

**The Highland Council  
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummuie on Tuesday, 27 February 2018 at 10.30am.

**Present:**

Ms K Currie

Mr H Morrison

Mr J McGillivray

Ms L Munro (Chair)

**Officials in attendance:**

Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Mr R Bamfield, Additional Support Needs Manager, Care and Learning Service

Mr M Dent, Access Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service

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

**Also in Attendance:**

Mr R Kirk, Area Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Chief Inspector I MacLelland, North Area Commander, Police Scotland

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr R Gale and Mrs D Mackay

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Highlands and Islands Enterprise Presentation: Update on the Potential Launch site in Sutherland  
Taisbeanadh Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean: Cunntas às Ùr mun làraich chur air bhog ann an Cataibh air a bheilear a' beachdachadh.**

Mr Roy Kirk, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) reported that the UK Space Agency (UKSA) was currently considering three possible locations in the Highlands and Islands for the development of a potential satellite vertical launch site, one of which was at The Moine in Sutherland. He explained that Sutherland had been identified as a potential location for a number of reasons including its natural advantages and skilled workforce. In terms of the economic impact, it was estimated that 150 direct jobs could be created with local staff given opportunities to develop their skills while further indirect jobs attracting new people into the area would also become available along with numerous supply chain opportunities. The project had the potential to create skilled and well-paid employment, and generate wider economic and community benefits. It also had the potential of making the North Highlands a centre for science and technology.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it had been suggested locally that HIE were mainly focused on larger high profile projects;

- the need for public safety to be paramount in relation to the development and a point as to whether there had been any joint working with Police Scotland to date;
- clarification was sought on the consultation undertaken with local communities to date, reference being made to the importance of communities being engaged at this early stage of the development;
- an assurance was also sought that local communities would be central to and involved in all stages of the development and their views would be respected as the project advanced;
- a point in relation to whether there was a notional short list of preferred launch sites and in relation to the level of infrastructure that would be required on the ground;
- clarification was sought on the measures to be taken to protect the environment around the development site;
- the potential for young people in Sutherland to have prospects of apprenticeships for skilled jobs in the fields of science, technology and engineering within their local area be welcomed;
- the Access Officer be invited to attend a future ward business to provide an update on the issues in relation to public access rights.

In response, Mr Kirk:-

- provided an assurance that HIE was focused on small, medium and large opportunities, and he provided examples of HIE's involvement in smaller scale projects in the area involving communities, local organisations and social enterprises;
- confirmed that safety was considered to be of paramount importance and initial discussions had been held and would continue with Police Scotland, and also other relevant agencies. HIE would also welcome the opportunity to widen the discussions in due course;
- provided an absolute assurance that as soon as there was more certainty and information around the project that HIE would be arranging for public meetings to be held in the area and that the views of communities would be taken into account as the project advanced and prior to any planning application being lodged;
- advised that in terms of infrastructure this would essentially involve an access road and launch complex which would include a control room, assembly building, strongback, launch pad, and fuel storage area;
- environmental studies and ecological work was already being undertaken and HIE was working closely with Scottish Natural Heritage in relation to the project. HIE was concerned to ensure that any mitigation required in terms of the environmental impacts would be included in the proposal. He also advised that the type of site proposed could be conducive to the environment and nature on the basis launches would not take place on a daily basis.

In conclusion, the Chair suggested that in the first instance Members should engage with and listen to the views of their communities at this early stage of the project, and thereafter and as more details of the project emerged that arrangements be made for the Committee to receive a further update from HIE on the proposals.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation;

- ii. **AGREED** that arrangements be made for a further update to be provided to Members at the appropriate time; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the Access Officer be invited to a future ward business meeting to provide an update on the issues in relation to public access rights.

#### **4. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/01/18 dated 19 February 2018 by the North Area Commander.

The Chief Inspector advised that Police Scotland's online safety campaign leaflet had been circulated with the report, and that it would be helpful if the leaflet could be circulated to all community councils in Sutherland.

During discussion, Members welcomed the new format of the report and raised the following issues:-

- clarification was sought and provided in relation to the deployment of camera vans by Network Rail/Transport Scotland at railway crossings in the area;
- a query in relation to whether the increase in the number of people detected for drink/drug driving offences reflected specific campaigns or a general trend and whether drivers were more likely to take a risk in rural areas where they may have to travel outwith their communities to a licensed premises over the winter months. The Chief Inspector explained this was a general trend being observed across all areas of the Highlands and Islands and there was a continued focus by the Police on raising awareness that enforcement was being carried out and in terms of the consequences of such behaviour;
- it was suggested the figures shown for the number of offences reported in relation to the supply of drugs was low in view of reports locally that consignments were being brought in through ports in the area. The Chief Inspector outlined the specific action being taken to patrol the ports in rural areas and establish links with communities, noting that Police Scotland encouraged the public to report any information in this regard;
- at the last Sutherland Drug and Alcohol Forum meeting it had been reported that a large volume of drugs were being purchased via internet orders which was extremely difficult to police. The Chief Inspector advised that the Police were aware of the use of the internet to obtain drugs and that he would link in with the Forum on this issue;
- whether the increase in the figures shown for acquisitive crime was potentially linked to the roll out of universal credit, it being confirmed that there was no evidence of any link, and that such crimes tended to be opportunist or involve substance/alcohol misuse; and
- while there had been a reduction in the number of people detected for seat belt offences, the figure was surprisingly high, particularly given the warning alerts in vehicles.

Thereafter, discussion followed on the fact that a significant proportion of incidents that the Police were required to deal with involved people with mental health issues and that this could be linked for example to an ageing population, alcohol and anxiety issues. The Chief Inspector advised that a paper to the Sutherland Community Partnership showed there was a particular problem with alcohol

misuse in the area, a copy of which he could make available if Members required. He also provided details on the action being progressed by the Partnership in relation to social prescribing and the links and sharing of information with permission, between the Police, NHS Highland and other partners particularly in relation to vulnerable people.

On hearing further from the Chief Inspector, Members confirmed they would welcome a presentation from Police Scotland's Public Protection Unit to the next appropriate meeting.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** following scrutiny, the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 Year 1, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2017 - 31 December 2017;
- ii. **AGREED** that the online safety campaign leaflet be circulated to all community councils in the area; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the Public Protection Unit be invited to attend the next appropriate meeting.

## **5. Farr Associated School Group Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/02/18 dated 16 February 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was reported that a senior member of staff at Farr High School had indicated to a local Member that staff were finding it difficult to get through the curriculum at the moment and concern was expressed that appropriate support be provided to the School in this regard;
- concern was expressed that the schools within the new ASG models in Sutherland had not received an inspection for a considerable period of time and the need for Members to be provided with an insight from Education Scotland as to the why more regular inspections were not being undertaken.
- in regard to the above, it was understood that an inspection was anticipated in the Dornoch ASG in the near future
- concern was expressed that the condition of all the School buildings within the ASG were rated as being 'poor' and clarification was sought on the steps being taken by the Service in relation to the replacement and upgrading of schools so they were fit for purpose;
- the Chair advised that she was aware significant work was programmed for Farr High School in the current year, a new nursery was programmed for Tongue and there was a move towards a new nursery in Melvich.

In responding to the above, the Area Additional Support Needs Manager confirmed he would feedback the points raised by Members to the Area Care and Learning Manager and the Education Quality Improvement Manager as appropriate.

Thereafter, Members further commented as follows:-

- clarification was sought and provided in relation to the staffing provision at nursery schools within the ASG;
- a request that more up to date figures be provided in future reports in relation to positive destinations, and that in addition to the percentages the figures also be expressed in terms of numbers of pupils to provide a clearer understanding of this item; and
- the Youth Development Officer and Active Schools Coordinator be commended on significantly increasing the number of contacts with young people and for the level of work being undertaken within the ASG area, including involvement in the Rock Challenge event.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** following scrutiny, the content of the report; and
- AGREED** to request that more recent data be provided in future reports in relation to positive destinations, and that the figures also be expressed in terms of numbers of pupils.

**5. Dornoch Common Good Fund – Annual Report 2016/17, Q3 Monitoring 2017/18 and Budget Report 2018/19  
Maoin Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich – Aithisg Bhliadhnail 2016/17, Sgrùdadh Q3 2017/18 agus Aithisg Buidseit 2018/19**

There had been circulated Joint Report No SCC/03/18 dated 8 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Head of Policy and Reform.

In discussion, it was reported that there was an increased level of activity in relation to Dornoch Common Good and it was anticipated the outcome of ongoing discussions on valuations would be reflected in the next report.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/17;
- NOTED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund - Third Quarter, 2017/18 Monitoring Report;
- APPROVED** the Dornoch Common Good Fund- Annual Budget for 2018/19; and
- NOTED** the financial strategy outlined.

**6. Minutes  
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 29 November 2017, which were approved by the Council on 14 December 2017.

The meeting closed at 11.55am.

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**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, 28 February 2018 at 10.30 am.

**Present:**

Mr R Bremner	Mr D Louden
Mr J Bruce	Mrs L MacDonald
Mrs C Caddick	Mrs D Mackay
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Mackay (substitute)
Dr I Cockburn	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs M Davidson	Mr S MacKie
Mr L Fraser	Mr A Mackinnon
Mr A Jarvie	Mr M Reiss
Mr R Laird	Mr P Saggars
Mr B Lobban	Mr B Thompson

**Non-Member also Present:**

Mrs J Barclay	Mr R MacWilliam
Mr A Baxter	Mr A Sinclair
Mr M Finlayson	

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources  
Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure  
Mr E Foster, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration, Development & Infrastructure Service  
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr M Bailey, Principal Project Manager, Commercial & Continuous Improvement Team, Corporate Resources Service  
Ms E Barrie, HR Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr M Kelly, Project Manager, Commercial & Continuous Improvement Team, Corporate Resources Service  
Ms K Lackie, Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr D Scott, ICT Strategy and Engagement Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Mr P Whitham, Senior Learning & Development Adviser, Corporate Resources Service  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr A MacInnes, 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 Mackinnon in the Chair**

## Preliminaries

Prior to commencing the meeting and in view of the particularly adverse weather conditions, the Chairman paid tribute to the winter maintenance staff and commended them for their work in ensuring that the roads and pavements were kept safe and this was supported by the Committee.

## Business

### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr R Gale, Mr R MacDonald, Ms L Munro, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie and Mrs C Wilson.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

Following on from the above, it was highlighted that as a result of a Notice of Motion it had been agreed at the full Council on 14 December 2017 that a report on Universal Basic Income would be submitted to the next meeting of the Corporate Resources Committee. It was therefore disappointing to note that this report was not on the agenda and an explanation was sought in this regard.

In response, it was confirmed that a report on Universal Basic Income had been drafted and submitted to the Poverty and Inequalities Working Group in the first instance, and the Chair provided an assurance that a report on this item would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee **AGREED** that a report on Universal Basic Income be submitted to the next meeting on 24 May 2018.

### 3. Good News Stories Naidheachdan Matha

The Committee **NOTED** that Louise McGunnigle, HR Business Partner had recently become a Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and Hannah Tinsley, HR Officer had achieved her Post Graduate Certificate in Human Resources.

## CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE CHÙRAIM AGUS AN IONNSACHAIDH

### 4. Gaelic and Culture Update Aithisg Ùrachaidh Gàidhlig agus Cultair

There had been circulated Report No RES/01/18 dated 19 February 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Chair welcomed the positive report and the prominent place afforded to Gaelic in the operation of the Committee. He advised that the Council continued to make a large contribution to the development of the language and its culture and that the progress and achievements being made were evident in the following:-

- the Council's third language plan had now been considered by Bord na Gaidhlig and had received favourable feedback;
- a new Head Teacher had been appointed at the Inverness Gaelic School and Portree Gaelic School would be open in the near future;
- there were considerable opportunities on offer throughout the Highlands for adults wishing to learn the language;
- there was an Impressive range of opportunities on offer to pupils of all ages and interesting projects planned; and
- the success of Highland schools at the prestigious FilmG initiative with a good range of awards.

Thereafter, it was reported that discussions would be held between the Chair and Mr R Bremner on the potential to strengthen the reporting to the Committee and in terms of further improving accountability for the funding which supported the work around Gaelic.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **FINANCIAL MONITORING SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL**

### **5. Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report to 31 December 2017 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/02/18 dated 16 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- It was highlighted that at this point in the financial year only 67% had been spent in relation to the Care and Learning Service budget and consequently there would need to be a rapid acceleration in spend in the remaining three months of the financial year to meet the year end budget estimate;
- It was noted that £15.3m had been spent on welfare services to date, with a year end budget estimate of £16.6m. This would mean a £1.3m spend over the next three months, which did not seem a reasonable spread in comparison to spend over the rest of the year. An undertaking was given to provide a more detailed explanation to Councillor D Loudon on the welfare services spend;
- It was noted that Council Tax income was forecast to be marginally short of budgeted levels and it was queried if this was a collection issue. It was explained that this was attributable to a more stretching income target being set for 2017/18;
- In terms of the budget heading entitled Other Costs, an explanation was sought on the reasons for the substantial difference between the annual budget and the year end estimate. Further detail on this would be provided to Councillor C Caddick;

