

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 10 September 2015 at 10.30am.

Present:

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

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Development & Infrastructure
Ms A Tanner, Inverness Heritage Trust Project Officer, Development & Infrastructure
Ms T Urry, Area Community Services Manager, Community Services
Mr J Taylor, Assistant Area Manager (Inverness), Community Services
Mr A McKinnie, Waste Operations Manager, Community Services
Mr P Finlayson, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care & Learning Service
Ms S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Manager, Finance Service
Mr K Masson, Policy Coordinator (Climate Change), Chief Executive's Office
Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector J MacDonald, Police Scotland
Mr F Nixon, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Mr G Ambrose, Chief Executive, Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd

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

Mrs H Carmichael in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, Members **NOTED** an update on the Syrian Refugee Crisis and that the City of Inverness Area would be considering ways in which it could provide support.

It was also ***AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that, in relation to the Timetable of Meetings for 2016, the City of Inverness Area Committee meetings should be held on Thursdays.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie, Mr A Duffy and Mr J Crawford.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 12 – Mr N Donald (Financial)

Item 17 - Mr J Gray, Mr D Kerr and Mr K MacLeod

Item 19 – Mrs M Davidson (Non-Financial)

Item 20 – Mrs C Caddick and Mr R Balfour (Non-Financial)

Item 22 - Mr H Wood (Non-Financial)

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

It was **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 25 June 2015 had not been exercised in relation to the business of this Committee.

4. Appointment of Depute Provosts Cur an Dreuchd Leas-Phròbhaistean

Prior to seeking nominations to appoint two Depute Provosts, the Provost & City Leader thanked the two existing Depute Provosts (Ms J Slater and Mrs B McAllister) for their hard work and dedication over the previous three years and for the support which had been given to her in her new role.

During discussion, and in support of the appointment of two additional Depute Provosts, it was highlighted that support could be received for civic duties through these appointments and an update on local issues provided for the Provost & City Leader.

In contrast, a view was expressed that the current two Depute Provosts were sufficient to carry out this role, with other Members being able to deputise for the Provost & City Leader if necessary. Also, if the number of posts was to be increased, there was a need for the duties of all four Depute Provosts to be clearly defined in the first instance.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED TO DEFER** any decision to appoint two additional Depute Provosts until the next meeting to allow both consultation with Group Leaders and the provision of further clarification of the respective roles.

5. Appointments to Outside Bodies
Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean air an Taobh A-muigh

a) Uniqueness and City BID

It was **NOTED** that the new Provost & City Leader had replaced the former City Leader as the Council's nominee to sit on the Board of both BIDs.

b) Inverness Town Twinning Committee

It was **AGREED** that Ms J Slater should replace the former Provost on the Inverness Town Twinning Committee.

c) Highlanders Museum – Board of Directors

It was advised that the Provost and City Leader had been invited to join the Highlanders Museum Board of Directors.

It having been confirmed that the invitation had been extended on a personal invitation and was not tied to the role, the Committee **AGREED** that the Provost and City Leader should be appointed as a Board Director.

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

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/36/15 dated 27 August 2015 by the Inverness Area Commander which provided a local summary update on progress with local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress report and updates in relation to the following five priorities as detailed in the report - Road Safety, Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Misuse, Antisocial Behaviour/Disorder, Crimes of Dishonesty and Protecting People.

It was also **AGREED** that information in relation to Police Staffing levels should be provided in future Area Police Performance reports on a detailed basis in regard to Ward level.

7. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report 2015/16
Plana agus Aithisg Dèanadais Comataidh Sgìreil na Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn airson 2015/16

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/37/15 dated 24 August 2015 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland which provided an update on progress against the priorities outlined in the Area Committee Plan for the City of Inverness 2015/16.

In this regard, activity areas had been identified through a range of Intervention, Prevention and Protection activities delivered in partnership to reduce risk to the communities in the City of Inverness Area.

The Committee **NOTED** the terms of the Area Performance Report as attached to the report.

It was also **AGREED** that another invitation should be extended to Elected Members to visit Inverness Fire Station.

8. Education Scotland School Reports – Period March 2015 to June 2015 Aithisgean Sgrùdaidh Sgoiltean Foghlam Alba

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/38/15 dated 25 August 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided details of Education Scotland's Inspections of Schools in the area during the period from March 2015 to June 2015 for scrutiny and monitoring.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst the results for all three Schools were excellent, reference was made to Strathdearn Primary School in particular as it had received a number of "Very Good" reports and specifically "Improvement through Self-Evaluation" and it was hoped that this could be duplicated in other Schools;
- the broad reporting did not allow consideration of the factors which might have affected results, such as demographics, roll pressures etc, which made scrutiny more difficult although it was recognised that this was due to the qualitative nature of reporting;
- individual Inspection Reports were reported to Ward Business Meetings and this was helpful; and
- it was important that areas of good practice were shared in order to inform future policy.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Education Scotland reports as presented.

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

It was **NOTED** that, in terms of Standing Order 17.2, the Chair had agreed that an additional item of business (which had not been specified on the agenda) and which related to a Safer Routes to School Project for Culloden Academy, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in view of the need to progress the project as quickly as possible.

In this regard, there had been circulated Report No. CIA/39/15 dated 24 August 2015 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, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need to record appreciation to all those involved in bringing to fruition the project at Muirtown Primary School. In this respect, comprehensive consultation had taken place to provide the best solution possible and, given the constraints of the site, it was hoped that work

- could be completed in time for August 2016 with Ward Members being kept informed of progress;
- whilst the promotion of cycling to school was welcomed, children also used skateboards and that too should be taken into account;
 - there was a need for further information on how much the modal shift from cars to cycling and walking had had on reducing carbon emissions; and
 - there had been difficulties experienced as a result of inappropriate parking by parents dropping off children at Milton of Leys Primary School. This had also been a problem at other Schools and consideration had to be given as to how to address this situation.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS)/Safer Routes to School (SRTS) Projects as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, and the additional project at Culloden Academy to provide cycle storage at a cost of £9,600;
- ii. **NOTED** that the Road Safety Unit would continue to work with Schools to develop further SRTS projects for future years; and
- iii. **AGREED** that, in relation to the project taking place at Muirtown Primary School, Ward Members should be kept informed of progress.

(At this point, the meeting adjourned for lunch and reconvened at 1.45pm).

10. Advice and Information Services: End of Year Monitoring Seirbheisean Comhairle agus Fiosrachaidh: Sgrùdadh Deireadh Bliadhna

It was confirmed that Advice and Information Services were recognised as a critical approach in alleviating poverty in the Council's Programme and Single Outcome Agreement.

In this connection, there had been circulated Report No. CIA/40/15 dated 25 August 2015 by the Director of Finance which provided information on the end of year monitoring of Advice and Information Services in Highland for 2014/15.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need to commend the work undertaken by the Advice and Information Service and specifically the helpful and compassionate way in which this had been handled which had been of benefit to many people;
- the Citizens Advice Bureau provided an excellent outreach facility at the Charleston Academy Community Complex and it was hoped that, although funding was due to come to an end in March 2016, this could be continued, especially given the high demand in the area;
- it was important that services were not duplicated at a time of limited resources;
- there had been an increase in the number of contacts made in relation to debt and welfare payments and it was felt that this was an indication of a generally deteriorating situation. In this respect, and by the time many individuals had reached the point of making contact with advice agencies, their personal circumstances had often deteriorated considerably and an extensive level of work was required to help them.

- there was considerable concern in relation to those persons who required help but who had not contacted the Advice Service;
- the proliferation of retailers who relied on alternative access to credit had the potential to exacerbate the situation in the coming years; and
- the approach of the Department of Work and Pensions to social security was felt to have exacerbated this situation and this was likely to continue. In this respect, the current benefits sanction regime was putting pressure on individuals to increase their incomes in order to reduce benefits at a time when many of those affected were making efforts to re-enter the workforce. In addition, a pilot was currently being run in Inverness and this was placing great stress on individuals and was giving cause for concern.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the level of support provided to customers across Highland in 2014/15, the continued increase in demand for these services and the pressures associated in delivering the intensive resource required to resolve complex cases;
- NOTED** the positive impact of the Mental Health Project in addressing issues presented by vulnerable clients which had current funding until end of March 2016;
- NOTED** the positive impact of the Reaching the Unreached service in preventing households being evicted and avoiding additional pressures on the Council's homeless services which had Scottish Legal Aid Board funding until the end of September 2016;
- NOTED** the potential of the Midwifery project to support new and expectant mothers in the Highlands to maximise their incomes which had funding until the end of May 2016;
- NOTED** the outcomes being achieved in supporting Highland residents to mitigate the effects of poverty; and
- AGREED** that Members should be provided with examples of sanctions being adopted by the Department of Work and Pensions with the aim of getting individuals back to work.

11. Winter Maintenance Priority Network – 2015/16 Lìonra Prìomhachais Obair-gleidhidh a' Gheamhraidh – 2015/16

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/41/15 dated 25 August 2015 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on the Winter Maintenance Service provision and specifically invited approval of the priority network of Primary and Secondary routes within the Inverness Area.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for further information on the proposed future arrangements for the gritting of pavements which was an equally important issue and a comparative map to highlight the current situation would be helpful on a Ward basis;
- it had to be recognised that there were many elderly people who did not live in sheltered housing and would be affected by the proposals within other housing areas;

- there was insufficient information within the report as to what was to change from the current arrangements and what would be different in terms of priority in the future;
- some roads did not appear to meet the criteria for priority but did represent particular problems in terms of their location and their proximity to schools, etc;
- there was a need for more detailed discussion at Ward level in the first instance before any decisions were made, particularly in terms of public safety;
- further clarification was necessary in regard to the implications of the loss of staff and vehicles for the City of Inverness Area;
- there was a need for adequate numbers of salt bins to be made available in suitable locations for community use;
- consideration should be given to utilising other Community Services staff on winter maintenance duties where possible and when required;
- more detail was needed on how the new streetscaping works would be dealt with in the affected areas;
- there was real concern about how robust the proposed arrangements would be in the event of really harsh winter weather;
- there was a need to also focus on vehicle usage as part of the consideration of priority roads/streets;
- working with other groups on winter maintenance activities was perhaps a possibility to be explored;
- information on what was to be proposed for the new UHI Campus and the surrounding access roads was required;
- consideration should be given to perhaps commencing winter maintenance/gritting at an earlier point in the day if possible;
- further detail on the criteria for demoting roads from 'secondary' to 'other' was needed;
- in-depth briefings for the affected Wards, with detailed maps, was needed before any final decisions were taken; and
- there was a need to defer any further discussion on this issue to allow discussion at Ward level in the first instance following which a Special Meeting of this Committee could be arranged to allow a decision to be taken at that time.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED TO DEFER** determination of the Winter Maintenance priority network to allow detailed discussion to take place at Ward level.

It was also **AGREED** that the Depute Chief Executive should provide advice as to how the priority network could then be agreed in time for the Winter Season, with the possibility of a Special Meeting of the Committee being considered.

It was further **AGREED** that a map of footpath prioritisation should be provided to Ward Managers for distribution to Ward Members.

**12. Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report – Mid Season
Aithisg Sgrùdadh Dèanadais a thaobh Cumail Suas Làraich – fios às ùr
am meadhan na ràithe**

Declaration of Interest - Mr N Donald declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds of a family member being an employee of a grass cutting contractor used by the Council and left the room.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/42/15 dated 25 August 2015 by the Director of Community Services which detailed performance management information of the Grounds Maintenance Services from April to June 2015.

The Committee **NOTED** the performance management and remedial action information provided on the Grounds Maintenance service as set out in the report.

The Committee also **NOTED** the management action taken to address the performance issues identified and **AGREED** to review required service standards at future Ward Business meetings.

It was further **NOTED** that the proposed Seminar on localism for City of Inverness Area Members would explore how any devolved Community Services budget could be allocated, particularly in terms of grounds maintenance.

**13. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 30 June 2015
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 30 Òg mhios 2015**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/43/15 dated 25 August 2015 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 2015/16.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the deterioration in the time taken to re-let properties was disappointing and information should be provided if it was more difficult to re-let properties in specific areas as there appeared to be a correlation between this and the levels of rent arrears and it was important that these were addressed;
- where tenants were re-housed in new builds, it was hoped that the properties which they left behind were in a state where they could be re-let quickly and not require a lot of work done on them and as such these properties should be inspected before they became vacant;
- some tenants with challenging lifestyle issues might not have used their Universal Credit to pay their rent and information was requested as to how much rent was outstanding as a result. In addition, information was sought as to the measures taken to recover this and the success rate. This collation of data would help to demonstrate the impact that this approach had, not only on Local Authorities but on the individuals themselves who were incurring further debts as a result;

- there was a need for more information on whether homeless arrears been reduced substantially and that this was closely monitored and action taken reported back to Members; and
- there were 394 cases of Under Occupancy (Bedroom Tax) and it was pleasing to note that 85% were in receipt of a Discretionary Housing Payment with the remaining 15% being reviewed weekly.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the information which had been provided on housing performance in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2015; and
- AGREED** that information on Rent Arrears attributable to persons who had previously been homeless should be included in future reports.

**14. Street Naming – New Developments at Slackbuie, Inverness and Tomatin
Ainmeachadh Sràide – Leasachaidhean Ùra san t-Slag Bhuidhe, Inbhir Nis agus san Tom Aitinn**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/44/15 dated 12 August 2015 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which sought homologation of decisions taken by Community Councils, supported by Local Members, to name five residential streets in Slackbuie and one street in Tomatin which currently had built units.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of the streets as follows:-

- Five residential streets at Slackbuie which currently had built units:
 - Poppy Gardens (Gàrradh a' Chrom-luis)
 - Lily Bank (Bruach na Lilidh)
 - Gorsebank (Bruach a' Chonaisg)
 - Ivy Crescent (Corran na h-Eidhne)
 - Foxglove Crescent (Corran Lus nam Ban-Sith); and
- One street in Tomatin which currently had built units:
 - Mill View (Sealladh a' Mhuilinn)

**15. Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief
Brath-leasachaidh Bhaile an Fhraoich agus Cheasag a Deas**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/45/15 dated 25 August 2015 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which outlined responses to the public consultation on the Draft Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief and presented a finalised version for approval.

In this regard, it was confirmed that this planning policy document was required to guide land use opportunities in the area and to assist the Council, partners and community organisations in making any bids for funding to help regenerate the wider area.

During discussion, the meaningful consultation which had taken place was welcomed, along with the sympathetic development envisaged at Clachnaharry and along the Canal.

However, there were particular issues which still have to be taken into account, including traffic issues around Clachnaharry, the importance of re-accommodating the Sea Scouts and the provision of some form of pedestrian crossing at the Canal Bridge. It was also important that Local Members were kept informed of any minor modifications made to the Brief.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the comments received during the Draft Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief consultation and **AGREED** the recommended Council responses contained in Appendix B;
- ii. **AGREED** for the Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief, at Appendix A, to be adopted as statutory Supplementary Guidance subject to consideration by the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee in November 2015;
- iii. **NOTED** that the Development Brief would be treated as a material planning consideration for development management purposes; and
- iv. **AGREED** for any minor modifications required to the Development Brief as a consequence of completion of the Habitat Regulation Assessment to be agreed by the Director with the Chair of the Committee and referred to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee, with Ward Members being informed as to any modifications.

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

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/46/15 dated 21 August 2015 by the Director of Finance which listed the capital projects included in the Council's Capital Programme being delivered in the City of Inverness area in financial year 2015/16 and the in-year budgets for these projects.

In this regard, it was highlighted that the U1074 Ruthven Bridge project had been erroneously included in the list as this project was outwith the City of Inverness area and consequently the total capital budget for the area was £37,851.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- as part of the review as to how capital monitoring was to be reported, (including allowing progress to be better monitored and ascertaining how much was spent on projects year-on-year), a request was made that this also be reflected in Area Capital Project reports;
- the need for improvements at the B9091 Clephanton Bends had been questioned by the local Community Council as these improvements would necessitate valued woodland being cut and would enhance the speed capability of drivers exiting the Croy By-pass; and
- in relation to the replacement cremators at Inverness Crematorium, it was important that they were sufficiently wide enough to accommodate larger

coffins to avoid instances where cremations required to take place elsewhere thus resulting in further distress to the families concerned.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the budgeted capital projects being delivered in the City of Inverness area in 2015/16 as detailed in the report.

It was also **AGREED** that the same level of capital reporting used at Strategic Committees should be adopted at Area level.

17. Annual Reports **Aithisgean Bliadhnail**

a) Inverness City Heritage Trust **Urras Dualchais Baile Inbhir Nis**

Declarations of Interest –

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.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/47/15 dated 21 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which provided information on the work of Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT) during the financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15.

In this regard, it was confirmed that particular attention had been given to the total grant allocation to properties in Inverness Riverside and Crown Conservation Areas to date and during 2014/15.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the work and dedication of the ICHT was appreciated, many of whom were professionals giving their time voluntarily;
- the restoration of the mosaics at the former Al Welders was welcomed;
- the ICHT had commissioned a study considering the potential uses of the Midmills Building and site and as a result this property would now be retained for the benefit of the city;
- heritage was depicted in the City's historic buildings, many reflecting the skills of local architects and builders and the ICHT had ensured that these works were protected and preserved for future generations;
- the possibility of fitting the Rose Window into a renovated City Centre building should be considered;
- sometimes it was too late to protect properties but in recent years, and thanks to the ICHT, it had been possible to make progress, particularly in Academy Street. However, there were huge costs involved in trying to restore and maintain historic buildings, especially for individuals;

- the streetscape and the building environment in Academy Street were two separate issues;
- the matter of what to do with Viewhill House had still to be resolved and was proving challenging. Similarly, Grant Street too had proved problematic and it was important to find a solution;
- sometimes buildings had to be demolished and a balance had to be found, particularly taking into account the need for housing against the costs of conserving 2nd/3rd floor properties; and
- owners should be encouraged to act to prevent their properties deteriorating by, for example, removing vegetation. If the Council undertook this role, there were issues surrounding liability. Also, failure to maintain properties resulted in buildings becoming dangerous. A pilot scheme, supported by Historic Scotland, where Stirling City Heritage Trust had set up a separate company to survey buildings, was underway and encouraging owners to take on maintenance responsibilities and it was suggested that the Trust should be invited to Inverness to present their experiences to ICHT and an invitation extended to any interested Members.

Thereafter, 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 others to deliver two conferences for building professionals/ practitioners. Also, the work with Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Scotland and other building professionals to try and find realistic options for retention and repair of important city buildings and features; 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

Members were advised that the Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) had been established following the successful ballot result on 14 March 2014.

In this connection, there had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/48/15 dated 19 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the BID Chief Executive which described the progress for the period September 2014 to September 2015, with particular reference to the project activity undertaken.

In this regard, reference was made to the support which BID had given to new and sustainable events over the past year and it was suggested that, in order to avoid any potential duplication and clash of dates of events, there was merit in the BID being part of the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **ENDORSED** the continuing work and activities of the Tourism BID; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID be invited to join the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group.

18. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/49/15 dated 25 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Inverness Common Good Fund as of 31 July 2015 and the projected year end position.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a relatively high level of expenditure to date in relation to the City Promotions budget;
- there would be a return of approximately £18,500 to the Property Management fees budget;
- further information was required on what was meant in relation to “Other Charges”, “Town House Other Charges” and “Victorian Market – Opportunities for Improvement”; and
- clarification was required in regard to which budget was to be used if, as recently reported in the local media, the Rose Street Car Parking charges were to be subsidised over the festive period to encourage shoppers. In this connection, the importance of promoting “Green” travel through the use of bus transport was also highlighted.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the financial monitoring report as circulated.

b) Grants and Capital Projects Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/50/15 dated 21 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which set out the current applications for funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

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

During discussion, reference was made to the application from New Start Highland to increase the supply of goods they received at the Recycling Centre. In this regard, concern was expressed that this was something that was already being undertaking and that the Council also employed staff at the Centre who should be encouraging the public to recycle where possible. There was also concern as to whether or not support for this

project could be sustained in future years, with the general consensus being that it could not be supported.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **REFUSED** the New Start Highland application for £15,000 for the “Waste Not Want Not” project;
- ii. **APPROVED** £8,000 from the Subvention Budget and £4,000 from the Grants Budget for the application from NHS Highland towards the International Conference on Innovation in Remote Healthcare; and
- iii. **NOTED** the current status of capital projects as detailed in the report.

c) City Events and Festivals – Review of 2015/16 Events and Festivals Programme and Proposals 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/51/15 dated 26 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which provided an update on the 2015/16 Events and Festivals Programme and sought approval of the proposed 2016/17 Programme and the allocation of £335,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Revenue Budget for 2016/17.

During discussion, concern was expressed at the proposed £130k to be spent on the Hogmanay Event which it was argued took business away from local hotels and was aimed predominantly at visitors. In this regard, it was suggested that it was important that close monitoring took place and that the benefits generated were ascertained, perhaps through Business Cases being produced for each event within the Programme for consideration thereafter by the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group.

In contrast, other Members were confident that proper governance and scrutiny was already undertaken and that detailed information was available to any Member who wished sight of it. The overall allocation was relatively modest and was considered to represent good value for money, taking into account the publicity events generated and that all events were free. In relation to the Hogmanay event in particular, this event had grown in stature and had placed Inverness on the Hogmanay tourism map and it was suggested that ways in which it could be expanded should be considered, along with an investigation of the possibility of some degree of commercial sponsorship.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the review of the 2015-16 Programme and that this was in line with the Action Plan;
- ii. **APPROVED** the 2016/17 Events and Festivals Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report and the allocation of a budget in the sum of £335,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Revenue Budget for 2016/17; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group should consider commercial sponsorship of the Hogmanay event.

**19. Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund 2015/16
Sgeama Thabhartasan Coimhearsnachd Càrboin Ciallaich 2015/16**

Declaration of Interest –

Mrs M Davidson declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item as a member of Abriachan Forest Trust but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/52/15 dated 26 August 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform which set out the applications received for the Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund in Inverness for 2015/16.

The report also detailed the background to the Fund, together with a summary of applications, the assessments and funding recommendations.

During discussion, and with the aim of encouraging additional applications, it was suggested that the Fund should be more widely publicised and, bearing in mind the considerable criteria which had to be met, that community groups should be afforded support from Officers.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the funding recommendations from the Carbon Clever Community Grant Fund as shown below;

Ref. No.	Applicant Organisation	Recommended Award
11554	Fearnag Growers	8,850
11568	Ardersier War Memorial Hall Association	6,790
11583	Abriachan Forest Trust	1,750
	Total	£17,390

- ii. **NOTED** that the revenue funding elements of the Abriachan Forest Trust's application, detailed at Paragraph 3.3 to the report, would be considered at a Ward 13 Business Meeting; and
- iii. **AGREED** to promote another round of funding in the current financial year (2015/16).

**20. Royal Regiment of Scotland – Freedom of the Highlands
Rèisimeid Rìoghail na h-Alba – Saorsa na Gàidhealtachd**

Declarations of Interest -

Mrs C Caddick declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item as the Council's Armed Forces and Veterans Champion and as a Colonel in the Army Cadet Force but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interests did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

Mr R Balfour declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item as a Member of the Queen's Own Highlanders Regimental Association and the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association North Highland Committee 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.

It was confirmed that the Council had agreed on 18 December 2014 to confer the Freedom of the Highlands on the Royal Regiment of Scotland and that plans were in hand for events on 15 and 16 October 2015.

In this connection, there had been circulated Report No. CIA/53/15 dated 20 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which invited Members to note the arrangements planned for the City and to agree the attendant cost of £24,401, a breakdown of which had been provided.

During discussion, reference was made to the long and proud tradition and association which the Highlands had had with the Armed Forces and the decision to confer the Freedom of the Highlands on the Regiment was welcomed. However, concern was expressed at the level of expenditure for a one-day event and it was suggested that perhaps more modest arrangements should be considered. There was also disappointment that this was a mid-week event which might affect public participation. Furthermore, Parades were also planned for Wick, Dingwall and Fort William and it was questioned as to why it was expected that the Inverness Common Good Fund would pay for the Inverness celebrations and why the other Parades would be met from Council resources. It was however recognised that this was a unique event and that the publicity it would attract could be considerable.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the arrangements being made and **AGREED** that £24,401 be allocated from the Inverness Common Good Fund Civic Hospitality budget towards the costs associated with the granting of Freedom Status agreed by Council on 18 December 2014 to the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

**21. Inverness City Centre - Proposed Wayfinding Project
Meadhan Baile Inbhir Nis – Pròiseact Lorg-slighe a Thathar a' Moladh**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/54/15 dated 28 August 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which summarised the outcome of a recent review and analysis of wayfinding in Inverness City Centre and explained how people's understanding of the city could be improved by adopting a Legible City approach.

The report also set out initial steps to develop this approach, including consultation with relevant stakeholders to produce a prototype map.

During discussion, some Members questioned as to whether it was necessary to employ the services of a consultant for the project on the basis that it could perhaps be undertaken from within existing resources. Also, the present use of "Finger" signs had encountered problems, particularly for those with sight impairment or mobility issues. However, it was recognised that a professional and consistent approach was required, taking into account the views of the

various stakeholders and utilising new technology such as touch screens and the intended introduction of public Wi-Fi in the City Centre.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the proposal to develop a new wayfinding system in Inverness City Centre, based on a “Legible City” approach; and
- ii. **AGREED** to the appointment of a consultant to engage with and secure buy-in from relevant stakeholders and to develop a prototype map, funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund up to a maximum of £5,000, taking into account the potential for electronic devices to also be used in the City Centre with the expansion of Wi-Fi.

22. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

Declaration of Interest –

Mr H Wood declared a non-financial interest in relation to Item (iv) as a Director on the Partnership for Wellbeing 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 following Minutes were circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 2 June and Special Meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2015 – **NOTED**
- ii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 29 May and 6 August 2015 – **APPROVED**;
- iii. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 6 July and 18 August 2015 – **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 17 August 2015 – **APPROVED**.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm.