

Minutes of Meetings

To be submitted to the Council

on

14 December 2017

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The Highland Council
No. 5 2017/2018

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 26 October 2017 at 10.35am.

1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence
A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mr R MacDonald
Mr B Allan	Mrs D Mackay
Mr R Balfour	Mr D Mackay
Mrs J Barclay	Mr W MacKay (via VC)
Mr A Baxter	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr B Boyd	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr R Bremner	Mr S Mackie (via VC)
Mr I Brown	Mr A Mackinnon
Mr J Bruce	Ms A MacLean
Mrs C Caddick	Mr C MacLeod
Miss J Campbell	Mr D MacLeod
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr A Christie	Mrs B McAllister
Dr I Cockburn	Mr J McGillivray
Mrs M Cockburn	Mr H Morrison
Mr G Cruickshank	Ms L Munro
Ms K Currie	Ms P Munro
Mrs M Davidson	Mrs M Paterson
Mr J Finlayson	Mr M Reiss (via VC)
Mr M Finlayson	Mr A Rhind
Mr C Fraser	Mrs F Robertson
Mr L Fraser	Mrs T Robertson
Mr R Gale	Mr K Rosie
Mr K Gowans	Mr G Ross
Mr A Graham	Mr P Saggars
Mr J Gray	Mr A Sinclair (via VC)
Mr A Henderson	Ms N Sinclair (via VC)
Mr A Jarvie	Mr C Smith
Ms E Knox	Ms M Smith
Mr R Laird	Mrs K Stephen
Mr B Lobban	Mr B Thompson (via VC)
Mr D Louden	Mrs C Wilson
Mrs L MacDonald	

In Attendance:

Chief Executive	Director of Corporate Resources
Director of Development & Infrastructure	Director of Community Services

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs I Campbell, Mr J Gordon, Ms P Hadley, Mr T Heggie, Mr W MacLachlan, Mr N McLean and Mr I Ramon.

2. **Declarations of Interest** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

Item 5 – People Committee (Item 18) - Mrs A MacLean and Mr P Saggars (both non-financial)

Item 5 – People Committee (Items 17 and 18) - Mr A Christie (financial)

Item 18(i) – Mr A Jarvie and Ms E Knox (both non-financial)

Item 18(iii) – Mr A Jarvie and Mrs I MacKenzie (both non-financial)

Item 18(v) – Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mrs C Caddick and Miss J Campbell (all financial)

Item 18(vi) – Mrs D MacKay (non-financial)

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, thanks were conveyed to all those who had been involved in the extremely successful National Mod which had recently been held in Fort William.

3. **Membership of the Council** **Ballrachd na Comhairle**

It was **NOTED** that, following the By-Election held on Thursday, 28 September 2017, Mr Alasdair Rhind, Morningside, Scotsburn Road, Tain IV19 1PU had been elected as a Member of Ward 7 (Tain and Easter Ross).

4. **Confirmation of Minutes** **Daingneachadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais**

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 7 September 2017 as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately – which were **APPROVED**.

5. **Minutes of Meetings of Committees** **Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan Chomataidhean**

There had been submitted for confirmation as correct records, for information as regards delegated business and for approval as appropriate, the Minutes of Meetings of Committees contained in Volume circulated separately as undernoted:-

Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee, 5 September

Isle of Skye & Raasay Committee, 11 September

Sutherland County Committee, 13 September

City of Inverness Area Committee, 14 September

Nairnshire Committee, 21 September

Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 28 September

Lochaber Committee, 4 October

People Committee, 19 October

The Minutes, having been moved and seconded were, except as undernoted, **APPROVED** – matters arising having been dealt with as follows:-

Starred Item: Item 18: PP. 12-15 of the Supplementary Paper*Declarations of Interest**

Mrs A MacLean and Mr P Sagers declared non-financial interests in this item on the grounds of being Board Member of the Ross & Cromarty Citizens Advice Bureau and Director of Nairn Citizens Advice Bureau respectively but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item (and also Item 17 – People Committee, 19 October) on the grounds of being General Manager of the Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureaux and confirmed that he would leave the meeting during any discussion.

Review of Debt Advice and Related Services

AGREED that the budget saving should be implemented over a 2 year period - £65k in Year 1 (2018/19) and £65k in Year 2 (2019/20).

**6. Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board
Co-Bhòrd Luachaidh na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean Siar**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Valuation Joint Board held on 27 June 2017 (approved by the Board on 22 September 2017) which were **NOTED**.

**7. Membership of Committees, etc
Ballrachd na Comhairle**

It was **NOTED** that, following the By-Election for Ward 7, the political make-up of the Council was now as follows:-

Independent – 30/SNP – 21/Scottish Conservatives – 10/
Liberal Democrat – 9/Labour 3 – Green -1

It was also **NOTED** that the formula in respect of the number of places on Strategic Committee remained as 10/7/4/3/1.

The Council also **AGREED** the following –

North Planning Applications Committee – Mr A Rhind to be included (Ward 7)
Pensions Board – Mr G Cruickshank to replace Mr S Mackie
Commercial Board – Mr A Rhind to replace Mrs F Robertson

Valuation Joint Board – revised membership – Mr L Fraser, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray, Ms K Currie, Mr W MacLachlan, Mrs P Munro and Mr D MacLeod.

8. Question Time
Am Ceiste

The following Questions had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance in terms of Standing Order 42 –

(i) Mr A Jarvie

To the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee

“How many times have electric car charging points, either owned by or situated on Highland Council property, been used both in the past 12 months and since they were originally installed?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, whilst welcoming the increase in usage from the previous year and with electricity costs now around £20k per year, Mr Jarvie queried as to whether consideration would be given to charging.

In response, the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee confirmed that a report had already been submitted to the Community Services Committee on this issue and a further report would be presented to the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee in due course.

(ii) Ms M Smith

To the Leader of the Council

“What measures are the Administration putting in place to ensure the Highlands gets maximum benefit from the £6million rural tourism infrastructure fund?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Ms Smith queried as to whether the Leader would organise teams of Officers to meet as soon as possible with Local Members in areas affected by tourism (and especially rural areas).

In response the Leader of the Council confirmed that discussion would be undertaken with the Cabinet Secretary and other Ministers at the Highlands & Islands Convention in the following week in relation to the potential for increasing the fund and the possibilities of leveraging in money from elsewhere. It was also acknowledged that it was vital to ensure that infrastructure was improved before the tourism season in 2018.

(iii) Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair

To the Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee

“Please provide a list of the number of agency staff, as well as their equivalent grades and costs to the Council, on a monthly basis from July 2016 to August 2017”.

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a supplementary question, Mrs Campbell-Sinclair queried as to whether a fuller response could be provided on the numbers of Council staff who had been

released under the Voluntary Severance programme and who had returned via an employment agency.

In response, the Chair of the Corporate Resources Committee confirmed that action was continuing to be taken in terms of reducing the number of agency staff across the Council and that if required a confidential briefing for any Member with the relevant Manager could be arranged.

9. The Council Programme – Progress Report Program airson Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No. HC/39/17 dated 16 October 2017 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, it was confirmed that the priorities for the Programme had now been firmly established and themes identified.

In this regard, consultation had been undertaken with Local Committees and, in addition to the provision of broadband, housing had been identified as key priority to ensure sustainability in all communities and to attract people to live and work in the Highlands.

The importance of engagement and continued joint working with Community Planning Partners, at both a strategic and local level, was also highlighted as being imperative in terms of delivering the Programme.

Finally, it was anticipated that the Programme would be finalised in November and appropriate reference made within the Corporate Plan.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the progress which had been made to engage collaboratively on the development of the Programme.

The Council also **AGREED** the revised commitments under the 5 priority themes at Appendix 1 and the proposed next steps as detailed in the report.

10. Redesign of Highland Council – Progress Report Bord Ath-dhealbaidh – Aithisg Adhartais

There had been circulated Report No. HC/40/17 dated 17 October 2017 by the Chief Executive.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the Board's programme of reviews and its progress in commissioning five peer reviews and the learning from lean reviews underway.

It was also **NOTED** that Board workshops were open to all Members to attend and that Members could propose areas for review to the Board.

Members further **NOTED** the engagement with Managers and the programme of local staff forums being held to brief staff and to share their views and ideas, the work in progress around the Council being more commercially minded, community minded and the development of a Redesign Board communications plan and the positive feedback from the External Auditors on the progress made to date.

**11. Annual Audit Report and Accounts
Aithisg Sgrudaidh on Taobh A-muigh**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/41/17 dated 16 October 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

In this regard, thanks were conveyed to the Director of Corporate Resources and his team for the considerable level of work which had been undertaken.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** that the Auditor's Report had been approved by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 28 September.

The Council also **NOTED** the agreed actions as detailed in the report.

**12. Results from the Citizens' Panel 2017 Performance and Attitudes Survey
Toraidhean bho Shuirbhuidh Coileanaidh is Bheachdan Phannal nan Saoranach
2017**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/42/17 dated 25 September 2017 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be extended to the staff for the compilation of this report and also to those who responded to the survey, with particular reference to young people;
- the overall satisfaction rate of 73% with Council services was extremely encouraging and provided grounds for optimism in terms of how the Council was dealing with current financial challenges;
- the overall statistics had been fairly consistent over the past few years and again this was encouraging in the current difficult circumstances which were being faced;
- it was however disappointing that the satisfaction rate was decreasing in terms of reference to a 'listening' Council and as such there was a role here for all Elected Members;
- road maintenance and schools continued to be high priorities within communities and the Council was addressing the need to allocate additional funds to these areas wherever possible;
- there was a need to acknowledge the reality of diminishing budgets and the associated impact on the future delivery of services (with the redesign work currently being undertaken of particular importance in this respect);
- it would be important to respond to the issues identified from the survey through the budget process, individual Strategic Committees and implementation of the Council Programme;
- it was hoped that there could be improvement on the 40.8% survey response rate in future;
- similarly there was a need for Elected Members to have a role in improving the 13% response rate in relation to the Council 'representing views';
- in contrast, and in regard to community safety, it was highlighted that 98.1% of respondents considered the area within 15 minutes' walk of their home to be 'very' or 'fairly' safe and this percentage rate was increasing year on year which was extremely positive and encouraging for the Council and partner

agencies in the Highlands;

- however, in terms of community safety, it also had to be noted that 13.7% of the younger age group felt 'rather' or 'very' unsafe and further detail was required on the reasons for this statistic in order to influence improvement in future;
- there was a wealth of information provided within the survey results which could be used to influence future service delivery;
- as part of a continual review of the survey questions, consideration should be given to assessment of how the Council was delivering its Programme and also the involvement of community planning partners;
- this had to be a 'living document' in that information was both used and shared on a regular basis;
- there was a considerable amount of positive messages arising from this survey and this should be used to promote the Highlands as an attractive place in which to live and work; and
- the proposal to continue to look for other opportunities to understand the views of a range of user groups which the survey could not provide (including age, gender, disability, ethnicity and housing tenure) was welcomed.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the key findings of the feedback from the Citizens' Panel from the current year's survey.

The Council also **AGREED** the follow-up action to communicate the results set out in Paragraph 4.1 and to await further analysis and reports as outlined in Paragraph 5.3 of the report.

13. Uig Harbour – Harbour Revision Order and Construction Consents Leasachaidhean Ionad-aiseig Uige – Adhartas a thaobh Ordugh Ath-sgrudaidh Calaidh

There had been circulated Report No. HC/43/17 dated 17 October 2017 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

During discussion, the importance of this project was highlighted in that it represented a major development for the area with associated benefits for the local economy and as such it was hoped that it could be progressed within a very quick timescale.

The consultation which had been undertaken with the local community was also welcomed and in this regard it was suggested that consideration should also be given to development of the shore side of the harbour and in future the other harbours in the area if possible.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the drafting and submission of a Harbour Revision Order and other construction consents for the new works required at Uig Harbour as detailed in the report.

14. Code of Corporate Governance Cod Riaghladh Corporra

There had been circulated Report No. HC/44/17 dated 5 October 2017 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

In this regard, reference was made to the considerable level of work which had been undertaken on this report by Ms M Morris, the previous Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Governance.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the progress on delivering the 2016/17 Code and **APPROVED** the 2017/18 Code of Corporate Governance as detailed in the report.

15. Commercial Board Bord Coimeirsealta

Suspension of Standing Orders – the Council **AGREED** to suspend Standing Order 20 to allow consideration of this item.

It was noted that, at the Council meeting on 29 June, it had been agreed that a Commercial Board should be established comprising 5 Members (1 from each political Group plus a Substitute), 2 Senior Officers in Executive roles and up to 2 External Advisers as Non-Executives on the Board.

In this regard, the first meeting of the Board had been held on 28 September when it had been agreed to recommend that the membership should be increased to 10 Members (2 from each Group) with 2 Senior Officers as Advisers but that no further action should be taken on appointing External Advisers meantime.

It had also been agreed to appoint Mr G Adam as Chair and Ms M Smith as Vice Chair of the Board.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the revised arrangements for membership of the Commercial Board as detailed.

16. Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings Gnath-riaghailtean co-cheangailte ri GiulanChoinneamhan

Suspension of Standing Orders - the Council **AGREED** to suspend Standing Order 20 to allow consideration of this item.

It was noted that it had previously been agreed to amend Standing Order 13.3 to remove the requirement for a Substitute Member from each Group (attending a meeting) to be 'named' in advance. It had also been agreed that notification of attendance by a Substitute had to be given no later than 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

This arrangement had previously been limited to 1 Member from each Group. However, it was now proposed that this limit should be removed and that Groups should be able to specify more than 1 Substitute if necessary.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the proposed amendment to Standing Order 13.3 as detailed, on the basis that (other than in exceptional cases) notification had to be given no later than 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

17. Scheme of Delegation and Administration to Strategic Committees and Sub Committees and to Officers
Raon Ughdarrais agus Rianachd gu Comataidhean Ro-innleachdail agus Fochomataidhean agus gu Oifigearan

There had been circulated Report No. HC/45/17 dated 28 August 2017 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

During discussion, it was suggested that in future approval of HRA rent charges should revert to the previous arrangement whereby this was a recommendation from the Strategic Committee to the Council.

It was also suggested that, in relation to the delegation to Officers within the Development & Infrastructure Service, and specifically the determination of planning applications, that the status quo should be maintained – and also that a Seminar for Members should be arranged as soon as practicable with a focus on planning issues/conditions.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation as detailed in the report – subject to the following amendments –

Part 1 – Powers Reserved to the Council – approval of HRA rent charges to be a recommendation from the Strategic Committee to the full Council.

Part IV – Delegation to Officers – Development & Infrastructure – the status quo to be maintained in relation to the determination of planning applications.

It was also **AGREED** that a Seminar for Members should be arranged as soon as practicable with a focus on planning issues/conditions.

18. Notices of Motion
Brathan Gluasaid

The following Notices of Motion had been received in accordance with Standing Order 10.1 –

Declarations of Interest

Mr A Jarvie and Ms E Knox declared non-financial interests in the following item (i) on the grounds of being Board members of Highland Disability Sport but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

(i)'The Highland Council celebrates all the Highland competitors at the recent Special Olympics, including the 58 athletes who brought home medals from six sports.

These games highlight the great benefits that sport brings to all those who take part. Not least, being a fantastic way to improve social inclusion among those who are usually excluded, this council agrees to continue to support and promote these excellent opportunities for those who live here.'

Signed: Mr A Jarvie Mr G Ross

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- congratulations should be conveyed to all those who had taken part and especially to the 58 athletes who had taken home medals from six sports;
- it was also important to recognise the support of volunteers, carers and families in this regard;
- participation was key and there should be recognition of the transformational difference which had been made to the lives of the competitors;
- there was also a need to recognise and to thank those involved in the contribution to this from Highland Disability Sport; and
- it was hoped that the local media could provide publicity for and recognise the achievements of local competitors.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

(ii) 'The Highland Council reaffirms its support for the final recommendations from CoSLA's Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy which includes the principle of subsidiarity.

The Council also believes that local democracy is increased when Local Government has control of taxation.

We move that the Council, working with CoSLA and other partners, undertake research on options to enhance local control of taxation so that local priorities and circumstances can be more fully taken into account.'

Signed: Mrs M Davidson Mr J Gray

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it would be extremely important to work with and undertake research with colleagues both in CoSLA and across the country to bring about change in regard to local taxation;
- specifically, this process should begin with a focus on Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates but should then be continued into areas where currently the Council had no direct control e.g. tourism, air traffic and landfill taxes;
- the principles arising from the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy were of particular importance in this regard and should be referenced by those not familiar with them;
- it was hoped that, following discussion and research, a full debate on all options available could be undertaken by the full Council in the first instance and thereafter with both the UK and Scottish Governments; and
- in terms of subsidiarity, and the devolution of tax raising powers, it was imperative that policies and taxation for local areas were again shaped and influenced by local government.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

Declarations of Interest

Mr A Jarvie and Mrs I MacKenzie declared non-financial interests in the following item (iii) on the grounds of being Board members of the Highland Award Project but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

(iii) 'The Highland Council recognises the great opportunities that The Duke of Edinburgh's Award provides to all those aged under 25 across the area. However, in the previous academic year, some of the most deprived high schools such as Wick, Alness, Dingwall and Inverness High School did not enrol any of their pupils in this award. So far this year, only four pupils from a disadvantaged background have started their gold level award, with only two actually completing it since April 2014.

This Council agrees that promoting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award delivers incredibly advantageous life skills. A great initiative would be to consider offering all children who are in our care, the opportunity gain their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This sort of targeted delivery to those most disadvantaged can deliver truly life changing results and as the award license holder, we will take further steps to help make this much more widely accessible.'

Signed: Mr A Jarvie Mrs I MacKenzie

Prior to discussion, it was noted that the mover and seconder of this Motion now wished to amend the wording within the first paragraph (second sentence) to read as follows – 'However, in the previous academic year, high schools serving some of the most deprived areas haven't enrolled any pupils in this award'.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this was a most worthwhile and valuable award which enabled the learning of real life skills and demonstrated the commitment of participating individuals to both employers and universities;
- particular reference was made to Kinlochleven and Ullapool High Schools for the number of pupils enrolled, and also Gairloch and Kinlochbervie, but it was felt that other schools could perhaps be supported to do more in this regard;
- consideration should therefore be given to offering all children in care the opportunity to gain this award, with the Council taking all steps available to help make it more widely accessible;
- whilst acknowledging the importance of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, it had to be recognised that individual Schools were best placed to decide if and when pupils were put forward for it;
- many schools across the Highlands currently offered alternative opportunities to pupils which were both inclusive and comprehensive and also targeted to specific catchment areas;
- it should be noted that the Duke of Edinburgh Award could also be undertaken through other organisations (and not just through schools) and this could have had an effect on the statistics re uptake;
- there were many other Award activities available, including the Saltire Award;
- there was a need for detailed consideration to be given to ways in which to encourage and increase the capacity of adult volunteers in the Highlands to facilitate the Duke of Edinburgh Award and other similar activities in the Highlands; and

- as well as highlighting the other opportunities which were currently available, there was a need to examine the reasons behind the low uptake of the Duke of Edinburgh Award in particular in some areas, including the associated costs per pupil of undertaking the Award.

Thereafter, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mrs I MacKenzie, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion – subject to the changes to the wording (in the first paragraph) which had been highlighted earlier in the meeting.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr G MacKenzie, seconded by Mr R Laird, moved the following – The Highland Council recognises the great opportunities that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provides to all those aged under 25 across the area as one element of a much wider provision available to young people in our schools and communities.

The Council agrees that promoting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other similar initiatives delivers incredibly advantageous life skills. Highland Council should continue to encourage and support these activities and to seek further funding opportunities.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 8 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 51 votes, with 5 abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:-

Mr A Jarvie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr P Saggars, Mr J Bruce, Mr C Smith, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr W MacKay and Mr A Sinclair.

For the Amendment:-

Mr R Bremner, Mr C Fraser, Mr K Rosie, Mr D Louden, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr B Boyd, Mr B Allan, Ms K Currie, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs C Wilson, Mr A Rhind, Mr R Balfour, Miss J Campbell, Mr G Ross, Mr K Gowans, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs D MacKay, Mrs P Munro, Mr C MacLeod, Ms E Knox, Mrs M Cockburn, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mr H Morrison, Mr J McGillivray, Mrs T Robertson, Ms L Munro, Mr A Graham, Ms K Stephen, Mr D MacLeod, Dr I Cockburn, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr D MacKay, Mr J Finlayson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr M Finlayson, Mrs A MacLean, Mrs C Caddick, Mr G Adam, Mr R Gale, Mr B Lobban, Ms M Smith, Mr R Laird, Mr A Henderson, Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A MacKinnon, Mr A Baxter, Mr A Christie and Mr J Gray.

Abstentions:-

Mr L Fraser, Mr S Mackie, Mr M Reiss, Ms N Sinclair and Mr B Thompson.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** to recognise the great opportunities that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provided to all those aged under 25 across the area as one element of a much wider provision available to young people in schools and communities.

It was also **AGREED** that promoting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other similar initiatives delivered incredibly advantageous life skills and that the Council would continue to encourage and support these activities and to seek further funding opportunities.

(iv) 'The Highland Council notes the disturbing effects of Universal Credit on Highland residents and public services during the pilot undertaken in the Inverness Job Centre catchment.

The Council notes in particular the catastrophic consequences of the in-built delay between an award being approved and the initial payment being made and of the ill-considered integration of the former Housing Benefit into the Universal Credit scheme.

The Council therefore urges the UK Government not to extend the Universal Credit regime any further until these issues and the other flaws are addressed and agrees that the Leader write to the Secretary of State to that effect.'

Signed: Mr R Laird Ms K Currie

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it should be noted that, since the roll-out of Universal Credit, the workload of the Welfare team within the Council had increased by 43%;
- in addition to the above, 80% of tenants on Universal Credit were now in arrears (with the projected sum for these arrears being £2.1m by the end of the year) and this had an extremely detrimental effect on those people involved in this process and also on the Council;
- there was an urgent need for the Council to join with others who were seeking reconsideration of the implementation of this ill-considered and damaging policy by the UK Government and specifically the Department for Work & Pensions in order to try and alleviate the suffering of those who were being most impacted;
- it had to be highlighted that the majority of people detrimentally affected were currently in work (and not unemployed);
- the acute financial difficulties being experienced by many people across the Highlands could not be understated and it was feared that there could be decades of problems ahead, not just for them but also for the Council;
- thanks should be conveyed to the Welfare Team for the work undertaken in relation to this issue, not least in the help and assistance provided to those people who did not have access to IT facilities and therefore were unable to complete or update the online application form;
- one of the major issues related to Universal Credit was that if even one benefit was changed or queried in any way, it had the result of ceasing all benefits being received and this had the effect of causing immediate and severe financial hardship;
- there was particular concern about the increase in doorstep lending activity and the use of foodbanks and it was suggested that this was due in large part to the processes involved in Universal Credit;
- Councils across Scotland were having to earmark significant levels of funding to mitigate the effects of Universal Credit and this funding could be spent more appropriately on local services;
- it was noted that a meeting had already been arranged with the Minister responsible for the rollout of Universal Credit but a commitment was given to also given to write to the UK Government in line with the terms of the Notice of Motion;
- the premium telephone number in place for calls in regard to Universal Credit had now been replaced with a Freephone number and this was welcomed;
- there was a specific need to review the position regarding arrears in relation to homeless accommodation as a direct result of Universal Credit;

- consultation should also be undertaken with the Scottish Government in terms of the potential use of any other powers which might help in the current circumstances;
- the previous arrangements in terms of the payment of different types of benefit had been in need of reform but it was considered that the new procedures had not been beneficial in this respect;
- there were severe and damaging effects on the mental health of those impacted by problems as a direct result of Universal Credit and this had to be highlighted with a view to making amendments to the current arrangements; and
- people living in rural areas were often very severely impacted, particularly in terms of the loss of local banking arrangements in many cases.

Thereafter, Mr R Laird, seconded by Ms K Currie, **MOVED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Jarvie, seconded by Mr P Saggars, moved that the word 'disturbing' should be removed from the first line of the first paragraph of the Notice of Motion. Also, that the subsequent two paragraphs should be replaced with the following wording – 'The Council notes the impacts of delays between payments. However, it does recognise the principle of Universal Credit, meaning that moving from unemployment to employment doesn't mean applying for a new benefit. Also, in taking multiple benefits paid at different times into a single payment thus making household budgeting easier. There has been an impact across the Highlands and agrees that the Leader write to the Secretary of State highlighting this to ensure the further rollout is smooth for all remaining claimants'.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 50 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 9 votes, with 3 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr R Bremner, Mr C Fraser, Mr K Rosie, Mr D Louden, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr B Boyd, Mr B Allan, Ms K Currie, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs M Paterson, Miss J Campbell, Mr G Ross, Mr K Gowans, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs D MacKay, Mrs P Munro, Mr C MacLeod, Ms E Knox, Mrs M Cockburn, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs L MacDonald, Mr R MacDonald, Mr H Morrison, Mr J McGillivray, Mrs T Robertson, Ms L Munro, Mr A Graham, Dr I Cockburn, Mr G MacKenzie, Mr D MacKay, Mr J Finlayson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr M Finlayson, Ms A MacLean, Mrs C Caddick, Mr G Adam, Mr R Gale, Mr B Lobban, Ms M Smith, Mr R Laird, Mr A Henderson, Mrs H Carmichael, Mrs M Davidson, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr A Baxter, Mr A Christie, Mr J Gray, Mr W MacKay, Ms N Sinclair and Mr B Thompson.

For the Amendment:

Mr R Balfour, Mr A Jarvie, Mr G Cruickshank, Mr P Saggars, Mr J Bruce, Mr C Smith, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie and Mr A Sinclair.

Abstentions:

Mr L Fraser, Mr D MacLeod and Mr M Reiss.

Decision

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Notice of Motion as detailed.

Declarations of Interest

Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham and Miss J Campbell declared financial interests in the following item (v) on the grounds of being landlords and left the Chamber during discussion of the item.

Mrs C Caddick declared a financial interest on the grounds of shared ownership of self-catering accommodation.

At this point in the meeting, Mr L Fraser also declared a financial interest on the grounds of being a landlord and left the Chamber during discussion of the item.

(v) 'The Highland Council notes the unprecedented high rents for private sector housing in Inverness and the pressure this places on both the Highland Housing Register and those individuals and families seeking a home in the city.'

The Council therefore agrees to examine and report back on the feasibility of applying under the provisions of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 for a Rent Pressure Zone for Inverness and for any other community in the Highlands facing similarly expensive housing rents.'

Signed: Mr R Laird Mr R MacWilliam

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it had to be highlighted that at present there was a large private sector housing market in Inverness with the average rent for a 1 bedroom property being approximately £520 per month (as opposed to the Scottish average of £482 per month);
- in light of the current difficulties facing many people, and predominantly young people, who were unable to obtain a Council House and also unable to provide a deposit for a mortgage (and thereby faced with high rents for private sector accommodation), the Notice of Motion sought investigation as to whether an application could be submitted for a Rent Pressure Zone for Inverness and for any other area deemed appropriate;
- in terms of the Housing Register, there were currently 1257 people applying for a 1 bedroom property and this had to be viewed alongside the statistic that only 164 Council properties had been re-let in the previous year;
- the provision of proper and affordable housing was essential for the health and wellbeing of everyone in the Highlands and as such there was real concern about the sub-standard condition of some housing in the private sector at present;
- it had to be acknowledged that tourism was expected to raise the demand for property in future years and there was a need to deal with the situation in some areas where very high levels of rent were currently being charged;
- as part of any future application for a Rent Pressure Zone, there would be a need to demonstrate for Scottish Ministers that current rent levels in the area were causing concern;
- whilst there was no intention to impact responsible landlords, there were unfortunately many situations at present where this was not the case and this was where action was required to implement improvement;
- in terms of concern that current legislation might not address all aspects of the problem, it was suggested that all other options should be considered in order to allow a fully informed debate and if possible decisions to be made locally;

- in terms of the wording within the Notice of Motion, wording should be included to make reference not just to Inverness but also to 'many other areas' where this issue was also a problem; and
- the wider consideration of a national strategy on the building of more homes would be essential at some point in the future.

Decision

The Council **NOTED** the unprecedented high rents for private sector housing in Inverness and many other areas and the pressure this placed on both the Highland Housing Register and those individuals and families seeking a home in the city.

It was therefore **AGREED** to examine and report back on the feasibility of applying under the provisions of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 for a Rent Pressure Zone for Inverness and for any other community in the Highlands facing similarly expensive housing rents.

(At this point, Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Miss J Campbell and Mr L Fraser returned to the meeting).

Declaration of Interest

Mrs D Mackay declared a non-financial interest in the following item (vi) on the grounds of being a Board Member of NHS Highland 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.

(vi)'It is proposed to form a Rural Health Group from Elected Members within Highland Council to:-

1. Lobby for appropriate health care funding in the area;
2. Assess and examine the ongoing redesign of health and social care by NHS Highland; and
3. Produce a democratically led plan for health and social care that is driven by both sustainability of funding and sustainability of care.'

Signed: Mr R MacDonald Ms N Sinclair

In this regard, there had been tabled Amended Wording (from Mr R MacDonald and Ms N Sinclair) in regard to the third bullet point of the Notice of Motion as follows –

'Mindful of the current plans and activity across Health and Social Care, engage with NHS Highland and others to ensure that we have appropriate democratic involvement that is driven by both sustainability of funding and sustainability of care'.

Prior to discussion, it was noted that the mover and seconder of the Motion now wished to amend the wording of the Notice of Motion as follows - to delete the word 'Rural' from the first sentence and to replace the third bullet point with the following – 'mindful of the current plans and activity across health and social care, engage with NHS Highland and others to ensure that there was appropriate democratic involvement that was driven by both sustainability of funding and sustainability of care'.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was suggested that geographic distance was major factor in relation to the current issues associated with the provision of health care, not least in terms of travel and technology;
- concerns in regard to recent changes made by NHS Highland included a perceived failure (during the recent consultation process) to take account of local concerns expressed by a majority of constituents in rural areas;
- there were currently serious concerns for those living with life threatening illnesses in remote areas, particularly where there was reduction in the number of community hospital beds;
- the purpose of the Notice of Motion was therefore to try to address the 'democratic deficit' which appeared to exist by forming an alliance of like-minded Elected Members to speak collectively on behalf of their constituents, particularly those in areas which were considered to be remote;
- recent changes had made it considerably more difficult to access out-of-hours and emergency care in some areas;
- overall there was a need to ensure that the correct questions were being asked about the NHS planning process, particularly in geographically distant areas, and that redesign proposals led to correct changes for all areas of the Highlands as part of a compassionate and humane health care system;
- there was also a need for a focus on the overall funding arrangements for the Highland area, with the provision of detail in regard to how and where current funding was being used;
- perennial issues of budgets, recruitment and sustainability made it imperative that a more radical and imaginative approach to the provision of health care across the Highland area was considered, with the close involvement of local communities at all stages of the process;
- it had to be highlighted that a recent Audit Scotland report had suggested that too little progress had been made in shifting the balance of care into the local community and this was a concern;
- the recent Members' Seminar had been extremely helpful in terms of productive discussion and the identification of ideas for the way forward, not least in relation to review of the Partnership Agreement with NHS Highland;
- the problems which had been identified had to be shared with all agencies in order for agreement to be reached on future solutions;
- close and detailed involvement of local people and communities was imperative if successful improvements/changes to current arrangements were to be implemented;
- there was a need for better communication with NHS Highland over the provision of care in rural areas in particular;
- it would be important to take account of socio/economic benefits in addition to financial considerations in future;
- it had to be recognised that thousands of people across the Highlands had signed petitions seeking changes to current arrangements; and
- in terms of any future proposals, and specifically in relation to engagement and communication, it was imperative that a focus was given to different actions for different areas, with the participation of all Members, all partners and especially all communities across the area.

Decision

It was **AGREED** to form a Health Group from Elected Members within the Council to:-

- lobby for appropriate health care funding in the area;
- assess and examine the ongoing redesign of health and social care by NHS Highland; and
- mindful of the current plans and activity across health and social care, engage with NHS Highland and others to ensure that there was appropriate democratic involvement that was driven by both sustainability of funding and sustainability of care.

**19. Deeds Executed
Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh**

It was **NOTED** that a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 7 September 2017 was available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website.

The meeting ended at 3.00pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Ross and Cromarty Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Tuesday, 31 October 2017 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mr D MacLeod
Ms I Campbell	Mr A MacKinnon
Dr I Cockburn	Ms P Munro
Mr M Finlayson	Mrs M Paterson (Vice Chair)
Mr C Fraser	Mr A Rhind
Mr D Loudon (tele-conferencing)	Mrs F Robertson (Chair)
Mr G MacKenzie	Ms M Smith
Mrs A MacLean	Ms K Stephen

Officials in Attendance:

Mrs H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr R Bain, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North), Community Services
 Mr C Sharp, Repairs Manager (North), Community Service
 Mr D Esson, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
 Ms S Wood, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
 Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operation Manager, Community Services
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager M Loynd, Scottish Fire and Rescue 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.

Business

Preliminaries

Prior to commencement of business, the Chairman, on behalf of the Local Committee, welcomed Mr A Rhind on his recent re-election to Ward 7 (Tain and Easter Ross). Mr Rhind replied in suitable terms.

The many fantastic achievements, both by adults and young people, at the recent Royal National Mod in Fort William were highlighted. The Ross Shire participants had acted as Ambassadors for the area and, in recognition of their success, the Dingwall and Seaforth Members had agreed to hold a Civic Reception, not only for participants from their Ward but for all those who had taken part across Ross Shire. Highland Council was a funder of An Comunn Gàidhealach, the Mod organisers, and this investment proved excellent value for money.

Congratulations were also extended to Kinlocheil Shinty Club who had won team of the year, coach and player of the year and the Marine Harvest Premiership.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs J Barclay and Mrs C Wilson.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the last meeting which had been held on 15 August 2017 and had been approved by the Highland Council on 7 September 2017.

Arising from this item, it was confirmed that a breakdown, on a Ward basis, of the number of kilometres of road by category had been circulated to Members, but this would be re-circulated to Councillor M Smith. Also, additional information had recently been provided from Chief Inspector I MacLelland, Police Scotland, regarding traffic management at a specific road vehicle collision near Kyle and this would be sent direct to Councillor I Campbell.

**4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report Nos RC/025/17 dated 20 October 2017, together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report, by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

As part of a presentation, a video clip was shown regarding the consultation that was about to be on the SFRS Transformation. The Service was facing changing demands and the key elements that needed to be addressed were detailed. In particular, the Service had seen a reduction in fires but their role had evolved into other areas such as rescue events in times of severe weather, terrorist attacks etc. Transformation would be a challenging process, over a 4 year period, with changes to terms and conditions, new duty patterns, more flexible working practises and the use of new technology. In acknowledgment of this, a recognition package was to be offered to firefighters.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- a request was made for the number of road traffic collision incidents that the Service was involved in to be provided at Ward level so that accident blackspots might be identified. In response, while this would be possible, caution was expressed that the figures would not represent a true picture as the Service was not involved in every traffic collision incident and Police Scotland figures would be more accurate;
- following on from the above, clarification was sought, and received, as to when the SFRS responded to traffic collisions;

- the prevention work carried out by the SFRS was applauded. The Service was commended for its Home Safety Visits and falls prevention approach and its joint work with NHS Highland;
- in response to a question, it was explained that personnel would be trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse and how to support people in terms of getting the right help and information;
- recognising that many of the most vulnerable also had mobility issues, it was suggested that fire suppressant and sprinkler systems should be installed in social housing. The costs of installing these in private houses might be prohibitive but, to encourage the installation of sprinkles, it was suggested that Government should consider providing grants;
- rural health provision in Highland was an concern and there was merit in exploring how the Service could work with the Centre for Rural Health Sciences. The SFRS would act as first responders in an emergency, as and when was necessary. In this regard, in response to a question, it was explained that not all fire engines carried defibrillators but where they did Firefighters knew how to use them;
- it was suggested more people would apply to become a Retained Firefighter if a more flexible approach was adopted. However, it was explained that the physical requirements for Retained Firefighters needed to be maintained although the consultation could look to see if there was capability for volunteers to perhaps act as medical responders instead;
- the more flexible approach taken in terms of distance had enabled more Retained Firefighters to be recruited;
- the use of different types of vehicles in different areas was commended. This would support local need and, for example, with the North Coast 500 route being so popular, these vehicles could carry emergency medical equipment required in a vehicle collision until the ambulance service arrived;
- the Scottish Ambulance Service was in the process of setting up community resilience teams and there was potential for the SFRS to complement this and work together both at a local and national level;
- the increase in deliberate fires was disappointing;
- given the difficult financial climate and decreasing budgets, a flexible approach to joint working was essential; and
- congratulations were extended to Area Manager John MacDonald who had been promoted to the rank of Deputy Chief Fire Officer. His contribution during his time as Area Manager had been considerable, especially in terms of community engagement.

