

Agenda Item	8
Report No	G/17/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 16th September 2021

Report Title: Inverness Castle Project

Report By: Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on plans to develop Inverness Castle into a world class visitor attraction that will act as a tourism gateway for, and draw visitors to, the Highlands, while providing a high-quality amenity for residents of the region.
- 1.2 The report will also introduce plans to celebrate Gaelic language and culture throughout the design of the new attraction.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource, Legal - The development of Inverness Castle is a Highland Council project, managed by High Life Highland (HLH) on behalf of the Council. THC leads the project as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal (CRD) and it is one of fifteen projects funded through the Deal. HLH manages the project as part of its Service Delivery Contract with the Council.
- 3.2 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - Celebrating and interpreting the 'Spirit of the Highlands' in 100 Stories will be the core theme of the visitor experience, encouraging people to visit other locations around the Highlands.
- 3.3 Gaelic - In delivering the project, HLH will work within the principles of the GLP, and specifically ensuring that there is equal respect for Gaelic and English. The principles of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) have been adopted by the Inverness Castle Project Team, supporting the aims of increasing Gaelic usage and the number

of Gaelic speakers, as well as continuing to enhance the profile of Gaelic and generating a positive image of the language and culture.

3.4 Risk, Climate Change / Carbon Clever – there are no implications.

4. Background

4.1 Inverness Castle is an iconic Category A listed building of national and international significance, situated in the centre of the Inverness, on Castle Hill above the banks of the River Ness. It was used by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) and The Highland Council (THC) for court and office purposes until March 2020. The decision of the SCTS to move from the Castle provided an opportunity to create a significant tourism asset that would act as a tourism gateway for, and draw visitors to, the Highlands.

4.2 The development of Inverness Castle is a Highland Council project, managed by High Life Highland (HLH) on behalf of the Council. THC leads the project as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal (CRD) and it is one of fifteen projects funded through the Deal. HLH manages the project as part of its Service Delivery Contract with the Council.

4.3 LDN Architects were appointed as project architects in April 2019 and have developed the designs for phase 1 to RIBA stage 4. The project is due for completion in 2024. Artist's impressions of the new attraction are presented in **APPENDIX 1**.

4.4 Creative Services Scotland were appointed to the project in April 2019 to provide direction on the development of the creative content for the new attraction. In fulfilment of the project vision, the new visitor attraction will present the 'Spirit of the Highlands' in 100 stories. Stories gathered from across the region will be filtered to select the stories that will best capture the imagination of visitors and encourage them to explore all parts of the Highlands. An online 'Autobiography of the Highlands' will be created to act as a repository for all stories collected.

4.5 Mather & Co were appointed as exhibition designers for the project in July 2021. With 25 years of experience in creating world-class attractions across the world, Mather & Co's work features new and innovative ways to tell stories, engage visitors and attract new audiences. They bring creativity, experience and innovation to the transformation of Inverness Castle and the development of the 'Spirit of the Highlands' project. Their approach will consider the whole experience of the visitor, including what people see and interact with before, during and after their visit, to make sure that everyone who visits the castle has an incredible time and can't wait to return.

5. Project aims

5.1 The project vision is:

'To take the opportunity of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service relocating from Inverness Castle to create a sustainable and viable must-see attraction that innovatively celebrates the Spirit of the Highlands: its creativity, culture, heritage and landscape. The centre will attract new and repeat visitors to the area, will be embraced by the people of the Highlands and will inspire all to visit other parts of the Highlands'.

5.2 The new attraction will draw additional national and international tourists to the Highlands and provide a high-quality amenity for residents of the region. The Castle will promote the 'Spirit of the Highlands' in 100 stories and seek to encourage visitors to explore other areas of the Highlands and Islands.

6. Celebration of Gaelic Language and Culture

- 6.1 A Delivery Group for the project is supported by a Project Board, made up of representatives of key stakeholders and partners, to provide expert advice for development of the project. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is represented on the Project Board.
- 6.2 It is proposed that a Gaelic Advisory Group be established for the project, to include Members of the Inverness Castle Project Team along with the Council's Gaelic Development Officer, Senior Gaelic Translation Officer and the Education Support Officer.
- 6.3 The Senior Gaelic Translation Officer has already supported the project through translations and expert advice and will continue to do so as the approach is developed.
- 6.4 As a Highland Council project, the principles of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) have been adopted by the Inverness Castle Project Team, supporting the aims of increasing Gaelic usage and the number of Gaelic speakers, as well as continuing to enhance the profile of Gaelic and generating a positive image of the language and culture.
- 6.5 In delivering the project, HLH will work within the principles of the GLP, and specifically ensuring that there is equal respect for Gaelic and English.
- 6.6 In line with the delivery of the GLP, specific elements of the project are likely to focus on Gaelic language and culture, for example, the proposal to include a Gaelic Garden on the grounds of Castlehill. The intention is that this will feature plants where their story can be linked with Gaelic language and culture and so engage visitors with this unique aspect of our heritage.
- 6.7 Celebrating and interpreting the 'Spirit of the Highlands' in 100 Stories will be the core theme of the visitor experience, encouraging people to visit other locations around the Highlands. One feature of this will be to have a Seanchaidh to tell the stories within the visitor attraction and through digital and online means.
- 6.8 Further detailed design concepts and proposals will be developed and shared with the Gaelic Advisory Group as the work of the exhibition designers progresses.

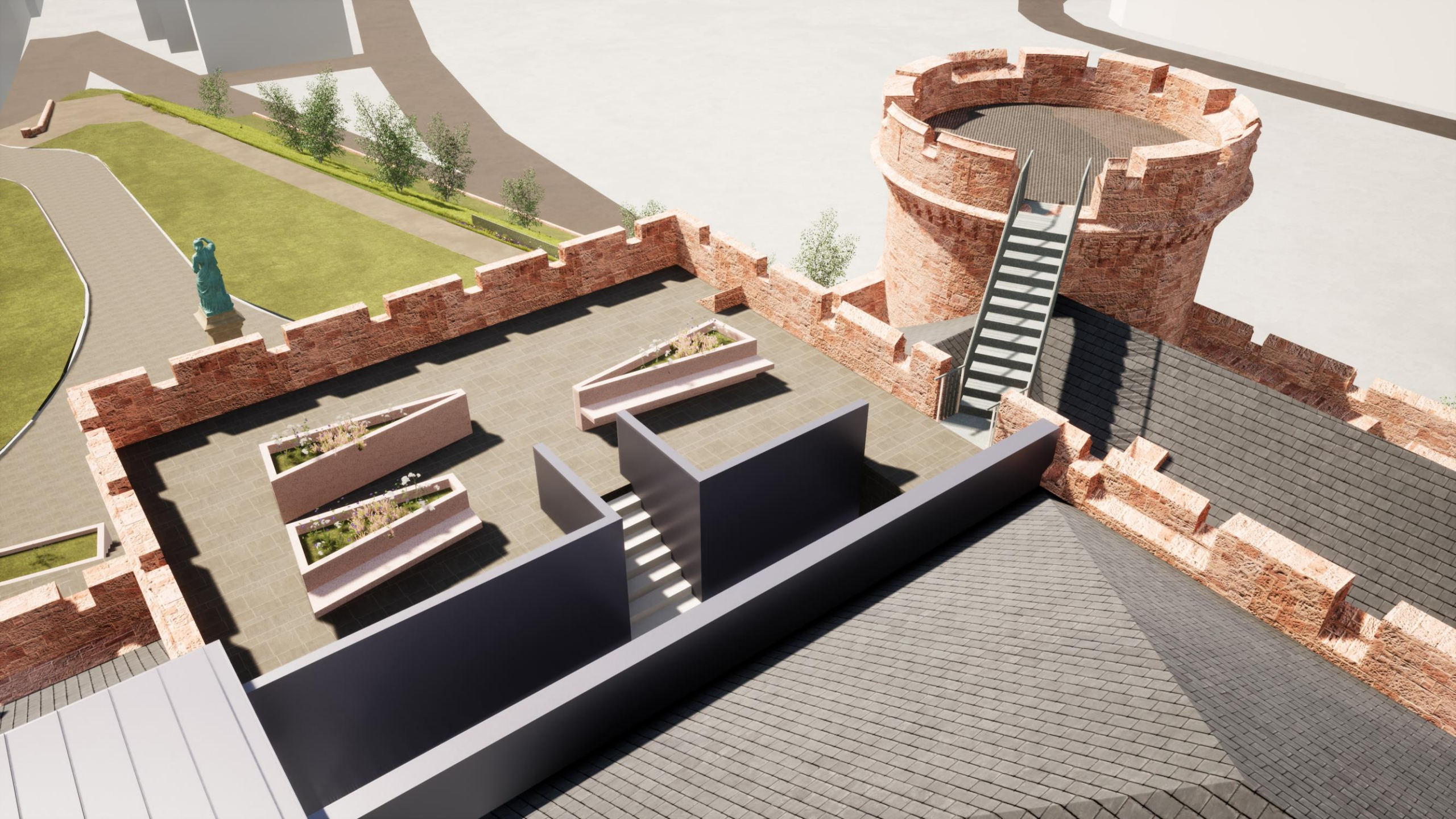
Designation: Director of Inverness Castle and Events HLH

Date: 6 September 2021

Author: Fiona Hampton













Gaelic Alphabet - Planting and Signage



I is for
Iogh
Yew



L is for
Luis
Rowan



M is for
Muin
Blackberry



R is for
Ruis
Elder



S is for
Suil
Willow



T is for
Teine
Holly