



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Stornoway on Thursday 27
November 2024 at 2.00pm

PRESENT

Mr Paul Steele (Chair)
Mr Duncan MacInnes MBE (Vice-Chair)
Mr Kenneth J Maclean
Mr Iain M Macleod
Ms Susan Thomson
Mr Uisdean Robertson
Mr Kenneth M Macleod

Mr Robert Mackenzie
Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr Kenneth Macleod
Mr Donald F Crichton
Dr Frances Murray
Mr Norrie Macdonald

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Iain A MacNeil
Mr Mustapha Hocine
Mr Angus Morrison
Mr Ranald Fraser
Mr Donald Macsween
Mr Calum Maclean

Mr Malcolm K Macdonald
Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Finlay M Stewart

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr
Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr John Cunningham
Mrs Emma Macsween
Mr Tim Langley
Mr Donald Macleod
Ms Rebecca Macleod
Mrs Anne Murray
Mrs Linda Cunningham
Mr Sandy Gomez

Mrs Fiona Macinnes-Begg
Ms Norma Skinner
Ms Anna Hulme
Mrs Fiona Knape
Mr Colin G Morrison
Mr James Mackinnon
Mr Dan Macphail
Mr Derek Mackay
Mrs Marina Macaulay

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer, led by Mr Calum Maclean.

The Chairman ruled items 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15 and the appendix to item 11 as urgent to allow the matters to be considered prior to the next meeting of the Comhairle.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024 1

The Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024 was **approved**.

Declaration of Interest 2

Mr Donald Crichton declared an interest in item 21 as a Member of Stornoway Trust and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

Mr Calum Maclean declared an interest in item 21 as a Member of Stornoway Trust.

Minute of Meeting of the Outer Hebrides Community 3

The Minute of Meeting of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership of 14 March 2024 was **noted**.

Planning
Partnership of 14
March 2024

Minute of Meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board of 24 October 2024 4 The Minute of Meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board of 24 October 2024 was **noted**.

Minute of Meeting of Comataidh na Gàidhlig of 26 November 2024 5 The Minute of Meeting of Comataidh na Gàidhlig of 26 November 2024 was **noted**.

Minute of Meeting of Local Government Employee Joint Consultative Committee of 12 November 2024 6 The Minute of Meeting of the Local Government Employee Joint Consultative Committee of 12 November 2024 was **noted and items 4 and 6(2) were recommended for approval**.

Minute of Meeting of Human Resources Sub-Committee of 21 November 2024 7 The Minute of Meeting of the Human Resources Sub-Committee of 21 November 2024 was **noted**.

CORPORATE MATTERS

Corporate Policy and Outcome Delivery Report 8 With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer Partnership Services and Community Care submitted Reports which detailed progress on corporate policy matters and set out the half year progress report on the 2024/25 Strategic Priorities for the Chief Executive’s Service and the Health and Social Care Directorate. Progress on the Outcome Delivery Plans were detailed in the Reports.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the half year progress of the 2024/25 Outcome Delivery Plans for the Chief Executive’s Service and the Health and Social Care Directorate.

Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2030 9 The Chief Executive submitted a Report which presented the draft Organisational Development Strategy for 2024-2030 for approval. The vision of the new Strategy is to create a healthy and sustainable workplace which will promote the achievement of corporate goals and personal development. The Strategy aimed to develop a dynamic working environment over the next six years to 2030 through three integrated frameworks to Work Well, Work Smart and Work Sustainably.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the draft Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2030.

National Care Service Update 10 The Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Partnership Services and Community Care, submitted a Report which provided an update to the Comhairle on the status of the National Care Service (NCS) Bill and associated developments. It was stated in the Report that, on 14 November 2024, the Minister for Social Care, Wellbeing and Sport announced a pause of the Stage 2 process of the National Care Service Bill to allow reflection of the views shared. It was further stated that, prior to this announcement, key stakeholders had withdrawn engagement Bill and CoSLA had withdrawn shared accountability for the

Bill based on its assessment of a lack of progress in addressing the concerns and risk identified by Local Government. A summary of the CoSLA position was provided at Appendix 2 to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Committee note the Report.

Communities Engagement with Comhairle Leadership Team	11	The Chief Executive submitted a Report which provided an outline of engagement between communities and the leadership of the Comhairle. The Report provided details of Ward visits which had been undertaken to encourage dialogue around budget priorities and to hear directly from communities. The findings of the visits were detailed in the Appendix to the Report.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

FINANCE

Budget Strategy 2025/26	12	With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Financial Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on the anticipated financial position in respect of the 2025/26 budget and sought approval of the next phases of budget consultation and preparation.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) notes the projected financial position, and measures to be taken in order to set a balanced budget by 31 March 2025, as set out in paragraphs 9.1 to 9.6 of the Report;**
- (2) notes that, following publication of the Scottish Budget and the Local Government Settlement in December 2024, the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer will submit a Report to a meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board to be held in December 2024 or early January 2025 to determine the content of options for public engagement and consultation on Budget Strategy taking account of the views of elected members expressed at the Budget and Strategy Seminar on 14 November 2024; and**
- (3) delegates authority to the Budget and Strategy Board to undertake the actions set out in recommendation (2) above.**

Second Quarter Capital Monitoring Report 2024/25	13	With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Financial Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on the progress of the 2023-28 Capital Programme as at 30 September 2024. The Report stated that projects totalling £28.2m had been carried forward from the 2018-23 Capital Programme and the delivery of these projects was ongoing. The Report stated that, at the time of writing, £4.0m of expenditure had been incurred in 2024-25 and the full breakdown was provided in the Appendix to the Report.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the capital expenditure at 30 September 2024; and**
- (2) agree that £250k of the £1m additional capital funding available in the current year should be used to undertake necessary works at Seaforth House to allow the Housing with Extra Care Facility to be used for Blàr Buidhe residents.**

Half Year Treasury Report 2024/25	14	With reference to item 15 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Financial Officer which provided a summary Report of the Treasury Management activity during the first six months of 2024/25 with an update on the wider economy, the Comhairle's debt portfolio, details of long term borrowing taken in the financial year up
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to 30 September 2024, any debt rescheduling that has taken place up to 30 September 2024, the investment position, the treasury prudential indicators and other significant factors in relation to the Loans Fund operation which would impact on Treasury operations throughout the remainder of 2024/25.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

Annual Treasury 15
Management
Report 2023/24

With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 20 September 2023 the Chief Financial Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on Treasury Management activity for 2023/24, which covered the following:

- The Comhairle’s debt and investment portfolio positions at the beginning and end of the year;
- The prevailing economic background during the year;
- The strategy for borrowing and other financing options for the year and its outturn;
- Debt restructuring activity;
- The annual investment strategy and its outturn; and
- Compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

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 as defined in Paragraph 5 of Schedule 7A of 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 of residence of any particular child in accordance with a supervision requirement made in respect of that child under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 would be disclosed.

Residential 16*
Placements for
Children and Young
People

With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024 the Head of Children’s Services/Chief Social Work Officer submitted a Report which detailed the provision in relation to Specialist Mainland Placements for children and young people and of the budgetary implications arising from these placements.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle note the Report

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

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 Paragraphs 6, 8 & 9 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Comhairle), the amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Comhairle under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services and 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.

Barra and Vatersay 17*
Community
Campus – Update

With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which provided an update on the progress of the Barra and Vatersay Community Campus (BVCC) Project. It was stated in the Report that a fee quotation for pre-construction services was under review and the primary scope of this work was to undertake Stage 1 design services, including site options appraisal work and submission of planning permission in principle in relation to croft land.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle note the Report.

STRATEGY

Risk Management Policy and Strategy 18 The Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought approval of the Risk Management Policy and Strategy, as revised and included at Appendix 1 to the Report. The Report stated that the areas of focus over the next strategy period would be improving risk identification during the Service Business Planning period and continuing to build back the suite of risk guidance documents and templates which were lost during the cyber-attack.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle approve the Risk Management Policy and Strategy at Appendix 1 to the Report.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Corporate Workforce Plan: Annual Report 19 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 20 September 2023 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which provided a progress update on the Corporate Workforce Plan approved by the Comhairle in September 2023. The Action Plan, appended to the Report, set out areas where progress had been identified as being strategically important and detailed progress in the first year of the Corporate Workforce Plan.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle approve the Risk Management Policy and Strategy at Appendix 1 to the Report.

RELATED MATTERS

Outer Hebrides Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023-2024 20 With reference to item 21 of the Minute of Meeting 29 November 2023 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought approval of the Outer Hebrides Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023-24 and the priority actions for 2024-25. The Report stated that the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 required that Local Child Poverty Action Reports were prepared and published jointly by local authorities and health boards and approval would be sought through NHS Western Isles and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership ahead of final publication.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the Outer Hebrides Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023-24 and Priority Action Plan.

Affordable Energy Options 21 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Planning Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on ongoing work to secure affordable energy for island homes and businesses. The Report stated that the Comhairle continued to work with partners to pursue a range of measures which could mitigate the impact of high fuel prices and reduce the level of fuel poverty in the islands.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the ongoing work which seeks to lower the price of energy for island homes and businesses, thereby reducing current levels of Fuel Poverty; and**
- (2) approve the addition of Muiteabhal Trust (Uisenis Wind Farm) to the Comhairle/Stornoway Trust Shared Ownership Joint Venture.**

Climate Change Strategy - Progress Update 22 With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 September 2022 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which provided an update on progress achieved in delivery of the Comhairle’s Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027, which provides strategic

direction on climate change mitigation and adaptation within the Comhairle. The Strategic Priorities were:

- A carbon neutral Comhairle;
- Net zero islands; and
- Climate resilient islands.

Each priority had strategic outcomes under it, detailing actions the Comhairle would take to work towards achieving these outcomes set out in the Strategy Action Plan. The Climate Change Strategy Progress Report 2024, appended to the Report, provided an update on progress achieved to date in delivering against each of the actions in the Strategy and the KPI results for the three years 2021/22 to 2023/24 were also provided in the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle notes the Climate Change Strategy Progress Report 2024.

Public Bodies
Climate Change
Duties Compliance
Reporting 23

With reference to item 23 of the Minute of Meeting of 29 November 2023 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought approval to submit the completed Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Compliance Reporting Template 2024 to the Scottish Government. The Report stated that the completed Compliance Reporting Template, appended to the Report, sought to provide an overview of the Comhairle’s progress on Climate Change in 2023 and the return covered Governance, Emissions and Projects, Climate Change Adaptation, Procurement and Wider Influence across the Comhairle area. It was further stated in the Report that the Comhairle had a number of climate change adaptation measures in place to assess, manage and review climate risk and the Comhairle also continued to use its wider influence on area-wide emission through working with a range of partners to support, enable and deliver projects with a positive climate impact, in areas including renewables, active transport and the roll out of EV charging infrastructure.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approves the submission of the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Compliance Reporting Template 2024.

Reports
Outstanding:
Progress 24

With reference to item 22 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024 the Chief Executive submitted a Report which outlined the Reports Outstanding arising from decisions of the Committee.

It was agreed to note the Report.