

**The Highland Council
Corporate Resources Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday, 30 August 2017 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour (substitute)	Mr R MacDonald (via VC)
Mr A Baxter	Mrs D Mackay
Mr R Bremner (via VC)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr J Bruce	Mr A Mackinnon
Mrs C Caddick	Mr C MacLeod
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Macleod (substitute)
Dr I Cockburn	Ms L Munro
Mrs M Davidson	Mr M Reiss
Mr L Fraser	Mr K Rosie
Mr R Gale	Mr P Saggars
Mr R Laird	Ms M Smith
Mr B Lobban	Mr B Thompson (via VC)
Mr D Louden	

Non-Member also Present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mr A Henderson
Mr T Heggie	Mr D Mackay

Officials in attendance:

Mr S Barron, Chief Executive
Ms M Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development
Mr D Yule, Director of Finance
Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance, Finance Service
Mr A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Business Support, Finance Service
Ms C Stachan, Accountant, Finance Service
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and Transformation, Corporate Development Service
Mr J Gladman, Digital Transformation Lead, Corporate Development Service
Mr D Macleod, Digital Services Manager, Corporate Development Service
Mr D Sutherland, Elections Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms K Lackie, Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms M MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer, Care and Learning Service
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, 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 the Committee.

Mr A Mackinnon in the Chair

In terms of Standing Order 18 it was **AGREED** to take item 24 Gaelic Language Plan after item 4 Recess Powers.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr S Mackie and Mrs C Wilson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 14 – Mr P Saggars (financial)

3. Good News Stories Naidheachdan Matha

The Committee **NOTED** that:-

- The HR and Customer Services Teams, along with the Corporate Improvement Team, had led on two successful cross-service Lean Reviews which identified cost reductions and service improvements in relation to the Council's Occupational Health Service and disposal of bulky waste items. The Groups recently had the opportunity to report their outcomes to the Redesign Board; and
- The Highland Council gained re-accreditation for its connection to the Public Sector Network (PSN) which was critical to ensure strong cyber security across the Council but also in its work with other public sector partners. This re-accreditation represented a significant amount of work and investment from the ICT Services Team and Wipro, the Council's service delivery partner.

4. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2017 were exercised in relation to the business of this Committee in consultation with the Chairs of the Corporate Resources Committee, People Committee and Places Committee to approve four Flexible Retirement and three Early Release applications.

CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE CHÙRAIM AGUS AN IONNSACHAIDH

24. Gaelic Language Plan Plana na Gàidhlig

There had been circulated Report No RES/52/17 dated 17 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- In welcoming the incorporation of Gaelic within the Corporate Resources Committee, the Chair highlighted the opportunity for the Council to play a leading role, both nationally and locally, in developing Gaelic in both educational and cultural events;
- It was emphasised that the Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group would seek to establish the views of Gaelic speakers, learners and bodies within the Highlands;
- A request was made for further information on the Gaelic Team's approach to bilingual presentation within the Council itself, including resourcing, and how this was delivered by staff; and
- Reassurance was sought, and received, that measures were in place, such as the Gaelic tutors training course, to mitigate issues which had been identified in some areas regarding recruitment and retention of Gaelic education staff.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the draft Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan 3 for the period 2017 to 2022.

FINANCIAL MONITORING SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL

5. Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 June 2017 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Corporra gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/32/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

It was noted that the Care and Learning Service was projecting a year end overspend of £0.897m which mainly arose from ongoing pressures on looked after children, unallocated savings, property repairs and servicing. It was advised that a detailed report on this overspend would be submitted to the Administration Budget Team and would also be circulated to Members of the Corporate Resources Committee once available.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets at 30 June 2017 and **NOTED**:-

- i. the estimated year end forecast;
- ii. the status of budgeted savings in the year; and
- iii. that a report on the overspend of £0.897m in the Care and Learning Service would be submitted to the Administration Budget Team for consideration, and a copy would be sent to Members of the Corporate Resources Committee.

6. Corporate Capital Monitoring Report to 30 June 2017 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Corporra gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/33/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

It was highlighted that Loan Charges amounted to 9.93% of the total revenue spend in 2016/17 and this figure had remained relatively static over the past year.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes as at 30 June 2017.

