

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held remotely on Monday, 30 August 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr John Finlayson
Mr John Gordon

Mr Calum MacLeod
Mr Calum Munro

Officials in attendance:

Mr Malcolm MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Mr Willie MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place

Mr Scott Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Service

Mr Douglas Chisholm, Development Plans Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Service

Ms Donna MacAllister, Engagement Coordinator, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Services

Mr Peter Finlayson, Quality Improvement Manager, Education and Learning Service

Mr Gordon Macdonald, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Service

Mr E McIntosh, Localism & Engagement Co-ordinator, Communities and Place

Mr Colin Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Service

Mr Colin Simpson, Principal Officer – Europe, Tourism & Film, Transformation & Economy Service

Mr Shane Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Communities and Place

Ms Wendy Anderson, Programme Administrator/Development Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Miss Julie MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Performance & Governance Service

Ms Morgan Zavarella, Committee Officer, Performance & Governance

Also in Attendance:

Inspector Ross McCartney, Police Scotland (Item 4)

Mr Stuart MacPherson, Highlands & Islands Enterprise (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.

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 5 – Mr C Munro (Non- Financial)

Item 7 – Mr C Munro (Non-Financial and Financial)

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for information Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 31 May, 2021 (which had been approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 24 June, 2021).

The Committee **NOTED** the terms of Minutes as circulated.

4. Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba

There had been circulated Report No SR/10/21 by the Area Inspector for Police which provided an update on progress with reference to the objectives outlined in the Highland Policing Plan 2020-2023.

Following a summary of the report by the Area Inspector, the following main points were raised:-

- in response to concerns raised regarding parking issues, and specifically queries as to when such issues became criminal offences and what powers were available to the Police, it was noted that parked vehicles causing obstructions and/or danger would be classed as a criminal offence and dealt with by the Police. In addition, the parking situation was monitored as part of Weekly Meetings held by the Police when any emerging trends would be identified;
- in response to queries as to whether there had been any reports of anti-social behaviour towards retail workers in the area, it was confirmed that there had been no such reports but that any incidences of such behaviour would not be tolerated;
- it was noted that a breakdown of 'hotspots' for speeding in the area would be provided in a report to a future meeting;
- in response to concerns expressed regarding bullying on social media, it was confirmed that the Police did everything possible to identify those responsible and also provided advice and support to victims. In addition, information on Online Support Forums was also provided; and
- also in relation to speeding, there was serious concern about tourists driving at excessive speeds throughout the area and it was hoped that the increased enforcement of speed limits which had been noticed during the pandemic could be continued. It was also suggested that a future report should be submitted to the Committee to allow consideration of issues which had arisen during the tourist season, including feedback from the Police, in order to ensure that lessons were learned for coming years.

Having scrutinised the report, and having thanked Inspector McCartney for his presentation, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 1, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 01 April 2020 - 31 March 2021.

**5. Newton Rooms
Seòmraichean a' Bhaile Ùir**

Declaration of Interest –

Mr C Munro declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Kilmuir Community Trust which was now in ownership of Kilmuir Hall and would be hosting a Newton Room for local school children 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.

A Verbal Update was provided at the meeting by the Quality Improvement Manager on the progress to date of the Pop-Up Newton Rooms. In this regard, it was noted that Highlands and Islands Enterprise had appointed international specialist firm, FIRST Scandinavia, the company which had developed and owned the Newton Concept, to create one of Scotland's first Newton Rooms at Caol Youth Centre in Fort William.

Newton Rooms offered practical education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for schools and the plan across Highland was to develop a network of Pop-Up Newton Rooms to promote STEM subjects across primary and secondary schools.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- equality of STEM provision across the region, awareness of STEM careers and STEM pathways and attracting STEM experts to the area would be key in the future;
- STEM careers were so important for young people and it was imperative that the same opportunities were available as elsewhere across the Highlands in order to retain and encourage young people to live and work in the area for the long term;
- there was a need for Portree High School to be considered as a possible future location;
- it was noted that High Life Highland were also creating their own STEM team and that this would be extremely important for parents as well as young people which was very much welcomed; and
- this was a learning process for all and it was especially pleasing to see 'green' modules included which would help with meeting the targets being set in relation to climate change issues in future.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the update on Newton Rooms as detailed.

