

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Ross and Cromarty Committee** held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Wednesday, 2 May 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr G Adam	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs J Barclay	Mr D MacLeod
Ms I Campbell	Mrs M Paterson (Vice Chair)
Dr I Cockburn	Mrs F Robertson (Chair)
Mr M Finlayson	Ms M Smith
Mrs A MacLean	Ms K Stephen

Officials in Attendance:

Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager (LEADER)
Mr P Mascarenhas, Community and Democratic Engagement Manager
Mr J Holden, Housing Manager (North)
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Skye, Ross and Cromarty
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Miss J Mair, Graduate Planner
Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms D Agnew, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Also in Attendance:

Group Manager M Loynd, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Dr A Sinclair, Western Biosphere Project
Ms Natasha Hutchison, Western Biosphere Project

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

Preliminaries

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr C Fraser, Mr D Louden, Mr A MacKinnon, Ms P Munro, Ms C Wilson and Mr A Rhind.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair congratulated:

- Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band for receiving second place in the Novice Juvenile A and B categories of the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships; and
- Ullapool and District Junior Pipe Band for winning the Eilidh MacLeod Endeavour Award, named after the young piper from Barra who tragically lost her life in the Manchester Terrorist attacks. The award is specific to pipe bands that demonstrate perseverance and resilience in the face of challenges.

The Chair also welcomed the commencement of works for the relocation of Gairloch Museum. The new site for the museum is the former Cold War Era Anti-Aircraft Operations Room, which became the Council Roads Depot.

Mrs Paterson advised that the Moderator of the Church of Scotland had visited the Ross and Cromarty Area where he had met with Councillors. The Moderator had asked that the Ross and Cromarty councillors be thanked for a very interesting visit.

Mrs Paterson also congratulated the Dingwall Gaelic Choir following their achievement of second place in the ladies choir and second place in the full choir at the pan-Highland Music Festival in Ireland.

The Committee thereafter **AGREED** to send a letter of congratulation to the Dingwall Gaelic Choir following their achievements.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the last meeting which had been held on 31 January 2018 and had been approved by the Highland Council on 8 March 2018.

In relation to the Action Tracker, circulated to Members, the Chair confirmed that the Tenancy Sustainment Visit Guidance had been circulated this morning.

Members queried the criteria by which Transport Scotland based their upgrade of junctions on the A9. Due to the substantial increase in housing at Evanton with a 200 house development recently approved, and a further 200 house development due imminently at the North Planning Applications Committee, Members asked that a letter be sent to Transport Scotland seeking clarification on the criteria used.

The Committee thereafter **AGREED** to write to Transport Scotland requesting clarification on the criteria for upgrading A9 junctions especially in relation to Evanton following the approval of a 160 house development and a further 150 house development due imminently at the Planning Committee.

**4. Presentation on the Western Biosphere Project
Taisbeanadh mun Phròiseact Bhith-chruinne an Iar**

A presentation on the Western Biosphere Project was given by Dr Audrey Sinclair and Ms Natasha Hutchison.

Thereafter, having thanked Dr Sinclair and Ms Hutchison for their attendance, the Committee:

i. **NOTED** the presentation; and

ii. **AGREED** to write to The Highland Council to express their support and appreciation of this project and for Members to encourage constituents to also write supporting the project.

Item 5 was taken after item 7, but for the purpose of this minute, items have been kept in their original agenda order for ease of reference.

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

There had been circulated Report No RC/012/18 together with the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report by the Local Group Manager for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The Group Manager advised that the recruitment of officers had been positive, but that it normally took a year for these officers to be fully trained in breathing apparatus and to count in the statistics as a full member of the station.

The Chair thanked the Group Manager for coming to the ward meetings to discuss the transformation of the fire and rescue service it had been very informative.

The Committee **NOTED**, following scrutiny, the Ross and Cromarty Performance Report.

**6. Leader Programme in Ross and Cromarty
Prògram Leader ann an Ros agus Cromba**

There had been circulated Report No RC/013/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Ms Cameron updated Members on the figures for the Leader Programme. 41 projects had been approved which represents a commitment of just over £2 million. A further £963,000 had been approved in principle. This showed a positive position on the Leader Programme.

During discussion, Members raised several issues including the following:-

- applicants had to spend the monies before they could claim them back from Leader and issues arose where the groups were unable to fund the projects in advance of the Leader money, in response Members were advised that the Highland Council had a resource whereby potentially the shortfall could be made available to groups to enable their uptake of Leader funding – this can be discussed with projects on a case by case basis; and
- the Leader programme had been a great success and was part of the European funding that would no longer be available following Brexit.

