

## City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness East Sports Facilities Working Group** held remotely on Thursday, 27 January 2022 at 10.00 am.

### **Present:**

#### **Highland Council:**

Mr C Aitken  
Mr I Brown  
Mr K Gowans (Chair)

Mrs E McAllister  
Mrs T Robertson

#### **Non Members in Attendance:**

Mrs C Caddick  
Mr A Graham  
Mrs I Mackenzie

#### **Officials in Attendance:**

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy  
Mr M Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer, Property and Housing  
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Communities and Place  
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance

#### **Also in Attendance:-**

Mr J Croall, Head Teacher, Millburn Academy  
Mr S Walsh, High Life Highland  
Mr S Swanson, High Life Highland  
Ms K Thomas, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

### **Mr K Gowans in the Chair**

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

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms L Denovan, Executive Chief Officer, Resources and Finance and Mr D Wilby, High Life Highland.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

#### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

There were circulated, for confirmation, the Minutes of the last meeting of the Working Group held on 16 December, 2021, the terms of which were

## **APPROVED.**

Arising from the minutes, it was highlighted that as this was a Working Group of the Council, meetings were held in private. However, during discussion matters relating to third parties may be disclosed and in this respect, it was recommended that the following resolution be agreed by the Working Group:-

*The Working Group is asked to resolve that under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items in relation to any issues relating to the circumstances of third parties on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.*

It was explained that in the event matters relating to third parties were discussed they would not be published in the minutes of the meeting and would be treated as confidential.

The Working Group **AGREED** the resolution as detailed above.

## **4. Terms of Reference**

There was circulated, for confirmation, the adjusted Terms of Reference, following the inclusion of revisions agreed at the last meeting of the Working Group held on 16 December, 2021.

The Working Group **AGREED** the Terms of Reference for the Inverness East Sports Facilities Working Group.

## **5. Update on Sports Pitch Project at Inverness College Campus**

The Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy gave a presentation on the sports pitch project at Inverness College Campus. This was a separate project to the remit of the Working Group, but was relevant in terms of the overall sports provision in the area.

The project aimed to deliver a fourth generation artificial sports pitch. Funding had been received from a variety of sources including developer contributions. A site had been identified and design of facilities prepared however due to Covid-19 the project had been put on hold. Inverness College had recently asked the Council in partnership with High Life Highland to take the lead on the project and work was ongoing to update the business case, costings and progress delivery of the project over the course of the next financial year. Once completed this would be a great facility based in the east of Inverness.

It was highlighted that Inverness was lacking in indoor sports facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of the City and wider Highlands. The Group would require to set out the key strategic aims for sports facilities in due course. In particular third party funding that may be available for such facilities was highlighted.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update on the sports pitch project at Inverness College Campus.

## **6. Strategic Direction**

There were circulated for information, copies of relevant feasibility studies provided previously and Members were invited to consider and discuss options for identifying key priorities and objectives of the Working Group.

In discussion, reference was made to the need for sports facilities for families, young children, those with a disability and the wider community and linking these to the ambitions of schools, colleges and Sports Scotland. It was important that the facilities would be of Highland wide benefit. Some of the key facilities required were highlighted as a swimming pool(s); indoor courts; gym; multi purpose rooms; café/restaurant; meeting rooms. In due course there would be a need to undertake stakeholder mapping to achieve the aims of the project and a project plan, timeline and Business case would be required.

There were great examples of regional sports facilities in places like Aberdeen and Dundee which would give the Group an idea of what may be possible in east Inverness. There were great sports facilities already in the west of Inverness and consideration should be given as to what facilities were needed to expand and complement these. A feasibility study into what facilities were required would be a way forward with this.

Apart from the capital cost of building facilities, there would be significant revenue costs for running and maintaining the facilities for the full lifecycle of the asset of circa. 30 years and these should be considered at the very outset of project planning, given the current constraints on the Council's revenue budget. There was a significant demand for further leisure facilities in Inverness and the need for a commercial approach to generate income to cover the cost of running and maintenance of facilities was highlighted.

Synergy with new school builds in the east of Inverness should be considered as the provision of facilities in community hubs worked very well and shared the resources to run the facilities.

Consideration had been given to sports facilities being located at the Inverness College Campus that would be open to staff, students and the public. There was a plot on the masterplan for the Campus identified for sports. Studies that had been undertaken on this could be shared with the Group and would help inform a feasibility study. However, a site nearby would also bring the same benefits to the Campus. It was also highlighted that sports facilities at the Campus would provide pathway opportunities for expansion of courses at the college.

There was a distinct link between the work of the Inverness Community Partnership in terms of wellbeing, mental health and welfare and the provision of sports facilities for the wellbeing of residents of Inverness.

High Life Highland along with partners were developing a more strategic approach to sports development in terms of infrastructure in the Highlands.

Business cases had been put forward for consideration in the Council's capital programme. Unfortunately, given the competing demands on the capital programme, these projects had not been chosen for funding. However, the Business cases could inform the work of the Group.

In terms of the location of facilities, the following sites were suggested:- Inverness College Campus; Milton of Leys; Inverness East Retail Park; Culloden Academy; Stratton development. Any other suggestions were welcomed.

In relation to funding for sports facilities, potential sources highlighted were Sports Scotland, Highland Council, Developer contributions, Lottery funding.

In terms of developer contributions, there would be significant housebuilding in the east of Inverness and information was sought on what revenue could be gained from developer contributions for facilities. Information on this would be sought from the ECO Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

It was explained that full Council would have the final decision on this project, as the project would require to be part of the capital programme in order for it to proceed.

Thereafter, the Working Group **AGREED**:-

i that Terms of Reference be prepared for a feasibility study into sports facilities in the East of Inverness; and  
ii maps for potential locations of sport facilities and a draft outline project plan and timescales be submitted to the next meeting.

## **7. AOB and Date of Next Meeting**

A date for the next meeting would be advised to the Group.

It would be checked that the business of the Working Group could continue during the period of Purdah.

The meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.