

INVERNESS PARTNERSHIP

**Minute of Meeting held in the Chamber, Town House on Friday, 16 August 2013
at 10.00am**

Present

Highland Council

Councillor I Brown

Councillor R Laird

Councillor T Prag

Councillor M Davidson

Councillor J Gray

Mr D Haas

Miss J MacLennan

Mr S Armstrong (Visit Scotland)

Mr M Smith (Inverness BID)

Ms D Rawlinson (UHI)

Mrs C Johnson (Inverness Area CC Forum)

Mr G Ambrose (Destination Loch Ness)

Mr M Johnson (Highlands & Islands Enterprise)

Ms J MacKinnon (DWP Inverness)

Mr G Murdoch (Police Scotland)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Ian Brown welcomed all those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been intimated on behalf of Mr S North, Mr C Duncan, Ms M McIntosh and Ms N MacKenzie.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 17 May 2013

There had been circulated the Minute of the previous Meeting held on 17 May 2013 – which was **APPROVED** – subject to a correction to the list of those present to include Mr T Prag.

4. Matters Arising

It was **AGREED** that the City Manager would follow up a query with NHS Highland as to whether representatives would be able to attend future meetings of the Partnership.

It was also **AGREED** that the City Manager would circulate a full list of participating organisations to Partnership members.

5. Working Group Updates

City Centre

A verbal update was provided at the meeting during which an update was provided on the work undertaken by the Group to date, with specific reference to cycling and walking initiatives.

In this respect, it was confirmed that a Seminar to consider the National Town Centre Review had been arranged for 18 September in the Council Chamber at Highland Council Headquarters (following the Planning, Environment and Development Committee meeting which was to be held earlier that day) and that as many organisations as possible would be invited to attend.

In terms of the national initiatives currently being taken forward, it was considered that there was a need for the Partnership to examine how it could link into and contribute to these initiatives wherever possible whilst avoiding duplication of effort and resources in this regard.

It was also **AGREED** that an update on the work currently being undertaken in relation to Academy Street, Inverness should be submitted to the next meeting, together with a summary of the work currently being undertaken by partners.

Active City – Cycle Working Group

There had been circulated Proposal for a Cycle Document to set out the strategic context for developing cycling infrastructure in Inverness and the surrounding areas.

During a summary of the proposed audience, format and content of the document, it was confirmed that other information which could be added included the Vision for the City to be Carbon Free by 2020, the Active Travel Plan prepared by Hi-Trans, the health benefits of cycling, the tourism benefits of encouraging more cycling visitors and an explanation of the requirements for both utility and leisure cycling and the need to accommodate both in infrastructure.

In terms of further issues which required clarification, these included the timescale for production of the document, who was to be responsible for production, who was to meet the costs, how the document should be printed and who should undertake the public launch.

In this regard, it was confirmed that the aim was to make Inverness 'Europe's Most Cycle Friendly Destination' in that currently it was the only city on target to meet the Scottish Government's aspirations. As such, it was **AGREED** that there needed to be an enhanced focus on advocacy, lobbying and advertising wherever possible as well as a clear definition of cycling routes across the city and surrounding areas in order to be ready to apply for any funding streams as and when they became available. Liaison with a range of organisations in this regard was also imperative in future in order to take this forward successfully.

Inverness Community Safety Partnership

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings held on 15 May, 12 June and 17 July 2013 – which were **APPROVED**.

In this regard, a verbal update was provided at the meeting during which it was confirmed that the Inverness Community Safety Partnership had successfully evolved over time and the current position was that partnership community safety work was being undertaken across the area in liaison with partners, including the voluntary sector, and the sharing of goals and objectives had produced significant and encouraging results across a range of issues.

In terms of the revitalisation of the City Centre, Operation Respect (Daytime) was working well and had benefited from regular meetings with partners and information sharing which had resulted in a number of improvements, including in relation to anti-social behaviour. Also, direct

contact with the NHS Harm Prevention Unit had already realised benefits and this was encouraging.

In terms of on-going initiatives, work was currently being undertaken to address the issues arising from the prevalence of lighter fuel/butane gas abuse, to reinforce and highlight the pilot exercise in relation to 'no cold calling' zones and to provide a focus for the helpline on the Kessock Bridge which was to be installed as part of future suicide prevention measures.

It was also confirmed that the new Governor of Porterfield Prison was shortly to join the Community Safety Partnership and this had been welcomed in terms of the expected input and contribution which would be received.

During discussion, it was **AGREED** that consideration should be given as to whether adequate resources were in place with the Trading Standards Unit to take forward the 'no cold calling' zone work in future and whether there were any measure in place to involve schools and parents in the proposed measures to tackle substance abuse.

It was also **AGREED** that there was a need to focus on and closely monitor the areas outside the City Centre in terms of a perceived increase in problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse and vandalism in those locations.

Employability

A verbal update was provided at the meeting by the City Manager during which it was confirmed that the Work Group was progressing well and all partners had now completed their mapping exercises.

In this respect, a number of future events had been arranged, including those planned for 29 August and 19 September, and it was confirmed that the continued active engagement from employers and businesses to date had been warmly welcomed.

During discussion, reference was made to future proposals for the involvement of employers in curriculum design and this was welcomed in terms of the potential future benefits which this could bring.

