

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/34/16

1 September 2016

Developing Local Priorities for the City of Inverness and Area

Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the local strategic priorities for the City of Inverness and Area.

1. Background

- 1.1 Building on the localism agenda and increased delegation of decision making to local committees, each local committee was asked by the Leader to consider developing a set of strategic Council priorities for their area.
- 1.2 It is important to note that these are Council priorities and that there will be opportunity, through the development of local community partnerships, to consider wider shared priorities at a later date.

2. Developing the Local Priorities for Inverness and Area

- 2.1 **Appendix 1** (attached) details the current priorities for the city and area, referred to within Highland First, along with progress to date.

3. Consideration of Additional Priorities

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider:
 - local priorities for their own ward;
 - priorities that are common throughout the City and area which have not been reflected by the above; and
 - priorities that reflect the geographical diversity of the City and area.
- 3.2 Members are also asked to distinguish between Council priorities and those that would need partnership discussion and agreement. Council priorities might, for example, be around harbours, tourism, biosphere, roads transport

4. Implications

- 4.1 There are no immediate resource, risk, legal, equality, climate change/Carbon

Clever, Gaelic or rural implications in the report. However, Highland First sets out ambitions which would have a positive impact on many of these themes.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the updates provided for each Highland First priority; and consider:

- local priorities for their own ward;
- priorities that are common throughout the City and area which have not been reflected by the above; and
- priorities that reflect the geographical diversity of the City and area.

Designation: Michelle Morris, Depute Chief Executive/ Director of Corporate Development

Date: 18 August 2016

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Inverness City – the Capital of the Highlands

For ease of reference the following symbols have been used to provide an assessment of performance:

- √ Progressing well or on target
- = Actions have some slippage, indicators are maintaining performance or where it is too early to judge
- M Mixed performance - positive and negative movements in indicators/actions,

64	<p><i>City/Region Deal - Progress the City/Region deal to lever in additional infrastructure investment, improve connectivity and enhance the skills of our young people across the Highlands</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following initial meetings with the Scottish and UK Governments, a long list of proposals was developed and a statement of intent provided. After further investigation of costs and benefits a final programme was agreed and The Heads of Terms (in principle agreement) for the City Region Deal was signed on the 22 March 2016. 	√
65	<p><i>Infrastructure for Growth – to continue to grow, Inverness needs to address infrastructure constraints to enable the delivery of new housing, business and recreational facilities.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inverness West Link enabling works have been completed and these were the diversion of the main statutory services equipment (e.g. water, telecoms) in advance of the main West Link construction and these were completed in advance of the commencement of West Link stage 1 as programmed. • West Link Stage 1 is the construction of the link between the Dores Road and the A82 (Glenurquhart Road) including the River Ness bridge crossing. The contract was awarded to Wills Bros. Ltd and works commenced in spring 2016 to ensure the temporary works in the River can be completed over the environmentally less sensitive summer months. Works are progressing well and are programmed to be complete in December 2017. • Inverness West Link and commencement of Torvean golf course: Tenders were invited for the golf course and the contract has been awarded to Coffey Construction and EGS Joint Venture, and works are programmed to commence in August 2016. This is a slight delay over the original programme, but this is not critical as the access dates for works on the live golf course are still to be achieved and works are programmed to be complete in spring 2019 as originally programmed. • In relation to the target for completion of the West Link. The West Link Stage 1 is under construction and the Golf Course is to commence in August 2016. Completion of the Golf Course in spring of 2019 will allow the existing golf course to be vacated allowing Stage 2 to commence for completion late 2020 all as programmed. • In relation to Inshes roundabout traffic capacity enhancements. Design work to ensure that the local traffic capacity enhancements at Inshes roundabout are compatible with future designs, delayed the commencement and these works were completed and operational in July 2016. The works were largely constructed off line with minimal traffic disruption and have been well received. • For Inshes roundabout scheme and the promotion of construction consents target of December 2016. The solution adopted by Transport Scotland for the A96/A9 link will dictate/influence the design to be adopted for Inshes Junction. Transport Scotland is to undertake public consultation in August 2016, and it is anticipated that the route will be announced by ministers in spring of 2017. We continue to work very closely with Transport Scotland to coordinate the design and construction programme. • In relation to the completion of works, as highlighted above Inshes junction will be designed and constructed to dovetail with the A9-A96 link. Design works are ongoing to provide the next phase of Inshes Junction, under permitted development rights, to provide three lanes over Inshes overbridge. A decision to move to the construction phase will only be taken 	=

	when certainty exists over the future of the bridge in respect of the A9-A96 link promoted by Transport Scotland.	
66	<p><u>City Promotion</u> – We will progress the move of the Scottish Courts Service from Inverness Castle and turn the castle and surrounding area into a major visitor attraction for the city and region. We will also work with partners to enhance visitor experience by seeking to deliver further attractions for the city centre including the riverside arts trail</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the development of Inverness Castle. A public consultation was undertaken and option agreed for castle by end March 2016. A new joint delivery group has been formed jointly chaired by the Provost/leader of Inverness and the Minister for the Rural Economy. Work is progressing on the viewing platform and is now part of the wider environmental improvements. Completion is due in late 2016 as additional stone repairs are being undertaken. • We have reviewed the Riverside Arts trail project programme which has resulted in the need to reschedule projected delivery. All projects are in process and it is anticipated that the Projects Programme will be completed by October 2017. • Visit Inverness Loch Ness, the tourism BID includes the riverside as one of the important features of the city in their marketing activity that promotes Inverness as a key visitor destination. As the Riverside Arts Project progresses there will be the opportunity for more specific references or promotional activity to promote both the wider project and specific installations. 	√
67	<p><u>City Centre</u> – We will work with our partners to deliver city centre Wi-Fi and other projects to deliver SMART Cities; as well as playing a full part in the Scottish Cities Alliance.</p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the Inverness city centre Wi-Fi project which is reported on at commitment 14 above. The following progress is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to play a full part in the smart cities work of the Scottish Cities Alliance with the “Scotland’s 8th City: The Smart City” Strategic Intervention projects progressing in parallel with the other cities. In addition to the strategic Intervention we are also in the process of developing other smart cities pipeline projects in collaboration with our partners. • The Council maintains a strong contribution to the work of the Scottish Cities Alliance, by participation in a wide range of initiatives aimed at working together to grow the economy of all of Scotland Cities. 	√
68	<p><u>Business Vibrancy</u> - We will encourage new businesses to locate in the city centre, notably in creative industries and information technology. We will also progress the development of the Victorian Market as a major attraction.</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incubator for start-ups is part of one of the projects being progressed through the Academy Street regeneration project. A proposal by Glasgow-based Wasps Artist Studios for the Midmills Building also includes potential incubator space. • The Project timescales have been amended following the City of Inverness Area Committee decision on 1 March 2016 to create a Victorian Market Stakeholder Group which includes Councillors and local business representatives. It will meet in early August 2016 and as part of its objectives (which focus on delivering a vibrant and sustainable future for the Market) will consider proposals for the Academy Street Entrance. Progress on delivery of the contract is now anticipated to be in the last quarter of this financial year. • We have established a stakeholder working group and will report on options in December 2016 for future management of the Victorian Market. 	=
69	<p><u>Health and Wellbeing</u> – Working with our partners we will progress the delivery of a regional sports facilities for the Highlands in Inverness incorporating indoor cycling,</p>	√

	<p><i>tennis and athletics as part of our aim of promoting the Highlands as a great place to live, work and visit. We will also explore options for a transport schemes so that all of Highland can benefit for this facilities</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>A revised outline business case will be prepared in August for the Regional Sports Facility project to establish if it can be included as part of our future Capital Programme. Outline design work is on hold until the Capital Programme review has been concluded.</p>	
70	<p><i>Transport - Working with our partners we will develop public transport provision in the city and we will work with Abellio Scotrail to prepare and implement a masterplan for Inverness Railway Station. We also will aim to make Inverness one of the most family and visitor friendly cities in the UK through expanding 20mph zones throughout the residential areas of the city</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2015 the Council, Abellio Scotrail (AS) and HITRANS entered into a joint commission to develop design ideas for improvements to Inverness Railway Station. AS plans to invest up to £2m on station improvements as part of its franchise agreement with Transport Scotland. The study was completed in March 2016 and discussions are now underway on implementation. A report was made to the City of Inverness Area Committee setting out progress with this work on 3 March 2016. • Road Construction Consents were granted for Tornagrain and Ness Castle during the 2015/16 period, which require the developers to formally implement 20 mph schemes within their developments. Work on both these developments commenced during the reporting period. Although the Council did not implement any formal 20mph zones in Inverness during 2015/16, we plan to deliver 3 schemes in 2016/17 in Merkinch (Inverness), Muir of Ord and Nairn. • A report on the National Roads Development Guidance was considered at the May 2016 Planning Development and Infrastructure Committee. This document, along with the Council's local guidance, sets out the requirement for roads within new developments to be designed for low speeds, and allows for the Council to require that 20 mph schemes be delivered where appropriate. Committee approved its use as guidance in the design of new developments 	M
71	<p><i>Social Equality - Working with our partners we will seek public sector infrastructure investment and training opportunities in our deprived communities to create jobs and improve quality of life</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite targeted marketing there were no shared apprentices were taken on from the most deprived SIMD areas during 2015/16. Of those taken on, 6 of the 9 apprentices came from rural areas. • In 2015/16 we secured Regeneration capital grant funding for the conversion of the Welfare hall in Merkinch, working in partnership with Merkinch Enterprise to deliver a new community project in its most deprived area. The scheme is currently on site. 	√
72	<p><i>Education - We will work to develop the presence of the University of the Highlands and Islands within the city, to enhance options for the retention of young people within the City and Region and encourage sector growth in industries</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the monitoring of implementation of the Highland Workforce Planning (which incorporates the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Strategy and the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan) which is provided at commitment 31 above. The following progress has been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The premises for the Science Skills Academy at the Inverness Campus has been completed with work now focussing on the delivery of the action plan for the academy. 	√