Thereafter, having thanked the SFRS for their presentation, the Committee;-

- i. **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report and updates in relation to the 4 Priorities; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Ambulance Service be invited to a future meeting to present their localism response proposals.

5. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No RC/026/17 dated 20 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- clarification was sought, and received, in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour, what constituted a case being resolved and what timeframes were generally expected;
- although Ward 6 (Cromarty Firth) had the highest level of rent arrears, this was because it also had the largest number of Council houses. In this regard, Councillor M Smith requested information as to how many households this amount of rent arrears would relate to. In addition information was sought as to what level rent arrears reached before the Council took action;
- it was suggested that the Council needed to take a more proactive approach to rent arrears and that lessons could be learnt from the Private sector. However, this had to be balanced against the Council's duty of care;
- in situations where tenants were evicted, the Council had a responsibility to re-house them and this could mean simply changing the locks and the family returning to the same property; Tenants could also apply for sequestration which meant that the debt was written off. Although this meant the Council did not receive any money it often offered the best outcome for families;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that the Council applied for direct payment of rents whenever possible;
- new legislation was to be introduced removing short tenancies. This was a practise that the Council sometimes adopted so a different approach would be required;
- when maintenance officers were in houses, it was suggested that they might also take the opportunity to survey if there were any other matters that needed to be addressed and to report back accordingly. This proposal could form part of the report that the Service had already committed to take back to Committee on various issues including the regular inspection of tenancies;
- concern was expressed that in Ward 5 (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh) at the increase in the average length of time to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs and to re-let properties. It was explained that this was due to staffing issues but measures had been put in place with a view to reducing these figures;
- where possible, local sub-contractors should be used for small maintenance issues and this needed to be borne in mind when the Framework was reviewed;
- details of the system for dealing with missed appointments, by both tenants and maintenance officers, were requested;
- the Council's policy was only to repair fences at the front of properties while dividing fences were the tenant's responsibility. Members felt there was a need to review this issue, together with the maintenance of garages, taking cognisance also on the impact on budgets;
- Councillor A Rhind requested information on the Capital Expenditure proposed for kitchen replacements etc in Ward 7 (Tain and Easter Ross Ward). In addition, he also sought information as to timescales regarding the removal of moss from roofs in Balintore. It was pointed out that wavy tiles were more likely to attract moss more than flat ones and it was now a planning requirement for flat tiles to be used on new houses; and

- it was important to adequately maintain pavements and railings in deprived areas. Failure to do so gave a perception that the Council did not consider these areas as importance as the more affluent areas which appeared to be in better condition.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the information provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017; and
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that the Scheme of Delegation be reviewed to give Local Committees the power to review the Housing Policy, particularly in relation to inspection regimes, garages and fences, taking into account the impact any proposals would have on resources.

6. Education Scotland Reports Sgrùdaidhean le Foghlam Alba

There had been circulated Reports No RC/027/17 and RC/028/17 dated 6 October and 23 October 2017 respectively by the Education Quality Improvement Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- referring to the Tain Royal Academy Report, the improvement which had taken place was welcomed. The Head Teacher's hard work and dedication was acknowledged and, since being appointed, he had started to bring higher levels of challenge in a few curriculum areas. It was important to send a positive message to him, the Senior Management Team and the pupils at the school that Members were encouraged at the progress which had taken place;
- concern was expressed at the pressure the Head Teachers were under at both Tain Royal Academy and Alness Academy. Not only were they faced with a revisit by HMI/Education Scotland in 12 months but they were also encountering new builds and the development of a 3-18 campus. Also, there was the ongoing pressures Head Teachers faced generally such as recruitment of staff, budget cuts and changes to the management of schools and Members sought reassurance that the necessary support would be provided to them;
- Members welcomed the integration of Gaelic into the S1-3 curriculum in Tain Royal Academy and the development of links with local primary schools and other partners;
- Alness Academy had faced difficulties with a large turnover of staff but some progress had been made. However, it was important to build on this and for positive outcomes and huge strides to be made before HMI/Education Scotland returned;
- the statistics reported from the various surveys were useful. However, a clearer indication would be achieved if the number of questionnaires issued and the number of responses returned was provided rather than reporting percentages;

- funding for schools had changed over recent years and it would be useful for Members to see how it had evolved. It was essential that these schools were adequately resourced to make the changes identified;
- turning to the Plockton Associated School Group (ASG) Overview, the many varied successes were applauded. However, concern was expressed at the delay in bringing this report before Committee. Discussion also took place as to whether ASG reports should be considered at Committee in addition to Ward level. It was explained that this was a requirement in terms of the Scheme of Delegation but alternative options as to how this could be accomplished could be explored; and
- the ASG report highlighted many positive outcomes, such as 100% positive destinations and the area's low unemployment rate. However the suitability and condition of many of the schools were graded as poor and this would continue to deteriorate unless remedial action was taken to address this. This would affect the outcomes which would eventually start to decline. Since the report had been written though £3m had been spent on a partial refurbishment of Plockton High School.

The Committee:-

- NOTED**, following scrutiny, the Education Scotland and Associated School Group Overview reports; and
- AGREED** that consideration be given as to how best Associated School Group overviews be reported to the Ross and Cromarty Committee in future.

7. **Winter Maintenance Plan 2017/18** **Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh**

There had been circulated Report No RC/030/17 dated 26 September 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the moisture content of salt was critical and the impact on equipment when salt was moved from a covered location to an uncovered location was questioned;
- the cost implications of removing grit bins during the summer and repairing and then replacing them was queried;
- the salt store barn at Gairloch had been located facing the prevailing wind and, as a result, the roof had blown away exposing salt to the elements. In addition, salt had previously been delivered by boat but this year it had been delivered by lorry, involving a 130 mile round trip;
- calls were made for the budget for gritting to be devolved to Local Committees. In addition, within the terms of the policy, the possibility of viring monies from, say the gritting of car parks, to other routes was explored;
- Members queried how the 10 footpath tractors were allocated;
- appreciation was expressed that the Bealach na Ba road was now classed as a Primary route;
- concern was expressed regarding the gritting of roads around Plockton High School. Some of the single track routes to the school were treated

as Secondary routes and occasions had arisen, due to the condition of these routes, where it had been necessary for the Head Teacher to close the school. It was suggested that there was merit for this prioritisation to be re-examined and to consider any additional cost as preventative spend. Many of the roads in question were winding with steep drops in parts, thus necessitating frequent breaking by buses; and

- Councillor M Smith requested A3 size copies of the maps presented.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plans for Ross and Cromarty for the 2017/18 period, which included the priority road lists and maps presented in Appendix B and C of the report, with the Bealach na Ba road now being classed as a Primary route

8. Ross and Cromarty Local Roads Maintenance Programme 2018/19 Prògraman Càradh Rathaidean Ionadail Rois agus Chromba

There had been circulated Report No RC/030/17 dated 2 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- appreciation was expressed to Community Services road engineers for the recent work undertaken to the A832 at the Fairy Glen. The Local Member, Councillor C Fraser had been kept informed and who, in turn, had advised community councils and residents at what stage works were at. Without this final resurfacing it was unlikely the road would have survived another winter and feedback from residents had been positive;
- assurances were sought, and received, that excessive amounts of weed killer were not used on verges given the negative effect the chemicals could have on bees. Notification to bee keepers in advance of using weed killer would enable hives to be closed;
- when Off-lets were kept clear drainage maintenance became easier;
- a closer working relationship with farmers would be beneficial where fields impacted on the road network;
- as safety was one of the factors taken into account when considering schemes for inclusion in the Roads Structural Maintenance Programme, attention was drawn to the Crask Junction, Findon. This junction was causing considerable concern locally and, although it was likely to be included in the Council's Capital Programme, a request was made that, if there was any underspend in the Roads Maintenance Programme, it be used to start work on this junction;
- confirmation was sought as to when the local budget allocations would be set;
- it was suggested that workforce allocation to areas should relate to the amount of mileage in each ward, Ward 5 (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward) having 48% of roads in Ross and Cromarty;
- concern was expressed that Community Councils had been asked to nominate 3 top road priorities. Given the number of Community Councils in the area this had raised expectations which could not be met. Furthermore, Members, in the first instance, should have been given the opportunity to consider the matter at Ward Business Meetings as they were aware of all the factors which needed to be taken into account;

- a number of roads in Ward 6 (Cromarty Firth) had been included and yet there were other routes which were in greater need of repair and it was requested that the priorities be considered at a Ward Business Meeting with a view to amending them; and
- concern was expressed at the poor standard of work carried out by contractors on repairs to roads met from the Highland Timber Transport Fund. Assurances were sought, and received, that the Council would not accept unsatisfactory work or, where the Council needed to undertake work, that the costs incurred were recouped.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the 2018/19 Roads Maintenance Programmes for the Ross and Cromarty Area with the exception of Ward 6 (Cromarty Firth) which would be subject to consultation with Ward Members with approval of that Ward Programme, including potential changes, being delegated to the Roads Operation Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ross and Cromarty Committee.

9. Common Good Funds Maoin Maith Choitchinn

There had been circulated Reports Nos RC/031/17–RC/035/17 dated 18 October 2017 by the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the following Common Good Funds:-

- a. Cromarty Common Good Fund RC/031/17
- b. Dingwall Common Good Fund RC/032/17
- c. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund RC/033/17
- d. Invergordon Common Good Fund RC/034/17
- e. Tain Common Good Fund RC/035/17

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- details of the Heritage assets of the Invergordon Common Good Fund were requested by Councillor M Smith;
- in relation to the Tain Common Good Fund it was pointed out that, as a result of the sale of the mussel boat, in the next set of accounts the value of the plant and machinery would record a loss. Furthermore, the sale of the Tain Mussel Fishery had generated £120,205 but this was to be ring-fenced for future mussel fisheries;
- also in relation to Tain Common Good, the £385,779 of Heritage Assets referred to the Alexandra suspension bridge and it was questioned if this amount would be depreciated in future; and
- Members welcomed the removal of the costs of the Tain CCTV monitoring contract and the lease of the Meikleferry pier from the Common Good Fund.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the updated information provided in relation to each Fund.

10. Tain Common Good - Request for 25 year lease of Grant Park by St Duthus Football Club
Maoin Math Coitcheann Bhaile Dhubhthaich - Iarrtas airson aonta-màil 25 bliadhna airson Pàirc nan Grandach le Sgioba Ball-coise Naomh Dhubhthaich

There had been circulated Report No RC/036/17 dated 18 October 2017 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **APPROVED** the request for a lease of Grant Park on the proposed Heads of Terms as contained in Appendix One of the report.

The meeting ended at 1.35pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday, 8 November 2017 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr R Balfour	Ms A MacLean
Mrs J Barclay	Mr D MacLeod
Mr R Bremner (Substitute)	Mr R MacWilliam
Miss J Campbell	Mr J McGillivray
Dr I Cockburn	Mr H Morrison
Mr C Fraser	Mr A Rhind (Substitute)
Mr J Gray	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Henderson	Mr A Sinclair (by video conferencing)
Mrs L MacDonald	Mr C Smith
Mr D MacKay	Ms M Smith
Mr W MacKay (by video conferencing)	

Non-Members also present:

Mrs H Carmichael	Mrs D Mackay
Mr K Gowans	Ms L Munro
Mr R Laird	Ms P Munro
Mr B Lobban	Mr P Saggars

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 C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr F MacDonald, Head of Property Services, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Services
 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, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr S Duncan, Property Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr M Fraser, Finance Manager (Partnerships and JV), Finance Service
 Mr A McCann, Economy and Regeneration Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager (Community Services/Development and Infrastructure), Finance Service
 Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr A Yates, Environmental Health Manager, Community Services
 Mr K MacInnes, Principal Economy Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Ms H De Haas, Climate Change Coordinator, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr A Puls, Principal Officer – Building Conservation and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service

Mr C Simpson, Principal Tourism and Film Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service

Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services

Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Ms F MacBain, Committee 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

Preliminaries

During the meeting the Chair paid tribute to James Hickey, who was tragically killed in a car accident in August. James was a mechanic based in the Aviemore workshop. He was 22 years old and had joined as an apprentice mechanic aged 17. He had a bright future ahead of him and would be sadly missed by his colleagues.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mr C MacLeod and Mr N McLean.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

Item 13 – Mrs H Carmichael (non-financial)

Item 15 – Mrs L MacDonald (non-financial)

Item 16 – Mrs L MacDonald (financial) and Mrs T Robertson (non-financial)

Item 22 – Mr A Henderson (non-financial)

Item 31 – Mrs T Robertson (non-financial)

**3. Good News
Naidheachdan Matha**

The following areas of good news were reported:-

- MSc Transport, Planning and Engineering

Laura Jamieson, Technician had received confirmation of her MSc in Transport, Planning and Engineering in mid-September and was currently working in the Road Safety Team, Development and Infrastructure.

- The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland

Barry Cumming, Scientific Officer passed his Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) Professional exams in October and was due to start working as a fully qualified Environmental Health Officer in the mid-Highland area.

- Certificate Presentation

Two Highland Council officers saved a colleague's life in February 2017, when he suffered a severe heart attack. The officers administered CPR and the colleague, Ian Wilson, had gone on to make a good recovery. The officers, John Reid (Environmental Health), and Richard Duncan (Trading Standards) were presented with the Inverness Civic Medal at the Inverness City Committee on 19 June 2017. They had both recently been awarded the Resuscitation Certificate from the Royal Humane Society and were presented with their award at the meeting.

- Carbon Clever

The Carbon CLEVER team had recently been awarded the SCDI Award for Excellence in Environmental Sustainability for two specific projects: The Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund and Highland Climate Challenge game pilot for primary schools.

- Highland Council Quality Awards

Trainee of the Year Award had gone to Kyle Dempster, an apprentice mechanic from the Fort William Workshop. Kyle was nominated by Sandy MacDonald who himself started as an apprentice mechanic with the Council 39 years ago. Kyle would receive his award at the Council's Quality Awards ceremony at the end of November.

Kyle was also recognised as trainee of the year by Moray Firth Group Training which provided training for the Council's apprentice mechanics.

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

3a. Urgent Additional Item: 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

In terms of Standing Order 17.2, the Committee **AGREED** to take the following urgent items of business.

i. Harbours Management Board
Bòrd Rianachd nan Calachan

- * The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that Kirsteen Currie be appointed to the Harbours Management Board in place of Mr Calum MacLeod.

ii. HITRANS Tier 1 Ferry Users Consultation Groups
Buidhnean Co-chomhairleachaidh Luchd-cleachdaidh Aiseagan Ìre 1 HITRANS

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Dr I Cockburn to the Hebrides Ferry Users Consultation Group which covered Barra, North and South Uist, Harris, Lewis and links to Skye in place of Mr Calum MacLeod.

4. Development and Infrastructure Service Revenue Budget Monitoring to 30 September 2017
Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Buidseat Seirbheis an Leasachaidh is a' Bhun-structair gu 30 Sultain 2017

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/01/17 dated 25 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, confirmation was sought, and received that expenditure on Public Local Inquiries could vary depending on the amount of work required in each individual case and that this was also reflected in the varying level of fees paid to solicitors.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017 and the actions which had been put in place to manage the budget over the remainder of the financial year.

5. Capital Expenditure Monitoring to 30 September 2017
Sgrùdadh Caiteachais Chalpa gu 30 Sultain 2017

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/02/17 dated 30 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- concern was expressed regarding the condition of some schools in the Highlands and that, whilst a number projects had been identified within the 2018/19 programme, some of these would be carried forward from the previous years' programme. Therefore, a request was made that a list of schools requiring urgent attention be drawn up;
- a request was made for more concise updates on the works required to bring schools up to standards to be brought to parent councils and other stakeholder groups;
- the importance of keeping the local community updated on works in relation to the replacement of White Bridge on the B9090 was emphasised;
- a request was made for a report to be brought to the Nairnshire Committee providing an update on the Flood Prevention Scheme at Auldearn Burn;
- concern was expressed regarding the potential impact repairs to roads listed in the capital programme within Ward 5 (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh) could have if the allocation of funding for these schemes was received just prior to the start of the tourist season. This could result in the commencement of these works taking place during the summer;
- a request was made for further detail on when proposed works to the Ullapool Primary School Early Learning Childcare project would commence;
- clarification was sought regarding the potential impact structural problems identified during phase 1 of the Inverness High School project could have on the overall budget for the project. In response, it was emphasised that the intention was to deliver the full scope of works originally planned; however, early indications from consultants had identified that a greater sum was likely to be required to undertake the full project and that scope for additional funding could be subject to the outcome of the review into

the Council's capital programme. It was suggested that a detailed briefing could be provided to Local Members;

- confirmation was sought, and received, that Merkinch Primary School had been identified as a priority project by the People Committee and that officers were seeking to move this project forward;
- follow a request, a brief update was provided on the current position of the Newhall Bridge project, during which it was explained that there were issues in relation to land access and that further updates could be provided to Local Members;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that any underspend on roads structural capital works within the current financial year would be carried forward into the following year; and
- the Chair of Resources was working hard to ensure that as many of the projects listed within the capital programme would be delivered.

The Committee **APPROVED**:-

- i. the capital expenditure monitoring position for the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017; and
- ii. an increase in the gross budget for the Fort William Office Project Phase 2 by £0.6m, to be funded by the Property Rationalisation line in the capital programme. The property rationalisation budget would be included in the Council's capital programme review which was currently underway.

6. Property Revenue Maintenance Budget 2017/18 Budget Allocation Riarachadh Buidseit airson Buidseat Cumail Suas Teachd-a-steach Seilbhe 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/03/17 dated 17 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed work categories and budget allocations for the 2017/18 Property Revenue Maintenance Budget.

7. Quarter 2 Performance Review Ath-sgrùdadh Coileanaidh Cairteil 2

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

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- confirmation was sought, and received, that the small applications team which had recently been established to assist in improving performance in dealing with planning applications consisted of existing staff seconded from within the service;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that the proposed changes to the charges for street naming and numbering reflected the administrative costs to the Council of informing the Post Office; and
- in highlighting the Road Construction Consent Project, it was suggested that community councils should be consulted on the proposed changes as there could be problems accessing the online form in some areas where broadband connectivity required improvement.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards and Development Plans teams;
- ii. **NOTED** progress with the eRoad Construction Consent project; and
- iii. **AGREED** to the amended schedule of charges for Street Naming and Numbering functions

8. **Development and Infrastructure Service Workforce Plan Plana Sgioba-obrach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh is a' Bhun-structair**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/05/17 dated 18 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Speaking to the report, the Director provided details of the estimated target dates for the Action Plan at Appendix 3 of the report as follows:-

- Requirement for agile more responsive workforce – April 2018;
- Performance Management – September 2018;
- Project Management – May 2018; and
- Transition and succession planning – September 2018

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in welcoming the opportunities afforded to young people through training schemes, reassurance was sought, and received, that the service was seeking to attract more young people into working within the service through youth trainee schemes and modern apprenticeships;
- in highlighting the drive towards localism, which had been identified as a principle within the Workforce Plan, confirmation was sought, and received, that staff within the service would be retained within local areas;
- the Council required an agile and responsive workforce and for staff to understand the need to meet Member and public requirements on service delivery and customer care. Concern was expressed however regarding the length of time it could take staff to respond to enquiries from customers. In response, it was explained that staff working remotely might not be able to respond to enquiries whilst they were out of the office; However, in recognition of the importance of responding to customer enquiries promptly, the service had introduced a help desk function to deal with initial enquiries; and
- requests were made for the following information:-
 - Gender balance split in the workforce figures;
 - The number of agency staff currently working within the service;
 - Figures providing a breakdown of the age groups within the workforce.

The Committee otherwise **APPROVED** the Development and Infrastructure Service Workforce Plan 2017 - 2021.

9. **Economy and Regeneration Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Eaconamaidh agus Ath-nuadhachadh**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/06/17 dated 31 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Chair referred to the opportunities presented by the large numbers of visitors to the Highlands;
- the Council Leader had brought the problems associated with the North Coast 500 to the attention of the Scottish Government and, although these problems did not over-ride the considerable benefits of the route designation, the supporting infrastructure required to be developed accordingly. Progress with tourism hubs for Wester Ross was slow;
- information was sought on the success of Business Gateway beneficiaries from the previous 5-10 years;
- the regional partnership was welcomed but its membership would benefit from a refresh; and
- an update was sought on the employment status of the youth trainees. In response, the Committee was informed that the scheme was a critical input into young people's development and that further analysis would be required to track their progress.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the report and the key developments highlighted during quarter 2 and emerging activity;
- ii. **AGREED** to a refocused Economic Forum to act as the Regional Partnership for Highland to drive forward co-ordinated and focused action on common priorities for the Highland economy; and
- iii. **AGREED** that information be sought on previous business gateway outcomes and consideration given to its inclusion in the Members' newsletter.

10. Climate Change Atharrachadh Aimsir

Items 10i, 10ii and 10iii were considered jointly and comments are detailed under 10ii.

- i. **Annual Report under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2016/17**
Aithisg Bhliadhnail fo Dhleastanasan Atharrachadh Aimsir nam Buidhnean Poblach 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/07/17 dated 19 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **AGREED** that the 2016/17 report be submitted as part of the mandatory reporting process under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties.

- ii. **Annual Progress Report on the Carbon Management Plan 2016/17**
Aithisg Adhartais Bhliadhnail mun Phlana Rianachd Càrboin 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/08/17 dated 19 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Prior to introducing the report, two small errors were highlighted: the reference in paragraph 2.1 should be to paragraph 5.1, and reference in paragraph 3.4 should be to paragraph 3.6.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Chair welcomed the various office rationalisation projects that were being undertaken;
- the importance of raising awareness of environmental issues and working to change behaviour was emphasised, as was the urgency of the situation. The waste strategy in particular required focus;
- reference was made to the importance of spending to save, as well as the financial savings that could be achieved over time through relatively small changes in behaviour and/or infrastructure;
- in relation to water bills, an update with corrected information would be provided to the Committee in due course;
- in relation to the anticipated annual carbon savings from all projects implemented by the organisation in the year ahead, information was sought, and provided, on when the financial out-turn for these would be available;
- information was sought on the development of a Unified Communications video-conferencing link between Golspie and Kyle of Lochalsh;
- information having been sought on the maintenance of the electric vehicle charging points, it was explained that HiTrans was putting together a Highland-wide strategy and, as technology improved, charging points were becoming more reliable. Information would be provided outwith the meeting on the charging point at Achnasheen that had been agreed in 2016 but was not yet in place;
- reference was made to the need to reduce excessive packaging, with direct lobbying of specific companies suggested;
- given the level of detail within the reports it would be helpful for concise 'headline' facts to be summarised and publicised in a Press release;
- Members were encouraged to sign up to the Green Ambassador Campaign; and
- consideration should be given in future to including procurement in the Carbon Management Plan.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the following remedial action to improve performance and to refocus on areas where emissions and costs were highest and increasing:-
 - a programme of measures, as detailed at para 3.1 of the report, to be rolled out to expedite progress towards meeting targets set out in the CMP in 2017/18;
 - revision and update of the Carbon Management Plan to set out a carbon reduction pathway through to 2023, taking in to account the Council's new programme plan and Scottish Government ambition as detailed in the new Climate Change Bill;
- ii. to issue a Press Release highlighting the progress the Council had made in carbon reduction and to promote public awareness of climate change; and

- iii. to encourage Members to sign up to the Green Ambassador Campaign.

iii. **Carbon CLEVER Capital Budget**
Cuibhreann Calpa Chàrboin CHIALLAICH

There had been circulated Report No. EDI/09/17 dated 19 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **NOTED** spend in 2016/17 and **AGREED** the proposals for spend in 2017/18.

11. **European Engagement**
Com-pàirteachas Eòrpach

There had been circulated Report No EDI/10/17 dated 23 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- with regard to the lack of clarity in relation to Brexit negotiations, especially concerning workforce planning given the high percentage of Highland businesses relying on migrant workers, the Chair was asked to write to the UK Government expressing the concerns of the Highland Council in relation to the region's reliance on migrant workers from the European Union. It was suggested that Local Authorities in the North of Scotland work together to ensure positive outcomes for all. Concern was expressed at the numbers of migrant workers that had indicated an intention to leave the UK and not return;
- reference was made to the Scottish Government's recognition of local needs, specifically the recent contribution of £6m towards the needs of rural tourism;
- there had been various valuable projects that had received LEADER or European Maritime and Fisheries Fund monies and action was urged to ensure projects were found for any remaining funds; and
- information having been sought on 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City', a report was due to be presented to the next meeting of the committee.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the European work currently undertaken by the Council and how it works collaboratively with other partners through the Highlands and Islands European Partnership;
- ii. **NOTED** the potential impacts on Highland and the Highland Council that may arise as a result of the UK decision to leave the EU;
- iii. **AGREED** to endorse the approach to continuing the Council's engagement as described in paragraph 5.4 of the report; and
- iv. **AGREED** the Chair write to the UK Government expressing the concerns of the Highland Council in relation to the region's reliance on migrant workers from the European Union.

**12. Inverness Airport Business Park Ltd – Unsecured Loan Stock
Pàirc Gnothachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis Eta – Stoc lasaid Neo-ghlaiste**

There had been circulated joint Report No EDI/11/17 dated 23 October 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Several Members referred to previous Council decisions that had been taken in relation to the Unsecured Loan Stock that had led to the current situation. Concern was expressed at the prospect of the loan stock remaining outstanding for a considerable period of time, particularly that repayment of the Council loan stock could be superseded by any further loans taken out by the company, and further information was sought on actions that could be taken to remedy this, with various suggestions being proposed including taking legal advice to clarify options to recover the amount due. The Director and various Members referred to the history of the project and the reasons for the recommendation in the report, the details of which were documented in the report.

Following further discussion, Members remained concerned about the outstanding loan stock and the lack of certainty around the timescales for repayment and requested the matter be further considered by the Council's Legal Services to establish whether any further actions could be taken to pursue the repayment of the loan stock, this to be reported back at to the February or May Committee meeting in 2018.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the assessment of Inverness Airport Business Park Ltd's 2016/17 Annual Accounts and the implications for repayment of the Council's Outstanding Loan Stock; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a report be brought to the Committee meeting in February or May 2018 updating Members with officer investigations as to the position on recovering the repayment of the Council's Outstanding Loan Stock.

**13. Inverness Business Improvement District
Raon Leasachadh Gnothachais Inbhir Nis**

Declaration of Interest

Mrs H Carmichael declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of the Board of Inverness Business Improvement District 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 EDI/12/17 dated 20 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the assessment made in Appendix 1 of the report relative to the draft Inverness BID Proposal and **AGREED** not to exercise the Council's right of veto, subject to the final BID proposal not materially affecting the assessment made.

The Committee further **AGREED** that if, upon receipt of the final BID Business Plan, it was considered that changes had been made which affected the assessment made in Appendix 1 of the report, authority be delegated to the Director of Development and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair of EDI Committee to seek the necessary amendments to the final BID proposal, failing which, a further report would be brought to Council on 14 December 2017.

**14. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Limited
Coimhearsnachd Tuathanas Gaoithe na Beinne Tarsainn Eta**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/13/17 dated 12 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Following a query in relation to what time limits were in place for communities to spend their funds, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the activities of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Limited; and
- ii. **AGREED** to accept, on behalf of The Highland Council, the Financial Statement of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Limited for the year ending 31 March 2017.

**15. Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance
Dreachd Iùl Leasachail mu Thabhartasan Luchd-leasachaidh**

Declaration of Interest

Mrs L MacDonald declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds that she owned an area of land in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and left the Chamber during discussion of the item.

There had been circulated Report No EDI/14/17 dated 25 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Chair highlighted the value of the Policy Development Group having had input into the development of the guidance;
- with reference to a proposal stating 'small scale residential development of 1-3 homes will receive a discount to reflect economies of scale and the need to maintain development viability; these discounts range from 70-80%,' concern was expressed that 70-80% might be too high and that consideration be given to discounts for social housing. It was clarified these figures had been benchmarked against other Local Authorities and that social housing contributions formed part of the consultation;
- information was sought, and provided, on the possibility of seeking developer contributions from small hydro schemes; and
- it was pointed out that significant levels of public art contributions were being sought from the new justice centre and the prison but not from smaller residential schemes.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance at Appendix 1 for consultation; and
- ii. **NOTED** that, from the point of approval by Committee, the Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance was a material consideration for the determination of planning applications.

The Committee broke for lunch from 1.05pm until 1.45pm

16. Strategic Housing Investment Tasgadh Ro-innleachdail Taigheadais

Declarations of Interest

Mrs L MacDonald declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds that she owned an area of land within the Highland Strategic Housing Investment Plan and left the room during discussion of the item.

Mrs T Robertson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Highland Housing Alliance 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 EDI/15/17 dated 31 October 2017 by the Director Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- regarding the Mid-market Rent Programme and the aim of the project to deliver high quality housing for young people under the City-Region deal, it was confirmed that all housing provided by the Council was of high-quality and that this aim reflected the Council's submission to the Scottish Government to offer young people attractive, affordable housing in the Highlands and encourage them to stay in the region;
- whilst it was suggested that rural areas should receive a greater allocation of funding for housing to retain young people, the allocation of funding investment in each housing market area statistical had reflected the evidence received from the Highland's Housing Need and Demand Assessment. Members were advised that if there were any communities with specific requirements, a more detailed housing needs assessment could be undertaken and any evidence collated could be used to justify to the Scottish Government a need for increased housing resources within these areas;
- regarding the potential for some sites to fall out of the indicative investment programme, it was highlighted that many of the projects included within the programme were at the initial feasibility stage and that analysis at a future stage might identify potential issues such as infrastructure;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that whilst there was an opportunity to seek more funding from the Scottish Government for disabled access housing, this would be on the basis that funding would mirror the Council's investment up to a maximum of 44%; and

- regarding the potential to save money through pre-fabricated buildings, attention was drawn to the “FIT Home” design pilot scheme currently being undertaken by Albyn Housing Society in Alness. Depending on its success, there was potential for the scheme to be introduced into other areas within the Highlands.

The Committee **APPROVED**:-

- i. the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, as submitted to the Scottish Government in draft form, included within Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. the indicative investment programme, included within Appendix 2;
- iii. that exceptional cost Council house build projects be agreed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure, in consultation with Local Members, the Director of Corporate Resources and the Chair of Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee;
- iv. the use of prudential borrowing to support mid-market developments identified within the SHIP on the basis that individual projects would be subject to approval of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee; and
- v. funding of £1,700,000, utilising the Council’s ability to access prudential borrowing, be loaned to the Highland Housing Alliance, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Director of Corporate Resources, to fund Mid-market rent housing in Drumnadrochit and Inverness.

17. Property Management Policy Poileasaidh Rianachd Cuid-seilbhe

There had been circulated Report No EDI/16/17 dated 16 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, confirmation was sought, and received that revenue maintenance of school estates was included within the Policy

The Committee **APPROVED** the adoption of the Property Management Policy.

18. Shopfront Design Guide: Planning Guidance (Consultation Draft) Iùl Dealbhaidh Aghaidh-bhùithtean: Stiùireadh Dealbhaidh (Dreachd Chochomhairle)

There had been circulated Report No EDI/17/17 dated 24 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in highlighting the importance of signs and signals within the built environment, concern was expressed at the lack of consistency in design. It was important to ensure that both visitors and local people shopping were comfortable within the surrounding built environment;
- the importance of the Guidance to the development of an environment within the city centre that was economically sustainable was emphasised;
- in welcoming the Guidance, the improvements to shop frontages in Nairn, following the introduction of a shop front scheme, was highlighted;

- whilst a request was made for a report to be brought to the Nairnshire Committee to give Local Members the opportunity to put their views forward to the consultation, the Chair suggested that this might be more appropriate for discussion at a Ward Business Meeting; and
- in highlighting the Dingwall Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and the efforts made by local business to make their streets more vibrant, it was emphasised that enforcement of the Guidance was required within local conservation areas to prevent shop and home owners installing signage and windows that did not reflect the surrounding built environment.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Shopfront Design Guide: Planning Guidance for public release and 6 week consultation.

19. Community Services Revenue Budget 2017/18 – Monitoring to 30 September 2017
Buidseat Teachd-a-steach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd 2017/18 – Sgrùdadh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/18/17 dated 18 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- by bringing in the Public Convenience Service, as well as grounds maintenance, in-house over £1m in savings had been achieved and the staff responsible were commended;
- information was sought as to how many of the authority's public conveniences had introduced charges and it was stated this information would be forwarded to Members. In addition, counters had been introduced to some public conveniences and it was explained that this was to establish if it was feasible to introduce charges;
- the £400k shortfall on the car parking budget was as a result of setting an over-ambitious target in previous years. In this regard, referring to the income from decriminalised parking enforcement, clarification was sought as to how this would be presented for monitoring purposes in future;
- the introduction of parking charges had been resisted in rural areas but Members in the Cromarty Firth Ward had explored a possible solution which, it was suggested, should be considered by the Redesign Board; and
- in response to a question as to what percentage of sodium street lights had been replaced with LED lanterns, it was stated that this information would be forwarded to Councillor MacLeod.

The Committee **APPROVED** the revenue budget monitoring position for the period from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

20. Community Services Performance Report
Aithisg Coileanaidh nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No EDI/19/17 dated 31 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

Concern was raised that complaints made to the Service Point regarding matters such as potholes and street lights were not being picked up by

Community Services timeously. This might be as a result of the way issues were labelled/titled by the CRM system and a review of the process was required.

The Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

**21. Community Services Workforce Plan
Plana Sgioba-obrach nan Seirbheisean Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No EDI/20/17 dated 16 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The workforce Plan contained a lot of information and there was merit in providing Community Councils with a link to the report, particularly highlighting the good work being done by the Service.

The Committee **NOTED** the Community Services Workforce Plan 2017-2021.

**22. Transport Team Re-structure
Ath-structar Sgioba na Còmhdhalach**

Declaration of Interest

Mr A Henderson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of HITRANS 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.

There had been circulated Report No EDI/21/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members welcomed the taking back, in-house, of the timetable production from HiTrans and suggested that, with the streamlining of the service, other aspects might also be considered for returning back to the Service. The Team's processes was to be the subject of a LEAN review and it was hoped that this would consider if the considerable amount of monitoring which the Team undertook was necessary. Looking to the future, community engagement would be increasingly important and, together with a reduction in monitoring and the addition of 2.5 FTE posts, this would enable the Team to continue to develop and implement community transport schemes by working with community transport providers and partners such as HiTrans.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the proposed structure for the Transport Services Team in Appendix 2; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the recommendation from the Redesign Board to transfer the budget and responsibility for home-to-school transport from Care and Learning to Community Services was being implemented and that a Service Level Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding was being developed to support this.

23. Update on Development of Waste Management Strategy for The Highland Council
Cunntas às Ùr mu Leasachadh Ro-innleachd Rianachd Sgudail airson Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No EDI/22/17 dated 8 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- this strategy had been reviewed during the term of the previous Council and appreciation was expressed to officers for their hard work. However, there would soon be a shortage of landfill sites in Scotland so robust action was now required to ensure that an Energy from Waste (EfW) Plant was included in the Capital Plan;
- the location of a EfW Plant would be contentious as would transportation but nevertheless these decisions had to be taken soon;
- there was an urgent need to reduce waste and to raise awareness of the issue but this was not the sole responsibility of the Council;
- a review for dealing with waste at viewpoints along the NC500 route was necessary; and
- a suggestion was made that income could be generated by advertising on wheelie bins but it was explained that wheelie bins were the property of the householder.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the work completed to date; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Final Business Case be presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 1 February 2018.

24. Road Structures – Annual Report
Structaran Rathaidean – Aithisg Bhliadhnail

There had been circulated Report No EDI/23/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of the Bridge Stock Condition Indicators in Highland;
- ii. **NOTED** the current position in Highland in relation to the number of structures inspections undertaken;
- iii. **APPROVED** the 2 year rolling programme for 2018-20 for the £350,000 Bridge Maintenance allocation of the Community Services Capital Programme; and
- iv. **APPROVED** the use of the current inspection regime while assessing the strategy for a move to a more risk-based approach by October 2018.

25. Standardisation of Procedures – Miscellaneous Licensing
Cunbhalachadh Mhodhan – Ceadachd Mheasgaichte

There had been circulated Report No EDI/24/17 dated 1 September 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the decision of the Director of Community Services to authorise implementation, from 1 September 2017, of the standard procedures set out in Appendix 2 of the report for the determination of licence applications made under the following legislation:-

- Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963
- Breeding of Dogs Acts 1973
- Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960
- Cinemas Act 1985
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- Guard Dogs Act 1975
- Performing Animals (Regulations) Act 1925
- Pet Animals Act 1951
- Riding Establishments Acts 1964 and 1970
- Theatres Act 1968
- Zoo Licensing Act 1981
- Licensing of Animal Dealers (Young Cats and Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations 2009

26. Local Bus and Concessionary Fares Consultations
Co-chomhairlean air Faraidhean Bhusaichean Ionadail agus Faraidhean le Lasachadh

There had been circulated Report No EDI/25/17 dated 25 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee **APPROVED** the draft responses as shown in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

27. Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Advisory Board – Minutes
Bòrd Comhairleachaidh Com-pàirteachas Ath-nuadhachaidh Ghallaibh agus Chataibh a Tuath – Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated Minutes of the meeting of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Advisory Board held on 21 March 2017.

Having expressed appreciation to the Partnership for their hard work and regular updates, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Minutes.

28. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC), which had been circulated separately, for:-

- i. North PAC – 1 August 2017;
- ii. South PAC – 8 August 2017;
- iii. North PAC – 12 September 2017; and
- iv. South PAC – 19 September 2017.

And **APPROVED** the Harbours Management Board Minutes of 8 September 2017.

29. 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 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

30. Property Transactions Monitoring Report
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. EDI/26/17 dated 16 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the monitoring statements for General Fund and Property Account transactions as approved by the Head of Development & Regeneration under delegated authority as well the Budgeted Sales for 2017/18 and Future Years Sales.

31. Housing Development Initiatives
Iomairtean Leasachaidh Taigheadais

Declaration of Interest

Mrs T Robertson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Highland Housing Alliance 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 to Members only Report No. EDI/27/17 dated 31 October 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in Talla nan Ros, King Street, Kingussie on Tuesday 14 November 2017 at 10.30 am

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Ms P Hadley
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager (Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey), Chief Executive's Office
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services
Mr L MacDonald, Housing Repairs Manager, Community Services
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Mr M Ferguson, Director of Planning and Rural Development, Cairngorms National Park Authority
Mr G Miles, Head of Planning and Communities, Cairngorms National Park Authority
Mr J Gibbs, Area Manager, Inner Moray Firth, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr R MacDougall, Station Manager, Service Delivery, Highland Central LSO Area, Scottish Fire and Rescue 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 B Lobban in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 3 and 5 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

**3. Cairngorms National Park Authority and Highlands and Islands Enterprise – Economic Development
Leasachadh Eaconamach Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a’ Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board but in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission remained in the room to participate in the discussion.

A presentation was undertaken at the meeting by Mr Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning and Rural Development, Cairngorms National Park Authority on economic development in relation to the park authority plan including the economic strategy and the spatial priority regarding the south Badenoch area.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- confirmation was sought and received that the Cairngorms National Park covered Highland, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Perth and Kinross, and Angus with Badenoch and Strathspey being the largest populated area;
- clarification was sought and received that the fact and figures provided from the Cairngorms National Park Authority Annual Review 2016/17 in relation to housing were taken from Council Tax records which did not include useable housing stock being used as businesses to avoid paying Council tax;
- it was queried if anything could be done to minimise the amount of affordable housing being resold;
- views were sought on the effect that the availability of housing in general was having on the local economy in relation to inward investment. In response it was confirmed that there was anecdotal evidence from businesses who were struggling to attract staff to the area that this was the case;
- there was doubt expressed regarding the likelihood of the Reaching 100% Programme (R100) being able to deliver superfast broadband access to every premises in the Badenoch and Strathspey area. In this regard, there was a need for the Council and the National Park to take a joint approach to support the consideration of alternative options;
- confirmation was sought and received that there was a plan to expand the forestry industry within the park area;
- the population in Highland had increased due to immigration rather than the native population. For that reason there was a need to be mindful of the possible impact of Brexit;
- caution was expressed regarding the graphics which were presented, specifically that people retiring to the area were not included in the total figures and reflected in the housing need, and in response it was suggested that a copy of the presentation by the and a link to the evidence report “Stimulating Housing Development in the Highlands and Islands” be provided; and
- it was important that the Council and the National Park met regularly, especially at officer level.

Thereafter, a presentation was undertaken by Mr James Gibbs, Area Manager, Inner Moray Firth, Highlands and Islands Enterprise on the opportunities and challenges relating to economic development in Badenoch and Strathspey during which he explained the resources deployed by HIE, set out the context of local issues and

projects and gave an overview of the priorities of HIE and links with partner organisations. He also provided an update in relation to the Cairngorm Mountain resort and ongoing discussions with the Council to replace the snow clearing equipment.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the last couple of years had been difficult due to a number of large firms with well paid jobs going out of business in the area;
- the local economy was highly dependent on the Cairngorm resort in winter and the report that discussions were being held with the Council regarding the replacement of snow clearing equipment was welcomed;
- in terms of availability of housing to attract business, there was a need to consider quality rental accommodation which would suit the transient nature of tourism industries;
- some concern was expressed regarding the increase in the percentage of affordable housing required which it was felt needed to be flexible to encourage developers to build;
- it was queried whether there was a way to encourage more direct involvement between High Schools and the UHI with the aim of producing a better educated workforce and in response it was offered that an invite be extended to Chris O'Neil, Principle of the UHI, to attend a future meeting to discuss this issue.

Having thanked officers for their presentations, the Committee **NOTED** the content of both presentations and **AGREED** that a copy of the presentation by the Cairngorms National Park Authority and a link to the evidence report "Stimulating Housing Development in the Highlands and Islands" be circulated to Members.

The Committee also **AGREED** that an invite be extended to Chris O'Neil, Principle of the UHI, to attend a future meeting to discuss the development of Higher Education and Further Education in the area.

4. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Performance Report for 2017/18** **Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/08/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During a summary of the report, Mr R MacDougall explained that the concern which was raised at a previous meeting regarding the current level of resources in relation to the development and expansion in the area had been reported to the Local Senior Officer who had confirmed that the current level of resources was reasonable but the situation would be monitored.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- It was important to monitor the effect on local services in future with regard to the transformation of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;
- It was queried whether there were any instances of stations in the area not being available due to low availability and in response it was confirmed that the

- best effort was made to maintain availability by working closely with employers and staff and being flexible with fire appliances to cover other stations; and
- the community engagement work to reduce the number of accidental dwelling house fires was commended.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the Performance Report.

5. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2017 gu 30 Sultain 2017

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council house tenant but in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission remained in the room to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/17 dated 31 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- It was queried whether the increase in rent arrears was as a result of Universal Credit and in response it was confirmed that staff were working hard to contact tenants on Universal Credit in order to make suitable arrangements for the payment of rent;
- concern was expressed regarding seasonal workers who could potentially be made homeless if accommodation was tied to the job;
- clarification was sought and received that the reason for the delay in the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs was due to situations where a work order was kept open for multiple visits for example in relation to pest control or to order materials;
- confirmation was sought and received that the number of homeless presentations was the number of applications received which could be for more than one individual;
- further information was sought in relation to cases of homelessness and in response it was offered to provide information on the reasons and outcomes of homeless presentations;
- the performance for rent arrears in the area had slipped slightly but was still reasonable good comparative to other areas in Highland however there was concern regarding the future impact of Universal Credit;
- in relation to tenants being evicted due rent arrears, confirmation was sought and received that the Council were notified by landlords, including Albyn Housing, who had a duty to advise of any potential homelessness;
- confirmation was sought and received that the Council would instruct a 'drain down' to prevent damage from cold weather if informed about an empty property then;
- an update on the progress being made to address the issues relating to biomass heating systems was sought and in response it was explained that the maintenance of biomass boilers required specialist training and would be undertaken by a number of local sub-contractors and assisted by staff based in Inverness and Lochaber; and
- it was queried whether the maintenance of biomass boilers should be carried out in-house given the number of tenants who now had the system installed and

in response confirmed that officers would attend a future ward business meeting to present more detail on the maintenance plan for biomass boilers.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017;
- ii. **AGREED** that further information on the reasons and outcomes of homelessness presentations be circulated to Members; and
- iii. **NOTED** that officers would attend a future ward business meeting to present more detail on the maintenance plan for biomass boilers.

6. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for noting Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 5 September 2017, which were approved by the Council on 26 October 2017 – which were **NOTED**.

In relation to item 7 Winter Maintenance Plan for 2017/18, concern was expressed that the Council's snow blower would now not be replaced despite it being confirmed at the previous meeting that consideration was being undertaken to do so.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm

**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, 15 November 2017 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr A Baxter	Mr D Louden
Mr R Bremner	Mrs L MacDonald (substitute)
Mr J Bruce	Mr R MacDonald
Mrs C Caddick	Mrs D Mackay
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Mackay (substitute)
Dr I Cockburn	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr L Fraser	Mr S MacKie
Mr R Gale	Mr M Reiss
Mr A Henderson (substitute)	Mr K Rosie
Mr R Laird	Mr C Smith (substitute)
Mr B Lobban	Mr B Thompson

Non-Member also Present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mr J Gray
Mr K Gowans	Mr A Jarvie

Officials in attendance:

Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources
 Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Corporate Resources Service
 Ms L Thornton, Team Leader, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr C Innes, Head of Commercial and Procurement Shared Services, Corporate Resources Service
 Ms S Beswick, Principal Contracts Officer, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
 Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service
 Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
 Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms K Lackie, Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
 Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
 Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

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 Baxter in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs M Davidson, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr C MacLeod, Ms L Munro, Mr P Saggors and Mrs C Wilson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Good News Stories Naidheachdan Matha

Having expressed congratulations, the Committee **NOTED** that:-

- Derek Yule had recently been appointed as Depute Chief Executive in addition to his role as Director of Corporate Resources;
- Linda Thornton, Team Leader in the Corporate Resources Service, had recently graduated with a Batchelor of Arts in Business and Management, studied through the UHI; and
- The Highland Council Learning and Development Team had won the SQA Life Long Learning Centre Award (Highly Commended) for 2017.

4. Membership of Sub-Committees, Working Groups, etc Ballrachd Fho-chomataidhean, Bhuidhnean-obrach, is eile

The Committee **AGREED** that:-

- i. Mrs L MacDonald replaced Mr C MacLeod on the Appeals Committee;
- ii. Mr R Bremner replaced Ms M Smith on the Employment Release Sub-Committee; and
- iii. Mr D Louden replaced Ms M Smith on the Head of Service Recruitment Panel and Non-Domestic Rates Appeals Committee.

CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE CHÙRAIM AGUS AN IONNSACHAIDH

5. Gaelic Update Fios às Ùr mun Ghàidhlig

(a) Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group

There had been circulated Report No RES/53a/17 dated 14 November 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

In introducing the report the Chair explained that the Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group was a cross party group with representatives from all areas of the Highland Council and with the purpose of ensuring engagement with the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan which was currently with Bòrd na Gàidhlig for ratification. Furthermore, he confirmed that once the Group was established it would seek representation from third sector partners.

In discussion, commendation was expressed for the work being undertaken by the Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group in terms of contributing to the Highland Council Programme and also in preparation for the next census in 2021.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group:-

- i. met on a quarterly basis and that it reported bi-annually to the Corporate Resources Committee;
- ii. continued to operate both at strategic and corporate level in relation to all aspects of Gaelic, including cultural development, across all services; and
- iii. liaised, when necessary, with external agencies, other Local Authorities and the Scottish Government.

(b) The Lochaber Royal National Mòd 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/53b/17 dated 8 November 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- recognition was given to the contribution made by Highland Council staff towards the hugely successful Royal National Mòd which was recently held in Lochaber and had the highest number of competitors entering competitions recorded to date;
- the economic benefit to the local area was significant and would be reported in full to a future meeting of the Committee following the publication of the economic impact study commissioned by An Comunn Gàidhealach; and
- due to the success of the Royal National Mòd in Lochaber the Highland Council was in a strong position to attract future events to the area beyond 2020.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the positive impact of the Royal National Mòd in the Lochaber area; and
- ii. **APPROVED** early work on securing the Royal National Mòd to the Highland Council area and beyond 2020.

**FINANCIAL MONITORING
SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL**

**6. Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2017
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Corporra gu 30 Sultain 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/54/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- concern was expressed regarding unallocated savings which were not achieved and repeatedly carried forward into the next financial year;

- concern was expressed that vacancy management was being used too much as a savings tool and it was suggested that departments, with the exception of Education where teachers were needed, should consider a different approach when vacancies arose. In this regard, it was confirmed that workforce plans were very important for future planning and similar concerns had been discussed at the Administration Budget Working Group;
- for future financial reports an indication was sought of whether the actual spend to date was appropriate in terms of the overall budget which was essential to provide Members with confidence and understanding of the spend to date and whether an underspend or overspend was likely at the year end;
- a review of how the Care and Learning budget was projected was requested so that it was better planned to mitigate against the various pressures which arose every year;
- there was an issue regarding how the Council budgeted for demand led services such as looked after children, homelessness and income generation relating to car parking charges, which should be considered more realistically in terms of what the savings could be achieved; and
- the work being undertaken relating to the re-design of the Council included a peer review of car parking charges cross Highland which took into account what could realistically be charged without affecting income.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets as at 30 September 2017 and the estimated year end forecast;
- ii. **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year; and
- iii. **APPROVED** the mid-year budget virements as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report.

7. **Corporate Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September 2017** **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Corporra gu 30 Sultain 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/55/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- the Administration Budget Working Group had proposed to significantly change the approach for budget setting in that the Capital Programme would be presented to Members for determination at the same time as the revenue budget at the annual budget setting meeting in February;
- in relation to Government Grant Income, reassurance was sought and received that the full amount of funding was expected to be received by the year end;
- the decision to consider the capital and revenue budgets together was welcomed and responding to a request assurance was provided that the Administration would share details of the capital programme and revenue budget with the Opposition at the earliest opportunity;
- the future role of slippage in the capital budget was queried and in response it was explained that deliverability of the programme was a key factor being scrutinised to avoid the need for slippage; and
- clarification was sought of when the Sale of Council House Receipts

would become zero as far as the Council was concerned.

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

8. Finance Service and Welfare Budget Revenue Monitoring to 30 September 2017

Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Buidseat Seirbheis an Ionmhais agus Sochair gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/56/17 dated 2 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- confirmation was sought and received that the expected level of Other Income would be achieved by the year end;
- the year end variance column of the monitoring reports showed if the Finance Service expected any changes during the year;
- an explanation was sought regarding the historical bank charges which were included in the expected overspend in the Directorate Section; and
- an update was sought on the progress of achieving the savings proposal in relation to Procurement which it was confirmed would be achieved but not within the current year and more detail would be provided during the agenda item on procurement later on in the meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the Revenue Monitoring position for the period to 30 September 2017 and **AGREED** that a detailed explanation of the historical bank charges be circulated to all Members.

9. Corporate Development Service Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2017

Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis an Leasachaidh Chorpóra gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/57/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- an explanation was sought and received regarding the significant increase of known pressures in the Licensing budget which was a good example of where a budget had carried higher levels of income and had not been subsequently adjusted when setting the budget in future and was due to the service having limited control over fees which were set nationally and was therefore based on assumptions about demand; and
- clarification was sought and received that the actual expenditure to date of the budget for ICT Services was low due to a timing issue relating to payment of the external contractor but that it was anticipated that the annual budget would be fully spent.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Development Service

- budget as at 30 September 2017; and
- ii. **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

10. Corporate Development Service Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seirbheis an Leasachaidh Chorporra gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/58/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- explanation was sought and received that the increase in the total project budget for ICT Reprovision was due to changes in the exchange rate;
- confirmation was sought and received that the Chromebooks were being purchased directly by the Council and that the ICT Contract with Wipro was priced in Pound sterling with an allowance for annual inflation;
- concern was expressed regarding the additional expenditure relating to the ICT Transitions Project and whether this would be a reoccurring theme;
- it was queried whether an alternative to the Chromebook would be considered if the cost continued to increase due to further adverse variations to the exchange rate. In response, it was explained that a strategy to deliver the Chromebooks had been agreed and there was not any current proposals to reconsider; and
- given the implications on the rollout of the Chromebooks and the risk of the exchange rate it was suggested that consideration be given to moving to a different foreign exchange model such as hedging.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the financial position of the Corporate Development Service capital budget as at 30 September 2017; and
- ii. that consideration be given to moving to a different foreign exchange model.

11. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 September 2017
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball gu 30 Ògmhios 2017

There had been circulated Report No RES/59/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee:-

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

**12. Chief Executive's Office Capital Monitoring Report to 30 September 2017
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir gu 30 Ògmhios 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/60/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Chief Executive.

In discussion, an indication was sought regarding the future of the Capital Discretionary Fund in terms of whether it would change, how it would be topped up every year and what it aimed to achieve. In response, it was explained that the Budget Working Group had not yet made a decision on this but ultimately this would be a decision for Members at the budget setting meeting on 15 February 2018.

The Committee **AGREED** the monitoring position for the Chief Executive's Office capital budget as at 30 September 2017.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE
SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORA**

**13. Treasury Management
Rianachd Ionmhais**

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/61/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, confirmation was sought and received that work was being undertaken to consider how the Capital Programme would be affected by borrowing in relation to the impact of the recent increase in interest rates.

The Committee **NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions as circulated.

**(b) Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2017/18
Aithisg Stiùiridh Meadhan-Bliadhna an Ionmhais 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/62/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2017/18;
- ii. **NOTED** the pending reclassification of the Council to "retail" status under the Markets in Financial Instrument Directive 2014/65 MiFID II; and
- iii. **AGREED** the Council complete the required documentation to "opt up" to "professional" status in order to ensure it could continue to implement an effective investment strategy.

**14. Performance Reports
Aithisgean Coileanaidh**

**(a) Finance Service and Corporate Development Service Quarterly Performance Report
Aithisg Dèanadais Ràitheil Seirbheis an Ionmhais**

There had been circulated Report No RES/63/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- an explanation was sought and provided in relation to the improvement in the Council Tax in-year collection rates relative to the position reported earlier in the meeting for Council Tax collected to date in financial year 2017/18; and
- clarification was sought and provided in relation to the fact the cost to the Council associated with the collection of outstanding Business Improvement District (BID) Levies was negligible.

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

**(b) Annual Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing (OHSW) Report 2016-17
Aithisg Bhladhnaill Slàinte agus Soirbheas Slàinte Dreuchdail 2016-17**

There had been circulated Report No RES/64/17 dated 2 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the downward trend in relation to both accident rates and working days lost was encouraging;
- confirmation was sought and provided that the increase in the number of incidents involving violence towards teachers mainly reflected the introduction of a new reporting system into schools;
- the OHSW Team be congratulated on the recent LEAN review of occupational health which it was suggested would result in an improved and more effective service being delivered to the Council by its occupational health provider, to the benefit of both managers and staff; and
- the significant increase in the number of management referrals to occupational health for mental health issues should be interpreted as a positive development in that it was easier for staff who were suffering from poor mental health to come forward to seek support.

Thereafter, reference was made a covenant being developed by the Mikeysline Charity by which employers in the Highlands would be invited to agree to support employees suffering from mental health issues to come forward and receive support, and for employees also to support colleagues.

In discussion, Members expressed the view that it was important the Council signed up to the covenant and made a positive statement that it supported the work of Mikeysline, and in addition agreed to display the charity's awareness literature and posters in Council buildings.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the achievements and performance for 2016/17; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the OHSW Annual Report.

15. Commercial and Procurement Shared Service Seirbheis Cho-roinnte Mhalairteach agus Solair

(a) Commercial & Procurement Shared Services Savings Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Shàbhaidhean Seirbheisean Co-roinnte Malairteach agus Solair

There had been circulated Report No RES/65/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, clarification was sought and provided in relation to the overall savings target for the Service in the current financial year and that it was anticipated the shortfall in the savings shown to date would be met going forward.

Thereafter, reference was made to the importance of training as being key in ensuring staff co-operation and compliance with the new processes and systems, and also in relation to the challenges associated with monitoring compliance going forward.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the position on procurement related savings;
- ii. progress to date and savings achieved; and
- iii. the role of the Commercial and Procurement Shared Services enabling the delivery of Service savings.

(b) Joint Procurement Strategy Ro-innleachd Solair nan Seirbheisean Co-roinnte

There had been circulated Report No RES/66/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- clarification was sought and provided that the Key Performance Indicator to be developed in relation to the percentage of spend with local businesses would be provided both for the Council and also across the three local authorities; in addition it was noted that benchmark information would also be provided in respect of performance compared to other authorities across Scotland;
- an explanation was sought in regard to the statement within the Strategy that bidders would be asked to confirm their position on the living wage across four options on the basis it was suggested this should be a mandatory requirement, and also at the lack of

reference to the requirement of bidders to recognise trade unions; the Head of Commercial and Procurement Shared Services provided an assurance that these points would be reflected in how contracts were specified going forward within the terms of the relevant regulations; and

- a prime focus of the Strategy should be on growing and developing the opportunities for small local suppliers based in the Highlands.

The Committee:-

- APPROVED** the Joint Procurement Strategy on behalf of The Highland Council for 2017-2022; and
- NOTED** that the Strategy would be published once approved by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils.

**(c) Contract Standing Orders
Òrdughan Seasmhach Cunraidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/67/17 dated 2 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **APPROVED** the adoption and implementation of the revised Contract Standing Orders.

**16. ICT Projects Update
Cunntas às Ùr mu Phròiseactan ICT**

There had been circulated Report No RES/68/17 dated 2 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

The ICT Operations Manager provided an update to the report during which he confirmed that the transition to SWAN had now been completed and the project was moving towards closure. In response to the Chair, he advised it was anticipated confirmation would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee that the additional costs to the Council incurred as a result of the delay in the roll out of SWAN had been recovered.

Thereafter, clarification was sought and provided that the upgrade of internet explorer had been necessary on the grounds that the previous version did not meet data security standards, and that this would involve both staff input from both the Council and Wipro.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**17. Technology Transformation Programme and Network Refresh
Ùrachadh Prògram agus Lìonra Cruth-atharrachaidh Teicneòlais**

There had been circulated Report No RES/69/17 dated 2 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- confirmation was sought and provided that the Members in Ward 8: Dingwall and Seaforth, would be provided with an update on the progress reported in respect of network refresh in their area;

- clarification was sought and provided in regard to the total number of devices which would be rolled out as part of the Transformation Programme; and
- it was noted there were no issues with server capacity in relation to the additional requirements for software and hardware in respect of the Programme.

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

**18. Corporate Resources Workforce Planning Report 2017-2021
Aithisg Dhealbhaidh Sgioba-obrach nan Goireasan Corporra 2017-2021**

There had been circulated Report No RES/70/17 dated 2 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was suggested that workforce planning was critical in the context of new technologies, budgetary constraints, the redesign of the Council, changing staff roles and following recent voluntary redundancy schemes;
- it was important to have the relevant data to support the development and delivery of the workforce plan over the next five years;
- the need to take a strategic approach to workforce planning across the Council to ensure there was flexibility in the ability to move staff between services;
- there should be a focus in particular on succession planning and also on learning and development, and also on ensuring that staff had the appropriate skills set to change jobs when required;
- in terms of the age profile of the Council's workforce, consideration be given to how to attract more younger people into the organisation;
- staff be commended on their work in the LEAN reviews which had been undertaken and which would deliver benefits for the Council going forward; and
- a point that at a recent staff briefing held in Lochaber, comments from staff had referred to the lack of awareness across the Council in relation to the skills sets of staff within the organisation; it was important therefore that workforce planning focused on ensuring that the right staff with the right skills were deployed in the right jobs.

The Committee **AGREED** the Corporate Resources Workforce Plan 2017 – 2021.

**19. Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) – Community Asset Transfer - Review Process
Achd Cumhachdachaidh nan Coimhearsnachdan (Alba) – Gluasad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd – Pròiseas Ath-sgrùdaidh**

Members were advised that the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) – Community Transfer – required the Council to consider requests from communities for the transfer of land and buildings.

In this regard, requests which were recommended for approval would be considered by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

Where requests were refused, community bodies had a right to ask for a review of that decision within a timescale of six months. On that basis, it was proposed that a Review Panel comprising five Members (one Member from each political group) with Substitutes if necessary should be set up from within the membership of the Corporate Resources Committee.

It was also be noted that, following consideration and decision by the Review Panel, community bodies would still have a further right of appeal to Scottish Ministers.

The Committee **AGREED** the establishment of the Review Panel in relation to the Community Asset Transfer review process as detailed.

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE LEASACHADH AGUS BUN-STRUCTAIR

20. Highland LEADER Programme – Cashflow Finance Prògram LEADER na Gàidhealtachd – Ionmhas Sruth-airgid

There had been circulated Report No RES/71/17 dated 6 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- clarification was sought and provided that the uptake in relation to the loan finance element of the Programme would be as anticipated; and
- a request that Members be provided with details of the projects being supported by the Cairngorms National Park LEADER Programme in Ward 20: Badenoch and Strathspey.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the take up of loan finance through the Highland Council support scheme to date;
- ii. **AGREED** to amend the criteria for accessing Highland Council loan finance support as described in the report; and
- iii. **AGREED** that details of the projects in Ward 20: Badenoch and Strathspey, being supported through the Cairngorm National Park LEADER Programme, be included in the next update report to the Committee.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN

21. Commercial Board: Minutes of Meetings Bòrd Malairteach: Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 28 September 2017 and 9 November 2017.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes and **AGREED** the recommendations contained therein.

22. Minutes of Meetings
Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan

The Committee **APPROVED** the following Minutes of Meetings:-

- i. Employment Release Sub-Committee held on 28 September 2017;
- ii. Appeals Committee held on 20 September, 21 September and 26 September 2017;
- iii. Central Safety Committee held on 8 September and 2 November 2017;
- iv. Non Domestic Rates Appeals Committee held on 11 October 2017; and
- v. Staff Partnership Forum held on 2 November 2017.

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm.

**The Highland Council
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick, on Tuesday, 21 November 2017 at 10.00am.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr D Mackay
Mr W Mackay
Mr S Mackie

Mr M Reiss
Mr A Sinclair
Ms N Sinclair

Officials in attendance:

Mr A Macmanus, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services
Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services
Mr G Mackenzie, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager M Loynd, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**1. Apologies for Absence
Liesgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr K Rosie.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report 2017-18
Aithisg Dèanadais Sgìreil 2017-18 na Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No CC/15/17 dated 9 November 2017 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In addition to the report, the Local Senior Officer gave a presentation on the consultation that was about to commence on Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- an explanation was sought in regard to the proposal to refine the station footprint as part of the transformation and the potential implications for stations in Caithness. It was confirmed this was mainly an issue for the central belt and that the station footprint in the Highlands was considered to be one of the Service's strengths;
- it would be helpful if the Service used plain English in respect of the consultation;

- the proposals to use different technologies and mid-sized vehicles and to introduce more flexible crewing models be supported on the basis this would help improve availability within the area;
- clarification was sought and provided in relation to the circumstances whereby the Service would assist NHS Highland in responding to incidents involving uninjured falls where no medical response was required;
- in a climate of reductions in public sector funding, the Council was of the view that sharing Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Scottish Ambulance Service control rooms would save money going forward;
- the potential to offer more training courses locally as a measure to address the recruitment challenges at some stations on the basis the feedback being received was that potential recruits were reluctant to give up the time involved in attending courses outwith the area;
- a point in regard to whether the Service planned to organise a Hi-Fires event in the area, reference being made to the success of the previous event held in Thurso and the importance of engaging with young people as potential future recruits. The Local Senior Officer confirmed he would discuss this matter with the Station Manager and report back to Members;
- it was important that pressure continued to be applied to have Thurso Fire Station upgraded as a priority and that Members concerns on this matter once again be reported back to the Service;
- in response to a question, it was confirmed the main causes of fires in domestic dwellings were electrical and cooking related;
- in relation to prevention and awareness raising, clarification was sought and provided in relation to the strategy and media campaign undertaken by the Service over the festive period;
- an update was sought and provided in regard to two recent fatal fires in Caithness; and
- an explanation was also provided in relation to the work of the Service and in partnership to provide communities and those people who were vulnerable and difficult to reach with the appropriate advice and support, and the challenges in this regard.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report and the presentation on the consultation on Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation.

4. Thurso Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No CC/16/17 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- to allow for further Member scrutiny, it was requested that additional columns be included in the staffing table in future reports showing FTE posts advertised but not filled, and also in relation to the number of non-class committed teachers at each school;
- it was encouraging that staff had indicated they were content with the condition of the buildings at Thurso High School; however there were issues with security due to the lack of a perimeter fence and also safety in terms of the management of traffic through the School;

- in regard to the above and while it was recognised the Council's capital funding was limited, there may be the potential for more a modest and cheaper refurbishment to be carried out at the School;
- the staff be commended on the excellent ASN work being undertaken across the ASG;
- it was requested that further information be provided on Croileagan Inbhir Theorsa's funding to allow Members to consider any correlations that may exist between its budget, staffing levels and the outcome of assessments;
- it would be helpful if Members could be provided with a more detailed analysis of ASN provision across Caithness to assist in their consideration of the issues in the area;
- a point in regard to whether there was a plan or initiative to improve the uptake of free school meal entitlement at Thurso High School. The Education Quality Improvement Manager confirmed she would discuss this matter further with the Head Teacher;
- it was suggested the term free school meals carried stigma and was distinctive and out of date and there was a need for an entirely different approach to be taken to the provision of meals for all in schools and other establishments; and
- there was also an issue with pupils purchasing fast food meals outside the High School, including those pupils with an entitlement to a free school meal, and reference was made to potential issues in relation to the quality of school meals and social factors in this regard.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED**, following scrutiny the content of the report;
- ii. **AGREED** that additional columns be included in the staffing table in future reports showing FTE posts advertised but not filled, and also in relation to the number of non-class committed teachers at each school;
- iii. **AGREED** information be provided in relation to Croileagan Inbhir Theorsa's funding; and
- iv. **AGREED** that Members be circulated with a more detailed analysis in relation to ASN provision in Caithness

5. **Winter Maintenance Plan 2017-18** **Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh 2017-18**

There had been circulated Report No CC/17/17 dated 27 October 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, reference was made to the potential for Loch Street, Wick to be treated on the basis that the road could be extremely icy in winter and many of the residents living in the area were elderly. The Roads Operations Manager confirmed he would investigate this matter further.

Thereafter, reference was made to the issues and challenges around the lack of uptake of the Council's 'Winter Resilience' scheme by community councils in the area. It was confirmed the scheme was still 'live' and that applications from communities would be welcomed. In discussion, it was proposed that a press release be issued to raise awareness of the scheme in an effort to improve uptake in the area.

During further discussion, Members raised the following additional points:-

- the potential for road safety signs to be installed at Hill of Forss, Caithness in view of a recent incident in this location; and
- the potential to extend the principle of the winter resilience scheme to the summer months to assist volunteers to carry out works in communities. The Manager confirmed he would consider any such requests received in this regard.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Caithness Area, which includes the priority road lists and maps presented in Appendices B & C; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a press release be issued to raise awareness of the 'Winter Resilience' scheme in Caithness.

6. **Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017** **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 An Giblean 2017 to 30 An t-Sultainn 2017**

There had been circulated Report No CC/18/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- a request that Members be provided with a briefing paper on the main issues in regard to the bedsits at Strathy House, Thurso;
- clarification was sought and provided on the targets for new build housing in Caithness set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018-2023 which had been approved by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 8 November 2017;
- it was important the Housing Team and Members continued their discussions to develop a local housing strategy to address difficult to let properties and low housing demand in the area in the longer term;
- in regard to the above, it was suggested that in addition to considering new build and possible selective demolitions, it was important also to explore alternative options such as the potential for low demand properties to be adapted to meet the demand for certain sizes of properties or to upgrade properties so they were more attractive to potential tenants;
- the potential to allocate low demand properties to prospective tenants who may be on waiting lists in other areas in Highlands;
- the proactive and early intervention approach being taken by the Council in relation to rent arrears associated with universal credit be welcomed;
- clarification was sought and provided in respect of the process whereby the Council could apply for an alternative payment arrangement for some tenants so that the rent was paid directly to the local authority;
- a point in regard to whether the Service relied predominately on in house or external contractors for repairs, reference being made to a specific case where there had been a delay in the replacement of an external door at a property. The Principal Housing Officer advised that she would investigate this particular case and report back to Mr S Mackie on this matter;
- a request that the Repairs Manager be invited to discuss issues in respect of repairs and maintenance in Caithness in more detail; and

- a point in regard to the underlying trends in relation to homeless presentations on the basis there may be a perception locally that homelessness in Caithness was increasing. In response, it was confirmed that no overall increase in homelessness was being observed at the current time.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED**, following scrutiny the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017;
- ii. **AGREED** that Members be circulated with a briefing paper in relation to the bedsits in Strathy House, Thurso; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the Repairs Manager be invited to attend a future Ward Business Meeting to discuss issues in respect of repairs and maintenance in Caithness.

7. Minutes

Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** the Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 29 August 2017, which were approved by the Council on 7 September 2017.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 23 November 2017 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr R Laird	Mr C Fraser
Mr P Saggars	Mr L Fraser
Mr G Adam	Mr K Gowans
Mr R Balfour	Mr D Louden
Mr A Baxter	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr B Boyd	Mr S Mackie
Mr R Bremner (on VC)	Mr D Macpherson
Miss J Campbell	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr J McGillivray
Mr G Cruickshank	Mrs M Paterson
Mrs M Davidson	Ms M Smith

Non-Members also present:

Mrs J Barclay

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources
 Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning
 Mr S Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance
 Ms S Barrie, Programme Manager (Property)
 Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager
 Mrs S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager
 Ms E Johnston, Corporate Audit & Performance Manager
 Miss D Sutherland, Corporate Audit Manager
 Dr S Carr, Corporate Performance Manager
 Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager
 Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr A Ross, Senior Strategic Risk Management Consultant, Zurich Municipal

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

Mr R Laird in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie and Ms K Stephen.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 4(iii) - Mr D Louden and Mr R Bremner (both Non-Financial)

3. Review of Corporate Risk Register Ath-sgrudadh Clar Cunnairt Chroporra

There had been circulated Report No. AS/15/17 dated 30 October 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

In this connection, a Presentation was undertaken at the meeting by Mr A Ross, Senior Strategic Risk Management Consultant, Zurich Municipal, on Corporate Risk Management during which he highlighted the importance of various issues associated with the risk management process and the need for Elected Members and Officers to have different perspectives on this within the Council.

In this regard, it was confirmed that Elected Members had a crucial role in challenging both internal and external risks in relation to decision making, not least in terms of scrutinising the nature of controls in place and their effectiveness.

Above all, the Council had to ensure that it was 'risk aware' and that a culture of discussion, linked with openness and transparency, was encouraged at all times.

During discussion, clarification was sought as to why the following risks were now being removed from the Corporate Risk Register - THC 36 (if the Council does not address and manage the impact of changes arising from the Welfare Reform Act this will be to the detriment of our communities) and THC 41 (if communities do not develop the capacity to participate in services and become more resilient and/or the Council is unable to match their expectations, then the objectives of the Council's Programme and its budget assumptions will not be met).

In response, it was confirmed that THC 36 was currently the focus of work within Corporate Resources and the Service Risk Register would be reviewed in January. In this regard, mitigation of the effects of the Welfare Reform Act across the Highlands was a high priority and as such consideration would be given at that time as to whether this particular risk needed to be escalated from the Service Risk Register to the Corporate Risk Register.

In regard to THC 41, it was noted that this was currently being managed through the Redesign Board process and specifically through the measures being considered/implemented in relation to localism.

In regard to CR3.2 (Education Governance: We will lobby for positive changes to the proposals for Education Governance, including through the Northern Alliance and CoSLA), it was agreed that further consideration would be given to including more detail on what was considered to be a substantive future risk for the Council.

During further discussion, it was suggested that discussion should be undertaken with Senior Officers in terms of adding a risk to the Corporate Risk Register in relation to the changes anticipated within the Council over the next few years and the measures to be taken to ensure that a clear vision was in place for the future

delivery of services. In this respect, a focus on Capital Budget cost control on an ongoing basis would also be crucial.

In summary, the Chair confirmed that the focus on issues related to Corporate and Service Risk Registers was ongoing and as such any Member could raise additional issues of concern with him and with the Corporate Performance Manager at any time.

Thereafter, and having thanked Mr Ross for his attendance at the meeting, the Committee **NOTED** the refreshed Corporate Risk Register which had been provided as Appendix 1 to the report and the risk profile at Appendix 2.

The Committee also **NOTED** that six monthly reviews of the Corporate Risk Register would continue to be reported each March and September and that an Officer Group had been established on corporate risk management.

4. Internal Audit Reviews and Progress Report **Ath-bhreithneachaidhean In-sgrùdaidh agus Aithisg Adhartais**

There had been circulated Report No AS/16/17 dated 14 November 2017 by the Corporate Audit Manager which summarised the final reports issued since the date of the last meeting, together with details of work in progress and other information relevant to the operation of the Internal Audit Section.

At this point, it was noted that Mr Josh Gallimore, Trainee Auditor, had recently been awarded his Chartered Internal Auditor qualification and that this Certificate would be formally presented to him at a future meeting.

In relation to the work of the Internal Audit Section, it was noted that audit work had been undertaken on behalf of the Valuation Joint Board and for Western Isles Council, and for HiTRANS for the SPARA 2020 project.

In terms of Corporate Fraud activity, three new referrals had been received regarding potential misuse of staff resources, plant, materials and equipment and these investigations were ongoing, with the indications being that one of these was likely to be a significant investigation. In this regard, it was confirmed that if this pattern of referrals continued, it might impact on completion of the 2017/18 audit plan if it was necessary to divert audit staff from planned work to assist with fraud investigations. However, any such changes would be reported back to the Committee.

In addition to the Progress against the 2017/18 Audit Plan and Performance Information which had been provided within the report, and with specific reference to the performance information for Quarters 1 and 2, it was noted that the support of the Chief Executive in obtaining a timely response to draft audit reports had resulted in all being provided within the specified timescales and this was welcomed.

The final reports were then presented as follows:-

(i) Development & Infrastructure Service – Renewable Heat Incentive Income Scheme – follow-up (Full Assurance)

(No issues raised at the meeting).

(ii) Care & Learning/Development & Infrastructure Services – Cromarty Primary School – Review of Extension & Refurbishment Project (Limited Assurance)

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was noted that there had been a very difficult set of circumstances surrounding this project but lessons had been learned. It also had to be highlighted that this particular project pre-dated the very thorough review of project management processes which had subsequently been undertaken (and which had resulted in new procedures being implemented);
- in terms of the duty of care to get the best value for money, there was real concern about the level of overspend on this particular project and whether there could be similar situations elsewhere in the Highlands which had the potential to lead to cumulative deficiencies;
- the issues had been raised initially by Local Members and there was concern that they might not have been identified otherwise;
- it was felt that more care and scrutiny should have been in place as this project progressed, including adequate contingency arrangements;
- in relation to due diligence, clarification was required in regard to when the Chief Executive had been made aware of the significant overspend situation in regard to this project;
- there appeared to have been non-accountability across a range of aspects of the project and this raised serious concerns for the budget process;
- it was hoped that there could be confidence that the new processes and procedures in place for project management would ensure that this situation was not repeated;
- more clarity/detail was required in terms of the exact nature of the level of overspend on this project;
- whilst welcoming the actions identified in the Action Plan, there was also a real need for a focus on workforce planning to ensure that the Council retained staff who were highly trained and able to provide a high level of oversight and management in relation to such projects in future;
- it had to be highlighted that, following investigation, it had not been possible to confirm responsibility for the circumstances which had led to the wall collapsing during this project;
- the amount of overspend on this project (which had originally had a 'fixed' price) was a real concern, not least in terms of public perception;
- consideration should be given to making changes to contract wording in future to include reference to action which could be taken in the event of damage incurred/extra work required/additional costs which could not have been determined at the outset;
- confirmation that all tendering opportunities were now advertised and monitored by the Programme Board for Major Projects was noted;

- one of the most important recommendations within the Action Plan was that in future full cognisance should be taken of an entire project site, including the surrounding perimeter walls, to ensure that the whole site was captured under the risk assessment process;
- it would be imperative to closely monitor future projects to ensure that improvements were being implemented and having the desired effect and Elected Members had an important scrutiny role in this regard;
- it should be noted that the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee received regular monitoring reports for all projects over £4m;
- lessons had to be learned across the Highlands in order to avoid previous project failings, such as those incurred in the Ben Wyvis project, with specific reference being made to current works being undertaken at Inverness High School which were being very closely monitored by Local Members;
- it was essential that in future all staff involved in project management/implementation were fully aware of their responsibilities and specific remits; and
- in terms of communication on future projects, a single point of contact for Elected Members was vital.

Declarations of Interest – Mr D Louden and Mr R Bremner declared non-financial interests in the following item (iii) on the basis of connections to the Inner Moray Firth and Caithness LEADER Programmes respectively but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

(iii)Development & Infrastructure Service – Leader Programme 2016/17 (Substantial Assurance)

(No issues raised at the meeting).

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Final Reports as detailed and the current work of the Internal Audit Section.

5. Action Tracking Report Aithisg a’ Leantainn Gniomhachd

There had been circulated Report No. AS/17/17 dated 13 November 2017 by the Corporate Audit Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the action tracking information provided within the report as circulated.

6. Code of Corporate Governance Cod Riaghladh Corporra

There had been circulated Report No. AS/18/17 dated 5 October 2017 by the Head of Corporate Governance.

During discussion, and with specific reference to a Whistle Blowing Policy being in place and reviewed regularly, it was hoped that a focus on this area of work could be provided alongside issues related to fraud activity within the Audit Plan in future.

In relation to a request for further detail on current data sharing arrangements with NHS Highland, it was confirmed that specific information in this regard could be sought from the Corporate Resources and Care & Learning Services within the Council.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the progress on delivering the 2016/17 Code of Corporate Governance and the 2017/18 Code as circulated.

**7. Corporate Complaints Process Report
Aithisg Ghearanan Corporra**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/19/17 dated 14 November 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **NOTED** the Council's performance for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints and recognised that the number of complaints received was a low volume within the context of the scale of the Council's customer base and the scope of services provided.

The Committee also **AGREED** to support the continued participation of Officers in the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network and that a review of the questions relating to complaints should be undertaken within the Council's Annual Survey of Performance and Attitudes as detailed in Paragraph 7.6 of the report.

It was further **NOTED** that the LEAN review of the Corporate Complaints process was ongoing.

**8. Annual Report of Scottish Public Service (SPSO) Cases determined in 2016/17
Cuisean Ombudsman Sheirbheisean Poblach na h-Alba a Fhuairleadh leis a'
Chomhairle – Aithisg as Ur**

There had been circulated Report No. AS/20/17 dated 13 November 2017 by the Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the outcomes of the SPSO cases and that actions had been taken in response to the Ombudsman's recommendations and all of the cases had now been closed.

The meeting ended at 11.35am.

**The Highland Council
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drumbuie on Wednesday, 29 November 2017 at 10.30am.

Present:

Ms K Currie

Mr H Morrison

Mr R Gale

Ms L Munro

Mr J McGillivray

Officials in attendance:

Mr G Cameron, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services, Community Services

Mr G Mackenzie, Roads Operation Manager, Community Services

Ms J Jennett, Area Care and Learning Manager, Care and Learning Service

Ms A Donald, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning Service

Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager M Loynd, and Station Manager J Gardiner, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Appointment of Interim Chair

The Ward Manager advised that Mrs L Munro, Chair and Mr H Morrison had been delayed due to the weather conditions and invited Members to appoint an interim Chair.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr J McGillivray as interim Chair.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs D Mackay

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Performance Report
Aithisg Dèanadais Ionadail na Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/20/17 dated 14 November 2017 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In addition to the report, the Local Senior Officer gave a presentation on the consultation that was about to commence on Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation.

Note:- Mr H Morrison and Mrs L Munro arrived in the meeting at this point.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- confirmation was sought and provided that the transformation process would be undertaken over the period of the next four years;
- concern at the potential impact on retained duty staff in employment/self-employed if they were required to take on new roles and the potential for the Service to lose staff if they could not commit to the additional time required;
- there was a need for Members to have open and robust conversations with senior officers in the Service both in relation to the impact of transformation on employers and communities in Sutherland;
- in addition, it was recognised there were sensitivities in respect of the proposals and therefore it was important that Members and the emergency services and partner organisations involved worked together with communities to deliver the best outcomes for Sutherland;
- concern was expressed at the proposals whereby the Service would assist NHS Highland in responding to incidents involving uninjured falls on the basis there may be an underlying medical reason for the fall. The Local Senior Officer advised that a pilot scheme was being run in Caithness with no issues arising to date and he would be content to share the outcome of the review of the pilot with Members;
- in regard to the above, the Chair requested that Members meet with the Service's representatives to discuss the review prior to the next meeting;
- clarification was sought and provided in regard to the role of the Service in water rescues in rural areas of Sutherland;
- congratulations were extended to Area Manager, John MacDonald who had been promoted to Deputy Chief Fire Officer and it was requested that Mr Macdonald be thanked on behalf of the Committee for his services to the area; and
- clarification was sought and provided in regard to the increase in the number of unwanted alarm activations in the area, it being noted these were generally not malicious.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the attached Area Performance Report;
- ii. **AGREED** that arrangements be made for Members to meet with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service representatives prior to the next meeting; and
- iii. **AGREED** that Mr John Macdonald, former Area Manager, be thanked on behalf of the Committee for his services to the area.

Note:- At this point Mrs L Munro took the Chair. She recorded her thanks to Mr J McGillivray for acting as interim Chair.

4. Kinlochbervie Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No SCC/21/17 dated 23 November 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed that Kinlochbervie Primary School had not been inspected since 2008; the Area Care and Learning Manager advised that

the Council had no influence or control in relation to HMle inspection dates but that she would check its current status in this regard;

- in response to a question, it was confirmed that Kinlochbervie ASG was functioning well and there were no issues in relation to recruitment and retention;
- the figure of 100% for positive destinations in respect of Kinlochbervie High School be welcomed;
- as a general point, the potential going forward for Head Teachers to meet with Members to discuss any issues of concern;
- it was important to be mindful of the geography of the ASG and the significant travel distances involved for some pupils;
- an explanation was sought in relation to the level of additional support need within the ASG particularly at levels 2 and 3, and it was noted that more detailed information could be provided to Members if required; and
- in regard the to the above, it was suggested that Members discuss at a future Ward Business Meeting any additional information they would wish to be included in future ASG reports

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to discuss at a Ward Business Meeting any additional information requirements in terms of future ASG Overview reports.

**5. Joint working arrangements in Sutherland – Amenities and Roads Services
Ullachaidhean co-obrachaidh ann an Cataibh – Seirbheisean Ghoireasan is
Rathaidean**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/22/17 dated 13 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed at the lack of grass cutting undertaken in some villages in North and West Sutherland over the past year and clarification was sought and provided in regard to the new working arrangements for the coming year;
- reference in the report to joint working with communities be welcomed as being progressive;
- clarification was sought in regard to the Service responsible for grass cutting at the foreshore in Golspie. The Head of Environmental and Amenity Services reported that he would clarify this matter and report back to Mr R Gale;
- concern that the standard of grass cutting in some burial grounds had not been to an acceptable standard and it was important appropriate equipment be used. In response, it was explained that an assessment of the machinery to be deployed next year had been carried out in consultation with staff in response to the concerns raised; and
- it was suggested that staff resources in some areas had not been sufficient to cover the range of work which had to be carried out and it was hoped the new working arrangements would help address this issue.

Thereafter, concern was expressed that grass cuttings were not being lifted in schools, communities and particularly in burial grounds which was proving

contentious in some communities. It was explained there was significant additional cost and time associated with lifting the grass and if this was to be carried out in burial grounds then, in terms of the budget, work would have to cease or be reduced elsewhere.

Discussion then followed on the opportunities to increase community involvement in the lifting and disposal of grass cuttings and on how this could be funded. The Chair suggested that Members consult with their communities on this matter and that the issue be discussed further at a Ward Business Meeting.

Thereafter, discussion focused on the opportunities to recruit staff through the Council's Modern Apprenticeship programme. It was noted that work was ongoing with the Council's Modern Apprentice Coordinator to develop a course for apprentice road workers. In addition, it was explained this approach was important given current recruitment difficulties and the age profile of the workforce.

Following on from the above, it was suggested that a partnership approach with communities who had access to funds or community benefit should be developed to facilitate the creation of modern apprenticeships and employment opportunities locally. The aim should be not just to fill vacancies but to create additional jobs and to recruit and retain young people in the area. It was suggested consideration be given to pilot schemes being developed in Sutherland and to involve other partner organisations. It was proposed this matter be explored in more detail at a Ward Business Meeting with the appropriate officials in attendance. As part of those discussions, it would also be helpful if Members be provided with supporting information on the current age profile of staff. There was also a need to consider how to grow the skills base in Sutherland.

Thereafter, it was suggested that it would be helpful to have discussions with Police Scotland in regard to the potential to have officers stationed in the area in which they live, particularly in the more remote and rural areas of Sutherland.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. implementation of the restructuring of Community Services and reduction in grass cutting as agreed; and
- ii. current arrangements in place for flexible and joint working between Roads and Amenity teams.

The Committee **AGREED** to discuss at a Ward Business Meeting:-

- i. the potential for joint working with communities in relation to the lifting and disposal of grass cuttings;
- ii. the opportunities to develop a partnership approach with communities to facilitate the creation of modern apprenticeships in the area; and
- iii. issues in relation to the stationing of Police officers in the area, with Police Scotland representatives being invited to attend.

6. Winter Maintenance Plan 2017-18 Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh 2017-18

There had been circulated Report No SCC/23/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

Arising from the report, reference was made to the need to replenish and refresh salt heaps/bins in specific areas. The Manager confirmed that he would arrange for this matter to be progressed.

Thereafter, reference was made to the issues around the lack of uptake of the Council's 'Winter Resilience' scheme by community councils in the area and clarification was sought and provided in regard to the criteria for the scheme. It was suggested that a press release be issued to raise awareness of the 'Winter Resilience' scheme in Sutherland, and that Members be circulated with details of the scheme.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Sutherland Area, which includes the priority road lists and maps presented in Appendices B & C; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a press release be issued to raise awareness of the 'Winter Resilience' scheme in Sutherland, and that Members be circulated with details of the scheme.

7. **Edderton Speed Limit Cuingalachadh Astair Ailbhinn**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/24/17 dated 3 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, it was noted that Edderton Community Council had been informed of the position, and it was requested the focus now should be on the provision of flashing warning speed signs in accordance with local views.

The Committee **AGREED** to:-

- i. reject the request for a 30 mph Speed Limit on the A836 through Edderton; and
- ii. the introduction of standardised 40mph repeater signs through the village.

8. **Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Report - 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017 Sgrùdadh Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich - 1 An Giblean 2017 to 30 An t-Sultainn 2017**

There had been circulated Joint Report No SCC/25/17 dated 17 November 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Head of Policy and Reform.

In discussion, reference was made to a long standing agreement to commit £100,000 from the Fund to the new build Dornoch Sports Centre. It was reported this commitment had been originally agreed by Dornoch Area Community Council in 2011, and that the Community Council had reaffirmed its commitment to this decision at its last meeting.

In discussion, the Committee unanimously expressed their support for the sum of £100,000 from the Dornoch Common Good Fund to be committed to the Dornoch Sports Centre project.

In relation to the specific project CAL15131: Dornoch Sports Centre, the Committee unanimously requested that the Council proceed with urgency to legally commit to the project before the closing date for acceptance in view of the following:-

- the extensive and costly work undertaken by both Highland Council project staff and in particular the qualifying group of companies tendering for the project, over an extended timescale;
- the final preferred bid as submitted by the contractor being only 2.5% over the original budget figure of £3m as confirmed in December 2015;
- the closing date for acceptance of this bid, being 5 January 2018;
- the match funding of £100,000 from the Dornoch Common Good Fund;
- the opportunity to draw down £75,000 from Sutherland Leader as match funding with an expression of interest already have been submitted by the Council's design team;
- the potential for at least £200,000 from SportScotland with the further consideration of a private offer to make up any shortfall to their maximum award of £400,000;
- the opportunity to draw down significant sums from the under-drawn Strategic Leader and Inter-LAP Leader funds, monies which must be utilised by March 2019;
- the fact this was the only Council capital project of any significance in Sutherland for a number of years and potentially for many years ahead; and
- the project had been the top priority in the Council's Capital Plan since December 2015.

In addition to the above, the Chair advised that she and the local Member, Mr J McGillivray would arrange to make representations to and meet with the Council Leader on this matter.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good Fund, as shown in the Quarter 2 monitoring statement.

9. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** the Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 13 September 2017, which were approved by the Council on 26 October 2017.

10. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

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

11. Ground Lease of Dornoch Common Good Land Aonta-màil Fearainn airson Talamh Maoin Math Choitcheann Dhòrnaich

There had been circulated Joint Report No SCC/26/17 dated 23 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and Head of Policy and Reform.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations set out in the report.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 30 November 2017 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr A Graham
Mr B Boyd	Mr A Jarvie
Mr I Brown	Mr R Laird
Mrs C Caddick	Mrs I MacKenzie
Miss J Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr A Christie	Mrs E McAllister
Mr G Cruickshank	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G Ross
Mr K Gowans	Mr C Smith

Officials in Attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure
 Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure
 Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Development and Infrastructure
 Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mr G MacCormick, Senior Environmental Health Officer, Community Services
 Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Chief Executive's Office
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr M Smith, Inverness City Centre BID Manager
 Mr P Strachan, Chair, Inverness City Centre BID
 Ms J Cuddy, Vice Chair, Inverness City Centre BID
 Mr G Morrison, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Ms J Murray, Manager, Victorian Market

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

Mrs H Carmichael in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr J Gray and Ms E Knox.

Prior to commencement of the formal business, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Ms J Murray, the new Manager of the Victorian Market, to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

- Item 4 – Mrs H Carmichael (non-financial)
- Item 7 – Mrs C Caddick (non-financial)
- Item 8 – Mr K Gowans (financial) and Mr R Laird (non-financial)
- Item 9 – Mr R Laird (non-financial)
- Item 13(d) – Mr A Graham (non-financial)

The following Members also declared non-financial interests in any items in relation to their Council appointments which might arise during discussion but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion:-

- Miss J Campbell – Member of Inverness City Heritage Trust, Inverness Community Safety Partnership, Victorian Market Stakeholder Group and Inverness Townscape Heritage Project.
- Mrs I Mackenzie – Member of Victorian Market Stakeholder Group
- Mr R MacWilliam – Member of Inverness City Heritage Trust and Inverness Townscape Heritage Project.

3. **Appointment to Inverness Festival Association** **Suidheachadh Dhreuchdan gu Buidhnean on Taobh A-muigh**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr C Smith to the Inverness Festival Association.

In this regard, it was noted that Mr Smith would replace Mr B Boyd.

4. **Inverness Business Improvement District Ballot for New Term from March 2018** **Sgìre Leasachadh Gnothachais Inbhir Nis, Baileat airson Teirm Ùir airson 2018-2022**

Declaration of Interest – Mrs H Carmichael declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of the Board of Inverness BID 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 Joint Report No CIA/38/17 dated 15 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager.

In this regard, a Presentation was undertaken at the meeting by Mr P Strachan and Ms J Cuddy during which it was confirmed that the current term of office for Inverness BID ran until 31 March 2018 when a renewal ballot to extend the term for a further five years was to be held. If successful in achieving a 'yes' vote from the majority of City Centre businesses, BID would continue in existence for a further five years until 31 March 2023.

In this regard, the draft Business Plan had been attached as Appendix 1 to the report and reflected feedback from City Centre businesses, including a focus on adding value to the services provided by the public sector and an emphasis on developing the strategy for regenerating the City Centre.

In addition, a map of the BID area had been attached as Appendix 2 and it was noted that this would remain unchanged and would again cover all separate relatable properties in the heart of the City Centre, including retail, office, leisure and other commercial businesses.

It was also noted that, in the five year period to 31 March 2018, more than £1.125m would have been generated by way of BID levy paid by businesses and invested in the City Centre.

In summary, it was confirmed that partnership offered by BID with the public sector offered both flexibility in delivery and engagement with a vital sector of the business community, often leading to a contribution either in kind or financially through the commitment of levy funds to the delivery of projects which made a difference.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks were conveyed to all those involved with BID for the considerable level of work which had been undertaken over previous years;
- it would be appreciated if consideration could be given to extending the boundaries of the BID area in future to include businesses on the west side of the River;
- the Council and BID enjoyed a very productive relationship and this worked best when challenges were jointly addressed, such as tackling the reasons for empty properties in the City Centre, and it was hoped that this could be continued;
- in terms of the funding currently received from the Common Good Fund, it would be advantageous for BID to investigate whether any other funding streams were available in future;
- the current projects which had been undertaken by BID had been very successful but there was a need to introduce new initiatives/projects wherever possible in future;
- there had been recent press reports which had incorrectly referred to the 'Retail Park' as the 'Inverness Centre' and it was important that this was corrected and not repeated in future;
- there were many positive examples of development in the City Centre at present and this was welcomed; and
- the City and surrounding areas had to be the subject of increased marketing in terms of being excellent locations in which to live and work and the involvement of BID in this regard would be much appreciated.

Thereafter, and having thanked the Chair and Vice Chair of BID for their presentation, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- * i. to endorse the draft Business Plan (Appendix 1 to the report); and
- ii. to recommend to the Council that support be given to the new 5 year term.

5. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report for 2015/16

Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson 2015/16

There had been circulated Report No CIA/39/16 dated 17 November 2017 by the Group Manager for Highland.

In this regard, specific information was provided on the current figures for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2017/18 from the central Scottish Fire and Rescue Service performance management database against the key indicators and timelines of previous reports.

This included analysis of the detail in relation to accidental dwelling fires, deliberate fires, road traffic collisions and unwanted false alarm signals.

In addition, it was confirmed that the Service continued to actively deliver and refine its whole-time duty system and retained duty system recruitment and training processes to meet national and local needs (with a national recruitment campaign due to commence on 30 November).

It was also noted the area had been inspected by HM Fire Service Inspectorate and a report would be published and shared with the Committee in due course.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in addition to the work already being undertaken on the issues associated with the burning of heather in rural areas, it would be appreciated if this could be increased wherever possible in order to make landowners fully aware of the impact on the Service when fires had to be attended, with a strong emphasis on prevention as a priority;
- the Home Safety Fire Visits undertaken by Officers were highly commended in terms of the care and compassion shown to vulnerable residents and the thanks of the Committee were conveyed to all those concerned;
- it would be helpful if Members could make the Service aware of any residents in their Wards who would benefit from Home Safety visits and this could be arranged at an early date;
- the increase in the number of false alarm calls in July was disappointing as it placed a strain on resources but it was noted that work was ongoing with 'Responsible Persons' in the establishments where this had occurred so it was hoped that the situation would improve;
- safety checks had been made on all Council buildings after the Grenfell Tower fire in conjunction with other agencies and this had been a positive experience for all concerned with no problems identified; and
- it was confirmed that work was ongoing with residents in flats in the area to reinforce the need to keep exits and stairwells clear of obstructions at all times.

Thereafter, and having thanked the Group Manager for his presentation, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Area Performance Report as circulated.

**6. Council Programme and City of Inverness Area Priorities
Prògram na Comhairle agus Prìomhachasan Sgìreil Baile Inbhir Nis**

**(a) Council Programme
Prògram na Comhairle**

The Leader of the Council was in attendance at the meeting to discuss the Programme for the Council and in this regard she highlighted the links between the Programme and City priorities, particularly in terms of the opportunities which could arise from the BID proposals and which could support the case for more investment from both the private and public sector.

In this regard, specific reference was made to the importance of identifying and addressing the key social equality issues in the area which had to be given a high priority, particularly at Ward level, with any action taken being closely monitored and assessed, through both performance measures and increased communication with other relevant agencies.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the position.

**(b) Developing Local Priorities – City of Inverness and Area
Prìomhachasan Sgìreil Baile Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/40/17 dated 8 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this had to be viewed as a strategic and ‘live’ document which was focused on clear priorities as identified in the five City Vision Themes (a place to live, a place to learn, a place to thrive, a welcoming place and a redesigned Council);
- it would be especially important to measure improvement at a local level;
- there had been real growth in the population in the area and this had had a significant effect on schools, public transport, etc;
- there were real challenges in relation to the condition and capacity of local schools in some areas and this had to be addressed as a matter of priority, with a crucial role for Local Members in this regard in terms of securing funding wherever possible for improvements;
- there should be consideration given to any viable opportunities available in regard to the Inverness Airport Business Park;
- addressing challenges at Ward and community level was key to making real progress in changing outcomes, particularly in relation to the delivery of services;

- monitoring and evaluating the proposed City Priorities was essential in terms of improving lives;
- it was imperative that the issues related to the poverty agenda were at the forefront of the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets;
- in terms of the proposals for localism, it was concerning that despite the fact that the City of Inverness area raised 34% of Council Tax in the Highlands and approximately 95% of parking charges, it only received 14% of the overall Roads Maintenance budget and as such there had to be a focus on reconsidering the budget process in this regard. It was therefore considered that, in addition to having power over how money was spent in their areas, Local Committees should also have power over how money was raised locally. As such, there should be a direct relationship between where money was raised, who set it and where it was spent;
- there was a need for a focus on bringing the current number of empty properties in the City Centre back into use wherever possible;
- improvements to parking at the Railway Station and in the provision of Public Conveniences should also be considered in terms of making the City Centre as welcoming as possible for visitors; and
- it was recognised that there would be significant issues in terms of re-basing budgets and a commitment was given that discussion would be undertaken on this following the budget process and as part of future discussions on the localism agenda. As part of this process, there would need to be input from all Members of the Council and an acceptance that this was being considered at a time of shrinking resources and a reduced workforce;
- it was envisaged that the Programme for the Council would look markedly different in future and it was imperative that all Members worked together to ensure that addressing poverty and inequality was at the heart of all proposals being taken forward; and
- the commitment to start the process of discussion on the re-basing of budgets after the completion of the current budget process was welcomed in terms of addressing the need for a direct correlation between who was making decisions and who would be affected.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the links between the Council's Programme and the City Priorities and **AGREED** the City Priorities for submission to the Council.

7. Draft Inverness East Development Brief Brath-ullachaidh Inbhir Nis an Ear

Declaration of Interest – Mrs C Caddick declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Member of the Inverness Airport Development Board 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 CIA/41/17 dated 15 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In this regard, the draft Inverness East Development Brief (IEDB) (Appendix 2 to the report) had been circulated separately.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this was a very positive report and the feedback from Transport Scotland in this regard was welcomed;
- there was strong support from local residents for the B variant to be selected as the preferred route for the road;
- the focus on connectivity issues as part of the proposals was essential;
- there were however real reservations about the building of 4 storey buildings and it was suggested that this particular proposal should be re-considered following the public consultation period;
- it was hoped that the proposals for the 'green corridor' could be taken forward at an early date;
- the timing of the building of schools to support this development was crucial;
- the lack of sports facilities in the area was a concern and it was hoped that this could be addressed as soon as was possible;
- whilst accepting the B variant as the preferred route, there was concern in relation to the extra pressure which this would place on the Inshes Roundabout;
- further detail was required on the proposals for health care provision in the area;
- it was hoped that all options for external funding would be explored in terms of what was to be provided for the area; and
- there had been very good consultation undertaken with residents in the area and this was welcomed.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the draft Inverness East Development Brief at Appendix 2 for public consultation;
- ii. **AGREED** to authorise Officers to make illustrative and presentational changes prior to publication, in consultation and agreement with the Chair of the Committee;
- iii. **NOTED** that, from the point of approval by the Committee, the draft IEDB was a material consideration for the determination of planning applications;
- iv. **NOTED** that comments received on the draft IEDB would be reported back to the Committee for its consideration, together with possible amendments, prior to completion of procedures leading to its adoption as statutory supplementary guidance; and
- v. **AGREED** that the Council should formally write to Transport Scotland to set out its case for the B variant to be selected as the preferred route for the road.

8. Inverness City Centre Development Brief Cunntas às Ùr mu Mheadhan a' Bhaile

Declarations of Interest –

Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of 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.

Mr R Laird declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Member of Inverness Civic Trust 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.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/42/17 dated 14 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In this regard, the Inverness City Centre Development Brief (Appendix 1 to the report) had been circulated separately.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in terms of the place making guidance for development on Upper Bridget Street, it would be important to ensure that proposals for a high quality landmark were taken forward, including the demolition of the existing buildings on the site;
- it would be important to provide clarification in relation to the links between Farraline Park and Rose Street in the development brief;
- it was essential that the colour palettes previously agreed for shopfronts were used in any new developments; and
- use should be made of the Design Review Panel, in conjunction with Architecture and Design Scotland, if necessary for any new developments.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that the Inverness City Centre Development Brief at Appendix 1 should be taken forward as statutory Supplementary Guidance to the Development Plan, including referral to Scottish Ministers for formal adoption;
- ii. **NOTED** the comments received during the draft Inverness City Centre Development Brief consultation; and
- iii. **AGREED** the recommended Council responses contained in Appendix 2.

9. City Centre Development Update Cunntas à Ùr mu Mheadhan a' Bhaile

Declaration of Interest – Mr R Laird declared a non-financial interest in this item as Chair of the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project 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.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/43/17 dated 19 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, it was suggested that investment in City Centre properties by private owners would be welcomed.

It was also noted that the Townscape Heritage Project was progressing well and visible improvement, particularly in relation to Academy Street, was expected soon. However, it was regrettable that this progress had been impeded in certain circumstances through the lack of co-operation from private owners of buildings and it was hoped that this situation would improve in future.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** progress and **AGREED** the next steps in delivering City Centre improvements as detailed in Sections 3 – 6 under the following themes - Visitor and Cultural Attractions, Access and Connections, Academy Street and surroundings and New Office and Residential Accommodation

10. **Draft Inverness City Centre Wayfinding Strategy** **Dreachd Ro-innleachd Lorg-slighe Meadhan Baile Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/44/17 dated 16 November 2017 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the strategy for wayfinding was welcomed which was very important especially for tourists and in addition to providing information and guidance would contribute towards the development of a brand for Inverness;
- it was possible that future developments could include the use of electronics to incorporate different languages;
- the Wayfinding Strategy was part of the many positive changes happening in the area;
- thanks were expressed to the Head of Planning and Environment and particularly to the Urban Designer for their involvement in the workshop and congratulations were expressed for an excellent outcome;
- the importance of plaques to improve the wayfinding experience was emphasised specifically in relation to highlighting particular sites of historic significance;
- with regard to the development of plaques, an explanation was sought and received that the Inverness Civic Trust had given consideration to the placement of plaques and that information could be requested in relation to potential funding sources;
- it was suggested that it would be appropriate to seek Smart City funding for this project; and
- so that signs were legible it was requested that white lettering on grey signs be avoided.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Draft Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre at Appendix 1 for public consultation in early 2018;
- ii. **AGREED** to authorise Officers to consider the feedback from Community Links Plus stakeholders in finalising the Draft Strategy for public consultation as set out in Paragraph 4.4; and
- iii. **NOTED** that a finalised version of the Strategy, together with feedback from the consultation, would be reported back to the Committee for consideration prior to its adoption as Planning Guidance.

**11. Inverness City Centre Trade Waste Project
Sealladh-sràide a' Bhaile – Leasachadh Ghoireasan**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/45/17 dated 9 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the progress made on the trade waste project was welcomed and the fair process for implementing the new requirements which included the support given to businesses was commended;
- it was appreciated that consideration was given to issues raised at the previous meeting and that the project area had been extended to cover the Inverness BID area; and
- assurance was sought and received that the project team would be able to effectively manage the roll out of the trade waste project across the City Centre by engaging with business and waste contractors.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED**:-

- i. the overall vision and objectives of the Inverness City Centre Trade Waste Project as provided in the report; and
- ii. implementation of the finalised policy in accordance with the timeline provided.

**12. Inverness City - Traffic Regulation Order Amendment and Tariff Update
Baile Inbhir Nis – Atharrachadh Òrdugh Riaghladh Trafaig agus Cunntas às Ùr mu Chìsean**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/46/17 dated 20 November 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

In this regard, it was **NOTED** that this item had now been withdrawn from the agenda.

**13. Inverness Common Good Fund
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis**

**(a) Annual Report 2016/17
Cunntasan airson 2016/17**

There had been Joint Report No CIA/47/17 dated 24 November 2017 by the Director of Corporate Resources and the Inverness City Area Manager.

In discussion, concern was expressed regarding the overspend which had been due to additional work carried out by Internal Audit where failures had been identified. In this regard, it was suggested that the Council

should be asked to repay these costs in terms of the proper management of Common Good Fund assets.

The Committee otherwise **AGREED** the final monitoring report and balance sheet for the Inverness Common Good Fund as at 31 March 2017.

**(b) Financial Monitoring
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/48/17 dated 10 November 2017 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 October 2017 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

**(c) Grants Sub-Committee – Proposal for Extension of Powers
Fo-Chomataidh nan Tabhartasan – Moladh airson Leudachadh Chumhachdan**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/49/17 dated 17 November 2017 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- extending the powers of the Grants Sub-Committee to form a dedicated group for issues relating to the Common Good Fund was welcomed;
- it was suggested that the maximum amount at which the Inverness City Area Manager could approve funding for Civic Hospitality under delegated power had been low for a number of years and that this should now be increased to £1,000;
- in contrast, it was suggested that no individual should be able to spend as much as £1,000 for the purpose of Civic Hospitality and that therefore the current process and threshold for determining applications should remain in place;
- in terms of good governance, any power to delegate expenditure on Civic Hospitality by the Inverness City Area Manager should be in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee;
- there was a need for some applications for grant funding to be determined urgently and the proposal within the report would allow this to be undertaken; and
- in response to a query on the audit on the Common Good Fund, and specifically as to whether there had been any financial cost as a result of the inefficiencies identified, it was confirmed that this issue would be raised with the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

Thereafter, Mr R Laird, seconded by Mr G Cruickshank, **MOVED** that the status quo should be maintained in relation to the threshold for applications for Civic Hospitality which could be determined by the Inverness City Area Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Graham, seconded by Mr A Christie, moved that the threshold for such applications should be increased to £1,000.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 12 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 6 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:-

Mr R Balfour, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr G Cruickshank, Mrs M Davidson, Mr K Gowans, Mr A Jarvie, Mr R Laird, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson, Mr R MacWilliam and Mr C Smith.

For the Amendment:-

Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mrs T Robertson and Mr G Ross.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to the Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee being re-named 'The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee' with immediate effect;
- ii. **APPROVED** the revised Powers Delegated from the City of Inverness Area Committee as detailed within Appendix 1 - subject to the status quo being maintained in relation to the threshold for applications for Civic Hospitality which could be determined by the Inverness City Area Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee;
- iii. **AGREED** that the new Delegated Powers detailed within Appendix 1 should be exercised as Full Delegated Powers; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the new Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee should be required to submit an Annual report to the City of Inverness Area Committee summarising the work of the Sub-Committee for the immediately preceding Financial Year.

**(d) Grants and Capital Projects
Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa**

Declaration of Interest – Mr A Graham declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds that a family member was a volunteer for Blythswood Care 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.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/50/17 dated 13 November 2017 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

In this connection, there had been circulated separately a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

The Committee **NOTED** the current status of capital projects and **AGREED** to approve the following applications:-

The Shirlie Project - £34,200
 The Royal Society of Edinburgh - £4,700
 Blythswood Care - £20,000

The Committee also **AGREED** to approve the following applications from Inverness BID from the "Partnership Working" cost centre subject to the approval of the 2018/19 budget.:-

The City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays - £57,800
 Operation Respect Easter/Summer 2016 - £6,025
 Inverness Community Safety Partnership - £9,000
 Inverness Gull Project - £12,000
 Coach Ambassador - £9,750
 Inverness Street Festival - £7,000 with the proviso that consideration is given by the applicant to Programme content with a view to ensuring progressive development.

**14. Scottish Junior Football Association - Inverness City Football Club – Lease Extension – Bught Park, Inverness
 Comann Ball-coise Òigridh na h-Alba – Club Ball-coise Baile Inbhir Nis – Leudachadh Aonta-màil – Pàirc a’ Bhucht, Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/51/17 dated 10 November 2017 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the decision taken by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager to allow an extension of the current lease of a Sports Pitch at Bught Park, Inverness, granted to Inverness City Football Club until 15 May, 2018.

**15. Minutes
 Geàrr-chunntas**

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 14 September 2017 - **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 17 October 2017 - **AGREED**;
- iii. Events and Festivals Working Group held on 18 September and 30 October 2017 - **AGREED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 6 November 2017 - **AGREED**.

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm.