

Agenda Item	13d
Report No	CIA/32/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 30 May 2019

Report Title: Inverness Common Good Fund
Grants and Capital Projects

Report By: Inverness City Area Manager

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current applications for grant funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Consider the applications for funding
- ii. Agree to refuse the Accessable proposal
- iii. Scrutinise the current status of capital projects
- iv. note the cost to undertake the work to the Rose Window was £14,675.27 and will paid from the Other Properties Budget.
- v. Approve the overspend on the Ness Islands Improvement Works Project from the Other Properties Budget
- vi. Approve an additional £6,500 to the Whin Park Improvement Works Project

3. Grants and Capital Projects

- 3.1 The current summary of funds available following the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee meeting on 13 May 2019 is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 **Booklet A** includes details of current grant applications for more than £10,000. Members are invited to consider the following applications:
1. **LOC MNR 2020:** Following receipt of further information the Sub-Committee recommend approval of a grant of £17,500 from the Conference Support Budget. This is based on the MOD potentially bringing economic benefit to Inverness of between £2.5m and £3.4m. Please see the Evaluations for Inverness 2014 and Dunoon 2018 in Booklet A. Based on the 9000 visitors quoted and assuming an average stay of 5 days (average visitor spend per day £64 – Visit Scotland estimate) this would mean a potential economic benefit to Inverness of £2.88m, to which local spend to fringe events would be added. Allowing for inflation this assessment equates with the benefits detailed in the 2014 Inverness Mod Evaluation. In additional recommended sum is consistent with awards made to events of a similar nature to date.
 2. **Special Needs Action Project:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee recommend deferral for further clarification on business planning aspects.
 3. **WASPs Trust:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee recommend approval of a grant of £65,000 towards the Inverness Creative Academy – Phase 2
 4. **Eden Court:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee recommend approval of a grant of £13,148 towards Under Canvas 2019
 5. **Scottish Canals:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee recommend approval of a grant of £50,000 towards the Carse Outdoor Hub
 6. **LCC Live Events:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee recommend approval of a grant of £17,000 towards the European Pipe Band Championships from the Conference Support Budget.
- 3.3 **Accessible**
- 3.4 **Appendix 2** details a new proposal to continue the Accessable Project (previously DisabledGo). The previous project commenced in April 2013 and ran for 6 years to 31 May 2019 at an annual cost of £8,000 per annum with the first year free giving a total project costs of £40,000.
- 3.5 The new proposal is costed at £8,256 per annum with a lifespan 3 or 5 years.
- 3.6 The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub- Committee considered the proposal at the Sub-Committee Meeting held on 13 May and during discussion it was pointed out that production of this guide was undertaken by most Local Authorities across Scotland as part of Council policy on Equalities and for this reason the application should be referred to the Council, noting in addition that it ought to be produced for the whole of the Highlands, not only for Inverness.
- 3.7 The Sub- Committee therefore **AGREED** to recommend refusal of the application to the City of Inverness Area Committee.
- 3.3 **Appendix 3** details the current status of capital projects.

4. Implications

- 4.1 Resource - Funding is provided by the Inverness Common Good Fund budget for 2018/19. Funding for the Lochness Knit Fest and for Partnership Projects are dependent on a budget for 2019/20 being agreed by this Committee.
- 4.2 Legal - There are no Legal implications as a result of this report
- 4.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - Applications are considered on merit which includes compliance with Council Policies. The need to ensure that the residents of the former Burgh of Inverness are the main beneficiaries is paramount
- 4.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - Consideration is given to ensuring that applications meet reasonable expectations in respect of climate change and carbon clever targets
- 4.5 Risk – There are no known risk implications in respect of this report
- 4.6 Gaelic - Applications if successful will be required to meet expectations set by Council Policy in this regard.

Designation: Inverness City Area Manager, Principal Project Manager

Date: 17 May 2019

Author: David Haas, Jason Kelman

Background Papers:

APPENDIX 1

**Inverness Common Good Fund
Available Resource for Allocation**

£

Budget Balance Available - Grants	315,000
Underspend from 2018/19	170,070
	485,070

Committee Date	Category	Award	Total for meeting	
(Committed from previous financial years)	Grants < £10k	98,150		
	Grants > £10k	71,920	170,070	315,000
21/02/19 City of Inverness Area Committee	Grants <£10k	7,500	7,500	307,500
13/05/19 Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee	Grants < £10k	52,405	52,405	255,095
30/05/2019 City of Inverness Area Committee - Reccommended for Approval	Grants > £10k	128,148	128,148	126,947

Budget Balance Available - **Conference Funding** 40,000

40,000

Committee Date	Category	Award	Total for meeting	
21/02/19 City of Inverness Area Committee	Grants < £10k	7,500	7,500	32,500
30/05/2019 City of Inverness Area Committee - Reccommended for Approval	Grants > £10k	34,500	34,500	-2,000



Renewal Proposal

Prepared for

David Haas
Inverness City Area Manager

The Highland Council

Produced by

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Executive Director
AccessAble
29th April 2019

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Outline Renewal Proposal

Background to AccessAble

AccessAble, previously called DisabledGo, is the UK's most popular and trusted Accessibility Guide, used by over 1.8 million people each year. The organisation was established in 2000, founded by Gregory Burke, a wheelchair user himself. AccessAble solely works to deliver its social mission, working on a 'break even' financial model. Over the past 19 years the service has changed lives, tackling social isolation and promoting independence.

AccessAble views comprehensive accessibility information as key to ensuring that disabled people and carers do not face inequality and exclusion. Working with over 350 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on www.AccessAble.co.uk and the AccessAble App. These Access Guides not only meet a social need, but help partners meet financial, corporate and legal obligations.

AccessAble works with over 110 local authorities across the UK, including major cities, such as Glasgow, Birmingham, Bristol, and Belfast. Other partners include the UK's leading universities and household names such as Next, Marks & Spencer, Odeon, Land Securities, SEA LIFE and Forestry Commission.

AccessAble visits and assesses all venues appearing on its website and App, to produce its Access Guides. These look at 'access' and 'disability' from lots of different perspectives. Not just mobility impairment, but also learning disability, sensory impairment, dementia and mental health.

As part of its work, AccessAble runs engagement events and offers work experience to local disabled people and carers.

The Need for Accessibility Information

In the UK, there are over 13 million disabled people and 4.5 million carers according to the UK Government's 2017/18 Family Resource Survey. The Department of Work and Pensions estimates the influential spending power of disabled people to be in excess of £249 billion per year.

As part of the launch of AccessAble, in October 2018, the 'Accessibility and You' survey, completed by 845 people across the UK, highlighted the stark contrast between the expectations of people with accessibility requirements and what is provided by the majority of public and private sector organisations. 99% of respondents said it was important to know about accessibility before visiting a new place and 98% searched for accessibility information in advance.

The real-life impact of not having access information available was also clear, 75% said they felt nervous or anxious visiting somewhere new and 76% said they had not visited somewhere due to a lack of accessibility information. Most concerning, 77% of respondents reported having to leave a venue after finding accessibility was not what they had expected.

AccessAble Inverness

AccessAble began working with The Highland Council in 2013. The project was made possible due to support from the Common Good Fund and covers venues within the 7 corresponding wards of Inverness.

The initial agreement between AccessAble and The Highland Council involved AccessAble' surveyors visiting and assessing venues and places of interest, including leisure centres, libraries, parks, hotels, shops and more. There are currently 829 Access Guides published with 296 Detailed Access Guides, 2 Route Guides and 531 Symbol Based Access Guide.

The Access Guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements, national figures state that 1 in 4 people have a link to disability, equating to 15,945, of Inverness' 63,780 residents and 58,693 of Highland's 234,770 (2016:Highland.gov.uk). These figures will only increase as the city and wider area's population ages.

Each Access Guides has been published on www.AccessAble.co.uk since October 2018, and prior to that was published on www.DisabledGo.com. The Access Guides can also be found on a Google search due to the search engine optimisation AccessAble uses to promote its website. While some integration between the AccessAble website and the Council, BID and Visit Inverness websites has taken place, this could be significantly improved. Equally, a substantial benefit would be derived from ensuring links are added to the HighLife website. This work is not labour intensive for the Council and something that AccessAble would be delighted to facilitate moving forward.

After producing and launching the Access Guides AccessAble has reviewed the information, liaising with all the venues included and sending surveyors back each year to reassess changes. Over the course of the current contract, 21% of included venues have made efforts to improve their access – demonstrating AccessAble's ability to be a catalyst for positive change.

AccessAble has also been delivered a range of engagement events and work experience days throughout the contract. This was done in partnership with Inverness Access Panel, prior to the recent challenges facing the Panel. Moving forward AccessAble would be keen to arrange engagement events involving a wide range of disability, carers and third sector organisations across Inverness.

In the last 12 months the Inverness Access Guides have been used 26,024 times. This usage has come from the following sources, 40% from search engine results, reflecting AccessAble's investment in this area, 11% directly to www.AccessAble.co.uk / www.disabledgo.com and 49% from referrals from other websites. These figures show the need for the Inverness Access Guides, but also the potential to increase the usage further by improving the links between the websites cited above and AccessAble. The work would equally make the City and Council's websites more inclusive.

AccessAble would be happy to organise a relaunch event for the service and deliver some briefings or training sessions with frontline staff. This would ensure Inverness is getting the greatest return on investment and is capitalising on the work completed to date.

Attached as an Appendix to this proposal are testimonials from residents and some of the City's leading attractions, demonstrating the Accessibility Guide's value to both the business and disability community.

Benefits

The AccessAble service provides crucial, practical information that enables residents and visitors, to make the most of Inverness, lowering the anxiety and the challenges of visiting somewhere unfamiliar. The Accessibility Guide helps Inverness meet a number of core duties and responsibilities.

Protect the vulnerable in our communities, promote fairness and welcome diversity.

The provision of comprehensive accessibility information enables people of all ages to confidently access venues and services, building personal resilience and independence. This in turn leads to disabled people and carers accessing and contributing to their communities. Being part of the community lessens the likelihood of social exclusion and fosters good relations.

This very much aligns to the council's focus on empowering and providing proactive support for excluded and vulnerable adults and carers.

AccessAble is working with a range of authorities to integrate accessibility information into existing resources so that people face less barriers to fulfilling their potential.

Providing this detail breaks down a key barrier and offers people greater personal control, so that they can independently decide to try something new. Working in this way would contribute to the Council's goal of enabling people to live independently, staying in their own homes for longer.

Support children to learn and thrive

AccessAble's service is all age and looks to ensure that accessibility information is available for children, young people and families with access needs. AccessAble has worked proactively to engage groups of parents and young people to shape Access Guides and the new AccessAble website and App.

An Accessibility Guide is a practical tool that enables people to access opportunities for training and skills. For many authorities AccessAble has included schools in its surveys, together with training venues and leisure opportunities. Being able to be active and involved at an early age enables people to build an independent future.

In each area AccessAble works the organisation is keen to offer training and work experience to local people. Recently this has included working in partnership with colleges, training organisations or employability services to provide opportunities to young people.

Make Highland a stronger and more resilient region

AccessAble is a practical project which evidences Inverness' commitment to inclusive communities – highlighting the diverse needs of disabled people and carers, together with the benefits of promoting and improving accessibility.

AccessAble can help monitor and improve accessibility in the community. AccessAble contacts every venue each year and reassesses any changes or improvements that are made. AccessAble typically sees an improvement of at least 10% in venue accessibility year on year. This combined with the surveyors visit and a robust joint promotion plan would raise awareness of accessibility and the needs of disabled people across Inverness.

In other areas AccessAble has worked in partnership with social care and public health teams to take an integrated approach ensuring that all community assets, health facilities and open spaces are included in the Accessibility Guide. By including venues such as parks, open spaces and leisure activities residents can access places that are low cost and improve their mental and physical health.

