

The Highland Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held Remotely on 10 February 2025 at 10am.

Present:

Mr M Green
Ms B Jarvie
Mr L Fraser
Mr P Oldham

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector R McCartney, Police Scotland

In Attendance:

Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager
Mr A Garrow, Project Officer
Mr M Gemmell, Principal Repairs Team
Mr L MacDonald, Repairs Manager
Ms S Lamb, Project Officer, Community Regeneration
Mr S Grant, Senior Engineer
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Ms K Arnott, Committee Officer

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 M Green in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Committee **NOTED** the following Good News:-

- work had started at the putting green on Phase II of the Team Hamish project with the expected completion date of May 2025. The efforts that had been made by all were commended;
- progress continued with the development of the Nairnshire Community Newspaper with their first employee appointed and work was ongoing to recruit an Editor;

- several successful Burns Night events had been held and helped to raise funds for local charities which was welcomed. Attention was also drawn to the fundraiser held by the Queens Park Residents Group in the Legion Hall, which was an excellent space with good facilities and use of this resource was encouraged; and
- reference was made to the high public engagement in the food waste collection service which had excelled all expectations. Consequently, a request had been made to the Scottish Government for another food waste lorry, which was a specialist vehicle, to meet the high demand.

4. Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications Measadh Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-bheothachadh na Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No NC/01/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- many people would benefit from the East Harbour path and this was welcomed;
- the benefits of the beach community having the ability to wash off sand particularly prior to using the splash pad. A request was made for a sign to be installed requesting that sand be washed off prior to entering the splash pad to help reduce maintenance and avoid short term closures of the facility. It was also clarified that the shower would be open seasonally in line with the splash pad but consideration would be given to keeping it open longer subject to appropriate infrastructure requirements being in place;
- praise was given to the diligent approach by officers to ensure that the funds were maximised; and
- the Chair advised that additional Community Regeneration funding of £12,882 had been awarded to the Team Hamish project for an extra road at Marine Road, Nairn. He further explained going forward the Community Regeneration Fund would predominately be the Coastal Community Fund and Nairn had received a £50,000 increase in funding making total funds available of £58,000 for 2025/26. However, this funding was allocated based on poverty and population, therefore on that basis Nairn should receive funding closer to £120,000 or £170,000 and work would continue to endeavour to achieve this.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** all of the applications presented for a funding award from the Community Regeneration Fund as follows:-

- East Harbour Path - £10,680
- Nairn Beach Shower - £9,101.28

5. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2025/26 Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2025/26

There had been circulated Report No NC/02/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- it was highlighted that the garages were effectively used for storage and thus the rental was not set at a commercial rate;
- it was proposed a 20% increase should be applied to garage rents noting this rate was still very low compared to the Highland average. Other Members indicated their support for a 20% increase; and
- consideration should be given to the Highland Council selling these properties due to the long term liability as well as their high value. It was suggested a consultation should be undertaken to explore selling the garages. However, although supportive of the consultation being undertaken, it was indicated some community groups needed affordable storage and demand for this should be explored.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that a:-

- i. 20% rent increase be applied to Nairnshire Garages; and
- ii. report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the viability of the Council garages being sold.

6. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2024
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2024 – 31 Dùbhlachd 2024

There had been circulated Report No NC/03/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion it was indicated that although the average time to complete emergency repairs was within target, it was still well below the Highland average. It was queried if there was a particular reason for this during which it was explained that this was mainly due to repairs predominantly being undertaken by private contractors, who often had competing demands and sometimes materials were also needed which meant a follow up visit was required. It was further highlighted some contractors had stopped working for Highland Council, while others were working in Inverness which also contributed to delays.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 30 December 2024.

7. Police Area Performance Report
Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No NC/04/25 by the Area Commander (South Highland Area Command).

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- it was noted the report covered the south Highland area and it was queried whether it would be feasible to receive information more specific to Nairnshire. However, it was explained the report was as detailed as it could be;

- regarding the issue of drug supply, it was explained that members of the public could assist in reporting any such incidents using the Police 101 call handling service, online using the Contact Us form or anonymously through Crimestoppers as well as attending their local station or stopping officers in the street;
- it was difficult to interpret trends/crime levels as reporting had improved which was welcomed;
- it was clarified that the North Division covered the whole of the Highlands and Islands area;
- anecdotally it seemed shoplifting was on the increase, particularly in Inverness, but the report suggested this had reduced. It was clarified shoplifting in Nairn had been challenging but Police Scotland was taking a more holistic approach to this to ensure there was meaningful engagement with a view to ascertaining the root cause and reducing this activity;
- concerns were raised regarding increasing levels of antisocial behaviour and exploitation of vulnerable people. Confirmation was provided there would be early intervention on this with awareness sessions in schools but it was urged that any such incidents should be reported to the police;
- a request was made for CCTV at River Park, Nairn but it was indicated that this was a Highland Council issue;
- confirmation was provided that the use of Bodycams would be rolled out in May/June 2025;
- confirmation that advice would be sought from the Roads Policing Department regarding horse users and cyclists on closed paths to improve messaging on this; and
- concerns were raised on speeding, especially on rural roads, with particular reference to the increased use of the Cawdor road in a bid to avoid the current roadworks on the A96 west of Nairn. Confirmation was provided that speed detection equipment was used in these areas but this would also be raised with the Roads Policing Department for better visible patrols to reduce speeding.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023–2026 Year 1 attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2024; and
- ii. change in format necessitated by a reduction in back-office capacity to prepare additional area committee reports.

8. **Area Roads Capital Programme 2025/26** **Prògram Calpa Rathaidean Sgìreil 2025/26**

There had been circulated Report No NC/05/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- confirmation was provided that overall, the Council had a positive relationship with Amey, Bear Scotland and Transport Scotland but the importance of having good communications was emphasised particularly in respect of temporary diversions onto Council road networks as a result of trunk road closures. The Roads Operations Manager was urged to report any specific concerns to the Chair who would raise them as part of his regular meetings with Amey and Transport Scotland;

- confirmation was provided that the table at the top of page 60 of the papers related to Nairnshire and not the City of Inverness Area as stated in the report;
- a number of complaints were being received regarding the traffic lights at Delnies but in addition to this temporary traffic lights had also twice been set up at the junction between the A96, Manse Road and Waverly Road, which were Highland Council roads, causing grid-lock across the whole of Nairn. Confirmation was provided that the traffic flow issues would be further investigated;
- responding to concerns raised regarding the extensive need for white and yellow lining around Nairn, confirmation was provided that the Council had made significant investment in road marking equipment and provision of an in-house team and this work would be undertaken in early March and late summer when the weather improved;
- it was clarified the Clephanton to Croy Road was within the Ardersier boundary. It was further confirmed the Council had good specialist IT boundary technology; and
- reference was made to the work carried out by Scottish and Southern Energy prior to Christmas without prior notice being given to residents. Although these important upgrade works were welcomed, reference was made to ensuring that communications were issued to the local community to ensure they received adequate advance warning prior to the commencement of the works taking place. Further checks would be made ascertain whether any further works were scheduled and Members would be notified accordingly.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2025/26 Area Roads Capital Programme for Nairn and Cawdor.

9. Nairn Common Good Fund – 2023/24 Audited Accounts. 2024/2025 December Monitoring and General Update, Proposed Budget 2025/26

Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann – Cunntasan Sgrùdaichte 2023–24
Sgrùdadh na Dùbhlachd agus Cunntas Coitcheann 2024–25, Buidseat ga Mholadh 2025–26

There had been circulated Report No NC/06/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- disappointment was expressed at the level of return on investment being received by Adam & Co. Their performance would be further examined by the Investment Sub Committee;
- it was indicated that Common Good Funds with liquid assets were charged and paid for Council services but those with assets but no cash did not and concerns were raised at the lack of parity. Confirmation was provided that Common Good charges was currently under review and that the outcome of this would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. A plea was made for progress of this as quickly as possible with a report back ideally within the next three months;
- the new Charging Framework, which was clear and transparent, was welcomed. There was a need to clarify the costs with the Nairn Highland Games Committee; and

- The Links was now available for organisations/individuals to host events and it was hoped that the Common Good facilities would be utilised which would benefit the whole community. The importance of promoting The Links and other Common Good areas, such as a notice board showing up and coming events, was emphasised. Confirmation was provided that discussions were being held with BID on promoting the framework and forthcoming events.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- AGREED** the Nairn Common Good Fund Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 at Appendix 1a of the report and the final 23/24 Monitoring Statement at Appendix 1b of the report;
- NOTED** the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund and 2024/25 outturn as shown in the Q3 monitoring statement against the budget presented at Appendices 2a and 2b of the report;
- AGREED** the Nairn Common Good Fund budget for 2025/26 detailed at Appendix 3 of the report; and
- subject to consideration of the 2025/26 budget, **AGREED** the revised Nairn Common Good Fund Lets Charging Framework at Appendix 4 to the report for implementation from 1 April 2025.

10. Ward Discretionary Budget Buidseat Fo Ùghdarras Uàird

Responding to a question, the Community Development Manager confirmed that he would provide Mr Oldham with a note of the funds remaining.

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward Discretionary Fund payments that had been approved since the previous meeting of this Committee:-

SGA19240	Green Hive, Trike Nairn	£1,516.00
SGA19418	Brent Centre Highlands, Sport & Thought Highlands	£1,000.00
SGA19458	Nairn Community & Arts Centre, Support to replace Audio Visual equipment	£5,550.00
SGA19524	Highland Schools Wind Orchestra (Highlife Highland), Highland Schools Wind Orchestra 2025 tour	£300.00
SGA19603	Nairn BID, Town Centre Seagull Prevention	£6,000.00

11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** Minutes of the Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 4 November 2024 which were approved by the Council on 12 December 2024.

The meeting was concluded at 11.24am.