

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Easter Ross Area Committee** held remotely on Tuesday, 8 November 2022, at 10.30 am.

Present:

Ms T Collier
Mr D Louden
Ms P Munro

Ms M Nolan
Mr A Rhind

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property
Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support & Engagement
Mr J MacKay, Amenity Services Manager
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Development Plans Team
Ms J-A Bain, Planner, Development Plans Team
Mr D Chisholm, Planner, Development Plans Team
Mr R Bartlett, Road Safety Technician
Ms D MacKenzie, Principal Housing Officer
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

Also in Attendance:

Chief Inspector S MacDonald, North Highland Area Command
Inspector C Murray, North Highland Area Command

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

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Ms S Rawlings and Ms M Smith.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

Item 4 – Mrs P Munro

3. Police – Area Performance Summary Report Poileas – Geàrr-Aithisg Coileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No ERA/15/22 dated 27 October 2022 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- clarification was sought and provided on the reported increase in rape and domestic abuse cases, many incidents of which were historical and the result of one perpetrator, rather than several, and an increased number of victims willing to report such crimes;
- in response to concerns about drug-related crime, and what could be done by Members to support the police, the need for community support and witness intelligence was emphasised;
- Members were urged to attend a community event planned for February 2023 for an estate in Tain, for which details would be provided in due course;
- in relation to scams, Members requested information on current trends, and a brief summary was provided of prevention and intervention measures being undertaken;
- the reduced police presence on the streets was disappointing, and attention was drawn to changing patterns of policing, and the pressures on police resources, for which political pressure for additional funding was urged;
- in response to concerns about young people engaging in anti-social behaviour, attention was drawn to work being undertaken with schools; and
- Members were urged to encourage applications for people to become special constables, and it was hoped the council's corporate communication service could help to publicise this. The useful role of community wardens was highlighted.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

**4. Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2
Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh 2**

Declaration of Interest: Mrs P Munro declared an interest in this item and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and decision.

There had been circulated Report No ERA/16/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

A presentation was provided summarising the key points of the report. It was clarified that Highland Deephaven was not due for expansion over and above the allocation shown in the plan.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- information was sought on a possible central site for Kiltearn Primary School and it was explained the school was not currently on the Council's Capital Programme and any expansion would be as indicated on the land in EV03. Longer term discussions could be held at a future date with landowners and the Education Service, as part of a future review of the Local Development Plan. The land in question at EV03 was allocated for housing and community use, which could include school expansion;

- concern was expressed that further housing expansion between Tain and Evanton was being constrained by Transport Scotland and this required further discussion;
- an explanation was sought and provided for the proposed location in AL09 for retirement homes being rejected. The new policy in the Plan in relation to the provision of accommodation for assisted living was outlined;
- the proposal to re-open the rail halt at Eventon was welcomed;
- if the Opportunity Cromarty Firth bid was successful and a review of the Local Development Plan was forthcoming as a result, it was hoped the hinterland policy would be reviewed;
- in the section entitled 'Alternative Sites,' the issues marked 'XX' should be clarified;
- in the section entitled 'Landscape and visual impacts & tourism concerns', Pitcalzean was wrongly spelt;
- in the section entitled 'Mr Scott per Bidwells (1273028)', the final sentence should read. 'the Reporter sees merit; and
- the Chair thanked the Development Plans team for their work.

Mr D Louden, seconded by Ms M Nolan, **MOVED** the recommendations i to iv, as detailed in the report, and a further 3 points, as detailed below, v to vii. There was no amendment.

The Committee:

- i. **AGREED** the recommended Council response to the place-specific issues relevant to this Committee area raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as set out in **Appendix 1**;
- ii. **NOTED** the issues raised in representations as they relate to strategic matters that may have implications for this Committee area and note the working draft response to these issues as set out in **Appendix 2**;
- iii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its examination up to but excluding the Plan's adoption; and
- iv. **AGREED** to authorise the Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the chair of this Committee, to make any necessary Habitats Regulations Appraisal, factual or other non-material changes to **Appendix 1** prior to its submission to Scottish Government;
- v. **AGREED** to request the Leader of the Council enter a dialogue with Transport Scotland regarding what action will be needed to allow development of housing between Evanton and Tain;
- vi. **APPROVED** the commitment to review the IMFLDP2 within two years of a successful OCF bid to ensure adequate housing land is available to support economic growth; and
- vii. **AGREED** to highlight to the Reporter the view of the Easter Ross Area Committee that the IMFLDP2 must be flexible, adaptable and subject to timely and regular review.

5. Highland Council Place Based Fund – Update Maoin Stèidhichte air Àite Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Fios às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No ERA/17/22 dated 31 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, information was sought and provided on the reasons for the delays in the installation of play equipment in various location, all of which were in hand but had been held up due to supply and staffing challenges. In response to a query about community ownership of public toilets in Alness, this would be taken forward by community support coordinators and amenities officers, and a community meeting was planned, to which local Members would be invited.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on Place based Investment Funds in Wards 6 and 7.

**6. Invergordon 20 mph Speed Limit and the Supporting Traffic Calming
Crìoch-astair 20 msu Inbhir Ghòrdain agus an Socrachadh Trafaig mar Thacsa**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/18/22 dated 7 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

Ms Collier raised concern about speeding traffic on the shore road in Kiltearn and was advised to email her request for a speed survey to the Road Safety Technician.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the background to the proposed 20 mph speed limit order and supporting traffic calming in Invergordon;
- ii. **NOTED** the objections made to The Highland Council (Invergordon) (20 mph Speed Limit) Order 2022 in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn;
- iii. **NOTED** the objections made to the supporting traffic calming in accordance with the regulations and not withdrawn;
- iv. **APPROVED** the making of the Road Traffic Regulation Order; and
- v. **APPROVED** the construction of the traffic calming in Invergordon.

**7. Housing Performance Report
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated Report No ERA/19/22 dated 24 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members expressed appreciation of the work of the Housing team, particularly their work dealing with rent arrears. Concern was expressed that housing remained allocated to people who were not resident in them, and a summary was provided of actions being taken to investigate incidences of this. It was suggested that enquiries to neighbouring properties was a helpful starting point.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

8. Invergordon Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Ghòrdain

There had been circulated Report No ERA/20/22 dated 6 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Community and Place.

During discussion, Members asked for information on the sale of Invergordon Town Hall, which was due to be on the market in 2-3 weeks, and timescales for the sale for the Bouchardon Bust.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Q2 monitoring statement for the Invergordon Common Good Fund;
- ii. **NOTED** the update on current Invergordon Common Good issues; and
- iii. **AGREED** to circulate the link with information on the sale of the Town Hall to Members, along with an indicative timeline for the sale of the Bouchardon Bust.

9. Tain Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Bhaile Dhubhthaich

There had been circulated Report No ERA/21/22 dated 6 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Community and Place.

It was clarified that at paragraph 4.2, it wrongly stated that income was expected to be on target for the year, when it was expected to be above target as a result of the proceeds from the sale of part of Blarliath Unit 2b. Members referred to the low rate of return being earned on the balances, and requested consideration be given to investment of the fund through the Pension Committee's Investment Sub Committee.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the Quarter 2 monitoring statement for the Tain Common Good Fund;
- ii. **NOTED** the update on current Tain Common Good issues; and
- iii. **AGREED** to investigate whether the funds should be invested through the Pensions Committee Investment Sub-Committee, this to be reported to a future meeting.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Easter Ross Area Committee held on 5 September 2022, which had been approved by the Council on 22 September 2022.

The meeting ended at 12.35pm.