

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held remotely on **Monday, 30 June, 2025 at 10.30 am.**

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Ms C Gillies

Mr D Millar
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Mr R Campbell, Service Lead, Property and Facilities Management
Ms S Fraser, Principal Architect, Property and Facilities Management
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Community Regeneration Fund, Place Service
Mr D Swanson, Project Officer, Active Travel, Place Service
Mr D Lamont, Amenity Services Manager, Place Service
Mr M Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager, Place Service
Mr R Bartlet, Interim Principal Traffic Officer, Place Service
Mr A McKinnie, Strategic Lead, Waste Management, Place Service
Ms M Ross, Principal Housing Officer, Place Service
Mr J Murray, Senior Environmental Health Officer, Place Service
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Officer (West & Mid Highland)
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate Service

Also in attendance:

Mr H Ross, Development Officer, Staffin Community Trust

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 J Finlayson in the Chair

Prior to the commencement of formal business the Chair gave a warm welcome to Councillor Christine Gillies, who was a new Councillor for the Isle of Skye and Raasay area.

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were none.

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

The Committee **Noted** the following transparency statements:-

Item 10 – Mr D Millar
Item 15 – Ms C Gillies

3. Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba

There was circulated Report No SR/8/25 by the Area Commander for Police Scotland.

Members were advised that the Chief Inspector, Police Scotland was unable to attend the meeting due to urgent operational matters concerning wildfires in the Grantown area. Members requested that the local Inspector be invited to attend a future Ward Business Meeting to present the performance report from a local perspective and noted that the next performance report would be submitted to the Area Committee at its meeting in December, 2025.

4. Staffin Community Trust - Presentation **Urras Coimhearsnachd Stafainn – Taisbeanadh**

The Development Officer, Staffin Community Trust was in attendance to give a presentation in relation to the Staffin Harbour project which was the main project the Trust was currently working on for the community. Works being carried out were highlighted and included construction of a new Harbour Facilities Building with retail space, work sheds, WCs and showers. The Trust were concentrating initially on construction of onshore facilities in order to generate revenue in order to support businesses and jobs. Revenue streams included boat lifting, vessel storage and fees for specific services and usage. The project had been broken down into phases to make it more achievable. Details were also provided on the Trust's Nurse's Cottage project which aimed to provide more accommodation in Staffin.

Issues raised in discussion included:- the demise of Organic Sea Harvest who had leased workshops in the area; the Trust would continue to work with businesses to promote job creation; income generation to support the ambitions of the Trust; the provision of more accommodation through the Nurse's project would be very much welcomed in the area; good partnership working the Trust had with the Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise in order to stimulate economic growth in the area.

The Committee were impressed with the ambition and progress made by the Trust on projects in the Staffin area, and Members would continue to support the Trust where possible.

The Committee **Noted** the presentation.

5. Housing Performance Report **Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais**

There was circulated Report No. SR/9/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place.

Following a summary of the report by the Principal Housing Officer, issues raised in discussion included:- the number of homeless applications specifically for Skye/Raasay area would be available in future reports; while it was right to support those in a homeless situation, more focus should be placed on providing housing for young people, other local applicants on the waiting list and key workers. It was noted that there was to be a review of the housing allocations policy and the timescale for this review would be advised to Members. Allocations were made to the greatest housing need.

In terms of the Council policy of acquiring properties from the private market for use as Council houses, 2 houses in Portree were highlighted as potential for acquisition for this purpose. The Council had recently approached NHS Highland to take over 2 houses for their key workers, but they declined on this occasion.

Continuing, reference was made to rent arrears being significantly lower than the same period last year. The aim should be to see a quarter by quarter reduction in rent arrears. Given the demand for housing on Skye, there was a need to ensure all the income due was received in order to continue to be able to provide affordable housing. In this respect, it was queried if there were any particular trends or factors that caused tenants to fall into rent arrears. This information would be useful in order to put in place early intervention measures, so that rent arrears did not happen. The Housing team worked hard with tenants to reduce rent arrears and to keep people in their homes. Tenants were also referred to other agencies, such as money advice for support. The Council would take court action if rent remained unpaid and thankfully there were very few evictions.

In terms of table 3 of the report 'value of current rent arrears by bands' information was sought on how much rent arrears are reducing by bands. This suggestion would be considered for inclusion in future reports.

Anti social behaviour in the Highlands was on an upwards trend and it was important for the Council to address such cases. Early intervention was key in resolving such cases and the Council worked with other public agencies to resolve incidents of anti social behaviour.