7. Finance Service and Welfare Budget Revenue Monitoring to 30 June 2017
Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Buidseat Seirbheis an Ionmhais agus Sochair
gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/34/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

Reference was made to the £0.016m overspend on school clothing grants which was a reflection of a policy review to increase award levels. This was an important grant for families in the current difficult economic climate and, although the increase in take up was welcome, concern was expressed at the increasing level of poverty. In view of this, it was felt that there was a need for more coherence in how the Council dealt with its poverty agenda in the Council's Programme and identifying ways in which to take priorities forward whilst ensuring that decisions did not undermine this approach. Therefore, it was suggested that the remit and title of the Council's Welfare Reform Working Group should be reviewed.

It was highlighted that Members had used social media to promote and encourage grant take up and confirmation was sought as to whether this was the reason for increase. It was explained that the increase in take up was mainly due to the change to a single service delivery team, delivering all financial benefits, which had enabled proactive and targeted awareness raising of the grant.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the Revenue Monitoring position for the period to 30 June 2017;
- ii. **NOTED** that the Service was on track to deliver the full savings target required to achieve a balanced budget; and
- iii. **NOTED** concerns about the ability to maintain savings of this magnitude in future years without impacting on the financial stewardship of the Council.

8. Corporate Development Service Revenue Expenditure Monitoring April to June 2017/18
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh Chorporra
Giblean gu Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/35/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Development Service budget as at 30 June 2017;
- ii. **AGREED** a budget feed to cover the cost of any by-elections that could not be offset by underspends elsewhere in the budget at the year-end; and
- iii. **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

9. Corporate Development Service Capital Expenditure Monitoring April to June, 2017/18
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seirbheis an Leasachaidh Chorporra Giblean gu Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/36/17 dated 22 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

In relation to the low actual spend to date compared to the overall capital expenditure budget, it was explained that as this was the monitoring position for quarter 1, therefore expenditure was still at an early stage in the financial year. Also, the largest project was the ICT Transformation and this expenditure was not properly profiled against the contract budget. As part of the review of the capital budget, the budget would be realigned according to intention to spend over the lifetime of the project. Further, the Digital Outreach budget had not yet been committed and remained as slippage to meet any future demand for Council funding to support infill and community projects. It was advised that the SWAN project would be completed soon and was under budget which was welcomed.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Development Service capital budget as at 30 June 2017.

10. Chief Executive's Service and Members: Revenue Expenditure Monitoring April to June 2017/18
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball Giblean gu Ògmhios 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No RES/37/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the financial position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget as at 30 June 2017; and
- ii. **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

11. Chief Executive's Office Capital Budget Monitoring Report to end of 30 June 2017
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/38/17 dated 22 August 2017 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **AGREED** the monitoring position for the Chief Executive's Office capital budget as at the end of June 2017.

**FINANCE SERVICE
SEIRBHEIS AN IONMHAIS**

**12. Treasury Management
Rianachd Ionmhais**

**(a) Summary of Transactions
Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean**

There had been circulated Report No RES/39/17 dated 9 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Appreciation was expressed to the Head of Corporate Finance and his team for providing more detail in the report about the potential risk from an increase in interest rates which reflected comments made during the previous meeting; and
- Clarification was sought and received that the table at 4.2 of the report indicated fixed term deposits made to cover payments as opposed to borrowing.

The Committee **NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions report.

**(b) Annual Treasury Management Report 2016/17
Aithisg Stiùiridh Bhliadhnail an Ionmhais 2016/17**

There had been circulated Report No RES/40/17 dated 17 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- An explanation was sought, and received, that the increase between the expected expenditure for PPP of £118.2m and the actual expenditure of £165.6m was due to amendments being made to reflect the new Wick Campus. Furthermore, an explanation was sought and received that this had not been factored into the original figure due to there being a different mechanism for borrowing in place for the Wick Campus which was only factored into the revenue budget;
- There was a need to change the format of the report to distinguish between the different models of funding to support borrowings, particularly in relation to PPP projects;
- Concern was expressed that the Council had not set an authorised limit for borrowing which included PPP;
- Clarification was sought, and received, that the report covered the financial year until the end of March 2017 and the actual authorised limit of borrowing of £915m on 20 February 2017 was the highest point reached during the year. In response to a request on 2017/18 indicators, it was explained that these were contained within the Strategy Statement and Investment Statement 2017/18 (a copy of which would be provided); and

- Concern was expressed in relation to mixed messages being given on PPP at different Committees. In response, it was explained that this issue was sensitive due to ongoing discussions with Hubco regarding the reasons for the delay in delivery of the Wick Schools Project but the Director of Finance could provide a further briefing on this.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Annual Treasury Management report for 2016/17 and also **NOTED** that:-

- i. the format of future reports would be amended to demonstrate the different funding models in place to support borrowings; and
- ii. a briefing could be provided on the delivery and associated costs of the Wick Schools Project.

13. Finance Service Quarterly Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Ràitheil Seirbheis an Ionmhais

There had been circulated Report No RES/41/17 dated 15 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

The Committee **NOTED** the statutory and key performance indicators.

14. Capital Discretionary Fund – Applications for Financial Support Maoin Calpa fo Ùghdarras – Iarrtasan airson Taic Ionmhasail

Declaration of Interest - Mr P Saggors declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds that he was a Director of a company which provided accounting services to one of the applicants and left the meeting for the determination of this item.

There had been circulated Report No RES/42/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- There was an increased awareness of the Capital Discretionary Fund over the last year due to changing community dynamics and the Council encouraging communities to take ownership of Council assets. It was therefore important to consider the future of the fund in terms of supporting communities to help them to continue to be ambitious;
- Recognition was expressed of the increasing difficulty communities experienced particularly in regard to the requirement to apply to many organisations in order to secure a complete funding package for their projects;
- Many communities were now seeking funding from benefactors, which should be encouraged;
- Support was expressed for the Lovat Shinty Club application to build a new club house and community facility. It was explained that, although this was a small village it was growing, the Council had approved new housing to be built, and local needs were increasing. This project would be a valuable community asset which could be used by other organisations such as NHS Highland to address the community desire to have medical services provided in Kiltarlity. In this regard, the Club had

been encouraged to approach the Ward Discretionary Budget to close the funding gap and Member support for the application was sought;

- Support, including the offer of additional ward discretionary funding, was expressed for the application from the Isla of Canna Community Development Trust to build an essential road to connect the Isle of Sanday to the Isle of Canna;
- Support was expressed for the Gairloch Heritage Museum project which had achieved 80% of the funding target, including the backing of the community in raising £148,500, and was requesting help to secure the final amount of funding. The project was run entirely by volunteers who had been awarded a Queen's Award for Voluntary Services in recognition of their work;
- Both applications from the Isla of Canna Community Development Trust and the Gairloch and District Heritage Company should be supported on the basis of special interest and tourism;
- Although the applications within the report were commendable projects, concern was expressed that, if approved, the Capital Discretionary Fund would be fully committed for the current financial year and consequently, as a result of timing, any future applications could not be considered. Therefore, assurance was sought from the Administration on their proposals for the future of the Capital Discretionary Fund and confirmation was sought and received that there were not any other applications currently in progress. However, it was reported that Ward Managers would have an awareness of other potential applications;
- In response, it was explained that the future of the Capital Discretionary Fund would be considered first by the Budget Team and then all Members as part of the review of the Capital Programme and input on this would be welcomed from Opposition Members;
- In relation to the list of current commitments, it was important that steps were taken to ensure that organisations intended to claim their award so that any unclaimed funds could be reused and the Director of Finance advised that confirmation of this would be sought;
- Fort Augustus Medical Centre had recently signed the final agreement so would be claiming their award imminently;
- Despite the merits of the projects and quality of the applications there was unease at approving the three applications without being aware of all the facts. Therefore, it was suggested that, in order to allow for a fair decision to be made, further details be presented to the meeting of the Council next week on any potential applications known to Ward Managers, the status of outstanding committed funds and the allocation in the capital budget for discretionary funding;
- In contrast, a number of Members were of the view that the three applications deserved to be determined today as they had correctly followed the process for applying and it was therefore felt that a decision should be provided in accordance with current policy. Although not against considering applications on an annual basis in the future, it was felt it would be unfair to change the system part way through the process;
- There was confidence that the Gairloch and District Heritage Company would secure LEADER funding but there was significant concern about the risk to the Council of providing a loan guarantee without confirmation that this funding was in place. It was therefore suggested that, in addition to the grant award for Gairloch and District Heritage Co Ltd, to agree, in principle, to providing a loan guarantee subject to LEADER funding being in place;

- An explanation was sought, and received, regarding the reason why some groups requested a guarantee. In response, it was explained that the value of the Gairloch Heritage Museum project was higher than other groups and the purpose of the loan guarantee was to provide security and address cash flow issues;
- If Members were minded to approve £200,000 to ensure the success of the Gairloch Heritage Museum then they should also be minded to provide a loan guarantee of £125,000;
- It was recognised that the terms of LEADER funding required successful applicants to incur expenditure before being paid retrospectively and in the past the Council had been able to provide a bridging loan to applicants which could be discussed with the Gairloch and District Heritage Company after a decision had been made on the Company's application for LEADER funding; and
- Now that the Capital Discretionary Fund had been fully spent, the Council was not in a position to place specific dates for funding applications until a decision had been made on the Capital Programme and the future of the Capital Discretionary Fund. It was therefore suggested that proposals on the format of the Capital Discretionary Fund be reported to a future meeting of the Committee once these decisions had been made.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the wider financial implications and choices around the Capital Discretionary Fund in the context of significant financial demands on the Capital Plan and its affordability as set out in Section 4 of the report;
- APPROVED** the following three funding applications:-
 - Lovat Shinty Club £80,000
 - Isle of Canna Community Development Trust £10,000
 - Gairloch and District Heritage Co Ltd £200,000
- AGREED**, in principle, that a loan guarantee be provided to Gairloch & District Heritage Co Ltd subject to LEADER funding being in place; and
- AGREED** that the Director of Finance ascertain from the applicants listed on Appendix 1 to the report that these funds were still required and would be drawn down within the required deadline period; and
- AGREED** that, pending the outcome of the approval of the Capital Plan, a report would be submitted on the future format and process for determining applications to the Capital Discretionary Fund.

CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE SEIRBHEIS AN LEASACHAIDH CHORPORRA

15. ICT Transformation and Network Refresh Prògram Cruth-atharrachaidh Teicneòlais & Ùrachadh Lìonraidh

There had been circulated Report No RES/43/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Disappointment was expressed regarding the Chromebook rollout start dates slipping and it was requested that the revised programme status, which would be adjusted once the Programme Board had confidence in

the revised start dates and any impact of the slippage had been mitigated, would be shared with Members as soon as possible;

- Reassurance was sought, and received, that no further slippage in the Chromebook rollout should occur;
- An explanation was sought regarding what would happen in the event that the projects still under review in relation to device costs and network refresh in schools could not be brought back within the agreed budget level. In response, it was explained that any adjustment required to the budget would be reported to the Council as part of the review of the capital budget but that work was being undertaken to adjust the number of devices needed to be purchased reflecting changes in the organisation to offset the budget pressure; and
- It was imperative that the network refresh and implementation of the new technical solution was done correctly even if it meant the programme required more time to complete testing and deployment of new devices.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the ICT Transformation and Network Programmes.

16. ICT Projects Update Fios às Ùr mu Phròiseactan ICT

There had been circulated Report No RES/44/17 dated 11 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

In discussion, Members requested further details of the outcome and cost implications of the outstanding legal clarification over data archive ownership in relation to the SEEMIS project which was now resolved.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

17. Transformational Savings Programme Prògram Shàbhalaidhean Cruth-atharrach

There had been circulated Report No RES/45/17 dated 15 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Clarification was sought, and received, that the £2m difference between the overall savings target for the 4 year programme of £13.378m and the total of both the savings achieved of £7.2m and savings on target of £4.1m was explained in paragraph 5.2 of the report. In this regard, it was requested that the executive summary to the report should be clearer; and
- Concern was expressed in relation to the ongoing red status of the saving relating to the transfer of Council Assets into Community Ownership and confirmation was sought, and received, that a senior officer had been appointed to work with communities who were interested in taking ownership of council assets.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. positive actions being taken to ensure that savings in exception were delivered;

- ii. benefits of the Transformational Savings Programme business improvement projects, and the wide range of work being delivered by the Corporate Improvement Team; and
- iii. contact details of the officer appointed to support the transfer of assets to community organisation be shared with Members as requested.

