

**The Highland Council  
Sutherland County Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Sutherland County Committee held in the Chamber, Council Offices, Drummie on Thursday, 23 August 2018 at 10.30am.

**Present:**

Ms K Currie

Mr H Morrison

Mrs D Mackay

Ms L Munro (Chair)

Mr J McGillivray

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr P Tomalin, Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

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

Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development & Infrastructure Service

Mr M Dent, Access Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service

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

**Also in Attendance:**

Mrs F Hampton, Head of Business, High Life Highland (Item 4)

Ms Y Ross, Youth Worker, Dornoch Academy, High Life Highland (Item 4)

Chief Inspector I MacLelland, North Area Commander, Police Scotland (Items 5&6 )

Detective Chief Inspector Vince McLaughlin, Police Scotland (Items 5 & 6)

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr R Gale.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Appointment of Vice Chair of Sutherland County Committee  
Cur Iar-Chathraiche Comataidh Siorrachd Chataibh an Dreuchd**

Mrs D Mackay seconded by Ms K Currie proposed that Mr H Morrison be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee.

On there being no other nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr H Morrison to the position of Vice Chair.

**4. Presentation: Year of Young People High Life Highland  
Taisbeanadh: Bliadhna na h-Òigridh High Life na Gàidhealtachd**

The Head of Business and Youth Worker, High Life Highland were in attendance to give a presentation on the event 'A Great Day Out in Sutherland' which was being held to celebrate the Year of Young People and which had been organised in response to feedback from youngsters in secondary schools in Sutherland. The event would be held at the Ferrycroft Visitor Centre in Lairg on 12 September 2018 and would involve pupils from Golspie High School, Dornoch Academy, Farr High School, Kinlochbervie High School and Ullapool High School. It would be free to attend and would focus on health and wellbeing and be activity and entertainment

based, and information was provided on the more detailed plans and activities for the day. A range of partners were supporting the event and further details were also provided in this regard.

During discussion, Members welcomed the event and commended the High Life Highland representatives, and young people involved for all the work they had invested in driving forward what was an excellent event.

Members then raised the following key issues:-

- the attendance of the Armed Forces was welcomed, however concern was expressed that they should not bring weapons to the event. The Head of Business confirmed that further details of the type of interactions proposed with the young people would be sought with the stipulation that no weapons should be brought to the event;
- clarification was sought and provided on the timeline that would apply in respect any decision to cancel in the event of poor weather conditions;
- it was confirmed that event was open to all secondary school pupils, reference being made to the logistical and safety issues associated with involving primary school pupils;
- the Sutherland Community Partnership also be commended on their involvement in pulling the event together;
- young people from Sutherland attending Tain Royal Academy should also to attend the event if they so wished be considered;
- the potential for recent school leavers to attend also be investigated; and
- it was noted that further more detailed discussions would take place with Members on the planning and logistics of the event at their Ward Business Meeting in September 2018.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

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

There had been circulated Report Nos SCC/10/18 and SCC/11/18 dated 8 August 2018 by the North Area Commander.

During discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- concern was expressed that a recent Driving Ambitions session at Dornoch Academy had involved only sixth year pupils and therefore the initiative was not capturing all young people as they were learning to drive and the importance of all schools in Sutherland being involved going forward. The Chief Inspector advised that Police Scotland supported the Council in regard to the delivery of Driving Ambitions and he would have further discussions on these issues;
- confirmation was sought and provided by the Chief Inspector that Members would be presented with more information on the work ongoing to update and improve Driving Ambitions through a more coordinated partnership approach;
- further information was sought and provided on the Rider Refinement North scheme in terms of how many people had engaged, how the public could become involved and when it would be repeated;

- an update was sought on progress with the 101 reporting system in response to which the Chief Inspector advised that it was working well with few complaints having been received; and
- further information was sought and provided in relation to Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism and in particular the work ongoing to develop contacts in the Sutherland area in order to run workshops for relevant staff. The Chair suggested that ports were a particular issue in Sutherland and Members could assist in identifying contacts within communities. The Chief Inspector welcomed this support and advised that he would provide the Ward Manager with the contact details of the relevant officer within Police Scotland for wider dissemination to Members.

The Committee following scrutiny, **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20.

**6. Presentation: Police Public Protection Unit - Protecting Communities Across Sutherland**  
**Taisbeanadh: Aonad Dìon Poblach a' Phoileis – A' Dìon Choimhearsnachdan Air Feadh Chataibh**

Detective Chief Inspector V McLaughlin, Police Scotland was in attendance to give a short presentation on the work on going in relation to protecting communities across Sutherland. He reported on the work of the Risk and Concern Hub which covered the Highlands and Islands and its importance in the managing and sharing of information with a range of partners to improve the wellbeing of persons, localities and communities in Highland. In this regard, he provided further information on the Vulnerable Persons Database and initiatives such as the Right to Ask Scheme which was a disclosure scheme for domestic abuse. An update was also provided on the work ongoing to protect people from financial harm through a coordinated approach with partners including with financial institutions to prevent fraud and repeat incidents.

During discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- information was sought and provided on the operation of the Right to Ask Scheme during which it was confirmed that the first point of contact would be through the 101 reporting system;
- it was important to note and welcome the significant progress which had been made in supporting families and victims over recent years;
- reference was made to the changing role of the Police officer in terms of protecting vulnerable people and communities, for example dealing with missing persons;
- in regard to the above a point that there was a shortage of mental health officers and other specialist support in respect of substance use and the fact the Police officer was filling that gap and the importance of their being a balance of provision across partners; and
- in response to the Chair, it was confirmed that a copy of the presentation would be circulated to Members.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

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

There had been Report No SCC/12/18 dated 20 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the title of the ASG should be changed to the Dornoch 3-18 Campus Associated School Group Overview. The Education Quality Improvement Manager confirmed she would feedback on this point;
- it was suggested the figures in respect of free meals uptake at Dornoch Academy reflected a level of deprivation which was not always acknowledged in statistics for the locality; and
- concern was expressed at the condition of the school buildings within the ASG and within Sutherland in general. It was suggested that rural areas were not benefitting from the Schools for Future programme and there was a need to focus and lobby on a programme which also invested in the upgrading and refurbishment of existing schools.

The Committee following scrutiny, **NOTED** the content of the report.

## 8. **Annual Area Capital Report** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Chalpa Sgìre**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/13/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.

In discussion, disappointment was expressed that a representative from the Finance Service had not attended the meeting to present the report and respond to Members questions and therefore allow for proper scrutiny of the report.

Further comments included:-

- the report be welcomed on the basis it represented a starting point for Member scrutiny and the opportunity to influence the capital spend going forward, specific reference being made to the condition of school buildings in the area;;
- the potential to retain the income of £70,000 generated from the sale of a Community Services building in the area for use in Sutherland, for example to offset/cushion against future pending charges in Sutherland such as car parking charges;
- in regard to the above concern was expressed that it was not competent to use capital monies to offset revenue charges;
- concern at the proposed measure to introduce car parking charges in Sutherland given there was no pressure on parking in the area;
- the need for Sutherland to be allocated a proportionate share of the Council's overall total capital spend to ensure fairness on the basis it was suggested that there was under investment in the area;
- it was requested that a league table of the proposed allocation of and actual capital spend across each area in the Highlands be produced. It was confirmed that an Annual Area Capital report was being presented to each of the Local Committees and therefore this information was already available.

Following further discussion, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2017/18;
- ii. **NOTED** that budget for each project in this Council area in 2018/19;
- iii. **AGREED** to request that an officer be invited to a Ward Business Meeting to speak to the report; and
- \* iv **AGREED** to request that the income of £70,000 generated from the sale of a Community Services building in Dornoch be ring fenced for use in Sutherland.

#### 9. **Dornoch Aerodrome Raon-adhair Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/14/18 dated 25 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In discussion, Members welcomed the report as an excellent piece of work and advised it would be helpful if progress could be reviewed after a period of one year. The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of this report;
- ii. **NOTED** the proposed changes to signs at the airstrip, and efforts to be made to promote the boundary walking route(s);
- iii. **AGREED** to delegate the Director of Development and Infrastructure to negotiate on behalf of the Council and conclude an agreement with the RAF;
- iv. **APPROVED** the Rules for Users (**Appendix 6**); and
- v. **APPROVED** the Schedule of Fees (**Appendix 7**).

#### 10. **Sutherland Local Access Forum - Appointments Fòram Intrigeadh Ionadail Chataibh – Cur an Dreuchd**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/15/18 dated 31 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In discussion, it was queried whether there were vacancies for community representatives on the Forum, interest having been expressed from representatives of Dornoch and Edderton Community Councils. The Access Officer advised that there were currently no community representatives on the Forum and as such there was the opportunity for additional appointments. He confirmed that any further appointments would be submitted to the Committee for approval.

A point was also raised on the need to raise awareness of the work of the Forum and the opportunity to discuss this matter in more detail at a future date.

The Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of those members of the public (as set out in **Appendix 2**) that have applied to be new members of the Local Access Forum in Sutherland.

## 11. Sutherland County Committee – Area Priorities Comataidh Siorrachd Chataibh – Prìomhachasan Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No SCC/16/18 dated 3 August 2018 by the Head of Policy and Reform.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the development of an action plan which identified timelines and lead officers in relation to priorities be considered at the next Ward Business Meeting;
- the Chair confirmed she would follow up in relation to Members concerns in regard to the Highland Third Sector Interface's decision to reduce its funding to VGES and CVS North;
- in terms of budgeting decisions it was critical to move forward with community engagement at the earliest opportunity and it was suggested that feedback be sought on the next steps during the series of meetings to be held between Members, community councils and the public in September 2018; and
- clarification was sought on the closing dates for the next round of funding from the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. The Ward Manager confirmed he would circulate Members with the relevant information.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** "A Voice for Sutherland and its People", the local strategic priorities for Sutherland, including the stated priorities for the next 12 months;
- ii. **AGREED** to promote these with the wider Council membership and as part of the Council's Programme 2017-22;
- iii. **NOTED** that there will be opportunity, through the Sutherland Community Partnership and engagement with partner agencies, community bodies and communities to consider wider shared priorities over the Council's term; and
- iv. **NOTED** 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.

## 12. Centenary Fields – Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens Raointean Cuimhneachan nan Ceud Bliadhna – Gàrraidhean Cuimhneachan Cogaidh Dhrochaid a' Bhanna

There had been circulated Report No SCC/17/18 dated 25 July 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, the Ward Manager clarified that the Creich and Kincardine Branch of the Royal British Legion and Creich Community Council would be consulted as part of the application process.

- \* The Committee **AGREED** to recommend that the Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens be nominated for Centenary Field status.

**13. Dornoch Common Good Quarterly Monitoring Report  
Aithisg Sgrùdadh Ràitheil Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/18/18 dated 25 July 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development.

The Committee **NOTED** the position of the Dornoch Common Good Fund, as shown in the Q1 monitoring statement against budget.

**14. Minutes  
Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Sutherland County Committee held on 23 May 2018, which had been approved by the Council on 28 June 2018.

**15. 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 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.

**16. Dornoch Common Good – Dornoch Firth Netting Rights  
Math Coitcheann Dhòrnaich – Còraichean Iasgach-lìon Caolas Dhòrnaich**

There had been circulated Report No SCC/19/18 dated 31 July 2018 by the Head of Policy and Reform.

The Committee **APPROVED** the recommendation set out in the report.

The meeting closed at 12.50pm.

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**The Highland Council  
Caithness Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Caithness Committee held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick, on Tuesday, 28 August 2018 at 10.00am.

**Present:**

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

Mr M Reiss  
Mr K Rosie  
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  
Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services  
Mr M Dent, Access Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

**Also in Attendance:**

Chief Inspector I MacLelland, North Area Commander, Police Scotland  
Area Inspector M Macdonald, Police Scotland

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Liesgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There had been circulated Report Nos CC/09/18 and CC/10/18 dated 20 August 2018 by the North Area Commander.

The North Area Commander reported that due to operational matters, Detective Chief Inspector M Sutherland was unable to attend the meeting but was keen to meet with Members to discuss the issues around serious organised crime. He confirmed he would liaise with the Ward Manager on the arrangements for this meeting.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- the joint approach being progressed with the Police in relation to licensing in the area was appreciated by licensees and was welcomed;
- following discussion with the Area Inspector, it would be helpful if community events in Thurso around drug misuse could be arranged as soon as possible, and reference was made to a proposal to establish a short life working group on this issue;



- confirmation was sought and provided that it was appropriate for Members to share the Area Performance reports with community councils and on social media. The Chief Inspector advised that he would also consider placing the reports on Police Scotland's Facebook page and investigate the formatting of the reports to allow them to be more readily uploaded onto social media;
- the increased visibility of Police officers in the area, particularly at the weekends was appreciated by the local community and Members were encouraged to take up the offer to accompany the Police while out on patrol;
- advice was sought on the works required to make the former Wick High School safe following recent acts of vandalism. The Chief Inspector confirmed that he would arrange for officers to carry out a site visit and for Ms N Sinclair to be contacted directly on this matter;
- information was sought and provided on the correlation between drug dealing and thefts by housebreaking and the action being taken locally to address this problem and recent successes in this regard;
- reference to Police Scotland's role in tackling littering with specific reference to plastics which was a rapidly growing area of public interest and the opportunity for the Police to further highlight this issue by pursuing prosecutions;
- the Chair provided an update on his recent positive discussions with the Chief of Roads Policing, Police Scotland in relation to the additional workload associated with the North Coast 500, and Members wish to have extra roads policing in the area; and
- the interventions being progressed by Police Scotland in relation to new and repeat offenders in the area.

During further discussion, Members raised a number of issues in relation to drug misuse in the area. The Chief Inspector advised that a particular concern was the misuse of prescribed drugs being ordered online and delivered through the post. Police Scotland had a good relationship with the mail services in terms of interventions to tackle this problem and intercepting these drugs. It was also important to raise awareness and to communicate key messages to the public about the dangers of taking prescription drugs. Members were encouraged to report any intelligence they may have directly to the Chief Inspector/Area Inspector.

Thereafter, discussion followed on the issues of anti-social behaviour associated with drug misuse in Caithness and community concerns on this matter. In response, the excellent work being undertaken by Safer Caithness on this matter was highlighted. It was also important to recognise the good support and help that was available in the area for those people in the community who were often in a vulnerable position due to a drug addiction problem. In particular, the work of the Caithness Drug and Alcohol Forum, Police Scotland, Council officers, and other agencies should be commended. The ongoing work of the Caithness Partnership to tackle deprivation in Caithness should also be recognised. It was suggested that communities in Caithness were tolerant and reference was made to the importance of engaging with them to ensure a better understanding of the issues for the benefit of all.

The Committee following scrutiny, **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20.

#### 4. **Wick Associated School Group Overview** **Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte**

There had been circulated Report No CC/11/18 dated 24 August 2018 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Members welcomed the outstanding progress being made in respect of the destinations of pupils on leaving Wick High School in recent years. Specifically pupils going on to positive destinations between 2013/14 and 2016/17 had increased from 88.1% to 95.6% which was now above the Highland and Scotland average. The figures also showed that pupils going on to Higher and Further Education had increased over two years from a total of 54.4% in 2014/15 to 60.6% in 2016/17. In addition, the number of pupils unemployed either seeking or not seeking employment had fallen from nearly 10% in 2014/15 to less than 1% in 2016/17.

Members congratulated the Head Teacher, management team, staff and pupils on this outstanding achievement. It was suggested the success of the School should be highlighted in the public domain and therefore arrangements be made for a press release to be issued and for this good news story also be highlighted to the local press. The Education Quality Improvement Manager confirmed she would feedback Members comments to the School.

During further discussion, it was suggested that the sustainable schools review in the area had been handled well to date, particularly in relation to communication and engagement with communities. Information was sought and provided on the next steps, in view of some concerns expressed by Newton Park Primary School. In response to a question, the Manager provided a summary of the range of work being undertaken through the Eco Schools initiative.

The Committee following scrutiny, **NOTED** the content of the report.

#### 5. **Annual Area Capital Report** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Chalpa Sgìre**

There had been circulated Report No CC/12/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.

The Chair advised that the report was intended to provide a general summary of the capital projects the Council was engaged in the area and that if Members had detailed questions on the projects then the relevant contact officers were listed in the report.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2017/18; and
- ii. budget for each project in this Council area in 2018/19.

#### 6. **Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018** **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais - 1 Giblean 2018 to 30 An t-Og Mhios 2018**

There had been circulated Report No CC/13/18 dated 14 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, Members raised the following key issues:-

- confirmation was sought and provided that the Housing Team had a good relationship and was working as closely as possible with the local CAB in dealing with the increased workload associated with the impacts of Universal Credit;
- the challenges associated with the current situation whereby the Council did not know if tenants were in receipt of Universal Credit unless advised by the customer and the importance of the DWP sharing more information in this regard, albeit it was recognised there were data protection constraints;
- the local Housing Team be commended on the range of good and positive work being undertaken in the area and on the level of assistance being provided to tenants impacted by Universal Credit. The Principal Housing Officer advised that she would feedback Members appreciation to staff;
- the challenges in respect of void properties in Caithness and rising rent arrears was also an issue for the wider Council and this should be taken into account in relation to any targets set and in allocating resources;
- in regard to the above, it was clarified that the performance indicators referred to in the report were set by the Scottish Housing Regulator; and
- information was sought and provided on the significant proportion of tenants in rent arrears as a result of Universal Credit and also in fuel poverty and the action being taken by the Service in seeking to address this issue.

The Committee following scrutiny, **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

#### 7. **Caithness Local Access Forum - Appointments** **Fòram Inntreighidh Ionadail Ghallaibh – Cur an Dreuchd**

There had been circulated Report No CC/14/18 dated 31 July 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of those members of the public (as set out in **Appendix 2** of the report) that had applied to be new members of the Local Access Forum in Caithness.

#### 8. **Minutes** **Geàrr-chunntas**

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 16 May 2018, which were approved by the Council on 28 June 2018.

The meeting ended at 11.35am.

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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 29 August 2018 at 10.30 am.

**Present:**

Mr G Adam	Mr B Lobban
Mr R Bremner (by Video Conference)	Mr D Louden
Mr J Bruce	Mr R MacDonald (by Video Conference)
Mrs C Caddick	Mrs D Mackay
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr S MacKie (by Video Conference)
Dr I Cockburn	Mr A Mackinnon
Mrs M Davidson	Mrs M Paterson
Mr L Fraser	Mr M Reiss
Mr R Gale	Mr D Rixson
Mr A Jarvie	Mr P Saggars
Mr R Laird	Mr B Thompson

**Non Members also Present:**

Mrs J Barclay	Mr J Gray
Mr B Boyd	Mr D Mackay
Mr A Christie	Mrs T Robertson
Mr K Gowans	

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr S Barron, Chief Executive  
 Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive and 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  
 Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service  
 Mr C Innes, Head of Commercial and Procurement Shared Services, Corporate Resources Service  
 Mr J Shepherd, ICT Operations Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
 Mr M Bailey, Principal Project Manager, Commercial & Efficiency Team, Corporate Resources Service  
 Mr M Kelly, Project Manager, Commercial & Efficiency Team, Corporate Resources Service  
 Mr M Fraser, Finance Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office  
 Ms A Macrae, Committee 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****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. Recess Powers  
Cumhachdan Fosaìdh**

The Chairman explained that delegated powers had been granted at the previous meeting of the Committee in regard to Alness Academy (Item 12 of the agenda).

Consequently, the Committee **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 28 June 2018 had not been used.

**4. Good News Stories  
Naidheachdan Matha**

The Committee **NOTED** that Rachel MacDonald, trainee accountant within the Corporate Finance service, had been admitted to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) following the successful completion of her exams and submission of her practical experience portfolio.

**FINANCIAL MONITORING  
SGRÙDADH IONMHASAIL**

**5. Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 June 2018  
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Teachd-a-steach Corporra gu 30 Ògmhios 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/**36**/18 dated 16 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

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

- As at end June 2018 the projected overspend in the annual revenue budget was £5.1m which had showed the impact of successive budget reductions. It was therefore extremely challenging to manage significant pressures on demand led services. The Administration's Budget Team had done all it could to protect front line services and jobs, and they were focused on finding ways the Council could increase income and maximise efficiency savings in areas where the Council did not have statutory responsibilities. The Council's budget would remain challenging in years to come, meaning that Members would have difficult

decisions to make in order that the Council had a balanced budget as was legally required;

- The Administration Budget Team had taken the decision to take urgent action to address the projected overspend by introducing enhanced expenditure control measures on recruitment, overtime, review of agency workers and travel. There would also be robust monthly monitoring to ensure savings were being met and progress reports would be submitted to Strategic Committees;
- It was confirmed that there were no job losses predicted at this time, and the Council had a good record of staff redeployment in cases where staff were at risk of redundancy;
- Services had to deliver services according to the resources that had been allocated to them by Council. However a point was made that the budget that had been allocated could not reasonably be implemented by Services and they were now having to deliver services on a reduced budget given the level of savings needing to be made;
- The Administration Budget Team welcomed views from other political groups on ideas for savings and assurance was given that they would continue to be consulted throughout the budget process;
- The budget deficit was at around 1% of the Council's total Revenue budget, and while this was a concern and would be addressed, the important issue was restoring reserves to a more appropriate level and this would form part of the budget strategy for 2019-2022. Currently the reserves were at around £8m and well below the minimum level recommended by Audit Scotland, who had recommended that public sector bodies should have a minimum of 2% of their annual revenue budget in reserve. Reserves at such a low level exposed the Council to address any cost pressures that might arise during the year, e.g. a particularly bad winter;
- the overspend in Care and Learning was largely due to the high cost placements for Looked after Children. The Council was looking at providing accommodation for this Service in its own area which would considerably reduce expenditure in this budget, as long as accommodating them in this area was in the best interests of the Children;
- The Redesign process was continuing to identify new areas for review and good progress was being made in meeting the savings target. Some of these potential savings would need investment as early as this financial year as they would require a change in the business activity of the Council. Concern was expressed at the level of redesign savings, how these would be achieved and whether the position at the end of the financial year would be known;
- All public sector organisations were facing financial challenges in light of less funding being given to the public sector but it was felt that Local Government was not being treated equitably with its public sector partners in terms of funding. However, the view was also expressed that the budgetary problems currently being faced were down to the decisions made by this Council;
- The level of savings required would have a significant impact on the delivery of services and there was a need to know what the implications for service delivery would be and how the budget gap would be closed and this should be reported to full Council;

- Difficult decisions would have to be made in order to achieve the required savings and there was a need to consult with Members and communities before these decisions were made to explain the reasons for them; and
- A point was made that loan charges were increasing and much of the financial problems facing the Council related to capital expenditure and this could get worse if borrowing rates increased which would put a cost pressure on the revenue budget. It was advised that the Capital programme that was approved by Council this year would have no overall impact on the loan charges budget and it was affordable. Assumptions on future increases to interest rates had been factored in when calculating the affordability of loans charges. In this respect, the work of the Treasury Management Team in the Finance Service was commended as they had saved the Council considerable amounts of money over the years by arranging loans at preferential rates.

In responding to a number of points, the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources stated that a report would be submitted to the full Council meeting on 6 September 2018 on an update to the preparation for the budget strategy for 2019-2022. As part of this process the Council's reserves needed to be rebuilt and this could no longer be optional. The measures that Directors were taking to address the budget pressures in their Services were proportionate to the budgetary challenges facing them and actions would be taken now. There was a direct link between Capital and Revenue expenditure and this was the reason why the Council had reduced by half the Council's capital programme in the last budget, so that borrowing did not increase any further. A Workforce Strategy was also currently being developed in order that Services could plan for the future based on its priorities and this would be linked closely with the financial strategy. Members in setting the budget took an element of risk in order to balance the budget e.g. with the level of savings that could be achieved from the Redesign process. If Members had chosen not to accept an element of risk in savings being made, then further cuts to the budget and ultimately services would have been necessary to set a balanced budget. Therefore, the key was in managing this element of risk and ensuring that savings were made from the Redesign process and other areas of service delivery. It was challenging to maintain a balanced budget but the Council had to keep within the resources that had been allocated to it and action to do this was underway.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. financial position of the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets as at 30 June 2018 and the estimated year end forecast;
- ii. actions proposed to restore a balanced position for 2018/19 as outlined in section 4 of the report; and
- iii. status of budgeted savings in the year.

## **6. Corporate Capital Monitoring Report to 30 June 2018 Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Calpa Corporra gu 30 Ògmhios 2019**

There had been circulated Report No RES/**37**/18 dated 17 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

It was requested that clarification be provided to Councillor I Cockburn on delays in statutory consents and high tender returns in relation to slippage on the Council house building element of the Capital programme and whether funding from the Scottish Government would be lost as a result of those delays.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes as at 30 June 2018.

**7. Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget Monitoring to 30 June 2018**

**Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra agus Buidseat nan Sochairean gu 30 Ògmhios 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/**38**/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In particular it was noted that Highland Council had used in full the Scottish Government's new funding to local authorities to support School Clothing Grand award levels. The level of grant award was now £140 in Highland which was the highest School Clothing Grant award of all local authorities in Scotland.

The Committee **AGREED** the financial position of the Corporate Resources Service and Welfare budget as at 30 June 2018.

**8. Corporate Resources Service Capital Monitoring Report to 30 June 2018**  
**Aithisg Sgrùdadh Calpa Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra gu 30 Ògmhios 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/**39**/18 dated 13 August 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 30 June 2018.

**9. Chief Executive's Office and Members' Revenue Monitoring Report to 30 June 2018**

**Aithisg Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach Oifis an Àrd-Oifigeir agus nam Ball gu 30 Ògmhios 2018**

There had been circulated Report No RES/**40**/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Chief Executive.

The Chairman advised that Member expenses forms were not be submitted timeously for processing and that this was resulting in administrative and significant budgetary difficulties. He therefore proposed that Members be required to submit their expenses for processing during the quarter that those expenses were incurred, otherwise they would lose those expenses. Although supportive of the proposal, it was recommended that confirmation be sought that this was legally permissible and if introduced Members be given adequate notice of the implementation date in order to adjust to the new policy.



Responding to a question, it was confirmed that following a meeting of Political Group Party Leaders, it had been agreed that due to the ongoing IT problems the format in which committee papers should be distributed, i.e. electronic or hard copy, would be reviewed in December 2018.

Also, it was highlighted that the IT problems affecting the Council's video conferencing facilities and the lack of a reliable system had a direct impact on Members travel and expenses. This point was acknowledged and it was confirmed that work was ongoing to resolve the IT problems.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the financial position of the Chief Executive's Office and Members' budget as at 30 June 2018 and **NOTED** the status of budgeted savings in the year; and
- \* ii. **AGREED to Recommend** to Council that, subject to it being legally clarified that it was permissible, Members be required to submit their expenses for processing during the quarter that those expenses were incurred, otherwise they would lose those expenses. Members would be informed of the date when this new arrangement would be effective from.

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

#### **10. Treasury Management Rianachd Ionmhais**

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

There had been circulated Report No RES/41/18 dated 17 August 2018 by the Director of Finance.

During discussion comments included that in relation to the proposal to provide a loan to Albyn Housing Society it was important to be aware of the implications for Scottish Government funding when developing the business case.

In addition, it would be helpful for an update to be provided on the potential implications of rising base rates and associated risks to the Council. The Chair confirmed this would be provided in the next quarterly report.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Treasury Management Summary of Transactions report; and
- ii. **APPROVED**, in principle, a loan to Albyn Housing society subject to a business case and detailed loan terms to be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee for approval; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the next quarterly report would include an update on the potential implications of rising base rates and associated risks.

**(b) Annual Treasury Management Report 2017/18  
Aithisg Stiùiridh Bhliadhnaidh an Ionmhais 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No RES/42/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Director of Finance.

In discussion, it was suggested that the advice received from the Council's Treasury Advisor mainly related to the past and it would be helpful if more detailed information on projections going forward could be provided. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism undertook to ensure more comprehensive information was provided in future reports.

The Committee **NOTED** the Annual Treasury Management report for 2017/18.

**11. Corporate Resources Service Quarterly Performance Report  
Aithisg Choileanaidh Ràitheil Seirbheis nan Goireasan Corporra**

There had been circulated Report No RES/43/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the Head of Revenues and Customer Services and staff be commended on their excellent work and in particular on significantly reducing the overall costs of the service areas identified in section 4 of the report and on Highland being ranked 1<sup>st</sup> for both new claims and change in circumstances in respect of housing benefit;
- the Team be congratulated on being selected as a finalist for the 2018 UK's Institute of Revenues Rating & Valuation (IRRV) Benefits & Welfare Reform Team of Year and it was hoped they would be successful at the awards ceremony to be held in October 2018;
- the Service was also commended on its performance in relation to attendance management and in particular the figures shown for the average number of days lost per employee; and
- issues with Council Tax billing which had been experienced by some tenants. The Head of Revenues and Customer Services advised Councillor R Laird that he would investigate the specific cases which had been highlighted.

The Committee **NOTED** the statutory and key performance indicators as outlined in the report.

**12. AIness Academy  
Acadamaidh Alanais**

There will follow Report No RES/44/18 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

In discussion, it was suggested there were fundamental issues with the current approach involving Scottish Futures Trust and Hub North of Scotland Limited on the basis that the process was too complex, time consuming and prone to delays. The Leader undertook to write to both organisations expressing the Committee's disappointment with the process, particularly in regard to the risks to the Council.

Further comments included that, as soon as they were known, it was important the Committee be informed of the final project costs. There was also a need to move away from bespoke designs for such projects.

The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services reported he had raised his concerns with the Scottish Futures Trust and Hubco about the process and the delays it appeared this was causing in the Highlands in comparison to other areas of Scotland and that he would be pursuing this matter further. He advised that the purpose of seeking approval for advanced works was to ensure every effort was being made to deliver the project on schedule, and that once the Council had signed off on the final contract value, the risk transferred in full to the contractor.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to homologate the actions taken under the Delegated Authority arrangements namely to sign two Letters of Intent (LoI) to cover two tranches of Advanced Works which in total amounted to approximately £2.4m;
- ii. **NOTED** the risks of signing these two LoIs without having agreed the finalised Project cost with Hubco;
- iii. **NOTED** the risks of not signing these two LoIs with Hubco;
- iv. **AGREED** the delegated authority arrangements agreed in May 2018 (the "Delegated Authority arrangements") remain in place to cover the continuing finalisation of the contractual documentation;
- v. **APPROVED** each of the detailed Legal requirements to be provided to Hubco as outlined in the report;
- vi. **AGREED** that a letter be issued from the Leader of the Council to Scottish Futures Trust and Hubco expressing the Council's disappointment with the process, particularly in regard to the risks that the Council was being exposed to; and
- vii. **AGREED** that, as soon as they were known, the Committee be informed of the final project costs.

### **13. Annual Procurement Strategy Report Seirbheisean Malairteach agus Solair Co-roinnte: Aithisg Sholair Bhliadhna**

There had been circulated Report No RES/45/18 dated 13 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the increased spend with local suppliers and the overall level of financial efficiencies delivered over the financial year be welcomed;

- it would be helpful to have a breakdown of SME's based on businesses with five employees or less and the associated levels of local spend;
- the opportunity to provide more proactive support to the smallest businesses in the Highlands to encourage them to tender for contracts and also in relation to the pre-qualification process; and
- the potential to extend the shared arrangement of the procurement function to include other local authorities be considered.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Annual Procurement report and **AGREED** that a breakdown of SME's based on businesses with five employees or less and the associated levels of local spend be provided.

#### 14. **ICT Transformation and Network Refresh** **Cruth-atharrachadh ICT agus Ùrachadh Lìonraidh**

There had been circulated Report No RES/46/18 dated 10 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

The Chair advised that Members had received a confidential briefing on this item and had been encouraged by the progress being made. He acknowledged there had been issues with the network over the past few days and on behalf of the Committee thanked the ICT Team for all their hard work and commitment to resolving these issues.

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

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

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

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Commercial Board held on 20 June 2018 and 9 August 2018, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

#### 16. **Minutes of Meetings** **Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan**

There had been circulated the following Minutes of Meetings, the terms of which were **APPROVED**:-

- i. Central Safety Committee held on 3 August 2018; and
- ii. Staff Partnership Forum held on 3 August 2018.

#### 17. **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 item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SERVICE  
SEIRBHEIS NAN GOIREASAN CORPORA**

**18. Wick Campus  
Àrainn Inbhir Ùige**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/**47**/18 dated 17 August 2018 by the Chief Executive.

Following detailed discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that action be implemented as per paragraph 7.9 and 7.13 of the report.

**19. Highland Council Commercial Strategy  
Ro-innleachd Mhalairteach Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/**48**/18 dated 7 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

Following discussion, the Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

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

**20. Commercial Business Case  
Cùis Ghnothachais Mhalairteach**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No RES/**49**/18 dated 20 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Following discussion, the Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

The meeting was closed at 2.40 pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 30 August 2018 at 10.30am.

### Present:

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

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager  
 Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator  
 Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer  
 Ms J Murray, Victorian Market Manager  
 Ms M Murray, Committee Administrator  
 Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager  
 Mr J Taylor, Roads Operations Manager (Inverness)

### Also in attendance:

Mr G Ambrose, VILN Chief Executive  
 Inspector C Gough, Police Scotland

**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**

### Preliminaries

The City Area Manager explained that Members had been issued with an amended set of reports, some additional information relevant to Item 4 (Police Area Performance), and the tabled set of minutes for the Events and Festivals Working Group of 30 July 2018.

The Committee **NOTED** the additional papers and **AGREED** that future meetings of the Committee would start at 10am, as previously discussed.

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ms E Knox, Miss J Campbell, Mr A Graham and Mr J Gray.

## 2. **Declarations of Interest** **Foilseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

Item 6 – Ms H Carmichael (non-financial)  
Item 8 – Mr K Gowans (financial)  
Item 10 – Mrs M Davidson (financial)

## 3. **Recess Powers** **Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

Members were advised that Recess Powers had not required to be used for this Committee over the Recess period.

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

There had been circulated Report Nos CIA/34/18 and CIA/35/18 (both dated 16 August 2018) by the Chief Inspector, Inverness Area Commander, which provided an update on progress with reference to the objectives outlined within the Highland Policing Plan for the periods covering 1 April 2017-31 March 2018 and 1 April 2018-31 July 2018 respectively.

Following the presentation, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the increase in police activity was welcomed and it would be useful if future reports contained more scientific / statistical information to more easily facilitate analysis of links between increased activity and performance statistics;
- increases in police activity were reflected in the crime detection statistics and it was hoped that crime prevention work would continue with other public agencies. In this regard, some health and social care reporting at area level, as happened in other areas and at the Community Planning Partnership, would be useful to identify areas of mutual concern;
- there were different types of shop-lifters: those who were stealing due to poverty and an insufficient funds to purchase food; and those stealing high value items to sell, often related to drug and alcohol addictions, with the latter more frequently coming to the attention of the Police. Often a small number of known individuals were regular offenders and a brief outline of work being undertaken to tackle this was provided. Further information was sought in future on the levels of shoplifting due to poverty, with this information also likely to be of help to the Citizen's Advice Bureau;
- concern was expressed about the high numbers of missing persons, with a significant number being Looked After Children, and it was hoped that social services were involved in such cases. There was a small cohort of individuals who went missing frequently and preventative work was ongoing;

- concern was expressed about the increase in hate crimes and information was sought on whether they were becoming more physical and violent, and on whether acid attacks had taken place in Inverness. It was thought there was significant under-reporting of this and of domestic violence, and work was ongoing with support agencies;
- it was confirmed there were no current plans to permanently locate a police officer in Tornagrain, and those communities would be serviced from Inverness;
- the process behind anti-social behaviour orders was explained. Known young offenders could be reported to the police and this would be passed to beat officers;
- further information on dishonesty crimes could be provided outwith the meeting and a report provided to a future meeting if required; and
- It was clarified that more detailed or specific information on a variety of topics could be provided outwith the meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** progress as detailed in the reports.

## **5. Annual Area Capital Report Cunntas Bliadhnaì Calpa Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/36/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concern was expressed that the report did not contain adequate information on the projects to facilitate useful scrutiny, and this was exacerbated by there being no officer present at the meeting to answer questions. Members were urged to contact the relevant service department with queries about individual projects, and some Members expressed disappointment with this situation and suggested that there was no merit in being presented with the report in its current format and only on an annual basis. The capital reporting process used for the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee was preferable and the Provost would discuss this with the Director; and
- a separate capital expenditure listing for schools would be preferred. Concern was expressed that demountable solutions were sought too quickly and when making such decisions the value of the asset after capital works should be compared to cost of installation and maintenance of a demountable unit.

The Committee **NOTED** the expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2017/18 and the budget for each project in 2018/19 as detailed in the report.

## **6. Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID – Progress Report Roinn Leasachadh Gnothachais Turasachd Inbhir Nis Loch Nis**

**Declaration of Interest – Mrs H Carmichael declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of the Board of Inverness BID and of Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism 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/37/18 dated 2 August 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Tourism BID Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Mrs Davidson would speak to the Tourism BID Chief Executive to explore ways of publicising the achievements of the BID and their contribution to the area. Of particular note was the completion of the South Loch Ness Trail which meant a complete off-road circuit could now be made of Loch Ness on foot, bike or horse. Marketing events were planned for Spring 2019 and reference was made to uses to which the funding that had been received from Scottish Government & European funded Improving Public Access Scheme, SSE and the Highland Council Discretionary Capital Fund would be put, including a Loch Ness Ranger and efforts to handle the expected increase in visitor numbers; and
- it was disappointing that work with HIE to launch a Loch Ness Tourism Business Plan had not come to fruition and this should be revisited as a Plan would helpful to attract investment.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the continuing work and activities of the Tourism BID as detailed in the report.

**7. Victorian Market – Action Plan - Use of Unit  
A' Mhargaidh Bhictòrianach – Cleachdadh Aonaid Fhalaimh**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/38/18 dated 15 August 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was clarified that the proposed rental rate for the unit was £20 per hour, not per day, and it was pointed out that this could be prohibitively expensive for certain vendors and that discretion should be used to avoid the unit being empty. Final decisions on pricing were delegated to the City Area Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Victorian Market Stakeholder Management Group;
- the steps taken to improve shop frontages were welcomed; and
- the possibility of a Committee visit to the market would be considered at a meeting of the Stakeholders Management Group.

The Committee:-

- (i) **AGREED** to Unit 15 in the Market Hall being utilised for the purposes detailed within the report, noting that this Unit would be taken off the market for a period of 2 years;
- (ii) **NOTED** that during this period the Market rent of £13,000p.a. would not be available to the Inverness Common Good Fund; and

- (iii) **AGREED** that the benefits to the Inverness Common Good Fund set out in the report outweighed the potential loss of rental income.

## 8. Events and Festivals Tachartasan agus Fèisean

**Declaration of Interest - Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Inverness College UHI and having a close family member who was an employee of High Life Highland 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/39/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- several Members expressed concern at the lack of financial detail on the proposed events and suggested that this prevented adequate scrutiny for them to agree the budget. It was explained that the exact detail on future events was not known at this point in time due to the number of uncertain issues and costs, and that a full break down of costs of previous events was available. Other Members pointed out that the budget was being rolled forward without a proposed increase and with the majority of events being similar to previous years. A significant new event being proposed was the Riverlights events, but approval was not being sought for the event itself but for the suggested format of the event and to obtain more detail for a future proposal. Following considerable discussion it was explained that regular reports on events were scrutinised in detail by the Events and Festivals Working Group and that a detailed breakdown of expenditure in the previous financial year could be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;
- consideration should be given to a future event commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first UK Government Cabinet meeting being held outside London in the Inverness Town House in 1921;
- an explanation was sought and received on why the Council had not bid to stage the European Pipe Band Championships, which were to be hosted in Inverness by a private company. Fringe events were a possibility;
- more information on the costs, revenues and benefits from the Highland Games would be beneficial and information was sought and provided on European film crews who had attended the Highland Games;
- the benefits of the events programme to the entire population of the Highlands was pointed out; and
- efforts should be increased to obtain sponsorship for certain events, particularly the Red Hot Highland Fling at Hogmanay.

The Committee:-

- (i) **APPROVED** the proposed programme;

- (ii) **APPROVED** the allocation of a budget in the sum of £340,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund budget for 2019/20;
- (iii) **APPROVED** the proposed 2019/20 Action Plan;
- (iv) **NOTED** the progress made on the development of the Signature Events programme under consideration for 2022;
- (v) **APPROVED** the suggested format for the Riverlights event; and
- (vi) **AUTHORISED** the development of an Event Plan and budget for future consideration by this Committee; and
- (vii) **AGREED** that a detailed breakdown of expenditure in the previous financial year be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

## 9. Winter Maintenance Plan 2018/19 Plana Obair-glèidhidh Geamhradh 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/40/18 dated 16 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

Following a presentation of the report, and during discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the adjustments to the Winter Maintenance Plan were welcomed;
- assurance was sought and received that winter maintenance would continue as planned in the Glenurquhart area despite the imminent retiral of staff in the area;
- Community Councils should be provided with the Plan and route maps for their areas to give them the opportunity to suggest minor tweaks as a result of local knowledge;
- there were many new housing developments and roads in Inverness South ward, the majority on elevated ground, and no increase in the winter maintenance budget, which was challenging;
- given past concerns about pavement clearance, it would be helpful for Members to be provided with maps of those plans and for them to continue to encourage resilience in communities and through Community Councils;
- information was sought on the emergency resilience text messaging service and whether texts could be issued to communities to alert them to bad weather and seek their assistance; and
- it was clarified that some of the maps attached to the report were out of date but that route plans contained all roads.

The Committee:

- (i) **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Inverness Area which included the priority road lists and maps presented in Appendices B & C, subject to the amendments detailed in the report;
- (ii) **AGREED** that the amended Winter Service Policy be circulated to Community Councils;
- (iii) **AGREED** that further information be sought and provided to Members of the Committee on the emergency resilience text messaging service; and
- (iv) **AGREED** that a map of the footways to be treated be provided to Members of the Committee.

## 10. Burial Ground Commutation Fund Maoin Cho-iomlaid

**Declaration of Interest – Mrs M Davidson declared a financial interest in this item as a close family member worked for the burial team 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/41/18 dated 15 August 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services and the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion, concern was expressed at the lack of progress with planned works by Community Services since approval of the 2018-19 budget in May 2018 and at the proposed three year moratorium on further capital works being funded, the reasons for which were detailed in the report. It was clarified that the Commutation Fund was being used to supplement the programme of works being undertaken by Community Services and further clarity on this would be sought.

The Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** the position in relation to the Inverness Burial Commutation Fund;
- (ii) **NOTED** the analysis of the fund’s financial performance; and
- (iii) **APPROVED** the recommendation that for three years from 2019/20 the annual value of works undertaken by Community Services should be capped at the level of the Fund’s annual income earned and a moratorium on any additional capital works should be applied with a review in three years; and
- (iv) **AGREED** that clarity be sought from Community Services regarding progress with the Commutation Fund programme of works and the funds available in the Council’s budget for Inverness Burial Grounds.

## 11. Homologation of new Street Names Aontachadh Ainmean Sràide ùra

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/42/18 dated 2 August 2018 by the Head of Policy & Reform.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of new streets as follows:

- (i) New housing development at Kirkhill as: Williamson Way
- (ii) New flatted development at Westercraigs as: Great Glen Place
- (iii) New housing development at Ness Castle, Inverness as: Mingary Crescent
- (iv) New flatted development at Tornagrain as; Johnstone House and 1 street as Mid Coul Court
- (v) New housing development at Wester Inshes (phase 3) requiring 4 street names as: Broomhall Court; Inshes Grove; Wester Elm Drive; West Park Avenue
- (vi) Creation of an additional street name serving 2 existing residential properties and 2 plots off Culloden Road, Inverness as: Tower Lane East.

## 12. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

### a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/43/18 dated 16 August 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Inverness Common Good Fund as at 31 July 2018 and the projected year end position.

The Committee considered the financial monitoring report to 31 July 2018 and **NOTED** that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

### b) Grants and Capital Projects Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/44/18 dated 8 August 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager which set out the current applications for funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

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

During discussion it was clarified that The Ledge project was not a commercial venture.

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

- Camanachd Association - £5,250, noting that approval of this application brought the Camanachd Association's grant to over £10,000 for the financial year 2018/19.
- The Ledge - £50,000
- Mikeysline - £25,000.
- Inverness Museum & Art Gallery, High Life Highland - £15,500

and **AGREED TO REJECT** the following applications:-

- ActivNess Ltd - £25,821
- Workers' Educational Association - £69,590

### c) Inverness Common Good Fund Sub Committee – Annual Report 2017/18 Fo-Chomataidh Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis – Aithisg Bhliadhnail 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/45/18 dated 2 July 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

During discussion it was clarified that the £11,043 underspend for 2016-17 had been carried forward to the following financial year and had been spent appropriately by the Grants Sub-Committee.

The Committee **NOTED** and the work of the Sub Committee as detailed.

**13. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

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

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 31 May - **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 7 August - **APPROVED**;
- iii. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 6 August and 14 August - **APPROVED**;
- iv. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 12 June and 30 July - **APPROVED**; and
- v. Victorian Market Stakeholder Group held on 19 June - **NOTED**.

**14. 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 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.

**15. Inverness Common Good Account Sites and Premises Transaction Report**  
**Aithisg Gnothachais Làraich agus Togalaichean Chunntasan Maoin Math**  
**Choitcheann Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated to Members only Joint Report No CIA/46/18 dated 28 August 2018 by the Head of Development and Regeneration and the Property Manager (Estates).

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report as detailed.

The meeting ended at 1.10pm.

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Lochaber Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council offices, Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Fort William on Thursday, 30 August 2018 at 10.30 a.m.

### Present:

Mr A Baxter	Mr I Ramon
Mr A Henderson	Mr D Rixson
Mr N McLean	Mr B Thompson

### In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)  
 Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport, Community Services  
 Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Community Services  
 Mr S Manning, Principal Transport Officer, Community Services  
 Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services  
 Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer, Community Services  
 Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Mr D Kennedy, Access Officer (Skye, Lochalsh and West Lochaber), Development and Infrastructure Service  
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

### Also in attendance:

Area Inspector, I Campbell, Police Scotland  
 Mr N Scroggie, Next Generation Broadband – Project Compliance Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
 Mr S Canning } Corran Ferry Consultants  
 Mr S Leitham }  
 Ms D Paton, AECOM

**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 - Chairman**

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr B Allan.

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

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

Item 5, 6 and 7 – Mr D Rixson (non-financial)

### 3. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìre

There had been circulated Report No LA/6/18 by the Area Commander for Police which provided an update on the progress with reference to the objectives outlined in the Highland Policing Plan 2017-20.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Driving Ambition events which had taken place in Lochaber, Kinlochleven and Mallaig Secondary Schools were welcomed and information was sought as to when it would take place in Ardnamurchan High School;
- reference was made to recent road fatalities, a number of which had involved motor cyclists. Considerable effort had been made to educate local motor cyclists on potential dangers but many of those involved in accidents lived outwith Highland and it was questioned how best this group could be reached;
- the popularity of the North Coast 500 was well recognised but it was questioned if this had also had an impact on the number of road accidents in Lochaber with tourists choosing to explore other routes;
- concerns had been raised as to how best to deal with the aftermath of an accident on the A82. Depending on the severity of the accident the route could be closed for some time and it was suggested that Traffic Scotland could make better use of Variable Message Signs (VMS) to inform motorists well in advance of incidents. These signs could also be used to highlight any recent accidents on the road to raise awareness with drivers and motor cyclists;
- concern had been expressed by Community Councils at variable speed limits, particularly on the trunk road through Fort William. Whilst recognising that this was within the remit of Traffic Scotland, it was felt a uniform speed limit would reduce the need for policing;
- reference was made to a recent social media campaign aimed at motorists overtaking cyclists;
- it was disappointing cyclists did not make use of cycle paths when available;
- the Deloitte Ride Across Britain cycle event had caused significant difficulties as a result of road closures and consequently this year it had been rerouted elsewhere;
- the increase in the number of offences concerned with the supply of drugs had increased but this was a sign of success and positive policing;
- as a result of conditions last winter at the Glencoe Ski Centre, difficulties had been encountered on the A82 with skiers parking vehicles on the roadside. However, discussions had taken place with the operators of the ski centre and measures were in place should this reoccur. However, informing skiers via VMS boards would prevent them from travelling to the area unnecessarily when the ski resort had reached capacity; and
- information was sought, and received, as to staffing allocations at police stations in Lochaber, together with the current number of vacancies. Despite various attempts to recruit, some posts remained unfilled and this was due to a number of factors including the availability of housing. Police officers were key workers and it was hoped that the Council could explore how it might assist.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **Scrutinised** and **NOTED** the Area Performance Report;
- ii. **AGREED** that the Head of Housing and Building Maintenance be contacted to explore the possibility of providing housing for key workers; and



- iii. **AGREED** that Transport Scotland be contacted to discuss the possibility of Variable Message Signs containing information regarding the available capacity of the Area's Ski Resorts.

#### 4. **Highlands and Islands Enterprise – Presentation** **Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean – Taisbeanadh**

Mr Nick Scroggie, Next Generation Broadband – Project Compliance Manager made a presentation on the rollout of broadband across Lochaber. He outlined the various initiatives in place, namely, the Digital Superfast Broadband Programme, the Scottish Government "Reaching 100%" Programme, the Council's Local Full Fibre Network Programme and the UK Government's Gigabit Voucher Scheme.

Areas still existed in Lochaber where there was no or limited connectivity, particularly a problem for businesses and Bed and Breakfast establishments. Although broadband via satellite could help, this was expensive and other possible options which might be explored included Wireless, provided by either private operators and/or community based schemes, or 4G.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** that a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation be circulated to Committee Members.

#### 5. **Lochaber Local Priorities** **Prìomhachasan Loch Abar**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr D Rixson declared non-financial interests in this item as a Trustee of Mallaig Heritage Centre and lifelong member of the West Highlands Museum but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interests did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

Councillor Rixson made a presentation on why Lochaber's Natural and Cultural Heritage should be included as one of the Lochaber Priorities. He outlined the case for the creation of a Web Portal which he suggested would both interest and inform, attract visitors, investment and employment and enhance a sense of identity and pride in Lochaber. A demonstration of the content such a Portal might contain having been provided, a breakdown of possible funding streams was also detailed.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation;
- ii. **AGREED** the protection of the area's Natural and Cultural Heritage as a Local Priority; and
- iii. **AGREED** to support the principle of a web portal subject to further discussion at a Ward Business Meeting.

#### 6. **Housing Performance Report** **Aithisg Dèanadais Taigheadais**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr D Rixson declared non-financial interests in this item as the Council's representative to Lochaber Housing Association but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interests did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No LA/14/18 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Housing Charter and other performances indicators for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- information was sought in relation to staffing levels in relation to “Repairs appointments kept”, which had been flagged as Red, and how this compared to other Areas;
- although not wholly due to Universal Credit, it had had a significant contributory effect to the increase in rent arrears. Highland Council had made considerable progress in the past in driving down rent arrears and, while Universal Credit had its merits, it was important that housing benefit was removed from it and representations were made to both MPs and MSPs in this regard; and
- the recent walkabout at the Plantation to identify areas of the estate which needed attention was welcomed. However, disappointment was expressed that not more of the area’s residents had taken part but this was due to a lack of awareness. As a result it was suggested a review should take place as to how these events could be better publicised.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018; and
- ii. **AGREED** to consider how best “walkabout” events could be publicised to local residents, particularly Housing Association tenants.

## 7. **Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2019-2021 Prògram Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais 2019-2021**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr D Rixson declared non-financial interests in this item as the Council’s representative to Lochaber Housing Association but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interests did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

There is circulated Report No. LA/15/18 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- in terms of priorities assurances were sought, and received, that safety issues always took precedent;
- when external fabric work on Council housing took place it was important that repainting was also included, given the impact on the ambiance of the area. This was particularly important when external cladding repairs took place as, without painting, the cladding was exposed to damage from frost;
- although concern was expressed at the inadequate internal doors in some properties, it was explained that these were the responsibility of the tenant;
- whilst the big capital schemes were welcomed, it was important not to overlook the small maintenance issues;
- it would be useful for Members to be aware of the number and details of repairs outstanding which were more than three months old. There was concern that some repairs were signed off as having been completed when, in fact, this was

- not the case;
- clarification was sought as to what effect the Scottish Government's new Energy Efficiency Standard on Social Housing would have. In this regard, any advice and/or information the Council could provide to non-Council owned properties would be welcomed as it would have the added benefit of reducing the carbon footprint;
- environmental improvements could make a considerable difference to an area and it was hoped resources could be increased in future; and
- parking on Kilmallie Road was both a safety and environmental issue and it was hoped improvements here could move forward in the near future.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the allocation of resources to the Lochaber Area as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the investment priorities as set out in section 4.2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposed two year HRA Capital Programme for Lochaber 2019-21 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme will continue to be provided through ward briefings and at Local Committees as requested by Local Members, in addition to reporting to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee; and
- v. **AGREED** that the number and details of repairs outstanding for more than three months be reported to a Ward Business Meeting.

## 8. Car Parking in Lochaber Parcadh Chàraichean ann an Loch Abar

There had been circulated Report No. LA/16/18 by the Director of Community Services.

A summary having been provided by the officer in relation to income collected to date and the impact of changes to car parking in Fort William, Members made the following comments:-

- an indication was sought, and received, as to the total capital expenditure incurred to introduce the changes to parking charges in Fort William;
- of the 200 Season tickets it was queried how many of these were bought, either directly or indirectly, by the Highland Council. However, it was important to bear in mind data protection restrictions and, furthermore, it was not possible to ascertain how organisations funded partly by the Council might chose to spend their funds;
- income projections were now on a more accurate footing but it was recognised that there was still uncertainty as to how this might decline over the autumn/winter period;
- information was sought, and received, as to the proportion of the Council's car parking budget generated from Lochaber. To ease the burden on Fort William it was important to look at other parking initiatives, both in Lochaber and in other Council areas;
- the possibility of introducing parking charges in Mallaig, for a 1 year trial period, was suggested. This would go some way to addressing a projected shortfall with the proposal of introducing a Lochaber £60 season ticket. Parking restrictions in Mallaig would also assist with traffic management issues, photographs having been tabled of issues which had arisen during the summer. Considerable

informal consultation had taken place over the summer and, while not unanimous, there had been significant support for the proposal. There were more than 300 spaces in Mallaig and the proposal was to introduce charges in approximately 120 of these, located in the centre of the village. As a result, the impact would affect visitors more than local residents and would go some way to meet the aspirations of the community in addressing their parking problem. Further details of this proposal were provided, including reserving some spaces in the East Bay car park for residents from the Small Isles and Knoydart but leaving the remainder of this car park free from charges. However, it was emphasised that a formal consultation process needed to be followed;

- furthermore, the introduction of parking charges along Glen Nevis and/or at the Glencoe Ski Centre had previously been suggested and disappointment expressed that further information had not been provided as to the viability of this and which could have alleviated part of the financial burden. These locations had the benefit of moving the financial burden from residents to tourists;
- to increase the uptake of the season ticket it was suggested that it be reduced to £5 per month. To mitigate this it was suggested that camper vans could be charged for overnight stays in Council car parks etc. However, it was pointed out that this could conflict with commercial camping sites and, in the first instance, this proposal should be considered by the Commercial Board;
- others felt £10 was the correct rate as it would allow those staying in a holiday let in the Small Isles, if parking was rolled out to Mallaig, to stay for 1-2 weeks for £10;
- the 30 minute free parking had proved popular whereas, before, a charge of 20p had been incurred; and
- the proposals for the An Aird 2 car park were welcomed but concerns had been raised about some users and, consequently, it was important that Local Members and partner agencies be informed when bookings for the full car park were received. It was important that partial closure of the car park was allowed.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. **AGREED** the sustaining of the Local Parking Season Ticket fee at current rates;
- ii. **NOTED** the current information of tariffs/parking incomes and **AGREED** to review this again at the November Area Committee once a full set of figures for the 2018 tourist season were available;
- iii. **AGREED** to the part or whole closure of the An Aird 2 car park for occasional event use subject to cost recovery for part or whole closure; and
- iv. **AGREED** that further information also be brought back on areas where car parking could be extended including Mallaig, Glencoe Ski Centre and Glen Nevis.

