

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Monday, 25 August 2025 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr S Kennedy
Mr G MacKenzie

Mrs A MacLean
Mrs M Paterson

In attendance:

Ms L Bauermeister, Community Development Manager
Mr B Cumming, Senior Environmental Health Officer
Mr J Mackay, Amenity Services Manager
Mr J MacLean, Bereavement Services Project Manager
Mr E Marsh, Housing Repairs Manager
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager
Mrs G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr D Jack, Police Scotland

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 G MacKenzie in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no declarations of interest.

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 Dingwall and Seaforth Area Committee.

4. Police – Area Performance Summary Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Dèanadais Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No DSA/15/25 by the North Area Commander.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Safer Ross Meetings continued to see some notable results and was a robust approach to tackling anti-social behaviour in dwellings and premises;
- it was difficult to report a neighbour that caused anti-social behaviour;
- examples of anti-social behaviour were shared and there was concern that there remained too few Police Officers on the street;
- there was concern regarding the speed of some drivers between Dochcarty Road and Tulloch Roundabout in Dingwall;
- information was sought, and provided, in terms of the increase in missing persons. The Missing Persons Coordinator continued regular contact with Social Services and care establishments;
- enquiries were ongoing in terms of a notable detection of cannabis on High Street, Dingwall;
- it was asked if there could be a breakdown in future reports between males and females in terms of domestic crime;
- further information was sought regarding unlawful use of motor vehicles;
- it was reported that theft by shoplifting had reduced. Not everyone agreed, however, Police reported there had been an increase in engagement between Intervention Officers and shops/premises;
- face-to-face meetings between Community Council Chairs and the Police had been beneficial; and
- concern was raised regarding drugs, including needles.

The Police Scotland Representative would provide Members a further response to points raised, outside of the meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023-2026 Year 1, attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 01 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

5. Housing Repairs Performance Report **Aithisg Choileanaidh Càraidhean Taigheadais**

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

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- in terms of tables 1, 2 and 3 in the report, the information suggested that Dingwall and Seaforth was not doing as well as the rest of Highland and information was sought regarding this. In response, Members were notified of an administrative error whereby sub-contractors had recorded the invoice date as the date of completion. It was thought that 5 emergency jobs had been recorded incorrectly;
- an update was sought in terms of MacDonald Road in Dingwall and Corrie Gardens in Muir of Ord. This would be provided outside of the meeting;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding residents applying for solar panels;

- there was frustration that properties sat empty for significant periods of time. It was the aim of officers to have void properties made available as soon as possible, however some were left in a poor state of repair; and
- information was sought, and provided, regarding capital works, which included interlink alarms.

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

6. Scottish Government Play Park Funding Maoineachadh Phàircean-cluiche Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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

During discussion, it was asked if Scottish Government funding could be used in non-Highland Council play parks. A response was provided. It was clarified that a play park would only be considered public if it was fully open to the public. Play parks such as school play parks, that were only open to school pupils attending that school, would not be considered as a public play park.

There would be a small contingency after the reported works were completed. This would go towards another small project or groundworks requiring extra funding.

Once the equipment was ordered, it was likely to be installed in early 2026. Installing as much of the equipment as possible in-house assured best value and the quickest turnaround.

The Committee **AGREED** that £86,860 be allocated to the agreed projects as outlined in Section 6.4.1 of the report.

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

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

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- it was requested that a grit bin be reinstated on Hill Street, Dingwall;
- in response to comments regarding broken grit bins, Members were informed that grit bins would be checked before winter started;
- grit bins were used to restock pavement gritters. They were restocked as required and where resources permitted;
- it was asked if there was an opportunity for criminal justice workers to fill the grit bins;
- it was asked if the vehicles were road-ready and a response was provided;
- it was asked how the Roads Service were informed of new roads, such as housing schemes, and a response was provided;

- Members expressed concern as there had been changes to the capital works funding allocation without their knowledge, a decrease of approximately £300,000;
- potholes were getting worse. Clarification was sought, and provided, regarding the weather constraints of the thermal pothole repair machine throughout the winter. The Chair asked for a timetable outlining when the machine was to be used in Dingwall and Seaforth; and
- an update was requested in terms of works on the A862 between Arduillie and Dingwall. The Roads Operations Manager was to be meeting with Scottish Water soon and would provide an update in due course.

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

8. **Bereavement Services Update** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Sheirbheisean Caoidh**

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

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- the gates at Fodderty Cemetery were continually open. One of the gates was difficult to move, and in general, the gates would benefit from a coat of paint;
- the paths at Fodderty Cemetery could be difficult to walk on, particularly on the hill;
- the grass at both Fodderty and Mitchell Hill Cemeteries was under control, but some felt it could be better. Fallen headstones were beginning to be covered with grass; and
- clarity was sought, and provided, in terms of available space and prepared lairs. The capacity of each cemetery was regularly monitored and records were updated weekly.

The Bereavement Services Project Manager would inform the local amenities team and would seek quotes for the path and gate works. Any unstable headstones would be temporarily repaired to ensure safety.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the current capacities and progress of burial ground extensions in the Dingwall and Seaforth area; and
- ii. the challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development.

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

There had been circulated Report No DSA/20/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- the number of abandoned vehicles was a concern. The Senior Environmental Health Officer (EHO) would attend the Ward Business Meeting on 15 September to discuss this;
- further information was sought, and provided, in terms of section 6.7 of the report and the pilot scheme in Easter Ross;
- there had been an increase in complaints of people feeding seagulls. Information was sought, and provided, regarding information available locally to discourage this, and further information was provided by the Senior EHO regarding the seagull problem in general; and
- information was sought, and provided, regarding export health certificates.

Members would provide a list of concerns to the Community Development Manager, to be discussed at the upcoming Ward Business Meeting.

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.

10. Dingwall Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Pheofharain

There had been circulated Report No DSA/21/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Committee **NOTED** the position of Dingwall Common Good Fund as shown in the 2024/25 Quarter 4 and 2025/26 Quarter 1 Monitoring Statements.

11. Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary budget applications approved since last meeting Iarrtasan buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàrd Inbhir Pheofharain agus Shìophort air an aontachadh bho choinneamh mu dheireadh

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved between 1 April and 31 July 2025:-

- i. Dingwall Museum Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)
- Security Cameras and Equipment: £700.00
- ii. 1st Conon Bridge & Maryburgh Scout Group - Purchase Equipment:
£650.00
- iii. Maryburgh Community Council - Maryburgh in Bloom: £400.00
- iv. Dingwall Fire Brigade Community Group - Dingwall Gala: £700.00

12. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

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

The meeting ended at 12.45pm.