

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held Remotely on Monday 25 August 2025 at 10am.

Present:

Mr L Fraser
Ms B Jarvie
Mr P Oldham

In Attendance:

Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager
Ms P Sheldon, Senior Environmental Health Officer
Mr S Grant, Roads Operation Manager
Ms F Cameron, CRF Programme Manager
Mr M Gemmell, Principal Repairs Officer
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Ms K Arnott, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Station Commander N Nethercott, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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 P Oldham in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr M Green.

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

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaìdh

The Committee **NOTED** the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 26 June 2025 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

4. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Committee **NOTED** the following Good News:-

- reference was made to the Nairn Highland Games which had been a very successful event with excellent sportsmanship;
- the “Picnic in the Park” organised by the Queenspark Residents Group at Riverside Park had been an excellent community event. An appeal was made on behalf of the Group for new committee members; and
- basking sharks had been spotted in the Moray Firth over the weekend. A reminder was provided of the penalties for harassing sea creatures and a plea was made to view them from a safe distance.

5. Fire Performance Report – Annual Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Teine – Aithisg Bhliadhna

There had been circulated Report No NC/14/25 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, the following main issues were raised:-

- Members discussed the recent Wildfires in Dava and surrounding areas and commended the work of the Fire Service as well as local farmers and estate workers during these difficult times. Further information was sought, and provided, as to whether all officers were trained in dealing with wildfires and whether Highland had sufficient resources to deal with these incidents. The use of a helicopter for such incidents had been queried however Members were advised that this was beyond the financial scope;
- reference in the report to Battery Energy Storage Systems was welcomed and it was suggested that it would be helpful if this information was provided to all Area Committees as well as both Planning Application Committees;
- the advice on overnight caravan/motorhome parking was welcomed and it was queried if this should be regulated the in the same way as campsites. It was explained that a car park area was not considered as a relevant premises and was therefore outside the scope of the Fire Scotland Act. However, it was recommended that the owners of such sites should undertake a risk assessment to ensure fire safety and that this should be incorporated into their management of the car park;
- information was sought, and provided, on the current recruitment issues during which it was confirmed there were currently 17 officers in post and three vacant posts. Recruitment was ongoing to increase the establishment whilst ensuring maximum availability/coverage; and
- further information was sought on the recent road accidents on the A96 and whether incidents on the surrounding minor roads had been increasing.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

In terms of Standing Order 9, the Committee AGREED at this stage to take Item 7, followed by Item 6.

7. Community Regeneration Assessment of Applications Measadh Iarrtasan Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd

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

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Members highlighted concern over the high cost of the Nairn Links Toilets however acknowledged that this was a project which required attention; and
- concern was expressed at the Nairn Riverside Development Plan and the various safety issues on accessing the park as well as the lack of warning signs that children were crossing. It was highlighted that there were three points on Mill Road which were part of an active travel route in the area and there was a lack of zebra crossings available. It was considered that appropriate signage as well as CCTV should be considered.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the award of the following applications:-

- a) CRF4149, Nairn Links Heritage - £25,054;
- b) CRF4150, Nairn Links Toilets - £45,000; and
- c) CRF4151, Nairn Riverside Development Plan - £30,000.

6. Winter Service Plan 2025/26 Plana Seirbheis a' Gheamhraidh 2025/26

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

During the discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- discussion took place around areas which were not identified as bus routes, such as Boath Park, Balmakeith Drive onto the A939, Bruar Park and Montgomery Drive which might be problematic during winter due to the steep gradient;
- given this was a time consuming task, it was suggested that grit bins were filled in advance prior to the winter;
- information was sought, and provided, on the number of gritters available to cover inclement weather conditions, stating that currently there were 119 gritters to cover 100 gritting routes within Highland; and
- in response to the suggestion of upskilling staff to provide additional support, it was explained that this was a specialised HGV driving role which required high level training to operate heavy vehicles in adverse weather conditions whilst adhering to Health and Safety regulations. However, other services could provide support in other areas such as gritting the footpath networks.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2025/26.

8. Housing Repairs Performance and Capital Report - 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025 Aithisg Coileanaidh agus Calpa Chàraidhean Taigheadais - Gàidhlig airson 1 Giblean 2025 gu 30 Ògmhios 2025

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

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the volume of Council houses coming up for let in the Nairn and Cawdor area was very low with only 12 relets over 2023/24 out of a possible 735;
- it was queried how many properties required refurbishment;
- confirmation was provided that further information would be provided to Mrs B Jarvie on the property at Harbour Street, Nairn that had recently caught fire and the feasibility of the Council taking ownership of this with a view to renting it out; and

- the average time for both emergency and non-emergency repairs was welcomed.

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

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

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

During the discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- reference was made the very broad range of activities undertaken by Environmental Health. It was highlighted that, if a licensee failed to adhere to their short term let conditions, then concerns in respect of this could be raised with Environmental Health;
- the benefits of licensing for dog walking services were recognised;
- reference was made to the lengthy process and officer time required to deal with abandoned vehicles. Members were informed of a revised process, which included the recovery of costs, currently being trialled in Ross and Cromarty and it was hoped that this would be rolled out in due course. However, it was harder to deal with abandoned caravans due to difficulties in tracing ownership;
- further information was sought, and provided, regarding the ongoing issues with seagulls within Nairn and the requests made to Environmental Health in respect of this;
- confirmation was provided that Scottish Government consultations were ongoing relating to the regulation of licensing beauty enhancing treatments such as tattooing and skin microplanning as well as other work carried out by beauticians. It was anticipated that licensing requirements for such treatments would be introduced within the next year along with appropriate guidance; and
- concern was expressed regarding the high level of pigeon excrement around the railway station and Cawdor Road which was creating a health risk to walkers and cyclists. Responsibility for the cleaning of this queried and it was confirmed that this would be raised with Network Rail for a resolution to be sought to the issue. It was queried whether the Council's Roads Department could clean this meantime while a longer term solution was sought.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the variety and volume of work that was undertaken locally by the environmental health team;
- ii. the Highland wide issues; and
- iii. the report format and content.

10. Nairn Common Good Fund Update – Quarter 4 2024/25 and Quarter 1 2025/26 Financial Monitoring Ùrachadh air Maoin Mhath Choitcheann Inbhir Narann – Sgrùdadh Ionmhais Ràithe 4 2024/25 agus Ràithe 1 2025/26

There had been circulated Report No NC/19/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

Prior to commencing the briefing, Members were informed of discrepancies in the report, highlighting Section 1.1 of the report should read "This report presents a detailed overview of income and expenditure relating to the Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF), incorporating near-final figures for Quarter 4 of the 2024/25 financial year and financial monitoring for Quarter 1 of 2025/26 as at 30 June 2025". Therefore, Members were asked to Scrutinise and note the position of the NCGF as shown in the Quarter 4 2024/25 and Quarter 1 2025/26 monitoring statements against the budget for 2025/26. Also an amendment to Section 5.3.7 paper should say Nairn Community and Arts Centre not Nairn Highland Games.

During the discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- attention was drawn to the investment income earned (£14,963) from a portfolio of approximately £800,000 which equated to a very disappointing return of less than 2%. In view of this, the Investment Sub Committee would be looking at moving various funds, which included the Nairn Common Good Fund, that were not receiving a good return on investment to a different Fund Manager;
- care was requested as to how the Nairn Common Fund should be utilised and the need to continue to grow the surplus was emphasised;
- it was suggested that a representative from the investment portfolio be invited to attend a future ward meeting. In addition, benchmarking with other local authorities on common good fund investments and the rates of return being received was requested; and
- regarding the Nairn Common Good Engagement Group, it was queried whether it would be feasible for Members to raise items for discussion at meetings. However, it was highlighted that councillors were not members of the Nairn Common Good Engagement Group but they could be invited along to meetings. On that basis, it was requested that an update on the museum be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund as shown in the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Statement against the Budget for 25/26;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress of the Nairn Common Good Engagement Group; and
- iii. **AGREED** the terms of reference for the Nairn Common Good Engagement Group for the next 12 months with immediate effect.

11. Ward Discretionary Budget **Buidseat Fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward Discretionary Fund payment that had been approved since the previous meeting:-

- Queenspark Residents Group – Picnic in the Park £1,500.

12. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** Minutes of the Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 26 May 2025 which were approved by the Council on 26 June 2025.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am.