

## The Highland Council

### City Region Deal Monitoring Group

Minutes of the meeting of the **City Region Deal Monitoring Group** held **Remotely** on **Thursday, 20 January 2022** at 10.00am.

#### Present:

Mrs M Davidson	Mrs T Robertson
Mr J Gray	Mr A Jarvie
Mr A Henderson	Mr P Saggars
Mr B Boyd	Mrs M Paterson

#### Officials in attendance:

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive  
 Mr M Macleod, Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Economy & Environment  
 Mr A Maguire, Head of Development & Regeneration  
 Mr F McGunnigle, Programme Manager, City Region Deal  
 Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager

#### Also in attendance:

Ms F Hampton, Head of Business, High Life Highland  
 Ms A Rutherford, Head of Telecoms Policy, Highlands & Islands Enterprise

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie and Ms M Smith.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 1 November 2021

There had been circulated Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Monday, 1 November 2021 which were **APPROVED**.

#### 4. Digital Update

An update was provided at the meeting by Ms A Rutherford, Head of Telecoms Policy, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, during which it was confirmed that the initial plan to add digital funds into the R100 North Contract was not able to proceed at present.

However, it was the case that interim alternative plans were now in place which include the setting up of a Dynamic Purchasing System which would include local, regional and larger contracts.

In this regard, further information was provided in respect of the creation of local projects which would include open market reviews, commercial announcements,

definition of potential project areas, tests with potential suppliers, finalisation of projects and beginning the procurement process.

During discussion, it was suggested that consideration should be given to local businesses/suppliers and specifically what they might need in order to compete for future projects, including a focus on learning from other areas.

It was also felt that there should be an assessment undertaken of the potential impact of any future decisions in relation to de-population of the Highland area and also the formatting of future timelines for specific projects.

Thereafter, and in thanking Ms Rutherford for the update which had been provided, Members otherwise **NOTED** the current position as detailed.

## 5. Castle Update

An Update/Overview was provided at the meeting by Ms F Hampton, Head of Business, High Life Highland, on the Castle design concept/business case including specific information in relation the East Entrance, Roof Terrace, Link Interior, Gardens/Grounds, Journey Stone, Interpretation Layers, Visitor Journey Features, Rose Window Room, Wall Sculpture and the South and North Towers.

Confidential Information was also provided in respect of the current tendering situation and, in this regard, it was confirmed that a full and detailed report was to be submitted to the Corporate Resources Committee in the following week.

During discussion, and in welcoming the progress and work undertaken to date, it was noted that a good response had been received to the request for stories in relation to the area and these were now being mapped, both geographically and thematically. These stories would continue to be refreshed over time and as such any additions would be very much welcomed in future months and years.

It was also noted that this was the 'Year of Storytelling' for Scotland and there was currently work being undertaken in conjunction with UHI in terms of how this could be taken forward, including through engagement with the general public and local schools on a regular basis.

Similarly, there was currently liaison with Visit Scotland in terms of highlighting journeys around the Highlands and also consideration being given to possible future opportunities for apprentices as part of the work being undertaken.

Thereafter, and having thanked Ms Hampton for the update which had been provided, Members otherwise **NOTED** the current position as detailed.

## 6. Update on Key Risks

An Update on Key Risks was provided at the meeting during which (and in addition to the previous discussion on both the Castle and Digital projects earlier in the meeting) it was confirmed that a remaining key risk was the significant underspend of the Programme overall which was largely due to Brexit and the Covid-10 pandemic which had delayed building projects.

As such, it was now expected that a considerable increase in spend would be undertaken in the coming months and that this would be evidenced by the end of 2023.

An update was also provided on the Longman Remediation Project and in this regard it was anticipated that formal approval was imminent with an Options Report expected within the following 4 week period.

Thereafter, and following general discussion, Members otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

## **7. Project Overview – Economy & Infrastructure Committee Bulletin**

There had been circulated Report No. CRDMG/1/22 dated 12 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

In this regard, and in noting that discussion had already been undertaken during the meeting on key projects listed within the bulletin, Members were advised of progress in relation to the Life Sciences Innovation Project and it was confirmed that the delayed start now meant that spend would effectively be transferred into the next financial year.

Thereafter, and following further general discussion, Members otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

## **8. Consideration of Change Requests**

It was confirmed that there were no change requests for this meeting but that it was expected that requests in relation to the Longman and the Northern Innovation Hub would come to the next meeting.

It was also confirmed that a meeting was to be held that afternoon with Transport Scotland and discussions would include reference to the Longman and the East Link. As such, a further update on those discussions would be reported in due course.

Thereafter, the position was otherwise **NOTED**.

## **9. Feedback on Annual Conversation with Government Representatives**

There had been circulated Report No. CRDMG/2/22 by the Executive Chief Officer.

In that regard, and during discussion, it was noted that very positive conversations had been held with both the UK and Scottish Governments although there was some concern in relation to the current status of digital projects for the area.

It was also the case that reviews were to be undertaken and further discussion initiated with the Executive Chief Officer (Resources and Finance) in relation to

current capacity within the Programme Monitoring Office and a further update on this would be provided in due course.

Thereafter, and in expressing the hope that further progress would be made in the current year, Members otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

#### **10. Date of Next Meeting**

It was **AGREED** that a date for a further meeting before the end of March should be arranged and Members advised accordingly.

The meeting ended at 11.25am.