

Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held remotely on Tuesday 8 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr L Fraser
Mr M Green

Ms B Jarvie
Mr P Oldham

In attendance:

Mrs K Lackie, Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer, Performance & Governance

Mrs A Clark, Head of Service Community Support and Engagement, Communities and Place

Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer, Performance & Governance

Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance

Also in attendance:

Mr R Chapman, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

BUSINESS

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Nairnshire Committee.

**4. Appointment of Chair
Cur Cathraiche an Dreuchd**

Mr L Fraser, seconded by Mr P Oldham, nominated Mr M Green for the position of Chair of the Nairnshire Area Committee.

There being no other nominations, Mr M Green was duly appointed as Chair of the Nairnshire Committee.

At this point in the meeting, Mr M Green assumed the position as Chair.

Mr M Green, seconded by Mr L Fraser, proposed that Mr P Oldham be appointed as Vice Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr P Oldham was duly appointed as Vice Chair of the Nairnshire Committee.

**5. Appointment of Provost
Cur an Dreuchd Pròbhaist**

Mr M Green, seconded by Mr P Oldham, nominated Mr L Fraser for the position of Provost of Nairn.

There being no other nominations, Mr L Fraser was duly appointed as Provost of Nairn.

**6. Appointments to Sub-Committee, Working Groups etc
Cur an Dreuchd gu Fo-Chomataidhean, Buidhnean-obrach is eile**

In order to avoid any conflicts of interest, the Chair proposed that, with the exception of the Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership, there should not be any formal appointments to sub-committees and working groups and that Members attend meetings as and when required/requested.

The Committee **AGREED** not to make any formal appointments to sub-committees and working groups and that Members attend meetings as and when required/requested subject to the following exception:

- Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership – Ms B Jarvie

**7. Appointments to Outside Bodies
Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean on Taobh A-muigh**

The Chair proposed the same principle to that taken at Item 6 be adopted in that there should be no appointments to Outside Bodies with the exception of the Nairn District Salmon Fishery Board.

The Committee **AGREED** not to make any formal appointments to Outside Bodies and that Members attend meetings as and when required/requested subject to the following exception:

- Nairn District Salmon Fishery Board - Mr Laurie Fraser and Ms Barbara Jarvie.

**8. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report
Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No NC/06/22 dated 22 July 2022 by the Local Senior Officer.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Further information was sought and provided on false alarms and the process undertaken in response to these. Assurance was provided that these incidents were responded to and treated seriously. In addition, preventative engagement was undertaken with the premises holders to eliminate what caused the false alarms and avoid this repeating in future;
- it was clarified that availability of the station's second fire appliance (69.56%) was due to staffing availability. Assurance was provided that efforts were being made to recruit more staff to provide cover during specific time slots to ensure 100% availability for both appliances. Further assurance was provided that there was an active engagement and recruitment campaign to recruit more female fire fighters;
- further information was sought and provided on the school driving initiative during which was it confirmed that this was a virtual programme which would target 16/17 year school pupils in Nairn and include driver and passenger safety education; and
- it was confirmed that the fire at the side of the railway on the B9091 was not deliberate.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance report.

9. **Winter Service Plan 2022/23** **Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh 2022/23**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/07/22 dated 19 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion it was requested that the winter route priority map be updated to reflect the current position in that the service and school bus route had been extended in line with the development of Montgomerie Drive and this should therefore be upgraded to a Secondary priority group; as they were no longer on a bus route, Lyle Road, Osprey Crescent and Sutors Park should be downgraded to priority group Other; and the map should also be amended to indicate that all residential roads in the new housing estates were being gritted. It was also queried when the Community Councils had last been contacted regarding the collaborative community self-help initiative Winter Resilience and the Roads Operations Manager advised he would investigate this and issue a new contact if necessary.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 subject to the winter route priority map being updated to reflect the current position as follows:
 - a. the bus route along Montgomerie Drive be upgraded to a Secondary priority group;
 - b. Lyle Road, Osprey Crescent and Sutors Park be downgraded to priority group Other;
 - c. the map be amended to indicate that all residential roads in the new housing estates were being gritted; and
- NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations would potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

