THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Ross and Cromarty

Date: 15 August 2018

Report Title: **Area Priorities**

Report By: Carron McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform, Ward Management

1.   Purpose/Executive Summary

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

2.   Recommendation

2.1   Members are asked to:

   i.   Consider and approve the local strategic priorities for Ross and Cromarty

   i.   Agree to promote these with the wider Council membership and as part of the Council's Programme 2017-22.

   ii.   Note that there will be opportunity, through the local community partnership and engagement with community bodies and communities to consider wider shared priorities over the Council's term.

   iii.   Note that further work will be done to identify how the local priorities agreed can be supported by staff and any other Council resources. This will include considering how to best measure progress. Some priorities are already well aligned to the Council's Programme.

3.   Background

3.1   Building on the localism agenda and increased delegation of decision making to local committees, each local committee was asked by the Leader in 2016 to consider developing a set of strategic Council priorities for their area. This was done and the resulting Area Priorities were adopted in October 2016.

4.   Updating the Vison for Ross and Cromarty

4.1   Following on from the Council elections in 2017 it was appropriate to revisit those priorities. Cllr Robertson, as Area Chair, discussed the priorities at Ward Business Meetings and/or with individual Members and groups of Members. Following those discussions the Area Priorities were refreshed, discussed again at 2 further Member meetings and then amended.

4.2   The updated Area Priorities are attached as Appendix One. Some require partnership working locally, for example through community partnerships and others focus on working with and lobbying other public bodies.

4.3   The local priorities reflect the Council's Programme; Local Voices – Highland Choices. There are themes around: a place to live; a place to learn; a place to thrive and a welcoming place. How the Council's Programme is to be delivered is set out in the Corporate Plan. Where local priorities are aligned to the Corporate Plan these are highlighted in the appendix with the corresponding Corporate Plan reference number.

5.   Implications

5.1   There are no immediate Legal, Risk or Gaelic implications at this stage. Implementation of these priorities will bring positive implications for the Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) and for the environment (Climate Change / Carbon Clever).

5.2   There will be resource impacts including staff time. It will be important to understand how best to direct staff time and other resources to support Members' priorities and how to measure progress against them. Further work will be done this year to identify the support needed and alignment with the resources supporting the Council's Corporate Plan.

Designation: Carron McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform, Ward Management

Date: 12 July 2018

Authors: Helen Ross, Senior Ward Manager, CSER

Ross and Cromarty Priorities – July 2018

Transport and Infrastructure
- o Developing and improving the road network, including working with partners to improve the safety of junctions (3.6).

- o Working with Hi Trans to seek improved cycle routes throughout Ross and Cromarty (3.6).

- o Understand the potential for community transport and encourage communities to explore/develop community transport initiatives. (3.7).

- o Supporting communities and businesses to have improved broadband access and connectivity. Ensure up to date awareness of Broadband provision/issues via HIE and Community Broadband Scotland including updates re potential to use the SWAN Network and examples of best practice (3.1).

- o Seek improved infrastructure Lobby the Scottish Government/partners as appropriate to support key infrastructure - e.g. to support Stromeferry By-pass solution and the re-opening of Evanton Railway station (3.4).

Economic development
- o Work with our partners to explore and support inward investment with a focus on town and village centre regeneration, where appropriate (1.4).

- o Promote the opportunities for sustainable economic development e.g. as provided by the Wester Ross Biosphere (4.1).

Tourism
- o Promote tourism, for example by promoting the NC500 route across the whole of Ross and Cromarty (4.3).

- o Support improved infrastructure e.g. via identification of potential revenue sources/ commercial or community opportunities/community asset transfers or buyouts. (4.3)

- o Consider how the growing cruise industry affects Invergordon and surrounding area and prepare a masterplan for the town, along with appropriate partners (4.3).

Housing
- o Work with officers and Council House tenants to achieve the improvement of Council Houses, Estates and the surrounding environment (1.2).

o Promote improved condition of the common areas on housing estates including:

     a) Supporting the work of Community wardens and
     b) Ensuring clarity of responsibility between Community Services and Housing work within housing estates

Education

o Ensure education estate provision is fit for purpose for nursery, primary, secondary and special school pupils across the Ross and Cromarty area with members able to scrutinise the progress and cost of local projects regularly (2.4).

Community Engagement and Community Planning

o Support effective local Community Planning Partnerships which enable and support communities and community involvement in them (1.3)

Health and Wellbeing

o Ensure sufficient information around key care provision and capacity including community initiatives and examples of good practice (3.2, 3.8).

o Ensure sufficient scrutiny of key services for adults and children which support health and wellbeing (3.2, 3.8).

Community Services and Waste

o Maximise local decision making across both revenue and capital CS budgets with the aim of delivering the right balance of preventative and response work (5.1).

o Explore potential to redistribute disaggregated budgets to permit the funding of village officers where this is a local priority (5.1).

Localism

o Ensuring that revenue and capital budgets are disaggregated to the true local level and information brought timeously and in such a way as to maximise members' ability to influence priorities and outcomes (5.1).