

**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, 6 March 2014, at 12.00 pm.

**Present:**

Mr K Gowans (Chair)	Mr T Prag
Mr I Brown	Mr G Ross
Mrs B McAllister	

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement  
Ms C Shankland, High Life Highland (Project Manager)  
Mr C Howell, Project Design Unit Manager, TECS  
Ms L Lee, Committee Administrator

**1. Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr S Blair, Creative Scotland (CS).

**2. Exclusion of the Public**

The Working 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 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Items 4, 5 and 6 - Mr G Ross (non-financial).

**4. Project Management Report**

**Declaration of Interest – Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a close relative who was a local artist, 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 2/14 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement dated 28 February 2014 providing an update to the Working Group on progress of the Project Programme in meeting the criteria set by the City of Inverness Area Committee for the provision of public art as part of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Prior to discussion, the Working Group was informed that Diarmaid Lawlor (Architecture Design Scotland) had had to resign from the Evaluation Panel due to him being commissioned to do additional work. Members expressed regret, and proposed that a letter be sent thanking Mr Lawlor for his contribution to the Panel. The Working Group concurred that the remaining Panel members would continue to provide a high level of expertise.

A verbal update was provided on progress as follows:

### **River Connections**

As the stone coping for the flood prevention wall had proved to be not suitable for carving, the Artist was looking into a process of printing on stainless steel which could be incorporated into the coping. Images could be provided to Members on request. TEC Services were aware that foundations would be required for some of the artwork and where possible would build these into the flood works; alternatively, the foundations could be retro-fitted.

In response to a question raised, an assurance was given that the working relationship between the artist and TECS continued to be positive and effective.

### **Workers' Memorial**

The design of the Workers' Memorial was now being taken forward through a competition. Officers would meet with representatives from the Trades Union Council the following week, and continue to work closely with them, to ensure that the Memorial was artistically coherent with the other art works.

### **Project Progress**

The Evaluation Panel had decided that a particular application for the Trail was outstanding, and were seeking further information from the applicant with a view to progressing to the next stage. The quality of applications received for the Gathering Place, the Rest Spaces and Sculptural Destination, however, had not been considered high enough and the projects would be going out to re-tender. It was hoped that the evaluations for all three projects could progress at the same time.

### **Procurement**

Although interest in the projects had originally been expressed by 53 applicants, and had included some exciting ideas, the number of applications received had been low. This was believed to be due to the complexity of the procurement process. Discussions had taken place with the Council's Head of Procurement which had led to the tendering process being revised to the most relaxed form that was legally possible. The process would be finalised the following week with the revised tender documents being publicised and also then issued to the 53 original applicants. Short-listed projects would be considered by the Evaluation Panel. In discussion, Members expressed concerns at re-advertising, but accepted that much had been learnt by going through the revision process. Although this had caused delay, the new procedure would make it easier for ideas to come forward, was robust, and would be in place for use in future similar projects.

### **Creative Scotland (CS)**

CS had, by means of a questionnaire, sought assurances from the Council relating to governance, planning and delivery of the projects, prior to its release of Stage 2 funding. Copies of the return, which had already been sent to CS, were tabled and CS had been kept fully informed of the delay in the procurement process and the reasons for this. CS had requested a meeting in early April with representatives of the Working Group, the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement, and the Project Manager, to discuss progress.

### **Flood Prevention Phase 2 and Public Engagement**

The Phase 2 Flood Prevention contract had now been awarded, and a public exhibition would be held in Trinity Church, Inverness, on 26 March 2014 providing information on how and when the scheme would progress. The works were expected to take 52 weeks. Members were apprised of various representations received from the public concerning the proposed parking arrangements in Huntly Street and the likely impact of changes in Riverside Street. Reports on these issues would be brought to the next City of Inverness Area Committee in accordance with due process.

In discussion, Members expressed the view that the public exhibition afforded a good opportunity to provide information about the flood prevention scheme, and to publicise the benefits that the art projects would widely bring to the city. Although details of the art projects were not yet available, an overall vision of what was being proposed would be useful. The exhibition also offered an additional way to meet CS's public engagement requirements. A proposal to purchase professional display materials capable of being updated and re-used at future exhibitions, to support both these ends, was discussed.

The Working Group **NOTED**:

- (i) the progress being made towards the appointment of Artists as recommended by the procurement Evaluation Panel and the refining of the procurement process for the following projects:
  - The Gathering Place
  - Rest Spaces
  - Sculptural Destination;
- (ii) the progress being made on the appointment of an artist for the Trail;
- (iii) the steps being taken towards the integration of the Workers' Memorial with the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme; and
- (iv) the progress being made in the delivery of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The Working Group **AGREED** that:

- (i) along with the officers as set out in the report, the Chair would attend the early April meeting with Creative Scotland, and that the Vice Chair would also attend, dependent on the date of the meeting;
- (ii) that a budget of up to £1,500 be allocated to fund design and purchase of re-usable display material illustrating a vision for the

- project, to be used at forthcoming public exhibitions with a view to disseminating information, generating enthusiasm, and meeting Creative Scotland's funding criteria relating to public engagement;
- (iii) that a letter be sent to Mr Lawlor (Architecture Design Scotland) thanking him for his contribution to the work of the Evaluation Panel; and
  - (iv) that the Evaluation Panel as currently constituted would continue to provide a high level of expertise and would not be increased in number.

## **5. Project Management (Ramada Commission)**

**Declaration of Interest – Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a close relative who was a local artist, 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.**

The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement provided a verbal update with regard to progress with the potential joint project to improve the appearance of the Mercure Hotel on Church Street. The hotel stood opposite the end of Union Street and had a significant impact on the streetscape in Inverness. Creative Scotland (as the former Scottish Arts Council) had supported the original plans, initiated with the previous owners.

While preliminary contact with the new owners had been positive, given that the Project Manager was currently fully engaged on the procurement process for the three City Art Projects, it was likely to be 8-12 weeks before she would be in a position to take the matter further. In discussion, Members strongly urged that every effort be made to take the Hotel project forward. It was hoped that this could be realised; however, if not, recovery of the grant previously awarded would be pursued.

The Working Group **NOTED** the information given.

## **6. Financial Monitoring**

**Declaration of Interest – Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a close relative who was a local artist, 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 03/14 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement dated 27 February 2014 which set out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 January 2014 and showed the actual expenditure to date.

The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement gave a brief explanation of the figures provided. Whilst the overall project budget was given as £740,900, some £22,000 had still to be raised. CS had been

apprised of this. In answer to questions, Members were advised that, should the final figure not be reached, it would be possible to revisit some of the budget heads, such as the £55,000 allocated to a festival, and that costings for projects would remain notional until the projects were agreed; it would be up to the artist to include in their budget any retro-fitting that might be required.

Members **NOTED** the content of the report.

## **7. Minutes**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the minutes of the Working Group held on 24 January 2014, as had been approved by the City of Inverness and Area on 4 March 2014.

## **8. Date of next Meeting**

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 17 April 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.