

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 21 August 2018 at 10.30 am

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Mrs M Cockburn

Ms P Hadley
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager (Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey), Chief Executive's Office
Inspector M Middlehurst, Police Scotland
Mr A Puls, Principal Officer Building Conservation & Environment, Development & Infrastructure
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Mr J McHardy, Housing Development Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager (South), Community Services
Mr R McNab, Performance & Inspection Co-ordinator, Community Services
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, LN&B&S
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr K Rodgers, NHS Highland (Item 3)
Ms D Forsyth, NHS Highland (Item 3)
Mr B Dunlop, Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust (Item 4)
Mr A McCracken, Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust (Item 4)
Mr P Crane, Cairngorm National Park Authority (Item 7)

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 B Lobban in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 10 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

3. NHS Highland: Redesign Process NHS na Gàidhealtachd: Pròiseas Ath-dhealbhaidh

A joint presentation was made by the NHS Highland Senior Project Manager and Senior Project Lead on the redesign process for the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Hospital Hub project for which a detailed planning application had recently been submitted. During the presentation, the Committee was provided with detailed information on the site location (Aviemore Technology Park); internal and external designs and layouts including landscaping and the intention to work in partnership with the Active Aviemore project to enhance local community transport and pathway links; and information on the services that would be undertaken at the hospital hub which included details on the Integrated Design Transport hub. In conclusion, information was provided on the project timeline which included the full Business Case being completed by May 2019, construction commencing in June 2019 and works completed by April 2021.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was queried whether the off-road pathway that led to the railway underpass would be enhanced;
- Further information was requested and provided on the intended plans for the existing health centre building once it had been vacated and the inclusion of the Council in this process;
- Assurance was provided that the 128 parking spaces would be adequate to meet projected demands;
- Concern was expressed at the lack of X-ray facilities in Aviemore and assurance was sought that provision of this service would be included within the new hospital. It was further highlighted that in doing so, this would free-up other services such as Ambulance Services who often had to transport patients to another location for X-rays;
- Confirmation was sought and provided that there was adequate provision on the new site for future expansion;
- It was queried whether a vibrations survey had been undertaken in view of the close proximity to the railway line;
- It was recommended that Albyn Housing should be included in future liaisons in regard to the path-network development to ensure joint access routes;
- It was suggested that provision of housing for key workers should be included as part of the project process;
- It was felt that modifications would be required to the road network at the junctions of Grampian Road and Dalfaber Drive in view of the likely increase in traffic volumes and further consideration of this was recommended; and
- It was queried whether there would be any scope for the project timeline to be shortened and an assurance was sought and provided that the existing facilities would remain in place and continue to be maintained until the new facility was operational.

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

4. **Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust** **Urras Carthannach Rèile Shrath Spè**

A joint presentation was made by Mr B Dunlop and Mr A McCracken from the Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust during which detailed information and photographic evidence was provided of the significant works that had been undertaken to date on the project 'Getting rails to Grantown'. The presentation also included information on the proposed realignment plans for the A95 and the potential location and design layout of the train station which would be a valuable asset for Grantown. In addition, the significant importance of linking Aviemore with Grantown and the resulting impact on tourism and the local economy was emphasised. In conclusion, the project sought the Council's support of their aforementioned plans to bring the project to fruition.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- Further information was provided on the Transport and Works (Scotland) Order which would be submitted in October 2018 with a view to the decision being received in Spring 2019;
- In regard to the A95 road alignment, it was clarified that this would be undertaken by Transport Scotland once the Trust had provided and installed the new bridge that was required;
- The Committee commended the Trust for their astounding achievements to date and recognised the benefits that the project would generate for the local area and economy;
- It was highlighted that the Council had been supportive of this project and would do all that it could to continue that support to bring the project to its completion. It was therefore proposed that a recommendation should be made to Council that the Highland Council continued to provide non-financial support to the project; and
- It was highlighted that the project would require significant funding and this was acknowledged by the Trust and it was explained that further work would continue in regard to attracting public and private funding once the TAWS Order had been approved.

- * Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation on Strathspey Railway Charitable Trust and **AGREED** to recommend to Council that the Highland Council continued to provide non-financial support to the Strathspey Railway project.

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/18 dated 8 August 2018 by the Area Commander.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- appreciation was expressed for the community policing and the visibility of this which had been particularly helpful;
- concern was expressed at the increasing levels of drink driving offences and there was a need to campaign against this unacceptable behaviour;

- although the reduction in the number of fatalities on the A9 was welcome, there was still a need for continued lobbying for the road to be dualled to increase safety; and
- a request was made for more mobile road policing units to be located at village entrances in a bid to reduce to speeding motorists.

The Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highlands and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 for the period covering 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 (Year 1) and 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018 (Year 2).

In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, Item 7 on the agenda was taken at this point.

7. Active Aviemore Study Update **Cunntas air Sgrùdadh na h-Aghaidh Mòire Gnìomhach**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**11**/18 dated 2 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In addition to the report, a further update was provided during which the Committee was advised that an application had been submitted to the Scottish Government Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to upgrade the car park and form a multi-use tarmac path to Loch Morlich at the Cairngorm and Glenmore area and the outcome of this would be announced on 5 October 2018.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- There was a need for continued dialogue with NHS Highland to ensure the Active Aviemore path-network was maintained/developed to encourage community use;
- The news that pathways would not be mixed usage by pedestrians and cyclists was welcome but public concerns had been expressed regarding the width of the road being reduced to accommodate a designated cycle lane. However, the need to ensure public safety was recognised therefore it was important that members of the public were encouraged to read the report to ensure they were fully informed of the plans. It was further requested that Members were provided with an early sight of the final report prior to it being published;
- A query was raised as to whether the cycle network would be expanded to encompass the surrounding villages. The logic of this was acknowledged and it was proposed that a recommendation should be made to the Council seeking non-financial support for the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CPNA) to take forward an off-road route connecting Aviemore, Carrbridge and Boat of Garten as part of the A9 dualling project; and
- Concern was expressed at the congestion difficulties being encountered at the local petrol station in Aviemore and the need for this to be managed was emphasised.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED**:-

- i. that authority be delegated to the Director of Development & Infrastructure to prepare and submit an application, or applications, to Community Links funding for the Design Phase for sections 1 to 5;
- ii. to confirm support for the submission of an application, or applications, to Community Links funding for the Design Phase for the Aviemore Orbital Path (section 6) and links to NCN7;
- iii. * to recommend to the Council that the Highland Council provided non-financial support to the CNPA to take forward a non-motorised users route connecting Aviemore, Carrbridge and Boat of Garten; and
- iv. that the Committee be provided with a copy of the full report, 'Active Aviemore – Active Travel Study', prior to publication.

6. Grantown Conservation Area Appraisal Update Measadh Sgìre Ghlèidhteachais Bhaile nan Granndach

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/10/18 dated 17 May 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Responding to a question, it was clarified that there was a community aspiration to convert Inverallen Church to community use. It was understood that Seafield Estates was gifting the land to the church for development which would be used to fund converting the church to community use. In view of this, concern was expressed that inclusion of this area of land in the Conservation Area would be a barrier to this development. However, it was explained that the purpose of a Conservation Area was not to deter new development but to ensure that it was designed to protect the special character of the area

The Committee **NOTED** the public comments and that the draft appraisal would be presented to the forthcoming South Planning Applications Committee for approval.

8. Annual Area Capital Report Aithisg Bhliadhnail Chalpa Sgìre

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

Disappointment was expressed that a representative from the Finance Service had not attended the meeting to present the report and respond to questions from Members.

During discussion, it was highlighted that the Kentallen Travelling People Site was not based in Badenoch and Strathspey and further information was sought in regard to Aviemore Primary School replacement.

Thereafter, 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.

9. Housing Investment Cunntas às Ùr mu Leasachadh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**13**/18 dated 14 August 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Committee welcomed the information on the level of housing investment planned for Badenoch and Strathspey, however concern was expressed that there was anecdotal evidence that in some cases social landlords were selling properties on the open market, as opposed to a restricted market, as higher sale prices could be achieved;
- A query was raised on whether any provision had been made for key workers, particularly in view of the forthcoming new hospital, and the critical need for this to be addressed was emphasised;
- Further information was requested on the Rural Housing Policy; and
- It was highlighted that although the area currently had a low wage economy, demand for Mid-market rental properties could increase as people upskilled.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the information provided on the planned housing investment for Badenoch and Strathspey; and
- ii. that further information would be provided to Councillor Cockburn on the Rural Housing Policy.

10. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018 Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais 1 Giblean gu 30 Ògmhios 2018

Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council house tenant but in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission remained in the room to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**14**/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- Clarity was provided that the average temporary accommodation indicator was measured in weeks and this was an average time based on the total number of applicants;
- A query was raised as to whether there was any evidence of Airbnb expanding into long term lets and impacting on the housing market;
- Further information was provided in regard to how the forthcoming Lean Review of repairs processes would be conducted and the anticipated timeline;
- It was highlighted that there were often valid reasons, usually based on local knowledge, for delays in housing repairs, e.g. the tenant was on holiday, and it was queried whether there was a mechanism for recording this level of information in order to reduce the impact on this performance indicator; and

- Reference was made to the extremely fast average re-let time performance indicator of 21.45 days and this was commended.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on Housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

11. **Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report** **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh mu Choileanadh Cumail Suas Raoitean**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**15**/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The Committee welcomed the positive results and thereafter **NOTED** the information provided on Grounds Maintenance performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

12. **Winter Maintenance Plan for 2018/19** **Obair-glèidhidh Geamhraidh**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/**16**/18 dated 6 August 2018 by the Director of Community Services. In presenting the report, the Roads Operations Manager explained that at the recent meeting of Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee, a change was made to the Winter Maintenance Policy whereby it was agreed that there would be an uplift to the Sunday service.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- An assurance was sought that there would be no reduction in the Saturday service in order to provide the increase in the Sunday service. However, it was explained that although there had been no change to policy, careful management of resources would be required to ensure all routes could be completed;
- It was essential that the changes and the potential impact on winter maintenance routes was communicated to the public;
- Further information was provided on the process for obtaining salt bins;
- A request was made for a report to be submitted to a future meeting in Spring 2019 on the implementation and effectiveness of the new salt brine system that was currently being trialled; and
- It was reported that a local contractor had been deployed to assist with winter maintenance at Aviemore Primary School which had resulted in damage to infrastructure and it was requested that consideration should be made to this function being undertaken by Facilities Management.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Badenoch & Strathspey Area, which includes the priority road maps presented in Appendix B subject to the alterations verbally conveyed at meeting; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a report to be submitted to a future meeting in Spring 2019 on the outcome of the trial of the new salt brine system.

13. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 22 May 2018 which were approved by the Council on 28 June 2018.

The meeting concluded at 12.50 pm.