

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 3 June 2014

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/16/14

Inverness City Arts

River Ness River Connections - Public Art Project Programme

Report by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement

Summary

This report provides an update on the curatorial progress of the River Ness – River Connections Public Art Programme and invites the Committee to release the balance of funding allocated from the Inverness Common Good Fund.

1. The Commissions

1.1 There are five artists' commissions proposed for the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Programme , with an associated education and community engagement programme. They are:

- River Connections
- The Gathering Place
- Artist-designed Rest Spaces
- The Sculptural Destination
- The Trail

1.2 **The River Connections Project Programme** is a series of interventions along the river in both Phase 1 and Phase 2. This commission has been awarded to the artist Mary Bourne (see para. 9) as it is not dependent on other funding partners as are the other commissions which will be awarded on confirmation of all funding, including Creative Scotland funding, in September.

1.3 **The Gathering Place**, the largest commission, will result in the creation of a special place and structure in which people can come together with an overview of the River Ness.

1.4 **Artist-designed Rest Spaces** will create relaxation areas that can accommodate individuals or small groups who might informally gather along the river's edge.

1.5 **The Sculptural Destination** will result in the creation of an artwork which will become a 'destination' or favourite place to visit on the riverside, drawing people to walk further down the river, whilst being visible from some distance away. It is anticipated that the sculpture will be interactive in some way.

1.6 **The Trail** is a project to map the river to create a trail or route from the Ness

islands to the river mouth. It could be both actual (e.g. waymarkers) and/or digital (in the form of an app or website easily accessed by mobile phone).

2. The Commissioning Process

2.1 The commissioning process involves the following steps:

- Community Consultation
- Drawing up the briefs in accordance with city vision and funding criteria. Creative Scotland's main funding criteria are:
 - high quality of artwork
 - community engagement
 - integration with Flood Team
- Advertising
- Evaluation
- Refining the procurement process
- Confirmation of funding
- Design, siting, installation

3. Advertising

3.1 Commissions have been advertised in a variety of websites most visited by artists including The Highland Council, Creative Scotland, Artists' Newsletter, ixia, Public Art Online, Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Glasgow Sculpture Studio, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, RSS etc.

4. Evaluation of tenders

4.1 The evaluation process has 3 stages:

- Evaluation of all tenders and shortlisting
- Limited Design Competition for shortlisted tenders for presentation of more detailed proposals
- Recommendations of Evaluation Panel submitted to ICArts Working Group for approval and award of commission.

4.2 The Evaluation Panel

The Evaluation Panel consists of:

- Dr Ken Neil, Acting Head of Research, Glasgow School of Art
- Dr James Mooney, (former Tutor of Painting, Royal College of Art , now resident in the Highlands)
- Mark Lomax, Inverness College
- Colin Howell, Highland Council

Advisors – David Haas, HC; Kenny MacInnes HC; Cathy Shankland, HLH

5. Procurement of Artists

5.1 The procurement of artists has been problematic in that artists have had some difficulty in negotiating the HC's procedures and the first round of

tenders did not produce any acceptable proposals, other than for River Connections and the Trail.

6. Re-tendering of commissions

6.1 The second call for artists for the outstanding projects, The Gathering Place, Rest Spaces and The Sculptural Destination met with a much better response in this round due to a refined procurement process and more direct contact with artists during the application period.

6.2 Although the refining of the procurement process has led to some delay in progressing the project, the new procedures should make it easier to procure artists for future public art projects.

7. Evaluation Meeting

7.1 The Evaluation Panel last met on Friday 25 April 2014 to shortlist artists for **the Gathering Place, the Sculptural Destination and Rest Spaces.**

- The Gathering Place - 12 tenders of which 4 shortlisted for invitation to Limited Design competition
- Rest Spaces – 8 tenders of which 3 shortlisted for invitation to the Limited Design Competition
- The Sculptural Destination – 8 tenders, none of which met the threshold score to be invited to a Limited Design competition in the judgement of the evaluators. However the evaluators considered that one high quality proposal from the Gathering Place was more suited to the Sculptural Destination and so this artist will be invited to the Limited Design competition for this project.
- The Limited Design Competitions for the shortlisted artists will be on 18/19 June 2014. Negotiation meeting 23 June 2014
- The shortlisted submission for the Trail project is also invited to the Limited Design competition on 18 June

8. Funding

8.1 The following funding has been allocated:

Creative Scotland £0.305m
Inverness Common Good Fund £0.250m
Highlands and Islands Enterprise £0.66m
Highland Council (City Gateway) £0.66m
Total £0.687m

Inverness Common Good Fund (Revenue allocation 2013/14) £30,750
Grand Total £0.717m

8.2 Submission of Stage 2 funding application to Creative Scotland for earmarked funding is due by 30 June in which we are required to specify artists and proposals for each of the commissions. Notification of outcome due in September 2014.

- 8.3 Partnership funding from HIE is dependent on Creative Scotland funding being confirmed. The Inverness Common Good Fund has allocated £0.250m of which £0.060m has been released for delivery of the River Connections project. Application of the decision making process agreed by Members previously has led to clear political and executive leadership via the ICArts Working Group and the Project Team comprising HighLife Highland's Exhibitions Officer (Curatorial lead) The Acting Head of Infrastructure (Project Management lead) with The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement taking the overall lead.

Release of the balance of £0.190m is essential as this will allow for the stage 2 Creative Scotland application to confirm that more than 80% of allocated Partnership funding is in place. This sum has been accounted for within the 2014/15 Inverness Common Good Fund Budget.

9. River Connections

- 9.1 Mary Bourne, stonecarver, is the appointed artist. She will be working on coping stones, flags and seating areas.
- 9.2 Poetry by Ken Cockburn in English and Gaelic will be incorporated into the artist's designs.
- 9.3 Mary Bourne is working with Highland Print Studio on stainless steel printed plaques.
- 9.4 Community engagement has been a major part of the artist's and Project Manager's research. The Access Panel, Countryside Rangers, angling societies, Inverness Cathedral, Merkinch Partnership, Arts in Merkinch, BID, Inverness City Heritage Trust, Inverness College, schools, local businesses, local residents, archaeologists, environmentalists and other river communities have been consulted and invited to share their thoughts on the river. This has provided an archive of research material for the future use of newly commissioned artists and an archive for the project.
- 9.5 Coping stones are about to be cut and laid – Mary Bourne will work on these in situ over the summer months providing further opportunities for community engagement.
- 9.6 Educational opportunities including schools' site visits to be arranged.
- 9.7 PR opportunities to be set up.

10. Worker's Memorial

- 10.1 The design of the Workers' Memorial is being taken forward through competition. The Project Manager has met with representatives from the Trades Union Council and continues to work closely with them, to ensure that the Memorial is co-ordinated and coherent with the other art works.

11. Equalities and Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 The delivery of projects under the governance arrangements identified in this report will be required to meet The Highland Council's policies. They will also actively enhance access to public art where practicable, for the widest possible sectors of the community.
- 11.2 There are no known climate change implications as a result of the content of this report.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 There are no known legal implications as a result of the content of this report.

13. Resource Implications

- 13.1 The City of Inverness Common Good Fund has allocated funds within its revenue budget for 2014/15 to meet the expenditure detailed within this report in respect of the appointment of both an artist for the River Connections Project and for Project Management arrangements. The Council will not appoint the Artists selected to deliver the Project Programme until funding has been confirmed by all funding partners and reported the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:-

- i. note the progress being made towards the appointment of Artists as recommended by the Evaluation Panel and the refining of the procurement process for the following projects;

The Gathering Place
Rest Spaces
Sculptural Destination
- ii. note the progress being made on the remaining elements of the River Connections Project Programme; and
- iii. agree the release of £0.190m from the £0.250m budget agreed in principle previously from the Inverness Common Good Fund 2014/15 Budget, to be utilised under the governance of the ICArts Working Group for the purposes of the delivery of the River Connections Project programme subject to Creative Scotland approving the Stage 2 funding application.

Designation: Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement

Date: 22 May 2014

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