- In terms of pension strain costs, it was explained that this related to staff that had left, e.g. via early release, the cost of which could be spread over a period of up to five years and confirmation was provided that it did not relate to the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme which had been funded via Council balances. Further information could be provided to Councillor C Caddick on the make-up of the pension strain costs;
- It was confirmed that other than those pressures detailed in the report, there were no other specific budget pressures at present;
- Reference was made to the Care and Learning Service budget being predicted to overspend. This had also happened in previous years and it was suggested that the budget allocated to this Service was therefore inadequate as the Service was consistently overspending their budget. It was advised that while there were budget challenges and large variances throughout the year, the budget for Care and Learning had usually met its target by the year end. Also, it was proposed to introduce zero based budgeting to understand more clearly the budget pressures;
- It was suggested that a 'year to date budget' should be produced for all Services that could be monitored quarterly, which would show the predicted timings of income and expenditure throughout the year, making budgeting more transparent;
- It was noted that there was a significant overspend on winter maintenance and concern was expressed about the impact that this and other budget pressures would have on the Council's non-earmarked general fund reserve. It was queried what the threshold was for alternative sources of funding being required other than using up the depleting Council reserves;
- While zero based budgeting was generally supported, it was queried how to account for demand led budgets such as winter maintenance or out of authority placements. It was felt that there was a need to find a better way of budgeting for this type of spend; and
- It was queried whether there was any prospect for additional Scottish Government funding to meet the overspend in winter maintenance, given the exceptionally long and harsh winter, and the substantial road network that had to be maintained. It was suggested that an approach should be made to the Scottish Government's Transport Minister seeking additional funding for this financial year for winter maintenance.

In response the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources acknowledged the points raised by Members in regard to budgeting and he highlighted different methods of budget management. He indicated that it could be helpful if Members received further information/explanations in regard to the budget assumptions but overall he felt that the basis of working with budget holders to focus and project the year end position had served the Council well and had also been commented on favourably by Audit Scotland as providing sound financial management.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets as at 31 December 2017 and **NOTED** the estimated year end forecast and ensuing impact on balances;

- ii. **AGREED** that an approach be made to the Scottish Government's Transport Minister seeking additional funding for the current financial year for winter maintenance; and
- iii. **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

**6. Corporate Capital Monitoring Report to 31 December 2017**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/03/18 dated 15 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

It was noted that the Council had received circa £5m from receipts from the sale of Council Houses. Although the Council house sale scheme had closed, it was understood that there was a substantial number of applications still being processed. An undertaking was given to provide Councillor A Jarvie with information on the number of applications still to be processed and the receipt that was likely to be made from them.

In relation to the underspend of £7.8m in the Housing Revenue account, the details of this would be provided to Councillor I Cockburn.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes as at 31 December 2017.

**7. Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget - Revenue Monitoring to 31 December 2017**  
**Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheisean nan Goireasan Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/04/18 dated 19 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In particular the positive outcomes from the welfare budget income and expenditure was commended as was the increasing take up on school clothing grants.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service and Welfare budget as at 31 December 2017.

**8. Corporate Resources Service Capital Monitoring Report to 31 December 2017**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/05/18 dated 19 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service capital budget as at 31 December 2017.

**9. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Revenue Monitoring Report to 31 December 2017**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/06/18 dated 15 February 2018 by the Chief Executive.

Reference was made to the overspend in the Members' budget and it was clarified that this related to under achieved income from Members catering. This had been slightly offset by a vacancy. If the vacancy was not taken as a saving the overspend in the Members' budget would be circa £16,000. It was therefore stressed that not achieving this target was unacceptable, particularly in view of the current financial climate, and it was confirmed that this was currently being reviewed and the outcome from this would be reported.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget as at 31 December 2017 and **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year.

**10. Chief Executive's Office Capital Monitoring Report to 31 December 2017**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2017**

There had been circulated Report No RES/07/18 dated 16 February 2018 by the Chief Executive.

It was queried why the City Gateways budget was in the Chief Executive's Office budget, as it was felt that it would be more appropriate in the Development and Infrastructure Service budget. It was advised that the City Gateways budget would in future be managed through the City of Inverness Area Committee as it was concerned with City developments.