It was also **AGREED** that there was a need for a clear, single document to be produced to highlight the number of initiatives being undertaken.

6. Partnership Strategy

There had been circulated Report No. IP/1/13 dated 7 August 2013 by the City Manager which confirmed that partnership working across the City and Landward Areas had developed over the past five years since the creation of the Inverness Partnership with the focus on making the best use of joint resources.

In this regard, the Partnership had agreed a new set of priorities at a meeting held on 2 March 2013 and it had now been suggested that these priorities should be further refined to focus on the strategic themes of 'Welcoming City' and 'Active City'.

In terms of 'Welcoming City', it was advised that this would provide a framework to allow partners to bring forward projects which supported improving the visitor experience, highlighting the empty shops in the City Centre, establishing links between the City Centre and the UHI Campus

and highlighting the vibrancy and hospitality within the area. In delivering this strategy, a number of key opportunities had been highlighted in the report and it was confirmed that the key partners would be Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Inverness College/Inverness Campus/UHI, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Highland Council, Highland Opportunity Ltd, Inverness Business Improvement District, Tourism Sector BID Steering Group, Visit Scotland and the Inverness Hotels Association.

In relation to 'Active City', it was advised that the framework provided a focus for projects which encouraged use of existing Green Space, developed initiatives to increase the use of cycle/walking routes generally, ensured that best use was made of opportunities to link the City Centre and the UHI Campus in order to encourage use of the cycling/walking routes and underpinned economic vibrancy by linking vehicular travel with cycling and walking. In this regard, a number of key opportunities had also been highlighted within the report for consideration.

During discussion, it was suggested that it would be helpful if the City Manager could circulate a complete list of all strategies and developments in relation to the City Centre to all members of the Partnership for information.

It was also suggested that Highlands & Islands Enterprise should be represented on the City Centre Workgroup.

Thereafter, the Partnership **AGREED**:-

- (i) the strategy set out in the report with the framework being 'Welcoming City' and 'Active City';
- (ii) the formation of Welcoming/ActiveCity and City Centre Workgroups on the basis detailed in the report;
- (iii) that reports should be submitted to each Partnership meeting on Workgroup activity and Action Plans produced for the next meeting;
- (iv) that the City Manager should circulate a complete list of all strategies and developments in the City Centre to all members of the Partnership; and
- (v) that Highlands & Islands Enterprise should be represented on the City Centre Workgroup.

7. Marketing Inverness

There had been circulated Joint Report No. IP/2/13 dated 1 August 2013 by the Director of Planning and Development and the City Manager which provided an update on the work undertaken to deliver the actions from the marketing action plan for Inverness in addition to recommending an approach to continued marketing activity over the next few months.

Following a summary of previous activity, and in regard to future plans, it was confirmed that the marketing group had held a strategic workshop in April with the purpose of reflecting on the group's achievements to date and to allow consideration as to whether there was a clear future role. A series of recommendations had subsequently been made with the main points emerging being that the group had put in place a range of resources which remained valuable but their full potential had yet to be realised, the group needed to be actively managed, developed, refreshed and promoted, some activities could be led and implemented by the group but others would involve support for and/or co-ordination of activities by others and the group needed the dedicated time of a member of staff to take forward the identified action. A number of additional tasks and roles had also been identified and these had been highlighted within the report.

It was therefore proposed that a short term post, located within one of the partner private sector organisations, should be created to continue activity until early Summer 2014 and in this regard eight specific tasks had been detailed within the report in terms of priority. In this respect, it was confirmed that Highlands & Islands Enterprise had agreed in principle to commit 50% funding for such a post and if agreed by the Partnership an application would then be submitted to the City's Common Good Fund for an equivalent amount to ensure the necessary continued activity as detailed.

During discussion, it was suggested that there was a need to build on the initiatives currently being undertaken across the City and surrounding areas in addition to the eight specific tasks which had been detailed in the report.

It was also confirmed that, as well as a marketing focus in relation to tourism, there was a need to highlight other local issues and locations, including links with the University in order to maximise benefits from the UHI Campus.

In terms of the office accommodation currently available within the City Centre, it was felt that an exercise to quantify what was currently available and its potential use could be advantageous at the present time, as well as consideration being given as to whether it was possible to dedicate staff to attracting and promoting Conferences in the area in future.

Thereafter, the Partnership **NOTED** the marketing activity which had already been delivered by the Marketing Workgroup and **ENDORSED** the proposals for future activity as detailed in the report.

It was also **AGREED** that a report should be submitted to the next meeting on the issues which had been raised in regard to future marketing opportunities, the potential for the use of office accommodation in the City Centre and whether it was feasible to dedicate staff to Conference promotion activities.

8. City Development Officer Group

A Verbal Update was provided by the City Manager during which it was confirmed that the next meeting would focus on issues in relation to the City Centre in order to make the best possible use of existing partnership opportunities wherever possible.

In this regard, it was **AGREED** that consideration should be given to ensuring that all relevant interests were recognised by this Officer Group.

9. AOB

It was **AGREED** that the City Manager would circulate a list of the potential funding streams available (on a project by project basis) to members of the Partnership in due course.

10. Date of Next Meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Friday, 1 November 2013 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.40am.