

Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held remotely on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr L Fraser
Mr T Heggie

Mrs L MacDonald
Mr P Saggars

In attendance:

Mrs K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer, Performance & Governance
Ms A Clark, Head of Service (Community Support and Engagement) Communities and Place
Mr D Haas, City Manager, Communities and Place
Mr B Cameron, Housing Policy & Investment Manager, Housing & Property Service
Mr D Wood, Principal Housing Officer, Housing & Property Service
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Economy and Infrastructure
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer, Performance & Governance
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance & Governance

Also in attendance:

Area Inspector V Tough, Police Scotland (Item 3)

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 meeting, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the City Manager for the ward support that had been received. He also extended his best wishes for a good recovery to the Ward Manager.

BUSINESS

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 6: Mr L Fraser (non-financial)

**3. Police Scotland Area Performance Report
Poileas Alba Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No NC/**14**/21 dated 31 August 2021 by the Area Inspector, Police Scotland.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Clarification was sought and provided that there had been experience of telephone scams in the area which predominately targeted the elderly/vulnerable and Police Scotland continued to work with local bank branches to prevent this fraudulent activity;
- It was confirmed that the vast majority of the public had been complying with the Covid restrictions and instances of large gatherings/parties had been rare. It was further confirmed that there was no additional information available in respect of Covid passports;
- Police Scotland indicated that they had not experienced much activity in respect of hare coursing but there had been instances of poaching. Therefore, extra anti-crime patrols were being undertaken and Police Scotland had also been working collaboratively with the Nairn River Salmon Board. Crossover of illegal activity e.g. poaching and farming theft was recognised;
- Appreciation was extended to Police Scotland for their support in the establishment of the Visitor Management Group and ensuring an enhanced and safe experience for visitors; and
- The need to promote and encourage home security, i.e. ensuring doors were locked, particularly amongst the elderly community, was emphasised.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-23, Year 1, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

**4. Nairn Common Good Fund: Proposal to Dispose of Sandown Lands for Development – Update and Additional Engagement Proposal
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann: Moladh Faighinn Cuidhteas Fearann Sandown Airson Leasachadh – Fios às ùr agus co-chomhairle a bharrachd**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/**15**/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- In terms of the response rate, Nairn tended to have a steady feed of responses throughout the consultation period. Support was indicated for the proposals and it was suggested that there should be a lengthy consultation period to ensure as wide a representation as possible;
- It was felt that the draft questions should be more specific. In particular, it was felt that Question 2 was too open and should be more targeted to ascertaining the public's priorities i.e. obtaining maximum sale value or increasing the proportion of affordable housing or ensuring a good design

brief. It was also felt that the public should be alerted to the potential benefits from the sale of the common good land and the sale proceeds. Confirmation was provided that the purpose of the consultation was to seek community views on the disposal of the land, not on how it should be developed, but views could be gathered on realising community benefits. It was also noted that question 2 was general in order to mirror the original consultation questions and allow those who did not respond initially the same opportunity for comment;

- Further information was sought and provided on Common Good custodian duties in relation to selling and it was also clarified that a valuation of the land would be provided by the District Valuer. It was felt affordable housing should not be the main purpose for selling and that if land was not sold, it still remained as an asset of the Common Good Fund;
- There appeared to be a lot of misinformation in the community in respect of the proposals and there was a need for clarity to ensure that the community could make an informed response based on factual information. It was clarified that the allotments area was not included and a graphic was being developed to show the area of land potentially being disposed of and the potential uses as outlined in the Development Brief; and
- It was indicated that the short life reference group needed to be established as soon as possible and that the membership should be as inclusive as possible to ensure transparency. The Head of Service (Community Support and Engagement) proposed that she liaise with the Chair of the Nairnshire Community Partnership on the group being established at the next meeting on 23 September 2021.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the terms of the additional consultation period as contained in the draft document at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the reflections on the consultation to date and the proposals for widening the engagement within the additional consultation period;
- iii. **NOTED** that a short life reference group would be established to support the further period of consultation and **AGREED** the Head of Service (Community Support and Engagement) liaise with the Chair of the Nairnshire Community Partnership on the group being established at the next meeting on 23 September 2021; and
- iv. **AGREED** to allow to the end of December 2021 for the additional consultation period with the outcome and recommendations being considered at the first meeting of the Nairnshire Committee in 2022.

5. Place Based Investment Fund – Proposals for Investment Tasgadh Stèidhichte air Àite - Molaidhean airson Tasgadh

There had been circulated Report No NC/16/21 dated 31 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the funding support towards both the play area provision and the Nairn Access Panel was welcomed. A request was made for the Council's amenity officers to work closely with Nairn Play to deliver on their project as well as promoting the natural environment. It was reported that a feasibility study on the beach access would be shared with Members once available. The Chair reported that he had had an onsite meeting with the two recently appointed

Community Support Co-ordinators on their role in enabling these projects to be brought to fruition. In addition, along with the help of the Tenant Participation Officer, a group of people had been identified to be involved in achieving the place based investment outcomes. The Council was thanked for their support in delivering these projects which would enhance the local area.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the proposed allocation of Place Based Investment Funds as follows:
 - a. Direct funding award to Green Hive to support the development of the Seaman's Hall Community Hub Project - £25,000;
 - b. Towards play area provision - £10,000;
- ii. **AGREED** the proposed sums to be ringfenced for the following areas of work:
 - a. Towards the development of accessibility projects within the ward led by the Nairn Access Panel - £10,000;
 - b. Towards projects to improve health and wellbeing outcomes, to be led by the Community Partnership - £5,000; and
- iii. **NOTED** that work was underway to explore allocating the remaining funding to the development of motorhome infrastructure and to support the development of Town Centre projects and that proposals would be brought for consideration to a future meeting of the Committee.

**6. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2021 gu 30 Ògmhios 2021**

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 NC/17/21 dated 30 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Officers were commended for their hard work and compassion, particularly in respect of reducing rent arrears which was a significant achievement in the current climate;
- Further information was sought and provided in respect of the reason for tenants opting out of receiving capital heating improvement works. It was further clarified that once the property had been vacated, dialogue was held with the incoming tenant with a view to the improvement works being undertaken;
- It was confirmed that the Council would be responsible for ensuring that houses were compliant with the new fire alarm regulations and a programme of works was ongoing in regard to this;
- In regard to project CSH19039, it was confirmed that this also included air source heat pumps. Arising from a complaint in the Piperhill area, further information was sought and provided on the level of consultation

with tenants on heating systems and whether any analysis was undertaken to determine if there had been a reduction in heating costs following the improvement works. The Housing Policy & Investment Manager proposed that Members be updated on the outcome of the heating system review of the premises in Piperhill by the independent energy advisors;

- It was too early to confirm whether a balanced budget would be achieved at the year-end but final outturns would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- The Nairn Capital programme was not currently, and did not anticipate in the future, being affected by any supply chain difficulties.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Members be updated on the outcome of the heating system review of the premises in Piperhill by the independent energy advisors.

7. **Winter Maintenance Plan 2021/22** **Obair-glèidhidh Geamhraidh 2021/22**

There had been circulated Report No NC/18/21 dated 2 September 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Confirmation was provided that there would be a reduction in services if the revenue budget was not increased in line with inflation, noting that the Council would be expected to meet its obligations to deliver a service which met with the standards expected within the Winter Maintenance Policy;
- Concern was expressed at the impact on the safety of school buses in outlying areas if gritting was not completed on all routes before buses started their journeys. It was clarified that if required, e.g. for significant snowfall, local contractors would be used, but assurance was provided that the Council would deliver the Winter Maintenance Policy as agreed; and
- It had been raised by the East Nairnshire Community Council that they had to continuously request to get Glenferness village gritted and further explanation was sought and provided on this. In addition, they had also been experiencing difficulty in ascertaining salt grit bins and it was confirmed that this would be further investigated.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plan for Nairnshire in reference to the Briefing Note (Appendix A); and
- ii. **AGREED** to investigate and report back on the provision of salt grit bins for the East Nairnshire Community Council area.

**8. Nairn Common Good Fund – Quarter 1 2021/22 Monitoring Report
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann – Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Cairteil 1
2021/22**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/19/21 dated 25 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

During discussion, it was highlighted that it had been brought to attention that the access to shelters located at Cumming Street, the swimming pool and the harbour required to be checked as it was alleged that they were potentially dangerous. Concern was expressed that an injury claim could be lodged against the Nairn Common Good Fund and it was requested that the ground conditions be repaired. The City Manager proposed that a safety audit be undertaken, which would assess the ground conditions and if any remedial works were required, and report back on the outcome of this with any works required urgently taking place as soon as practicable.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund as shown in the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Statement against Budget for 2021/22;
- ii. **AGREED** to homologate spend within Quarter 1 undertaken in respect of:-
 - a. Urgent necessary repairs and interventions due to health and safety concerns and/or to prevent further degradation to Nairn Common Good Fund property;
 - b. Granting a waiver of the usual fee for the use of the Nairn Links by the Funfair for the period 9 – 21 August 2021 only; and
- iii. **AGREED** to defer commissioning further non-essential refurbishment work to the Harbour Street Toilet Block, pending an additional assessment on the viability and justification of reinstating the building as a public convenience. With a report to be taken to the first scheduled meeting of the Committee in 2022.
- iv. **AGREED** that a safety audit be undertaken of the access entrances to the shelters located at Cumming Street, the swimming pool and the harbour and the outcome reported to Members with any works required urgently taking place as soon as practicable.

**9. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 23 June 2021 which would be approved by the Council on 9 September 2021, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

The meeting was concluded at 12.22 pm.