

Minutes of Meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Tuesday, 4 March 2014 at 10.30 am.

Present

Mr I Brown, Mr A Graham, Mr R Balfour, Mrs C Caddick, Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Christie, Mr J Crawford, Mrs M Davidson, Mr N Donald, Mr A Duffy, Mr J Ford, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray, Mr D Kerr, Mr R Laird, Mrs B McAllister, Mr K MacLeod, Mr F Parr, Mr T Prag, Mr G Ross, Mrs G Sinclair, Mrs J Slater, Ms K Stephen, Mr H Wood

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Yule, Director of Finance
Mr D Haas, Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement
Mrs T Urry, Housing and Property Manager (South)
Mr C Mackintosh, Area Education Manager (South)
Mr J Taylor, Acting Area Roads and Community Works Manager (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)
Mr B MacKinnon, Employability Team Leader, Planning and Development Service
Mr C Thomas, Research Officer, Planning and Development Service
Mr S Carr, Principal Policy Officer – Climate Change, Chief Executive’s Service
Mr J Kelman, Project Manager, Housing and Property Service
Ms I Baikie, Community Safety Officer, Chief Executive’s Service
Ms N MacKenzie, Employability Officer, Planning and Development Service
Mr G Reynolds, Events Officer, Chief Executive’s Service
Ms A MacNeill, Senior Public Relations Officer, Chief Executive’s Service
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Chief Executive’s Service
Mrs R Moir, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive’s Service
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive’s Service
Mr G Smith, Assistant Civic Officer, Finance Service
Ms L Mackay, Assistant Civic Officer, Finance Service

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector M Mackay, Police Scotland
Mr T Duff, Lead Consultant, LDN Architects

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.

Mr I Brown in the Chair

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, concern was expressed in relation to the Timetable of Meetings for 2014 and specifically the changes which had been made to the day chosen for meetings of this Committee. In this regard, it was suggested that Tuesdays were not the most appropriate days and that the Committee should revert to meeting on Mondays in future as had been the case in the past.

By way of clarification, it was confirmed that the Timetable of Meetings for 2014 had been agreed by the Highland Council in October 2013 and therefore any requests for changes to the dates for the current year would require to be submitted to the full Council.

Business

1. Apology for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr D Hendry.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 4 – Mr H Wood (non-financial)

Item 6 – Miss J Campbell, Mrs B McAllister, Mr K MacLeod and Mr R Laird (all non-financial)

Item 8 – Mr A Christie (non-financial), Mr D Kerr and Mr A Duffy (financial)

Item 9f – Mr I Brown and Mr G Ross (both non-financial)

Item 12 – Mr H Wood (non-financial)

3. Drummond School Overview Sealladh Coitcheann air Sgoil Dhruimein

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-01-14 \(493kb pdf\)](#) dated 18 February 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided an update of key information in relation to Drummond School.

In this regard, specific issues which had been detailed in the report included the School Profile, Attainment and Achievement, Key Strengths, Priorities for Improvement, Partner Agencies and Notable Successes. In addition, a presentation was made by the Area Education Manager (South) illustrating the work taking place at the school and informing Members of the current position in relation to the Senior Leadership Team.

It was also confirmed that a visit to Drummond School had been arranged for the afternoon of 19 March 2014 and it was hoped that as many Members as possible would attend.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the recent presentation to the Adult and Children's Services Committee by CHIP+ had highlighted the challenges faced by parents of children with additional support needs and the support CHIP+ provided in this regard and it had to be noted that these parents often felt isolated;
- Drummond School played a pivotal role in the families of children with additional support needs and tribute was paid to all the work undertaken in supporting these children and their families;
- the positive "can do" ethos of the whole school was welcomed;

- the partnership arrangements with other schools and communities demonstrated how the learning process could be integrated;
- it was noted that it had not yet been possible to fill the Head Teacher's post which was disappointing and it was queried as to whether there were any underlying reasons in this regard;
- further information would be helpful in relation to staffing levels at the school;
- building on the success of Drummond School's achievements, it was important to consider the issue of transition, both into the school and from the school into Adult Services. In this connection, it was noted that a group led by the Chief Executives of NHS Highland and Highland Council had been formed to drive this forward with a report detailing progress to be submitted to the next meeting of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee;
- with the continuing increase in the roll, it was questioned whether Drummond School had the capacity to continue to expand, both in terms of space and the in regard to the possible impact on education;
- it would be beneficial for Officers from Adult Social Services, NHS Highland and Housing Services to be present at the visit to the school to answer questions and for Members to have the opportunity to look at the School Development Plan;
- it was vital that Drummond School was used to its full potential and in this regard best practice elsewhere should be taken into account and embedded where appropriate; and
- there was a need to express appreciation to the various businesses who had contributed to Drummond School.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the content of the report and the terms of the presentation as detailed.

10. Inverness Public Space CCTV System Sìostam CCTV Àrainn Phoblaich Inbhir Nis

In accordance with Standing Order 18, and with the consent of the meeting, Item 10 on the agenda was considered at this point.

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-13-14 \(578kb pdf\)](#) dated 13 February 2014 by the Depute Chief Executive which provided an update on the recent investments made to the Inverness CCTV System and on the outcomes achieved by the Inverness cameras.

In this regard, it was noted that during 2012/13 a number of investments had been made to the Inverness CCTV infrastructure, including fibre optic transmission upgrades with a total cost of £10,589. In 2013/14, the Inverness Common Good Fund had made an annual contribution amounting to £83,978 to support camera maintenance, repairs and monitoring.

With regard to extending the CCTV system, and on the basis of Police analysis of reported incidents over the last year and supported by Police Scotland, approved by Safer Highland and funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund, an additional camera was anticipated to be fully operational by the beginning of March 2014 in the Castle Wynd area.

At this point, it was confirmed that, while the system was monitored from Burnett Road Police Station, Police Scotland did not have management responsibility for its operation. Also, while detailed local statistical evidence on the impact of the CCTV network on crime prevention and detection was not available, it was nonetheless considered to have made a significant contribution to de-escalation of disorder and to the positive detection rates and crime reduction figures achieved in Inverness. Efforts would continue to bring clear information to Members.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whether all cameras were functioning effectively and in constant active operation: assurances were given that:
 - 3 cameras were currently under repair and should be functioning again within days
 - all cameras, when not being actively manoeuvred by an operator, were set at an intelligence-led default position and were monitored regularly
 - account was taken of the potential impact of street furniture on field of camera vision
 - information querying camera operability was addressed quickly oarrangements could be made for a Members' briefing visit to Burnett Road Police Station to view the system in operation and for information to be made available to Members on camera locations and orientation
- whether Police Scotland should make a greater financial contribution to the operation and maintenance of the system: there were no plans to change the current arrangements
- whether recorded instances of traffic infringements were followed up, and whether the CCTV system could be used to help compensate for the reduced Traffic Warden service: the Chief Inspector in attendance undertook to look into these matters.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that the CCTV System, including the investments made in 2012/13 as per Section 2.1 and Tables 15 and 16 in Appendix 3, should continue to provide an effective contribution to Community Safety within the City;
- ii. **NOTED** the outcomes achieved by the Inverness CCTV System as per Section 4 and Appendix 1;
- iii. **HOMOLOGATED** the decision to fund and install an additional camera at Castle Wynd, Inverness as per Section 3 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** that arrangements would be made for a Members' briefing visit to Burnett Road Police Station to view the CCTV system in operation.

4. Carbon CLEVER City Cathair-bhaile Càrbon CIALLACH

Declaration of Interest –

Mr H Wood declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being the Chair of the Highland Cycle Campaign 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. [CIA-02-14 \(656kb pdf\)](#) dated 19 February 2014 by the Head of Policy and Performance which proposed a vision of a Carbon CLEVER City, provided a further update on a number of current projects in the Inverness area and outlined a number of prospective projects for the city. In this regard, two applications to the Inverness Common Good Fund had been attached to the report for consideration.

During a summary of the report, it was confirmed that the Carbon CLEVER Action Plan was currently being drafted by Council Officers and would be presented to future meetings of the Highland Council. In this regard, Officers would work to align Carbon CLEVER to important Council strategies such as the Land Use and Transport Strategy, Green Transport Strategy and Development Plans.

Project updates were also provided on Arterial Cycling Routes for Inverness, Carbon CLEVER Cycles and Etape Loch Ness and it was advised that a number of prospective projects would be developed with partners, stakeholders, communities and residents and would target match funding from a range of European, national and regional funds.

Prior to debate, the Chairman pointed out that, in Paragraph 3.3 of the report, a bid for £5,000 had been made to the Inverness Millburn Ward Discretionary Budget (and not the Inverness Central Discretionary Budget as had been stated).

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- given the size of the cycling community and their use of social media, the projects, especially Etape Loch Ness, were likely to receive a lot of coverage;
- rather than a Transport Hub, a Transport Interchange was needed;
- if people were to be encouraged to use public transport then an improved bus service had to be provided as the need to change buses en route often acted as a deterrent;
- to promote the benefits of electric cars, consideration should also be given to providing additional charging points in car parks etc;
- in relation to developing a Common Good Fund Strategy, Members felt that they were unable to agree at this stage the Common Good's role but asked that its role was instead noted. While welcoming the prospective projects detailed in the report, these were still in the process of being developed and it was premature to commit funds from the Common Good at this stage;
- if the aspiration that by 2025 Inverness was to be a city where residents and visitors could move around the city easily by bicycle, on foot and public transport, then it was important that work started now on projects. Many might have to be amended over time but at least projects would have been brought to the fore;
- locating hubs for the Carbon CLEVER bikes in the city centre and at Council Headquarters would encourage the use of bikes for business and by Council officers;
- the Cairngorm National Park had successfully delivered a similar electric bike scheme;

- the Carbon CLEVER project benefitted all in Highland and therefore consideration should be given to using other Common Good Funds, the Community Benefit Fund or some of the Climate Change Group's budget;
- it was important that Ward Members were involved in the siting and design of the cycle hubs and in this regard it was suggested that Stephen's Brae was not, for a number of reasons, the best location;
- people might travel to Inverness and then use the Carbon CLEVER bikes and some suggested that it was necessary therefore to address the issue of car parking. However, other Members were of the view that car parking in Inverness was adequate;
- it was important that the electric bikes were suitable for persons of all heights. It was also questioned as to how far bikes would be able to travel on a charged battery, where they could be recharged, what the lower age limit was and if they could be adapted to accommodate child bike seats;
- the price difference for visitors and locals to hire a bike for a day (£20 and £10 respectively) was questioned, especially given the need to encourage tourists to come to Inverness;
- a previous scheme supported by the Council had enabled individuals to hire bikes in Inverness and clarification was sought as to where these bikes were now;
- if Inverness Common Good money was to be used, it was important to understand exactly how Etape Loch Ness would improve the quality of people's lives in the Burgh of Inverness;
- there was an untapped demand for an event such as Etape Loch Ness and potential for it to grow in the same way as the Loch Ness Marathon;
- many cyclists taking part in Etape Loch Ness would return to the area;
- while a Car Club in Inverness had merits, it would be important to consider how projects in other cities similar to Inverness had fared;
- in the development of a Car Club proposal, it was important to engage with those needing transport to Raigmore Hospital, an area where there was growing need; and
- a Car Club would enable those individuals who did not presently have a car to continue to be car-free but to have access to a car as and when necessary.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the vision of Inverness as a Carbon CLEVER City, based on the description provided at Paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the applications to the Inverness Common Good Fund for:-
 - a. a contribution of £5,000 towards the Carbon CLEVER Cycles Scheme as outlined at Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 and Appendix 1; and
 - b. a contribution of £5,000 towards the sponsorship of the Etape Loch Ness as outlined at Paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 and Appendix 2;

and:-

- iii. **AGREED** the suitability of the prospective projects outlined in Section 4 of the report; and
- iv. **NOTED** the potential strategic role of the Inverness Common Good Fund and Carbon CLEVER working together to bring benefits to the city.

5. Population Change in the City of Inverness Area 2001 to 2011 **Atharrachadh Sluaigh ann an Sgìre Cathair-bhaile Inbhir Nis 2001 gu 2011**

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-03-14 \(531kb pdf\)](#) dated 14 February 2014 by the Director of Planning and Development which summarised some early results from the 2011 Census, giving local information on the number and ages of people living within the Inverness City Area.

The report also compared these figures with those from 2001 to show that the population of the Inverness City Area had grown by 17.8% (compared to the Highland average of 11.1%) with an increase in five out of seven Wards, and at a local level in 52 out of 90 data zones. Local population growth was strongly linked to the building of new homes. Whilst the City Area shared some features of an ageing population with the rest of Highland, the workforce was younger than both the Highland and Scotland averages.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- infrastructure such as schools and shops had lagged behind housing development, particularly in areas such as Inverness South which had seen significant and rapid growth;
- community facilities should be developed in tandem with housing, not afterwards; information on jobs and commuting patterns would be useful in a number of ways, including in developing green transport plans; and
- when large housing developments aged and children moved away there could be potential to use classrooms in other ways.

Thereafter the Committee **NOTED** that the last decade had seen strong population growth of 18%, higher than the Highland average, and also that:

- i. the population had tended to fall slightly in areas that had seen limited new house building and in these areas there was evidence of population “cycles”;
- ii. the Census results showed that the City Area had a comparatively young work force although it did share some features of an ageing population with the rest of Highland; and
- iii. the strong links between economic growth, new house building and population growth.

6. Deprived Area Fund 2014/15 **Maoin Sgìre Bhoichd 2014/15**

Declarations of Interest –

Miss J Campbell, Mr K MacLeod and Mr R Laird declared non-financial interests in relation to this item on the grounds of being Board Members of Merkinch Enterprise but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

Mrs B McAllister and Mr R Laird declared non-financial interests in relation to this item on the grounds of being Board Member and Chair respectively of Merkinch Partnership but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-04-14 \(602kb pdf\)](#) dated 18 February 2014 by the Director of Planning and Development which described the 5 applications received for the Deprived Area Fund for 2014/15 and invited Members to approve recommendations for the allocations. In this regard, the recommendations had been approved by the City of Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

It was also recommended that decisions regarding the balance of the Funds in 2014/15 be delegated to the Common Good Sub-Committee for consideration.

At this point, the Employability Team Leader corrected an error in the figures whereby it was confirmed that the Awards recommended totalled £135k (rather than £137k as had been stated).

During discussion, Members highlighted that, although the criteria had been extended to include additional areas (Hilton, Dalneigh, Raigmore and Ardersier), the applications received were all from existing projects and there was therefore a need to provide support to groups and communities in the new areas to develop programmes.

In response to a question on progress with a report on mapping of existing community activity, it was confirmed that work was currently being undertaken to examine how different sources of funding could be integrated in order to build capacity in communities. Once this work was complete, a report would be brought to the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the recommendations for the Deprived Area Fund 2014/15 as shown below:-

Ref. No.	Applicant Organisation	Recommend 2014-15
3517	Merkinch Partnership	£ 59,000
3518	Merkinch Enterprise	£ 18,750
3536	Inverness Blitz (Highland Wildcats)	£ 9,500
3537	Arts in Merkinch	£ 30,000
3560	The Conservation Volunteers Scotland	£ 18,480
	Total	£ 135,730

The Committee also **AGREED** that decisions on the use of the balance of funds for 2014/15 should be delegated to the City of Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

(The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.00 pm and resumed at 1.45 pm).

7. Grounds Maintenance Performance Report **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Gleidheadh Raointean**

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-05-14 \(541kb pdf\)](#) dated 24 February 2014 by the Director of Community Services which detailed the arrangements for monitoring performance of the Grounds Maintenance Service in the City of Inverness and Area.

The report explained that there were approximately 3.4 million square metres of public open and amenity space and approximately 40,000 tasks to be undertaken on an annual basis to the standards specified in the Grounds Maintenance Service Level Agreement (SLA). With regard to performance, overall 85% of the inspections which had been carried out had passed and had been graded in the Satisfactory and Good Category. In addition, overall 84% of all breached standards had been rectified within the contractual limit of seven days.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the “Green and Growing” programme lacked clarity;
- it was considered that the mapping of grass cutting areas remained inadequate;
- work in the Inverness South Ward was carried out to a high standard;
- it would be desirable for developers to pay the Council to be responsible for factoring of open space in private sector developments; and
- the Community Services Committee should be asked, at the time of contract renewal for maintenance in the rural areas, to review the contract terms carefully with consideration being given at that time to submitting an in-house tender on the basis that there should be no further automatic roll forward.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on grounds maintenance performance for 2013 for Inverness City and Area as detailed in the report.

8. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013 **Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2013 gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2013**

Declarations of Interest –

Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau 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.

Mr A Duffy and Mr D Kerr declared financial interests in this item as Council House tenants but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-06-14 \(548kb pdf\)](#) dated 21 February 2014 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on housing performance indicators during the first three quarters of 2013/2014.

During a summary of the report, specific information relating to Repairs, Tenancy Management, Rent Arrears, Homelessness and Homeless Prevention was provided. Performance against targets was highlighted, as was the changed format of reporting, as had been agreed at the Finance, Housing and Resources (FHR) Committee.

In response to comments that the new reporting style did not provide as much information as Members wished, the Housing and Property Manager (South) advised that much of the information Members were seeking was available online; she would provide a link to the webpage after the meeting. Information on complaints was, however, not available on an Area basis due to the way it was recorded. Should Members wish for more information to be contained in the report, this could be provided.

During discussion, Members drew attention to increasing re-let times and suggested that additional focus should be placed on what could be done to address this issue.

Concerns were also expressed in relation to the recent increases in rent arrears which were contrary to the broad trend over past years notwithstanding that dedicated rent collection officers were employed by the Council.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April to 31 December 2013 as detailed in the report, along with the information provided at the meeting.

9. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

a) Review of Investment Strategy and Capital Planning Ath-sgrùdadh air Ro-innleachd Tasgaidh agus Dealbhadh Calpa

There had been circulated Joint Report No. [CIA-07-14 \(500kb pdf\)](#) dated 19 February 2014 by the Director of Finance and the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which confirmed the existing investment strategy for the City of Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF), set out the current governance arrangements, provided an update on the review of the investment strategy and confirmed existing and potential financial commitments.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the report was welcomed and thanks were expressed to the Director of Finance and his staff for their efforts;
- it was helpful to see the reasons why it was considered that the Investment Property Portfolio should be retained and support was expressed in that regard although it might be necessary to review the position in the future;
- information was sought on the origin of the policy of reinvesting the dividends from equity investments in the Equity Portfolio and it was suggested that there might have been occasions when this income could have been utilised for other things;
- it was essential to examine revenue expenditure commitments;
- it would not be necessary to sell stocks and shares if there was better retention of income;
- using the income from the Investment Property Portfolio and cash investments, even on a planned basis, would mean there was less funding available in the future;

- in terms of the investment strategy, it was important to strike a balance and not rule anything out in the future;
- it was essential to expedite the refurbishment of the office accommodation at 1-5 Church Street and an update was sought on the Inverness and Dingwall office review;
- there would be significant expenditure from the ICGF over the next few years and it was essential to have a clear depiction of the position;
- concern was expressed that the Victorian Market was not being managed in a manner that generated a financial return;
- cash investments were not replaceable if sold;
- there were no new funds the ICGF could access, other than to borrow, and it was important to consider that;
- 9% was not a high return for a property development fund and it was suggested that 15 to 20 % could reasonably be expected;
- in relation to the investment properties at the Longman Estate, concern was expressed that they had been leased to companies throughout Britain who then sub-let to local businesses at a profit. It was suggested that all leases be examined when they came up for renewal and, where the lessees were from outwith Inverness, the properties be brought back under the management of the Council so they could be leased directly to people who lived and worked locally. This was a long term aim but would give a better return; and
- consideration should be given to expanding the Investment Property Portfolio in to the City centre and its environs in the future.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the progress to date on the review of the Strategy applied to the administration of the Inverness Common Good Fund;
- ii. **AGREED** that the Investment Property Portfolio should be retained; and
- iii. **NOTED** existing and potential financial commitments.

At this stage, Members referred to a previous report, “Investing in Inverness and Area Capital Projects”, and sought clarification as to why there had been no further reports since August 2013. In response, it was explained that this tied in to the Council’s capital planning process and it was likely that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

**b) Town House Works Programme, High Street, Inverness
Prògram Obraichean Talla a’ Bhaile, An Àrd-Shràid, Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. [CIA-08-14 \(167kb pdf\)](#) dated 19 February 2014 by the Director of Planning and Development and the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which sought approval to proceed to tender to carry out comprehensive fabric works to the Town House following frequent emergency repairs and a detailed condition survey.

The works would include full stone repairs and replacement, mortar re-pointing, roof repairs, rainwater goods renewal, window repairs and replacements. Approval was also sought to investigate further third party funding.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- responsibility for maintaining the Town House lay with the Inverness Common Good Fund but the sums involved were significant and it was important to source as much external funding as possible. Historic Scotland had agreed to contribute a maximum of £500,000 per phase and it was suggested that extending the phasing might attract more funding;
- in addition to Historic Scotland, it was suggested that the Scottish Government, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Council should also contribute to the project;
- information was sought on the cost of the survey work undertaken to date and day to day repairs over the past few years;
- the longer the works were delayed the more would be spent on repairs and it was important to proceed with Phase 1;
- there was no guarantee that extending the phasing would attract more funding;
- reference was made to Inverness City Heritage Trust and it was suggested that incorporating the project into a city area regeneration scheme might lead to a better outcome in terms of funding and would be worth investigating;
- the outcome of investigations regarding further sources of funding was eagerly awaited and it was hoped that private sector funding could be obtained;
- in relation to the stonework, clarification was requested as to whether it would be replaced like for like;
- there was a surplus of £1.3m in rental income from the Inverness Common Good Fund investment Property Portfolio and it was suggested that, if the phasing was extended to 10 or 12 years, this could be utilised to fund the Town House project, together with any external funding;
- the Town House was an important building to Inverness but the funding required was too great to take from Inverness Common Good Fund investments. Some sequential draw down could be made but it was important to set a limit that could not be exceeded. If the investments were cleared, the Inverness Common Good Fund would be unable to fund other projects and events;
- consideration should be given to borrowing funding in the region of 20% of the project. In addition, the Town House was on the Council's Asset Register and it was suggested that 20% funding be sought from the Council;
- information was sought on the accuracy of the projected costs of £8.8m;
- extending the phasing could lead to the rest of the building falling further into disrepair;
- information was requested regarding what impact the works would have on the interior of the building;
- it was important to make it clear to the public that Inverness Common Good Fund owned the Town House;
- it was essential to scrutinise the costs to ensure that value for money was achieved;
- concern was expressed regarding projects where costs had risen significantly once works were underway and the importance of factoring risk and contingency in to any negotiations was emphasised;
- public safety was paramount in carrying out the works;
- Phases 1 and 2 could be carried out as two separate phases rather than simultaneously; and
- the Council paid a reasonable rent to the Inverness Common Good Fund for the use of the Town House and it was not appropriate to seek further funding.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that work be undertaken to proceed to tender for the repairs outlined in the report at a total estimated project cost of £7,250,000 over five phases and to carry out further investigation into third party funding.

**c) City Events and Festivals – Review of 2013 Events and Proposals for 2014
Tachartasan agus Fèisean a’ Bhaile – Ath-sgrùdadh air Tachartasan 2013 agus
Molaidhean airson 2014**

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-09-14 \(770kb pdf\)](#) dated 20 February 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which provided an update on the 2013 Events and Festivals Programme and previewed the 2014 Events and Festivals Programme and the additional events which would be staged as part of the Homecoming Scotland 2014 celebrations.

The report confirmed that the 2013 Programme had been delivered within budget and had met the aims and objectives contained in the action plan, existing partnerships had been enhanced and new partnerships had been developed on a local, national and international basis.

It was proposed that the 2014 Programme would consist of the core events together with the Highland Homecoming programme. In this regard, and as a result of the work undertaken to develop the programme, significant in-kind and financial support had been secured from EventScotland.

At this point, the Chair advised that the proposed Events and Festivals budget of £340,000 for 2014/15 included a sum of £20,000 to be transferred from the Civic Hospitality budget to cover hospitality expenditure in relation to events. However, it was now proposed that an application be submitted to the Grants Sub-Committee in respect of hospitality costs and therefore the Committee was being invited to agree a revised budget of £320,000 for Events and Festivals in 2014/15.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- that investment of Common Good Funds in events over the past six years had raised the profile of Inverness to an unprecedented level and had contributed to the establishment of the Highland Homecoming Fund which would benefit both Inverness and the wider area;
- the Programme for 2014 and Homecoming celebrations would generate significant levels of additional revenue in the area;
- opportunities for the Programme to include events in response to the increasing Eastern European population resident in the Highlands;
- opportunities to generate additional income through the sponsorship of events by third parties;
- there was a lack of reference in the report to the Royal National Mod to be held in Inverness in October 2014;
- in addition to economic benefits, the staging of free, inclusive and safe events had generated significant social benefits; and
- the Programme was in line with local and national policy to support tourism and communities by supporting the staging of events.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the activities staged in the second half of 2013;
- ii. **ENDORSED** the activities of the Events and Festivals Working Group and confirmed that the activity met with the aims and objectives of the Inverness Events and Festivals Action Plan;
- iii. **AGREED** the Events and Festivals proposed programme and budget of £320,000 for 2014/15; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Highland Homecoming events for 2014 be funded by an additional budget of £50,000 (the Highland Homecoming budget) to be administered under the governance of the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group with funds to be drawn from the Inverness Common Good Fund.

d) Budget Setting for 2014/15 and Capital Programme Suidheachadh Buidseat airson 2014/15 agus Prògram Calpa

There had been circulated Joint Report No. [CIA-10-14 \(537kb pdf\)](#) dated 19 February 2014 by the Director of Finance and the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which invited Members to set the Revenue Budget for the Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF) for the financial year 2014/15.

The report also clarified the current governance arrangements, anticipated income (primarily from tenancy rentals), the proposed expenditure split into essentials (for the maintenance of buildings and the provision of basic services) and a number of additional items, action on the future investment of any projected surplus funds and the structure of payments made to the Council for services rendered in support of the fund and how these services should be supported in the coming financial year and thereafter.

The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement clarified that to reflect the amendment agreed at Item 9(b) above, the Civic and Conference Hospitality budget would require to be adjusted to £120,000 and the Events and Festivals budget to £370,000. It was also clarified that the budget heading 'Civic Promotions' should read 'City Promotions'.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the Common Good Fund budget for 2014/15 as detailed within the report subject to the adjusted figures for the Civic and Conference Hospitality budget (£120,000) and the Events and Festivals budget (£370,000);
- ii. **AGREED** to develop detailed cash flow forecasts for major project expenditure to permit the most appropriate investment exit strategy to be agreed with the Fund Manager; and
- iii. **NOTED** that Officers would continue to monitor projected cash flow for the Common Good Fund, in particular through the Capital Projects Monitoring Report, with an emphasis on the utilisation of surplus revenue either within projects or as an opportunity for investment.

e) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-11-14 \(483kb pdf\)](#) dated 17 February 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Common Good Fund as of 31 January 2014 and the projected year end position.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report as circulated.

f) Grant and Capital Projects Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

Declarations of Interest –

Mr I Brown declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a Board member of Inverness Business Improvement District 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 him from taking part in the discussion.

Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a Member of Nairn Dunbar Golf Club 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 him from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. [CIA-13-14 \(578kb pdf\)](#) dated 17 February 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which set out the current applications for funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects. There had also been circulated separately a copy of supporting documentation as [Booklet A \(1657kb pdf\)](#) and [Booklet B \(2863kb pdf\)](#).

In this regard, the current summary of funds available, following the Grants Sub Committee meeting on 10 February 2014, had been detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, with the current status of capital projects highlighted within Appendix 2.

The Committee **NOTED** the current status of capital projects as detailed in the report and **AGREED** the applications for funding as follows, as recommended by the Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 10 February 2014:-

Camanachd Association (£15,000) - **APPROVED**

Celtic Media Festival 2015 (£10,000) – **APPROVED**

Highland Golf Links (£12,000) – **REFUSED**

Inverness BID Inverness Gull Project 2014 (£12,000) – **APPROVED**

Inverness BID City of Inverness Annuals Floral Displays (£37,700) – **APPROVED**

Inverness BID Inverness Community Safety Partnership (£14,000) – **APPROVED**

Inverness BID Operation Respect Easter/Summer 2014 (£5,790) – **APPROVED**

11. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated Minutes of the Meetings as follows:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on [9 December 2013](#) - **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on [6 December 2013 \(476kb pdf\)](#) - **APPROVED**;
- iii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on [24 January 2014 \(953kb pdf\)](#) - **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on [10 February 2014 \(560kb pdf\)](#) – **APPROVED** (on the basis that decisions made by a vote would be recorded as such at future meetings).

12. Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Programme **Prògram Rothaireachd, Coiseachd agus Sràidean nas Sàbhailte**

Declaration of Interest –

Mr H Wood declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being the Chair of the Highland Cycle Campaign 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. [CIA-14-14 \(484kb pdf\)](#) dated 27 February 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve the projects delivered through the Scottish Government funding for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets for the City of Inverness as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Safer Routes to School Project listed in Appendix 1; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the Road Safety Unit would continue to work with schools to develop further Safer Routes to School Projects for future years.

The meeting ended at 3.45 p.m