

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 21 October 2013

Agenda Item	7
Report No	CIA/55/13

Community Planning and Partnership Working in Inverness

Report by the Corporate Manager

Summary

This report summarises the work of the Inverness Partnership and asks Members to consider its work in light of the current review of community planning arrangements taking place in Highland.

1. Background

- 1.1 Members will be aware, from the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) report presented to Highland Council on 27 June 2013, that a review of community planning arrangements in Highland is currently taking place. The review proposes an approach that meets the public service reform agenda; builds on current arrangements; and links to each partner's governance and accountability arrangements. Progress on this will be reported to the Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board (the Board) later this year.
- 1.2 The Board has proposed a strategic framework that will ensure strength of leadership and accountability, whilst embedding the ability of partners to both challenge and support to ensure best practice and measurable progress.
- 1.3 In line with the strategic framework, further work is being carried out by each strategic lead partner on the Board to map the local community planning arrangements at the operational level. This will include consideration of what is needed to deliver results and also the ability of existing groups to deliver and, if appropriate, be integrated into local community planning arrangements.

2. Partnership Working in Inverness

2.1 The Inverness Partnership

- 2.1.1 The City of Inverness Area Committee has delegated power from the Council to oversee partnership working for the City and Area. The Partnership is chaired by the City Leader, with secretariat support from the Inverness City Manager.
- 2.1.2 **Appendix A** lists the sub-groups which have been successfully established along with partner details.

2.2 Review of Partnership priorities

2.2.1 Since 2008, these have been refined and the strategic themes of the Inverness Partnership now include:

- Welcoming City; and
- Active City.

2.2.2 **Appendix B** contains details of the strategy being followed, which allows for the workgroups to agree actions based on strategic aims.

3. Synergies between Partnerships

3.1 This report has addressed partnership working which:

- Supports employment and employability through promoting the Highlands as a place to invest; and
- Is helping the City of Inverness achieve the objective of becoming Carbon-Free.

4. Future Developments

4.1 The advent of the UHI Campus network across the Highlands will allow for opportunities to develop further links between Inverness College UHI and the Inverness Partnership. This will involve joint objectives being set and the interweaving of the different disciplines promoted by Inverness College and the partners. The first focus of this developing relationship is to help make the City of Inverness and Area a welcoming place for students. Particular focus is being given to the City Centre and links to the regeneration of empty shops, first floor premises and the Academy Street area in general.

4.2 UHI will also act as a catalyst for focusing on objectives that underpin the growth of the Highland economy through supporting employment and employability.

5. Inverness City Vision and Development Briefs

5.1 The work of the Inverness Partnership also takes close note of the key provisions of the City Vision and the on-going work being undertaken to produce Development Planning Briefs for the City. Both the City Vision and the first Brief completed for the City Centre, emphasise the need to make best use of space and improve connectivity between the areas for pedestrians and cyclists in particular. Noting the opportunity provided by Inverness Campus UHI, promoting the development of Inverness as a Carbon Free City will be a key priority.

6. Implications

- 6.1 There are no known resource, legal, equalities, climate change or carbon clever implications as a result of this report.

Recommendation

Members are invited to:-

- i. note the achievements of the Inverness Partnership and the key role that partnership working plays in community planning in Inverness; and
- ii. agree to recommend to the Inverness Partnership that partnership priorities are kept under review to reflect the emerging themes of the Highland Public Services Partnership

Designation: Corporate Manager

Date: 22 September 2013

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Appendix A Sub-groups which have been successfully established and partner details

- Inverness Community Safety Partnership
- The Inverness Marketing Workgroup, which has led to the proposal to create a new Tourism Sector Business Improvement District for Inverness and Area.
- Links with the Council's Employability Workgroup. This already underpins much of the work of the Partnership and will be of increasing significance noting the refocused priorities detailed below.

The Inverness Partnership remains focussed on:

- Identifying and quantifying needs within communities.
- Developing the contribution of the City of Inverness and Area to the SOA.
- Developing initiatives, which improve economic vibrancy and workforce employability along with support for employers to improve employment opportunities.

The principal partners are:

- Highland Council
- NHS Highland
- Third Sector
- Inverness Chamber of Commerce
- Inverness Business Improvement District (BID)
- Inverness College - UHI
- Police Scotland
- Visit Scotland
- Destination Lochness/Tourism BID Steering Group
- Inverness College UHI
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Merkinch Partnership
- Inverness Community Council Forum
- Scottish Natural Heritage

Appendix B - Strategy Details

The strategy focuses on the following key SOA and Council Programme objectives:

- Supporting employment and employability;
- Promoting a reduction in health inequalities;
- Encouraging investment in the City – particularly within the City Centre;
- Developing strong connectivity between the Inverness UHI Campus site and the City Centre;
- Facilitating the growth of carbon free transport within the City and Area;
- Supporting the growth of the Tourism Sector and the links between the attractions within the City Area and the Highland Region and, through the 7 Cities Initiative, the rest of Scotland; and
- Underpinning economic growth within the retail and general commerce sectors, with a particular focus on the regeneration of the City Centre.

Key themes for the Partnership are:

Welcoming City

This provides a framework which allows partners to bring forward projects which support the following themes:

- Improving the visitor experience;
- City Centre – empty shops;
- UHI campus – links with City Centre;
- City Centre – vibrancy; and
- Hospitality

Visitor Experience.

There are opportunities for the Hospitality and Retail sectors to work on a programme which 'sells' the facilities that the City and surrounding attractions have for the visitor.

Empty Shops

Opportunities are used to brighten up empty shop premises, look at innovative temporary uses and work with property owners to do so.

Inverness Campus – UHI.

The opportunities provided by the potential increase in the number of students and the general profile raising of the City as a place to learn, live and invest in, provides a major opportunity to enhance support for economic vibrancy within the City and Area.

Streetscene Welcome

Inverness BID and the Council to ensure that the City provides a welcoming environment to locals and visitors.

Active City

This gives a focus to projects which:

- Encourage use of existing Green Space;
- Develop initiatives to increase use of cycle/walking routes generally;
- Ensure that opportunities are made best use of to link the City Centre and UHI campus in order to encourage use of the cycling/walking routes; and
- Underpin economic vibrancy by linking vehicular travel with cycling and walking.

Workgroups - Progress to Date:

The Cycle/ Walking Routes Working Group (to be renamed Welcoming/ Active City)

- Strategy and Action Plan is now in place through the Inverness Active Travel Audit prepared in June 2011 by the Halcrow Group on behalf of Hi Trans
- The focus is on improving infrastructure for cycling; acknowledging that such infrastructure would be used by walkers too. Priorities should primarily be aimed at benefiting local residents for both utility and leisure cycling.
- The top priorities are planned to be:
 - a. Inverness City;
 - b. Around Loch Ness circuit;
 - c. Around Beaulieu Firth circuit; and
 - d. Inverness – Nairn – Cawdor – Inverness route.
- Agreement has also been reached to support and help raise the profile of existing cycle infrastructure initiatives.

UHI – Campus - the 'Campus Alignment Group'

Hosted by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and leads on this critical aspect of partnership working. The link between the Inverness Partnership and the Campus Alignment Group is through HIE and Inverness College - UHI.

City Centre

This Workgroup focuses on improving the economic vibrancy of the City Centre and in particular increasing footfall and the improving the use of public spaces.