

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Tuesday, 2 September 2014 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

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

### Officials in Attendance:

Ms M Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development  
Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure  
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager  
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Building Standards, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr D McKechnie, Integrated Transport Manager, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Development and Infrastructure  
Mr M Smith, Principal Engineer (Flood Team), Development and Infrastructure  
Mr J Smith, Principal Engineer, Development and Infrastructure  
Ms T Urry, Area Community Services Manager, Community Services  
Mr A Yates, Environmental Health Manager, Community Services  
Mr N Thornton, Environmental Health Technical Officer, Community Services  
Ms N Young, Area Education Manager – West, Care and Learning Service  
Ms A MacNeill, Senior Public Relations Officer, Chief Executive's Service  
Ms A Clark, Policy Officer, Chief Executive's Office  
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Development Service  
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

### Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector M Mackay, Inverness Area Commander, Police Scotland  
T/Chief Inspector J MacDonald, Police Scotland  
Mr R Scott, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**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**

## Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the City Leader, on behalf of the Area Committee, congratulated all the Scottish Athletes who had competed in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the many volunteers from the Highlands. In this regard, special mention was made in relation to Stephanie Inglis from Daviot who had won a Silver Medal for Judo.

Also, it was confirmed that the War Memorial at Cavell Gardens had won the Legion Scotland 'Best Kept War Memorial' in the Large Community with Gardens category and thanks were conveyed to the City Community Services team for the outstanding work which had been undertaken in this regard.

## Business

### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie and Mr F Parr.

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

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

Item 6 – Mr I Brown (non-financial)

Item 9 – Mr A Duffy and Mr K MacLeod (both non-financial)

Item 23c – Miss J Campbell, Mrs H Carmichael, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Gray, Mr D Kerr, Mr K MacLeod, Mrs B McAllister (all non-financial) and Mr A Duffy, Mr J Gray and H Wood (all financial).

### 3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

It was **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 26 June 2014 had not been exercised in relation to the business of this Committee.

### 4. Update on Inverness City Centre Development Brief and Key City Centre Projects Fios às ùr mu Bhrath Leasachaidh Meadhan Baile Inbhir Nis agus Prìomh Phròiseactan a' Buntainn ri Meadhan a' Bhaile

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/32/14 dated 20 August 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which set out progress in developing a City Centre Action Plan to reflect the outcomes of the recent public consultation on the City Centre, including initial steps to develop tourism and cultural facilities, improve access and connections and regenerate Academy Street.

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The report also outlined a proposed update to the Inverness City Centre Development Brief to incorporate the City Centre Action Plan and expand guidelines for future development in the City Centre.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the progress which had been highlighted in the report was welcomed, particularly in regard to the Castle and the Midmills building whereby liaison could now be undertaken with the relevant agencies to determine possible future use in both cases;
- there was a need for caution in terms of the scale and timing of future redesign work in Academy Street in order to allow public consultation to be undertaken in the first instance;
- further examination of the current design guidance for the City Centre should be undertaken;
- consideration should be given as to whether the traffic flow in Church Street should revert to its previous arrangement;
- engagement with other agencies and partners should be maximised wherever possible;
- in terms of an integrated transport plan, improvements should be made to the Rail and Bus Stations wherever possible, particularly in terms of the provision of more 'pedestrian friendly' areas;
- consultation should be undertaken with taxi operators wherever possible and in this regard it was helpful that the Director of Development and Infrastructure was to attend a future meeting of the Licensing Sub Committee;
- issues in regard to the restriction of the flow of traffic on Academy Street should be addressed and also the need to improve the façade of buildings and in particular upper windows at that location;
- there was a need to greatly improve the provision of public toilet facilities in the City Centre; and
- regeneration of empty office units should be undertaken wherever possible and the availability of incentive payments in this respect should be highlighted.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that work should proceed on City Centre projects (as identified in Appendix 1 to the report) including improvements to cultural and tourism facilities, to improve access and connections and to regenerate Academy Street;
- ii. **AGREED** the proposed scope of the updated Inverness City Centre Development Brief as presented in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- iii. **NOTED** that the timetable for publishing the updated brief for public consultation would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

## 5. The Highland Council Response to Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study Freagairt Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd do Sgrùdadh Cheangalan A9/A96 Chòmhdhail Alba

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/33/14 dated 20 August 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which set out the background to

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Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study and described the route options currently being considered.

The report also provided an overview of the public comments on these options which had been received by Transport Scotland and a recommended Council response to the Study.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this was an extremely complex piece of work which would have a major impact on the future roads infrastructure and it was vital that all aspects were considered, particularly in relation to the impact on the smaller road networks in the area;
- in regard to the Inshes area, there had been local concerns expressed about the traffic flow from east to west and these concerns should be considered in detail in conjunction with Transport Scotland;
- it was imperative that Local Members were involved in future discussions and proposals wherever possible;
- the proposals for the links into the Retail Park and the new College Campus were essential and were welcomed;
- a robust flood alleviation scheme in all relevant areas was vital and should be regarded as a priority in terms of any future proposals and discussions with developers;
- concern was expressed with regard to the loss of arable farmland as a consequence of the route options being considered;
- the need for an integrated transport plan to link the road, rail and airport networks was highlighted;
- improvements to the Longman Junction were welcomed but the need for flood prevention works in this location were also highlighted; and
- future design work should include improved cycle and pedestrian access wherever possible.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the proposed response to Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study with a recommendation that Options C and D be investigated in more detail by Transport Scotland.

Also that Option D should be subject to further cost benefit analysis and assessment of cost reduction measures (including a shorter A9 diverge slip lane which would avoid the need to replace the B9006 Culloden Road over bridge) and that Option C should be particularly worthy of further analysis if coupled with a solution to the A9 queuing safety issue.

### 6. **Draft Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief** **Dreachd Bhrath Leasachaidh nan Innseagan is an Rathaig Mhòir**

**Declaration of Interest – Mr I Brown declared a non-financial interest in this item as a resident of the Drakies housing scheme 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/34/14 dated 21 August 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which outlined the content of a draft development brief for the Inshes and Raigmore area of the City of Inverness.

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In this regard, it was confirmed that this planning policy document – which had been attached as Appendix A to the report - was required to guide land use opportunities and related strategic and local transport network improvements in the area and its preparation had been informed by a public consultation on 'Issues & Options' held earlier in the year.

Recommended responses to the comments received had been set out in Appendix B to the report and, after a consultation and further Committee approval process, it was intended that the brief would be adopted as a statutory part of the Council's Development Plan.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for further clarification on how the Dell of Inshes retail development linked in with the Scottish Government's 'Supporting Towns and Cities' policy;
- it was suggested that the land to the rear of the Police Station could be considered as a possible site for relocation of the Court Service or the new Prison;
- an over bridge on the A9 should be treated as a priority;
- linking with Transport Scotland's A9/A96 Connections Study would ensure that the best options for improvements to this area could be achieved and would make best use of the funding opportunities available;
- there were potential problems with the area of land which had been identified by Police Scotland in terms of access and these should be investigated with a view to finding the best possible solutions;
- in terms of flood alleviation, a land drainage system should form part of the retail development;
- the provision of an underpass next to the Beechwood Business Park would represent an improvement for cyclists and walkers in the area; and
- residents in the Drakies area had expressed concern about potential problems arising from traffic lights in multiple locations within a relatively contained area.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the comments received to the Issues and Options consultation;
- ii. **AGREED** the recommended responses as contained in Appendix B; and
- iii. **AGREED** Appendix A as the content of the Draft Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief to be subject to public consultation.

### 7. **EU Green Infrastructure Programme 2014/2020: Inverness 'Walks on Water'** **Prògram Bun-structair Uaine an Aonaidh Eòrpaich 2014/2020: 'Cuairean air Uisge' Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/35/14 dated 20 August 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which outlined details of a bid for funding from the EU Green Infrastructure Programme to provide a sequence of high quality green spaces linked by green active travel routes along waterways and the seafront in Inverness.

In this regard, it was confirmed that the proposal, titled 'Walks on Water', had been identified at the Muirtown and South Kessock Design Event earlier in the year where the community had collaborated with public and private sector representatives to agree the regeneration and development priorities for this area of the City.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a strong desire within the local community to make the best use of the identified locations in the Muirtown and South Kessock areas of the City and it was important that they were included in and had ownership of future proposals in this regard;
- of particular concern was the need to have a safe crossing of the railway line in place for walkers and cyclists and measures to protect wildlife and it was suggested that discussions in this regard should be held with Network Rail in order to find the best solution;
- there was the potential for the Ferry Pier to be used by 'Dolphin Watch' cruises and this would further help regeneration if it could be progressed;
- there had been mistakes made in the past and lessons should be learned from them in terms of putting in place long term plans for the area;
- there was considerable historical interpretation in the area which could be explored in terms of future potential;
- updates on any new proposals should be submitted to the Ward Business Meetings in the first instance to allow consideration by Local Members;
- Carnach Point and Clachnaharry should also be viewed as areas for future development;
- discussion should be undertaken with Scottish Canals in terms of the provision of additional cycling routes in the area;
- there was a need to encourage the involvement of young people in the area, perhaps through volunteering initiatives; and
- consideration should be given to the provision of a local facilitator for the area if possible in order to provide guidance in the development and implementation of local projects.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Inverness 'Walks on Water' proposal as detailed; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Officers should progress the next stages of the bid process in liaison with partners.

## **8. Inverness West Link – Publication of Road Orders Ceangal Inbhir Nis an Iar – Foillseachadh Òrdughan Rathaid**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/36/14 dated 19 August 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided information on the proposal to publish the proposed Road Orders for Stage 1 of the Inverness West Link, which had been granted Planning Permission at the South Planning Applications Committee meeting on 8 April 2014. The Compulsory Purchase Order for the land required for the project was currently being progressed.

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The report set out the history of the Inverness West Link to date and detailed the proposed Road Orders, as well as their implications. The Orders themselves, as well as plans showing the proposals were appended to the report.

The Committee **APPROVED** the publication of the following proposed Road Orders as detailed in Appendix A to the report:-

- i. The Highland Council (Proposed West Link Road Stage 1 - Sections Of Bught Road (U3823) And Ness Side Road (U2238), Inverness) (Stopping Up) Order 2014;
- ii. The Highland Council (Proposed West Link Road Stage 1 - Private Means Of Access From Bught Road (U3823) And Ness Side Road (U2238), Inverness) (Stopping Up Of Accesses) Order 2014; and
- iii. The Highland Council (Proposed West Link Road Stage 1 - Various Footpaths, Inverness) (Stopping Up) Order 2014.

### **9. River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme (Tidal Section) Phase 1 Draft Traffic Orders – Huntly Street Sgeama Dion Thuiltean Abhainn Nis (Earrann a' Mhuir-làin) Ceum 1 Dreachd Òrduighean Traftaig**

#### **Declarations of Interest –**

**Mr A Duffy declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Member of the British Legion 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 his involvement in the discussion.**

**Mr K MacLeod declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a member of the congregation of the Free North Church and confirmed that although he would remain in the Chamber, he would not participate in the discussion or voting.**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/37/14 dated 18 August 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which invited Members to review representations made by the general public to the revised draft Traffic Orders affecting Huntly Street and to note progress on the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase 1.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- taking into account all of the issues which had been identified, it was proposed that the first and third recommendations within the report should be agreed, namely the proposed Traffic Orders as drafted and noting of the programme for scheme delivery for completion in April 2015, with the proviso that a mechanism for review should be included which could be used where and if necessary;
- relatively fewer objections had been made than to earlier Traffic Orders;
- the ban on a left-hand turn onto Ness Bridge would reduce the use of Huntly Street as a means of avoiding traffic congestion on Kenneth Street;

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- the creation of a shared use walk/cycle-way on Huntly Street would encourage people to linger in the area and therefore provide additional custom for local businesses and this was not compatible with allowing cars to park along that section of the riverbank;
- similar objections had been made to recent alterations to Ness Walk, with many businesses now finding that the improvements were beneficial rather than detrimental;
- the changes being suggested for Huntly Street were part of the vital flood protection works that were being undertaken to protect residential and business properties along the riverside and several amendments had already been agreed to mitigate any detrimental effect;
- a loss of custom would be experienced by valuable local businesses and disappointment was expressed that a meeting of all concerned had not been held in order to negotiate a compromise;
- although the shared walk/cycle-way might be pleasant in summer, there were many months of the year which suffered poor weather which would not encourage customers to linger in the vicinity;
- a large numbers of parking spaces had been lost from that area of the city in recent years, with reference being made to the flatted accommodation in the vicinity, all of which suffered from a shortage of parking;
- reference was also made to the original Planning Permission for the Flood Alleviation Scheme in 2009 which had indicated that parking provision would be protected;
- relatively few parking spaces were planned for the southern end of Huntly Street;
- a comprehensive and strategic review of parking provision on the west side of the river was required and should include a review of any parking provision which might be approved on Huntly Street;
- it would have been helpful if the plans accompanying the report had contained more detail; and
- there should be further consideration given to whether the disabled bays would be short or long stay in the future.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the making of the proposed Traffic Orders as drafted – on the basis that a mechanism for review would be included and could be used where and if necessary - :
  - The Highland Council (Huntly Street, Inverness) (Restricted Parking Zone Order 2012) Amended Order 2014;
  - The Highland Council (Inverness Permit Parking) Order 1999 (Various Roads, Inverness) Amendment Order 2014; and
  - The Highland Regional Council (Inverness – Riverside West) (General Traffic) Order 1984 (Balnain Street, Friars Place, Greig Street, Huntly Street, Inverness) Amendment Order 2014.
- ii. **NOTED** the programme for scheme delivery for completion in April 2015; and



- iii. **AGREED** that a comprehensive and strategic review of parking provision on the west side of the river should be undertaken and that this should include a review of the parking provision on Huntly Street.

**10. Engaging with Police and Fire and Rescue Services at Area Committee  
A' Dèanamh Ceangal le Seirbheisean Poilis agus Smàlaidh is Teasairginn  
aig Comataidh na Sgìre**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/38/14 dated 6 August 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform which described the role of Members in engaging with the new national services for Police and Fire and Rescue.

In this regard, it was confirmed that the report had been provided as context for Members in considering the first round of new style performance reports from the national bodies.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the requirements on the Council for the engagement and scrutiny of Police and Fire and Rescue services;
- ii. the governance arrangements the Council had in place for this purpose through strategic, non-strategic and Area Committees as well as partnership arrangements through community planning and district partnerships; and
- iii. that Local Members had important engagement and scrutiny roles but had no role in specifying operational matters or in agreeing resource allocation.

The Committee also **AGREED** to scrutinise the performance of Police and Fire and Rescue services based on information provided separately for the Area Committee and to make use of the good practice guidance for doing this as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

**11. Police – Area Performance Summary  
Poilis – Geàrr-chunntas an Dèanadais Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/39/14 dated 19 August 2014 by the Area Commander for Police which provided a local summary update on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it would be helpful if a further breakdown of the figures which had been provided and comparative information could be provided for future reports and reported through to Ward Business Meetings;
- tracking figures and trends would also be helpful in terms of providing an accurate position of crime rates generally in the area;
- more detail was required on alcohol/drug abuse/anti-social behaviour figures in particular;
- the proposed extension of the Community Beat Officer team was welcomed as this was viewed as being particularly successful, particularly in terms of the interaction with young people;

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- there was a need for continued liaison with Community Councils and Ward Managers; and
- the information which had been provided on Culloden Academy, Doorstep Crime work and Farm Watch was very helpful and had been much appreciated.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress report in relation to the five Priorities, namely Road Safety, Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Misuse, Antisocial Behaviour/Disorder, Crimes of Dishonesty and Protecting People as detailed.

## **12. Fire and Rescue Service Area Committee Plan and Performance Report for 2014-15**

### **Plana agus Aithisg Dèanadais Comataidh Sgìreil na Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn airson 2014-15**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/40/14 dated 11 August 2014 by the Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue setting out, in separate booklets A and B:-

- a) Area Committee Plan for City of Inverness for 2014-15 (Booklet A); and
- b) City of Inverness Performance Report (Booklet B).

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for thanks to be conveyed for the work undertaken in tackling wild fires in recent months which had been extremely valued and effective in the local communities affected;
- further safety training, particularly in rural areas and in liaison with Ward Managers, would be welcomed;
- there was a need to sustain the rural network of Fire Stations and ensure that the work which was undertaken was accurately recorded; and
- a joined up approach to dealing with false fire alarms, particularly in Council housing communal hallways, was badly needed as this was becoming an increasing problem for both the Fire and Rescue Service and tenants, not least in terms of the expenditure required to attend and resolve issues.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the attached Area Committee Plan for 2014-15 and the Performance Report as circulated.

## **13. Public Space Amenity – Inverness Response Team Sgioba Freagairt Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/41/14 dated 21 August 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement and the Inverness Area Commander (Highland Division – Police Scotland) which provided a briefing on the development of an Inverness Community Safety Partnership initiative (Inverness Response Team).

In this regard, it was confirmed that the initiative had been designed to address local public space amenity issues on a daily basis and share resources to ensure early intervention in preventing and tackling community concerns. It was

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intended that this would then free up resources invested in dealing with acute problems, deliver better outcomes and achieve value for money.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- more work was needed in terms of identification of those persons 'at risk' in the community and in this regard stronger links with Social Work and Adult Advocacy agencies were required;
- there was a need to examine the resources currently being made available by the Council to deal with anti-social behaviour; and
- both Inverness City and the rural areas had been included in the initiative but it had to be recognised that there were different issues involved and as such these areas had to be dealt with differently.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the creation of the multi-agency partnership Response Team and the commitment by public, private and third sector organisations as detailed in the report.

The Committee also **AGREED** to support the role and remit of the Inverness Response Team as detailed.

### 14. Communities Panel Development Leasachadh Panal nan Coimhearsnachdan

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/42/14 dated 11 August 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform which summarised the approach to developing the Council's new Communities Panel.

During discussion, it was noted that there would be an opportunity to discuss the issues involved at Ward Business Meetings and that Members should contact the Head of Policy and Reform if they wished to provide details of any additional representative groups to be included in the draft invitation list which had been attached to the report.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the approach to developing the Communities Panel which had been outlined in Section 2 of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Members should provide details of any additional representative groups to be included in the draft invitation list which had been provided as Appendix 1 to the report.

### 15. Local Air Quality Management – Proposed Air Quality Management Area Declaration Rianachd Càileachd Èadhair Ionadail – Foillseachadh Rianachd Càileachd Èadhair a Thathar a' Moladh

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/43/14 dated 20 August 2014 by the Director of Community Services which explained that a Detailed Assessment had been carried out for nitrogen dioxide within Inverness City Centre which had been identified as being at risk of exceeding the Annual Mean Air Quality Objective for nitrogen dioxide based on monitoring in 2012 and as set out in the Council's 2013 Progress Report.

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In this regard, it was confirmed that the Environment Act 1995 now required the Council to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) by order as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report and, after further assessment and consultation, produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

During discussion, Members acknowledged the serious nature of the information which had been contained in the report and highlighted the need to identify and support vulnerable groups within the community who might be affected by the issues raised.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the main conclusions for the Detailed Assessment Report – Inverness - May 2014;
- ii. the boundaries of the Inverness City Centre AQMA as described in the attached plan and associated Declaration Order (Appendix 1); and
- iii. the action planning process associated with the declaration of an AQMA for Inverness City Centre as detailed in the report.

### 16. Landfill Communities Fund Maoin Choimhearsnachdan an Tiodhlacaidh Sgudail

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/44/14 dated 13 August 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited approval of an application to the Highland Council Landfill Community Fund from for the project entitled 'Coastal Conservation Action Days'.

The Committee **APPROVED** the application as detailed.

### 17. Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Programme Prògram Rothaireachd, Coiseachd agus Sràidean nas Sàbhailte

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/45/14 dated 19 August 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.

During discussion, a request was made for the linings around St Joseph's Primary School and Bishop Eden Primary School to be repaired as it was now difficult to make out the various restrictions in these areas.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Safer Routes to School (SRTS) project listed in Appendix 1 and **NOTED** that the Road Safety Unit would continue to work with schools to develop further SRTS projects for future years.

It was also **AGREED** that the linings around St Joseph's Primary School and Bishop Eden Primary School should be repaired as soon as possible in order to highlight the various restrictions in place in these areas.

**18. Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report – mid season update**

**Aithisg Sgrùdadh Dèanadais a thaobh Cumail Suas Làraich – fios às ùr am meadhan na ràithe**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/46/14 dated 19 August 2014 by the Director of Community Services which detailed performance management information for Grounds Maintenance Services from April to July 2014.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- concerns had been expressed about the need to find the work for staff which had been employed on a seasonal basis and any implications which this might have for Council staff;
- thanks should be conveyed to the Director of Community Services for the considerable progress which had been made over recent weeks in terms of the previous issues reported in regard to ground maintenance;
- there was however still a need for continual monitoring of complaints in relation to overgrown paths, bushes, trees etc in housing areas;
- lessons should be learned from mistakes which had been made with the current contract before implementing any new contracts;
- there were still longstanding issues in relation to Burial Grounds which required to be resolved and consideration should be given to this as a matter of priority; and
- the situation in Ward 18 had caused particular concern and should be resolved as soon as possible although it was acknowledged that some work in this regard had commenced earlier in the day.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the performance management and remedial action information provided on Grounds Maintenance Services as set out in the report; and
- ii. the management action being taken to address the performance issues which had been identified.

The Committee also **AGREED** to review required service standards at future Ward Business meetings.

**19. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014**

**Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2014 gu 30 Òg mhios 2014**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/47/14 dated 19 August 2014 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section had performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators during the first quarter of 2014/15.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- information was sought on how many tenants were in rent arrears as a result of the Under Occupancy Charge;
- in relation to homeless accommodation, concern was expressed regarding the Quarter 1 rent arrears figure and that, if the trend continued, the year-end figure would be in the region of £387,000. In

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addition, it was understood that there was a backlog of service charges and confirmation was sought that staff had been dedicated to tackling these issues. Delays in housing benefit payments could result in rent arrears and information was also requested on the level of arrears of tenants in receipt of housing benefit as well as tenants who were in employment and not in receipt of housing benefit. With regard to employed tenants, it was suggested that the possibility of direct payment to the landlord, rather than via the Council, be explored;

- an explanation was sought as to why average re-let times were shorter in the more rural Wards;
- concern was expressed that every tenant on universal credit was in rent arrears; and
- it would be helpful to know the reasons for rent arrears and reference was made to the high cost of temporary accommodation. Good work had taken place in terms of helping people in such accommodation to claim housing benefit and information was requested on whether this had been sustained.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information which had been provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2014 as detailed in the report.

## 20. Capital Projects – Investing in Inverness and Area Pròiseactan Calpa – Tasgadh ann an Inbhir Nis agus a Sgìre

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/48/14 dated 19 August 2014 by the Director of Finance which listed the capital projects included in the Council's Capital Programme which were being delivered in the City of Inverness Area in the financial year 2014/15 and the in-year budgets for these projects.

During discussion, Members commented that the format of the report was insufficient for monitoring purposes, no explanatory information had been provided and the status of some projects was out of date.

In addition, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to EC238 - Milton of Leys Primary School Extension, it having been confirmed that £577,000 was the total project cost outstanding for the year 2014/15 only, Members welcomed the completion of the project on time and under budget; and
- it was noted that the figure of £15,000 which had been attributed to Highland 2007 was in respect of Retention Sums for the Highland Archive Centre and project HR536 CHB 5 – Inverness, Milton of Leys P1 and associated costs of £1,043,000 – was a housing project.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the budgeted capital projects being delivered in the City of Inverness Area in 2014/15 as detailed in the report.

It was also **AGREED** that Officers should consider reviewing the scope of the report to provide for detailed information relating to project status in future.

**21. Kilchuimen Associated School Group Overview**  
**Sealladh Coitcheann Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Chille**  
**Chuimein**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/49/14 dated 18 August 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update of key information in relation to the schools within the Kilchuimen Associated School Group (ASG) and useful updated links to further information in relation to these schools.

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

**22. Annual Reports**  
**Aithisgean Bliadhnail**

**a) Inverness City Heritage Trust – Reporting of Company Activity to Council**  
**Urras Dualchais Baile Inbhir Nis – Ag Aithris Gnìomhachd**  
**Companaidh dhan Chomhairle**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/50/14 dated 31 July 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement and the City Heritage Trust Officer which provided information on the work of Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT) during the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14.

In this regard, particular attention had been given to the total grant allocation to properties in Inverness Riverside and Crown Conservation Areas to date.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the contributions made by the Inverness City Heritage Trust in delivering a programme of conservation work funded by grant assistance in Inverness since 2005;
- ii. the work carried out in partnership with Inverness College, Historic Scotland and the RTPI to deliver two separate conferences for building professionals/practitioners and home owners and also the work with the Council on the Empty Homes Initiative; and
- iii. the current situation with regard to future funding from Historic Scotland for Inverness City Heritage Trust.

**b) Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID: Progress Report**  
**Sgìre Leasachaidh Gnothachais Inbhir Nis agus Loch Nis: Aithisg**  
**Adhartais**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/51/14 dated 15 August 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement and the Business Improvement District (BID) Chief Executive which described the progress made since the Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID had been established following the successful ballot result on 14 March 2014.

In this regard, particular reference had been made to the transition from destination management organisation into a tourism business improvement district, the setting up of the operational structure and the beginnings of project activity.

The Committee **NOTED** the continuing work and activities of the Tourism Business Improvement District as detailed in the report.

**23. Inverness Common Good Fund  
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis**

**a) Scheme for Winter Payments 2014/15  
Molaidhean Sgeama Phàighidhean Geamhraidh 2014/15**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/52/14 dated 19 August 2014 by the Director of Finance and the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which followed on from the revision of the Winter Payment Scheme for 2013/14 and built on these amendments to improve the Winter Payment Scheme for 2014/15.

The Committee **AGREED** as follows:-

- i. the criteria for the 2013/14 Scheme as set out in Paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 within the report be used as the basis for the 2014/15 Scheme;
- ii. eligibility for the 2014/15 Scheme be extended to include those with children under the age of 5 years who also received Income Support, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income based Employment and Support Allowance, or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit);
- iii. a single tier payment of £79 be made to those applicants who satisfied the eligibility criteria for the 2014/15 Scheme;
- iv. the scheme be made available to residents in the City of Inverness and the Landward areas of the seven City Wards;
- v. the sum set aside within the Inverness Common Good Fund revenue budget 2014/2015 for the Winter Payment Scheme be increased to £100,000, with the sum of £50,000 being ring-fenced within the current Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee Grants budget to be used for this purpose and only released back for general allocation if not required; and
- vi. an award of £20,000 to Blythswood Care in principle - with power to confirm the award being delegated to the Inverness City Manager in consultation with the Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee.

**b) Financial Monitoring  
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/53/14 dated 15 August 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Common Good Fund as of 30 June 2014 and the projected year end position.

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



c) Grants and Capital Projects  
Tabhartasan agus Pròiseactan Calpa

Declarations of Interest –

Mr A Duffy, Mr J Gray and Mr H Wood declared financial interests in relation to this item on the grounds of being Board Members of Inverness Leisure and left the room during discussion of the item.

Miss J Campbell and Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interests in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Member of Merkinch Community Management Committee and having a long association with Inverness Angling Club respectively and left the room during discussion of the item.

Mr J Gray, Mr D Kerr and Mr K MacLeod declared non-financial interests in relation to this item as Board Members of Inverness City Heritage Trust 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 H Carmichael, Mr K MacLeod and Mrs B McAllister declared non-financial interests in relation to this item as Director of Inverness Leisure, Board Member of Merkinch Enterprise and Member of the Merkinch Community Steering Group respectively 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/54/14 dated 14 August 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement which set out the current applications for grant funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

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

The Committee **APPROVED** the following applications for funding:-

- i. Arts in Merkinch - £11,847;
- ii. Inverness Angling Club - £28,500 in principle over three years subject to:- (1) the Club, following discussions, taking on obligations in relation to husbandry and promotion of the river on areas outside of the leased area; and (2) annual review of progress to the Council's satisfaction; and
- iii. Inverness Leisure Limited - £50,000.

The Committee **AGREED TO DEFER** consideration of the application for funding from Merkinch Community Centre pending the outcome of discussions between Merkinch Community Centre and High Life Highland (HLH) to find a way forward in relation to HLH funding part of the refurbishment.

The Committee also **NOTED** the current status of capital projects as detailed in the report.

**d) Sale of Land at Slip Road – Longman Roundabout  
Reic Fearainn aig Leas-rathad – Cearcall-rathaid an Longman**

It was confirmed that Transport Scotland had been granted a licence to occupy an area of land at the Longman roundabout to construct a filter lane in November 2012. This land had been held in the Common Good portfolio and Transport Scotland had been granted the licence as a short term solution whilst sales negotiations were undertaken.

In this respect, it was advised that Transport Scotland had initially offered £500 for the land but the Council had now negotiated a proposed sale price of £7,000. It was also advised that the land extended to 2,815 sqm of rough ground and given its location was considered to have limited future development value.

The Committee **AGREED** to formalise the agreement and sell the land to Transport Scotland for £7,000 as detailed.

**24. Membership of Tourism BID  
Ballrachd Sgìre Leasachaidh Gnothachais airson Turasachd**

It was confirmed that, following a successful ballot on 13 March 2014, Uniqueness – The Loch Ness and Inverness Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) – had come into existence on 1 April 2014.

In this regard, it was noted that the Council had no tourism related properties in the tourism bid area and as such was not a levy payer and had not voted on the creation of the TBID.

Since the creation of the TBID, its Members had elected a Board of Directors, which was chaired by Colin Marr, Chief Executive at Eden Court Theatre, and in recognition of the Council's role in tourism in the area, the Board had invited the Committee to nominate a Member to serve as a Board Director.

At this point, Mr A Duffy, seconded by Mrs G Sinclair, nominated Mr I Brown.

Mr G Ross, seconded by Miss J Campbell, nominated Mrs M Davidson.

On a vote being taken, Mr Brown received 11 votes and Mrs Davidson received 6 votes, the votes having been cast as follows –

**Votes for Mr Brown** – I Brown; A Graham; B McAllister; J Slater; A Duffy; K Gowans; D Hendry; R Laird; T Prag; G Sinclair; H Wood.

**Votes for Mrs Davidson** – R Balfour; J Campbell; M Davidson; N Donald; D Kerr; G Ross.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr I Brown to serve as a Director on the Board as detailed.

**25. Inverness Local Holidays 2015/16**  
**Saor-làithean Ionadail Inbhir Nis 2015/16**

The Committee **AGREED** the following dates as Local Holidays for the City of Inverness for years 2015 and 2016 -

**2015**

Thursday 1 January  
Friday 2 January  
Monday 2 February  
Monday 2 March  
Monday 6 April (Easter Monday)  
Monday 4 May (May Day)  
Monday 6 July  
Monday 5 October  
Monday 2 November  
Friday 25 December  
Monday 28 December

**2016**

Friday 1 January  
Monday 4 January  
Monday 1 February  
Monday 7 March  
Monday 28 March (Easter Monday)  
Monday 2 May (May Day)  
Monday 4 July  
Monday 3 October  
Monday 7 November  
Monday 26 December  
Tuesday 27 December

**26. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings as follows:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 3 June 2014 – **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 29 May, 20 June and 22 August 2014 – **APPROVED**;
- iii. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 27 June 2014 – **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 11 August 2014 – **APPROVED** – subject to confirmation that in future the decisions would be recorded within the Minute (as opposed to being attached as an appendix).

The meeting ended at 5.05pm.