

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 22 February 2018 at 10.30am.

### **Present:**

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Mr R Balfour            | Mr J Gray       |
| Mr B Boyd               | Mr A Graham     |
| Mr I Brown              | Mr A Jarvie     |
| Mrs C Caddick           | Mr R Laird      |
| Miss J Campbell         | Mrs I MacKenzie |
| Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair | Mr D Macpherson |
| Mrs H Carmichael        | Mr R MacWilliam |
| Mr A Christie           | Mrs T Robertson |
| Mrs M Davidson          | Mr G Ross       |
| Mr K Gowans             | Mr C Smith      |

### **Officials in Attendance:**

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure  
Mr A Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration  
Mr R Gerring, Transport Planning Manager  
Ms A Tanner, Inverness City Heritage Trust Project Officer  
Mr J Taylor, Roads Operations Manager  
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Chief Executive's Office

### **Also in attendance:**

Chief Inspector C Gough, Inverness Area Commander, Police Scotland

**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**

## **Business**

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

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms E Knox, Mrs B McAllister and Mr G Cruickshank.

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

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

Item 5 – Miss J Campbell (non-financial)  
Item 6 – Miss J Campbell, Mr J Gray, Mr R MacWilliam and Mr R Laird (all non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial)  
Item 13 – Mrs I MacKenzie (non-financial)  
Item 16 – Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray and Mr R Laird (all non-financial)

### 3. **New Year's Honours** **Urraman na Bliadhna Ùire**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following individuals had been recognised in the New Year's Honours List:-

Stuart Christopher Rose, BEM  
Dr James Patrick Vestey, OBE

### 4. **Police – Area Performance Summary** **Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/1/18 dated 2 February 2018 by the Inverness Area Commander which provided an update on progress with reference to the objectives outlined within the Highland Policing Plan 2017-20.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it would be helpful if a Briefing could be arranged for Members on the issues raised in the report, specifically the drink/drive figures, licensed premises checks, drug offences and statistics in relation to shoplifting;
- in relation to shoplifting, the increase in detection due to an increased Police presence in the City Centre was welcomed;
- interaction with Inverness BID in terms of the sharing of good practice and marshalling activities (leading to a quick and dynamic response in the reporting of crimes) was also welcomed;
- there was however concern about the increase in the level of drink/drive offences and speeding offences;
- both this report and the next report on Operation Respect City Centre proved that the City Centre was becoming safer and there was a need to convey the thanks of the Committee to all those involved for the marked improvement in policing;
- in regard to shoplifting statistics and the reasons behind this issue, consideration should be given to making this a standing item on future agendas in order to monitor the situation;
- there was surprise at the statistics in regard to use of a mobile phone whilst driving offence as it was not felt that this had lessened to any great degree;
- there appeared to be a close relationship between the increase in shoplifting, drug and alcohol offences and problems with Universal Credit and it would be helpful if more research could be undertaken and detail provided to inform the future Briefing for Members; and
- consideration should be given as to whether it might be feasible to implement a different form of policing for minor offences in future e.g. 'warning/advising' culprits as to their behaviour in the first instance as opposed to issuing Fixed Penalty Notices, such as for littering offences.

Thereafter, and having thanked the Area Commander for his presentation, the Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 (attached as Annex A to the report) for the period covering 1 April – 31 December 2017.

It was also **AGREED** that a Briefing on the issues raised at the meeting as detailed would be arranged for Members of the Committee.

**5. Inverness Community Safety Partnership – Operation Respect City Centre 2017/18 Winter Festival Period Evaluation Report**  
**Com-pàirteachas Sàbhailteachd Coimhearsnachd Inbhir Nis – Aithisg Mheasaidh Ùine Fèis Geamhraidh 2017/18 ‘Operation Respect’ Meadhan a’ Bhaile**

**Declaration of Interest – Miss J Campbell declared a non-financial interest in this item as a member of the Inverness Community Safety Partnership 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 from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/2/18 dated 9 February 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Inverness Area Commander (Highland and Islands Division, Police Scotland) which provided an overview of resources, actions and evaluation of the multi-agency Operation Respect – City Centre for the Winter Festival 2017/18.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to all those involved with Operation Respect and who had contributed to such a successful outcome as detailed in the report;
- the information on trends and analysis which had been provided was welcomed;
- in acknowledging the excellent work which had been undertaken, there was a need to highlight that the multi-agency approach was working particularly well and that as a result there was a safer and more relaxed atmosphere in the City Centre;
- special mention had to be made of the outstanding role of the Street Pastors in view of the contribution which they were making to the City Centre; and
- it would be beneficial if this report could link with other initiatives currently taking place, including locality plans.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the evaluation available to date on the effectiveness of Operation Respect – City Centre for Winter 2017/18 as presented.

**6. Inverness City Heritage Trust Annual Report**  
**Aithisg Bhliadhnail Urras Dualchais Baile Inbhir Nis**

**Declarations of Interest – Miss J Campbell and Mr J Gray (as members of Inverness City Heritage Trust), Mr R MacWilliam (as a member of Inverness City Heritage Trust and the Academy Townscape Heritage Project ) and Mr R Laird (as Chair of the Academy Street Townscape Heritage Project) declared non-financial interests in respect of this item as detailed 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 them from taking part in the discussion.**

**Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest as an employee of Inverness College UHI 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/3/18 dated 30 January 2018 by the Inverness Heritage Trust Project Officer which provided information on the work of Inverness City Heritage Trust during the financial year 2016/17, with particular attention to the total grant allocation to projects in Inverness Riverside Conservation Areas to date and during 2016/17.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst noting the achievements and performance which had been detailed in the report, it had to be highlighted that there was still insufficient funding to deal with issues relating to historical buildings in the City;
- also, whilst improvements were encouraged and the Council was working constructively with Historic Scotland in this regard, there were many issues, such as private ownership of buildings in need of repair, which were more difficult to tackle;
- work was currently ongoing in relation to projects in Academy Street and at the Midmills Building in Inverness and this was welcomed;
- there was also a need to acknowledge the funding and Officer support which had been received from the Inverness City Heritage Trust for such projects;
- there were however complex issues associated with buildings on Castle Street and High Street and solutions for these areas were still being sought;
- it was noted that a further report on the progress of the Academy Townscape Heritage Project in particular would be submitted to the next meeting with an update on further progress;
- it was suggested that consideration should be given to the siting of more blue plaques in the City if possible to commemorate famous persons who had lived and worked in the area; and
- there were frustrations where civic and commercial concerns were not aligned and where this then led to a delay in progress and action and as such it would be helpful if future legislation could address this issue.

Thereafter, Members **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 the Traditional Building Forum for the Highlands and Islands to deliver conferences for building professionals/ practitioners. Also, the work with other building professionals to try and find realistic options for retention and repair of important city buildings and features;
- (iii) the current situation with regard to future funding from Historic Environment Scotland for Inverness City Heritage Trust; and

- (iv) that a report on the progress of project work, with an emphasis on the Academy Street Townscape Heritage Project, would be presented to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

## **7. Roads Maintenance Programme 2018/2019 Prògram Càraidh Sgìreil airson Rathaidean agus Dhrochaidean 2017/18**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/4/18 dated 30 January 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it had to be highlighted that the recent Winter period had had a very detrimental effect on the road network across the City and surrounding areas;
- there was frustration that allocation of the roads maintenance budget was based on the distance of roads (as opposed to width and usage) and as such there was a significant disparity between the City of Inverness area and the rest of the Highlands;
- the continued provision within the wider Council budget for Winter Maintenance as a result of the recent budget was welcomed;
- there was a need for further more detailed discussion on the allocation of the roads maintenance budget (with particular reference to the City of Inverness Area) and it was suggested that this should be undertaken by the Provost in the first instance with the Chair of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee and the Director of Development & Infrastructure;
- it was also hoped that further clarity in this regard could be provided as a result of the forthcoming zero based budgeting exercise;
- in order to take this issue forward, and to seek a fair allocation for the area, it was suggested also that a unanimous recommendation from this Committee should be made to the full Council in March to review the allocation formula for roads maintenance to better reflect infrastructure design, usage and actual maintenance costs;
- it should be recognised that delays in surface dressing greatly increased costs over time;
- roads in industrial areas and the City Centre were very rarely given a high priority in terms of the current roads maintenance arrangements;
- there was a need to convey thanks to the roads maintenance and gritting teams for the considerable work which had been undertaken over recent weeks in particular;
- there was a need to recognise the impact on the surrounding roads adjacent to the successful West Link route;
- consideration also had to be given to the current poor state of trunk roads in the area;
- on an economic level, it was anticipated that there would be a considerable number of claims made to the Council for damage to cars as a result of the condition of some roads at present; and
- it would be helpful if a Briefing could be arranged for Members on disaggregation of the Roads Maintenance budget.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2018/19 Roads Maintenance Programme for the City of Inverness Area.

\*It was also **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the Council should review the allocation formula for Roads Maintenance to better reflect infrastructure design, usage and actual maintenance costs.

It was further **AGREED** that a Briefing should be arranged for Members of the Committee on disaggregation of the Roads Maintenance budget.

## **8. Lower Speed (City Centre) Study Sgrùdadh Astaran nas Ìsle (Meadhan a' Bhaile)**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/5/18 dated 1 February 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- whilst acknowledging the regulations which were in place in relation to the siting of signage, it was suggested that further consideration should be given to the prominence of the signage at the gateways to the City;
- it would be helpful if further comparison statistics could be provided in relation to results before and after implementation of 20mph speed limits;
- increased awareness around this issue was imperative as it was a reality that slower cars were safer for all concerned and the focus had to be on safety above all else;
- there was a need to consider repeat signs where possible, along with additional road markings;
- priority had to be given to residential areas, and specifically those areas with School buildings;
- in terms of the responses which had been received and which had been detailed in the report, it had to be acknowledged that not everyone would be content with the final decisions taken;
- there was a need to consider the concerns expressed by cyclists in the City and their experiences to date, both good and bad;
- it had to be recognised that it would not be feasible to allocate a 20mph speed limit on all roads, such as Millburn Road;
- this was not just a City issue but also applied to village and more rural areas in the Highlands;
- it would be helpful to consult Local Ward Members in the first instance prior to the siting of any new signs;
- the current mix of 20mph and 30mph signs on the same road was causing confusion in parts of the City and this required to be changed;
- consideration should perhaps be given to the imposition of 20mph zones throughout the whole City area;
- more information was required in regard to the compliance threshold and the levels at which this was tolerated; and
- it would be important to involve Inverness BID in future consultations.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (i) **NOTED** the contents of the report and the supporting documentation;

- (ii) **NOTED** the aspects of the Inverness City Development Brief that were relevant to the actions set out in the final section of the Study Report;
- (iii) **AGREED** to endorse the key outcomes identified from the Individual/Social/Material Workshop: Users of streetscape feel safer: Inverness is more attractive: improved amenity and economy;
- (iv) **AGREED** to delegate to the Director of Development and Infrastructure to develop and implement a messaging campaign about lower speeds in Inverness City and other communities; and
- (v) **AGREED** to delegate to the Director of Development and Infrastructure to review the existing speed limit gateways and enhance them through improved signs and markings.

It was also **AGREED** that liaison should be undertaken with Ward Members on signage options.

## 9. Inverness City Active Travel Network (ICATN) Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Lìonra Chòmhdhail Ghnìomhach Baile Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No CIA/6/18 dated 6 February 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, it was highlighted that road markings in relation to contraflow cycle lanes were causing confusion in certain parts of the City and this needed to be examined as a matter of safety.

It was also noted that the Scottish Government had announced plans for an increase to the budget for Active Travel Networks and this represented an opportunity for further bids for funding for the area which was welcomed.

Thereafter, Members **NOTED** the contents of the report and that reports would be brought back to Ward Business Meetings and the Committee as necessitated, such as the proposal for any statutory approvals such as Road Traffic Regulation Order.

It was also **AGREED** to appoint Mr B Boyd, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs C Caddick and Mrs I MacKenzie to sit on the Advisory Panel for the ICATN Programme.

## 10. Street Lighting Update Soillseachadh Sràide

There had been circulated Report No CIA/7/18 dated 9 February 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, and in welcoming the progress which had been made on the LED programme as detailed in the report, it was suggested that it would be helpful if further information could be provided at a Ward level in future if possible.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress and future programme for delivery of LED replacement lighting in Inverness.

It was also **NOTED** that a submission had been made for EU funding under the ERDF SMART Cities Programme for grant funding towards the provision of

Intelligent Street Lighting in Inverness and that development of the proposals would involve a consultation stage, including presentation at Ward Business meetings with a report back to the Committee later in 2018.

**11. Homologation of New Street Names  
Aontachadh Ainmean Ùra Sràide**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/8/18 dated 8 February 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of new streets for new housing and flatted developments in Drumnadrochit, Lewiston and the Hill, Holm, Ness Castle and Crown areas of Inverness as detailed in the report.

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

**(a) Financial Monitoring  
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/9/18 dated 7 February 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 January 2018 and that overall expenditure was within agreed budgets.

**(b) Grants and Capital Projects  
Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/10/18 dated 1 February 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Committee **NOTED** the funds available for allocation and the current status of capital projects as detailed in the report.

It was also **NOTED** that there had been very positive feedback from visitors in relation to the recent Town House Open Days and that work was ongoing with High Life Highland in relation to arranging further Open Days in future.

**(c) Budget Setting for 2018/19 and Capital Programme  
Suidheachadh Buidseit airson 2018/19 agus Prògram Calpa**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/11/18 dated 7 February 2018 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and the Inverness City Manager which invited Members to set the revenue budget for the Inverness Common Good Fund for the financial year 2018/19.

It also clarified governance arrangements, anticipated income (primarily from tenancy rentals), the proposed expenditure, split into essentials (for the maintenance of buildings and the provision of basic services) and a number of additional items, action on the future investment of any



projected surplus funds and the structure of payments made to the Council for services rendered in support of the fund and how these services should be supported in the coming financial year and thereafter.

The Committee:-

- (i) **AGREED** the Common Good Fund budget for 2018/19 detailed within the report and appendices;
- (ii) **AGREED** to maintain a general reserve of £2m and reallocate the remaining uncommitted sum of £1.6m to a Property Investment Fund; and
- (iii) **NOTED** that Officers would continue to monitor projected cash flow for the Common Good Fund, in particular through the Capital Projects Monitoring Report, with an emphasis on the utilisation of surplus revenue either within projects or as an opportunity for investment.

It was **NOTED** that a report on the Victorian Market would be submitted to the next meeting in May.

It was also **NOTED** that further works were now being undertaken on the Steeple Clock and that it was hoped that it would be back to full working order soon.

Also, that active marketing of the vacant area in the top floor of 1-5 Church Street, Inverness was continuing.

### 13. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

**Declaration of Interest – Mrs I MacKenzie declared a non-financial interest in item (iii) as a member of the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group 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 from taking part in the discussion.**

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 30 November 2017 – **NOTED** – subject to the following correction – Item 4 (Inverness BID Ballot for New Term) – to confirm that there had been recent incorrect references to the ‘Retail Park’ as the ‘Inverness Centre’ but these references had not in fact come from the ‘press’ as had been stated in the Minute;
- ii. Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 29 January 2018 - **AGREED**; and
- iii. Victorian Market Stakeholder Management Group held on 6 February 2018 – **NOTED**.

**14. Exclusion of the Public  
Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following 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.

**15. Inverness Common Good Account Sites and Premises Transaction Report  
Aithisg Gnothachais Làraich agus Togalaichean Chunntasan Maoin Math Choitcheann Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated to Members only Joint Report No CIA/12/18 dated 19 January 2018 by the Head of Development and Regeneration and the Property Manager (Estates).

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

**16. Lease Amendment  
Atharrachadh Aonta Màil**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr A Graham, Mr J Gray and Mr R Laird declared non-financial interests in this item 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 them from taking part in the discussion.**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No CIA/13/18 dated 23 January 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

**Additional Urgent Item**

**Corporate Investment/Development Purchase Opportunity**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. CIA/14/18 dated 15 February 2018 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 3.15pm.