18. Digital Ambition 2020 Ro-innleachd Didseatach 2020

There had been circulated Report No RES/46/17 dated 1 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

In discussion, an update was sought on the progress of making meetings paper free. In response, it was noted that there was an increase in the use of technology to access electronic meeting papers and Members would continue to be supported to fully implement this change. In this regard, it was highlighted that there was a need for a wider culture change to ensure staff no longer printed reports for Members that had already been circulated electronically. In addition, the Convener reported that he had recently sent an email to Group Leaders seeking their support with this issue.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Highland Council's Digital Ambition – 2020.

19. Workforce Planning Strategy 2017 – 2023 Ro-innleachd Sgioba-obrach Corporra

There had been circulated Report No RES/47/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- It was important to acknowledge the value of staff to the Council and to ensure that staff continued to receive the professional development required in order for them to progress their career within the organisation;
- Encouragement should be given to staff seeking to apply their knowledge to other services within the Council;
- The importance of investing in employee learning was emphasised and in this regard, the establishment of a budget for learning was suggested;
- With reference to the Digital Ambition project, it was emphasised that the proposals contained within the Strategy would require a culture change within the Council;
- Effective succession planning was a key aspect of future workforce strategy;
- Whilst welcoming the strategic objectives, caution was expressed that the targets outlined were ambitious and could be difficult to achieve if the reliance on savings through vacancy management continued;
- The prioritisation and efficiency work being undertaken through the Redesign programme, in particular through the Lean Programme and Process Excellence, had helped provide staff with the opportunity to work in different departments and develop new skills;
- With regard to leadership development and peer-learning, it was suggested that emphasis should be made on the need to develop coaching and mentoring skills in order to train staff, in particular when staff transferred into different departments;

- More co-ordination and cohesion was required with community planning partners in order to sustain a public sector and public service orientated workforce within the Highlands; and
- Clarification was sought, and received, that of the 10,000 staff employed by the Council, 7,905.5 were Full-time equivalents.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the Corporate Workforce Planning Strategy 2017 - 2023.

20. The Highland Council Modern Apprenticeship Programme Ro-innleachd Phreantasachdan Ùr-nodha

There had been circulated Report No RES/48/17 dated 21 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Whilst the target of 150 apprenticeships was ambitious, it was vital that the Council attracted young people into the organisation and provided a good experience for them in order for them to want to stay in the organisation long-term, in particular, as 10% of current staff were under 30 years old;
- In welcoming the Programme, it was necessary for the Council to promote the programme and reassurance was sought, and received, that the Council would continue to seek opportunities to draw down funding from Skills Development Scotland to deliver training to staff who were upskilling;
- The gaps in skills available within some departments, such as mechanics, and how this scheme could be of benefit was highlighted;
- It was important not to differentiate the rates of pay and the conditions between the Council and the private sector as this might make apprenticeships less attractive. Confirmation was sought, and received, that the Council, as a Scottish Living Wage employer, paid the living wage to apprentices;
- A request was made that feedback be made available at least twice a year on the effectiveness of the Programme and whether the target of 150 apprenticeships within two years was in the process of being achieved;
- The issue of young people leaving the Highlands to move south in order to work was highlighted;
- The effectiveness of the "Buddy System" in the workplace environment was highlighted and could work in the context of retaining young people within the Council;
- Reassurance was sought, and received, that measures, such as better engagement with schools and communities, would be taken to ensure that the Council provided opportunities for young people from deprived areas to participate in an apprenticeship; and
- Whilst welcoming the creation of job opportunities for young people in rural areas, caution was expressed that the work had to be available in order to avoid apprentices becoming dissatisfied.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the implementation of a Corporate Modern Apprenticeship Programme;
- ii. the establishment of a Modern Apprenticeship Team; and

- iii. to Champion Modern Apprenticeships in the Highlands.

At this point the meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.10 pm and the meeting resumed at 2.00 p.m.

**21. Corporate Development – Statutory Performance Indicators, Quarterly Performance Report
Leasachadh Corporra – Comharran Coileanaidh Reachdail, Aithisg Coileanaidh Ràitheil**

There had been circulated Report No RES/49/17 dated 8 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress in relation to the Statutory Performance Indicators and that a report, comprising a breakdown of Absence Management costs by Service, had been requested and that a meeting would be held with the Leader and the respective Group Chairs to discuss any issues arising from this.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE
OIFIS AN ÀRD-OIFIGEIR**

**22. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2018
Ath-sgrùdadh air Sgìrean Bhòtaidh agus Àiteachan Bhòtaidh 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/50/17 dated 31 July 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Concern was expressed that the revised Council polling scheme which was used in both the recent Council and UK Parliamentary elections had created confusion in some wards as people were unfamiliar with the location of new polling stations and it was requested that the Council revert to the previous scheme;
- Concern was expressed regarding the short notice some parents had in order to make alternative arrangements for children who attended schools which were used as polling stations;
- There had been confusion at some schools which were being used as polling stations and there was a need to ensure that any changes were effectively and actively communicated;
- Concern was expressed that in some locations turn-out had been low due to lack of amenities at Polling Stations, such as car parking, and a request was made for there to be more focus on ensuring/increasing voter turn-out rather than cost;
- Whilst acknowledging the concerns raised, it was highlighted that there had been no complaints in some wards and turnout had increased within Ward 20;
- It was requested that the issue of disability access into polling stations be included within the Review; and
- Concern was expressed that changes to ward boundaries in Caithness had resulted in at least two community council boundaries changing and it was requested that this be investigated in the Review.

Having provided feedback to inform future stages of the review, the Committee **AGREED** the timetable for the review of polling districts and polling places.

23. Staff Support for Election Duties **Taic Luchd-obrach airson Dhleastanasan Taghaidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/51/17 dated 16 August 2017 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Concern was expressed at the expectation that was being made on staff to travel home promptly in order to get some sleep before having to return to work on the afternoon following an overnight count, in particular, when a count did not finish until after 5.00 am. It was therefore suggested that staff involved in the overnight count process should be given a full days leave;
- It was emphasised that under present circumstances, the Returning Officer had the flexibility to allow staff to have the whole day off following an overnight count if deemed appropriate;
- Prior to the commencement of an overnight count, the Returning Officer would be unaware whether special dispensation could be required in order for staff to fully recover following the completion of their duties;
- It was emphasised that staff were volunteering for the overnight count and that they were receiving extra pay for their services;
- Staff had the option to prepare and manage their time accordingly through the use of flexi-time/annual leave if so desired;
- Confirmation was sought that the proposed arrangements did not contravene the EU Working Time Directive;
- The increased workload pressure on staff having to cover other duties for those away on a full days leave following an overnight count was highlighted; and
- It was important that an appropriate amount of time for rest between standing down and returning to the office was offered to staff following an overnight count.

Following discussion, Mr R Laird, seconded by Ms M Smith, **MOVED** that the Committee agree that Council staff involved in the overnight count process for elections be given the following day off.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr B Lobban, seconded by the Chair, moved the recommendation contained within the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 8 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 15 votes with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr R Bremner, Dr I Cockburn, Mr R Laird, Mr D Loudon, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr C MacLeod, Mr K Rosie, Ms M Smith

For the Amendment:

Mr R Balfour, Mr A Baxter, Mr J Bruce, Mrs C Caddick, Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs M Davidson, Mr L Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mrs D Mackay, Mr B Lobban, Mr D MacLeod, Mr A Mackinnon, Ms L Munro, Mr M Reiss, Mr P Sagers

The Committee **NOTED** the current arrangements and **AGREED** the Returning Officer be allowed to make suitable arrangements for time off on an election by election basis based on the framework set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS
GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN**

**25. Minutes of Meetings
Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan**

There was tabled at the meeting the Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council Staff Partnership Forum – Elected Member/Staff Side Group held on 28 August 2017 the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

Valedictory

The Chair, on behalf the Committee, congratulated Ms Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development on her appointment as Managing Director of Blaenau-Gwent Council. He expressed appreciation for all her assistance and wished her success in her new role.

The meeting ended at 2.30 pm.