

**The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held in the Chamber, The Court House, High Street, Nairn on Wednesday 12 June 2019 at 10.30 am.

**Present:**

Mr L Fraser  
Mr T Heggie

Mrs L MacDonald  
Mr P Saggars

**In attendance:**

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey  
Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service  
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer, Community Services  
Mr S Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

**Also in attendance:**

Chief Inspector B MacKay, Police Scotland (Item 3)  
Police Constable R Shanks, Police Scotland (Item 3)  
Mr D Wilson, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 4)

**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 T Heggie in the Chair****Preliminaries**

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Chair advised that the press would be allowed to record the meeting since it was a committee meeting held in public and was not webcast.

**Business****1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declaration of Interest:-

Item 7 – Mr L Fraser (non-financial)

**3. Presentation - Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership**

A presentation was made by Chief Inspector Brian MacKay and PC Rosemary Shanks which provided an update on progress of the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership (NNCP) which had been established following the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 and included representatives from public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups. Information was provided on the community consultation which had taken place within the area, during which, it was explained that following analysis of the data

received from the public, an area profile had been produced and was used to inform the NNCP's Locality Plan which aimed to improve outcomes for communities within Nairn and Nairnshire. Further information was provided on the progress which had been made in relation to a range of priorities contained within the Plan and how these were being delivered through multi-agency collaboration.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- In commending the positive work undertaken by the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership, it was highlighted that there were a number of issues which were interlinked and could be cross-referenced by the Partnership going forward, such as access to transport for both the young and elderly and in relation to employability;
- The work of the Community Communication and Engagement Officer was commended;
- Having a wide range of members from different backgrounds had helped the Employability Sub-Group achieve a number of positive outcomes, in particular, the success of the Places and Spaces Sub-Group in moving use of community space forward was highlighted with an event due to take place on the 20 June at the Riverside Park;
- The Employability Sub-Group's future activities included an apprentice day in the Autumn, increasing the number of businesses offering work experience to students, looking at potential employment opportunities within the hospitality and care sectors and also seeking employment opportunities for ex-offenders;
- It was emphasised that there was an opportunity for liaison between organisations to discuss the shared use of facilities and that bringing together any concerns raised by individual organisations could help to achieve a positive solution; and
- The analysis, reporting and actions undertaken by the Community Partnership was commended.

Having thanked Chief Inspector MacKay and PC Shanks for their presentation, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

#### **4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Committee Performance Report for 2018-19**

There had been circulated Report No N/9/19 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was expressed that 11 of the 21 reported incidents of deliberate fires for the whole of the Highland's for October 2018 had occurred within Nairnshire;
- In relation to moorland fires, confirmation was sought, and received, that whilst there was currently no specific link between the spread of wild fires and the close proximity of wind farms, wild fires were more likely to occur in wind driven areas with dry vegetation and greater exposure to sunshine;
- Overall the figures presented within the report in relation to Nairnshire reflected a comparable position with the rest of the Highlands;
- It was highlighted that a significant number of reported false alarms within Nairnshire had been raised in connection with one property;
- Working in conjunction with partner agencies had enabled suspects of fire-raising to be identified; and

- The willingness of individuals to make themselves available as retained duty staff was commended.

Having thanked the Local Senior Officer for his report, the Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the Area Performance Report.

## 5. Nairn Links – Development Plan

There had been circulated Report No N/10/19 dated 3 June 2019 by the Acting Head of Policy.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The work undertaken by the Ward Manager and her business support officer in relation to bringing the Links Development Plan process to the consultation stage was commended, and the work carried out on drafting of the Development Plan and bringing together the various community groups and agencies by the lead consultant was also commended;
- In highlighting that some initial work had been undertaken in relation to some of the projects identified with the Development Plan, clarification was sought, and received, regarding the likely timescale for commencement of projects, during which it was explained that work in relation to design and procurement would take place this year and that ground works could commence in 2020;
- The Development Plan presented an opportunity for the community of Nairn to help deliver the projects identified;
- It was emphasised that every opportunity should be made to publicise activity undertaken in relation to the Development Plan in order to keep the public informed; and
- The proposed framework would enable projects to be progressed as and when funding becomes available.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to adopt the draft Nairn Links Development Plan enclosed at Appendix A of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the forming of a Project Team and Steering Group to develop a project plan for stage 1 of developing the Nairn Links;
- iii. **AGREED** the initial project proposal to redevelop the paddling pool site; and
- iv. **AGREED** that update reports on future projects be brought back to the Committee for consideration as required

## 6. Nairn Shopfront Scheme

There had been circulated Report No N/11/19 dated 24 May 2019 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was emphasised that improving the appearance of facilities and buildings could help to increase footfall on Nairn High Street;
- Confirmation was sought, and received, that in order to meet the requirements of the original Sainsbury Supermarket developer contribution, a review of the Section 75 agreement would be undertaken by Legal Services; and
- It was highlighted that The Ward Manager would be working with the Nairn BID to work on proposals for improvements to the environs of Nairn High Street.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. that a deadline be set for final applications to the Nairn Shopfront Improvement Scheme of 31 July 2019;
- ii. the proposals to work with the Nairn Business Improvement District to utilise the remaining funds to improve the environs of Nairn High Street; and
- iii. that an update report on outcome of project(s) be brought back to this Committee

## 7. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

**Declaration of Interest: Mr L Fraser declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Sub-Contractor for the Housing Service in Nairn 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 his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No N/12/19 dated 30 May 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In speaking to the report, the Principal Housing Officer confirmed that, following a request for further information at the previous meeting of the Committee, the level of debt which had been written-off in Nairnshire for 2018/19 was £5,051.79.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was highlighted that there were particular needs in relation to housing demand in Nairnshire and further information was sought, and received, regarding the ways in which the service prioritised demand in the area;
- Further information was sought, and received, regarding the purchase of properties for use as social housing and whether there could be an opportunity to purchase upper floor properties on Nairn High Street;
- It was highlighted that there was a perception by some members of the public that in some instances available houses were not being rented out; however, it was acknowledged that these houses had been allocated for tenants with specific needs;
- Concern was expressed regarding the high figures in relation to rent arrears and it was emphasised that monitoring of this needed to continue; and
- The collaborative work undertaken in relation to rent arrears between the service and Nairn Citizen's Advice Bureau was commended.

The Committee **NOTED** and scrutinised the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

## 8. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 13 March 2019, which had been approved by the Council on 9 May 2019.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm.