

**The Highland Council**  
**No. 6 2022/2023**

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 10.35 am.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence**  
**A' Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

**Present:**

Mr C Aitken	Ms L Kraft
Ms S Atkin	Mr B Lobban
Mr M Baird	Mr P Logue
Mr A Baldrey	Mr D Louden
Mr C Ballance	Mr A MacDonald
Dr C Birt	Mr W MacKay
Mr B Boyd	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr R Bremner	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr I Brown	Mr S Mackie
Mr J Bruce	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr M Cameron	Mr R MacKintosh
Mrs I Campbell	Ms K MacLean
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr T MacLennan
Mr A Christie	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs M Cockburn	Mrs B McAllister
Ms T Collier	Ms J McEwan
Ms H Crawford	Mr J McGillivray
Ms S Fanet	Mr D Millar
Mr J Finlayson	Mr H Morrison
Mr D Fraser	Mr C Munro
Mr R Gale	Mrs P Munro
Mr K Gowans	Ms L Niven
Mr J Grafton	Mr P Oldham
Mr A Graham	Mrs M Paterson
Mr M Green	Mrs M Reid
Mr D Gregg	Mr M Reiss
Mr R Gunn	Mr A Rhind
Mrs J Hendry	Mrs T Robertson
Ms M Hutchison	Mr K Rosie
Mr A Jarvie	Mrs L Saggars
Mrs B Jarvie	Mr A Sinclair
Ms L Johnston	Ms M Smith
Mr R Jones	Mr R Stewart
Ms E Knox	Ms K Willis

**In Attendance:**

Chief Executive

Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place

Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning

Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

**Mr B Lobban in the Chair**

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence  
Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr L Fraser, Mr S Kennedy, Mrs A MacLean, Ms M MacCallum, Ms M Nolan and Ms S Rawlings.

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

The Council **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:-

Item 6 (Question 5): Mr A Christie

Item 7 (ii): Mr A Christie

Item 7 (iii): Mr D Gregg and Ms L Kraft

Item 12: Mr A Christie

Item 13: Mr D Gregg

Item 14: Mr A Christie and Mr D Gregg

Item 15: Mr A Christie and Mr D Gregg

Item 18: Mr A Christie and Mr D Gregg

Item 21: Mr A Christie and Mr D Gregg

**3. Confirmation of Minutes  
Daingneachadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais**

There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 October 2022 as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately which were **APPROVED**.

**4. Minutes of Meetings of Committees  
Geàrr-chunntasan Choinneamhan Chomataidhean**

There had been submitted for confirmation as correct records, for information as regards delegated business and for approval as appropriate, the Minutes of Meetings of Committees as contained in the Volume which had been circulated separately as undernoted:-

Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee, 31 October 2022

Gaelic Committee, 2 November 2022

Comataidh na Gaidhlig, 2 November 2022

Climate Change Committee, 3 November 2022

City of Inverness Area Committee (Special), 4 November 2022

Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee, 7 November 2022

Lochaber Area Committee, 7 November 2022

Sutherland Area Committee, 7 November 2022

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee, 8 November 2022

Easter Ross Area Committee, 8 November 2022

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, 9 November 2022

Economy and Infrastructure Committee, 10 November 2022

Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee, 14 November 2022

Black Isle Committee, 15 November 2002

Nairnshire Committee, 16 November 2022

Communities and Place Committee, 16 November 2022

Housing and Property Committee, 17 November 2022

\*Education Committee, 23 November 2022

City of Inverness Area Committee, 24 November 2022

Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 30 November 2022  
Corporate Resources Committee, 1 December 2022

The Minutes, having been moved and seconded were, except as undernoted, **APPROVED** – matters arising having been dealt with as follows:-

**\*Education Committee, 23 November 2022**

**Starred Item 12 - Review of the statutory consultation exercise on the establishment of Gaelic**

**AGREED** the creation of Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School on the basis set out at paragraph 1.2 of the report.

**City of Inverness Area Committee (Special), 4 November 2022**

**Notice of Amendment:** Item 3: Inverness Common Good Fund: Financial Monitoring and Budget Allocation Report

“We, the undersigned, give this Notice of Amendment to rescind the decision of the City of Inverness Area Committee, meeting on Friday, 4 November 2022, for deferring any decision on reallocating budgets to alleviate poverty.

Signed: Mr A Christie, Mrs T Robertson, Mr C Aitken, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mr D Gregg, Mrs H Crawford, Mr A Graham, Mrs A MacLean, Mr A Mackintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mr R Gale and Mr M Reiss.

And instead moved that the Council:

Agree that the remaining uncommitted balance of £72,000 relating to Festive Lights be redesignated to be spend on poverty alleviation measures.”

In this connection, there had been re-circulated Report No CIA/25/22 dated 20 October 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members were reminded by the Convener that although full Council was technically responsible for the Inverness Common Good Fund expenditure, they did not see the financial expenditure reports before they were submitted to the City of Inverness Area Committee;
- the Leader of the City of Inverness Area Committee indicated that he was minded that the remaining balance be remitted back to the City of Inverness Area Committee for reallocation;
- some Members expressed disappointment that the Inverness Common Good Fund expenditure allocation had been spent on additional Christmas decorations without full discussion with all City of Inverness Area Members and had failed to take into consideration the unprecedented rise in the cost of living and the ongoing impact of the Russian/Ukraine war. In this regard it was emphasised that there should be no repeat of this occurrence. However, it was also felt that the City of Inverness Area Members had taken the foregoing into consideration and that this matter should remain with the City of Inverness Area Committee to discuss and collaboratively resolve; and
- it was stressed that the Council had a duty to be seen by the public to spend the budget responsibly and to get best value for money.

Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr D Macpherson, **MOVED** that Council note that all Highland Councillors had a duty to ensure that Inverness Common Good Funds were spent in line with the intentions of the fund and its origins. Accordingly, Council reminded the City of Inverness Area Committee that when planning future expenditure to reflect upon the current economic situation and resultant poverty levels in its area to ensure that the funds were always targeted in the best possible way.

As an **AMENDMENT** Mr I Brown, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, moved that the Financial Monitoring and Budget Allocation be reverted to the City of Inverness Area Committee for resolution.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 26 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 38 votes, with 4 abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

#### **For the Motion**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs B Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Mr A MacDonald, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms J McEwan, Mr M Reiss, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Sagers, Mr A Sinclair, Ms M Smith and Mr R Stewart.

#### **For the Amendment**

Ms S Atkin, Mr C Ballance, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Loudon, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr R MacKintosh, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs M Reid, Mr K Rosie.

#### **Abstentions**

Mr J McGillivray, Mr A Rhind, Ms K Willis, Mr A Baldrey.

#### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** that the Financial Monitoring and Budget Allocation be reverted back to the City of Inverness Area Committee for resolution.

#### **Minutes of Meetings not included in the Volume were as follows -**

- i. Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board held on 23 September 2022 (approved by the Board on 25 November 2022) – **NOTED**; and
- ii. Redesign Board – held on 28 November 2022 – **APPROVED** *with the exception of those matters to be discussed at Item 16.*

#### **5. Membership of Committees, etc Ballarachd Chomataidhean, msaa**

The Council **AGREED** that Mr M Green replace Mr B Lobban on the Communities and Place Committee.

**6. Question Time**  
**Àm Ceiste**

The following Questions had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance.

**Member Questions**

**(1) Mr A Christie**

To the Leader of the Council

“Please could the Leader summarise the key findings and recommendations contained in the document “Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Highland” which was prepared by the Care Inspectorate in partnership with Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and how any required improvements will be taken forward.”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a Supplementary question, the cause for the delay in the publication of the Inspection report, the final draft of which had been presented to the Council in September 2022, was queried.

In response, the Leader of the Council agreed to investigate and respond to Councillor Christie.

**(2) Mr A Christie**

To the Leader of the Council

“In light of the unprecedented projected 2023/24 budget gap of £40m+ please could the Leader detail as to what events are planned by the Administration in 2023 with regard to engaging with communities, Unions, Council staff, councillors, third sector organisations, parent councils, general public and vulnerable adult social care service users to receive observations on the budget in the lead up to the Special Budget Meeting of Council in March 2023?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a Supplementary question, it was queried whether the Leader of the Council agreed that his response was inadequate in addressing the budget setting process.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he did not agree.

**(3) Mr A Jarvie**

To the Leader of the Council

“With it becoming increasingly unlikely the Council will meet its agreement to reach net zero by 2025, will your Administration make a statement that it shall not be meeting the commitment you voted for in the last Council term?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

**(4) Mr M Reiss**

To the Chair of Corporate Resources

“What provisional financing arrangements are being considered for the replacement of “A” Block at Thurso High School, following the unexpected closure of the building on the receipt of an independent structural survey/assessment in October 2022?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a Supplementary question, it was queried what the potential longer-term options for Thurso High School were as referred to in the answer.

In response, it was confirmed that that this matter would be addressed in the Capital Plan and would be discussed in the forthcoming weeks.

**(5) Mr D Gregg**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

To the Leader

“I have been contacted by local residents who have been waiting four years for ADHD and other neurodiversity assessments, and are now paying four figures for private assessments. Can the council provide the current number of children waiting for ADHD assessments and the average waiting time for assessment, by geographical area across the council?”

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a Supplementary question, it was queried whether the Leader of the Council would commit to working in partnership with NHS Highland to ensure there was a joint strategy for reducing waiting times for assessments.

In response, the Leader of the Council confirmed that this would be discussed with the Chair of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

**(6) Janet McEwan**

To the Leader of the Council

“With regards to Avonlea Children’s Centre, Wick and Thor House, Respite Centre, Thurso can the leader give us the true position in respect of both these facilities? As I am receiving conflicting information from senior staff and residents”.

The response had been circulated.

In terms of a Supplementary question, further information was sought on what would happen to the 20 staff employed at Avonlea Children’s Centre.

In response, it was confirmed that further information would be provided by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

**(7) Alex Graham**

To the Leader of the Council

“How many properties does Highland Council own in the City of Inverness, excluding schools and council houses?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

**(8) Angela MacLean**

To the Chair of Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing Committee

“Can the chair confirm that Highland Council have a suitable compliment of trained Practice Leads and social workers in each Highland Area to run an effective Service. If there are some vacancies that these will be advertised as soon as possible and not delayed by the job freeze?”

The response had been circulated.

There was no supplementary question.

**7. Notices of Motion  
Brathan Glusaid**

The following Notices of Motion had been received by the Head of Corporate Governance –

- (i) “Highland Council commits to urgently contacting the Scottish Government to call on them to implement a full review of the current situation in some remote and rural areas with Highland Council where Fire Stations were either effectively closed due to being unable to supply the minimum of four firefighters to crew an appliance or unavailable for lengthy periods. This was resulting in no effective/timely response to incidents in areas as dispersed as Caithness, NW Sutherland, Skye and the Aird and Loch Ness Ward.

The review should include age, fitness requirements, training, Fire Brigade Union input, Commercial Buildings Insurance implications, joint RVP procedures, distance living from local stations and crewing levels.

The Review was called for in order to protect lives now”.

Signed: Matthew Reiss    Richard Gale    Chris Ballance

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- support was voiced for the commendable work of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), which was much appreciated by all;
- some Members felt that while the overall sentiment of the motion was supported, there was a preference to aim for more local solutions, which would progress the situation more timeously than trying to address it via the Scottish Government. It was pointed out that this had been attempted in 2021 by the previous Council Administration, with the response being that while the SFRS appreciated the concerns and were actively working to overcome them, the matter was operational in nature. It was thought the position was unlikely to have changed;

- the need for local independent scrutiny was emphasised and a summary of efforts undertaken to address the situation was provided;
- the situation was complex and required partnership working;
- it was suggested that the use of the word 'closed' in the motion was not fair or accurate and statistics were provided on overall availability levels for various fire stations in the Highlands. However, it was further pointed out that while overall availability levels might be sufficient, there were snapshots in time in areas outwith Inverness during which there had been no appliance availability. A local-based review was required to address this;
- innovative solutions to the recruitment challenges being faced had been undertaken by the SFRS and this was not reflected in the terms of the motion;
- any review should consider the policy requiring a fire crew of four in remote and rural areas, with disappointment being expressed that a crew of three might be available to start immediately tackling a fire but would have to wait for a fourth fire fighter to be sent from elsewhere;
- it was proposed that a letter could be sent to the Scottish Government in addition to a localised review, which should be started as soon as possible;
- a review should also investigate the availability levels of second appliances on the north coast;
- the training commitment of seven weeks for volunteers was considerable;
- Mr G MacKenzie requested the minutes of the meeting held with the SFRS in 2021, and hoped that further discussions would take place with the SFRS, which would be open to Members from all groups; and
- the Convener pointed out that no matter how they voted, all Members appreciated the work of the SFRS.

Mr G MacKenzie, seconded by Mr D Fraser, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the Highland Council recognised and commended the work of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service crews and staff across Highland. The Council also recognised that there were challenges facing the retained duty system and were keen to continue to work in partnership with the SFRS Board to find local solutions for local places. To this end, the Council would seek an early meeting with representatives of the SFRS Board to review current practices and consider future solutions, as well as the work already undertaken, as reported to the Communities and Place Committee in November 2022.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 28 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 35 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:

#### **For the motion**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Ballance, Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mr P Logue, Mr A MacDonald, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr R MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms J McEwan, Mr J McGillivray, Mr M Reiss, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Siggers, Mr A Sinclair, Ms M Smith, Mr R Stewart, Ms K Willis.

**For the amendment:** Ms S Atkin, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Loudon, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Reid, Mr K Rosie.



## **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** that the Highland Council recognised and commended the work of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service crews and staff across Highland. The Council also recognised that there were challenges facing the retained duty system and were keen to continue to work in partnership with the SFRS Board to find local solutions for local places. To this end, the Council would seek an early meeting with representatives of the SFRS Board to review current practices and consider future solutions, as well as the work already undertaken, as reported to the Communities and Place Committee in November 2022.

- (ii) **The following Members made Transparency Statements in respect of this item and having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:**

**Mr A Christie as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland; and  
Mr R Bremner as a member of his family was a development officer.**

“This Council meeting notes that:

On 26 June 2014 Highland Council issued a Community Benefit Policy to enable Highland communities to benefit directly from the use of local resources associated with renewable energy sources. This built on the Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefit from Onshore Renewable Developments, interpreting them for the Highland context. The policy was intended to support Highland communities to maximise the benefit they derive from Community Benefit by promoting the following four guiding principles.

It sought a minimum payment to Community Benefit funds equivalent to £5,000 per Megawatt of installed capacity per year (Retail Price Index linked with 2011 as the baseline year). It also proposed the establishment of a Highland Trust Fund, with income from developers to be split between Local Funds and the Highland Trust Fund.

It was now evident that there have been major changes in the field of onshore wind energy, such as

- The price of electricity has tripled
- Turbine sizes are much bigger, often producing six times the power of older turbines
- Some communities have benefitted significantly from voluntary community benefit payments
- Other neighbouring communities with equally pressing needs and impacted by development have had no benefit, due to the varying ways that areas of benefit are determined by developers, communities and other stakeholders.

It was evident that the people of the Highlands are deriving little benefit from the vast profits being generated by turbine owners developers, usually based outside Scotland and that the modest benefit voluntarily provided is not provided equitably to Highland communities.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. review the Highland Council Policy for Onshore Wind Turbine Development as a matter of urgency, including the proposed Highland Trust Fund which has not yet been established; and

2. call upon the Scottish Government to legislate to allocate at least 5% of gross revenue from wind turbines (rather than £5,000+inflation per turbine) and to widen the areas in which funds are to be distributed”.

Signed: Angus MacDonald    Michael Baird    Alex Graham  
         Molly Nolan            Janet McEwan    Ron Gunn

Following a summary of Mr MacDonald’s motion, Mr Rosie proposed that the focus of the motion was too narrow, and he outlined three areas where collaboration was already providing significant benefits, including the Caithness community heating network, the potential use of windfarms for superfast broadband infrastructure, and hydrogen opportunities. He therefore suggested that the following also be included in the Motion – “that the Council recognised that the vast range of renewable energy opportunities (onshore and offshore wind, hydropower, battery and pumped storage, biomass, solar, wave and tidal power and hydrogen) presented huge opportunities that would enable us to address the challenges faced in our communities and to achieve our wider climate action ambitions. Highland Council supported the formation of a collaborative regional partnership, with the aim and purpose of achieving a road map to Net Zero emissions and affordable energy solutions across the Highlands”.

Mr MacDonald indicated his willingness to incorporate Mr Rosie’s amendment into his Motion, and asked that the following amendment be made: ‘to call upon the Scottish Government to legislate to allocate at least 5% of gross revenue from wind turbines (rather than £5,000+inflation **per megawatt**) and to widen the areas in which funds are to be distributed’

A brief summary was provided by the Leader of the Council on the work already being undertaken in relation to transmission, green energy and on and off-shore wind turbines.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED**:-

- i. to review the Highland Council Policy for Onshore Wind Turbine Development as a matter of urgency, including the proposed Highland Trust Fund which had not yet been established;
- ii. to call upon the Scottish Government to legislate to allocate at least 5% of gross revenue from wind turbines (rather than £5,000+inflation per megawatt per turbine) and to widen the areas in which funds were to be distributed; and
- iii. to recognise that the vast range of renewable energy opportunities (onshore and offshore wind, hydropower, battery and pumped storage, biomass, solar, wave and tidal power and hydrogen) presented huge opportunities that would enable us to address the challenges faced in our communities and to achieve our wider climate action ambitions. Highland Council supported the formation of a collaborative regional partnership, with the aim and purpose of achieving a road map to Net Zero emissions and affordable energy solutions across the Highlands.

**(iii) Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-**

**Mr D Gregg - as an employee of NHS Highland**

**Ms L Kraft - as a part time case worker for Maree Todd in her capacity as MSP for Caithness Sutherland and Ross**

“This council recognised the importance of Breast Screening in the early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer for women across the Highlands. It also recognised that to be truly effective it had to be available and accessible to all woman who met the agreed criteria.

That being the case it was incumbent on the council to ensure that the breast screening mobile facility was available to all women within the appropriate times scales.

However, it was known that in some areas access to the unit was difficult and indeed sometimes impossible for some women to access and this in particular referred to women who had restricted mobility or had no access to private or public transport. As an example, one such location was the village of Helmsdale on the East coast of Sutherland. Helmsdale shared a GP practice with the village of Brora which was located 12 miles south of Helmsdale. The Breast Screening unit that attended this area only operated from Brora and as such women from Helmsdale had to arrange personal travel or use public transport to access the unit. In some cases, neither of these options was available if an individual had poor mobility and no access to private transport. As a result, some women were denied access to the unit by virtue of geographical exclusion and in one known instance there had been a gap of 16 years since breast screening had been accessed.

This example highlights the inequity of this service in the remote and rural Highlands and as such the council calls upon the Leader to lobby NHS Highland and the Minister for Public Health, Women’s Health and Sport, to ensure that the breast screening unit was available in villages and communities such as Helmsdale to ensure that every woman had access to this vital service”.

Signed: Richard Gale      Michael Baird      Angela Maclean      Jim McGillivray      Trish Robertson

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the important work undertaken by the screening service was acknowledged;
- it was suggested that the issues raised by the Motion were operational concerns of NHS Highland and Highland was above the national average for participation in the screening programme. The Council should encourage local Members to pursue the provision of information to the community by NHS Highland;
- a summary was provided of the history of the mobile breast screening programme, which had never been intended to go to all villages, but to serve several settlements while being based in one location, due to infrastructure and set up requirements and time constraints; and
- it was clarified that patients over the age of 50 were invited to attend every three years and those over age 71 could self-refer. People were urged to take up any screening opportunities offered.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED** the terms of the Amendment as detailed.

### **8. Appointment of Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Scrutiny Leads Cur Ceannard Sgrùdaidh an Dreuchd airson Poileas Alba agus Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

The Council **AGREED** the following appointments:-

- the Chair of Communities and Place be appointed as the Council Scrutiny Lead for Police Scotland; and
- the Vice Chair of Communities and Place be appointed as the Council Scrutiny Lead SFRS.

**9. Appointment to Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited  
Cur an Dreuchd gu Cothrom na Gàidhealtachd (Tasgaidhean) Earranta**

The Council was advised that there was currently one vacant place on Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited – a company which created and sustained employment in the Highlands through investment in businesses and community enterprises. There were six meetings held during the year and the role of Directors was to consider individual investment proposals and decide on their merit and set out the strategic policy of the company. It was considered desirable for Directors to have appropriate business orientated experience and, in this regard, there had been circulated Role Profile and Skills Set.

The Council **AGREED** Mrs K MacLean be appointed to Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited.

**10. Appointment to Highland Housing Alliance  
Caidreachas Taigheadais na Gàidhealtachd**

The Highland Housing Alliance was formed to help address the need for affordable housing in the Highlands with the objectives of operating a revolving landbanking fund to facilitate the construction of affordable housing, carrying out infrastructure works to enable sites to become available as feasible building sites, developing projects to provide housing (for sale and rent) at market or near market levels, organising, packaging and managing joint developments with housing associations and others and undertaking research, development and other work to improve the housing procurement process in the Highlands with specific reference to the sustainable use of locally sourced products.

The Council **AGREED** that Mrs A MacLean replace Mrs M Paterson on the Highland Housing Alliance.

**11. Financial Crisis – Workforce Planning and Preparation  
Èiginn Ionmhasail – Dealbhadh agus Deisealachadh Feachd-obrach**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/41/22 by the Head of Finance.

Following an introduction to the report by the Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Finance and Commercialism, Members raised the following main points: -

- the scale of the crisis was unprecedented and there was uncertainty around the Council's flat cash settlement from the Scottish Government and in relation to budgets for pay awards and inflation assumptions and forecasts. This was a material change from previous years and it was taking longer to reach the point where it was possible for the Administration to consult with Opposition Members;
- through COSLA, it was clear all other local authorities in Scotland were facing challenges due to the financial crisis;
- central to the crisis was the impact on the Council's staff and highlighting the People Strategy set out in the report and reinforcing the commitment to protect the Council's staff where possible;
- tribute was paid to the Council's senior officers, staff and the trade unions for their positive approach in working with Members to consider measures to

- achieve savings and retain posts wherever possible;
- front line staff had brought forward ideas for cost savings at engagement sessions and budget holders had been involved in workshops with staff;
  - the aim was to gather information, appraise all the options and consider how to protect jobs and services. To bring forward draft budget proposals at this stage would be premature and irresponsible;
  - representations were being made to the Scottish Government on the unique challenges facing the Highlands. This included bringing forward ideas and solutions and the potential for them to be implemented;
  - the lack of collaboration to date with Opposition Members on its proposals was highlighted and the Administration needed to share information and be more open and transparent about the ongoing discussions and proposals for next year's revenue budget;
  - it was disappointing the Council was now having to ensure it operated safely and met the minimum statutory requirements when previously the authority had always strived to be the best and break new ground;
  - the level of staff savings required demonstrated the seriousness of the situation. Difficult decisions would have to be made and these would impact on services, jobs and people across the Highland;
  - a special meeting of the Council should be held in January 2023 to review the impact of the Scottish Government budget settlement on the Highland Council;
  - the Council's current financial position and projected budget gap was unprecedented, based on financial forecasts in previous years;
  - the Scottish Government's underspend on this year's budget should be used to meet the shortfall for all local authorities immediately and help support communities;
  - details of the posts that were being protected or removed was sought and how the savings had been calculated and the consideration given to the needs and priorities of Services;
  - the resilience of the people, communities and businesses in the Highlands was praised as was the sustained performance on Council tax and non-domestic collection rates;
  - in common with all other local authorities, there would have to be wholesale changes in how services were delivered and an evaluation of whether some services could continue to be delivered;
  - further clarity needed to be provided on the proposed savings on the Health, Wellbeing & Social Care budget, given the ageing population in Highland and concern at the potential loss of front line care staff;
  - further clarity was requested on the proposed savings on the Education budget. The need to protect children and invest in their future should be paramount in the consideration of budget cuts;
  - an explanation was sought, and provided, on the average head count of staff compared to 2017, in terms of the prudent use of the significant additional Covid funding received and additional duties during this period. Vacancy management controls had been put in place in relation to the previous year's budget;
  - in relation to staff savings, clarification was provided that the focus was on the prioritisation of services and on reducing agency spend in directorates and localities, to achieve best value. Details of the flow chart process would be shared with Members and senior officers were willing to attend Member group meetings if required;
  - there was a need to consider the current level of capital projects in view of the significant costs to the revenue budget in servicing the Council's borrowing;
  - the single biggest risk that the Council faced was that of long-term financial sustainability. Members had to accept the realities of the situation and demonstrate to the public the crisis could be mitigated through dialogue and by accepting the need to change; and

- in regard to the discussion, the Administration had not shared with Opposition Members the ideas, solutions, savings proposals and changes to services being discussed. This did not demonstrate collaboration or working in partnership.

Thereafter, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, **MOVED** approval of the recommendations in the report and an additional recommendation that a special meeting of the Council be held in January 2023 to review the impact of the Scottish Government budget settlement on the Highland Council.

Mr K Gowans, seconded by Mr R Bremner, moved as an **AMENDMENT** approval of the recommendations in the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 27 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 41 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

### **For the Motion**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr R Gale, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mr A Jarvie, Mrs B Jarvie, Mr P Logue, Mr A Macdonald, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr S Mackie, Mr A Mackintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Ms J McEwan, Mr J McGillivray, Mr M Reiss, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Saggars, Mr A Sinclair, Ms M Smith, Mr R Stewart.

### **For the Amendment**

Ms S Atkin, Mr A Baldrey, Mr C Ballance, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr R MacKintosh, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs M Reid, Mr A Rhind, Mr K Rosie, Ms K Wills.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED**:

- i. the controls being undertaken to address the in-year budget pressures;
- ii. the work being done to identify a sustainable reduction in staffing levels to help address the anticipated budget gap in 2023/24; and
- iii. that engagement with staff and unions was ongoing and would inform proposals that would be brought forward as part of the budget setting process in March 2023.

## **12. Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-2022 Aithisg Àrd-Oifigear Obrach Sòisealta 2021-2022**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/42/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

Following an introduction to the report by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care, Members raised the following main points: -

- the Executive Chief Officer was thanked for the report and tribute paid to all staff on the excellent social work services delivered in Highland in challenging circumstances;
- it was not clear whether the recent significant increase in child neglect numbers would continue and joint work with partners on this complex area was ongoing;
- an update was sought, and provided, on the way forward in improving service delivery, innovation and achieving outcomes in the current financial crisis;
- an explanation was sought, and provided, on the factors impacting on the number of children taken into foster care and the number of available foster carers. A report on allowances for foster and kinship carers to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee was being brought forward and a national decision awaited;
- an assurance was sought, and provided, that the agreed additional payment to kinship carers would be issued in the near future;
- the success of the Home to Highland project was highlighted and confirmation the target for bringing children back from out of area placements had been achieved;
- in relation to the above project, concern at the approach being taken to close some children's houses. It was explained a review had concluded there were too many children in residential care in Highland and a plethora of work was being undertaken around enabling children to remain at home. The portfolio of houses was being reviewed in terms of need and up to date design more suitable for young people;
- concern was expressed at the process followed and communication with local Members in regard to the closure of Avonlea, Wick. A summary was provided on this matter during which it was explained the Care Inspectorate had ultimately served an enforcement notice and this meant Avonlea would close. The Service was working closely with the young people, families and staff to consider needs. The enforcement notice had accelerated matters and the ability to have smaller residential units in place. Learning points had been taken from the process;
- local Members in Ward 3 appreciated the clear information the Chief Executive, ECO Health and Social Care and team had provided on Avonlea and the ability to be involved in the ongoing discussions;
- an update was sought, and provided, on the work in progress to provide for children experiencing mental health issues following the pandemic with earlier access to the range of available mental health services;
- the pressure on care at home services and staffing including the impact of Brexit, the level of unmet need particularly in North Highland and the impact of the planned reduction in delivery hours. In response, a summary was provided on the range of measures being progressed in partnership to tackle this issue;
- the difficulties the public were experiencing in relation to care at home carers provision were highlighted and that clients found it difficult to bond and have a conversation with their carer due to time pressures;
- care homes and care at home services were essential to reduce delayed discharges and to the wellbeing of older people who remained in hospital due to a lack of reablement or package of care. It was explained the key focus for the Service and NHS Highland was on getting care at home right as this would have positive effects on all the other services;
- there was concern at the number of young people remaining in residential placements and an update was provided on the range of opportunities being explored to support and enable looked after and other groups of young people;
- the Highlands Advance Nurse Practitioner Programme and trainee schemes had been successful and should continue to be supported;
- the available respite provision for children with special and complex needs was explained and the ongoing work to build different types of provision, given that one

- approach did not fit all, was recognised;
- the level of direct support being provided to child carers at home needed to be given a special mention. It was confirmed that a report on young carers was due to be submitted to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee;
  - an update was sought, and provided, in relation to respite provision at Thor House, Thurso and the planned move for the children currently resident in the premises. Feedback was also being sought from families and young people in the area on need and the location of provision;
  - in future, the annual report would be submitted closer to the relevant year end and confirmation was given that the amalgamated report of all local authorities, and the relevant link, would be circulated to Members in due course;
  - further information and examples were requested in relation to the reference in the report to the complexity of cases and why they were taking longer than previously; and
  - information was sought on the additional number of carers that would be required to meet the shortfall of hours per week of unmet need; how the weekly figures for the turnover of care home beds compared to the numbers that required a care home; and the potential for Care Home Oversight Group to establish a risk register of care homes.

The Convener advised that written responses to questions would be provided to Members where it had not been possible to provide a response at the meeting.

### **Decision**

The Council **NOTED** the issues raised in the annual report and the implications for social work and social care services within Highland Council and NHS Highland.

### **13. Our Future Highland: The Highland Council Programme 2022 - 2027 Ar Gàidhealtachd Ri Teachd: Prògram Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd 2022 – 2027**

**Transparency Statement: Mr D Gregg made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Board Member of Inverness Citizens Advice Bureau. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/43/22 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

Following an introduction by the Leader of the Council, the following issues were raised during discussion:-

- it was emphasised that it was the Programme of the Council, not the Administration;
- the Council Programme, the Corporate Plan and Service Plans, which would be approved by Strategic Committees, were interlinked and it was hoped they would all come together by late spring of 2023;
- it was disappointing not to hear more about the walkabouts that had taken place at locations across the region;
- Members commended the “vision boards” produced by schools, some of which specifically mentioned community gardens and growing spaces. In that regard, reference was made to the decision, at a recent meeting of the City of Inverness and Area Committee, to designate for housing development a field that had been earmarked to be a community growing space. The local community was upset at the loss of such a space, and the importance of listening to communities was emphasised;



- measuring the success of the Programme was going to be challenging;
- general support was expressed for the areas of the Programme relating to the economy, education and housing, and the review in 2023, when more would be known about the economic situation, would provide an opportunity for refinement;
- concern was expressed that paragraph 4.1 of the report, which set out the context in which the Programme was placed, did not mention climate change. Members quoted from the UN Secretary General's opening speech at COP27, in which he had stated that climate change was the defining issue of our age, and it was unacceptable, outrageous and self-defeating to put it on the backburner. The progress report to the Council meeting on 27 October 2022 had indicated that, as part of the engagement programme, Climate Change Committee Members would be asked to participate in a focus group to consider the Programme in the light of the Council's climate change and adaptation requirements. However, the focus group had not taken place and Members remained concerned about the Programme. The message concerning the unprecedented climate and ecological crisis needed to be forefront, along with the other significant considerations, and it was necessary to act now to embed climate action across all Council activities and assets;
- in relation to the public survey that had been carried out, 805 responses represented approximately 0.5% of the population of Highland. From a statistical analysis perspective, to have a confidence rating of 95% or above would require around 9,000 responses;
- there had been approximately 8,000 abandoned calls to the Service Centre in the past year, and it was heartening to see the aspiration to improve response times in replying to enquires and service requests from the public;
- the proactive nature of the Programme was commended;
- it would be helpful to get an idea of the numbers pertaining to the proposals to broaden the Council's income base through taxation and to implement the tourism levy;
- it was good to see housing featuring so prominently in the Programme. However, it was disappointing there was no mention of mid-market affordable rent or shared ownership options. In addition, Highland had a high level of self-build housing compared to the Scottish average and it would be helpful to hear what other housing plans the Administration hoped to bring forward;
- whilst there clearly had been an attempt to engage with the wider community, the response from Community Councils and Parent Councils had been disappointing, and it was necessary to review the approach to engagement and consider how to get a better response in future;
- the proposed conversion of Council assets for housing use was welcomed, and it was suggested consideration be given to converting some assets to key worker housing;
- there had been a good response to the walkabouts and public meetings in Skye;
- it was clear that young people had a vision for Highland and they were the people that were going to be living here in the future;
- the proposed Programme was a starting point and all Members had a responsibility to ensure there was a natural linkage with the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and that the Programme positively impacted communities and constituents;
- future generations would never forgive the current generation if it made choices that required the continued use of fossil fuels in Highland, known as the region of renewables, and it was necessary to be creative and find different ways of travelling;
- it was welcomed that the Programme did not present addressing climate change as punitive but as an opportunity to raise money and create jobs in Highland which, in areas such as Lochaber, had some of the lowest wages in Scotland;

- the vision set out in the Programme was a step in the right direction in terms of having a quality employment market to reverse the trend of young people leaving Highland;
- in relation to building houses to support communities and economic growth, the need for age-friendly communities was emphasised and it was requested that this be included in the Programme;
- whilst it was recognised that it was the Council's Programme, the importance of community services was emphasised, particularly in terms of health and social care service provision and caring for the aging population;
- the Gaelic version of the Programme, which sent a strong message as to the Council's commitment to Gaelic, was welcomed;
- appreciation was expressed to the Officer Support Group for their assistance in putting the Programme together and organising the associated engagement activity;
- the importance of public engagement and working with communities to find local solutions was emphasised;
- in response to the comments regarding climate change, it was highlighted that one of the Programme's five high-level outcomes was dedicated to addressing the climate emergency, and that the Climate Change Committee had committed to have a two-day seminar to agree net-zero targets and action plans;
- in the section about a sustainable Highland environment, there was a little about valuing and protecting Highland's natural environment but a lot more about making the most of the financial opportunities from renewable energy, and it was important to recognise that these two aspirations might conflict with each other on occasion. Whilst in favour of increasing Council and community-owned renewable energy projects, care was needed, and a commitment was sought within the Programme to look after Highland's natural capital to ensure there was no further loss of habitat and decline in wildlife;
- the school vision boards included saving bees, local food growing, space for animals and planting trees, and it was essential to take these matters on board as part of addressing the ecological crisis. In that regard, it was highlighted that an area of Common Good land in Nairn had been identified for food growing and ecological benefit and it was hoped to be able to bring this forward in the next few years;
- the explicit support within the Programme for local place plans which met communities' needs was welcomed;
- it having been noted there had been no survey responses by the under 20 age group, it was queried what attempts had been made to engage with secondary school pupils. In addition, not all 16 year olds were in school and it was suggested a special effort should be made to engage with them;
- it was necessary to get to an era where addressing climate change trumped all other policies and that was not seen as controversial. People should also apply the same thinking in their personal lives; and
- attention was drawn to the finding in the "My Life in the Highlands" survey that 47% of young people did not plan to stay in their local area for longer than five years. Young people had to want to live in and move to Highland to grow the economy and improve society and, in relation to the earlier contribution regarding the need for age-friendly communities, it was important that communities were also youth-friendly.

## **Decision**

The Council **APPROVED** the Council Programme for 2022 – 2027.

**14. Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27  
Dreachd Phlana Corporra 2022-27**

**Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-**

**Mr A Christie - as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland**

**Mr D Gregg - as an employee of NHS Highland and a Board Member of Inverness Citizens Advice Bureau**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/44/22 by the Chief Executive.

Following an introduction by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, the following issues were raised during discussion:-

- the importance of assurance, as opposed to reassurance, whether at Area Committee, Strategic Committee or Full Council level, was emphasised;
- concern was expressed that there was still a considerable amount of work to be done on the Corporate Plan, and information was sought, and provided, as to how it would be taken forward at a time when the team was depleted;
- the value of indicators such as “Cost per library visit” and “Cost per visit to museums and galleries” was questioned and it was suggested these needed to be looked at further;
- it was considered that some of the attainment indicators needed to be strengthened. In addition, it was necessary to measure against the virtual comparators and authorities that Highland compared itself to when looking at attainment, not other figures. In response, the Chair of the Education Committee explained that the Council’s targets were clearly laid out, stretch aims having already been agreed with Education Scotland. He also referred to the Raising Attainment Strategy presented to the Education Committee on 29 September 2022 and the discussion on the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework at the Education Committee on 23 November 2022, and assured Members that the point regarding comparison was being taken on board;
- a Members’ Seminar was needed to review the Corporate Plan prior to the final version coming back to Full Council in March 2023;
- concern was expressed regarding actions and measures that were in partnership with other bodies, such as the Community Planning Partnership, as the Council was not dependent on itself to achieve them;
- it was encouraging to see the new indicator relating to CO2 emissions and clarification was sought, and provided, as to whether it related to the Council’s own operations and whether there was a clearly established baseline; and
- there was a long waiting list for Council housing and it was suggested that consideration be given to an indicator relating to the waiting list and the number of people being housed by the local authority.

**Decision**

The Council **NOTED**:

- i. the draft Corporate Plan for 2022-27 at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. the final version of the Corporate Plan would come forward for Member approval in March 2023;
- iii. the Corporate Plan would support the delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan;
- iv. the Corporate Plan would be the subject of an Annual Performance Report in September each year; and

- v. the Plan was normally reviewed following the Annual Performance Report to Council and any changes would be submitted to Council for approval;
- vi. and **AGREED** that a Members' Seminar on the Corporate Plan be arranged prior to consideration of the final version at Full Council in March 2023.

**15. Contract Standing Orders  
Gnàth-riaghailtean Cùmhnaint**

**Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-**

**Mr A Christie - as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland  
Mr D Gregg - as an employee of NHS Highland**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/45/22 by the Head of Finance.

The Council **APPROVED** the changes to the Contract Standing Orders and **AGREED** that these should become effective from 1 January 2023.

**16. Redesign of the Highland Council – Work Programme Update  
Ath-dhealbhadh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Cunntas às Ùr mun Phrògram Obrach**

There had been circulated Report No HC/46/22 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues: -

- the Redesign Board was considered to be one of the most important Council bodies and all Members were encouraged to attend meetings and workshops. The Board had a crucial role in finding ways for the Council to improve and streamline processes and to generate income;
- in relation to the proposals for the Inverness Town House, some Members highlighted the importance of the Grade A listed building to the city and to the Highlands, for historical and economic reasons, and suggested the hasty departure of council staff from it posed a risk to the Council's ability to find an appropriate and suitable alternative use for the building by March 2023. The departure should be postponed to facilitate more measured planning for the future, noting that the cost of this postponement was less than 1% of the £40m budget gap, and it was likely there would still be a cost to the Council in relocating staff elsewhere. The sudden loss of Council workers from the town centre would impact city centre businesses, with whom further consultation was urged, and the proposals would be a loss to the Inverness Common Good Fund;
- other Members pointed out that if the savings to the Council from the proposed departure of staff from the Town House in March 2023 were not realised, those savings would have to be sourced from other budgets. Any postponement would affect the whole asset rationalisation programme;
- it was requested that Drummuie be considered as one of the proposed key bases, there being none proposed for Sutherland at present; and
- the location for the new bus company was welcomed and it was noted that the Council had been successful in recruiting new drivers and might be able to share their approach with Stagecoach.

Mr B Lobban, seconded by Mr R Bremner, **MOVED** to note the Work Programme for the Redesign Board, comprising major projects and a programme of Lean and Rapid Reviews, and agree the recommendations as set out in the Redesign Board minute held on 28 November 2022.

Mr A Graham, seconded by Mr A Christie, moved as an **AMENDMENT**, to agree the recommendations as set out in the Redesign Board minute held on 28 November 2022, subject to the exit date to vacate staff from the Town House premises being deferred to 31 March 2024.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 37 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 21 votes, with two abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED** the votes having been cast as follows:

#### **For the motion**

Ms S Atkin, Mr A Baldrey, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Loudon, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Reid, Mr K Rosie, Ms K Willis.

#### **For the amendment**

Mr C Aitken, Mr M Baird, Mr C Ballance, Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mr P Logue, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr R MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Ms J McEwan, Mr M Reiss, Mrs T Robertson, Mrs L Saggars, Ms M Smith, Mr R Stewart.

#### **Abstentions**

Mr R Gale, Mr A MacDonald.

#### **Decision**

The Council:

- i. **NOTED** the Work Programme for the Redesign Board, comprising major projects and a programme of Lean and Rapid Reviews; and
- ii. **AGREED** the recommendations as set out the Redesign Board Minute held on 28 November 2022.

#### **17. Inverness Business Improvement District (BID) Sgìre Leasachadh Gnothachais Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/47/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Council **APPROVED** the assessment made in Appendix 1 to the report relative to the Inverness BID Proposal and **AGREED** not to exercise the Council's right of veto.

#### **18. Inverness Business Improvement District Ballot for New Term from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2028 Baileat Sgìre Leasachadh Gnothachais Inbhir Nis airson na Teirme Ùire bho 1 Giblean 2023 – 31 Màrt 2028**

**Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-**

**Mr A Christie - as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland**  
**Mr D Gregg - as an employee of NHS Highland**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/48/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues: -

- concern was expressed on proposals for Academy Street, Inverness. The paper referred to a welcoming and vibrant City but the refusal to pilot a traffic order in Academy Street to see the effect of displaced traffic on other areas of the City was an opportunity missed. If the Council was working in partnership with the Inverness Business Improvement District (BID) and businesses the Council should have piloted the removal of traffic through Academy Street before agreeing to do this;
- it was highlighted that the recommendations on Academy Street were agreed at the last City of Inverness Area Committee in November 2022 and there was ongoing public consultation on the Academy Street proposal;
- full support from the Council should be given to Inverness BID and the ballot for the new term in order to continue the great achievements of the business improvement district. In future it was hoped that businesses in other areas of the City could be included in Inverness BID;
- Inverness BID had been invaluable in helping other areas with the problem Gull issue. They had been very interactive and shared policies on this issue. However, a view was expressed that Gulls were a declining species in the UK and money spent on dealing with problem Gulls could be better used; and
- in past elections businesses in the BID area had voted in favour, by increasing percentages, of renewal of the BID and the business survey also endorsed the work of BID.

**Decision**

The Council **AGREED**:

- i. the draft Business Plan (Appendix 1) from Inverness Bid; and
- ii. to support the new 5-year term for the Inverness Business Improvement District in the forthcoming ballot on 23 March 2023.

**19. Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies: Revised Proposals Ath-sgrùdadh de Roinnean-Pàrlamaid na RA: Molaidhean Ath-sgrùdaichte**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/49/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** the initial and revised constituency maps at Appendices A-D to the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the recommendations approved at the Communities and Place Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED to HOMOLOGATE** the response to the Boundary Commission at Appendix E to the report.

## 20. **Planning Review Body (PRB)** **Buidheann Ath-sgrùdaidh Dealbhaidh**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/50/22 by the Acting Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The PRB only had a small membership and thus it could sometimes be difficult to get a quorum and the proposed increase in membership was therefore welcomed. However, concern was expressed regarding the second recommendation in that the PRB did not give adequate consideration to local knowledge in all applications as the PRB membership did not comprise of a Member from each ward. Consequently it was proposed that this recommendation should be replaced.

Mr T MacLennan, seconded by Mr B Lobban, **MOVED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

Mrs T Robertson, seconded by Mr A Christie, moved as an **AMENDMENT**, that the second recommendation be replaced with the following wording 'As not every ward is represented on PRB, some applications will not have the benefit of local knowledge, therefore the exclusion of ward Members to participate on applications for their ward'.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 39 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 14 votes, with two abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED** the votes having been cast as follows:

### **For the Motion**

Ms S Atkin, Mr A Baldrey, Dr C Birt, Mr B Boyd, Mr R Bremner, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs B Campbell, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs M Cockburn, Ms T Collier, Ms S Fanet, Mr J Finlayson, Mr D Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mrs J Hendry, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mr R Jones, Ms E Knox, Ms L Kraft, Mr B Lobban, Mr D Louden, Mr W MacKay, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr T MacLennan, Mr D Millar, Mr H Morrison, Mr C Munro, Ms P Munro, Ms L Niven, Mr P Oldham, Mrs M Reid, Mr K Rosie, Mrs L Saggars, Ms K Willis.

### **For the Amendment**

Mr C Aitken, Mr J Bruce, Mr A Christie, Mr J Grafton, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr R Gunn, Mr P Logue, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Ms J McEwan, Mrs T Robertson, Mr R Stewart.

### **Abstentions**

Mr C Ballance and Mr R MacKintosh.

### **Decision**

The Council **AGREED**:

- i. an increase in the PRB membership from 6 to 8 elected Members (an increase of 1 Member from each NPAC and SPAC), each PAC to appoint its additional PRB Member at its next meeting; and
- ii. that Members of the PRB might determine Notices of Review in their ward (a removal of the automatic restriction currently in place).

**21. Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Update  
Cunntas às Ùr mu Chùmhnant Coimhearsnachd Feachdan Armaichte na Gàidhealtachd**

**Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-**

**Mr D Gregg - as an employee of NHS Highland  
Mr A Christie - as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland**

There had been circulated Report No. HC/51/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

The Council:-

- i. **NOTED** the considerable progress made with partners across a range of activities which support the Armed Forces Community Covenant; and
- ii. **AGREED** to the appointment of Councillor Leslie-Anne Niven as Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion on an interim basis.

**22. Timetable of Meetings 2023  
Clàr-ama Choinneamhan 2023**

The Council **AGREED**:

- that a Special Meeting of the Council be held on Wednesday 1 February 2023 at 10.00am to review the Capital Programme;
- the Planning Review Board commence at 2pm on Wednesday 1 February 2023 or following the conclusion of Council; and
- a Seminar on the Capital Programme be held on 18 January 2023.

**23. Deeds Executed  
Sgrìobhainnean Lagha a Bhuilicheadh**

It was **NOTED** a list of deeds and other documents executed on behalf of the Council since the meeting held on 27 October 2022 was available on the Council's Website.

**24. Urgent Additional Item**

In terms of Standing Order 8, the Convener had agreed that the following be taken as an additional urgent item:-

**Recruitment Process for Chief Executive  
Pròiseas Fastaidh airson Àrd-Oifigear**

There had been circulated Report No HC/52/22 dated 6 December 2022 by the Head of People.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the Appointments Panel and recruitment process as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 of the report;
- ii. consideration of all administrative issues related to the recruitment be delegated to the Appointments Panel;
- iii. that external advisers be used as set out in paragraph 6.1 and 7.1 of the report and the extent of this involvement should be approved by the Appointments



- Panel and not exceed £20k;
- iv. the arrangements for appointing an interim Chief Executive;

and **NOTED**:-

- v. the salary was £159,499 with the 2022/23 pay award pending.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm.