

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 January, 2023 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr D Millar

Mr C Munro
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr A Bruce, Service Delivery Manager, Resources & Finance
Mr G Macdonald, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
Mr G Smith, Service Lead – Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
Ms J Bruce, Principal Housing Officer, Housing & Property
Mr J Henderson, Housing Investment Officer, Housing & Property
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager Community Regeneration, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
Ms M Gray, Project Officer Community Regeneration, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
Mr A MacInnes, Committee Officer, Performance & Governance

Also in Attendance:

Mr M Colliar, Group Commander, 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.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

Transparency Statements: Item 9 – Mr D Millar and Mr C Munro

In accordance with Standing Order 9, with the consent of the meeting, item 10 on the agenda was taken at this point.

Urgent Item of Business – the following report was taken as an urgent item of business due to the timescale in which to distribute the Islands Emergency Cost of Crisis funding.

Item 10.

The Islands Emergency Cost Crisis Fund 2022/23 Maoin Staing Cosgais Èiginn nan Eilean 2022/23

There was circulated Report No. SR/6/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities & Place in relation to the Scottish Government providing the Highland Council with grant funding to help alleviate the cost crisis in our island communities. The report set out recommendations for distribution of the share of funding for Skye & Raasay.

Members welcomed the report, the extra funding to help island communities and were fully supportive of the recommendations.

The Committee:-

i **NOTED** that the Council has received Islands Emergency Cost Crisis funding for 2022/23 to help alleviate the impacts of the cost crisis for island communities.

ii. **AGREED** that this funding be used to automatically make non-recurring cost crisis payments of £155 per eligible household by 28 February 2023 where the Council holds current bank details, in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out in section 4 of the report.

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 October, 2022, which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 8 December, 2022, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

4. **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There was circulated Report No SR/1/23 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In relation to station availability of all the fire stations in Highland, a significant number of these were below the establishment the Service would like due to the challenges that continued to be faced with recruitment. The Isle of Skye had in particular been very challenging to recruit staff and the Service was being proactive to try and increase new recruits joining the Service. To address staffing shortages a joint mobilisation policy with other areas had been launched and moving staff around to provide cover where needed at stations. It was highlighted that up to 12 new recruits would be joining stations in the area which was great news and would make a big difference to the staffing establishment for the area. A different operating model for the Portree fire station was being considered as well as a new multi agency building. There were also plans to have a new station in Uig.

There were ongoing conversations within the Service on different operating models and they included, for example, the option of a wholetime station on Skye

with the opportunity to give firefighters careers. A development event for Officers was being held and part of this would be on how to deal with wildfires. In terms of the length of time firefighters could spend dealing with wildfires, there was a need for crew rotation and the need to keep firefighters safe. There was currently a ballot for industrial action with the Service and the outcome of this would be known soon and the resources would require to be managed to deal with incidents such as wildfires.

In terms of road traffic incidents in the area, the majority were likely to be tourists or people without the knowledge to drive on roads in rural areas. However, the majority of these occurred at low speed and injuries were not too significant. It was found that locals or business people in a hurry that tended to make errors at high speed with more significant consequences. The Service worked closely with Police Scotland and partner agencies to educate the public on safe driving.

The Committee **NOTED** the SFRS performance report.

5. Area Roads Capital Programme 2023/24 Prògram Calpa Rathaidean Sgìreil 2023/24

There was circulated Report No. SR/2/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy which detailed the proposed 2023/24 Area Roads Capital Programme for Isle of Skye and Raasay Area.

The Chair acknowledged that there was anxiety and frustration in the community over the state of the roads on Skye, Raasay and across Highland. It was recognised however that there were limited resources available to undertake road maintenance. Local Members would work hard to try and provide additional resources for roads in this area as it was the top priority for the Skye/Raasay area. Members appreciated and supported the work of the roads team.

The poor state of roads was impacting on the community and the tourist economy and there was a need for the Council to re-evaluate the funding put towards roads maintenance to ensure that this area received a fair share.

It was highlighted that the local allocations of capital budget for 2023/24 remained to be established and would be calculated from the approved service capital budget allocation being adjusted for any acceleration or slippage in the previous financial year for each area allocation and also analysis of the road condition survey results. The baseline road allocation for this area was £490k. By way of context it was advised that the annual road condition survey showed that there had been a considerable deterioration in the road network over the last 10 years. In order to maintain roads in a steady state with no improvement it was estimated that the Council would require to spend £26m per year and it was estimated that Skye/Raasay would require to spend £2.6m per year just to maintain its roads in a steady state (the current budget was £490k).

It was requested that the road maintenance planned work schedule from now until the end of April, 2023 and the programme of routes for the Jet Patcher would be shared with Members so that they share this information with the public. There would be surface dressing on roads this year and this was in the programme. The Pot Hole Pro would also be used. Road maintenance was prioritised in terms of safety and hierarchy of the network.

The Committee **APPROVED**:-

i the proposed 2023/24 Area Roads Capital Programme for the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area;

ii the remaining £44k from earmarked reserves from the Skye and Raasay area share of local car parking income for 2021/22 to road maintenance; and

iii **NOTED** that the road maintenance planned work schedule from now until the end of April, 2023 and the programme of routes for the Jet Patcher would be shared with Members.

**6. Isle of Skye and Raasay HRA Capital Programme 2023/27 & 2022-23 update
Prògram Calpa Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais an Eilein Sgitheanaich
is Ratharsair 2023/27**

There was circulated Report No. SR/3/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

It was highlighted that there was a focus on energy efficiency and adaptation works on the housing stock within the capital programme. It was requested that a breakdown on expected demand for the various elements of the capital programme and the process for prioritisation of energy efficiency elements of the programme would be shared with members at a Ward Business meeting. Work would continue on local delivery and partnership working to produce better economies of scale, in order to make the best use of the resources available within the capital programme.

The Committee:

i **NOTED** the update on the 2022-23 Isle of Skye and Raasay HRA Capital Programme at section 5 of the report.

ii. **NOTED** the resources available to Isle of Skye and Raasay at 6.7.

iii. **AGREED** the proposed investment priorities in the HRA Capital Programme for Isle of Skye and Raasay 2023-27 as set out in Appendix 1.

iv. **NOTED** that updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme will continue to be provided through ward briefings and at future Local Committees as requested by local Members, in addition to reporting to Housing and Property Committee.

v **NOTED** that a breakdown on expected demand for the various elements of the capital programme and the process for prioritisation of energy efficiency elements of the programme would be shared with members at a Ward Business meeting.

7. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2023/24

There was circulated Report No. SR/4/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property which provided information on garage rents for Skye & Raasay and invited the Committee to set rent levels for garages held on the Housing Revenue Account for 2023/24.

It was recommended that a 7% increase be applied to the 5 garages on Skye/Raasay which amounted to a 46 pence weekly increase for a Council tenant and 57 pence weekly increase for a non tenant. The current rents were

considerably below the Highland wide average rent for a garage from the Council. Money from garage rents were ring fenced for repairs to garages

The Committee **AGREED** a 7% rent increase to apply to Skye & Raasay Garages.

8. Uig Harbour Redevelopment Cunntas às Ùr mu Ath-leasachadh Cala Ùige

There was a presentation by the Service Lead Infrastructure on the Uig Harbour Redevelopment. The Committee were provided an overview of the works being undertaken, construction progress, scale of works and dates for the closure of the ferry terminal. Currently all works were proceeding well and the project was due for completion by April, 2024.

In discussion, it was advised that the dredging material of the seabed was not suitable for re-use and it would be disposed of at sea and licences were in place for this. The works would continue when the ferry came back into service in March, 2023. The piling works were progressing well despite several obstructions being encountered on the seabed. The tender for the new terminal building had gone out last year, but due to affordability, this part of the project would be re-tendered with the aim of completion by April, 2024.

The work of staff on this project was recognised and commended by Members as was the work undertaken by Councillor C Munro. The community engagement on the project was also acknowledged.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on Uig Harbour Redevelopment.

9. Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) Assessment of Applications

Transparency Statement:- Mr D Millar made a Transparency Statement in respect of the applications relating to Cuillin FM/Radio Skye as he was a volunteer to broadcast a show on Radio Skye which he broadcast from his home. Mr Millar had no other connection to Radio Skye and having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Transparency Statement: Mr C Munro made a Transparency Statement in respect of the Skye Dance application, as a family member participated in Skye Dance events; and the Ionad Thronairnis – Guthan na Tìre (Voices of the Land) application as he had participated in a festival and he received a fee for taking part in that festival. However, Mr Munro wished to record a connection to these applications but having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There was circulated Report No. SR/5/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

There was an introduction to the report, which included changes to some applications. The Committee were invited to consider 16 applications for CRF funding. The revised total grant requests amounted to £495,255 and available funding was £440,795.

The Committee considered applications for Community Regeneration Funding (CRF) and agreed as shown below. In total 16 applications were approved amounting to £443,244 leaving a balance of £7,697 being carried forward to the next round of CRF funding.

Glendale Community Hall Association – Hall Flood Defence

APPROVED £10,146.22 to be funded from the Islands Emergency Fund

Cuillin FM/Radio Skye – Journalist Pilot Programme Extension

APPROVED £14,081

Broadford & Strath Community Company – Community Co-ordinator & Development

APPROVED £10,250, subject to technical condition that specialist consultant support fees require to be agreed before they are incurred to ensure eligibility.

Ionad Thronairnis – Guthan na Tire (Voices of the Land)

APPROVED £30,000

Broadford & Strath Community Company – Skye Event Space

APPROVED £50,000 subject to conditions being met relating to planning, match funding and land acquisition.

Cuillin FM trading as Radio Skye – Radio Skye Accommodation Pods

APPROVED £15,000, subject to conditions being met relating to lease of land, planning permission and match funding.

Skye Iconic Sites Project – Quiraing Loop Path Reinforcement

APPROVED £90,000

SkyeDance – Building connection & community through dance

APPROVED £25,939

Skye Connect – Skye Cycle Network – Development Stage 2

APPROVED £16,500 with the condition that a benchmarking exercise be undertaken on the salary of the post. It was requested that updates on progress with the project be shared with Members.

Uig Community Hall Association – Environmental & Accessibility improvements

APPROVED £9,000

Hebridean Diving Services – Coastal Defence

APPROVED £35,058 subject to a constituted group led by the community being formed for this project and match funding being in place.

Sleat Community Trust – Overhauling Sleat Renewables Wood

APPROVED £11,220

Uig Community Trust – Uig Regeneration Projects

APPROVED £22,500, subject to a benchmarking exercise with Highland & Islands Enterprise being undertaken on the salary of the Local Development Officer post, which depending on the outcome, may result in a reduced grant award. Updates on progress with projects should also be provided to Members.

Portree & Braes Community Trust – Home Farm Hub

APPROVED £64,138.66, subject to conditions on match funding; a benchmarking exercise being undertaken on the salary of the Project Officer post; and eligibility of costs.

Portree and Braes CT – Finance & Admin Officer

APPROVED £18,412, subject to the condition that information on the outcomes of the project and the plan for the Trust to achieve financial sustainability be shared with Members.

Portree & Braes CT – Matheson Place Playpark

APPROVED £21,000

The meeting ended at 12.50 p.m.