



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in Council Offices,
Stornoway on Wednesday 7 February 2024 at
2.00pm.

PRESENT

Mr Paul Steele (Leader)	Mr Norman Misty Macdonald
Mr Duncan MacInnes MBE (Depute Leader)	Mr Kenneth Macleod
Mr Kenneth John Maclean	Mr Donald F Crichton
Mr Iain M Macleod	Dr Frances Murray
Mr Uisdean Robertson	Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr Paul Finnegan	
Mr Robert Mackenzie	

APOLOGIES

Mr Grant Fulton	Ms Susan Thomson
Mr Mustapha Hocine	Mr John A Maciver

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Iain A MacNeil	Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Angus Morrison	Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Ranald Fraser	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Donald Macsween	Mr George Murray
Mr Iain M Macaulay	Mr Finlay M Stewart

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Mr Derek Mackay
Mr Tim Langley	Mr Dan Macphail
Mr Donald A Macleod	Ms Anna Hulme
Mr Norman Macdonald	Mrs Fiona Knappe
Mrs Jennifer Macleod	Mrs Marina Macaulay
Mr Sandy Gomez	

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer, led by Mr Finlay M Stewart.

The Chairman ruled items 5, 7 and 13 as urgent in order to allow the matters to be considered prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023	1	The Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 was approved .
Declaration of Interest	2	There were no declarations of interest.
Minute of Meeting of Budget and Strategy Board of 16 January 2024	3	The Minute of Meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board of 16 January 2024 was approved .
Minute of Meeting of Community	4	The Minute of Meeting of the Community Safety Board of 31 January 2024 was noted and the recommendations at item 3 were recommended for approval .

Safety Board of 31
January 2024

Minute of Meeting of Human Resources Sub-Committee of 5 February 2024

5

The Minute of Meeting of Human Resources Sub-Committee of 5 February 2024 was **noted**.

Minute of Meeting of Comataidh na Gàidhlig of 6 February 2024

6

The Minute of Meeting of Comataidh na Gàidhlig of 6 February 2024 was **noted and the recommendations at items 5, 6 and 7 were recommended for approval**.

CORPORATE MATTERS

Cyber Incident Update

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With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which provided an update on progress on recovery from the cyber attack on the Comhairle's Information Technology (IT) systems.

It was stated in the Report that significant progress had been made in restoring internal and external communications, with internet connectivity now fully restored at all sites across the Comhairle estate and a new telephone system was being rolled out. It was further stated that the Comhairle continued to work with partners and had sought expert advice on recovery and, while significant progress had been made, the service recovery process would be in place for months and would require an element of temporary redistribution of tasks and duties which may delay or postpone certain areas of work and the incurring of additional costs once the details of the recovery processes for each Service became clear.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle notes the update on the process of recovery from the cyber attack on the Comhairle's systems on 7 November 2023, as set out in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.5 of the Report.

Council Tax on Second Homes: Policy Revision

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With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 14 June 2023 the Chief Financial Officer submitted a Report which sought approval for a change to the Council Tax on Empty Homes and Second Homes Policy, as it applied to second homes. It was stated in the Report that, in 2013, Councils in Scotland had been given powers to levy additional Council Tax on empty homes in certain circumstances. At this time, Councils had also been permitted to charge between 50% and 90% on Second Homes and the Comhairle had introduced a 90% charge (10% discount). In 2018, the regulations were amended to allow councils to charge between 50% and 100% on second homes and the Comhairle had implemented a 100% charge on second homes from 1 April 2018, removing the discount previously applied. During 2023, the Scottish Government issued a consultation regarding the charges levied on Empty and Second Homes, which resulted in Councils being allowed to charge up to 200% on Second Homes from 1 April 2024. It was stated in the Report that the introduction of a 200% charge would generate around £800k of additional income for the Comhairle, to be used for ongoing service provision.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) agree to amend the current policy to charge 200% on second homes; and**
- (2) agree that second home properties on the market for sale or long term let, continue on the pre-April 2024 100% charge for a period not exceeding six months from the date that the property is advertised.**

STRATEGY

Education
Provision:
Stornoway Primary
Sports
Development
Update

9

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 September 2021s the Head of Children's Services submitted a Report which provided a progress update in relation to the proposed sports facility at Stornoway Primary School and to clarify the current financial position of the project. It was indicated in the Report that, since approval of funding, the project had progressed through the tendering of a supplier for the tensile fabric structure (TFS) element of the building and the commissioning of professional construction services that included a Quantity surveyor, Building Services Engineer and Structural Engineer. The estimated cost of the planned building had been confirmed to be £3.4M, an increase of £1.45 M on the agreed budget and work had been undertaken to amend the design and scale of the building to bring the development within range of the agreed budget. The Report stated that the revised design had reduced the overall building size and had been costed using the same modelling, at £2.25M, which included a contingency element that had been required to be identified to cover any increases in costs or unforeseeable issues during the construction.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to:

- (1) proceed with the proposed amendments to the building size and design set out in the report in the interests of bringing the project development costs to within the range of the £2M budget; and**
- (2) proceed with the project, as costed at £2.25M, if no further construction savings could be identified, and strictly subject to the successful application for external funding via the Free School Meal Expansion Programme, should the funding bid be unsuccessful, the matter will return to the next committee series for the consideration of members as to how to proceed.**

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information in terms of Paragraph 5 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, namely, information relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of any particular child or relating to the supervision or residence of any particular child in accordance with a supervision requirement made in respect of that child under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

FINANCE AND POLICY

Residential
Placements for
Children and Young
People

10*

With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Head of Children's Services/Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report which provided details of the outturn position in relation to specialist residential placements for children and young people for the financial year 2023/24 and of the budgetary position. Appendix 1 to the Report highlighted the projected under and overspend figures for 2023/24.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle note the projected financial position for specialist residential provision for 2023/24.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information in terms of Paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, namely, any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Comhairle in the course of negotiations

for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

Spaceport 1 Project Update	11*	With reference to item 22 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 June 2021 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which provided an update on progress with the Spaceport 1 Project and sought agreement as the mechanism by which the operator of Spaceport 1 would be appointed and the extent of the Comhairle's involvement in the construction element of the project. The Report stated that the Spaceport 1 Project Board had met on 29 January 2024 and had agreed that Option 2 had been the preferred option and progressing these workstreams would be key to demonstrating progress and to attracting investment from the public and private sectors.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the update on progress with the Spaceport 1 Project; and**
- (2) agree the Spaceport 1 Project Board's recommendation that Option 2 is the preferred way forward in terms of the appointment of the spaceport operator and delivery of the construction phase of the project.**

RELATED MATTERS

Heat in Buildings Bill Consultation	12	The Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought approval for the response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on a Heat in Buildings Bill. The Report stated that the proposals included making new laws around the heating systems that could be used in buildings and the introduction of a new law requiring homeowners and private landlords to meet a minimum energy efficiency standard was also proposed. A response to the consultation had been drafted and was appended to the Report.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the response to the Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Bill Consultation.

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places	13	The Chief Executive submitted a Report which detailed the outcome of the Review of Polling Places and Polling Districts and sought approval of the list of polling districts and polling places. The Report stated that the Elections Act 2022 had introduced new requirements for Voter ID and facilities to check these had been considered as part of the review.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030	14	With reference to item 25 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought approval for the Comhairle's British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-2030. The Comhairle's first BSL Plan had been approved on 2 October 2018 and the respective BSL Progress Report 2018-2024 was appended to the Report. The Comhairle approved the draft BSL Plan 2024-2030 on 29 November 2023.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the BSL Progress Report 2018-2024 at Appendix 1 to the Report;**
- (2) note the requirements of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 for public bodies in Scotland to publish BSL plans every six years, the second of which is to be published by April 2024; and**
- (3) approve the draft BSL Plan 2024-2030, at Appendix 2 to the Report.**

Reports Outstanding	15	There were no reports outstanding arising from decisions of the Committee.
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