

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 June 2026 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr J Finlayson
Ms C Gillies
Mr D Millar

Officials in attendance:

Mr A Bone, Acting Roads Operations Manager, Place Service
Mr D Hopwood, Area Environmental Health Manager, Place Service
Ms M Ross, Assistant Housing Manager, Place Service
Mr D Swanson, Active Travel Project Manager, Place Service
Ms M A Gray, Project Officer, Community Regeneration Fund, Place Service
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Officer (West & Mid Highland)
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate Service

Also in attendance:

Inspector A Mackenzie, Police Scotland
Mr D MacDonald, Sleat Community 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 was an apology for absence from Mr R Stewart.

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

Item 3 – Mr D Millar (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/11/26 by the Area Commander for Police Scotland.

Following commentary on the report by the Inspector, Members noted that Inspector Ali Mackenzie was due to retire soon following 30 years Police service.

Members thanked the Inspector for his service to Police Scotland and to this area and they wished him the best for the future, with a long and happy retirement.

In terms of the report, reference was made to concerns raised at Community Council meetings in relation to Police staffing numbers; drugs available in the area; driver behaviour particularly by tourists in hired vehicles/motorhomes, and an update on the Police house in Dunvegan was requested. In response the Inspector advised that tourists when hiring motorhomes as long as they had the required permissions on their driving licence had every right to use the vehicle. Road accidents involving tourists often was due to lack of awareness or understanding of narrow roads, passing places and changing from 2 lanes to single carriageway. Officers had worked in the past with hire companies in order to educate tourists on the limitations of our roads. Officers also stopped vehicles to educate drivers. Telematics of vehicles from phones, watches and motorbikes with collision alert, triggered a response from Police which took up significant resource time for Officers and at times it had been found to be unnecessary for them to attend. Drivers were also using Sat Navs as opposed to road markings/signage to dictate their driver behaviour, and for example, they may drive at slower speeds as a result.

Continuing, there was still an Officer for the Dunvegan area and the Police station was still active. The Police were working with the local community to identify a location for a new station for Dunvegan.

It was advised that Community Councils appreciated Police Officers attending their meetings. Given the number of incidents and the apparent lack of Police resources, there was a feeling that people did not want to bother the Police with lower level incidents. In response, staffing numbers had always been a challenge in this area, but this was also a national issue.

In relation to the biggest changes to policing over the long term and challenges facing the Police, the Inspector advised that the perception was that policing was always better in the past. The Police had always wanted more Officers. However, 30 years ago there were not the same challenges such as with the internet or mobile phones. People now had the ability to contact the Police much quicker and therefore the demand on Police resources was much greater now. Working with partners in respect of mental health calls and the demand this had on Police resources was highlighted. Continuing, in relation to drug issues, people were encouraged to report any criminality to Police by the 101 or 999 telephone numbers or online at Police Scotland or contacting Crimestoppers.

It was requested that a briefing note be prepared on how the Police service operates nowadays on Skye/Raasay and circulate to local Members/Community Councils. This would be useful to understand the different approaches and pressures to policing and the best way to contact local Police officers.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. 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 2025 – 31 March 2026;
- ii. the change in format necessitate by a reduction in back-office capacity to prepare additional area committee reports; and

iii a briefing note would be prepared for Members/Community Councils on how the Police operates on Skye/Raasay.

4. Sleat Community Development Trust Urras Leasachadh Coimhearsnachd Shlèite

Mr D MacDonald, Chair, Sleat Community Development Trust was in attendance and gave a presentation in relation to work undertaken by the Trust in the community and key projects that the Trust are delivering and some of the challenges faced by the Trust.

It was highlighted that the Trust was established around 20 years ago to try and bring more focus to the various sustainability, economical, environmental and social welfare matters in Sleat. The main assets in the Trust were the Armadale stores and garage and Tormore community woodland. Volunteers were essential to the work of the Trust and there was an ongoing challenge in attracting volunteers for the Trust's activities.

The Trust looked for new opportunities and while they did not want to buy the whole of the Clan Donald Land Estate Trust last year, a community due diligence exercise was undertaken to understand this asset and what opportunities there may be. The Clan Donald Land Estate had now been sold and it was positive that the new owners did want to work with the community and the Trust were engaging with them.

The Trust also interfaced with Sabhal Mor Ostaig and Bun-Sgoil Shleite and acted as the finance vehicle for the Drumfearn to Breakish public/cycle path. The Trust also worked with the Ferry Users Group; operated an electric community minibus, and introduced Skyenet Community broadband. There was also a community café which helped link people.

The Trust had funding for a Community Development Officer to assist them in their activities. The recruitment process was underway. The Trust were developing a list of future projects including potential projects with the new Armadale Estate. The new Development Officer would assist progressing projects. The ambition was for this post to be self sustaining after 3 years as it was believed that there were some projects that could generate income to achieve this aim.

Following the presentation, Members referred to the impressive length of time the Trust had been in existence. One of the key factors for trusts and community groups was sustainability and longevity and the Sleat Community Development Trust had shown this was possible with strong management and working with other community partners. Trusts had an important role in communities where more activities were requiring to be done by communities themselves.

In relation to income generation, the Tormore hydro scheme had been very successful and surplus funds generated were reinvested in community projects.

The Committee thanked Mr MacDonald for his attendance and the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

**5. Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) Assessment of Applications
Measadh Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd**

There was circulated Report No. SR/12/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which presented a funding application to the Isle of Skye and Raasay Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) allocation for discussion and decision by Members. The report also updated Members on the Isle of Skye & Raasay CRF budget position for 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Members were supportive of the application from the Portree Community Centre Association and the Committee therefore **APPROVED** the CRF grant award, subject to any conditions, up to the value of £39,493.16.

**6. Portree Mobility Hubs
Co-ionadan So-ghluasadachd Phort Rìgh**

There was circulated Report No. SR/13/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided Members with an update on work undertaken to date on the provision of a Mobility Hub or Hubs for Portree, and to ask them to agree on the proposed next steps recommended following the initial summary report.

In discussion, there was some frustration over the lack of progress on Portree Mobility Hubs and the length of time it had taken to progress matters. It was queried how quickly could matters be progressed and what funding avenues were being explored to deliver mobility hubs. Also, clarity was sought on the areas identified for the mobility hubs and an undertaking was given to provide Councillor D Millar with a site visit to the areas identified. In response, it was acknowledged that this was a priority and that the Active Travel Project Manager would submit an update report to an Area Business Meeting with more detail on the proposed sites. There would also be community engagement on the project.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the findings of the initial summary report on Mobility Hubs; and
- ii. **AGREED** that officers should further explore the deliverability of the emerging preferred options identified in the report.

**7. Housing Management Performance Report
Aithisg Coileanaidh Stiùireadh Taigheadais**

There was circulated Report No. SR/14/26 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 31 March 2026.

The Assistant Housing Manager highlighted key aspects of the report and in response to questions from Members, it was advised that the Right Sizing Scheme for Council homes had been approved and Officers would look to incentivise anyone who wished to move into a more appropriate sized property. Further, the Council had purchased a number of properties for social housing and the Council's Development team could provide more information on this. The Manager had been involved in the Caithness Stakeholder project a few years ago where the formation of care villages was discussed. It had been proposed that there would

be extra care housing next to health centres which was an excellent idea. For various reasons this proposal never happened but care villages could improve the lives of people.

In terms of rent arrears, it was advised that the Department of Work and Pensions paid the universal credit housing element, which was the rental payment, in arrears. Therefore, anyone in receipt of the full housing element would be in rent arrears.

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

With the agreement of the Committee, the following item was taken after item 6 of this minute.

8. Environmental Health Annual Report and Activity 2025/26
Aithisg Bhliadhnaile agus Gnìomhachd Slàinte Àrainneachdail 2025/26

There was circulated Report No. SR/15/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update on the Environmental Health team and an annual report on local activity during 2025/26.

Following a presentation on the report by the Area Environmental Health Manager and in response to questions, the Manager confirmed that the data in the report relating to short term lets was accurate and the Manager was unaware of large number of short term lets operating without the required licences. However, the Environmental Health team would be interested in information of any short term let operating without the required licences, so that they could be brought into compliance. In relation to timescales for consultations on planning applications and licences, there had been delays due to the volume of work the team had and the recruitment issues faced by the Service. Efforts to address these recruitment challenges were detailed. Further, there was cross working between specialist officers and staff resources were used in an effective way.

There was a workshop on the issue of abandoned vehicles scheduled for 4 June and following this a report would be submitted to the Communities and Place Committee in August which would give a better understanding of what could be done to address this issue. Also, the Service was working with the DVLA to undertake an operation to tackle this problem in the Highland area.

Other than using the environmental health team online service via the Council website, contact details of local offices were on the Highland Council website, and the public could visit Service Points for assistance and appointments could be made with local Officers.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the scope and volume of work currently being delivered in the local area;
- ii. **NOTED** local issues and current operational priorities;
- iii. **NOTED** Highland wide issues impacting Environmental Health services; and
- iv. **AGREED** the format and content of the report.

9. Road Maintenance Update
Cunntas air Càradh Rathaidean

There was circulated Report No. SR/16/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update on the Area Roads Capital Programme completed, at the time of writing, from the 2026/27 programme and works programmed for the remainder of the financial year.

In response to questions from Members, the Acting Roads Operations Manager advised that the surface dressing programme was slightly behind schedule and it was hoped to start this work very soon. The road lining programme would also start soon and in terms of emergency repairs to roads, resources could be brought in from other areas to assist with this. A staffing update was provided at the meeting and it was advised that there were a number of roads still requiring to be adopted and work was ongoing on this.

There was positive feedback from Members on the road maintenance work that was ongoing in what was a comprehensive capital programme. The Acting Roads Operations Manager was thanked for his attendance at the recent Ward Forum with Community Councils. It was useful for Community Councils to understand the issues of capital and revenue funding.

The Committee **NOTED** the update report.

10. Ward Discretionary Budget
Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward 10 Discretionary Budget applications approved since the last meeting of the Committee.

Glendale Trust - Glendale Film Show & Archive Event - £910
Highland Good Food Partnership & ReRoot - Feel Heal Real Food -£608
Radio Skye - Young Woman In Radio - £1,894

A full list of Ward Discretionary Budget awards for 2025/26 was available at:

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/421/ward-discretionary-budgets-and-spend>

11. 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 16 February, 2026 the terms of which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 26 March, 2026.

The meeting ended at 12.47 p.m.