The Committee **AGREED** the monitoring position for the Chief Executive's Office capital budget as at 31 December 2017.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE**  
**SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORA**

**11. Treasury Management – Summary of Transactions**  
**Rianachd Ionmhais - Geàrr-chunntas Ghnothaichean**

There had been circulated Report No RES/08/18 dated 14 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Appreciation was expressed for the recent Treasury Management workshop training session which had been most informative. It had highlighted the volume of daily transactions undertaken with a large number of financial institutions to ensure maximum benefits and utilisation of low rates for short term borrowing and staff were commended for this excellent work;

- Although it was acknowledged that LOBO Market Loans was a historic situation, it was highlighted that this impacted all local authorities across Scotland and it was proposed that an approach should be made to CoSLA with a view to working together to get the lending rate lowered; and
- It was highlighted that many of the Public Works Loan Board loans were very old hence the high average interest rate and it was queried as to whether there was any scope within the cap set by the Council to borrow more finance based on current borrowing rates which were much lower.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions as circulated; and
- AGREED** that a request be made to CoSLA for joint working across all local authorities to have the LOBO Market Loan rates reduced.

## **12. Corporate Resources Service Quarterly Performance Report Aithisgean Coileanaidh Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra**

There had been circulated Report No RES/09/18 dated 9 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- The Committee welcomed the report and commended staff for the excellent performance results contained in the report, particularly in regard to Housing Benefit claims, for which the Council was first in Scotland in terms of speed of processing and administering claims and also for the high efficiency of the Council in paying invoices and the importance of this for small businesses was emphasised;
- Advice was sought and provided on a suggestion made at a local community council meeting should there be any public disobedience by refusing to pay Council Tax;
- Further information was provided on the steps that were taken to pursue outstanding Council Tax payments and ensure maximum collection;
- Should the Nairn BID levy proceed, an assurance was provided that there would be no material difference in the Council's approach and charge for collection of the BID levies which would be full cost recovery; and
- Concern was expressed that there was a downward trend in regard to the level of BID levies collected and explanation was sought and provided as to the reason for this trend.

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

### **13. Opportunity to Generate Income by Installing Solar PV on the Council Estate** **Iomairt Cumhachd Grèine**

There had been circulated Report No RES/10/18 dated 5 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed the report which they felt was an excellent opportunity for the Council to generate essential income;
- Further information was sought and provided on a number of issues including how the project could be expanded; the level of projected profits based on marginal cost of borrowing; the next project steps; and how the project would be monitored, particularly in regard to income, and reviewed;
- The change in the financial model towards onsite consumption and less reliance on the feed in tariff was welcome;
- It was essential that local Members were consulted and an assurance was provided that the project team would work closely with Members to ensure that the right local sites were identified. In particular, a request was made for further dialogue in regard to potential opportunities available for the car park behind Nairn Court House and it was also queried as to whether there was any scope for partnership working in regard to locating solar PVs on common good land;
- Although the overall principles of the initiative were supported, concern was expressed in regard to the practicalities of the installation of the solar PV and further information was sought on the measures that would be taken to counter vandalism; and
- It was suggested that further consideration should be given to how the project could be expanded such as purchasing land for the specific purpose of installing solar PV.

Following a unanimous recommendation from the Redesign Board on 19 December 2017, the Committee **AGREED** that £2.3m of self-financing capital be used to install 2.5MW of solar PV on the Council estate, achieving the net profit projections set out in the report which equated to £4.01m over a 20 year period.

### **14. Modern Apprenticeship Programme Update** **Aithisg Adhartais nam Preantasachdan Ùr-nodha**

There had been circulated Report No RES/11/18 dated 5 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed the report and although they recognised the breadth of the scheme across a range of different disciplines they were keen to ensure that the programme continued to grow and expand;
- The achievements to date were commended but concern was expressed that only four Early Year Practitioners had been pursued to March 2018 and it was stressed that this target needed to be set significantly higher in order to meet future demands;

- It was highlighted that the Council provided a vast range of training opportunities which needed to be recognised and opportunities for in-house training should also be capitalised upon; and
- It was essential that the Council worked collaboratively with stakeholders such as NHS Highland in order to promote a step change to ensure opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships were maximised across the whole of the Highlands to generate a resilient local workforce.

The Committee **NOTED** the excellent progress to date, current activities and future opportunities

#### **15. Living Wage – Accredited Employer Status Fastaiche Tuarastail Bith-beò Barantaichte**

There had been circulated Report No RES/12/18 dated 8 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, concern was expressed in regard to the role of HR in identifying pay rates of employees of current contractors which was felt to be essentially a procurement issue and further clarity was provided that HR would be involved in setting out the parameters of the accreditation and Business Support colleagues would be contacting contractors with specialist direction and support provided by Procurement. In addition, confirmation was also provided that a clear distinction was made in regard to suppliers and contractors.

The Committee **AGREED** to support an application to become an Accredited Living Wage employer to reduce poverty and improve pay for employees in the Highlands.

#### **16. ICT Transformation and Network Refresh Prògram Cruth-atharrachaidh ICT**

There had been circulated Report No RES/13/18 dated 15 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Prior to opening the item for discussion, the Chairman explained that in view of the commercially sensitive aspects relating to this report, a Member briefing had been held on 27 February 2018 to enable detailed discussions and he expressed his appreciation to Members for attending this positive meeting. He further apologised for an error he had made on this matter at the meeting of the Committee held on 30 August 2017 and he provided an assurance that a report would be provided as had been requested at the briefing.

Thereafter, the following key points were raised:-

- Rollout of the Chromebooks was dependent on the network refresh being completed and disappointment was expressed at the delays to these two aspects of the programme particularly as the timescales and revised dates were still unknown. Further disappointment was expressed as it was also not yet known whether there would be any further impact/delays to the next Associated School Groups (ASGs) and further information was sought as to whether there would be any chance of catching up on the lost time within the rollout schedule;

- The importance of communicating with the relevant schools and keeping them informed of progress was emphasised and it was acknowledged that this needed to be improved;
- Concern was expressed that it had been three months since it had been identified that there would be a delay to the programme but that revised dates were still awaited and an assurance was sought that a revised Implementation Programme with timescales would be demanded. It was suggested that the lack of a revised programme indicated that this matter was not being properly prioritised and being addressed as a matter of urgency and in order to take this forward it was recommended that the Council adopt a much tougher approach;
- In addition, concern was expressed that lessons had not been learnt from past contract procurements, particularly in regard to the educational aspects of the contract. It was highlighted that Chromebooks had been delivered to all schools in the Millburn and Dingwall ASG as well as Portree High School and would also soon be delivered to the Portree ASG primary schools despite the fact that they could not yet be utilised. Therefore, concern was expressed that if there were further delays to the programme then the equipment would be out of date by the time it could be accessed and used;
- It was highlighted that schools needed to plan, both on an individual and ASG basis, and a request was made for this to be taken on board as well as the needs of the school in terms of their curriculum when developing the revised implementation timescales;
- It was queried as to whether staff had been trained on teaching using Chromebooks and whether the value of these as a learning tool, compared to traditional teaching techniques, had been measured;
- It was recommended that a detailed risk analysis supported by contingency plans should be prepared;
- It was acknowledged that working in partnership with the contractor was helpful; however it was stressed that the Council needed to be a robust client using all options available to ensure that the service that the Council was paying for was being delivered; and
- Confirmation was provided that when Office 365 was rolled out to users they would have significantly increased mailbox and storage capacity. In the interim before the rollout there would be no additional charge for increases in mailbox sizes for users when required.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the ICT Transformation and Network Programmes and that a further report would be provided as requested at the briefing.

## **17. ICT Projects Update** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Phròiseactan ICT**

There had been circulated Report No RES/14/18 dated 7 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**  
**Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir**

**18. Community Asset Transfer: Review Process**  
**Glusad So-mhaoin Coimhearsnachd: Pròiseas Ath-sgrùdaidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/15/18 by the Chief Executive.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- The need for a clear governance process was accepted but it was requested that it be monitored and, if necessary, reviewed to ensure that it was an efficient and effective procedure;
- Given the requirement for the formal process as set out in para 2.5 of Appendix 2 to the report, further information was sought on the format of the proceeding stage during which it was clarified that this was undertaken in less stringent and more collaborative manner;
- Clarity was sought on the role of third/interested parties representation and whether there were any restrictions, e.g. geographical, community groups only, etc in regard to this; and
- With regard to para 1.1 fourth bullet point on Appendix 2 to the report, it was suggested that the Chair of the panel should only be reviewed if the Chair was to cease being a member of the panel.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the process for the Member Review Panel and proposed hearing procedure for reviews of community asset transfer decisions as set out at Appendix 2 to the report; and
- \* ii. **AGREED** to recommend to Council that the Scheme of Delegation be updated to reflect the process.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS**  
**GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS CHOINNEAMHAN**

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

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 7 December 2017, 16 January 2018 and 16 February 2018 the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

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

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Employment Release Sub-Committee held on 7 December 2017 and 8 February 2018;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Appeals Committee held on 22 November 2017;
- iii. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Central Safety Committee held on 2 February 2018.; and
- iv. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Staff Partnership Forum held on 2 February 2018.

**21. Exclusion of the Public**  
**Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 9 and 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE**  
**SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORA**

**22. Equal Pay Update**  
**Cunntas às Ùr mu Phàigheadh Co-ionann**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/16/18 dated 6 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the report.

**23. SWAN Transition Delay Settlement**  
**Rèiteachadh Eadar-ghluasad SWAN**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/17/18 dated 2 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the report.

**DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**LEASACHADH AGUS BUN-STRUCTAR**

**24. Commercial Investment and Development Opportunity**  
**Ceannach Tasgadh Malairteach**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/18/18 dated 15 February 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair)** held in the Chamber, Tigh na Sgìre, Park Lane, Portree on **Monday, 5 March, 2018 at 10.30 am.**

### Present:

Mr J Finlayson  
Mr J Gordon

Mr R MacDonald  
Mr C MacLeod

### In attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Service  
Sergeant B Crawford, Police Scotland  
Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental & Amenity Services, Community Services (by Video Conference)  
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Development & Infrastructure  
Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development & Infrastructure Service  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's 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 J Gordon – Cathraiche (Chair)**

### Business

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes  
Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated for information Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 11 December, 2017, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

**4. Police – Area Performance Summary  
Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìre**

There was circulated Report No SR/1/18 by the Area Inspector for Police which provided an update to the Committee on the progress relating to the objectives outlined in the Highland Policing Plan 2017-20.

It was advised that some of the statistics in the report covered the mainland area of the Division and an undertaking was given that where this occurred, revised statistics for the Isle of Skye and Raasay area only would be sent to Members.

Overall the Isle of Skye and Raasay area continued to be a safe place to live, work and visit and the Police would seek to maintain this as the busy summer season approaches.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- there were people who had committed historical offences that the Police could go back and detect and it was reassuring that people did come forward with information to the Police even after some considerable time after the offences had been committed.
- It was good news that the number of people detected for speeding had reduced over the last period and it was advised that the Road Policing Unit made regular visits to the area. However, particularly in the summer there was a problem with speeding and overtaking on Viewfield Road, Portree and perhaps there was a need for more signage to reinforce the 30mph speed limit on that stretch of road.
- It was noted that drug use was an issue for every community and information was provided on the various methods of intelligence and investigation the Police used to detect those involved in the supply of drugs. The public's help was always welcome in detecting this crime and the anonymity of those providing the information was key particularly in small communities. The public could call the Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously with information.
- It was queried what powers the Police had to prosecute those who had lit heath fires that then gone out of control and how extensive was the problem. It was advised that in the last week there had been a number of heath fires in the area. This was a legitimate way of looking after land, but it was strictly governed by the Hill Farming Act 1946 and the Muirburn Code of best practice. Failure to control fires could result in prosecution.
- It was queried if the Police received an increased number of calls in winter conditions due to the lack of gritting in certain areas. It was advised that there had been an increase in calls relating to some roads in the area, and the Police would contact the Council asking them to send gritters in those circumstances.
- Reference was made to an article in the Press relating to an increase in slips and falls during winter conditions and people having to attend Accident and Emergency as a result. The costs of this could be substantial i.e. hip operations, and therefore it was perhaps a false economy to be cutting back on gritting roads and pavements.

The Committee having scrutinised the report:-

i **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 Year 1, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2017; and

ii **NOTED** that revised statistics for the Isle of Skye and Raasay area would be sent to Members.

## 5. Performance Report on Public Conveniences Aithisg Choileanaidh air Goireasan Poblach

There was circulated Report No SR/2/18 by the Director of Community Services which detailed performance management information of the Public Conveniences Service in Skye and Raasay covering the period of 1 November 2017 to 28 February 2018.

There were 7 public convenience facilities on the Isle of Skye, including Elgol, which had been omitted from the report. Insourcing of the service had provided opportunities to improve service delivery and performance management. A new inspection system had been developed to measure the quality of the facilities being provided from the perspective of the service user.

In terms of the Council decision to introduce charging at certain facilities, it was confirmed that the facility in Portree would be considered for charging as there were significant income opportunities at the facility.

It was noted that there had been a proposal for charging at the Dunvegan public convenience. Members were concerned about introducing charging at this facility as it was not in a great condition. An undertaking was given to look at this proposal again taking into consideration Members comments.

Information was sought on a Highland Comfort Scheme for Kyleakin and an update on this would be sent to Councillor J Finlayson.

In terms of the Highland Comfort Scheme there was a need for more publicity as to where these facilities were and when they were open. It was confirmed that work would be undertaken to improve the publicity for the Highland Comfort Scheme and the facilities available, opening times etc. within the Scheme, by publicity on the Council's website, signage and getting the message across to Community Councils.

Members views were sought on the seasonal public convenience at Elgol. Options included closing the facility, a Community Asset transfer or a Highland Comfort Scheme. Members were firmly of the view that the facility should not close as this area was particularly busy in the summer. Members were content that the other two options i.e. Community Asset transfer or Highland Comfort Scheme should be considered.

In terms of the Broadford facility, it was queried if there was to be any investment in upgrading it. It was advised that currently there was no programme for capital investment in public conveniences. However, investment in these facilities would be looked at when developing the Council's strategy for public conveniences.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i **NOTED** the contents of the report; and

ii **NOTED** the proposals to include information on:-

- the structural condition of Council facilities;
- the cleanliness of facilities provided under the Highland Comfort Scheme; and

- the implementation of the Council's decision on 15 February 2018 in future reports.

## **6. West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd an Iar agus nan Eilean**

There was circulated Report No. SR/3/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which presented the outcome of consultation on the proposed West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan and sought agreement on the Council's finalised position to enable officers to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers for Examination. Appendix 1 to the report contained the detail of this information.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Co-op had asked the Council to bolster the Co-op's position in Broadford as the company has possible plans to refurbish and extend the existing store. To safeguard their potential future investment they wanted the local development plan amended, to close off the option of other retail development in the village. This was not a valid planning reason and it was not for the Council to prevent companies competing against each other and therefore no adjustment to the Plan was recommended.
- There was currently a major change for planning for health provision on the Isle of Skye, with a reduction in health provision and a shift from health provision from the main population growth area on the Island, Portree to Broadford. NHS Highland had stressed to the Council the need for more housing on the Island and it was queried if NHS Highland had consulted Planners on the implications of the redesign of health provision on the Island on economic development in the area. A view was expressed that it was difficult to see how economic growth could be sustained with the changes proposed by the NHS. In response, it was advised that Planners had not been consulted by the NHS on which location (i.e. Broadford or Portree) the new hospital facilities would be built on the Island. Once the Broadford site had been chosen, Planners had been consulted by NHS on potential sites within Broadford for the new health facility. Further, public bodies did undertake research as to future population trends in order that they could make plans for service provision for the future e.g. future housing requirements, health services.
- It was essential that the road around the Lump, Portree was kept in the Plan as community groups regarded this as very important for the future regeneration of Portree.
- In terms of consideration to flooding risk in the development plan for Broadford, national flooding guidance advised Councils not to earmark sites for development in local development plans that were within the area that would flood in the case of a one in a two hundred years flood event. However, it was still open to a developer to carry out a detailed flood assessment risk which could prove that the proposed site for development would be outwith the one in two hundred years flood risk event area.
- It was advised that the Scottish Government's Planning Bill proposed reforms to the preparation of local development plans, with plans to be in place for 10 years rather than 5 years, but with a right to amend the plan during that time.
- There was flexibility in local development plans as to the type of development that could take place by designating some sites 'mixed use'. Further, a developer could make an application on an area not zoned for development

in a local plan and planning permission could be granted if the case for development was strong. The onus was on the developer to prove that their site was better than those zoned for development within the plan.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i **NOTED** the issues raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as they relate to the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee area and **AGREED** the recommended Council response to these issues as set out in **Appendix 1** to the report;

ii **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory procedures required to progress the Plan to Examination including the submission of the **Appendix 1** to Scottish Ministers; and

iii **AGREED** to authorise the Director of Development and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Chairs of the Local Committees, to make non-material changes to **Appendix 1** prior to its submission to the Scottish Government.

The meeting ended at 12.25 p.m.