In terms of Standing Order 18, the Committee **AGREED** that agenda item 11 and 10 be considered at this juncture.

## 11. Corran Ferry Options Appraisal Measadh Roghainnean Aiseag a' Chorrain

There had been circulated Report No. LA/19/18 by the Director of Community Services.

In amplification of the report a presentation was made by the Consultants commissioned by Highland Council to undertake an appraisal of future operations for the Corran Ferry service. The study had provided an opportunity to review all aspects of infrastructure and operation and the options as to how, and at what level, the service could be put on a sustainable footing. Whilst acknowledging the community

aspiration for a fixed link across the Corran Narrows, this was a long term proposition and did not remove the more immediate need to make the ferry service viable. Accordingly, looking at possible opportunities, a careful analysis had been made of all factors including infrastructure, crew, operations and methods of delivery. It also considered if the current service level was appropriate with a view to developing a short list of three options to be assessed against Transport Planning Objectives (TPO) and Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria, namely:-

Option 1a - a new larger quarter point vessel, with MV Corran retained as the refit/relief/second vessel

Option 2c – a larger straight through vessel, with MV Corran retained as the refit/relief/second vessel

Option 2d – larger straight through vessel, with refit/relief/second vessel secured from elsewhere.

In summary, all three options addressed the infrastructure and service problems and therefore the determining factor was the method of service delivery. Bearing in mind that the current model was unsustainable, Members needed to consider the degree of control they wanted to maintain, the extent to which they wished to retain liability for the service and if they wanted the private sector to be involved.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in response to a question, it was explained that, in terms of operational benefits, a straight-through roll on roll off ferry had the advantage of being able to source relief and refit more readily than a quarter loading vessel;
- the potential savings of all electric vessels was sought;
- the safety of the crew of any option was paramount;
- while at present Calmac had few, if any, stand-by vessels, there was an aspiration that this would change in the future;
- the 12 feet height restriction on the A831 and other height and weight restriction on alternative road routes, effectively made the peninsula an island;
- although it had been acknowledged for some time that there was a need for a replacement vessel, there had been a reluctance to look at all options and the inclusion of these in the study was welcomed;
- the Consultants' full report was not publically available due to the confidential information it contained. However, the Executive Summary had been included as an Appendix to the report as it was important that the Committee's discussion today was open and transparent. In future, it might be necessary for some discussions to be held in private; and
- it was important that the potential of providing a fixed link over the Corran Narrows in the future should still be explored.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the strategic business case options presented in the Corran Ferry Service Options Appraisal;
- ii. **NOTED** the intention to present the report to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in November 2018 in reference to the financial aspect;
- iii. **APPROVED** the exploration of options in more detail in order to develop a preferred outline business case, including essential consultation with Members and appropriate stakeholders;
- iv. **APPROVED** discussion with Transport Scotland in order to explore options in more detail; and

- v. **NOTED** the intention to bring a further report back to Committee with proposals to address the sustainability of the current Corran Ferry Crewing Model.

## 10. Fort William Strategic Transport Study Sgrùdadh Còmhdhail Ro-innleachdail a' Ghearasdain

There had been circulated Report No. LA/18/18 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure.

Ms Deborah Paton, AECOM made a presentation on the preparation of a comprehensive and evidence based Pre-Appraisal Report in compliance with STAG. Information had been gathered from various sources, forming the basis of a case for change in Fort William. She highlighted the main themes which had arisen including road network and resilience, poor bus accessibility, limited rail journeys both locally and to the Central Belt and the constraints on active travel. Congestion was a key problem which needed to be addressed and, through workshops and a range of other engagement methods, the objective was to create a transport network that alleviated the economic and social impacts of congestion, particularly journey time variability, for both local and strategic transport users and which would accommodate future growth in Lochaber. It was important therefore to move forward to the next stage (Stage 1 Appraisal) and, to emphasise the importance of the issue, a collective approach from the Council, Hitrans and HIE to the Transport Minister was proposed.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- including robust evidence based data was important;
- the increase of tourism in the Highlands needed to be emphasised in the narrative, especially the impact of the North Coast 500. The tourist season lasted approximately 200 days and, most nights, as a result of tourists staying in the area, the population doubled;
- the volume of traffic using the Calmac ferry service to Skye and the Small Isles also had an impact on the road network;
- between the Lochybridge and West End Roundabouts there were 7 sets of traffic lights and 6 roundabouts to navigate, adding to the congestion in the town;
- congestion on a trunk road needed to be considered differently from congestion within a town;
- the data relating to the impact of traffic on the A82 during the peak season should be highlighted to other Council Members; and
- it was hoped that the information gleaned through the charrette exercise relating to improvements to the town centre would be incorporated but that some of these issues could still be addressed meantime.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the Executive Summary, attached at Appendix 1 of the report,; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the submission of a joint letter from the partner organisations (Highland Council, Hitrans, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise) to the Transport Minister seeking agreement for Transport Scotland to lead on the Stage 1 Appraisal and complete the appraisal within 6 months.

## 9. Winter Maintenance Plan for 2018/19 Plana Obair-gleidhidh Geamhraidh airson 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No LA/17/18 by the Director of Community Services.

In amplification of the report, Members were informed that, at the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 16 August 2018, the Saturday treatment service had been reduced to offset the additional costs of providing an increased Sunday service. In Lochaber this could be accommodated within the proposal presented to Members in the report. In addition, the Committee had agreed that all available manual staff across Community Services could be mobilised to assist with treatment of footways as deemed necessary.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the measures and arrangements put in place, with the operators of the Nevis Ski Centre, to keep the access road clear of snow and ice were welcomed;
- disappointment was expressed that, at present, there was no community reliance available to help with the gritting in the Upper Glengarry area;
- the possibility of approaching the Glencoe Ski Resort to ascertain if they were willing to assist with gritting Glen Etive during bad weather merited exploring; and
- in relation to the review of footway tractors, Members were advised that the numbers in Lochaber had remained the same. However, a quad bike had been used locally to assist with gritting and which, during the summer months, was used to help with weed killing.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for Lochaber Area which included the priority road maps presented in Appendix B of the report subject to the alterations verbally conveyed as a result of the decisions taken at the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 16 August 2018.

## **12. Annual Area Capital Report Aithisg Bhliadhnaidh Calpa Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/20/18 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the expenditure on each project in this Council area in 2017/18; and
- ii. the budget for each project in this Council area in 2018/19.

## **13. Homologation of the Appointment of Trustees to the An Aird Trust Aontachadh Urrasairean a Chur an Dreuchd do Urras na h-Àirde**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/21/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the appointment of Councillor Andrew Baxter and Councillor Blair Allan to the An Aird Trust.

## **14. Support for Fairtrade Town Status for Fort William Taic airson Inbhe Baile Malairt Cothromaich airson a' Ghearasdain**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/22/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to support the principles of Fairtrade by promoting awareness of the Fort William Fairtrade Town initiative when appropriate and by serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings; and
- ii. to appoint a Council officer to liaise with the Fort William Fairtrade Team.

**15. Lochaber Local Access Forum Appointments**  
**Cur an Dreuchd do Fòram Inntrigeadh Ionadail Loch Abar**

There had been circulated Report No. LA/23/18 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

The Forum had been in a period of abeyance in recent years but, with a number of local issues arising, it was expected that it would once again meet on a more regular basis.

Having **NOTED** the existing members who were continuing their membership, the Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of Dr Michael Foxley and Mr Ruari Watt as new members of the Local Access Forum for Lochaber, as detailed in the Appendices to the report.

**16. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Lochaber Committee held on 11 April 2018 which were approved by the Council on 10 May 2018, it having been highlighted that, in the Preliminaries, Mr A Rixson should read Mr *D* Rixson.

The meeting ended at 4.20 p.m.