

**The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness City Arts Working Group** held in the First Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness, on Thursday 13 June 2013 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr K Gowans (Chair)
Mr I Brown
Mr T Prag

Officials in attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager
Mr C Howell, Project Design Unit Manager, TEC Services
Mrs T Bangor-Jones, Administrative Assistant

Also in attendance:

Mrs C Shankland, Exhibitions Officer, Highlife Highland
Mr S Blair, Project Manager, Creative Scotland

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology was intimated on behalf of Mrs B McAllister, Mr G Ross and Mr G Philips.

2. Exclusion of the Public

The group **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 Part 1 of schedule 7A of the Act.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr K Gowans – Item 5 (non-financial)

4. Flood Alleviation Scheme – Project Progress to Date

The Project Design Unit Manager gave a full and interesting presentation which updated Members the progress of the Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) and how this tied in with the proposed City Art projects. In particular the Project Design Unit Manager emphasised the following:-

- Phase 1 tenders had now been received and that all seven tenders were competitive;

- that there were issues with the preferred tender but it was hoped that with collaborative working the concerns would be dealt with to all a planned start dated of end of July 2013;
- the importance of dovetailing the streetscape works and the civils to ensure a positive outcome for what would be a challenging project;
- that any projected delay with the Kessock Bridge upgrade work would have little or no effect on the civils project; and
- it was acknowledged that that the proposed hotel project in Glebe Street may be a concern but discussions were taking place.

The Chair thanked the Project Design Unit Manager for the programme update.

During discussion Members expressed concern that any delays with the public art project programme SHIFT//SEOL could negatively impact the ability to dovetail both projects.

Thereafter, Members **NOTED** the current position.

5. **SHIFT//SEOL Project Management and Action Plan**

Declarations of Interest

Mr K Gowans declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ICArts/07/13 by the Inverness City Manager updating Members on the operational management arrangements which would allow the project programme to progress pending the appointment of a Project Manager. Services were currently being supplied by the Acting Project Manager with assistance from the Exhibitions Officer.

The Inverness City Manager summarised the interim arrangements for officer support from HighLife Highland, which was appended to the report. It was clarified that after the appointment of a Project Manager, assistance from Highlife Highland would be retained on a flexible basis in order to provide advice to the Working Group (ICArts). Members were also advised that all stages of the procurement process the strict governance protocol was being adhered to.

As the value of it exceeds 50K a full tender process would be required. The tender document would be brought to the attention of freelance curators/arts administrators/public art agencies thought to be suitable.

In response to questions, it was clarified that the 10 to 12 week recruitment process would be given the appropriate amount of time to ensure no further slippage in the project schedule. It was further explained that wherever

possible, work that could be undertaken prior to the arrival in post of the Project Manager, would be done.

Members expressed concern about delays and the need to expedite the recruitment of the new Project Manager whilst ensuring that governance was being adhered to.

Thereafter, Members **NOTED** the report.

Item 6 and 7 were taken together.

**6. SHIFT//SEOL Artists Procurement Process
SHIFT//SEOL Projects Briefs – Rest Places and The Trail**

There had been tabled Report No ICArts/08/13 by the Inverness City Manager updating on the progress of organising support from Highlife Highland with regard to the appointment of a specialist public art Project Manager as well as the commissioning of public arts projects within the SHIFT//SEOL programme until such time that the Project Manager had been appointed.

During a summary of the report it was explained that the draft River Connections brief had been revised and was with the Procurement Unit for review.

It was confirmed that the three artists' briefs (River Connections, The Trail and Rest Areas) which were currently being redrafted to take account of ICArts feedback on the originals and were almost complete. The River Connections brief would allow the chosen artist scope to develop a proposal for one work or a series of works relating to the significance of the river to Inverness, historically, culturally and ecologically. The second and third briefs are more specific in that they relate to a rest place/seating area and a trail down the river. The three briefs would be linked and first brief would set the ground for remainder so that there would be an overall co-ordination of the work. An open call (for the River Connections brief) for artists would be an attractive proposition, but given the nature of the commission and the amount of time available to research all aspects of the development and delivery, to minimise risk it would seem more appropriate to invite experienced artists who are capable of undertaking a project of this complexity to submit proposals. A shortlist has been drawn up which includes Highland and non-Highland artists.

In response to questions the Project Manager, Creative Scotland confirmed that as it seemed unlikely that a Stage 2 application would be progressed in 2013 that Members should note that a Stage 2 application could be received as later as February 2014. It was also explained that the artists brief should not be prescriptive it is for the artist to provide the creative input/design. To aid discussion the Project Manager, Creative Scotland provided Members with as brief outline of the timeline involved in the Creative Scotland decision making process.

During discussions Members reiterated the need for project designs to be considered by the ICArts Working Group and that the chosen design must be inclusive and accessible to all. It was hoped that the designs would make full use of the River Ness. With regard to the progress of the briefs, Members expressed concern at the time it was taking to finalise them.

Thereafter the Working Group **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** to develop a non-prescriptive brief, style.

7. Project Management (Ramada Commission)

The Inverness City Manager confirmed that he had spoken with The Accor Group with regard to the resurrection of the joint project which had been taken forward by the previous owners.

The Inverness City Manager confirmed that investigations had begun with regard to establishing options for recovering the sums expended around through the Creative Scotland grant.

Members expressed concerns that the façade of the hotel was not architecturally interesting and added little to the Inverness townscape. Attention was drawn to the initial contact having been made at a local level and perhaps it would be beneficial to explore if contact could be made at a higher corporate level within the Accor Group. To add value it was suggested that an approaches could come from the Leader of the Council.

Members conveyed their hope that the project could be resurrected as a positive outcome could only enhance the streetscape of Inverness.

Thereafter, the Working Group **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that the Inverness City Manager and the City Leader liaise to find the best possible route to ensure contact at the highest level within the Accor Group.

8. Media Relations

The Public Relations Manager was unable to attend due to business commitments and The Working Group decided that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

9. Financial Monitoring

There had been tabled Report ICArts/09/13 by the Inverness City Manager which set out revenue monitoring position as at 31 May 2013 together with the actual spend to date.

Following a summary of the report it was explained that the revenue monitoring statement did not show any expenditure against the project programme. It was explained that the allocated budget for 2013/14 would be £125k and that £60k had been released by the City of Inverness Area Committee for the River Connections project. It was confirmed that £30,750

had also been allocated for revenue running costs and that no invoices had been received within reporting period.

Thereafter, the Working Group **NOTED** the report.

10. Minutes

There had been circulated for noting the minutes of the Working Group held on Thursday 2 May 2013.

The Working Group **NOTED** the Minutes.

11. Date of next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next scheduled meeting was set for Wednesday 4 September 2013 from 10am to 12noon.