

The Highland Council

Ross and Cromarty Committee – 25 October 2016

Agenda Item	4
Report No	RC/032/16

Developing Local Priorities for Ross and Cromarty

Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development

Summary

This report asks Members to consider and approve the draft Ross and Cromarty Area Priorities as outlined in **Appendix One**.

1. Background

- 1.1 Building on the localism agenda and increased delegation of decision making to local committees, each local committee was asked by the Leader to consider developing a set of strategic Council priorities for their area.
- 1.2 It is important to note that these are Council priorities and that there will be opportunity, through the development of local community partnerships, to consider wider shared priorities at a later date.

2. Developing the Vision for Ross and Cromarty

- 2.1 Ross and Cromarty Members were invited to meet together on 26 September to discuss and consider Area Priorities. Feedback from ward level discussion had been used to draft local and strategic priorities which provided a helpful starting point.
- 2.2 Members discussed the draft priorities in detail and clarified and refined them. The updated Area Priorities are attached as **Appendix One**. Members are asked to consider the Area Priorities and to approve them for adoption.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There are no immediate resources, legal, equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever Gaelic or rural implications in the report. However the Priorities include ambitions which would have a positive impact on many of these themes.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider and agree these draft priorities for Ross and Cromarty.

Designation: Michelle Morris, Depute Chief Executive/ Director of Corporate Development

Date: 7 October 2016

Author: Helen Ross, Senior Ward Manager, (CSER)

Ross and Cromarty Area Priorities Updated 26-9-16

- **Transport and Infrastructure**
 - Developing and maintaining the road network, with a focus on strategic (non-trunk) routes and unclassified roads.
 - Work with partners, particularly Police Scotland, to improve Road safety
 - Prevention of flooding through ongoing maintenance.
 - Protection of local infrastructure and the environment through greater enforcement around planning, flooding and access rights
 - Supporting communities and business to have improved broadband access and connectivity
 - Seek improved connections to the national grid for rural communities across Ross and Cromarty
 - Lobby the Scottish Government to support a solution to the Stromeferry By-pass
 - Support the re-opening of Evanton Railway station

- **Economic development**
 - Work with our partners to explore and support inward investment with a focus on town and village centre regeneration
 - *Growing our Own* - seek to develop employment and training opportunities potentially through new models within our communities, particularly around home care
 - Work with partners to promote the opportunities offered by the Kishorn Yard
 - Promote the opportunities for sustainable economic development provided by the Wester Ross Biosphere
 - Explore the opportunities to re-develop the Invergordon Tank Farm (VDLF)

- **Tourism**
 - Working with our partners we will utilise the area's natural resources to promote the area as a tourist destination
 - To further support the success of the North Coast 500, we will:
 - Promote Business Gateway as a way of supporting and developing local businesses
 - Explore how best to develop facilities for campervans along this route
 - Consider the need for additional signage and roads infrastructure to meet the increased demand
 - Explore how best to develop facilities for campervans along the North Coast 500 and other routes across Ross and Cromarty
 - Work with partners to promote the area and retain more cruise ship visitors

- **Housing**
 - Explore greater provision of affordable housing and housing suitable for disabled people throughout the area.
 - Work with Council House tenants to achieve the improvement of Council House Estates

- **Education**
 - Seek solutions to reducing the attainment gap
 - Ensure education estate provision is fit for purpose for nursery, primary and secondary pupils across the Ross and Cromarty area
 - Promote positive mental well-being amongst young people including addressing the challenges of cyberbullying

- **Community Engagement**
 - Ensure we have supported and enabled communities and volunteers
 - Support the development of effective Community Partnerships and work within these partnerships to enable and support communities in their aspirations

- **Health and Wellbeing**
 - Work with partners, including the third sector, to improve access to local care for the elderly, including access to respite provision for both the elderly and individuals with learning difficulties
 - Work with our partners to improve access to local health care and hospitals including patient transport services
 - Promote and facilitate training for potential carers
 - Improving health and mental wellbeing through:
 - Improved access to leisure facilities
 - Promotion of the natural environment for leisure and recreation
 - Management of parks and grounds in order to improve the natural environment