

**The Highland Council  
City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness City Arts Working Group** held in the Second Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness, on Friday, 17 October 2014, at 9.00 a.m.

**Present:**

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

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager  
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service  
Ms C Shankland, Project Manager, High Life Highland  
Ms L Lee, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr S Blair, Creative Scotland.

**2. Exclusion of the Public**

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

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Item 5 - Mr G Ross (non-financial).

**4. Minutes**

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Working Group held on 22 August 2014.

**5. River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Project**

**Declaration of Interest – Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a close relative who was a local artist, but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No IC Arts 09/14 dated 10 October 2014 by the Inverness City Manager inviting Members to consider the outcome of the

### Item 19(iii)

successful bid for funding from Creative Scotland's Large Capital Programme and to note the next steps in concluding the procurement of Artists for the delivery of the project programme. Members welcomed the funding success and expressed appreciation for officers' efforts. The award was a significant milestone for the project and a boost for Inverness. Partners had also welcomed that the award had been made.

The City Manager provided an update on progress with the various parts of the project, including that:

- artists could now be appointed for all the projects except the Gathering Place
- plans were being progressed for education and engagement activities; opportunities for Members to engage with the artists would be arranged
- integration of the artwork with the flood alleviation scheme could now move forward - progress was expected to be rapid; Members would be kept informed of developments
- a Communications Plan was being worked on by the Council's Corporate Communications team
- progress would be reported to the City of Inverness Area Committee and to partners (Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Creative Scotland) – there were conditions attached to partner funding that had to be met.

In response to questions, Members were reminded that the management of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Project lay with the Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service, and that a lead artist would be appointed to co-ordinate the art projects, under the day to day management of the Project Manager.

The Project Manager, High Life Highland provided an update on the art projects:

**River Connections** – Mary Bourne was working with the Flood Team. The arrival of the coping stones was imminent; the stones would be worked on in situ. A day was planned in November for her to engage formally with the public, allowing people to ask questions as she worked. Delivery of Caithness flag and granite was expected in 8-12 weeks.

**Gathering Place** – The Evaluation Panel would consider applications over the coming weeks. Their recommendation would be presented to the Working Group in December, for decision.

**Sculptural Destination** – Annie Catteral's design related to the river's geology and myths. She would prepare visualisations and these would be brought to the next Working Group meeting.

**Signposting** – there was ongoing communication with other Council officers and Church Street Traders to ensure that signposting for the flood alleviation art projects co-ordinated with the signposting strategy in the City Centre.

**Community Engagement** – arrangements were being made to bring the

### Item 19(iii)

artists together so that a plan for community engagement with the projects could be drawn up. It was hoped that bringing the artists together would identify synergies and stimulate ideas as to how the component projects could sit together. McLaughlin and Harvey were keen that the hoardings at Anderson Green / Capel Inch (by the play park) be made use of, and had provided a small gratuity for materials, perhaps for an art project for school children.

In discussion, Members commented that:

- Members would need to see a picture or sketch of the proposals for the Gathering Place, to gain an idea of what was being proposed and how it would dovetail with the other projects, before coming to a decision
- the vinyls were now in place in Church Street and would be updated as the project developed
- the inclusion of geology in the Sculptural Destination project was welcomed, there was a growing interest in geology.

There was unanimous support for the offer made by the developer for community/schools use of the hoardings - involvement of children in such projects decreased the likelihood of vandalism. There was a need to move quickly as the hoardings would only be in place until April. Arising from this discussion, Members were advised that it would be difficult to make similar use of other hoardings or barriers, as these were frequently moved and co-ordination would be difficult.

In response to questions raised, the Working Group was advised that the High Life Highland Project Manager would liaise with the High Life Highland Creative Links Leader, Amy Macleod and Sally Cooper from the Flood Team, and contractors with regard to engagement of schools; locations for the art projects had yet to be finalised, but were likely to include Friar's Shott.

**Website** - The Communications Plan had been delayed. Whilst space on the Council's website had originally been offered free of charge, it was now understood that there would be a fee of £500 per micro-site with a £100 monthly hosting charge. The City Manager would discuss the position with the Council's public relations office – the project was high profile and important for the Council.

Having expressed satisfaction with progress to date, the Working Group **NOTED:**

- i. the approval of the Creative Scotland Stage 2 application to their Large Capital Projects Funds;
- ii. that the proposal for the Sculptural Destination would be brought to the next meeting for approval;
- iii. that the Evaluation Panel's recommendation for the Gathering Place would be brought to the next meeting for approval ; and
- iv. that the City Manager would establish the costs of hosting a web page for the project work and would report back to the next meeting;

and **AGREED** that:

- i. officers proceed to let contracts for the delivery of the River Connections Project programme as appropriate; and
- ii. the City Manager work up a plan to make use of the Capel Inch hoardings and circulate this to the Working Group for comment; and that powers be delegated to the City Manager in consultation with the Chair to take forward the plan thereafter.

## **6. Flood Alleviation Scheme – Project Update**

The Head of Infrastructure gave a verbal update on the delivery of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme, particularly pertaining to:

- Mary Bourne's work – the installation of the coping stones was imminent; the flood alleviation team was liaising with Mary
- liaison with the artists – the Head of Infrastructure would be meeting with the Artists in November to scope out the works required and timescales
- Phase 1 - the heavy engineering was complete and the programme was scheduled to complete by the end of April. However, unforeseen issues with previous electricity cabling had arisen which might cause slippage. Members would be kept informed
- Phase 2 – this was progressing well; the walls were being erected - the stone would weather; McLaughlin and Harvey would be engaging with football clubs and schools
- Trees – during Phase 1 there had been some unavoidable damage to tree roots. Whilst all the trees had been assessed by the Council's Tree Officer as being stable, precautionary work was being carried out to selectively reduce tree crowns so that these were in scale with the roots, to lessen the impact of wind etc. The trees would be monitored. Any trees which failed would be replaced appropriately. It was important that this message reached the public. Additional tree planting would be carried out in Autumn 2015, decisions had yet to be made as to the species and size of the new trees.

In discussion Members were keen that the opportunity for promoting the flood scheme through the artworks be taken up. It was important to think long-term about the benefits to the City and to keep people informed.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

## **7. Website**

It was **NOTED** that this issue had been discussed under Item 5 above.

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

The City Manager reported that focus to date had been on the River Connections project. However, resources were now becoming available to look at the Ramada project. The first step would be to establish where the project had reached and what assets were available. Creative Scotland would then be contacted to see if the monies allocated previously were still available. Once the position was established, officers would make contact

## Item 19(iii)

with the owners of the Mercure Hotel. Members would be kept informed of progress and an update would be brought to the next meeting.

In response to questions raised in discussion, the Working Group was advised that the Planning and Infrastructure Service was aware of this potential project and would integrate it with other works such as the proposals to improve Station Square and Academy Street, if possible. In response to questions, the City Manager undertook to investigate when the Creative Scotland funding would expire, and whether it could be used for other projects; and whether the Ramada had plans to improve the hotel's appearance.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position and that a progress update would be brought to the next meeting.

### 9. Media Relations

The City Manager reported that work on preparation of a detailed communication strategy was ongoing; it was hoped this would be circulated by the end of the month. Aims included making best use of the River Connections programme to promote the benefits of the scheme overall to the City.

In discussion, the Chair concurred with this view and drew attention to the importance of involving Members, officers, schools and other groups and for there to be a feeling of ownership of the scheme. The City Manager undertook to take forward this ethos. Members also highlighted that the media would likely be looking for visuals that they could print, and that it was hoped that positive as well as negative views of the project would be taken from the blog and reported.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

### 10. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No ICArts 10/14 dated 10 October 2014 by the Inverness City Manager setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 September 2014 and showing actual expenditure to date.

Having duly scrutinised the figures, and explanations having been given in response to questions raised, the Working Group **NOTED** the position.

### 11. Date of next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that a date and time for the next meeting, anticipated to be in mid-November, would be intimated as soon as possible. The meeting would be held once the information on the Gathering Place was available.

The meeting ended at 10.10 a.m.