Members thanked Ms Cameron for her help and assistance with the Leader Programme over this and previous years.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

**7. Participatory Budgeting – Dingwall, Kyle, Tain and Easter Ross
Buidseatadh Com-pàirteach - Inbhir Pheofharain, An Caol, Baile
Dhubhthaich agus Ros an Ear**

There had been circulated Report No RC/014/18 by the Acting Head of Policy.

During discussion, Members raised a number of issues including the following:-

- the response from the participatory budgeting meetings had been encouraging;
- there was value in bringing different groups together to share resources;
- young people should have their say in the community and the age for participation should be set at senior school age;
- Members had to be careful that it was not just the loudest voice that was heard and that smaller minority groups were supported and given a voice within these meetings;
- in relation to the recent agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA, clarity was sought on the 1% of the Council budget that was to be given and from which budget this would be taken;
- due to the withdrawal of transport services from the East Coast on commercial grounds, it was asked if PB could be considered in relation to transport and be looked at as a new development;
- the catchment area and focal point for the meeting had to be considered, although one meeting had been held in Kyle as a deprived area, several of the Members could not vote as they were not in the Kyle catchment area;
- the funding for the first stage of the participatory budgeting had been requested from the Ward Discretionary Budgets, but as these budgets had now been considerably reduced another funding method should be explored;
- bigger areas and groups could dominate as they did at the meetings;
- meetings could be manoeuvred whereby applicants encouraged friends to come and affect the vote;
- a mixed response had come from the Tain area meeting although it was predominantly negative; and
- participatory budgeting was very much still a work in progress.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Report;
- ii. **AGREED** that transport be considered as a potential area for future PB; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a new funding source for participatory budgeting be explored to avoid requests from the much reduced Ward Discretionary Budget.

8. **Housing Performance Report** **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No RC/027/16 by the Director of Community Services which provided Members with information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 31 March 2016.

In discussion, the following point was raised:-

- although the removal of the facility to make cash payments at Service Points may have contributed to the increase in arrears across Highland when it was introduced, payments by debit cards can still be made at Service Points, so this is not considered an ongoing factor. The reported rise in arrears was likely to continue due to the increasing roll-out of Universal Credit.

The Committee **NOTED**, following scrutiny the information provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

9. **Roads Programme 2017/18 Progress Report** **Aithisg Adhartais Prògram Rathaidean 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RC/016/18 by the Director of Community Services.

Members had concerns for road staff who suffered abuse from the public over the condition of the roads, however they thanked staff for their hard work with winter gritting through the extended winter and for their work on the road maintenance in the area.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** to visit individual Ward Business Meetings to discuss the progress of the roads programme relative to each area.

10. Street Naming – Alness
Ainmeachadh Sràide - Leasachaidhean Ùra Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No RC/017/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform, Ward Management.

The Committee **APPROVED**:

- i. the naming of a new six property development in Alness off Perrins Road as Fulton Court, Alness.

11. West Highland and Islands Development Plan
Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd an Iar is nan Eilean

There had been circulated Report No RC/018/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised issues including the following:-

- in relation to the Kielburn Crescent site there was no objection in principle but that there were considered to be constraints that affect the developable area of the site, and as such a limit of 2/3 houses should be put on this site to avoid encroaching on the steep bank. Officers indicated that the Committee's views on this issue could be referred to the Reporter for consideration.

In relation to smaller settlements that were not included in the Local Development Plan, there was other robust criteria for consideration by Planning Officers.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the issues raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as they related to the Ross and Cromarty Committee area and **AGREED** the recommended Council response to these issues as set out in **Appendix 1**;
- ii **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory procedures required to progress the Plan to Examination including the submission of **Appendix 1** to Scottish Ministers;
- 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 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 Item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**12. Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund -
Report on Coastal Protection
Maoin Mathas Coitcheann na Cananaich agus Ros Maircnidh –
Aithisg mu Dhìon Cladaich**

There had been circulated **to members only** Report No RC/019/18 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Head of Policy and Reform.

The coastal erosion had been an ongoing problem following the big storms of 2010 and Members thanked officers for their continued work in achieving this funding.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the contents of report;
- ii. **AGREED** to support the proposed Coastal Protection Project (Rosemarkie Beach Erosion Foreshore Reinstatement);
- iii. **AGREED** a contribution of £50,000 on terms suggested from Camping and Caravanning Club;
- iv. ***AGREED** to recommend to The Highland Council that the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund contribute funding towards the proposed works to a maximum of £137,000 (including £17,000 contingency).

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm.