# The Highland Council

**Minutes of Meeting** of the **Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee** (**Comataidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Ratharsair**) held remotely on **Monday, 31 August 2026 at 9.30 am.**

**Present:**

Mr J Finlayson
Ms C Gillies
Mr D Millar
Mr R Stewart

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive Corporate
Mr M Bailey, Strategic Lead Commercialisation, Corporate
Mr G Smith, Service Lead, Infrastructure, Place Service
Mr A Bone, Acting Roads Operations Manager, Place Service
Mr S Dalgarno, Strategic Lead, Asset & Property Management, Place Service
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Community Regeneration Fund, Place Service
Ms M Maguire, Principal Planner, Place Service
Mr G Somers, Solicitor, Corporate Service
Mr J Maclean, Bereavement Services Project Manager, Place Service
Ms R Robertson, Project Co-ordinator, Place Service
Mr S MacPhee, Housing Maintenance Officer, Place Service
Ms S Fraser, Programme Manager, Place Service
Mr I Robertson, Principal Technical Officer, Place Service
Mr C Holmes, Property Manager, Asset Management, Place Service
Ms A Smith, Business Development Lead, Corporate Service
Mr J MacLean, Business Development Lead (The Storr), Corporate Service
Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Officer (West & Mid Highland)
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate Service

**Also in attendance:**

Station Commander, S Fraser, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (item 4 only)

**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

Item 5 – Ms C Gillies (Transparency Statement)
Item 6- Mr J Finlayson (Transparency Statement)
All Items – Mr D Millar declared a Transparency Statement for all items on the agenda as he had two family members who worked for the Council.

**3. Recess Powers**
**Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee NOTED that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 25 June 2026 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee.

**4. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Committee Performance Report**
**Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Seirbheis Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There was circulated Report No SR/17/26 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

Following commentary on the report by the Station Commander, it was advised that Station availability across the area was good and when recruiting there was a focus on ensuring there was cover during the day. Additional options were looked at to improve recruitment such as liaising with Partner agencies to see if there was any interest in joining the Service. There was increased establishment at Broadford and Dunvegan Stations and currently there was focus on recruitment to Portree and Raasay Stations. In particular there was a focus on upskilling staff at the Raasay station. Any Member suggestions to improve recruitment would be welcomed. In this respect, an issue was highlighted that to join the service as a retained firefighter you required to be aged 18 or over, whereas you could join the armed forces at 16 years old. Lowering the age could help recruitment particularly in rural areas. An undertaking was given to find out whether the Service was considering lowering the age for recruitment to the Service. It was advised that fire skills training was offered for young adults.

Continuing, works on the new Uig Fire Station had now been completed and the building had been handed over to the Service by the contractor. Final preparations were being made so that the station should be operational this week. The facilities at the station were fantastic and should future proof the area for a long time. Members were invited to visit the station to see the new facility.

In relation to progress with a new Portree Station, currently there was no further information available on this. As soon as any information became available Members would be informed.

In relation to road traffic collisions, it would always be considered what could be done to lower the risk of collisions happening. The Service did undertake initiatives such as with young drivers to try and improve the message to drive safety.

In relation to wildfires, there had been a low number of incidents recorded in this area and this was down to partnership working and crews working with landowners and prevention work. The Service was looking to increase the community asset register to provide additional capacity to tackle wildfires.

The Committee:-

i NOTED the Area Performance Report; and

ii NOTED that information would be provided to Members as to what consideration had been given to lowering the age of recruitment to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

**5. Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update**
**Sgìre Smachd Màil Gheàrr-ùine – Cunntas às Ùr às Dèidh Co-chomhairleachaidh**

**Transparency Statement - Ms C Gillies declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as she was a member of the Scottish Crofters Federation who were one of the respondents to the consultation. However, having applied the objective test she did not consider that she had an interest to declare.**

There was circulated Report No. SR/18/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place.

Following commentary on the report by the Principal Planner, a view was expressed that the recommendation should not be supported. Tourism was the backbone of the economy in this area and the local jobs that tourism supported. It was concerning that with a proposed Visitor Levy, Short Term Let licensing and the proposed Short Term Let Control Area (STLCA) there was a trend of more and more regulation coming in, which could make it harder to operate a tourism business. There had only been 73 resident responses and no Community Councils had responded to the consultation and there was not a clear mandate one way or the other to the proposal for a STLCA, considering it was a major planning regime change. Further it was known that Trade bodies were considering a judicial review of the proposal should it be implemented. Therefore, an amendment was proposed that this proposal is not introduced and it be recommended to the E&I Committee that Skye and Raasay is excluded from the proposed Highland Rural STL Control Area.

In relation to the consultation responses, it was open to everyone to respond and the response rate to the wider consultation had received 608 responses which was a good return. Clarification was also provided on the retrospective aspect of a STLCA; the licensing regime for STLs; and the consultation process. Further, the area linguistics significance proposal to formally protect and support Gaelic was being looked at as the Skye area met the mandatory criteria given the proportion of Gaelic speakers in the area, evidence of significant housing pressure and evidence of significant concentration of STLs in the area.

In relation to whether STLCA could cause house prices to crash, there was no evidence this had happened in Badenoch & Strathspey or elsewhere in Scotland, particularly as it only introduced a requirement for planning permission for future changes of use and did not prohibit the letting of a property for a STL.

In relation to the suggestion for a STLCA being introduced on a trial period, any trial period would require to go through the full regulatory process and likewise to remove a STLCA would require to go through the same process. Any trial period should be long enough to determine any impact.

It was advised that the Skye and Raasay area had the highest number of house completions in the last 5 years that had been transferred into STLs which was more than triple the equivalent rate for the whole of Highland. Further, in relation

to family inheritance, while STL licenses were transferrable, planning permission went with the premises.

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

As an AMENDMENT, Mr R Stewart Moved this proposal is not introduced and it be recommended to the E&I Committee that Skye and Raasay is excluded from the proposed Highland Rural STL Control Area.

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 consultation feedback and the potential implications that a STL Control Area will have on communities within Skye and Raasay as set out in Appendix 2 and summarised in Sections 8, 9 and 10; and
ii. AGREED to recommend to E&I Committee that Skye and Raasay be included within the proposed Highland Rural STL Control Area, should any decision to submit a proposal for designation to Scottish Ministers be taken.

**6. Community Regeneration Fund – Funding Requests**
**Measadh Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-nuadhachadh Coimhearsnachd**

**Transparency Statement – Mr J Finlayson declared a transparency statement on this item as he was a Board Member of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Skye and Lochalsh. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.**

There was circulated Report No. SR/19/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which presented two funding requests 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 and Raasay CRF budget position for 2026/27. Members were supportive of the applications.

Following consideration, the Committee:-

i. NOTED the Community Regeneration Funds currently available in Isle of Skye and Raasay;
ii. AGREED to approve the request of up to £210,672 match funding to the Islands Programme 26/27 application – IP019 – Gaeltec Community Hub Phase 1, Dunvegan Community Trust, and the request of up to £100,000 match funding for works associated with the Tigh Na Sgire Portree Demonstrator Project; and
iii. AGREED the approved CRF grant award, subject to conditions outlined in 7.3 of the report, up to the value of the available area allocation.

**7. Winter Service Plan for 2026/27**
**Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2026/27**

There was circulated Report No. SR/20/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which detailed the 2026/27 Winter Service Plan for Isle of Skye and Raasay Area.

In relation to planning for the winter it was advised that all the lorries had been serviced and were ready for operational activities. There was additional staffing in the team this year which would provide additional capacity to clear footpaths, fill grit bins and provide relief for drivers of gritters so that these vehicles could be operational for longer. Therefore, there was confidence that the team were in a good position to deal with winter conditions.

There was a community resilience programme and communities could complete a form to apply for personal protective equipment and Grit/Salt bins.

The contractor for trunk roads should be responsible for winter maintenance of pavements alongside these roads and an undertaking was given to contact Bear Scotland for clarification on their winter maintenance policy, priorities and timescales. This information would be shared with Members.

The Committee APPROVED the Winter Service Plan for 2026/27.

**8. Area Roads Capital Programme Update**
**Cunntas às Ùr air Pròg ram Calpa Rathaidean na Sgìre**

There was circulated Report No. SR/21/26 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 2026/27 programme and works programmed for the remainder of the financial year.

In discussion, it was highlighted that the Roads team in delivering the capital programme had also been responsive to other works requested by communities which had been much appreciated. It was confirmed that the capital programme had largely been completed subject to a few schemes that were highlighted at the meeting. Work had already started on next year's Capital Programme and Members would be consulted on this.

Further, the white lining programme had commenced and would be carried out jointly with a sub contractor. A point was made that white lining in Portree required to be undertaken, particularly at the Primary School and this would be prioritised this week as well as Sconser Ferry terminal. In advance of the new link road in Portree opening, the appropriate white lining for the access roads and roundabouts should be completed to ensure drivers were aware of the rights of way. An update was also sought on the proposed new traffic orders in Portree.

It was noted that the surface dressing programme had been cancelled due to a procurement issue of an item of plant and machinery. However, the team were fully prepared for the programme to commence next year.

The Committee NOTED the update report.

**9. Housing Repairs and Capital Report**
**Aithisg Chàraidhean Taigheadais agus Calpa**

There was circulated Report No. SR/22/26 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 30 June 2026.

Members welcomed the report and it was good news in terms of emergency repairs and non emergency repairs response times which had seen a continued improvement compared to previous quarters. It was queried why the Council's target was so far off the Scottish Housing Network benchmark for emergency repairs. It was advised that as this data was Highland wide information on this was not available at the meeting.

It was queried how many homes in the Council's housing stock on Skye had damp and mould issues, how many of these cases were considered urgent as they were a risk to tenants health, and the average time for getting those repairs fixed. It was advised that damp and mould cases were always treated as high priorities and the process for dealing with this was highlighted.

In relation to Environmental Capital Projects, it was requested that Members be kept updated on the funding available and projects to be prioritised.

The Committee NOTED the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2026 – 30 June 2026.

**10. Broadford & Dunvegan Primary School Projects – Progress Update**
**Cunntas às Ùr air Sgoiltean Ùra – Dùn Bheagain agus an t-Àth-Leathann**

There was circulated Report No. SR/23/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update on progress with the Broadford and Dunvegan Primary School projects.

Members welcomed progress with these projects, which would be of great value to communities. An undertaking was given to provide Members with information on whether the Scottish Government had agreed to provide an extension for the funding of Broadford Primary School given that the School would not be in use until after the deadline for funding. Also, information would be provided as to whether the Broadford project had received an uplift in funding from Scottish Government.

In relation to these two major projects on Skye it was important to progress modern apprenticeship opportunities and that the contractor was engaging with communities to maximise wider community benefits.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i. NOTED the progress being made on the Broadford and Dunvegan Primary School projects;
ii. NOTED that Broadford Primary School is now under construction and remains programmed for completion in December 2027;

iii. NOTED that Dunvegan Primary School continues to make positive progress towards financial close in late 2026; and
iv. NOTED the continued management of programme, budget and project risks across both projects.

**11. Taigh na Sgire Redevelopment – Project – Progress Update**
**Cunntas às Ùr air Pròiseact Taisbeanaidh Taigh na Sgìre**

There was circulated Report No. SR/24/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update on the Taigh na Sgìre Redevelopment Project in Portree.

Following commentary on the report by the Strategic Lead, Asset & Property Management, a point was made regarding the gaelic name of the redevelopment, Taigh na Sgire. Historically Taigh was spelt Tigh which was the spelling that had been used before and this was well known in the community and the majority of Members were in favour of retaining the historical spelling.

It was requested that Members have the opportunity to visit the redevelopment to see progress that had been made and an undertaking was given to arrange this. It was hoped that some funding would be set aside to keep the area around the building clean and tidy.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i. NOTED the current progress of the Taigh na Sgìre Portree Demonstrator Project;
ii. NOTED the revised project completion date of late 2026;
iii. NOTED the current budget position and actions being taken to manage project costs;
iv. NOTED the community benefits being delivered through the construction contract;
v AGREED that the historical gaelic spelling of the redevelopment be retained – Tigh na Sgire.

**12. Portree Link Road – Progress Update**
**Cunntas as Ur air Caladh Phort Righ**

There was circulated Report No. SR/25/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place, which provided an update of progress on the construction of the Portree Link Road project.

It was noted that good progress was being made on the construction of the Portree link road with anticipated completion in early October, 2026. Clarification was sought on signage as traffic coming from the North should be directed onto the link road and away from the town centre. It was advised that traffic patterns would be monitored. Further, technology was changing and drivers were being led by their Sat Navs. It would be considered what other positive interventions could be made regarding signage in the coming months and also what additional explanatory signage could be used for parking.

Clarification was also sought on whether signage would be installed at the exit to Bayfield car park to encourage traffic to go left towards the link road. It was

suggested that brown signs be used for directions to popular tourists locations so as to bypass the google maps preference for going through the town centre.

Further, on the A87 trunk road coming into Portree, it was queried if there was an opportunity to extend the filter lane at the High School to allow easier movement of traffic towards the link road. It was advised that this could be raised with Transport Scotland and their contractor Bear Scotland at one of the regular liaison meetings. In this respect, more information was sought from the Member to see what positive intervention could be made to assist the flow of traffic in this area.

Reference was made to the existing accesses from housing along the route of the new road which should be marked to show right of way before the road was opened.

The Committee NOTED progress on construction of the scheme.

**13. Portree Harbour Repairs Update**
**Cunntas as Ur air Caladh Phort Rìgh**

There was circulated Report No. SR/26/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update on structural repairs to the Portree Harbour Infrastructure which are taking place in the harbour this year as part of the Capital Programme.

It was highlighted that communication had been key with local people in order to minimise disruption during the works on the harbour. Good progress was being made on the works and phase 2 works would take place over the winter period to minimise disruption with a target completion date of March 2027.

Clarification was sought on proposed traffic orders for the harbour area and the Community Council was keen that new railings at the harbour be installed. An undertaking was given to liaise with Traffic and Parking Services and the Roads team on these points. Clarification was sought on the exact start and end point of Quay Street and Douglas Row at the Harbour.

The Committee NOTED the content of the report.

**14. Bereavement Services – Project Updates**
**Cunntasan as Ur air Proiseact Seirbheisean Luchd-caoidh**

There was circulated Report No. SR/27/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Place which provided an update to Members on the work being undertaken on burial ground capacity and new and/or extended burial grounds in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area.

In discussion, it was hoped that a suitable site for Skeabost and Borve burial ground provision could be found soon and the ongoing work to achieve this was noted. Disappointment was expressed that snagging works had still not been completed by the contractor at Portree burial ground. An undertaking was given to ensure the contractor completed these works within the retention period of the contract and an update on progress on these works would be provided to Members.

The lack of maintenance on historic burial grounds was also highlighted and these concerns would be relayed to the Amenities team. Maintenance issues on paths at Broadford and Ashaig burial grounds would be looked at.

The Committee NOTED:-

i. the current capacities and progress of burial ground extensions in the Isle of Skye and Raasay area;
ii. the challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development; and
iii. an undertaking was given to ensure the contractor completed works at Portree burial ground within the retention period of the contract.

**15. Parking Income**
**Cunntas as Ur mu Ionmhas na Pairc Charaichean**

With the agreement of the Committee, this item was deferred until the next meeting so that further information could be included in the report to be presented to the Committee.

**16. Annual Report on Operational Activities at the Old Man of Storr**
**Aithisg Bhliadhnail air Gniomhachd Obrachail aig Bodach an Stoir**

There was circulated Report No. SR/29/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive Corporate.

Following a summary of the report by the Assistant Chief Executive Corporate, Members recognised that the Old Man of Storr site was a massive success story for the area and the Council and everyone involved were thanked for their tremendous efforts. The Storr centre was managing tourism at the site and creating jobs and income generated was reinvested at the site. The funding to build the centre received from a variety of sources was a great success story.

In relation to the future of the site, there were plans for an extension to the car park and a review of a single site future operating model and a proposal for a one cost centre was underway which could help to address future challenges and deliver solutions for the site. The review will consider the service delivery model, therefore related corporate policies such as car parking income are not part of this review. Given the success of the centre, it was felt that there may be a need for additional car parking enforcement staff at the site in future.

The importance of Access Officers engagement with tourists was highlighted and it was queried what scope there was for them to cover other areas. Staff were also thanked for the support they provided to the Mountain Rescue team. It was highlighted that Access Officers at the site through their engagement with tourists had reduced the number of visitors going off the designated path and thereby reducing maintenance costs. In terms of Access Officers covering other areas, this was not within the scope of the review of the future operating model for the centre.

There was a need to be mindful of not becoming a victim of our own success and having to fund other services on Skye on the back of income from the centre. Income generated at the site should be viewed as additional money rather than core funding.

It was queried what consideration could be given to expanding The Storr model to other visitor attractions on Skye. It was advised that opportunities at Neist Point were being explored and there were developments at Coral beach. Opportunities for further developments across Highland were also being explored.

Officers continued to look at what improvements could be made to the site such as with toilet provision. In terms of the car park extension, it would be assumed that an additional full time Parking Enforcement Officer would form part of this proposal.

The Committee:-

i NOTED the achievements delivered at the Old Man of Storr site during the second year of operation and support the continued development of this important initiative for the Skye and Raasay Area.
ii. NOTED the continued development of the site as a sustainable visitor destination supporting local economic, environmental and community benefits.
iii. NOTED that regular update reports will continue to be taken to the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee; and
iv. NOTED that review of a single site future operating model is underway.

**17. 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.

Kyleakin Local History Society - Setting up New Society Website - £1,500

**18. 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 June, 2026 the terms of which were approved at the Highland Council meeting held on 25 June, 2026.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.