The Principal Housing Officer undertook to attend a future Ward Business meeting to discuss any other matters arising from the housing performance report.

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

6. Public Sector Co-location - Presentation

Co-shuidheachadh Roinne Poblach – Taisbeanadh

The Service Lead, Property and Facilities Management and Principal Architect were in attendance and gave a presentation in relation to the Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan and activity throughout the Highlands and a project overview and outcomes of the redevelopment of the Council's Tigh na Sgìre office in Portree to provide a public services hub.

Following the presentation, issues raised during discussion included a query regarding the space difference between the old and planned Registrar Ceremony Room given that there had been some large weddings and meetings held there. An undertaking was given to provide this information to Members. The community looked forward to this redevelopment being finalised, good progress was being made with it and it was encouraging to see a good number of agencies that would be co-located in Tigh na Sgìre. It was disappointing that Police Scotland would not be involved in this public services hub given the Police station in Portree had limited availability to the public. Information would be provided to Members on the final position with the Police on this, as they had been engaged in the early stages of the project.

It was confirmed that there would be some flexibility should other public services agencies wish to be located in Tigh na Sgìre in future. A further issue raised was in relation to whether parking could be identified for the future occupants of Tigh na Sgìre.

The Committee **Noted** the presentation.

7. New Schools in Broadford and Dunvegan

Sgoiltean Ùra san Àth Leathann agus ann an Dùn Bheagain

The Service Lead, Property & Facilities Management was in attendance to give an update report on the new schools for Broadford and Dunvegan.

In relation to the new school in Broadford, 4 tenders had been received all from main contractors who had a base in the Highlands. The design of the new school was nearing completion and once a contractor had been appointed, they would finalise the remaining work packages for the project. If the contract was awarded soon, work on site should commence later this year, with project completion in late 2026. There were still a few planning issues to be resolved and there would be meetings on these soon with Sepa, Transport planning and Environmental Health.

There was discussion regarding the Planning issues still to be resolved and it was advised that it should be possible to resolve these issues without delaying the timescale for the project programme. If there were any lessons learned from this, that would benefit future projects, these would be taken on board.

In relation to the new school in Dunvegan, Planning application matters were being progressed and it was anticipated that this process should be relatively straightforward, given that the masterplan had already been approved in principle. The design of the school was progressing and was similar to that of the new Broadford school and was based on a standard template for the design of schools across Highland as contained in the Highland Investment Plan. The access road to the school was nearing completion and was a major investment by the Council in Dunvegan. The Dunvegan school was due to be completed by the summer 2027.

In discussion, Members were pleased with progress on this project. The engagement with the community on it was also recognised. There was a problem of speeding in Dunvegan and this was a particular concern in the vicinity of the school. It was suggested that the safer routes to school team put in traffic calming measures to stop speeding in the vicinity of the new school.

The Committee **Noted** the updates provided in relation to the new schools in Broadford and Dunvegan.

8. Community Regeneration Funding Award

Duais Maoineachaidh Ath-bheothachadh Coimhearsnachd

There was circulated Report No. SR/10/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place, which summarised the background to the homologation of £14,291.56 Community Regeneration Funding (CRF) investment in the Broadford Toilets – Access Improvements project.

The Committee:-

- i. **Noted** the risk of external grant conditions not being met; and
- ii. **Agreed** by homologation the Council investing £14,291.56 CRF grant for access improvement works to the Broadford Toilets.

9. Active Travel Post Overview

Foir-shealladh Dreuchd Siubhail Ghnìomhaich

There was circulated Report No. SR/11/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an overview of the aims of the 2-year fixed term Active Travel post, funded through income available to the Committee.

Following a summary of the report by the Project Officer, Active Travel, issues raised in discussion included the Portree active travel masterplan and specifically junction improvements from Wentworth Street, Bank Street to Portree Harbour, with the suggestion that a yellow box junction be installed there; traffic issues on Home Farm road; the new link road would ease pressure on Bosville terrace road; the lack of pedestrian crossings in Portree and what could be done to improve traffic movement around Somerled Square.

Continuing, active travel projects would require liaison with the roads team to make the best use of resources and efforts should continue to obtain as much external funding for active travel projects as possible. In particular, if funding was sought from Transport Scotland, they would look for match funding from the Council to help unlock this funding. Timescales for receipt of funding from Transport Scotland would be shared with Members once information was available.

