

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in **Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey/Remotely** on 29 May 2023 at 10.30 am

### Present:

Mr J Bruce  
Mrs M Cockburn

Mr R Jones  
Mr B Lobban

### In attendance:

Mr L Hannah, Ward Manager (Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)  
Ms L Johnston, Elections Manager  
Ms S MacLennan, Housing Manager  
Ms S James-Gaukroger, Conservation Area Project Officer  
Mr A McInnes, Senior Committee Officer  
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

### Also in attendance:

Mr N Nethercott, Station Commander, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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

**Mr R Jones in the Chair**

### Business

#### 1. **Apologies for Absence** **Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

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

Item 4 – Mr B Lobban

Item 6 – Mr B Lobban and Mr R Jones

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

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/08/23 dated 29 May 2023 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- confirmation was sought and given that automatic alarms at Council premises and schools would no longer be attended to without confirmation of fire;
- attention was drawn to the consequences that the new policy could have for the Council especially as not all appropriate officers lived near the premises they were responsible for;
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that this was a National Policy;
- information was requested as to whether there had been consultation with Head Teachers to ensure that appropriate policies had been put into place;
- it was queried whether any secondary protections, for example ranger patrols, would be available;
- attention was drawn to the fact that there had been an average of less than 2 false alarms a week across 6 fire stations in the Badenoch and Strathspey area;
- it was requested that the Council be given more time to ensure that all premises have policies and strategies in place;
- information was sought on the current situation pertaining to recruitment of personnel; and
- it was queried if the work between the Fire Service and the NHS promoting domestic safety had restarted after Covid.

The Committee:-

- **NOTED** the Report;
- **NOTED**, with concern, that the SFRS from 1 July 2023 would not attend automated fire alarm call outs to commercial business and workplace premises unless a fire had been confirmed by the property Responsible Premises Officer, including schools and office buildings;
- **AGREED** the Head of Property & Facilities Management ensure that the Council had RPO systems in place to deal with this SFRS change in responding to alarm activations

#### 4. **Ward Discretionary Budget** **Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

**Transparency Statement: Mr B Lobban declared a connection to this item as a member of the Grantown Museum Trust but, as the item was just for noting, did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Fund applications have been approved since 1 April 2023:-

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Grantown Museum and Heritage Trust	Landseer – A Highland Romance	£1,500

During discussion, it was confirmed that there was £14,500 left in The Ward Discretionary Budget to be spent by March 2024

## 5. **Grantown's Conservation Area Management Plan** **Plana Stiùiridh Sgìre Ghlèidhteachais Bhaile nan Granddach**

**Transparency Statement: Mr B Lobban and Mr R Jones declared a connection to this item due to their involvement with the Caingorm National Park Association, but having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/23 dated 29 May 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- information was sought on how the public consultation was promoted;
- the inclusion of green energy and solar panels in the plan was welcomed;
- clarification was requested on the restrictions surrounding the installation of solar panels on buildings;
- it was suggested that some aspects of the plan may have needed to be looked at again; and
- concern was expressed about some areas of the plan being too restrictive.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the public comments;
- ii. **AGREED** the Council response within Appendix 1; and
- iii. **AGREED** to recommend to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee that it formally approve and adopt the Grantown-on-Spey Conservation Area Management Plan within Appendix 2 of the report at their meeting on 17 August 2023.

## 6. **Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023** **Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 An Giblean 2022 gu 31 Am Mart 2023**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/10/23 dated 23 May 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- concern was expressed over the issue of rent arrears;
- attention was drawn to the work done by the welfare team to support those in rent arrears;
- on the point being raised, it was clarified that although the Council did not have a policy regarding pet ownership in its properties, any problems arising from pet ownership would be addressed as an anti-social behaviour issue; and
- it was queried whether there was an increased number of anti-social behaviour issues in relation to pet ownership.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## 7. **Minutes** **Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 6 February 2023 which were approved by the Council on 9 March 2023.

**8. Review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries: Initial Proposals**  
**Ath-sgrùdadh air Crìochan Parlàmaideach**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/11/23 dated 25 May 2023 by the Elections Manager.

- it was suggested that the whole of Badenoch and Strathspey should be in one constituency rather than being split across two constituencies as outlined in the report; and
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that the Cross Council Boundary Group would meet on Wednesday 31 May to discuss these proposals.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Chair issue a letter on behalf of the Area Committee to the Boundaries Commission for Scotland requesting that the entirety of Badenoch and Strathspey should remain within in one constituency rather than be split across 2 constituency areas.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am