

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in **Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey/Remotely** on 4 August 2025 at 10.30 am

Present:

Mr John Bruce
Ms Muriel Cockburn

Mr Russel Jones
Mr Bill Lobban

In attendance:

Mr L Hannah, Community Development Manager
Mr A Lawrie, Principal Repairs Officer
Mr C Irvine, Community Works Officer
Ms A Tanner, Community Heritage Officer
Ms P Sheldon, Senior Environmental Health Officer
Mr R Murdoch, Environmental Health Officer
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr S Walsh, Chief Executive, Highlife Highland

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

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. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 26 June 2025 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.

In terms of Standing Order 9, the Committee AGREED to take item 8, followed by item 5, at this stage.

8. Housing Repairs Performance and Capital Report – 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025

Aithisg Coileanaidh is Calpa Càradh Thaighean – 1 Giblean 2025 gu 30 Ògmhios 2025

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/17/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- tenants were switching off air source heating as it was expensive to run and it was therefore queried whether more education was needed on how to use this type of heating system more efficiently;
- information was sought and provided on the ages of houses that needed replumbing and what material was used to replace thin walled copper, how many properties still had night storage heaters, and whether there were still biomass units operating successfully in properties; and
- it was queried what the process was for monitoring and dealing with damp in properties as this could be linked with respiratory health conditions.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025.

5. Winter Service Plan for 2025/26

Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2025/26

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/14/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- it was queried whether there were any plans to put out extra communication about winter gritting routes, as had been done in the previous year, to ensure that routes were not blocked by parked cars;
- information was sought and provided on staffing levels for gritter operators, the filling of grit bins, and the parking bays on Grantown Road in Aviemore;
- it was requested that information be provided to Community Councils on the use of grit bins and the Community Resilience Scheme;
- an update on the speed limit signs of the Ruthven to Kingussie road was provided; and
- it was requested that a report on the signage on the Glentruim to Catlodge road be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2025/26; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a report on the Glentruim to Catlodge road be brought to the next meeting of the Committee in respect of public objections received.

4. Highlife Highland Services Report Aithisg Sheirbheisean High Life na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/13/25 by the Chief Executive, High Life Highland.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- it was queried what was being done to work with Early Years Childcare Providers and new parents to encourage engagement in the Book Bug scheme, and if there would be an opportunity to expand the scheme to Kincaig;
- it was good to hear that year-round opening was being considered for the Highland Folk Museum;
- it was queried whether Tala nan Ros Hall was breaking even;
- on the point being raised, the Chief Executive undertook to report back to a future meeting of the Committee on what was being done to encourage engagement between Primary Schools and Libraries;
- in response to a question, it was suggested that the location of the Service Point in Grantown library had helped to increase traffic to the library, and it was queried whether locating more Service Points within libraries could be considered;
- it was requested if parking and donation revenue information for the Highland Folk Museum could be separated in the next report;
- information was sought, and provided on the music tuition service in Badenoch and Strathspey, and virtual music tuition was commended;
- the work of the new manager at the Badenoch Centre was commended;
- on the point being raised, it was clarified that a balanced view would be taken on re-wilding with a focus on biodiversity;
- information was sought and provided on accessibility and concessions for elderly and disabled people across Highlife Highland sites, and opportunities for youth engagement outside of sporting activities; and
- clarification was sought on charges for visiting the Highland Folk Museum as several internet sites had the incorrect information concerning this.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the report.

6. Community Regeneration Fund Applications Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-bheothachadh Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/15/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

An update on the Loch Vaa project was provided.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the collaboration between the Council, the National Park and the landowner was commended and it was suggested that this type of collaborative approach be considered for other projects;
- the additional £30,000 requested was a small amount given the scale of the project; and

- it was requested that a site visit be arranged for after a Badenoch and Strathspey ward business meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the Community Regeneration Funds currently available in Badenoch and Strathspey;
- APPROVED** the full request of CRF funding of £80,000 to deliver the full Laggantygown Cemetery Car Park/Loch Vaa Project; and
- NOTED** that a site visit for Members would be organised.

7. **Environmental Health - Annual Report & Activity 2024/25** **Slàinte Àrainneachdail – Aithisg Bhliadhnail & Gnìomhachd 2024/25**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/16/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the Environmental Health team was commended for the breadth and depth of work undertaken;
- information was sought and provided on the enforcement capacity for food hygiene cases and what was being done to mitigate, and educate on, food borne infections, who to contact with a complaint about the inadequate disposal of waste-water, and the Environmental Health team's involvement in Short-term Let Licensing;
- in response to a question, it was clarified that members of the public should contact the environmental health team to report abandoned cars in residential areas;
- on the point being raised, the difficulty of recruiting Environmental Health Officers was explained and it was clarified that the service was currently working to upskill current team members; and
- a Member's workshop on the role and scope of the Environmental Health team was requested.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:-

- variety and volume of work undertaken locally by the Environmental Health team;
- Highland wide issues; and
- report format and content.

9. **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Funds use 2024/25** **Cleachdadh Mhaoinean Sgìre Bhàideanach is Shrath Spè**

There has been circulated Report No BSAC/18/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- attention was drawn to the ward discretionary fund award for Newtonmore Camanachd Club which had been originally allocated for safety padding but was later authorised for use of fencing;

- in response to a suggestion from Members, The Community Development Manager undertook to work with the Corporate Communications team to advertise which projects had been supported from ward funds;
- it was suggested that pictures of the projects supported by ward funds be requested; and
- it was requested that this report be presented to the committee annually.

The Committee **NOTED** and scrutinise the use of Badenoch and Strathspey Ward funding allocations for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 28 April 2025 which were approved by the Council on 15 May 2025 and the Special Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 27 May 2025 which were approved by the Council on 26 June 2025.

The meeting concluded at 12.15pm.