

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Tuesday, 3 June 2014 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

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

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure  
Mr D Haas, Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement  
Mr C Mackintosh, Area Education Manager (South)  
Mr J Taylor, Acting Area Roads and Community Works Manager (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)  
Mr S Callan, Assistant Housing Manager South, Community Services  
Mr C Howell, Project Design Unit Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service  
Mr M Smith, Principal Engineer and Team Leader, Flood Team, Community Services  
Ms A MacNeill, Senior Public Relations Officer, Chief Executive's Service  
Ms A Clark, Policy Officer, Chief Executive's Office  
Mr C Simpson, Tourism Co-ordinator, Development and Infrastructure Service  
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Development Service  
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service  
Mr G Smith, Assistant Civic Officer, Finance Service  
Ms L Mackay, Assistant Civic Officer, Finance Service

### Also in attendance:

Mr Martin Johnson, Area Manager, Highlands & Islands Enterprise  
Mr Mark MacKay, Inverness Area Commander, Highland Division, Police Scotland  
Ms C Shankland, Exhibitions Officer, High Life Highland

**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, tribute was paid to the late Mr Ian Fraser, former Provost of Inverness, who had recently passed away. In this regard, Mr Fraser's achievements during his time as Provost were highlighted and the condolences of the Committee were conveyed to his family.

## **Business**

### **1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Hendry, Mrs G Sinclair, Ms K Stephen and Mrs B McAllister.

### **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

Item 4 – Mr A Christie, Mr K Gowans, Mr K MacLeod and Mr F Parr (non-financial)

Item 5 – Mr G Ross and Mr F Parr (non-financial)

Item 7 – Mr K Gowans and Mr F Parr (non-financial)

Item 13 – Mr H Wood (non-financial)

Item 15 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

Item 16c – Mr T Prag (non-financial)

Item 19a – Mr R Laird (non-financial)

### **3. HIE Overview of Inverness Area Economy Sealladh Coitcheann Iomairt na Gaidhealtachd is nan Eilean air Eaconamaidh Sgìre Caithair-bhaile Inbhir Nis**

A Presentation was undertaken at the meeting by Mr M Johnson, Area Manager, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, during which he highlighted the Economic Strategy for the area, including reference to the purpose, vision and priorities contained within the Highlands & Islands Operating Plan.

In this regard, it was confirmed that 8 Area Offices currently employed approximately 250 staff with the aim of supporting businesses, strengthening communities and developing growth sectors. Particular areas of focus included Energy, Tourism, Food & Drink, Life Sciences, Creative Industries and Social Enterprise.

Creating a competitive region through physical infrastructure and regionally significant investments was key to future successes and as such the vision of the Highlands & Islands in 2020 was as an international marine renewables centre, a digital region, home to more growth businesses operating in international markets, recognised internationally for digital healthcare and marine science expertise, characterised by dynamic and sustainable communities, a globally connected region and an attractive region for young people.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was important that every opportunity was taken to attract both national and international investment for the area and that businesses should continue to be encouraged to set up offices in the City Centre where possible;

- it was encouraging to note the positive statements in relation to the economic situation across the Highlands and important to recognise that a strong economy in Inverness had benefits for the wider area;
- there were new opportunities emerging in regard to offshore wind developments and it was considered that these could be just as successfully delivered in the Highlands as elsewhere;
- it was imperative that the workforce across the Highlands was developed where necessary in order to meet the demands of potential inward investors;
- more use could perhaps be made of the Community Challenge Fund in terms of enabling communities to take ownership of and deliver services in local areas;
- there was a need to focus on young people across the Highlands, particularly in terms of skills development, as they represented the workforce of today and tomorrow;
- employment opportunities and self advancement would lead to better quality jobs and a more successful workforce in future and this had to underpin all proposals coming forward;
- it was essential that Next Generation Broadband was delivered for all areas of the Highlands and there was therefore a need for all agencies to work together in terms of delivery, particularly in smaller rural areas which could present particular challenges and therefore require innovative solutions;
- in terms of creative industries, it was pleasing to note that arrangements were in place to ensure that strong demand in any particular sector could be met from flexible resources;
- it was imperative that individual communities were listened to and involved in the delivery of local services wherever possible, such as the provision of social care, and that contracts were split into smaller quantities where feasible in order to sustain smaller areas;
- communities across the Highlands had to be at the heart of all proposals in order to ensure successful workforce development and planning; and
- in relation to the focus on local needs and initiatives, there was an urgent requirement for a strategy to be developed for the provision of adult social care in future which was a high priority growth area and which would require a highly skilled workforce across the Highlands.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the position.

#### **4. Inverness City Centre Action Plan Plana-gnìomha airson Meadhan Cathair-bhaile Inbhir Nis**

##### **Declarations of Interest –**

**Mr A Christie and Mr K MacLeod declared non-financial interests in relation to this item on the grounds of being General Manager and Director respectively 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 their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

**Mr K Gowans declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Director of High Life Highland and on the basis of a family**

**member being employed by the organisation 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 F Parr declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Director of High Life Highland 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/15/14 dated 21 May 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which outlined details of a proposed Action Plan for Inverness City Centre containing a package of priorities for maximising footfall and optimising the role of the City Centre as the key regional destination for retail, commercial and social activity.

The report also summarised feedback received during two recent consultation events aimed at gathering views on the priorities for the City Centre and showed how these views had been considered in drawing up the Action Plan.

In this regard, it was confirmed that the priorities which had emerged from the consultation events, including improvements to City Centre access and connections, development of Academy Street and its surroundings and redevelopment of key sites to create visitor and cultural attractions, would play a key role in the development of the City Centre Action Plan. Also, these priorities had been discussed by the Inverness Task Force and, subject to approval, they were committed to co-ordinating their delivery in partnership with other key agencies and partners.

A number of initial actions had been listed in the report, alongside committed interventions and improvements, and these included the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme, the Carbon CLEVER Cycles pilot and the Millburn Cycle Link.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this represented the most widespread consultation to date and it was pleasing to note the number of responses which had been received and the sense of confidence in the proposals;
- the various linkages between areas in the City Centre were especially important in terms of 'way finding', including surfaces, lighting, greening, etc and as such should be an important focus in terms of future action to be taken;
- whilst this represented an excellent example of public consultation, there were still some omissions, such as the future use of the Castle, and these should be addressed as part of future proposals;
- the inclusion of proposals in relation to the Railway Station and the Bus Station were particularly welcome;
- it was very important that feedback was provided to all those who had taken part in the consultation process in order to reassure people that their views had been listened to and considered;

- thanks should be conveyed to the Inverness Courier for their focus on this high profile issue which had raised interest levels with the general public;
- it would be important to ensure that where work had already been undertaken, such as on walking and cycle routes, that this taken account of in future proposals and not unnecessarily duplicated;
- there was a need to address maintenance issues in relation to the green areas already established in Inverness;
- further work was required in regard to the routes into the City Centre and also areas such as the Raining Stairs and the Market Brae Steps;
- consideration should be given at an early date to the possible future use of the Midmills Building in Inverness;
- making progress on 'easier wins' at an early date would be advantageous;
- it was especially important to avoid raising public expectations and then not being able to meet them;
- work was needed to improve the current signage, particularly in the City Centre;
- provision of a transport hub was essential for the future;
- there was a need for further consideration to be given to the feasibility of providing an electric vehicle in the City Centre as part of transport connectivity;
- addressing the issues in regard to the number of empty properties in the City Centre was essential, as well as focusing on the provision of affordable housing for rent;
- consideration should be given to the separation of walking and cycling routes in the City Centre;
- Inverness had recently been voted the happiest City in Scotland in which to live and the second happiest in the UK and this should be highlighted wherever possible;
- urgent consideration should be given to the identification and provision of a Travellers Site in the City;
- there was a need to look at other avenues of funding for City Centre proposals in addition to the Ward 15 Discretionary Fund; and
- potential future actions could perhaps include the provision of 'Living Walls', a Roof Garden on Bridge Street if feasible and better toilet facilities.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** the outcome of the recent City Centre consultation events in Appendix 1 to the report and **AGREED** the three priorities for the City Centre in Paragraph 5.4 and Table C;
- (ii) **AGREED** the initial actions identified in Appendix 2 for delivering the three priorities to inform the next version of the City Centre Action Plan;
- (iii) **AGREED** that Officers should incorporate the Action Plan into a review of the Inverness City Centre Development Brief and reflect it in other relevant strategies;
- (iv) **AGREED** that the Action Plan and the priorities identified should be used to inform future Capital Programme bids; and
- (v) **AGREED** that the Inverness Task Force should co-ordinate the delivery of the City Centre Action Plan.

**5. Inverness City Arts – River Ness Connections – Public Art Project Programme  
Ealain Cathair-bhaile Inbhir Nis – Fios as Ur mu Phrogram a' Phroiseict**

**Declarations of Interest –**

**Mr F Parr declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Member of the Inverness and District Union Council 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 G Ross declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds that a family member 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. CIA/16/14 dated 22 May 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which provided an update on the curatorial progress of the River Ness – River Connections Public Art Programme and requested the release of the balance of funding allocated from the Inverness Common Good Fund.

During a summary of the report, it was confirmed that there were five artists' commissions proposed for the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Programme, namely River Connections, The Gathering Place, Artist-designed Rest Spaces, The Sculptural Destination and The Trail.

The commissioning process involved a number of steps, including community consultation, drawing up briefs in accordance with city vision and funding criteria, advertising, evaluation, refining the procurement process, confirmation of funding and design, siting and installation. In this regard, information was provided on the Evaluation Panel meeting which had been held on 25 April to shortlist artists for the The Gathering Place, The Sculptural Destination and Rest Spaces.

Specific and detailed information was also provided in terms of the funding which had been allocated. In this respect, it was confirmed that the release of the balance of £0.190m from the Inverness Common Good Fund was essential as this would allow for the Stage 2 Creative Scotland application to confirm that more than 80% of allocated partnership funding was in place.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there had been good governance, transparency and accountability in the work which had been undertaken and this was welcomed;
- the design of the Workers' Memorial was being taken forward through competition and in this regard the Project Manager had met with representatives from the Trades Union Council in order to progress this issue;
- whilst a commitment had already been made in terms of funding, it was essential that the release of the balance of £0.190m was now undertaken in

order to allow for the Stage 2 Creative Scotland application to be progressed; and

- in order to avoid the perception that this was a large amount of money being allocated to public art projects during very austere economic conditions, it should be highlighted that a number of different funding streams had been identified across a range of organisations and that the contribution from Council budgets had been limited to £0.066m.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** 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 and Sculptural Destination;
- (ii) **NOTED** the progress being made on the remaining elements of the River Connections Project Programme; and
- (iii) **AGREED** 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.

## 6. Marketing Inverness Margaideachd Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/17/14 dated 20 May 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which provided an update on the delivery of actions from the marketing action plan for Inverness and outlined a way forward which was currently under consideration by the Inverness Partnership Marketing Group.

In this regard, it was confirmed that previous and current activity included a new version of the Website, a promotional film about Inverness, inward investment, PR and social media activity and completion of a Photographic Library. The Loch Ness and Inverness Business Improvement District had also formally come into existence on 1 April 2014.

In terms of future marketing activity, an update was provided at the meeting whereby it was confirmed that the Tourism Business Improvement District had offered to undertake agreed activities for the Marketing Group on the basis that funding would be provided to them for this service. This offer had been discussed by the Marketing Group at a meeting on 27 May and it had been suggested that an application for such funding could perhaps be submitted to the Inverness Common Good Fund in due course if this was considered acceptable to the Committee.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was concerning that more use had not been made of social media and this should be progressed in order to ensure that best value was being obtained;

- in addition to the Inverness Common Good Fund, consideration should be given in future to other possible sources of funding, including budgets related to development and infrastructure;
- there was a need for further and increased liaison with Visit Scotland if possible;
- it would be important that there was no duplication of service going forward as a considerable amount of work had already been undertaken in relation to some of the issues mentioned in the report, such as the creation of a website and video production; and
- the focus should not just be on tourism but also on highlighting Inverness and the surrounding areas as attractive places in which to live and work.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** the marketing activity already delivered by the Inverness Partnership Marketing Group;
- (ii) **ENDORSED** the approach agreed by the Inverness Partnership Marketing Group to delivering future activities on the basis that any funding awards would only be made following applications to the Highland Council or the Inverness Common Good Fund and as such would be subject to the governance and approval processes already in place.

**7. Inverness Royal Academy Associated School Group Overview  
Sealladh Coitcheann air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Acadamaidh  
Rioghail Inbhir Nis**

**Declarations of Interest –**

**Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Director of High Life Highland and on the basis of his wife being an employee of High Life Highland 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 F Parr declared non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Board Member of High Life Highland 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/18/14 dated 20 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided an update of key information in relation to the schools within the Inverness Royal Academy Associated School Group and useful updated links to further information in relation to these schools.

In this regard, specific and detailed information was provided in relation to Attainment and Achievement, the most recent HMIe report, the Standards and Quality report and Wider Achievement and Notable Successes.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the successes with curricular/extra-curricular activities and fundraising across Primary Schools, especially Hilton and Cauldeen, were welcomed;
- there was a need for further progress to be made in terms of improving through self-evaluation and improving services;
- it was essential that children were encouraged to target learning where possible in order to provide a focus on the renewable energy sector which was likely to provide considerable opportunities for employment in the future; and
- there was a need to focus on improvements overall as part of the next stage of Associated School Group reports.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

## **8. Community Challenge Fund – Area Update Maoin Dubhlan Coimhearsnachd – Fios as Ur a thaobh na Sgìre**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/19/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which provided Members with an opportunity to consider the interest at a local level in the Community Challenge Fund, launched in January 2013, and also to discuss how the Fund could best be promoted and utilised within the local area.

In this regard, it was confirmed that there had been 11 expressions of interest from the City of Inverness Area, of which 1 had been approved. In terms of the 10 which had been rejected, it was explained that this had been because they were for services which the Council currently did not provide or where the ideas required further development.

In relation to making the Community Challenge Fund work, the Council had agreed a series of changes in March in an attempt to make it more accessible and to ensure that applicants and staff felt more supported, including changes to criteria, proactive promotion and capacity building. In this respect, Members were asked to consider how the Fund could be promoted and used to best effect within the City of Inverness Area.

During discussion, it was suggested that, whilst the Fund had been laudable in its concept and there were a number of positive examples in terms of what had been achieved to date, it was now time for a review, particularly in terms of addressing key factors, such as employment, legal issues, asset transfer and contracts (including NHS Highland contracts) and promoting community sustainability and empowerment wherever possible. As such, there was an urgent need for community planning at a local level to be undertaken in order to develop the Council's enabling role with a view to all agencies across the Highlands being in a position to support communities who wished to take on and deliver services.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** the take up of the fund to date in the City of Inverness Area; and

- (ii) **NOTED** the changes made and the approach to promoting the fund which had been agreed by the Council in March 2014.

**9. Rural Poverty – Research Briefing  
Bochdainn Duthchail – Brath Rannsachaidh**

There had circulated Report No. CIA/20/14 dated 12 May 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform which provided Members with a summary of the methodology and the key findings from two research studies considering rural poverty published in 2013: 'A Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland' and 'Local Incomes and Poverty in Scotland'.

In this regard, it was confirmed that these studies had provided valuable insight and published evidence in relation to the costs of living in remote rural Scotland and had demonstrated the importance of using a variety of indicators when measuring income and poverty. As such, they could be seen as a balance to the use of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in identifying priorities for intervention. Specifically, the areas within the Highlands which were amongst the 15% most deprived in Scotland were parts of Inverness (Merkinch, Hilton and Raigmore), Easter Ross, Wick and part of Dingwall.

Following the publication of the studies, a rural proofing tool for Highland had been drafted which would operate in similar way to an equalities impact assessment in the provision of key questions to policy makers on areas to consider when developing a new policy or service. In this respect, work was currently ongoing to consider incorporating this into a broader approach to assessing community impact i.e. the potential impacts of a policy on a community as a whole, with possible future adjustments including delivering services differently in rural or deprived urban communities or offering affordable transport options if services were centralised in order to minimise the impact.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there tended to be conflation between poverty and deprivation in some Area Committee reports and it was important to recognise that these were separate issues and that poverty was only one aspect of deprivation. In this regard, it should be noted that the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation looked at six other factors, in addition to poverty, when determining deprivation in an area;
- this work would form an integral part of future community planning and rural proofing within the Council and specifically as part of the budget setting process and as such it would be helpful if further consultation could be undertaken with Members in regard to the draft rural proofing tool at an early date;
- it would also be helpful if further information could be provided on the political lobbying on this issue which had been undertaken to date;
- the cumulative impact of budget decisions on rural communities had been taken account of in the previous budget consultation process undertaken by the Council and this would be repeated in future; and
- in terms of the review of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, it would be helpful if the income domain could be tailored to recognise the different

income standards required in urban and rural areas and more weight given to the public services domain.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- (i) the findings of both research papers; and
- (ii) that a rural proofing tool had been drafted, assisted by the findings of these research studies, and work was ongoing to consider this tool in relation to a broader approach to assessing community impact which would take into account deprived urban communities, health inequalities and the impact upon equality groups.

**10. River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme (Tidal Section) Phase 2 – Draft Parking Orders – Riverside Street**  
**Ordughan Parcaidh agus Traftaig, Ceum 2 a thaobh Sgeama Dion Thuiltean Abhainn Nis (Earrann a' Mhuir-lain)**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/21/14 dated 18 May 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which invited approval for the making and implementation of the draft Traffic Orders affecting Riverside Street within Phase 2 of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme (Tidal Section) and the programme for scheme delivery.

In this regard, specific and detailed information in relation to the objections to the Road Traffic Orders (24 from Waterloo Bowling Club, 1 from Inverness Bowling Club and 1 from the Boys Brigade) had been contained within the report.

It was also advised that Phase 1 continued to progress between Ness Bridge and Friars Bridge and it was proposed to re-open Bank Street at the end of June. Completion of this phase was programmed for the end of February 2015.

Phase 2 had commenced on 28 April and was progressing along the west bank. In addition, trial holes were currently being carried out in a number of locations on the east and west banks to confirm the location of services and tree roots.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this was an excellent example of consultation and negotiation and thanks should be conveyed to the team involved;
- there had been good engagement with local schools in the area and this had been appreciated;
- in relation to the Flood Scheme, there was a problem on Kessock Road as a result of the large amounts of excavated ground which had built up and this required to be addressed as soon as possible;
- consideration should be given to the provision of disabled parking bays in terms of the option to be chosen for car parking; and
- there was a need to review other potential car parking options in the area which could be utilised if necessary.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **APPROVED** the making of the amended Traffic Order entitled “THE HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL (INVERNESS-CENTRAL CONSOLIDATION) ORDER 1988 (RIVERSIDE STREET, INVERNESS)” which amended parking restrictions on Riverside Street and removed the existing parking provision;
- (ii) **APPROVED** the making of the Traffic Order entitled “THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (RIVERSIDE STREET, INVERNESS) (OFF-STREET PARKING) DRAFT PARKING ORDERS – RIVERSIDE STREET” in line with Option 2 as detailed within the report - to establish the off-street car park as proposed in the draft Orders and provide Waterloo Bowling Club access to 12 number spaces during the bowling season (controlled by demountable bollards);
- (iii) **APPROVED** the inclusion of accommodation works within the curtilage of the Boys Brigade Club to provide a private parking space to remove their objection; and
- (iv) **NOTED** the programme for scheme delivery for completion in April 2015.

#### **11. Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges Program Gleidhidh airson Rathaidean agus Dhrochaidean**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/22/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited approval of the Maintenance Programmes for Roads and Bridges for the City of Inverness and Area for 2014/15.

In this regard, detailed information was provided on budget distribution, with a particular focus on the 2014/15 programmes for Surface Dressing, Structural Road Maintenance and Bridge Maintenance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the inclusion of the Streetscape defects within the Maintenance Programme was welcomed but it the deterioration within a relatively short space of time was disappointing and it was hoped that this would not re-occur in future;
- the condition of the Infirmary Bridge was causing concern and as such there was a need for an inspection to be undertaken at an early date if possible; and
- there was also concern in relation to the condition of the Ness Bridge and it was hoped that re-painting could perhaps be undertaken as part of any future inspection.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Maintenance Programmes for Roads and Bridges for the City of Inverness and Area for 2014/15.

## **12. Public Space Amenity – Inverness Community Safety Partnership Aithisg Bhliadhnaid Com-pairteachas Sabhailteachd Coimhearsnachd Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/23/14 dated 20 May 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement and the Inverness Area Commander (Highland Division – Police Scotland) which summarised the activities of the Inverness Community Safety Partnership (ICSP) since it had last reported to Committee in April 2013 and provided information on the priority issues for 2014.

In this regard, detailed information had been provided on action taken in 2013/14 in relation to the prevention of anti-social behaviour during daylight hours, Operation Respect during Winter 2013/14 and the addressing of community safety issues with an emphasis on reduction and prevention.

Work in progress in 2014 included a survey of diversionary service providers to scope the breadth of diversionary activities available to identify any gaps in provision, development of further no cold calling zones, implementation of the Operation Respect Summertime Initiative, engagement with the third sector to assist in the delivery of diversionary activity, support for the NHS Harm Reduction Service, liaison with the Scottish Prison Service and arrangement of a year-end review and planning meeting to identify priorities and objectives for 2014/15.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Operation Respect was an example of collaborative working at its best and as such the thanks of the Committee should be conveyed to all those involved;
- consideration should be given to increasing the service currently being provided by Taxi Marshalls;
- in relation to the action taken following reports of low level anti-social behaviour in the City Centre, there was a need to ensure that regular feedback was given to both businesses and the general public in this regard;
- the expansion of cold calling control zones wherever possible would be welcomed;
- Inverness and the surrounding areas were generally very safe, low crime areas and this needed to be highlighted, along with the recently reported reduction in serious crime;
- collaboration and co-ordination between all partners was imperative in order to ensure that the maximum benefit was achieved from the services which they provided;
- the thanks of the Committee should be conveyed to the Street Pastors for the work which they undertook on a regular basis, particularly in regard to diversionary activity;
- there was genuine concern and serious doubt regarding proposals for Police Officers in the Highlands to be armed;
- it was recognised that the reporting of hate crime was limited, often due to the circumstances involved, and there was therefore an urgent need to consider ways of addressing this in light of the potential long term damage to the groups affected;

- consideration should be given by NHS Highland to the identification of potential cost savings achieved through the early intervention of the Red Cross (in the City Centre in particular) which often prevented hospital admissions or the need for medical treatment;
- the prevention of shoplifting was of benefit to many traders in the City Centre;
- drug and alcohol abuse in the City Centre was an on-going problem and it was suggested that further liaison was required between the Police, Street Pastors and the Drug & Alcohol Forum in this regard;
- there needed to be more focus on the '101 Service' as a number of concerns had been voiced in this respect;
- an increased presence, wherever possible, of Police Officers in the City Centre would be welcomed; and
- in addition to the concerns which had previously been expressed in relation to armed Police in future, there was also widespread concern in regard to mounted Police in the area.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **APPROVED** the ICSP priorities for the ICSP for 2014;
- (ii) **NOTED** the establishment of a new Operation Respect – Summertime;
- (iii) **ENDORSED** the evaluation report on Operation Respect – Winter 2013/14; and
- (iv) **ENDORSED** the work of the Operation Respect Daytime Group.

### 13. **Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Programme Program Rothaireachd, Coiseachd agus Sraidean nas Sabhailte**

#### **Declaration of Interest –**

**Mr H Wood declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being the Chairman of the Highland Cycling 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/24/14 dated 20 May 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited approval of the projects delivered through the Scottish Government funding for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets for the City of Inverness Area as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

In this regard, it was confirmed that the costs which had been detailed had been estimated at present and, if the proposals were approved, the schemes would be put out to tender and implemented on a priority basis to allocate the available funding.

In addition, small grant funding allocated from the 2014/15 budget amounted to £3,900 for 'Walk to School Week' resources and 'Park Smart' leaflets for Highland Schools.

During discussion, it was suggested that as much encouragement as possible should be given to parents across the Highlands to walk or cycle, rather than using cars, when picking up their children at the end of the school day.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **APPROVED** the Safer Routes to School Project listed in Appendix 1 to the report; 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.

**14. Education Scotland Reports – March 2014 to June 2014  
Aithisgean Foghlam Alba – Mart 2014 gu Ogmhios 2014**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/25/14 dated 21 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided details of Education Scotland's inspections of schools in the Area during the period March 2014 to June 2014 for scrutiny and monitoring.

In this regard, it was confirmed that a Routine Inspection of Daviot Primary School had been undertaken in February 2013 after which evaluations had been received as follows – Improvements in Performance (Good), Learners' Experiences (Very Good), Meeting Learning Needs (Very Good), the Curriculum (Good) and Improvement through Self Evaluation (Satisfactory). The Authority and the Head Teacher had both been provided with a copy of the report and the inspection findings and these would be used to adapt the School Improvement, with annual reports on the impact on learners through the Standards and Quality Report.

The Committee **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

**15. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014  
Aithisg Deanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2013 gu 31 Mart 2014**

**Declaration of Interest –**

**Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a 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.**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/26/14 dated 21 February 2014 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on housing performance indicators during the year of 2013/14.

In this regard, specific and detailed information had been provided on Repairs, Tenancy Management, Rent Arrears and Homelessness/Homeless Prevention.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for further clarification in relation to the increase in the number of homeless presentations during 2013/14;
- in terms of the primary advice reasons provided, it would be helpful in future to have comparative figures for previous years;
- a Briefing for Members on the current position regarding homelessness in the City of Inverness Area, including the statistics in relation to the provision of temporary accommodation, should be considered at an early date;
- additional monitoring data for the area had been requested at the previous meeting but it was noted that this had still not been provided;
- further information was required in terms of the LIFT Scheme and specifically confirmation of how 'affordable' housing was in the area;
- there had been reports of problems with the hand held devices used by Council employees in terms of registering updated details on jobs completed and this required to be resolved as soon as possible; and
- a further report was required in relation to what appeared to be a developing problem with arrears on service charges associated with temporary accommodation.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

It was also **AGREED** that a Briefing on Homelessness should be arranged for Members of the Committee at an early date.

## **16. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis**

### **(a) Review of Investment Strategy and Capital Planning Ath-sgrudadh air Ro-innleachd Tasgaidh agus Dealbhadh Calpa**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/27/14 dated 26 May 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 and the current governance arrangements and set out a revised investment strategy in the context of existing and potential financial commitments.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the proposal to establish a City Investment Fund was considered to be premature at this stage and should be deferred meantime with a further more detailed report to a future meeting;
- there was a need for a Briefing to be arranged for Members on the key issues in this regard in order to allow further consideration before any future decisions were taken;
- consideration should be given to the provision of breaks in any future contract in order to avoid over commitment and a focus on how the contract was to be structured; and

- it was disappointing that the suggested improvements in relation to the empty buildings in Church Street had not been undertaken and it was requested that this be followed up as soon as possible.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress to date on the review of the Strategy and that further reports would be presented to formulate a specific strategy for the Fund.

The Committee **AGREED TO DEFER** consideration of existing expenditure commitments and the option of establishing a City Investment Fund (including funding options and the scale of annual investment) as outlined in the report.

The Committee also **AGREED** that a Briefing for Members on the key issues identified within the report should be arranged before the next meeting in order to allow further information to be received before any decisions were taken in this regard.

### **(b) Financial Monitoring Sgrudadh Ionmhasaid**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/28/14 dated 15 May 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Common Good Fund as at 30 April 2014 and the projected year end position.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report as presented – subject to the following corrections –

Page 147 – Expenditure –

Civic and Conference Hospitality – should read £120k (and not £100k); and  
Events and Festivals – should read £370k (and not £390k).

### **(c) Grant and Capital Projects Proiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa**

#### **Declaration of Interest –**

**Mr T Prag declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Board Member of Inshes Community Association and left the room.**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/29/14 dated 15 May 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.

In this regard, there had been circulated separately a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

Following discussion of the third application from the Inshes Community Association, Mr G Ross, seconded by Mr D Kerr, **MOVED** that £30,000 be granted (as opposed to the £60,000 which had been requested).

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr K Gowans, seconded by Mrs C Caddick, moved that £60,000 should be granted as requested.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 7 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 5 votes with 2 abstentions and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:-**

A Graham; J Slater; R Balfour; D Kerr; R Laird; F Parr; G Ross

**For the Amendment:-**

I Brown; C Caddick; M Davidson; K Gowans; K MacLeod

**Abstentions:-**

A Duffy; H Wood

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i. **APPROVED** the following applications for funding:-

Hands Up for Trad - £10,000

Inverness Tattoo Committee - £9,900

Inshes Community Association - £30,000

ii. **NOTED** the current status of capital projects; and

iii. **NOTED** that expenditure of £0.009m due against the Replacement of Gas Boilers; Inverness Town House project would be drawn from the Town House Maintenance budget.

**(d) Exclusion of the Public**

**As-dunadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**(e) Inverness Common Good Account Sites and Premises Transaction Report  
Laraich Chunntasan agus Aithisg Gnothachais Maoin Math Choitcheann  
Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. CIA/30/14 dated 22 May 2014 by the Head of Property Partnerships which summarised property transactions recently approved under the Highland Council's Scheme of Delegation after consultation with Local Members as appropriate and in accordance with policy, together with a statement on the current position in respect of Inverness Common Good Fund rents and tenants arrears.

The Committee **NOTED** Inverness Common Good transactions approved under delegated powers during the period from 25 November 2013 to 21 May 2014 and the position regarding the tenant roll as at 23 May 2014.

It was also **AGREED** that legal advice should be sought on the provision of long leases and in particular the timescales in this regard in order to ensure best value for the Council.

**17. Street Naming – New Housing Development at 1 Kintail Crescent  
Ainmeachadh Sraide – Taigheadas Ur aig 1 Corran Chinn t-Saile**

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** a decision by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement, taken in consultation with Inverness Ness-side Ward Members and Hilton, Milton and Castle Heather Community Council, to name a street which had been formerly the site of a public house at 1, Kintail Crescent and included a new Council Housing development as “Kintail Terrace”.

**18. Burial Ground Commutation Fund – Work Programme 2013-16  
Maoin Co-iomlaid nan Cladhan**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/31/14 dated 20 May 2014 by the Area Community Services Manager and Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which provided an annual update on the Burial Group Commutation Fund Work Programme.

In this regard, it was confirmed that twenty-one projects involving small capital works had been completed during the financial year with actual expenditure of £100,149 (which was £4,951 less than estimated). Eight projects (with total estimated expenditure of £19,200) had been re-scheduled for delivery during the financial year 2014/15, with three projects for that year having been started early.

The overall Programme remained on target for completion within the approved budget of £271,400.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- despite use of the Commutation Fund over recent years, lack of maintenance was still an issue across a number of Burial Grounds in the area;
- maintenance work in relation to the Chapel Yard in the City Centre had been scheduled within the Programme but it was concerning to note that this had not yet been started;
- in view of the concerns which had been raised, there was a need to review the current three year Programme in order to ensure that a continuous and sustained level of maintenance was in place for Burial Grounds across the area;
- there had been examples of excellent cross-Service working in terms of delivery of the current Programme and this was welcomed; and
- there was a particular need to ensure that appropriate funding for on-going maintenance in regard to the following Burial Grounds was in place – Chapel Yard, Friars Yard and the Old High Church Yard.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress made during 2013/14 and **APPROVED** the re-scheduled Work Programme for 2014/15.

It was also **AGREED** that appropriate funding should be put in place for ongoing maintenance of Chapel Yard, Friars Yard and the Old High Church Yard.

## **19. Membership of Outside Bodies** **Ballrachd Bhuidhnean bhon Taobh A-muigh**

### **Declaration of Interest –**

**Mr R Laird declared a non-financial interest in relation to Item 19(a) on the grounds of being a Board Member of Merkinch Enterprise and Chairman of Merkinch Partnership 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 Committee **AGREED** the following appointments:-

- (a) James Cameron Community Centre Service Review Group – Mr G Ross, Mr D Kerr and Mrs B McAllister;
- (b) Highland Military Tattoo at Fort George – Management Board

Mr R Laird, seconded by Mr I Brown, nominated Mr A Duffy.  
Mr D Kerr, seconded by Mrs M Davidson, nominated Mr R Balfour.

On a vote being taken, Mr Duffy received 6 votes and Mr Balfour received 8 votes, the votes having been cast as follows:-

#### **For Mr A Duffy:-**

I Brown; A Graham; J Slater; A Duffy; K Gowans; R Laird

#### **For Mr R Balfour:-**

R Balfour; C Caddick; M Davidson; D Kerr; K MacLeod; T Prag; G Ross; H Wood

Mr R Balfour was therefore appointed.

- (c) Inverness Area Sports Council – Ms J Slater to replace Mr R Laird.

## **20. Minutes** **Gearr-chunntas**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings as follows:-

- (i) City of Inverness Area Committee held on 4 March – **NOTED** – subject to confirmation that a Monitoring Report on Inverness Area Capital Projects would be submitted to the next meeting;
- (ii) Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 28 February and 25 April – **APPROVED**;
- (iii) Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 6 March – **APPROVED**; and
- (iv) Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub Committee held on 25 February and 12 May – **APPROVED**- subject to the following –

Page 195 – Application No.12 – Royal British Legion Scotland – Inverness Branch – Minute to be corrected to confirm that the Motion from Mr R Laird had been seconded at the meeting;

Page 196 – Application No.6 – Minute to be corrected to confirm that Mr R Laird had not asked for his dissent to be recorded; and

Page 199 – Item 10 – Civic Functions – Protocol and Procedures – Minute to be corrected by deleting reference to ‘the Provost and the Grants Sub Committee Chair having the discretion to confirm if they had any objection to an application being granted’ (after a majority decision had already been taken by Members of the Sub Committee).

The meeting ended at 4.40pm.