

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Economy and Infrastructure Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 4 May 2023 at 10.30 am.

Present:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Mr C Aitken (Remote) | Ms J McEwan (Remote) |
| Mr M Baird | Mr H Morrison (Remote) |
| Mr I Brown | Ms L Niven (Remote) |
| Mr M Cameron | Mr A Rhind |
| Mr K Gowans | Mrs T Robertson |
| Mr M Green | Mr K Rosie |
| Mr R Jones | Mr R Stewart |
| Mr P Logue (Remote) | Ms K Willis |
| Mr W MacKay (Remote) | |

Non-Members also present:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ms S Atkin | Ms L Kraft (Remote) |
| Dr C Birt | Mr B Lobban (Remote) |
| Mr R Bremner | Mr G MacKenzie (Remote) |
| Mrs I Campbell | Mr T MacLennan (Remote) |
| Mr A Christie (Remote) | Mr D Macpherson (Remote) |
| Ms S Fanet (Remote) | Mr J McGillivray (Remote) |
| Mr J Finlayson (Remote) | Mr D Millar |
| Mr R Gale (Remote) | Mr C Munro (Remote) |
| Mr A Graham (Remote) | Mr P Oldham |
| Ms J Hendry | Mrs M Paterson (Remote) |
| Ms M Hutchison (Remote) | Mr M Reiss |
| Mrs B Jarvie (Remote) | |

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Interim Depute Chief Executive
Ms T Urry, Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment
Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration
Mr A McCann, Economy and Regeneration Manager
Ms N Wallace, Service Lead, Environment, Development and Active Travel
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager
Ms H Martin, Programme Manager (City Region Deal)
Mr R Campbell, Service Lead, Capital Planning and Estate Strategy
Mr D Chisholm, Tourism & Inward Investment Team Leader
Ms J Gair, Employability Team Leader
Dr S Andrews, World Heritage Project Co-ordinator
Mr J Watson, Coastal Planning Officer
Mr D Cowie, Principal Planner
Miss J MacLennan, Joint Democratic Services Manager, Performance & Governance
Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer, Performance & Governance

Also in Attendance:

Mr C Mather, Mather & Co (Remotely)

Ms F Hampton, High Life Highland

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

Mr K Gowans in the Chair

Business

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

An apology was intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/ Aithris Fhollaiseachd

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declaration of Interest:-

Item 6: Mrs J Hendry

and Transparency Statements:-

Item 10: Mr H Morrison

Item 14: Mr K Rosie

Item 17: Mr H Morrison

3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Chair informed Members of a number of items of good news as follows:-

- Corran Ferry - the MV Corran Repairs were expected to be completed by early June and the repair to the Maid of Glencoul was also progressing. Meanwhile, contingency measures remained in place at Loch Linnhe. The normal timetable was running at the Corran Narrows for foot passengers and bicycles were using a temporary passenger vessel service. In addition there were increased sailings at the Camusnagaul crossing and a direct service up Loch Linnhe to Fort William for commuters. Any measures that could also be taken to enhance arrangements for buses were currently ongoing. In addition, overnight works to improve passing places were taking place on the A861 single track route around Loch Linnhe. Regarding the site visit by the Ministry of Defence in April, an initial report had been prepared and the Council was currently assessing options with them as well as exploring any additional possible commercial possibilities. Community engagement was taking place with Local Members by way of face-to-face meetings and online, the latest online meeting having been held on 27 April with another one taking place on 4 May. The feedback from communities was being incorporated wherever possible.
- Film Service –2022 had been a boom year for Highland with direct spend in the Highland region reaching over £3m, with both national and international productions filming across all parts of Highland. The in-house team were

hopeful that 2023 would be another successful year with several largescale shoots already planned.

- Business Gateway – in the last financial year the Council – through its business start-up and growth finance, and Business Gateway advisory services - had helped over 2000 Highland businesses to grow. Also, through the Council's start-up grant 315 new businesses had received help to set up.
- The opening ceremony of the new £6million Invercoe Bridge took place on Thursday 27 April 2023 was attended by the Convenor, the Chair and pupils from Kinlochleven and Glencoe Primary Schools. Council staff and contractors were thanked for making the project a huge success.

The Committee **NOTED** the good news.

4. Presentation – Inverness Castle Visitor Experience Taisbeanadh – Turas tro Chaisteal Inbhir Nis

The Senior Responsible Officer for the Project, Mr Allan Maguire, gave a brief update on the progress of the construction work to date. The construction update was followed by a short film presented by Mr Chris Mather, Chief Executive of Mather & Co, who has used stories and content from all areas of the Highlands to design the visitor experience within the Castle and in its grounds on the esplanade. The film showed Members how the design of the visitor experience was progressing.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- thanks were expressed for the video presentation, and also to Council staff, CEO Chris Mather and the High Life Highland team for their integral parts on the project;
- this was a world class event which advertised the whole Highlands, but was based in Inverness Castle; and
- it was anticipated that up to 500,000 visitors would attend to enjoy the experience.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

5. Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal Annual Report Aithisg Bhliadhnail Cùmhnant Baile-Roinne Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/19/2023 dated 11 April 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- Members highlighted the importance and successes of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal in such projects as the West Link, the Newton Rooms, Life Sciences, Assisted Living, Fit Houses and Inverness Castle;
- the Longman Junction Project was highlighted as a future good news project to alleviate traffic north bound especially at the end of the working week;

- information was sought, and provided, regarding when works on-site would commence on the Inshes to Smithton scheme, especially as planning permission had now been submitted;
- it was felt that the report did not include the more rural remote areas of Highland. In this regard it was queried what the Council would do to readdress this;
- a progress update was requested on the digital project referred to on page 17 of the report;
- it was queried what businesses in Sutherland had been supported as referred to on page 24 of the report;
- it was highlighted that no access for Sutherland schools to the Newton Rooms had been mentioned in the report; and
- regarding renewable energy heating installations, as a skills shortage to install and maintain air and ground source heating systems had been identified, it was queried what was being done by the Council to make school children aware of this fantastic industrial opportunity. Also it was questioned what was being done to encourage firms to offer apprenticeships to school leavers to help them meet the demands of the renewable industry and retain a workforce in the Highlands.

The Committee **APPROVED** the report as a record of the activity and delivery during 2021/22.

6. Nairn Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Ùrachadh Roinn Leasachadh Gnothachais Inbhir Narann

Declaration of Interest: Mrs J Hendry declared an interest in this item as Nairn BID was a business customer and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, she left the meeting for this item.

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/20/2023 dated 11 April 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

Members expressed their support of the work carried out by Nairn BID especially the work completed in its first term to the High Street and other local tourist areas. In this regard it was confirmed that BID had already been working on new proposals for the next term.

The Committee:-

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

7. Community Regeneration Programme Prògram Ath-bheòthachadh Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/21/2023 dated 14 April 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- thanks were expressed to officers and the team for their hard work producing the report;
- attention was drawn to page 67 of the report which Members were delighted to confirm that funding had been sourced through the strategic allocation of funds to a number of groups who previously had a reduction in funds. In this regard it was queried if the funding for those groups would be provided from a central budget, or their geographical area budget;
- appreciation was expressed regarding the number of successful works in Nairn and Lochaber areas. In addition funding allocation was welcomed for Skye and Raasay from the Coastal Communities Fund which had helped to support some transformational projects across the ward;
- regarding the Coastal Communities Fund allocation process, clarification was sought, and provided, on how the groups mentioned on page 67 of the report met the fund objectives;
- it was queried if Lochaber Music School project could be included in the funding allocation list as funding had also previously been cut. In this regard it was confirmed that the School could submit an application to the fund;
- regarding the Place Based Investment Programme and the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund clarification was sought on the allocation process as Ward 10 would receive less than 4% of these funds;
- in relation to the Local Place Plans process, it was queried what resource the Council could provide to support local communities deliver their Local Place Plans or if communities were expected to deliver these Plans on their own; and
- whilst the funding allocation process had been difficult, Members were pleased with the outcome and recognised that the local organisations needed the Council's continued support;

The Committee:-

- NOTED** work underway to develop and extend the Highland approach to Community Regeneration including the preparation of Area Place Based Plans and inclusion of UK Shared Prosperity Fund into the Community Regeneration Programme;
- AGREED** arrangements, as detailed in Appendices 1,2,3 and 4 of the report, for the management of the Highland Coastal Communities Fund, the Place Based Investment Programme, the Community Led Local Development Programme and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund;
- AGREED** the process for dealing with other funds over and above those included in this report, as outlined in Appendix 5 of the report; and
- AGREED** to homologate the decision to submit two applications to the Scottish Government's Islands Infrastructure Fund as outlined at paragraph 5.8 of the report.

8. **Employability Services** **Seirbheisean So-fhastachd**

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/22/2023 dated 18 April 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- thanks were conveyed to officers for their hard work on this report and for their dedication towards improving employability within Highland communities;
- information was sought regarding the quality and sustainability of the 257 jobs which had been generated and the last two years budget for the Employability Service to provide greater value for money context; and
- Members requested information on client satisfaction information as it was not contained within the report. In this regard it was queried if the Council had conducted any surveys.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the 'No One Left Behind' policy and financial agenda which was supporting the design and development of a Highland unique employability service including the increasing focus on tackling child poverty and the drive to raise as many parents as possible out of poverty, including in-work poverty;
- AGREED** the Operational and Investment Plans for 2023/24; and
- AGREED** to the establishment of a Skills Challenge Fund to deliver the UKSPF Skills Interventions and request to partners on the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership to collaborate with the Council on the design and delivery of the Challenge Fund.

9. Performance Monitoring Quarter 4 to 31 March 2023 Sgrùdadh Coileanaidh Cairteal 4 gu 31 Mart 2023

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/23/2023 dated 4 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

The Committee **NOTED** the Directorate's performance information.

10. Roads Strategic Capital Allocation Riarachadh Calpa Ro-innleachdail Rathaidean

Transparency Statement: Mr H Morrison made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item a family member was employed by the Council's Road team. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/24/2023 dated 12 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- Members expressed thanks to Officers and staff for their tremendous amount of work producing the report in a sensible and pragmatic manner;
- it was welcomed that the planned expenditure of £7.7m which would be spent strategically across the Highlands road network;
- it was felt that the decision to increase the roads budget was the right decision and works were welcomed across Highland, especially as it was felt the roads network condition had substantially deteriorated over the last 18 months;

- it was hoped that the distribution of roads repairs and maintenance resource was prioritised to meet the needs of all Highland, which in turn would support local businesses;
- Members welcomed the £1.3m planned roads investment for Ward 5 (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh);
- it was queried if the Roads Service had sufficient workforce resources to carry out the planned works or if many works would be subcontracted out;
- whilst welcoming the £1.8m strategic investment for Skye and Raasay, it was highlighted that the remaining capital roads budget allocation was less than 7%. Therefore, it was felt that this disparity was unacceptable and the Committee were urged to reconsider the budget allocation formulae;
- appreciation was expressed for the recent ongoing and planned roads repairs programme in Caithness;
- it was requested that Strathroy Bridge and High Bridge at Midfearn on the B9176 be considered for future roads investment;
- concern was raised that many Skye and Raasay roads now had very high volumes of traffic and many of these roads had not been engineered for this amount of heavy use. In this regard it was also highlighted that increased numbers of heavy goods vehicles extracting timber and rock had accelerated the deterioration of the roads network across Highland;
- an update was sought on plans to create a rapid response pot-hole repair team;
- thanks were conveyed to the Administration for backing this programme, and to the roads operatives in all areas for their continued hard work. It was recognised that road operatives had to endure occasional abuse from members of the public regarding the poor quality of Highland roads;
- it was felt that Lochalsh area had been overlooked for roads investment;
- attention was drawn to recent financial statistics highlighting that the Council's reserve levels would only last another two or three years. It was essential that the Council managed roads investment funds accordingly;
- it was queried if the £102,000 roads investment project for the C1053 Lybster to Achavanich road would be programmed after the Golticlay wind farm had been constructed due to the amount of heavy good vehicles which would use the road to remove tons of rocks;
- information was sought whether feedback from communities had been taken into consideration when formulating the programme;
- it was felt that there had been an underinvestment in roads for a long time. However, hard work at the Redesign Board was ongoing to reform the whole approach regarding roads infrastructure. In this regard it was stressed that the money needed to be spent in the areas highlighted, in order to make the identified improvements; and
- Members were encouraged to support and work with each other for the benefit of the whole Highlands roads infrastructure.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the strategic capital allocation as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** that schemes may require to be adjusted for operational reasons or following further discussion with local Members.

11. Highly Protected Marine Areas Consultation Response Freagairt Co-chomhairleachadh nan Sgìrean Mara Fìor Ghlèidhte

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/25/2023 dated 5 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- it was generally accepted that the marine environment needed attention but the Scottish Government proposals were not the way to do it. The impact on communities had to be gauged;
- disappointment was expressed with the response to the Scottish Government's consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) as it failed to adequately acknowledge the effect on communities. The policy would have a devastating impact on ways of life, culture and language. As an example, it was pointed out that the Portree district had over 110 registered small boats and families relied on marine resources for their economic and social survival and the proposals would have a disproportionate and detrimental bearing on island communities by putting their very existence at risk;
- the impact on this policy on the Gaelic language and culture was likely to be significant, further eroding the Highland heritage and identity;
- it was important that Highland Council, given the area's reliance on its coastal economy, made reference to the issues the proposals would have, not just for fishing, but for aquaculture, seaweed harvesting, recreational use, tourism, oil and gas, renewable energy, ports, harbours and Space Ports;
- not all Members had had the opportunity to formally discuss the response despite there having been a number of meetings which had taken place since the consultation had opened in December 2022 and calls were made for the Committee not to homologate the response but to note it. In reply, the Leader explained the process that had been followed and the reasons for the delay in submitting the response. He assured Members the normal process had been followed;
- disappointment was also expressed that the Highland Council's response to the HPMA consultation had not highlighted unacceptable socio-economic impacts despite the Chair acknowledging that the Highland Council had recognised the need to take action in response to the biodiversity crisis. It was contended that the marine environment was in a highly degraded state due to over-exploitation and Scotland's existing network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) were wholly ineffective, offering little protection for the marine environment;
- Scotland's fishing industry had declined and this exemplified the need to act to restore Scotland's marine environment and secure a future for coastal fishing communities in the Highlands. There was international evidence to draw on that clearly detailed the benefits of HPMAs for the environment and where inshore fishing industries had not disappeared in areas where protected marine reserves had been established but had, in fact thrived; and
- marine reserves protected important habitats, preventing further degradation and restoring the productivity of inshore waters. They were sites for scientific study and generating income through sustainable fishing and nature-based tourism and the aim of HPMAs in Scotland would not be to destroy local coastal

communities but to protect the resources that they depend on and thereby secure their future.

Following discussion, Mr K Gowans, seconded by Mr I Brown, **MOVED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr R Stewart, seconded by Mr P Logue moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the Committee:-

- i. note the details of the HPMAs and the proposals put forward by Scottish Government;
- ii. note the private political group of a select few of SNP/Independent group within Highland Councils response to the consultation; and
- iii. agreed the next steps proposed for engaging with the process.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 15 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 2 votes, with no abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr C Aitkin Mr M Baird, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mr K Gowans, Mr M Green, Mr R Jones, Mr W MacKay, Ms J McEwan, Mr H Morrison, Ms L Niven, Mr A Rhind, Mrs T Robertson, Mr K Rosie, Ms K Willis.

For the Amendment:

Mr P Logue, Mr R Stewart.

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the details of the HPMAs and the proposals put forward by Scottish Government;
- ii. **AGREED** to homologate the Council's response to the consultation; and
- iii. **AGREED** the next steps proposed for engaging with the process.

12. The Flow Country Candidate World Heritage Site Planning Position Statement

Aithris air Suidheachadh Planaidh airson Làrach Dualchais na Cruinne airson nam Flòbhaichean

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/26/2023 dated 3 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- there was unanimous support from the Highland Council and the Scottish and Westminster Governments for this outstanding universal natural resource to be recognised as a World Heritage Site and which was of international importance;

- the position now reached had taken a long time and had involved representation at senior levels of government to ensure it was well supported as a bid;
- the statement would provide clarity and guidance and was an importance step forward in framing future consideration of proposals in and around the Flow Country;
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) policy would provide protection against developments that would damage the Outstanding Universal Value for which the site had been nominated;
- it was important, in facing the climate emergency, that this resource was recognised but it formed just one part of a wider strand of measures including renewable energy generation;
- World Heritage Status of the Flow Country would bring enormous benefits for Caithness and Sutherland and would benefit both Climate Change and the biodiversity of the peatlands. World Heritage Status would also help to care for the peatlands;
- in the meantime, caution was urged when considering any developments under NPF4 affecting this area;
- the area was practically surrounded by the NC500 and it was anticipated that tourists would now remain longer in the area;
- when awarded World Heritage Status, the Flow Country would be joining other sites such as the Grand Canyon and the Great Barrier Reef; and
- the population of the Flow Country was small and the demographic was of an older age range and it was hoped the boundary line defining the area would be interpreted in a smart, intelligent and flexible way so not to discourage viable economic development.

The Committee **APPROVED** The Flow Country World Heritage Site Planning Position Statement within Appendix 1 of the report.

13. Highland Council Airfields Raointean-adhair Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/27/2023 dated 3 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- no mention was made in the report regarding the reintroduction of commercial flights using the Ashaig airfield, despite previous historical discussions. If there was officer capacity available, it was hoped this issue could be reignited or, otherwise, to avoid continued uncertainty, a decision made as regards to the Council's position one way or another;
- previous approaches to the Scottish Government concerning Ashaig airfield had included the proposal that, if it was to be used commercially, it would be carbon neutral;
- Skye would be the only island without access to an airstrip;
- the storage of wind turbine components at the Ashaig airfield brought in revenue to the Council;
- Ashaig airfield would need considerable investment to be brought back up to standard and it was questioned, given climate change and limited available resources, if this was the best way to move forward;

- there were community implications involved when considering the future of airfields. For example, Ashaig was the only airfield within 100 miles capable of landing a fixed wing air ambulance;
- considerable private investment was being made in the Dornoch area and it was hoped that either a private investor or community group would come forward so that the airfield could continue to operate independently from the Council. Perhaps, it was suggested, as a gesture of good will, the Council would take responsibility for the administrative and legal costs of any lease transfer;
- it was hoped any lease or transfer of ownership of the Dornoch airfield would be done in consultation with the Sutherland Area Committee; and
- a recent transport workshop had explored the possibility of aviation using hydrogen and electric and this merited further investigation for Highland; and
- it was hoped that before any sale or long term lease was concluded for Plockton airfield, community consultation take place and it be reported back to the Committee as it was important to be mindful of the safety implications surrounding the disposal of such assets.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** that the current resource committed to the operation and maintenance of the airfields was not sufficient to meet all of the maintenance liabilities and legal requirements;
- NOTED** that in light of this a decision was required as to the future operation and management of Dornoch, Plockton and Ashaig airfields;
- APPROVED** a Risk Register presented as Appendix 1 of the report and the ongoing plan to address and reduce risk across the airfields e.g. by updating signage and repairing boundary markers;
- APPROVED** the implementation of online PPR system at Ashaig and Dornoch, based on the conclusions presented in Appendix 2 of the report;
- AGREED** that the Council should continue to operate Ashaig airfield in a manner which meets all necessary legal obligations and ensures the airfield was maintained to a level which would support operation of commercial services until such time as further developments with regards to scheduled air services were made;
- AGREED** that the Council should seek to offer a lease on Dornoch airfield to one of the interested parties in the local community; and
- AGREED** that the Council should explore opportunities for either the sale or the long-term lease of Plockton airfield.

14. Establishing a Short-Term Let Control Area for Ward 20: Badenoch and Strathspey

A' stèidheachadh Sgìre Smachd Màil Gheàrr-ùine airson Uàrd 20: Bàideanach agus Srath Spè

Transparency Statement: Mr K Rosie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as an owner of a short-term let in Caithness. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/28/2023 dated 31 March 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

There was a housing crisis in Badenoch and Strathspey and this meant businesses could not recruit staff and young local people were unable to find a home due to unaffordable accommodation. It was hoped that by introducing a Short Term Let Control Area this would help redress the balance between short term let holiday accommodation and housing stock available for longer term rentals and ownership. The move towards a Control Area was, however, coming into being at the same time as a national licensing scheme was being introduced, bringing additional stress to the valued holiday let operators, so the public engagement sessions proposed to support these operators was welcomed as would any additional help and information.

The Committee:-

- i. based on the Scottish Ministers approval of the Council's application to establish a Short-Term Let Control Area for Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey), **AGREED**:-
 - a. to delegate authority to officers to undertake the final legislative arrangements to establish the Short-Term Let Control Area for Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey), including the necessary press advertisement, notification of interested parties and other publication work;
 - b. for Officers to hold information session(s) to inform existing (& perspective) operators of the requirements the Control Area had across Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey); and
 - c. that the commencement date of the Short-Term Let Control Area for Ward 20 (Badenoch and Strathspey) would be 18 June 2023.
- ii. **NOTED** the consultation feedback and the potential implications the draft Non-statutory Planning policy would have on the determination of planning applications for Short-term Secondary lets, as set out in Appendix 2 and summarised in Section 6 of this Report and agree to adopt the draft Non-statutory Planning policy (as amended) (Appendix 3) as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for Short-term Secondary let planning applications.

15. Culture and Speed Limit Compliance Cultar agus Gèilleadh ri Crioch-astair

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/29/2023 dated 20 March 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of this report.

16. Developer Contributions Tabhartasan Luchd-leasachaidh

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/30/2023 dated 18 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

As it was proposed to review this in line with the Highland-wide Development Plan, a call was made to ensure that provision was included in the Plan that contributions were spent locally to the development. Local Area Committee were well placed, at the appropriate stage, to act as a sounding board to advise as to where such contributions could be best directed.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the requirement for this factual update to more fairly reflect updated costs for school and community facility developer contribution rates;
- ii. **AGREED** the updated school and community facility developer contribution rates and note the updated evidence and refinements for calculating school contributions;
- iii. **NOTED** that these costs and factors would be applied to all planning advice and new planning applications received from the date of the committee onwards; and
- iv. **NOTED** that a full review of Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance and parent developer contributions policy would be carried as part of the new Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) in compliance with new national policies.

**17. Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey 2022/23
Suirbhidh Staid Obair-càraidh Rathaidean na h-Alba 2022/23**

Transparency Statement: Mr H Morrison made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item a family member was employed by the Council's Road team. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. ECI/31/2023 dated 14 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment.

There were a number of ways by which the roads infrastructure in Highland could be measured and acknowledged, the Scottish Condition Road Indicator Matrix Report being one of them. Members were encouraged to look in detail at what information and advice was taken into consideration in formulating this report, which could be found on the Audit Scotland website, and which would inform the Redesign Board in its deliberations. However, this was just one tool and, to complement this, was detailed information from officers. This provided the Redesign Board with as much evidence as possible to recover the area's infrastructure and how it should be maintained going forward.

On a separate issue it was also suggested that perhaps the Council should consider using a liquid format rather than grit, as used in some other countries, to prevent damaging road surfaces.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the results of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey for 2022/23 and that our relative ranking has improved from 26th to 25th position amongst Scottish Local Authorities, with a road condition index (RCI) of 36.5% which represents the percentage of the road network which was considered to be in need of maintenance treatment;

- ii. **AGREED** that the overall Road Condition Indicator result for Highland can be published on the Council's website before a paper was presented to Committee, due to the increasing number of requests for information that had been received from Members, the public and the press; and
- iii. **AGREED** to utilise the report as a useful source of information while determining the future capital allocation programme, noting that without sustained funding, the condition of the road network would deteriorate and, as such, our ranking amongst the other Scottish Local Authorities may drop.

18. Membership of Committees, Working Groups, Outside Bodies etc
Ballrachd Chomataidhean, Bhuidhnean-obrach, Bhuidhnean air an Taobh A-muigh etc

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that Mr J Bruce replace Mr A Jarvie on City Region Deal Monitoring Group as put forward by the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Group;
- ii. **NOTED** that Mr R Jones had been appointed to the Highland Strategic Local Advisory Group at the Committee's last meeting; and
- * iii. in **NOTING** Mrs T Robertson remained on the Board, also **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Highland Council that Mrs M Reid be appointed as a director to the board of Tornagrain Conservation Trust as the Highland Council's representative.

19. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the following Minutes of the Planning Applications Committees (PAC):-

- i. North PAC – 6 December 2022
- ii. South PAC – 13 December 2022
- iii. North PAC – 25 January 2023
- iv. South PAC – 8 February 2023
- v. North PAC – 7 March 2023

and, **APPROVED** the following Minutes:-

- vi. Harbours Management Board – 29 March 2023

20. Exclusion of the Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobaill

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act, the relevant paragraphs being shown in the reports.

21. Property Transactions Monitoring Report
Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Ghnothachasan Seilbhe

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/32/2023 dated 31 March 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

**22. Housing Development Initiatives
Iomairtean Leasachaidh Taigheadais**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/33/2023 dated 5 April 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

**23. Land and Property
Fearann agus Cuid-seilbhe**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. ECI/34/2023 dated 31 March 2023 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 2 pm