

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in **The Glass Room, Kingussie Courthouse, Kingussie/Remotely** on 28 April 2025 at 10.30 am

Present:

Mr J Bruce
Ms M Cockburn

Mr R Jones
Mr B Lobban

In attendance:

Mr L Hannah, Community Development Manager
Mr J Henderson, Housing Manager
Ms D Sutton, Strategic Lead (Community Operations and Logistics)
Mr D Lamont, Amenities Services Manager
Mr J MacLean, Bereavement Services Project Manager
Ms R Robertson, Project Co-ordinator
Ms A Tanner, Community Heritage Officer
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager
Mr D Summers, Principal Transport Officer
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr N Nethercott, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr C Simpson, Cairngorm National Park Authority

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

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Area Performance Report Aithisg Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/06/25 by the by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

In addition to the report Members' attention was drawn to the improved availability of the second appliance in Grantown on Spey and congratulations were extended to Douglas MacDonald, Watch Commander of Carrbridge Community Fire Station on his retirement after 43 years of service. Members also extended their congratulations.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- information was sought, and provided, on education and support measures for the area's aging demographic, the virtual reality driving scheme for older drivers, the process for applying for home safety visits and how often the two appliances from Grantown on Spey were deployed together;
- in response to a question, the difference between primary and secondary fires was explained; and
- congratulations were extended for a successful recruitment drive.

The Committee **NOTED** and **SCRUTINISED** the attached Performance Report.

4. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais

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

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- concern was expressed at the low numbers of dwellings being allocated to people on the housing list compared to those allocated from homeless applications;
- it was important to be aware of the tensions caused locally by some of the communication around homeless allocations;
- information was sought, and provided, on working with other housing associations, antisocial behaviour and excessive numbers of cats or dogs in council houses;
- it was queried whether people had to present as homeless within Badenoch and Strathspey in order to be housed there and the Housing Manager undertook to provide more detailed information on where the various homeless presentations in Badenoch and Strathspey had come from;
- it was queried whether people who presented as homeless from within Badenoch and Strathspey could be given higher priority for housing in the area and whether the allocation of Need to Reside points was fixed or could be changed;
- evidence from NHS Highland suggested that people might have been moving to Badenoch and Strathspey because of better social care provision in the area which had put pressure on housing;
- in response to a question, the Housing Manager undertook to find out if any referral areas had a local housing policy; and
- the benefits of having a local housing policy for Badenoch and Strathspey were discussed.

The Committee :-

- i. **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025; and

- * ii. **AGREED** to request that options for a local housing allocations policy be explored for Badenoch and Strathspey to ensure local housing need in the Area was being met.

5. **Amenities Grounds Maintenance and Future Operating Model** **Cumail Suas Rointean Ghoireasan agus Modail Obrachaidh san Àm ri Teachd**

There had been circulated Report Nos BSAC/08/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- in response to a question the Strategic Lead (Community Operations and Logistics) undertook to provide detailed information to a future Ward Business Meeting on the areas where grass would be cut;
- the importance of working with communities and existing volunteers was emphasised;
- information was sought, and provided, on the designation of Sports Grass and the Strategic Lead (Community Operations and Logistics) undertook to provide details of pitches in the area that were maintained to Sports Grass standards and find out whether any others needed to be added;
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that local communities would be consulted when selecting areas for rewilding; and
- information was sought, and provided, on the restrictions on glyphosate use and weedkilling.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

6. **Bereavement Services Update** **Fiosrachadh Ùraichte mu Sheirbheisean Call Bhuill Teaghlaich**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/09/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- information was sought, and provided, on the demand for burials versus cremations, the possibility of accessing funding from churches for burial ground maintenance and how the number of years of additional capacity in burial grounds was calculated; and
- it was queried whether there could be any funding, including from the potential tourist levy, for the maintenance of very old headstones for historical purposes as these could be of interest to tourists.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress of burial ground extensions in the Badenoch and Strathspey area; and
- ii. the challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development.

7. Community Regeneration Funding Award Maoineachadh Ath-bheòthachaidh Coimhearsnachd

There is circulated Report Nos BSAC/10/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place

During discussion information was sought, and provided, on the reasons that repairs were needed to the Burnfield toilets and the electrical work needed at Newtonmore Hall including the implications of this concerning the entertainment license.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the risk of external grant conditions not being met;
- ii. **AGREED** by homologation the Council investment of £9,435.20 CRF grant for the repair of the Burnfield Toilets in Grantown on Spey (£4,435.20) and the urgent electrical work at Newtonmore Village Hall (£5,000); and
- iii. **AGREED** to ringfence the Tranche 5 Highland Coastal Communities Funding (£50,000) to deliver the Laggantygown Cemetery Car Park/Loch Vaa project.

8. Local Transport Forum Fòram Còmhdhail Ionadail

There had been circulated Report Nos BSAC/11/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

- the involvement of Scotrail was acknowledged and it was highlighted that LNER was also keen to be involved in the project;
- it was queried whether there should be input from young people;
- the importance of having a clear timeline and an “aim to finish” date was emphasised;
- it was requested that the first meeting of the group be held before the Council’s summer recess;
- in response to a query about active travel route maintenance, the Principal Transport Officer undertook to discuss this with the Active Travel team;
- it was suggested that the final membership of the group, frequency of meetings and terms of reference be discussed at the inaugural meeting; and
- the importance of the group being chaired by a Member of the Council was emphasised.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to the establishment of a Badenoch & Strathspey Transport Forum, chaired by a Ward Member;
- ii. the draft Terms of Reference for the Forum;
- iii. the proposed Membership for the forum as set out in this report; and
- iv. that the inaugural meeting would take place prior to the Council’s summer recess.

9. Ward Discretionary Budget Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Ward Discretionary Fund application had been approved since the last Committee:-

Aviemore Community Enterprise Company	Outdoor Classroom Link Path	£2,160
Badenoch & Strathspey Access Panel	Update Disability Access Guide	£1,110
Feis Spe	Feis Day 2025	£600
Grantown Outdoor Bowling Club	Working Towards Net Zero	£500
Grantown YMCA Community Centre	Community Storage	£500
Kincraig & Vicinity Community Council	Football Goal Posts	£200
Kincraig Parish Church	Weekly Lunch for School Pupils	£2,000
Newtonmore Community Woodland Development Trust	Calder Path, Wildcat Trail, Bridge Installation	£1,000

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for noting Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 2 February 2025, and approved by the Council on 27 March 2025 which were **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 11.50am