

The Highland Council

Care, Learning and Housing Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **External and Third Sector Sports, Leisure, Culture and Community Funding Working Group** held in Committee Room 3, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 5 August 2019 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr A Jarvie
Mr G MacKenzie (Chair)
Mr C Smith

In attendance:

Ms D Manson, Chief Executive
Ms K Lackie, Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms I Murray, Commissioning Officer, Care and Learning Service
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Boyd, Mr A Christie, Mr T Heggie, Mr D Macpherson and Mr G Ross.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

Item 4 – Mr A Jarvie and Mr C Smith (both non-financial)

3. Minutes

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 June 2019 were **NOTED**.

4. Review of Funding for External and Third Sector Sports, Leisure, Culture and Community Organisations

Declarations of Interest:

The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion:-

Mr A Jarvie – Director of High Life Highland

Mr C Smith – Member of Highland Disability Sport and Inverness Area Sports Council

- (a) The Chief Executive provided a verbal update on discussions in relation to the provision of specific leisure services in the Badenoch and Strathspey area. In addition, the Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office, provided statistics in respect of a number of leisure facilities throughout Highland.
- (b) There had been circulated Report No ETSF/02/19 dated 23 July 2019 by the Head of Resources.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- for the Working Group to be able to make recommendations, and to inform future discussions regarding the provision of leisure services, not only in Badenoch and Strathspey but throughout Highland, it was suggested that a Council-wide analysis of swimming pools, including those in receipt of direct grants, be called for as soon as possible. The analysis should include information on the number of users; unit costs per visit; capital investment over the past five years; operating, maintenance and energy costs; and income generation;
- the complexity of the task remitted to the Working Group having been recognised, the need to mitigate any reduction in the 2020/21 budget saving because of any delays to the review process was emphasised. In that regard, it was highlighted that the Working Group had previously reached a consensus in relation to village halls, namely, that funding be reduced by £40k with appropriate application criteria to be developed for the remaining contingency fund of £10k. If this was accepted by the Care, Learning and Housing Committee, £160k of savings remained to be identified;
- discussion took place on the merits or otherwise of basing High Life card costs on the number of facilities within a specific area;
- the need for fairness and equity was reiterated;
- it was suggested that there might be merit in expanding the remit of the Working Group to include identifying gaps in resourcing and making recommendations regarding future capital funding;
- there was potential for at least four of the organisations that were the subject of the review to transfer to High Life Highland, and it would be helpful if that could be expanded upon for the next meeting. It was added that significant savings could be achieved by transferring facilities to High Life Highland, lower insurance costs being cited as an example;
- there would be concern amongst the organisations that were the subject of the review, and it was important that communication was maintained; and
- it was suggested that a report on the work of the Working Group to date, including a recommendation that village hall funding be reduced by £40k, be presented to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee on 21 August 2019.

Thereafter, the Working Group:-

- i. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that a Council-wide analysis of swimming pools, including those in receipt of direct grants, be carried out as soon as possible and presented to the Working Group for consideration, the said analysis to include information on the number of users; unit costs per visit; capital investment over the past five years; operating, maintenance and energy costs; and income generation;

- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that additional savings be identified to mitigate any reduction in the 2020/21 budget saving in respect of sports, leisure, culture and community organisations as a result of any delays to the review process;
- iii. **AGREED** that further information on the potential to transfer organisations that were the subject of the review to High Life Highland be presented to the next meeting of the Working Group; and
- iv. **AGREED** that a report be presented to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee on 21 August 2019 setting out the work of the Working Group to date, including a recommendation that funding for village halls be reduced by £40k, with appropriate application criteria to be developed for the remaining contingency fund of £10k.

5. Date of Next Meeting

It was **AGREED** that the meeting of the Working Group provisionally scheduled to take place on Friday 16 August 2019 be cancelled and that the date of the next meeting be confirmed following consultation with the Chair and relevant officers.

The meeting ended at 10.45 am.