposed improvement works to Killmister Moss Road, it was emphasised that commencement of works should take place as soon as possible and prior to Winter;
 - following flood damage to housing in Halkirk due to recent heavy rain, reassurance was sought, and received, that a commitment had been made to develop a Surface Water Management Plan for Halkirk and that investigative work would commence shortly; and
 - confirmation was sought, and received, that the Smart City – Digital Projects scheme was within the 8 city European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) and that updates would be reported to Committee in due course.

The Committee **APPROVED**:-

- i. the capital expenditure outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2017; and
- ii. the budget allocation of £0.2m for flood defences in Conon Bridge.

8. Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 4 Performance Review Frèam-Coileanaidh Dealbhaidh agus Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanaidh Ràith 4

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/08/17 dated 26 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In discussion, it was suggested that, in comparing the 100% performance delivery of pre-application advice for major applications with local pre-application advice, which currently stood at 61%, improvements could be made locally by realigning priorities within development management.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards and the Development Plans teams.

9. Review of the Scottish Planning System Freagairt do Cho-chomhairle Ath-sgrùdaidh Dealbhaidh Riaghaltas na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/08/17 dated 26 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

- good progress was being made in making linkages between the Local Development Plan and delivery and this was essential in building public credibility in the planning system;
- there was support for the principle that allocated sites not delivered by developers during the plan period could be given first refusal to affordable housing providers;
- the importance of Compulsory Purchase Orders in areas of employment where there was high demand for housing was emphasised; and

- it was important that the Council identified opportunities to purchase land in rural areas for housing at the earliest opportunity given the various strands of funding available.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the comments enclosed at Appendix 1 of the report as the Council's views on the review of the planning system in Scotland for consideration by Scottish Government.

10. Update on the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal Cùmhnant Baile-Roinne Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd

Declarations of Interest

Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Inverness College/UHI but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.

Mrs M Smith declared a non-financial interest in this item as Company Secretary and Board Member of Albyn Housing Society but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/09/17 dated 29 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- following comment that the City-Region Deal was primarily focused on Inverness and not all areas of the Highlands were benefiting from the City-Region Deal, a comment which was strongly refuted by the Committee, reassurance was provided that the City-Region Deal would benefit the whole of the Highlands and examples of the projects taking place outside of Inverness, including the Science Skills Academies in Caithness and Lochaber, the Innovative Assisted Living (FIT House) project and the digital programme to extend digital coverage into remote areas, were highlighted; and
- it was suggested it might be beneficial for Local Committees to consider how Project Boards of partner organisations operated and that an invite be made to Ms Donna Chisholm, Project Lead for Highlands and Islands Enterprise to speak at local committees.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the progress of the Inverness City-Region Deal.

11. Planning Fees and Charges Cìsean agus Cosgaisean Dealbhaidh

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/10/17 dated 5 June 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, whilst welcoming the proposed changes to pre-application fees, Members felt that they did not reflect the commercial aspirations of the

Council and it was suggested that a proposal to increase planning fees further be referred to the Council's new Commercial Board.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the increase to planning fees; and
- ii. **AGREED** the proposed changes to pre-application fees and the introduction of a new fee for Non Material Variations, and to refer the suggestion of further planning fee increases to the new Commercial board, recognising the need to meet legislative requirements around achieving cost recovery only.

12. Highland Council Ranger's Service – Proposed Transfer to High Life Highland

Seirbheis nam Maor-dùthcha – Moladh Gluasad gu High Life na Gàidhealtachd

Declaration of Interest

Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest on the grounds that a family member 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 interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/11/17 dated 6 June 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- assurances were sought that the staff involved had been consulted and that the timetable for the proposed transfer could be met, bearing in mind that High Life Highland itself still had to agree the arrangement;
- it was important that the transfer provided sustainability of the Ranger Service into the future;
- recently there had been no Ranger Service provision in Skye but it was hoped that the new arrangement would provide more opportunities to discover other ways of working to plug this gap; and
- assurances were sought, and received, that Access Officers were not involved in the transfer.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the recommendation to transfer the Ranger Service to HLH later in 2017 following the conclusion of statutory procedures; and
- ii. **AGREED** to delegate final details of the transfer to the Director of Service, in discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Places Committee.

13. Historic Windows and Doors: Planning Guidance for Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas
Uinneagan agus Dorsan Eachdraidheil: Stiùireadh Dealbhaidh airson Thogalaichean Clàraichte agus Thogalaichean Neo-chlàraichte ann an Sgìrean Glèidhteachais

There had been circulated Report No PLA/12/17 dated 23 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- different styles of windows could frequently be seen in conservation areas;
- it had been suggested that a condensed brochure clearly setting out restrictions and requirements be made available to all residents in conservation areas. However, it was thought that there was limited value in doing this and there were other more cost effective solutions; and
- the guidance was much needed and would be welcomed, particularly by conservation architects.

The Committee **APPROVED** the finalised version of 'Historic Windows and Doors: Planning Guidance for Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas' for adoption as non-statutory supplementary guidance.

14. Scottish Government Consultations on Scottish Energy Strategy, Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies & Regulation of District Heating, & Onshore Wind Policy Statement
Co-chomhairlean Riaghaltas na h-Alba air Ro-innleachd Lùth na h-Alba, Prògram Lùth Èifeachdach na h-Alba, Ro-innleachdan Èifeachdais Teasa & Lùtha & Riaghladh Teasachadh Sgìreil & Aithris Poileasaidh Gaoth Cladaich

There had been circulated Report No PLA/13/17 dated 29 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the consultation responses provided to the Scottish Government in respect of the draft Scottish Energy Strategy, Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies and Regulation of District Heating, and the Onshore Wind Policy Statement.

15. Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Advisory Board – Minutes
Bòrd Comhairleachaidh Com-pàirteachas Ath-bheothachaidh Ghallaibh is Chataibh a Tuath – Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** circulated minutes of meeting of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Advisory Board held on 9 November 2016.

16. Community Services Revenue Budget 2016/17 – Near Final Outturn 2016/17
Buidseat Teachd-a-steach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd 2016/17 – Fìor Shuidheachadh Faisg air Deireannach 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/14/17 dated 6 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- there was a significant underspend on the Repairs and Maintenance element of the HRA Expenditure and this had been used to reduce loan costs. However, if this occurred again it should be used for other repair and maintenance projects, such as improving stairwells and common areas;
- in relation to the disaggregated budget for Ross and Cromarty, it was disappointing that there had been a £851,571 and £2.4m underspend on roads and amenity services and the Housing Revenue Account respectively, particularly as there were many roads in the area which required repair and the need for affordable accommodation. Members had been unaware of these underspends and it was essential this was not repeated in future years bearing in mind the additional monies being provided by the Scottish Government for housing; and
- the shortage of accommodation throughout Highland was exacerbated by landlords using their properties for commercial tourism use rather than for residential accommodation.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue budget outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2017.

17. Community Services Capital Expenditure – Final Outturn 2016/17 Caiteachas Calpa nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd 2016/17

There is circulated Report No. PLA/15/17 dated 5 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- although there was an underspend in relation to the HRA Capital Programme, this was because officers had retendered contracts to ensure that better value for money was achieved;
- it was vital to build as many properties as possible;
- going forward with the Capital Plan it was important to have a proper replacement programme for equipment; and
- grass cutting of verges was an important part of road safety and therefore calls were made for a reappraisal of the current timetabling, particularly in Ross and Cromarty.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the capital expenditure outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2017; and
- ii. **AGREED** that an appraisal be undertaken in relation to grass cutting in Ross and Cromarty and the potential for a timetable for this work to be carried out.

18. Community Services Performance Report – 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 Aithisg Coileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/16/17 dated 23 May 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- rent arrears in Highland was estimated to reach £2.1m by the end of 2017/18 as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit. Not only would this impact negatively on the Council but it would have significant detrimental implications for individuals. Consequently, it was essential that the Council work with the Department of Work and Pensions to address this urgently and, in this regard, it was suggested that a representative from the Department of Work and Pensions brief Members as to how the difficulties surrounding Universal Credit could be allayed;
- where budgets were tight it was important not to lose revenue by delays in installing car parking meters. Related to this, information was sought as to progress being made with parking meters which could be topped up remotely by using an app;
- the benefit of benchmarking the Council's average re-let time against other local authorities would enable a clearer indication as to performance;
- the electronic recording of pothole repairs would allow performance to be better evaluated by Members as the current system misrepresented the number of repairs which had actually taken place; and
- a list of road/amenity officer would be circulated to Members and it was hoped that these officers could also assist in reporting potholes.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April to 31 March 2017;
- ii. **AGREED** that flat numbers 2, 4, and 6 Wellington Street, Wick, be declared surplus to requirements and offered for open market sale;
- iii. **AGREED** to request that a representative from the Department of Work and Pension be asked to attend a briefing for members on the impact of Universal Credit on Council housing rent arrears;
- iv. **AGREED** that further information on smart apps for Parking Meters be included within a review of charging for parking; and
- v. **AGREED** that an up to date list of roads/amenities officers could be circulated to Members.

**19. Scottish Government Consultation: Draft Water Intended for Human Consumption (Private Water Supplies) (Scotland)
Co-chomhairle Riaghaltas na h-Alba – Dreachd Riaghailtean airson Uisge airson Òl le Daoine (Solair Prìobhaideach) (Alba)**

There had been circulated Report No. PLA/17/17 dated 1 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on Draft Water Intended for Human Consumption (Private Water Supplies) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

**20. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated separately Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC) for:-

- i. North PAC – 10 January 2017;
- ii. South PAC – 17 January 2017;
- iii. North PAC – 21 February 2017; and
- iv. South PAC – 28 February 2017.

The Committee **NOTED** the terms of the Minutes as presented.

21. Exclusion of The Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

22. Lighting and Communications Team Structure - in support of LED Programme
Taic Luchd-obrach airson Luathachadh LED

There had been circulated to Members only Report No PLA/18/17 dated 1 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

23. Ullapool to Lochinver Bus Service
Ullapul-Loch an Inbhir - Seirbheis Bus

There had been circulated to Members only Report No PLA/19/17 dated 5 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **AGREED** that the bus service between Ullapool-Lochinver be reinstated.

24. Housing Development Investments

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. PLA/20/17 dated 25 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

25. Land and Property Transactions Report
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. PLA/21/17 dated 26 May 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm.