

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Monday 10 February 2025 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr S Kennedy
Mrs M Paterson
Mrs A MacLean

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Community Development Manager
Ms L Bauermister, Community Development Manager
Ms F Cameron, Community Regeneration Funding Programme Manager
Ms M MacDonald, Area Education Manager
Mr E Marsh, Housing Repairs Manager
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager
Mrs G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr D Jack, Police Scotland

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

Mrs M Paterson in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr G MacKenzie.

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

There were no Declarations of Interests/Transparency Statements.

3. Police – Area Performance Summary Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No DSA/01/25 by the North Area Commander.

Members expressed various concerns regarding theft by shoplifting and requested information regarding engagement with those reporting the crimes. A large number of shoplifting incidents were at repeated locations. Particular examples were provided and a response was given.

The following further issues were discussed:-

- the availability of drugs via social media was worrying;
- it was asked if Police had received reports of the offer of drugs to children leaving youth clubs and it was confirmed that this had been the case. These reports were reviewed by the Divisional Intelligence Unit and Police liaised with partners including the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service and Procurator Fiscal Service;
- tenants living near to anti-social behaviour were suffering;
- speeding was on the increase;
- in terms of missing care-experienced young people, it was asked if it was the same individuals being reported or if there was an increased amount of incidents and a response was provided; and
- Members shared the frustrations felt by the community and welcomed the Safer Ross meetings which had recently been reinstated. It was felt that working partnerships were important.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023-2026 Year 1, for the period covering 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2024.

4. Area Roads Capital Programme 2025-26 Prògram Calpa Rathaidean Sgìreil 2025-26

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

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- the number of potholes was concerning, particularly those that had already been back filled;
- in terms of the Capital Programme 2025/26 in Appendix 3 of the report, further details were sought and a response was given;
- in terms of the impact assessment in the report, it was felt that there might be a socio-economic impact should damage occur to cars, or on tourism;
- the Roads Operations Manager would meet with Members in the Spring for site visits; and
- it was confirmed that the thermal machine tests were successful and the machines might be used in the future.

Thereafter, Members requested the total amount of Capital Expenditure required to address the Dingwall and Seaforth area road repairs and structures, for the last 5 years and for this financial year. The Roads Operations Manager confirmed that this would be provided to the next Ward Business Meeting.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2025/26 Area Roads Capital Programme for Dingwall and Seaforth Area.

5. Education Associated School Group Report Aithisg Foghlaim Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No DSA/03/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- information was sought regarding the progress of St Clements School as it was not included in the report. It was hoped that the Head Teacher might attend an upcoming Ward Business Meeting;
- the number of home schooled pupils was requested and it was confirmed that this would be provided outside of this meeting; and
- further information was sought regarding Positive Destinations and it was confirmed that this would be provided outside of this meeting.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** the content of the report.

6. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No DSA/04/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- in terms of paragraph 6.7 of the report, it was asked where the Housing Service drew the line in determining whether a repair was an emergency or not. An example was provided and a response was given;
- clarification was sought, and provided, regarding the carrying out of the backlog of low priority works;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the preparation of properties, including homeless accommodation, for re-letting;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the rewiring of properties;
- it was asked how the Environmental Improvements budget had been spent and it was confirmed that this would be provided after this meeting; and
- information was sought regarding Aids and Adaptations and it was confirmed that this budget was not used for general repairs.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2024.

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

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

Members raised various concerns regarding the garages in the Dingwall and Seaforth area, which included:-

- some of the garages were in a poor state of repair and some were not fit for purpose;
- assurances of repairs had been given in the past but the repairs did not appear to have happened;

- many garages were used for storage rather than cars;
- there were still a number of wooden garages; and
- it was asked how much income generated from garage rent went towards repairs.

Thereafter, it was felt that the proposed 8-10% increase in garage rent was too high.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- a 6% rent increase to apply to Dingwall and Seaforth Garages and Garage Sites; and
- a report be submitted at the next meeting confirming:-
 - the total amount of Dingwall and Seaforth garages rent received that was allocated to repairs; and
 - an outline of how the garage estate could be improved using that budget.

8. **Community Regeneration Funding (CRF)** **Maoineachadh Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd**

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

During discussion, clarification was sought, and provided, regarding funding and Members welcomed the structural upgrade and restoration of Sir Hector MacDonald Memorial in Dingwall.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the risk of external grant conditions not being met; and
- AGREED by HOMOLOGATION** the Council investing £162,541.90 CRF grant in the restoration of Sir Hector MacDonald Memorial in Dingwall.

9. **Dingwall Common Good Fund** **Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Pheofharain**

There had been circulated Report No DSA/07/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

Clarification was sought, and provided, regarding delegated powers.

The Committee:-

- AGREED** the Dingwall and Seaforth Common Good Fund Statement of Accounts (Appendix 1a) and Q4 monitoring report for 2023/24 (Appendix 1b).
- scrutinised and **NOTED** the position of the Dingwall and Seaforth Common Good Fund as shown in the 2024/25 Q3 monitoring statement at Appendix 2;

- iii. **APPROVED** the proposed budget for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 3; and
- iv. **AGREED** to delegate to the Community Support and Engagement Team power to approve expenditure up to £10,000 in relation to Dingwall and Seaforth Common Good within the annually set budget and following consultation with Ward Members. This delegated power would be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process.

10. Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since last meeting
Iarrtasan buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàrd Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort air an aontachadh bho choinneamh mu dheireadh

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since its last meeting, and that the remaining balance was £7,889.

- i. Highland Schools Wind Orchestra – 2025 tour to Augsburg, Germany: £300;
- ii. Maryburgh Amenities Company – Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch: £300
- iii. Conon Bridge Lunch Club – 2024 Christmas Lunch: £300
- iv. Muir of Ord Development Trust – OAP Christmas Lunch: £300
- v. Conon Bridge Community Council – Christmas 2024: £300
- vi. Maryburgh Community Council – Defibrillator Project: £400

11. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee held on 11 November 2024 which were approved by the Council on 12 December 2024.

12. Dingwall and Seaforth Area Place Plan

There had been circulated Report No DSA/08/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

Members welcomed the Area Place Plan and thanked all involved in its production.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to adopt the Dingwall and Seaforth Area Place Plan (APP);
- ii. **AGREED** to support and promote the APP where possible in terms of its consideration within other Plans and Strategies across or impacting the Dingwall and Seaforth Area; and
- iii. **NOTED** that to progress the work and aspirations set out in the Plan future steps would include creation of detailed action plans.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm.