

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee**
held remotely on 28 April 2025 at 11am.

Present:

Dr C Birt

Ms L Kraft

Mrs I Campbell

Mr P Logue

In attendance:

Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager

Ms M Ross, Assistant Housing Manager

Ms L Bauermeister, Community Development Manager

Mr A Bone, Roads Officer

Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Station Commander Mr B Liversedge, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 3)

Station Commander Mr J Douglas, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Item 3)

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 I Campbell 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

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/09/25 by the Local Senior Officer for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- regarding the cause of a recent fire north of Achiltibuie, it was confirmed that the incident was believed to have been caused by a barbecue or similar activity, which resulted in significant environmental damage, despite no injuries or loss of structures. It was therefore emphasised that safety messages around outdoor fire use should continue to be promoted in partnership with rangers, landowners and other local agencies;

- Members highlighted the need for continued public messaging regarding safe outdoor activities, especially during periods of dry weather;
- concern was expressed about lithium battery fires, particularly following a recent high-profile incident in the Central Belt. In this regard it was confirmed that there had been no local incidents involving lithium battery storage facilities locally to date, although the matter remained under close observation. In addition, the SFRS advised that national advice on battery energy storage systems (BESS) from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) had been circulated to Members and that the SFRS were providing guidance and conducting inspections at the setup phase of such sites; and
- it was confirmed that monitoring of this risk area would continue.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

4. Housing Management Performance Report – 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Aithisg Coileanaidh Stiùireadh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2024 gu 31 Màrt 2025

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/10/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- clarification was sought regarding the procedure when tenants were evicted. It was confirmed that individuals could present as homeless to the Housing Options Team, where they would be assessed for support depending on their circumstances. Eviction was treated as a last resort and, in some cases, the full extent of a household's difficulties only become apparent at the point of eviction. However, the housing service aimed to keep people housed whenever possible;
- clarification was sought regarding the definition of a "homeless presentation". It was explained that a presentation occurred when an individual formally approached the Housing Options Service seeking help due to homelessness or the threat of homelessness;
- Members welcomed the overall content of the report, noting that while individual homelessness cases could seem urgent and severe, the broader statistics evidenced effective management and consistent support being provided;
- Members praised the compassion and commitment of housing officers, referencing positive experiences in assisting homeless individuals in their wards;
- it was confirmed that Members could report antisocial behaviour complaints raised by constituents either by contacting their local housing officer directly or use the antisocial behaviour investigators' generic email address circulated previously. All reports would be acted upon, initially by the housing officer, and escalated to specialist investigators if the issue proved serious or persistent; and
- Members expressed their satisfaction with the report and thanked Officers for their efforts and the positive results achieved across the service.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

5. Area Roads Capital Programme 2023/24 Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Phrògram Calpa Rathaiden na Sgìre 2023/24

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/11/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members queried when the 2025/26 Capital Programme would be reviewed again, and it was advised that discussions would be better deferred for another month, as finalised costs for 2024/25 were not yet fully available due to standard processing delays of four to six weeks;
- concerns were raised regarding the condition of the Glenelg Road, and it was confirmed that through negotiations related to telecommunications installations, a 4.8km overlay had been secured at no direct cost, with chipping scheduled the following year;
- Members queried whether contractors were already engaged to deliver 2025/26 works. In this regard it was confirmed that contractors were in place, and that works were awarded progressively and reviewed on a weekly basis;
- Members queried the progress of works near the police station at Kyle, where previous drainage issues had been reported. It was confirmed that repairs had been carried out and were nearing completion, and Kyle main street had been added to the Capital Programme list;
- concerns were raised about missing or damaged passing place signage, particularly at Bealach na Bà. It was confirmed that passing place signage had now been prioritised at the top of the signage programme and would be delivered once ongoing roadworks allowed for safe installation;
- Members discussed repeated damage to signage near Stromeferry, and it was proposed to relocate signage behind drainage ditches and to install bollards to reduce future collisions;
- the replacement signage at the Strathcarron Road end was scheduled for installation. However, additional measures would be considered by the road safety team to ensure it was placed in an appropriate location and to prevent it from being hit by drivers;
- Members highlighted misleading parking signage at the Shinty pitch area in Lochcarron and asked for remedial action, with confirmation that the existing signage would be folded to avoid directing vehicles into unsuitable areas;
- Members raised concerns regarding the A832/A835 Garve junction, citing poor visibility of road markings and the risk caused by the sudden transition from higher speeds to the junction. It was requested that the 40mph speed limit be extended beyond the junction, and Officers agreed to review responsibility for the lining and to liaise with Bear Scotland regarding speed and signage improvements. Whilst resurfacing had improved road conditions, this had unintentionally encouraged excessive speeding in some areas, heightening risks at the junction;
- issues were raised regarding broader speed management in rural areas, and it was confirmed that traffic regulation orders (TROs) for non-20mph limits were now being progressed more efficiently following outsourcing to the Road Safety Team. In this regard clarification was provided that 20mph

schemes were separately funded and managed by the Road Safety Team, while other speed limits were supported through local Roads budgets. In addition, Members would be updated on the reviewed villages being considered for adjusted speed limits;

- concern was expressed about campervan parking in cemetery car parks, and it was confirmed that informal signage could be installed quickly to discourage such parking whilst awaiting formal traffic orders;
- concerns were raised regarding damage to rural roads caused by timber transport, particularly on roads now designated as 'green routes' where prior consultation was no longer required; and
- Members welcomed the significant progress made in delivering capital works and requested that regular updates continue to be provided regarding outstanding works and emerging issues.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the final budget allocation for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh area for 2023/24;
- ii. the works completed on the approved list to date;
- iii. the additional works identified and prioritised throughout the year;

and **AGREED:-**

- iv. that Members would be updated on the reviewed villages being considered for adjusted speed limits.

**6. Area Roads Capital Programme 2024/25 Update
Cunntas às Ùr mu Phrògram Calpa Rathaidhean na Sgìre 2024/25**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/12/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the final budget allocation for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh area for 2024/25;
- ii. the works completed on the approved list to date;
- iii. the additional works identified and prioritised throughout the year;

and **AGREED:-**

- iv. to defer detailed discussions on the 2025/26 Capital Programme until final financial data for 2024/25 became available.

**7. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Budget
Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird Rois an Iar, Shrath Pheofhair agus Loch Aillse**

Members highlighted that Strathconon had expressed strong interest in having a wreath for 2026 Remembrance Day, and it was requested that this be considered. In this regard it was confirmed that the request had been noted and

that Officers would investigate the process for this and report back to Members in due course.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** that the following Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Fund applications had been approved since 20 January 2025:-

- Remembrance Day - wreaths - £204.60
- Wester Loch Ewe Trust - Cataloguing of Historical Artefacts - £900.00
- Community Out West Trust - Community Toilets Refurbishment - £1,250.00
- Torridon District Community Association - Community Centre Gutter Repairs - £630.00
- Torridon - Community Development Officer Bridging Funding - £1,000.00
- Southwest Ross Drama - One Act Play Festival - £500.00
- Stromeferry & Achmore CC - Manual grit spreader to aid Winter Resilience - £353.99
- Welcome Ullapool - Replace public benches and picnic tables - £2,386.16

And **AGREED** to update Members on the process for Remembrance Day wreaths.

8. Minutes

Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 20 January 2025 which had been approved by the Council on 27 March 2025.

The meeting concluded at: 11:55am