

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Caithness Committee** held **remotely** on Monday 27 April 2026 at 10.00 am

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr R Gunn
Mr A Jarvie
Mr S Mackie

Mr M Reiss
Mr K Rosie
Mr W Mackay

In attendance:

Ms C MacIver, Community Development Manager
Mr R Macleod, Service Lead Housing Investment/Building Maintenance
Ms A Banks, Principal Housing Officer
Miss J MacLennan, Joint Democratic Services Manager

Also in attendance:

Inspector D McAlpine, 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 A Jarvie in the Chair

1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence Gairm a' 1hlàì ragus Leisgeulan

There was an apology for absence from Ms J McEwan.

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

There were no declarations of interest/transparency statements.

3. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgireil

There was circulated Report No CC/12/26 by the North Area Commander.

In discussion, Members raised the following points:

- in response to a query, further clarification was provided on the charges that applied under the Road Traffic Act in respect of anti-social behaviour caused by noisy exhausts on vehicles driven by boy/girl racers; Members were encouraged to report any incidents together with the relevant vehicle registration number;
- in relation to the entrances at both Dounreay and Vulcan sites on the A836, it would be helpful for data relating to non-injurious incidents to be recorded to support local Members and the community in demonstrating their road safety concerns in these locations; the Inspector confirmed he would investigate the potential for these figures to be provided and report back on the matter;
- it was disappointing that Police camera vans could only be deployed in locations where there had been serious or fatal incidents as their

deployment in villages, at schools and in other locations where persistent near misses/minor accidents had been reported would be an effective measure to prevent more serious incidents;

- the potential for a small roads policing unit to be based in Caithness given the benefits this would bring in terms of policing the North Coast 500, interaction with schools and increasing Police visibility in the area;
- the decrease in the figures for missing persons and increase in the number of drink/drug driving detections across the area be welcomed;
- Police Scotland's success in detecting a cannabis farm at the former Wick High School was welcomed and an assurance that checks had been undertaken on other large empty buildings in the area; and
- an update was sought and provided on the current position with staffing at sergeant level in Caithness.

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

4. Housing Management Performance Report – 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Aithisg Dèanadais Stiùireadh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2025 gu 31 Màrt 2026

There was circulated Report No CC/13/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

5. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2026/2027

Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2026/27

There was circulated Report No CC/14/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

In discussion, it was suggested that a longer term strategy and multi year programme be developed for garages and garage sites in Caithness and that this approach clearly set out to tenants the benefits they would derive from any rent increases. Members had been provided with a comprehensive list of garages and garage sites in the area, an inventory of works was being prepared and an action plan developed and it was important this was taken forward by Members and officers at their monthly housing meetings

In relation to rental levels for 2026/27, it was suggested a 10% increase for garages and 15% increase for garage sites would be reasonable to provide some scope to match rental income with the area environmental budget to enhance the maintenance programme and improvements to the estate.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that a 10% rent increase be applied to garages and a 15% rent increase be applied to garage sites in Caithness in 2026/27.

6. Ward Discretionary Awards
Duaisean fo Ùghdarras Uàird

There was circulated and **NOTED** details of the Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 for Thurso and Northwest Caithness Ward and Wick and East Caithness Ward.

7. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

There were circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of the Caithness Committee held on 19 January 2026 which were approved by the Council on 26 March 2026.

The meeting ended at 10.55am