**6. Area Roads Capital Monitoring 2021/2022 Progress Report
Aithisg Adhartais Obair-ghleidhidh Rathaidean**

There had been circulated Report No. SR/11/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy which detailed the progress for the 2021/22 Capital Roads Maintenance Programme for Isle of Skye and Raasay and sought formal approval for additional and amended schemes which had been added after the Area Committee meeting on 29 March 2021.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the funding which had been received had been widely welcomed and had made a huge difference to the area, In this regard, the thanks of the Committee were conveyed to the Roads & Transport team for the projects which were in progress and those projects which had been completed;
- there was concern about the manpower available in terms of the reduction in staffing over recent years and also in noting that the current shortage of HGV drivers nationally was also having an effect at a local level in the area;
- in regard to surface dressing, it was noted that in areas where there had been slippage, preparatory work would be undertaken with an update provided for Ward Business Meetings on specific locations; and
- the Roads & Transport Team had to be commended in particular for the flexibility which had been shown in completing projects and undertaking repairs as part of the programme.

Thereafter, the Committee: -

NOTED the progress of the 2021/22 Area Roads Maintenance Capital Programme for the Skye & Lochalsh Area;

APPROVED the amendments and additions to the 2021/22 Surface Dressing and Surfacing Programmes; and

NOTED the progress of the Strategic Schemes allocated to Skye & Raasay Area.

7. **Skye and Raasay Future** **Àm ri Teachd an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Ratharsair**

Declarations of Interest – Mr C Munro declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of Kilmuir Community Trust which had a project on the list at Appendix 1 to the report and also a financial interest on the basis that his wife was a teacher 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 the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. SR/12/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy) which sought adoption of a new place-based investment framework for the area known as Skye and Raasay Future.

The report also sought approval for the next steps in securing its adoption through other partners and groups and confirming the ongoing collaborative approach to implementation and monitoring.

There had also been circulated an additional Appendix which included minor amendments in relation to the original appendix.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- thanks were conveyed to the Officers concerned for the work which had been undertaken and the extensive documents which had been circulated;
- there was also a need to record the outstanding community input to this Council and Highlands & Islands led initiative which had taken place during a pandemic.

Above all, this demonstrated the strength of joint working/collaboration in the empowerment of local communities;

- with reference to the proposed outcomes which had been detailed in the report, it was stressed that the next stage of working together to make the best use of resources would be of vital importance;
- it was hoped that this achievement through partnership working and process would be recognised on a Council wide basis as a really exciting and positive example for all;
- it was anticipated that the work which had been undertaken to date would help with alignment in relation to future funding opportunities;
- the references to Gaelic throughout the documents was noted and welcomed;
- the extremely successful holistic approach with communities would help to provide a bright and sustainable future for the area; and
- this should be viewed as a 'living document' and used as an example of 'best practice' for future partnership working across the Council.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

AGREED the draft "Skye & Raasay Future" (SARF) at Appendix 1 to the report;

NOTED the comments made during the engagement events and online consultations as set out in the Architecture & Design Scotland report enclosed at Appendix 2;

NOTED that the SARF would be prepared in an online 'Storymap' format;

AGREED the next steps for securing adoption of SARF by partner groups and organisations, and the ongoing collaborative approach to governance as set out in Section 6;

NOTED that the adoption process proposed would include consideration of SARF by the Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee; and

NOTED that the implementation of SARF would rely on collective responsibility across all public sector partners and communities across Skye & Raasay. Internally, this would set the framework for Council services and budgets to be aligned with the outcomes and priorities where appropriate.

8. Community Asset Transfer Request: Raasay Ferry Terminal CAT Port-Aiseig Ratharsair

There had been circulated Report No. SR/13/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Communities and Place) which asked Members to consider and agree a recommendation to vary a Community Asset Transfer request from Raasay Development Trust relating to ownership of Raasay Ferry Terminal.

During discussion, it was confirmed that this was an exciting development which empowered the local community and as such the Officers concerned were thanked for the well constructed and comprehensive report which had been presented.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** to vary the Community Asset Transfer request for approval as follows - a 99-year lease of Raasay Ferry Terminal to Raasay Development Trust for £1 p/a if asked and on the terms as detailed in the recommendation in the report.

9. Portree Link Road Rathad Ceangail Phort Rìgh

There had been circulated Report No. SR/14/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy) relating to the proposed Portree Link Road.

During discussion, it was confirmed that this was exciting news which would benefit the whole of Skye, with ambitious and realistic timescales. Also, the developer contributions were very much appreciated and welcomed in that they would help with the transformation of the area, not least through the differences made with the flow of traffic. There was also a need to recognise that this would be a vital component in the future Development Plan.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

NOTED the funding position in respect of the Portree Link Road;
AGREED to the submission of a planning application for the scheme; and
NOTED the proposed delivery programme.

10. Visitor Management Plan Plana Stiùiridh Luchd-tadhail

There had been circulated Report No. SR/15/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy) which provided an update on the progress in delivering the activities outlined in the Highland Council Visitor Management Plan.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the thanks of the Committee were conveyed to the Officers involved with the Visitor Management Plan which had made a huge difference to the area, with the employment of Seasonal Access Rangers in particular being commended as being vital for the future;
- the levels of visitor management and support had been excellent and much appreciated by both tourists and residents in the area;
- the response at a local level had to be acknowledged and it would be imperative to ensure that this was continued;
- in terms of issues to be taken forward, this included an extension of the Comfort Scheme if possible and the installation of additional Passing Place signs as a priority;
- the area was classed as a major tourist destination and as such the Visitor Management Plan was greatly needed and would help to improve the visitor experience; and
- the Council wide response on this issue had been greatly appreciated and very much welcomed. In this respect, it was confirmed that the production of a specific Skye & Raasay report at the end of very season should be implemented and this should include a section on lessons learned for the future.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the information provided by each Service on progress to date on delivering the Visitor Management Plan actions as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

**11. Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Assessment of Application
(Glendale Community Hall)
Maoin Coimhearsnachd Cladaich Ghleann Dail**

There had been circulated Report No. SR/16/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy) which invited the Committee to consider an application for Highland Coastal Communities funding for Glendale Community Hall.

Following consideration, and in thanking the Glendale community for the submission of such an excellent project, the Committee **AGREED** to award a grant of £25,014.56 for Glendale Community Hall as detailed in the report.

**12. Update on Parking Revenue
Teachd-a-steach bho Pharcadh**

There had been circulated Report No.SR/17/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy) which provided an update on the income generated from car park management and indicated the ongoing work to determine the final cost out-turns and link with the overall Council policy on car parking income.

During discussion, and in noting that a further report on this issue would be submitted to the Economy & Infrastructure Committee in December, it was stressed that it was important that the arrangements in respect of the future allocation of funding were clearly set out and clarified for Members and also for the community as there had been some confusion in this respect.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

**13. Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations
Maointean Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite – Riarachaidhean Maoin eachaidh gam Moladh**

There had been circulated Report No. SR/18/21 by the Executive Chief Officer (Communities and Place) which invited the Committee to agree the budget allocation for Place Based Investment Funding outlined in the report and to note the markers for future spend.

During discussion, thanks were conveyed to Officers for the work undertaken on what were very positive projects which were warmly welcomed by Members and local communities.

It was also suggested that, over the next two month period, work should commence on planning for proposed action in the following year which would be a good use of time.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the proposed allocation of Place Based Investment Funds as follows - Investment in additional Seasonal Staff Hours for Amenity Services - £14,000

It was also **NOTED** that the projects related to the following themes were under development and would be brought for consideration to a future meeting - Commercial Business Opportunities, Skye & Raasay Future, Roads, Social Isolation and Loneliness.

The meeting ended at 12.55pm.