By including venues such as parks, open spaces and leisure activities residents can access places that are low cost and improve their mental and physical health. This supports the investment made in such spaces across Inverness and would promote improvements to many potential users.

On a practical level in other areas AccessAble has been used to collect data and promote a range of community schemes. This includes, Changing Places, Safe Places Schemes, Community Toilet Schemes and Dementia Friendly Communities.

Protect and enhance Highland's influence and reputation nationally and internationally

An Accessibility Guide is not just about enabling people to be part of their community but also ensuring they are able to contribute to it as consumers and employees. With 1 in 4 households having a link to disability and disabled people being accountable for a £249 + billion annual spend in the UK alone (DWP:2014), promoting accessibility and facilities should be viewed as an essential part of regeneration and investment.

Tourism continues to be of massive importance to the Inverness economy. Inclusively promoting the City should be seen as a key part of developing the Highlands as a world class, year-round, tourist destination. AccessAble has a proven track record of working with tourism teams and destination management organisations to ensure that the information needed by carers and disabled people is available.

[Visit London Example](#)

By profiling and promoting the accessibility of venues, especially tourist attractions and hotels you encourage people to visit breaking down misconceptions. Accurate, detailed information also facilitates longer stays as people have the information needed to feel confident their needs will be met. As an industry focused on welcome and guest experience, the importance of managing expectations is key to success and the Access Guides are a great way to do this.

Beyond these core priorities a partnership with AccessAble helps the council deliver on its Equality Act obligations and commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Proposal

Due to its social mission, AccessAble simply charges partners the actual cost of producing, publishing and promoting its Access Guides and is focused on sustaining its services into the future.

AccessAble works with partners for 3 or 5 years, to ensure the project is sustainable and that the best possible value can be delivered.

It is proposed that the annual review carried out by AccessAble is restructured to focus on improving and developing the Detailed Access Guides contained in the Inverness Guide. All 296 Detailed Access Guides would be called to confirm their Guide is up to date and any flagging a structural change would be visited by a surveyor and reassessed.

If less than 10% of venues require a revisit AccessAble will revisit existing venues to take new photographs and upgrade the information to our most recent research templates. This will ensure that the Access Guides are kept up to date and in line with the latest standard, something that is vital given their usage.

In addition, the 2 Route Guides would be checked annually, with a surveyor walking and checking each route.

The Symbol Based Access Guide would be removed in line with other towns and cities. The reason for this removal is their proportionally low usage and the disproportionate amount of funding required to retain them.

Annual Review **£8,256**

Additional options

Should the Council wish additional venues can be added to the guide, on either a structured or adhoc basis.

Detailed Access Guides - [Example Detailed Access Guide](#)

Street / Area Guides - [Example Street Guide](#)

Summary Access Guides - [Example Summary Access Guide](#)

▪ To add a Detailed Access Guide	£ 188
▪ To add a Summary Access Guide	£ 52
▪ To add a Street Guide	£ 720
▪ To review a Detailed Access Guide	£ 26
▪ To review a Summary Access Guide	£ 12
▪ To review a Street Guide	£ 275

(All costs exclusive of VAT)

A combination of Street Guides and Summary Access Guides have been popular with areas of tourism and regeneration, something that may be worth considering for core streets within the BID area.

It should be noted that the name AccessAble formally launched, along with a new website and free mobile App, in October 2018. This work has been entirely funded through private sector sponsorship that AccessAble has secured.

The Highland Council will benefit from all the accessibility and functionality advancements at no extra cost. The App will enable people to access the information

on the go, even if their device is not connected to the internet. Feedback to date has been that this will be particularly useful when out and about, enabling people to make decisions without the need to plan in advance. The name AccessAble was chosen after extensive consultation and will better reflect the Access Guide's wider user base, which includes carers, older people, people with mental health issues and people with temporary access requirements due to illness, injury or treatment side effects.

The funding commitment enables AccessAble to –

- Provide a dedicated project manager, including twice yearly meetings or training sessions.
- Meet with stakeholder groups and/or arrange two annual engagement event/s on the Council's behalf, including a relaunch.
- Arrange for interested stakeholders to accompany AccessAble surveyors' while carrying out some assessment or run a Surveyor Workshop.
- Call all 296 venues with Access Guides to check for accuracy and changes.
- Revisit 10% of venues to either update or upgrade the Access Guides.
- Update the Access Guides and Inverness pages throughout the year when requested.
- Input and upload all data ready for quality assurance.
- Quality assure all data collected using proven ISO9001 processes.
- Cover all associated expenses, including travel and accommodation.
- Analyse the Council's website, and that of other local partners, and suggest where referral links can be added.
- Help the Council implement referral links and develop an appropriate button.
- Develop the dedicated hub page for Inverness on www.AccessAble.co.uk.
- Work with the Council to promote the Inverness Accessibility Guide to residents and visitors, including a communications plan and a re-launch.
- Provide leaflets, posters, banner stand and plaque to promote the Access Guides.
- Promote Council news and events on www.AccessAble.co.uk.
- Produce an annual report summarising key improvements and usage.
- Cover all maintenance and hosting costs associated with both the database and website.

Next Steps

The current contract period runs until 31st May 2019 so AccessAble would welcome a response to this proposal before 1st May.

**Anna Nelson
Executive Director
AccessAble
29th April 2019**



COMMON GOOD FUND SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

DISABILITY GROUPS

Asked - 'What difference will the Accessibility Guides make to you? Who do you think the information will benefit the most?'

'Hugely beneficial to the group I represent, as I represent persons of all ages with long- or short-term mobility problems.

Any person who requires access information and so important to remember that a lot of people have hidden disabilities.'

Shopmobility Highland

'To improve planning of events and outings for all of our service users. Staff when planning and preparing, also all service users and members of the community.'

The Richmond Fellowship Scotland

'Ability to share information – research and planning for venue use. Everyone – individuals, carers and families.'

Autism Initiatives

'Great idea – just needs more publicity. All families with access needs.'

National Autistic Society

'Very much so! [making a difference] What a fabulous idea I'm all up for that. Well as long as it made sure to contain info about autism friendly places, etc. Coz that would be the only bit relevant to me'

Local Inverness Resident



'Personally, the Guides to me look good and are very helpful... I don't necessarily utilise it all that much as I know Inverness very well. I will pass the information again on to our Assistants and Guardians etc. to see if they can benefit from it too!'

Local Inverness Resident

'The project is a fantastic initiative and will definitely help alleviate social isolation in Inverness (particularly for the deaf community).'

General Feedback from the Inverness Engagement Event

'The level of detail is fantastic and a really well thought out pan-disability approach.'

General Feedback from the Inverness Engagement Event

BUSINESSES AND ATTRACTIONS

Asked - 'Do you think AccessAble is a good way to inclusively promote your venue?'

'We think the guide is a vital tool to help promote just how accessible we are as an airport. It is great being able to communicate this to anyone who will be a first-time visitor or anyone planning to travel to Inverness as a tourist.'

The guide has definitely been able to help us provide better information to people as any email requests we have had in relation to accessibility of the terminal we have been able to direct them to the link which provides much more detail than we do on our website.'

Inverness Airport

'It is a good way to inclusively promote our venue, it helps provide better information to people with access requirements.'

Castle Gallery



'We have lots of people with different disabilities that come to the theatre/cinema and it is useful for them to have the information and for us to be able to direct them to you.'

Eden Court

'AccessAble's links on our website are very useful and have benefited our customers greatly with the visuals which prevents people booking a tour from a departure point of boat that could cause them difficulty.'

Jacobite Cruises

'Absolutely yes, people with access requirements can't always be sure that a venue is providing reliable access information and also you can never be sure if the venue know what it's talking about in relation to access.'

It is useful for our disabled users - good to see that an organisation that is independent from the exhibition centre has collected the information which is really valuable have done assessment.

Loch Ness Exhibition Centre

'It is important for people to know about the access they are going to face.'

Highlanders Museum

'Definitely a good way of promoting the centre as being inclusive, good idea to redirect people to the information.'

The Tomatin Distillery Visitors Centre

It is a great way of promoting our venue as being 'disabled friendly. Being on AccessAble is very useful, we get lots of enquiries from individuals/groups where someone has a disability, and although we always encourage them to talk to us regarding access enquiries, it is still good to redirect people to AccessAble.'

Urquhart Castle and Visitor Centre

Capital Projects Funded by Inverness Common Good Fund

1 General

- 1.1 This appendix provides project status information for current key capital projects funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund, including financial progress details, as of 14 May 2019.

2 Capital Programme Update

- 2.1 The current status of each individual project is summarised below.

2.4 Conservation of External Fabric Phase 3, Town House, Inverness

- 2.4.1 Acceptance letter issued on the 23 July 2018. Work commenced on site on 10 September 2018 and the completion date for is 11 September 2020.

Works are progressing well and on programme.

Decant arrangements for the next phase is currently being arranged.

Additional works to part of the Castle Street elevation has been instructed and the additional costs will be used from the contract contingencies. It should be noted that if any further large additional items are found then additional funding may be required.

Agreed Total Common Good Funding	£3,204,083.57
Anticipated Final Account	£3,204,083.57

2.5 Victorian Market, Academy Street Entrance Upgrade

- 2.5.1 Approval has been given for the stonework repairs to the Academy Street Entrance and work will commence on site in July, the work will take approximately 5 weeks.

The Inverness Townscape Heritage Project has awarded a Grant of £30,256 towards the cost of the project. The Common Good Fund will fund the remaining costs which amounts to £20,147.60

Agreed Total Common Good Funding	£20,147.60
Third Party Funding	£30,256.00
Total Project Costs	£50,403.60
Anticipated Final Account	£50,403.60

2.6 Civic Floor Male Toilet Refurbishment, Inverness Town House

- 2.6.1 Refurbishment drawings and tender documentation has been completed, tender costs have been received and are over budget, after looking at the tender costs further quotations will be sought. Once costs have been agreed

Discussions with Civic Officer will be held to arrange an appropriate time for the works to take place as the toilets will be out of use for a period of four to six weeks.

2.7 Rose Window – Relocation & Weather Protection

The Rose Window is maintained as an asset of the ICGF. Instruction was given to relocate the former Methodist Church Window that was located in Academy Street and was stored within Diriebught Road Depot. The relocation was required as Diriebught Road Depot was running out of space within the yard. It was also evident the protected covering was required to be renewed.

A new location was found and the window was moved to Lotland Street Depot. Work was undertaken to window before it could be moved and the protected covering could be renewed.

The work undertaken was to replace all metal bolts and repairs to stone work in these locations, renew metal support and lifting frame. In the new location a foundation slab was installed to allow the new support frame to be bolted in place to stop any movement.

The work has recently just been undertaken, final checks and sign off will take place before the end of May.

Can members please note the cost to undertake this work was £14,675.27 and will be paid from the Other Properties Budget.

2.8 Ness Islands Improvement Works

Due to extra work being carried out for additional decking boards for the bridges following safety inspections and additional backfill work completed on the river banks there is a £10,400 overspend on this project. Please see Appendix 4.

Members are asked to approve the overspend to be paid from the Other Properties Budget.

2.9 Whin Park Improvement Works

This project is currently ongoing and at this time. A 10% contingency is recommended to be added in the sum of £6,500. No contingency was included initially. The total project cost is £65,000 to be spent over two years.

Members are to approve an additional £6,500 to the Whin Park Improvement Works Project.

3. Governance

- 3.1 These projects are funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund and monthly Contract Monitoring reports will be issued to the Inverness City Manager, in line with governance arrangements.

Appendix 4

CIAC 03/03/2016 (Funding Approved)	225,000
CIAC 19/06/2017 (Funding Approved)	73,183
CIAC 22/11/2018 (Funding Approved)	9,358
Total Funding Approved	307,541
Extra decking	8,000
Extra backfill	2,400
	317,941
	307,541
Shortfall	10400