

City and Area of Inverness Economic Recovery Sub-Group
 Wednesday 1st December 2021 at 11.00am

ACTION NOTE

Present:

Cllr Bet McAllister (BM); Cllr Bill Boyd (BB); Cllr Carolyn Caddick (CC); Cllr David Fraser (DF); Cllr Isabelle Mackenzie (IM); Cllr Janet Campbell (JC); Cllr Trish Robertson (TR); Mike Smith (MS) BID; ECO Transformation; Malcolm Macleod (MG) ECO Infrastructure and Environment; Stewart Nicol (SN) Alison MacNeil(AM)Senior Public relations ; Cllr Alex Graham (AG) Allan Macquire (AM) Head of Development and Resources; Cllr Margaret Davidson Leader (MD)

Items	Note/Action Agreed	Action For	Action Undertaken
1. Welcome/Apologies for Absence	<p>NOTED - No Apologies Received.</p> <p>Need to consider who the appropriate people are to be on this group.</p> <p>MM- In terms of the change of emphasis to development, one of the things emerging from the run up to committee was the progress of key strategic projects. Projects at different stages. This group has an opportunity to have a full picture of projects. Recognizing the wider context of what is happening around the city. Important to include other partners and chamber of commerce in project discussions on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>AG- The membership pf the group was set by committee, probably on a political group basis, although any member can attend. The role of this group is to report on parts of the recovery plan into the Area group, perhaps a case to ask the remit to be reconsidered at the next CIAC.</p> <p>Minutes from the 18th October meeting suggest the name of group should now be the City Area inverness economic recovery group with some discussions as to name going forward as the recovery aspect was all about Covid. Designed to look at the opportunities to kick start our visitor attraction. Also, how to get people back to the city Centre. Although this is still very much part of this groups remit should the recovery now become development. This was discussed at the last CIAC. Perhaps more appropriate is to call this group the City Area development group.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>AG- I would concur but with the proviso we flag it up to the CIAC to agree.</p> <p>JC- Are we confident that we are out of recovery- agreed that should endorsed at next CIAC</p> <p>CC- some of the topics coming to the group are more long term strategic topics rather than just recovery. Uncomfortable discussing the master plan and city vision when not really under remit of recovery. Aware that at some point, pandemic will come to an end so important to set up the next city council with a clear remit going forward.</p> <p>CC- sees the group as being the powerhouse to chase things and keep things moving. So, at the CIAC we can present a rounder picture hopefully eliminating the need for lengthy debate.</p> <p>CC- Not suggesting we just change the name but consider the future agenda of the group.</p> <p>IM- At the Recent CIAC it was on the Agenda there was an item about the Inverness city area Master plan which we were all briefed on but have received an email from MP Drew Hendry asking for comments about his paper Inverness 2035 one city one vision paper. Wanted to ask what his vision paper is this different to our Master plan. We need to bring in some clarity about what we are trying to achieve.</p> <p>SN- Important to pull to together the Highland councils Master plan and Drew Hendry's vision paper. We need to have a</p>		

		<p>strategic plan for the city, but it is important is to get the operational delivery right. Both will drive investment in the city and can attract investment. We do need to engage with businesses, the business community is not always aware of what's happening. Working on ideas of how we can properly engage with businesses. Searched for the city vision on the council website and could only bring up an old one, this highlights the point of communication. We need to see the progress and how we dialogue this. Recognizing we will be unable to satisfy everyone. Share's members frustration with some projects stalling i.e., the Network Rail project. Need to be able to hold other parties accountable for delivery and failings.</p> <p>CC- valid points made, share frustrations about moving things forward,</p> <p>MM- Confirmed that Drew Hendry Vision paper and the Councils master plan are 2 different documents. Spoke to Drew about his document which is a lot more general, wider vision. Keen that this ties into our strategy. Drew is keen to help in any way he can, be that looking at specific projects, lobbying activity etc. Both documents are entirely complimentary. Need to ensure we keep working with the group supporting Drew with his vision paper. It was agreed that the next step of the strategy is the consultation, and all agree that part of this will be strong visible web presence.</p>		
2.	Update on Master Plan			
		<p>Noted – A lot of discussions were held at the CIAC regarding the Master Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad support at the CIAC for the aspirations set out in the plan and all the various strands of work. • Next stage is for public consultation, this will be done as soon as practical. We will look at the approach we take, taken on board SN's point about engaging with the private sector. • Not a lot to add at this stage as covered at the CIAC, other than thanking for members for their support. Now need to make sure aligns with what the wider community thinks. • Hope the document will provide the opportunity for more detailed conversation Will make changes as asked for through the consultation period. <p>Members Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MM- Concentrated on the city and immediate environments there is a Key issue about tourism development. Tourism BID is looking at a business Support plan for tourism, wondering if we should be involved. • MM -A lot of interest in investing in inverness at the moment, people working with renewable energy, low carbon hydrogen, Biomedicine. We should be having more sight of this, which may involve with working with HIE. • JC – In relation to the consultation, can responses be submitted in writing as not everybody is computer literate, difficulties with electronic set up. MM will raise this issue. • CC- astounding how many projects are on the go at the moment. • IM – Can we have a milestone document regarding all the projects, setting out expectations and timescales. We could look at milestones and decide when it is appropriate to discuss at the working group. CC agrees with this suggestion. Do we have a project plan? MM- We did have a list of all the projects, but a milestone document is an excellent idea will allow full trans parity in terms of all the different projects. ACTION Will work on this with AM. AM we previously had a list of city Centre projects, wasn't Red/Green/Amber as some projects didn't have capital funding to take forward. We can include projects which are post planning which will have dates. Re Network Rail- Knows DH has been in discussion with network rail to agree a date for network rail to come to this group, hopefully the next meeting. I would however highlight Network rail as a long-term project. We can provide 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deadlines for projects further progressed. Can also try to get some information from private sectors for members. CC – thinks this would be helpful- to hear more regularly about projects This document would provide some reassurance about a projects progress, and obstacles to progression. Agrees that including the private sector feedback within this document will provide a complete picture. Thinks that we need to have different groups coming into provide updates on developments 		
3.	Key Strategic Projects			
		<p>AM gave Members an overview of the current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The projects previous referenced are moving at pace. There have been various challenges Union Street- Progressing well, exciting project, impressed with the contractors specifically due to the complexities of the project. Good example of contractors being considerate to neighbours. Church Street- Now complete, investigating if we offer low costing ownership. Difficult to attract private investors to the city Centre to develop houses/flats for sale. By offering Low-cost ownership we want to tray and show investors that this model can work. Castle Project – we have had the tenders returned, higher then pre tender estimates. This is reflected across the board, currently in negotiations with tenderers. Expecting further update in January. Tied into this is the LUF BID for the zero carbon projects which includes the castle. A meeting is planned with UK government officials about timescales for taking these projects forward. Castle Chisolm’s – slightly delayed due to additionally groundworks and some underpinning required. Hotel’s site – progressing well Eastgate Hostel- we are awaiting a response back from the owners as they told us that they have an interested buyer. No progress yet. No timescales for this but we can still report back to meetings with updates available. <p>In general, there is a real challenged with construction costs, construction price inflation is higher than it’s ever been before, coupled with the limited availabilities of contractors in the Highlands. ACTION working with MM will produce a development sheet which will show all the projects being currently worked on and hopefully get some information from the private sector as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Springfield’s have bought out Tullochs, the main housing developer in Inverness. <p>Question- CC is there a date for the completion of the Railway link between the airport and the City. - AM doesn’t know a date yet but will endeavour to get information for the next meeting.</p> <p>NOTED; IM suggested that HIE should attend these meetings to provide updates, where relevant.. Although concerns about group becoming too big.</p> <p>BM - has concerns about potential Job losses resulting from the Tulloch buyout. Springfield’s is a centrally based company so employees may not be local. CC thinks that as so many housing developments are planned doesn’t think this will be the case.</p> <p>JC- in relation to Union Street the recent artists impressions were amazing. Very exciting project</p> <p>MS- agrees with SN regarding the next stages of the master plan and vision, but the operational delivery is the core. One of the things that is quoted in most visions in cities these days is private ownership of residents in city centres. This marketing is lacking in Inverness, ability to achieve this will be difficult.</p>		
4.	Marketing			

Mike Smith gave an update from Inverness BID:

- Eastgate footfall is down 30% on 2019. Last W/E should have been the busiest of the year, however Bad weather reduced the number of out-of-town visitors hampering sales.
- Increased numbers of browsers, the hope being that browsers will come back and buy.
- VM are running an Elf on a Shelf scheme which is attracting a lot of visitors mostly younger, good attendance compared to 2019
- NHS have announced that they plan to use a unit at Eastgate for Muscular Skeletal Disease MKD- A project gaining a lot of support. Suggestion of having a vaccination clinic in one of the Eastgate units.
- M&S are closed on Boxing day, giving staff a 2day holiday., other shops are following suit, but the Eastgate centre is still open. In England Sunday trading hours are only 6 hours.
- BID plan to use same concept as recent years “Shop, Eat, Stay, play”, being promoted through MFR and other social media channels. Adverts will focus on the main footfall drivers, independents, and the hospitality sector. Focus of the campaign will be to promote the city centre
- Work will also be done with Highland News Media and there will be a major social media campaign
- Inverness City Centre BID is second in terms of social media reach and the largest of all Scotland BID's
- Discussions have been had with Amy Macleod at HLH on city centre experiences. Plans to tie this in with existing events such as elf on the shelf
- Eastgate plan to run the Grotto with the hospice in a covid compliant way. There will be no events but random acts of kindness in partnership with MFR. Also plans for a late Thursday night car park offer

Hospitality-

- Has been some Busy Weekends, in general hospitality industry is please with numbers.
- Still issues over staffing.

Operation Respect-

- Started last week in November and will operate until after New Year.
- Multi Agency support including Police support providing reassurance to people in the city centre, particularly those who are more vulnerable. Does have mobile support so can move about the city.

Michael Golding unable to be at meeting Mike Smith Provided an update

- Next project TBID is the City Marketing Project with BID and the ICGF. This is on schedule and the partnership collaboration is working well. Looking to launch in the next couple of weeks.
- Campaign with Expedia to encourage visitors to City and Loch Ness, running currently looking at the next 3months,
- Campaign with VILN aimed at winter booking, targeting the central belt and North of England, getting then to visit,
- TBID are producing a hero video which will be aired next year, this will tie in with the year of stories.
- A business events video has been produced which is being used at a tourism trade fair in Barcelona.
- ACTION- Circulate Video to members

Members Comments:

- **CC** highlighted how positive it is that people are out browsing in shops again. Thought excellent idea to have MSKD in the Eastgate and agrees would be brilliant to have a vaccination clinic in one of the units.
- **NOTED MS-** although Footfall is down, spend per head is up.
- **JC-** Is it to late to consider Free parking for an hour? **DH** not at meeting to discuss but consensus thought perhaps to late to implement- **ACTION-** CC would discuss with **DH**

Note: Free car parking option

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IM- Agrees with the idea of a Vaccination HUB in the Eastgate, they have similar initiatives in the south. She has sent an email to Dr Tim Allison to suggest. • IM -Asked MS about some of the BID traders' groups, is there lack of communication between these groups, we need to ensure more communication. Acknowledges that traders have been going through a tough time. Can we try and get out more positive media messages? What more can Bid, Council Officers do to support traders. • CC positive news about the temporary parking spaces at the Town House • MS- in response to IM comments about traders and communication- there are over 850 business in the city centre, BIDS role has been to communicate with people and sometimes you have to agree to disagree. Over the last couple of years Covid has meant there has been a lot more consultation than normal. Agrees with the concept of positive messages. 		<i>created in Castle st Car Park</i>
5.	Communications Plan			
		David Haas Unable to attend the meeting so no update provided.		
6.	Notes of Previous Meeting			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the previous note was agreed as an accurate record 		
7.	Matters Arising from Previous Notes			
		<p>ACTION Points-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Dalgarno to send copies of slides to members after presentation- Thinks this has been done. • Street Paster Scheme- DH was due to send this out- ACTION Ask DH for the schedule. • Get Access to the E&F meeting notes- Not sure if we have been sent these- will pick up a future meeting. • To go back to CIAC to ask for the name of the group to be changed as discussed, although our make up to stay as is. Perhaps different members might like to join group if the new name provides a new remit to group. <p>The notes of this committee do go to Inverness area committee but also go to the recovery board which is still ongoing. The Master Project List will be developed with MM and AM. Hope to have the rail network people at the next meeting to provide an update. MM – It might be useful to invite HIE to the next meeting or the one after. Good to get their perspective on projects. Does the group want then invited? CC- Good suggestion, MS Hotel association could also provide an update on the Hotel industry and take an update on Station Re -Development Project. Action – Update on Station Redevelopment project and invite Hotels association Chair to attend regarding progress through COVID-19 IM- On social media families are missing events- families are asking what events hotels are holding for Hogmanay and if they can attend. CC reasonable to focus on the Railways and then leave HIE to subsequent meeting. MM agreed as HIE having a new leadership, but important to reach out. CC – Should HIE be represented on this group, particularly if the focus of this groups shifts to development.</p>	RR	

		<p>ACTION MM – Can pick up with HIE and how best they want to proceed, either as a members or associate with occasional attendance</p> <p>IM- As a Milburn councillor had an invite to see the vision of the old college site. Why were all members not included in the presentation? Action MM Confirmed he did not go, might have gone through the architect's department. Will investigate.</p> <p>CC- Closed the meeting and thanks those who attended.</p>		
8.	Date of Next Meeting			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W/C 24th January 2022 		