

## **The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Redesign Board of the Highland Council** held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on 28 August 2025 at 2pm.

### **Members present:**

|                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr M Baird                        | Mr R Jones                       |
| Mr B Boyd                         | Mr G MacKenzie                   |
| Mr R Bremner                      | Mr A MacKintosh                  |
| Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair           | Mr D Macpherson                  |
| Mr A Christie                     | Mr D McDonald                    |
| Mr J Finlayson (sub for B Lobban) | Mr P Oldham (sub for M Cockburn) |
| Mr D Fraser                       | Mrs T Robertson                  |
| Mrs J Hendry                      | Ms L Saggars                     |
| Ms B Jarvie                       |                                  |

### **Non-Members present:**

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Dr C Birt    | Ms L Johnston   |
| Mr M Cameron | Mr R MacKintosh |
| Mr R Gale    | Mrs A MacLean   |
| Mr K Gowans  | Mr D Millar     |

### **Participating Officials:**

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate  
Ms A Clark, Chief Officer, Housing and Communities  
Mrs S Armstrong, Chief Officer - Revenues and Commercialisation  
Mr J Shepherd, Chief Officer, Business Solutions  
Ms D Sutton, Chief Officer, Operations & Maintenance  
Ms R Fry, Chief Officer – HR and Communications  
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

### **1. Apologies for Absence** **Leisgeulan**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs M Cockburn, Mr M Green, Mr B Lobban, Mr J Gibson, UNISON, and Mrs C A Stewart, GMB.

### **2. Declarations of Interest** **Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were none.

### **3. Recess Powers** **Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Board **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 Redesign Board

#### 4. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Board **NOTED** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025, which had been approved by the Council on 26 June 2025.

#### 5. Food in Schools Project Pròiseact Biadh ann an Sgoiltean

There was circulated Report No RDB/06/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

During discussion, disappointment was expressed that only eight Members had completed the Food in Schools survey, while noting that the scheduled Members' Workshop would assess the survey results in more detail to inform a draft action plan for the Board's consideration.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the progress to date; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the draft action plan would be considered by the Redesign Board in November 2025.

#### 6. My Council Programme Prògram na Comhairle Agam

There was circulated Report No RDB/07/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- the important role the website played in public interaction with the Council was highlighted and Members were urged to engage with the process to replace it, noting that the new website was due to be live by the end of the year. Various Members offered their help, and pointed out the need to reduce the number of clicks required to access information, and to improve the search facility. Progress with both was summarised, as well as the aim to reduce the use of PDFs where appropriate. The need for some documents to be time-stamped, or version-controlled, if downloaded, was pointed out;
- the transformational impact of the My Highland project was summarised, noting that increased use of online services by those able to access them freed up face to face and telephony resources for those unable to access online services, thus improving inclusivity. It was suggested that once the Council tax aspect of MyHighland had been rolled out, consideration be given to it being used for Council housing rents;
- assurance was sought and provided of measures being taken to maximise security measures on the new website;
- it was queried how the new website would be publicised to users, including regular users such as community councillors, and the importance of transparency was emphasised;
- assurance was sought and provided that feedback provided via the website was not visible to the public;
- a guide to using the new website was suggested, although it was pointed out that a website should be designed to be easy to navigate without the need for a guide. The importance of the site being kept up to date with information that

was easy for the public to find was emphasised, noting that at present members of the public often asked Councillors for Council information. A summary was provided of some of the plans to ensure there were review dates, and allocated responsibilities, in relation to keeping information updated and accessible etc; and

- Members interested in participating in a review group should contact the Chief Officer, Housing and Communities, noting that Mr Boyd and Mrs Hendry were already the allocated Members for this project. Mrs Robertson, Mr Oldham and Mr Cameron indicated their interest. An update on the project would be provided to the next meeting.

The Board **NOTED**:

- i. the progress update, including approved request for change (milestone); and
- ii. the opportunity to take part in website user testing (end of October 25).

## **7. Amenities Review and Roads Improvement Project 2**

### **Pròiseact Ath-sgrùdadh Ghoireasan agus Leasachadh Rathaiden 2**

There is circulated Report No RDB/08/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was the first time roads and amenities had been considered simultaneously and the reasons for this, including shared resources and issues, were summarised;
- with reference to section 6.2 of the report and Phase 2 of the Roads Redesign Project, workshops had been held to look holistically at the status of roads across the whole Council area, and Members referred to the historic formula for the distribution of road funding, with 40% of the funding being distributed by the Council's existing formula and 60% according to demonstrated need, this to take place until the conclusion of the roads funding review. Additional workshops were required to continue this work, and it was felt this should have been referenced in section 6.2 of the report;
- it was queried how the amalgamation of roads and amenities would work in relation to responsibility for street cleaning, grass cutting, and gully emptying, and this was being tackled by the various Redesign Board Member groups, with proposals due to be brought back to the Board in due course;
- it was queried what was being done about significant weed growth in areas of high traffic, following the reduction in the use of glyphosate as a weed killer;
- it was queried what support and advice could be offered to communities who were choosing to develop wild-life areas / rewilding, for example to avoid sloped areas if possible due to additional maintenance challenges;
- with reference to the Redesign Board Member groups, some good results had been achieved, with particular mention of amenities, and these should be show-cased and / or shared at workshops;
- it was queried whether projects were being followed through from the start to the end of the process, with attention drawn to specific issues which could fall between roads and amenities and might be overlooked, causing frustration to communities. It was important to ensure communities and services worked together and it was queried when communities would be given the opportunity to feed into the review;

- in relation to the implementation of digitised job cards, a summary was provided of work being undertaken with colleagues in the Council and with other local authorities to source information; and
- information was sought and provided on engagement with roads and amenities staff on the amalgamation, noting that information from the Board was public.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the updates on each of these projects;
- ii. **AGREED** the Chief Officer, Operations & Maintenance, and the Chief Officer, HR and Communications, liaise with the Member groups with a view to publicising the review of roads and amenities to communities; and
- iii. **AGREED** the roads funding distribution progress be included on future reports.

The meeting ended at 3pm.