

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee**
held remotely on 3 August 2026 at 11am.

Present:

Dr C Birt

Ms L Kraft

Mrs I Campbell

Mr P Logue

In attendance:

Mr J MacLean, Bereavement Services Project Manager

Ms M Maguire, Principal Planner

Mr K MacKenzie, Principal Repairs Officer

Mr B Cumming, Senior Environmental Health Officer

Mr M Crowe, Project Officer - Community Regeneration

Ms L Bauermeister, Community Development Manager

Mrs O Marsh, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr D Jack, Area inspector, Police Scotland (Item 4)

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Ms L Kraft in the chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the following declaration of interest:-

Item 6 – Mrs I Campbell

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaìdh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 25 June 2026 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee.

4. Police – Area Performance Report Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas Coileanaidh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/11/26 by the Chief Inspector - Area Commander.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- clarification was sought on whether a police officer had been appointed to Lochcarron. It was advised that an update would be obtained and provided to Members outwith the meeting;
- the increase in mobile phone offences was queried, including whether this reflected increased use of mobile phones while driving or improved detection methods;
- concern was raised regarding the increasing number of drink and drug driving offences and whether the increase principally related to alcohol or controlled substances;
- the distinction between assault and serious assault offences was queried;
- clarification was sought on the difference between detection rates and conviction rates;
- comments that public confidence in reporting incidents to Police Scotland had increased were welcomed and an update was sought on engagement with Community Councils; and
- clarification was sought, and provided, on the arrangements and timescales for road closures following fatal and non-fatal road traffic collisions.

The Committee:-

- i. **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 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026; and
- ii. **AGREED** that an update on the appointment of a police officer to Lochcarron would be provided to Members outwith the meeting.

**5. Housing Repairs and Capital Report – 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026
Aithisg Choileanaidh Càraidhean Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2026 gu 30
Ògmhios 2026**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/12/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- concern was raised regarding a former janitor's house in Plockton which had remained vacant for several years and whether it could be utilised to provide accommodation for a key worker currently living in temporary accommodation. In this regard, it was advised that the matter would be followed up with Housing Officers and a response provided outwith the meeting;
- concern was raised regarding the higher rental costs associated with temporary accommodation when compared with standard Council housing;
- the criteria used to determine whether a repair was classified as an emergency or non-emergency repair were queried;
- information was sought on how repair completion times were measured, including whether travel time formed part of the calculation;

- the Environmental Capital Programme was welcomed and clarification was sought on the process for identifying and prioritising projects within the Ward; and
- information was requested on arrangements for Members to contribute project suggestions and priorities for future Environmental Capital funding.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026; and
- AGREED** that further information would be provided outwith the meeting regarding the former janitor's house in Plockton and the matters raised in relation to key worker and temporary accommodation.

6. Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update
Sgìre Smachd Màil Gheàrr-Ùine – Ùrachadh Às dèidh a' Cho-
chomhairleachaidh

Mrs I Campbell made a Declaration of Interest in respect of this item, as the owner of a self-catering property. In accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, she left the meeting for the duration of the item.

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/13/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the decision-making process was queried, including whether any recommendation made by the Committee would be referred to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee for final consideration;
- the status of the report and consultation documents as public documents was queried, including whether they could be shared with interested constituents;
- a question was raised regarding how the cumulative impact of short term lets would be assessed across a large and diverse rural area and whether individual local circumstances would be taken into account;
- information was sought on how future planning applications for short term lets would be assessed should a Control Area be designated, including the consideration of site-specific factors and local planning policies;
- the implications for existing short term let operators were queried, including the requirement to demonstrate planning status when renewing licences;
- further information was requested on the purpose and process of obtaining a Certificate of Lawfulness and how this differed from a planning application;
- assurance was sought that any future planning applications would be assessed on their individual merits rather than through a blanket approach across the Control Area; and
- the relationship between the proposed Control Area, the licensing regime and the evidence required from existing operators at licence renewal stage was queried.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the consultation feedback and the potential implications that a STL Control Area would have on communities within Wester Ross Strathpeffer and Lochalsh as set out in Appendix 2 of the report and summarised in Section 8, 9 and 10 of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Economy and Infrastructure Committee that Wester Ross Strathpeffer and Lochalsh be included within the proposed Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Area, should any decision to submit a proposal for designation to Scottish Ministers be taken.

7. **Environmental Health - Annual Report & Activity 2025/2026** **Slàinte Àrainneachdail – Aithisg Bhliadhnail & Gnìomhachd 2025/2026**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/14/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- information was provided on a vehicle reported as abandoned in the Achnasheen area and advice was sought on the process for reporting and investigating abandoned vehicles, including how ownership was established and the circumstances in which enforcement action could be taken;
- information was sought on the Council's role in relation to dangerous and aggressive dogs, including the distinction between matters dealt with by the Council and those dealt with by Police Scotland;
- clarification was sought on the Housing Scheme of Assistance grants, including the Environmental Health team's role in assessing and administering adaptation grants;
- information was sought on the Council's approach to issues relating to gulls, including current policy, reporting arrangements and measures available to reduce nuisance and nesting activity;
- concern was raised regarding gull activity in parts of the Ward and the potential impact on local communities;
- information was sought on the disposal of abandoned vehicles and whether any value could be recovered from vehicles removed by the Council; and
- it was suggested that vehicles with a residual value should, where possible, be sold rather than destroyed.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

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

8. **Bereavement Services – Project Updates** **Seirbheisean Bròin – Ùrachaidhean Pròiseict**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/15/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- information was sought on the remaining capacity at Clachan Duich Burial Ground and the high standard of maintenance at the burial ground was commended.;
- an update was sought on ongoing discussions regarding access arrangements and maintenance at Kinlochewe Burial Ground. In this regard, it was advised that the matter would be checked with the local team and an update provided outwith the meeting; and
- information was sought on progress with proposals to improve accessible access at Clachan Church. It was advised that discussions had taken place with representatives of the Trust and that a further update would be provided.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the current capacities and progress of burial ground extensions in the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh area;
- NOTED** the challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development;
- AGREED** that an update would be provided outwith the meeting regarding access arrangements and maintenance at Kinlochewe Burial Ground; and
- AGREED** that a further update would be provided regarding proposals to improve accessible access at Clachan Church.

9. Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications Measadh Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/16/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, clarification was sought on the options that would be considered as part of the feasibility study for the provision of public toilets at Achnasheen, including the potential use or sale of land associated with the former facility. Information was also sought on whether the availability of land for a replacement facility would be examined as part of the feasibility study.

The Committee **AGREED** that funding be awarded from the Community Regeneration Fund as follows:

- Plockton Village Hall – £21,480.00
- Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust – £85,381.10
- The Highland Council – £20,000.00

10. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Budget Buidseat fo Ughdarras Uàird Rois an Iar, Shrath Pheofhair agus Loch Aillse

The Committee **NOTED** that the following Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Discretionary Fund applications have been approved from 1 April to 30 June 2026.

- Kyle Public Hall - A Fresh Face Remedial work to repair and refresh external walls - £1,000.00
- Strathpeffer Residents' Association - Strathpeffer Community Park - Insurance shortfall - £1,500.00
- Shieldaig Community Association SCIO - Annual Power sweep to maintain MUGA for the school, nursery, and community use - £840.00
- Coigach Community Trust - Signage and car bay markings for new EV Charging Points - £269.55
- Dornie and District Community Hall - Energy Improvements - £1,000.00
- Stromeferry & Achmore Community Council - New noticeboards for Stromeferry and Achmore villages - £381.94
- Gairloch Primary School Parent Council - Gairloch Nursery Play Gym Equipment - £499.29
- Kinlochshiel Shinty & Community Sports Club Limited – “Bring on The Girls” Purchase of Materials/Equipment for women’s shinty team - £1,000.00
- Welcome Ullapool - Ullapool Hill Paths Map Signs - £1,000.00
- Peffery Way Association - Installing an outdoor bike repair station - £1,275.00
- Gairloch Museum - "A walk through time" A creation of a 4.5 km outdoor geological Timeline - £1,000.00

11. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 27 April 2026 which were approved by the Council on 14 May 2026.

The meeting ended at 12:50 pm