**10. Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF)
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann**

Prior to discussion of the undernoted reports, the Chair explained that the NCGF had an important role for the people of Nairn and it was vital they were involved in the decision-making process. He therefore welcomed the establishment of a pilot scheme to achieve this outcome, the details of which would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

**a. Consultation on proposal to dispose, by sale, of Grant Street workshop and yard, Grant Street, Fishertown, Nairn
Co-chomhairle mu mholadh gus faighinn cuidhteas, le reic, de bhùth-obrach is lios Sràid nan Granddach, Sràid nan Granddach, Baile an lasgaich, Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/08/22 dated 6 July 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points had been raised:

- Members indicated that they were supportive of the property being leased as opposed to being sold. It was felt that the asset should be retained and an income generated from the lease and that the tenant might also be able to make improvements;
- It was thought the site was for commercial use only but if it was to be sold for housing then it would require to be offered to the Housing Service in the first instance; and
- this was a secluded area and the site would benefit from the overgrowth being cleared and drone footage/photographs being taken to enable the full potential of the site in terms of the lease options to be explored.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as contained in the analysis at Appendix 1 to the report;
- APPROVED** the responses to the issues raised in connection with the proposal for publication on the Council's website as contained in the table in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- AGREED** the property be leased instead of being sold and that the proposal go ahead on that basis.

**b. Consultation on disposal and associated change of use at West Links, Nairn
Co-chomhairle mu fhaighinn cuidhteas agus atharrachadh cleachdaidh aig Machair an Iar, Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/09/22 dated 6 July 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members indicated their support for this proposal and recognised that extending the seating area would help to boost business, particularly in the winter, and continue to attract many visitors to the area. It was noted that this was a lengthy lease (30 years) and it was suggested and confirmed that the lease would revert to Common Good in the event that the business was no longer trading.

In respect of the consultation concerning the existing and proposed additional land to be leased at West Links, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the outcome of the consultation process undertaken as contained in the analysis at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the responses to the issues raised in connection with the proposal which could be found at Appendix 1 to the report for publication on the Council's website;
- iii. **AGREED** the proposal to dispose, by lease, of the area of 178m² of land at West Links, Marine Road, Nairn;
- iv. **AGREED** to change the use of the additional 40.5m² area from public amenity to kiosk seating; and
- v. **NOTED** that, if agreed, it would be necessary to seek Sheriff Court consent in respect of the proposal.

c. Consultation on potential future development of Sandown Lands – Consultation Outcome
Co-chomhairle mu leasachadh san àm ri teachd aig Fearann Sandown – Toradh Co-chomhairle

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/10/22 dated 7 July 2022 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Officers were commended for the report and the effective consultation that had been undertaken and the proposals accurately reflected the views of the community. The importance of consultation and continuous improvement and the role of the Reference Group to achieve this was also emphasised. Appreciation was expressed for the time and contributions from the members of the Reference Group;
- further information was sought and provided on community growing opportunities during which it was confirmed it could include working in partnership with the Council's Community Food Growing Officer in respect of community growing/agriculture, expansion of the existing allotments and education in a green space. However, it was explained that this would need wider engagement and community involvement to develop and determine what aspects should be taken forward. It was indicated that the Community Supported Agriculture ideas were welcomed and consideration should be given to developing these;
- the proposal to undertake a feasibility study to establish the community growing opportunities was welcomed and it was hoped that this would have diverse engagement with a wide range of ages and family involvement;
- self-build plots had been considered previously but there had not been a great demand and a green energy project had also been tried but failed due

- to being unable to connect to the grid. If properties were no longer used for Airbnb then there would be sufficient housing to meet needs; and
- there was a need for agricultural land and given the importance of this in the current climate, it was felt that the two large fields should currently be retained for agricultural use.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the key outcomes from the work of the short life Reference Group at paragraph 4.4 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the representations received in respect of the second phase of the consultation as contained at Appendix 1 to the report;
- iii. **AGREED** the responses to the representations received within the additional period of consultation also outlined at Appendix 1 to the report;
- iv. **APPROVED** the publication of Appendix 1 to the report on the Council's website and to notify those who had responded within the full consultation period, where contact details had been provided;
- v. **NOTED** the analysis and key themes outlined in Section 5.2 of the report which was based upon the feedback from the two consultation periods;
- vi. in terms of the future use or development for the Sandown Lands, **NOTED** the options contained within the report and **AGREED** the officer recommendation as follows:
 - **AGREED** not to proceed with disposal of Sandown lands at this time and **AGREED** the following next steps:
 - a. that options to establish further community growing opportunities on the Sandown Lands field (hatched in pink on the site plan contained in Appendix 2 to the report) be explored through a feasibility study, which would include further engagement with the community. The scope for commissioning this feasibility study would be brought before a future meeting of this Committee; and
 - b. that further work to consider uses for the remainder of the Sandown Lands would be led by the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership, and relevant sub-groups, in an Area Place Planning process. Any future proposal would be subject to a further Community Empowerment Act Consultation and reports to meetings of this Committee.

d. Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF) Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated Joint Report No NC/11/22 dated 29 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- there was a need for more detailed financial information to give more transparency and Members a greater understanding of the fund. Having greater detail would enable income and expenditure to be fully scrutinised i.e. examine costs, ensure rents were fair and identify potential efficiency savings. There was also a need to look for potential opportunities to secure external funding to make improvements such as to insulation. It was

suggested that management accounts, perhaps presented on an annual basis with detailed information on each property, was required but it was recommended that further work be undertaken to determine the most appropriate format that would provide Members with the required level of detail whilst ensuring commercial sensitivity. It was recognised that this would require extra work and thus result in additional costs however this could potentially be offset against any efficiency savings which might be generated;

- a future report on the invitation to pay parking scheme was welcomed. It was requested that a breakdown of income by car park be provided in order to ascertain which meters were delivering a return and how many visitors were taking up the invite to pay which would assist with determining future policy;
- with regard to the Annual Surplus, concern was expressed at the proposed cost (£5,000) for the removal of the Links store and the Committee was advised that the Ward Manager would investigate this to ensure that the best price was secured. The development of the Links area including progress with Phase 2 of Team Hamish and expansion of the seating area at the West Links was welcomed;
- although supportive of the award, the Nairn Book and Arts Festival should be aware that the Ward Discretionary Fund was for one-off funding. It was suggested that there might be a need to identify financial support from an alternative fund in future. The need for successful events to continuously secure funding was an ongoing issue across the Highlands and perhaps there was a need for a central events fund;
- Members were supportive of a Common Good Fund award for Nairn town centre Christmas lights and tree. However, it was expensive and further information was sought and provided on the range of costs that this would be utilised to support. It was reported that a full breakdown of costs was provided annually;
- there was a need to examine the income from the Common Good Fund and how it should be dispersed, particularly if there was a desire for the fund to be operated in a more commercially orientated manner;
- the Committee welcomed the proposal for an Events budget line in the 2023/24 Nairn Common Good Fund budget and each application could be determined on its individual merit. It was suggested that there should be engagement and consultation with the community in order to determine how the fund would be operated and at which level the budget should be set; and
- concern was expressed that the NCGF Investment portfolio was not performing well. It was suggested that this might be due to it being a managed fund rather than a tracked fund. It was indicated that the NCGF replicated the model used by Inverness Common Good Fund but there was a need for further information to enable a greater understanding. It was therefore requested that a report be presented to a future meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the position of the NCGF as shown in the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Statement against Budget for 2022/23;
- ii. **AGREED** the use Nairn Common Good Fund cash reserves in 2022/23 to support Nairn events:

- Nairn Book & Arts Festival £2,000
 - Nairn Christmas lighting £3,000
- iii. **AGREED** that proposals for an Events budget line in the 2023/24 Nairn Common Good Fund budget be presented to a future meeting of the Committee;
- iv. **NOTED** that a report on the Invitation to Pay Parking Scheme at NCGF sites would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee and **AGREED** that this include a breakdown of income by car park; and
- v. **AGREED** that:
- a. there be further investigation to determine how the accounts could be presented in more detail;
 - b. the cost of the removal of the Links store be investigated by the Ward Manager to ensure value for money; and
 - c. there be a report to a future meeting on the NCGF Investment portfolio.

11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 8 March 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

The meeting was concluded at 11.45am.