

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held remotely on **Monday, 1 December, 2025 at 10.30 am.**

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Ms C Gillies

Mr D Millar
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:

Mr M Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager, Place Service
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Community Regeneration Fund, Place Service
Ms M A Gray, Project Officer, Community Regeneration Fund, Place Service
Mr D Wilby, High Life Highland, Director of Corporate Performance
Ms M Maguire, Principal Planner, Place Service
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Place Service
Mr R Bartlett, Principal Traffic Officer (Acting), Place Service
Ms M Ross, Assistant Housing Manager, Place Service
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Officer (West & Mid Highland)
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate Service

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector Scott Robertson, Police Scotland
Ms S Jamieson, Local Development Manager, Raasay Development 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

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were none.

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

Items 3 & 5 Mr D Millar (Transparency Statement)
Item 4 Ms C Gillies (Transparency Statement)

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

Transparency Statement - Councillor D Millar declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as he had a family member who works for Police Scotland, but not serving in the Highland division. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

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

Following commentary on the report by the Chief Inspector Police Scotland, it was highlighted that in terms of the issue of drink/drug driving, if members of the public had any concerns about such incidents, the Police should be informed in order that they could take action to keep the roads safe. The work of Mountain Rescue Services, Coastguard and RNLI in assisting with missing persons cases was commended. The perpetrator's of online fraud cases were in many cases outwith the local area and indeed outwith this country and the public needed to follow the advice for keeping safe online and also help vulnerable people to combat this fraud.

There was a link between drug offences and violence/anti social behaviour and there was serious and organised crime present in the South Highland area. Any calls with information about drugs made to Police Scotland would be recorded and could be helpful in detecting this crime.

Information on incidents relating to dog attacks/dog worrying would be shared with Members. If any patterns emerged from these incidents, then the Police could provide high profile visibility to help stop them.

Further, a lot of road traffic offences/accidents were in relation to tourists. All calls to the Police were prioritised for example in terms of threat, harm and risk.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

4. Raasay Development Trust Presentation Taisbeanadh Urras Leasachaidh Ratharsair

Transparency Statement - Councillor C Gillies declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as she was a Director of Raasay Development Trust. Given the item was for information purposes and having applied the objective test she did not consider that she had an interest to declare.

Ms S Jamieson, Local Development Manager, Raasay Development Trust was in attendance and gave a presentation on an overview of the Trust and projects that the Trust deliver in the community.

Following the presentation, the diversity of projects being undertaken and the ambitions the Trust had was recognised. This would make Raasay an attractive place to work and live. It was queried if the co-ordination of the various community groups involved in projects and partnership working was effective. It was advised that there would be a governance review with alternative models of governance being looked at.

In terms of the upgrade of 3 houses at Inverarish Terrace, costs had increased, however completion of the upgrade was still on target for September, 2026. Work on the Pontoons was key given the importance of maritime works and tourism to the Island. However, funding to undertake the Trust's ambitions for this project would need to be found.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

5. High Life Highland Service Delivery
Libhrigeadh Seirbheis High Life na Gàidhealtachd

Transparency Statement - Councillor D Millar declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as a Director of High Life Highland. Given the report was for information purposes and having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There was circulated Report No. SR/26/25 by the Chief Executive, High Life Highland which provided the committee with information on High Life Highland (HLH) service delivery in the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee area.

In discussion, Members welcomed the information on service delivery contained in the report and there was a wide variety of services that HLH were able to offer the people in this area which was very impressive. The promotion of the Gaelic language was acknowledged and it was queried if there was a connection between FC Sonas, a gaelic community football club and Alba FA as the former intended to expand their activities to Skye and Raasay. Information on this would be shared with Councillor D Millar.

The Archive Centre was a great example of how to work with the community and the opening of the Skye Bridge and Angus Og exhibitions were particularly highlighted as a great success. The leisure service was to develop the overall program within the Fingal Centre with more classes to suit the needs of the less well served, such as wellbeing for the elderly, infirm and special needs groups. These classes would be developed working in partnership with the NHS.

It was welcomed that there had been an increase in users of the library service. The library was located in the school and was evidence of the importance of having the right facilities in the right place. The importance of music tuition and skills was recognised and these services were particularly strong in the Highland area. The reduction in customer numbers in Sports Development was a result of staff absences and these numbers were now recovering.

Further the work of HLH staff in the area was commended, such as in the Archive Centre, Music and Active Schools Co-ordinators and it was important to recognise what skills they offered.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

6. Community Regeneration Fund – Funding Request
Maoin Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd – Iartras Maoineachaidh

There was circulated Report No. SR/27/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which presented a funding request to the Isle of Skye & Raasay Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) allocation for discussion and decision by Members.

The Project Officer highlighted an error in the report and advised that five (not four) applications had been submitted for The Islands Programme 2025/26 funding. Thereafter, a summary of the report was provided.

Following consideration, the Committee **APPROVED** an award of £50,000 of Community Regeneration Fund to the Young Carers New Build – Design Stage 4

project, subject to approval of the funding proposal submitted for consideration as part of the Islands Programme 2025/26.

7. Short Term Let Control Area Sgìre Smachd Màil Gheàrr-ùine

There was circulated Report No. SR/28/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which invited the Committee to decide on whether to progress with the introduction of a Short Term Let Control Area (STLCA) covering all or part of their area.

There was commentary on the report by the Principal Planner. In discussion, a view was expressed that while housing pressures in this area were well recognised, it was not felt that a STLCA was the right method to resolve this. Tourism was essential to the Skye and Raasay area with over 800,000 visitors a year who brought in excess of £220m in spending. Therefore, many jobs in this area depended on tourism and Short Term Lets (STLs) very vital to the success of tourism, not only for visitors but short term workers and contractors who all required accommodation in the area to work. STLs were a key part of our tourism infrastructure and undermining them would not reverse decades of policy failure in housing delivery. It was felt that the scale of the problem was not as bad as was being made out. It was also felt that there was a culture in Highland of anti development and there was a need for this Council to look at what it could do to support people wanting to build their own homes. There was a need for the Council and Scottish Government to work better to foster a culture for development to accelerate house building and address the issue of empty homes.

Other views expressed at the meeting referred to the statistics shown in the report highlighting the housing pressures. Some communities themselves had undertaken projects to provide more housing in their areas given the extent of the problem. The STLCA proposed would not be applied retrospectively, so those who currently had STLs would not be impacted by this. One of the key statistics in the report was the number of people who could not afford the market entry house price. Many people who worked in the hospitality industry would not be able to buy a house and therefore this was part of the reason that the housing shortage and affordability needed to be addressed. There were a high number of homes being purchased by people from outwith the area and this made it very difficult for local young people to stay and work in the area. A STLCA was a method to help alleviate the housing pressures and it would go out to community consultation.

It was clarified that the income required to afford market entry house price and average house price, was household income, not personal income. In terms of the 64 new build completions in 2024/25 for Skye and Raasay, these were new builds applied through the planning process and the statistics did not include new builds purpose built for STLs. Further, in relation to existing STLs in Skye/Raasay, given there was not currently a STLCA, there was no requirement for those existing STLs to have planning permission in place, unless a material change of use has occurred.

Thereafter, Mr J Finlayson, seconded by Mr D Millar **MOVED** the recommendations detailed in the report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr R Stewart Moved the following – “Recognise that tourism is the economic backbone of Skye and Raasay, supporting nearly half of working-

age residents and contributing over £220 million a year to our local economy, and that short-term lets are a vital part of that infrastructure. Accordingly, the Committee does NOT AGREE to progress with a Short-Term Let Control Area, and acknowledge it would risk damaging local employment and visitor capacity without meaningfully improving housing availability.”

There was no seconder to the Amendment and therefore the Amendment failed. Therefore, the **MOTION** as proposed became the finding of the meeting.

Mr R Stewart requested that his dissent to this decision be recorded.

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the evidence presented demonstrating the degree of prevalence of STLs within Skye and Raasay;
- ii. **NOTED** that this evidence, demonstrates that the housing market within parts of Skye and Raasay, is subject to significant pressure, exacerbated by high rates of potential dwellings being converted to STLs;
- iii. **NOTED** that the designation of any new STLCA will have no retrospective impact on existing STLs where no material change of use had occurred at the time of establishment and will therefore only require planning permission from new STLs established after a STLCA comes into force;
- iv. **NOTED** that should the Environment & Infrastructure Committee formally commence the process of introducing a STLCA, this will initiate a process of further evidence gathering and public consultation with communities;
- v. **AGREED** that the Skye and Raasay Area Committee therefore seeks to progress with the process of considering the introduction of a STLCA covering all or part of the Skye and Raasay area; and
- vi. **AGREED** that progressing with consideration of a STLCA enables communities within the area to participate in that consultation at the appropriate stage.

8. Housing Performance Report Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais

There was circulated Report No. SR/29/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided information on how the Housing Service performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 September, 2025.

In discussion, a view was expressed that there should be a move towards a local lettings initiative to ensure local families and key workers could get houses within the community. The Housing and Property Committee had agreed to a review of the Housing Allocations Policy and local Members were supportive of local people being a higher priority within that policy. A Key Worker policy was also being developed.

Anti social behaviour cases could involve some complex issues and it was queried how proactive the Housing team were on community engagement in resolving these issues. In relation to rent arrears, information was requested on how many months these cases had been in arrears. Information on this would be provided to Members. However, cases where people were £500 or less in arrears, was largely

due to universal credit being paid 5 weeks in arrears. It was felt that early intervention in dealing with these cases was key and the Housing team were proactive in supporting tenants.

It was queried how the number of homeless presentations could be reduced and how many of them that had been given tenancies were from this area. In terms of the quarterly statistics for homeless presentations, it was advised that there were new people on the homeless presentation list each quarter. Information would be provided to Members on the circumstances behind these presentations.

Further, it was queried how many houses did the Council plan to build over the next 5 years. It was felt that the Council had not built many houses in this area for some time and were reliant on the local Housing Association on building most of the houses. The Council's Housing Development Manager was to attend an Area Business Meeting to brief Members on planned housing developments in this area. The Council did work hard on being a very good landlord and this was recognised.

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

9. Car Park Finance Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Ionmhas na Pàirc Chàraichean

There was circulated Report No. SR/30/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an overview of parking income and expenditure for 2024/25.

In discussion, more local information regarding parking finances had been sought rather than the general Highland wide information provided in the report. However, Officers were able to provide specific information relating to Skye at the meeting. The public were aware that substantial parking income had been raised locally, but this money was going into a central budget and there were areas in Highland that were not charging for parking. It was not felt this area was getting its fair share of income from parking.

Information was requested and provided on off and on street parking income for Skye/Raasay. Around £900,000 was collected in parking income from this area for the year to date with circa £200,000 of this coming back to the Skye/Raasay area. Also, £304,000 had been generated so far this year from Penalty Charge Income. Parking services costs were handled through a central cost code and was not broken down to individual areas, apart from some site specific localised costs such as parking meters, cash/card transactions. However, it was estimated that to run the Parking services on Skye/Raasay cost in excess of £400,000 per year.

It was advised that for authorities to operate decriminalised parking enforcement, legislation required them not to burden the authority with any costs, thereby reducing funding available for other services. Therefore, all on street income which included penalty charge notices, pay and display, and permits, was used in order to fund parking services. Thereafter, some off street parking income may be used to balance the parking services budget.

In terms of car park operational costs and maintenance and in particular the £53 per bay per year annualised maintenance cost, this was based on a 40 year

lifespan for a car park, and was determined by the Service as the actual cost of running car parks. This charge would go into the Council's central budget. This had been particularly contentious given that some car parks had received no maintenance for some considerable time. It was noted that the Parking Service did not have a budget for repairs, and this would require to be funded from the Roads maintenance budget. Also, £54,000 in costs related to the Storr and Bayfield car parks capital funding repayments.

There was a general view that income from parking should be invested back into local communities and road and parking infrastructure. It was welcomed that £40,000 had been awarded towards the resurfacing of the Broadford car park and Members would consider how to add to this i.e. money from this areas share of parking income.

A view was expressed that the Car Park Finance strategy and policy was in need of a review, for example, this area and other areas in Highland did not receive any income from legacy car parks. There was general disappointment in the current arrangements and for fairness there was a need for change. There had been conversations about this at a senior level in the Council and there might be progress on this in the near future. This was a full Council policy decision and would need to be addressed by the full Council.

It was advised that all parking income used to go into the central budget, but since the introduction of the localised funding model, areas now received a share of the income from parking income. Parking tariffs were reviewed annually and any income from increased tariffs could only be shared with areas if there was a surplus following costs being deducted.

The issue of workforce planning was raised. The work undertaken by Parking Enforcement Officers on Skye was commended, however there was a concern that there was not enough officers and it was queried what plans were in place to replace staff who may leave the service. It was advised that the Service was undertaking workforce planning and it was proposed to increase the number of officers on Skye and other areas.

It was highlighted that any decisions on car parking income made at a local level had implications for central budgets.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

10. Roads Maintenance Update **Cunntas às Ùr mu Chàradh Rathaidean**

There was circulated Report No. SR/31/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee with an update on the Area Roads Capital Programme completed at the time of writing from the 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 noted that the 2025/26 Capital allocation and the Strategic allocation to the Skye and Raasay Capital Budget was circa £3m and had enabled additional works to be programmed. However, there were still many roads in need of maintenance and

this area had a large road network. A number of single track roads had not been designed for the volume of traffic they were now experiencing. Local Members needed to keep pushing for additional resources for our roads. There was also a recognition of the hard work being undertaken by the local Roads team.

There was a need for more white lining on roads and the need for gully emptying in Portree and efforts were being made by the Roads team to carry out this work.

In order to fulfil the works necessary in the capital programme, this required the full workforce in the Roads team and therefore there was limited flexibility to carry out other works identified such as pot hole repairs. When there was capacity in the team, other priorities would be undertaken.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

11. 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.

CFINE - Fairshare in Highland	£1,100.00
Rag Tag Textiles Ltd	£999.00
Seall - Festival of Small Halls	£500.00
Kyleakin Local History Society	£2,000.00

12. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There was circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee (Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair) held on 1 September, 2025, the terms of which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 18 September, 2025.

The meeting ended at 1.53 p.m.