In terms of the capital allocation funding for active travel, there was a need to look at pragmatic, low cost interventions. However in terms of the more expensive elements of the proposed active travel programme, it was felt the community wanted to see more money spent on roads. Therefore a view was expressed that the £100k allocated for active travel should be put to roads maintenance. However, it was generally felt that there was an active travel programme with money allocated to it and this should continue. In addition, the Committee should look at its disaggregated budget and other income generation in the area to support additional funding for road maintenance.

The Committee:-

- i. **Noted** the overview and aims of the post;
- ii. **Noted** the budget which has been allocated to support Active Travel projects on Isle of Skye and Raasay;
- iii. **Agreed** the proposed Programme of Work for 2025/26; and
- iv. **Agreed** to support efforts to secure additional funding for delivery of Active Travel projects on Skye & Raasay.

10. Uig Public Conveniences

Goireasan Poblach Ùige

Transparency Statement – Mr D Millar declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as he had a family member who works with the Council.

However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There was circulated Report No. SR/12/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place, which proposed that the Uig public conveniences be closed on 31 August 2025, following the full commissioning of the new facilities at the ferry terminal. The new terminal included publicly accessible toilets which will be maintained to a high standard and will be open during all ferry operating hours.

It was highlighted that the local Development Trust were interested in acquiring the Uig public convenience and the old Calmac building. There was discussion regarding the new ferry terminal public conveniences opening times and the need to maximise the opening hours. It was advised that discussions with Calmac regarding opening times were ongoing. Members of the Committee were strongly supportive of extending the new ferry terminal public conveniences opening hours.

The Committee:-

- i. **Agreed** closure of the Uig Public Conveniences from 31 August 2025; and
- ii. **Agreed** formal disposal of the asset, to allow the Uig public convenience be marketed for sale or made available for asset transfer.

At this point the meeting was adjourned for a comfort break and the meeting resumed at 12.35 p.m.

11. Roads Maintenance Update

Cunntas às Ùr mu Chàradh Rathaidean

There was circulated Report No. SR/13/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place, which provided an update on the Area Roads Capital Programme 2024/25, 2025/26 Programme and additional works programmed for the remainder of the financial year.

Following commentary on the report by the Roads Operations Manager, it was advised that the appendices to the report which showed the works programme would be updated and shared with Members.

Members acknowledged the scale of work in the programme and commended the significant efforts of the road repairs team and there were many positive comments from the community regarding the works being undertaken.

Issues raised in discussion included the importance for flexibility in the roads maintenance programme in order to get more work done in a particular area; an update on the new thermal road repairs team to support pre surface dressing work; the more money that could be obtained for road maintenance the better to deliver more for communities; there were lots of roads in need of patching and examples were provided and all these works would be carried out in due course; suggested traffic calming measures in Dunvegan.

Continuing, the roads team were working at full capacity at the moment and additional staff were being brought into the area to support the team. Deterioration of road surfaces caused by water showed the importance of ditching and drainage works. There had been a significant programme of white lining carried out on Skye.

An update on staffing in the roads team was also provided and there was a great commitment in the team to undertake all the work required.

The Committee **Noted** the update report.

12. Parking Income

Teachd-a-steach Parcaidh

There was circulated Report No. SR/14/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place, which provided an update on pay and display income generated from parking in Council car parks in Skye.

Following commentary on the report by the Interim Principal Traffic Officer, issues highlighted in discussion included that income received from parking charges and retained in the local area was now substantial compared to in the past when no income was retained locally. The income received had been reinvested in projects in the local area; the local area did not receive penalty charge notice (PCN) or on street car parking income and Members were supportive of more car parking income being retained locally.

Continuing, it was queried what car parking income and PCN money was invested on maintenance of car parks, employment of Parking Enforcement Officers etc. in Skye. It was felt the current car parking income allocation model was not right for Skye and more of the money should be retained locally. In particular more Parking Enforcement Officers were required.

It was suggested that Officers bring forward options for devolving to the local area some car parking services such as parking maintenance and enforcement activities. This information would inform Members if the local area was receiving best value from the income generated through car parking charges and PCNs. Members undertook to discuss this suggestion further at a Ward Business meeting with appropriate Officers.

It was advised that the maintenance fee for parking bays went into the Councils general budget. There was no maintenance funding allocated to the Parking Enforcement team. The team did undertake minor repairs to car parks. However, car parks were an area roads asset and the roads team understandably prioritised money being spent on roads. On street car parking income and PCN income went to the running of the Parking Enforcement Service and roads related projects. An undertaking was given to provide Members with a breakdown of costs for car parking maintenance and where the money received from car parking income was spent.

The Committee **Noted:-**

- i the contents of the report; and
- ii that a breakdown of costs for car parking maintenance and where income from car parking was spent would be submitted to a Ward Business meeting.

13. Waste Management Service Update

Cunntas às Ùr mun t-Seirbheis Rianachd Sgudail

There was circulated Report No. SR/15/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place, which provided updated information on the implementation of the Recycling Improvement Funded Waste and Recycling service change project.

Following commentary on the report by the Strategic Lead, Waste Management, some of the issues raised in discussion were:- the new facility at the Portree Waste Transfer Station, which would receive, aggregate and dispatch recyclable materials to contracted processors. Members would be invited to the new facility once completed. Some views received from the public were that the new black bins were too small and not robust, however these bins were what was available on the market to purchase; opportunities for investment for street recycling bins would be looked at and public communications to get the most out of these bins.

The Committee **Noted**:-

- i. the information connected to new waste and recycling collection services; and
- ii. the progress being made on the essential waste management infrastructure project that will support service change in Skye.

14. Environmental Health – Annual Report and Activity 2024/25 Slàinte Àrainneachdail – Aithisg agus Gnìomhachd Bhliadhnail 2024/25

There was circulated Report No. SR/16/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update on the Environmental Health team and an annual report on local activity during 2024/25.

Following commentary on the report by the Senior Environmental Health Officer, issues raised in discussion included – the range of services the Environmental Health team covered was recognised and the work staff in the team were undertaking was commended. A list of the Environmental Health team serving the Skye and Raasay area would be provided for Members. It was queried what the ideal staffing numbers to cover all the work of the team would be. It was advised that a restructure of the team had been approved and details were provided and there had been a significant increase in staff resources for Skye and Raasay.

An update on staffing to administer the short-term lets licensing regime was provided. Members were supportive of the Environmental Health team being adequately resourced. Short-term licensing would continue to be a priority for the team. It was not felt the new regime was putting people off short term lets and the licence would last for a 3 year period. Short term licensing did ensure properties for let were safe to do so, to protect the health and safety of the public.

Reference was made to the problem of fly tipping and abandoned vehicles and it was queried if there was anything that could be done to encourage larger landowners to address this problem in liaison with the Environmental Health team.

The Committee **Noted**:-

- i. the range and volume of work being undertaken locally by the Environmental Health team;
- ii. the Highland wide issues; and
- iii. the report format and content.

15. Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 Achd nan Eilean (Alba) 2018

Transparency Statement – Ms C Gillies declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as a Director of the Isle of Raasay Development Trust and had been involved in the Carbon Neutral Islands Project. However, having applied the objective test she did not consider that she had an interest to declare.

There was circulated Report No. SR/17/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Corporate which provided an update on the implementation of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 as it related to the Highland Council area for the financial year 2024/25.

The Committee **Noted** the update and acknowledged the work that had taken place.

16. Ward Discretionary Budget Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird

The Committee **Noted** the following Ward 10 Discretionary Fund Grant awarded since the last meeting of the Committee.

2024/25 Budget:

Rag Tag & Textiles Ltd - Flourish Garden - £740

Remembrance day wreaths - £160

Portree & Braes Community Trust - Portree Village Maintenance - £3800

Skye & Lochalsh Archive Centre - Curious Travellers Art Events - £2446.20

2025/26 Budget:

The Skye Youth Pipe Band - Scottish Week Festival - £1000

17. Trusts – Skye and Raasay Committee Urrasan – Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Ratharsair

The Highland Council holds funds for a number of Trusts and Bequests. As per the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 some of these Trusts are at risk of becoming dormant as no payments have been made for 5 years. The following list of Trusts were those at risk of dormancy in Skye and Raasay, and it was **Noted** that funds would be distributed to the community organisations named below.

Fund name - Type	Amount £	Recipient Community Organisation
HCT Skye Poor Fund (Ward 10)	782.82	Skye and Lochalsh Citizens Advice Bureau
King George V Playing Field	230.00	Portree and Braes Community Trust
MacIver Trust	334.48	Sleat Local History Society
Total:	£1,347.30	

18.Minutes

Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 17 February, 2025 which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 27 March, 2025. The terms of the minute were **Noted**.

The meeting ended at 2.07 p.m.