

## The Highland Council

Minutes of **City of Inverness Area Committee** took place **Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness** on **Thursday 24 November 2022** at **10.00 am**.

### Present:

Mr C Aitken	Mrs J Hendry
Mr C Ballance	Ms E Knox
Mr B Boyd	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr I Brown	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr M Cameron	Mr R MacKintosh
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Ms K MacLean
Mr A Christie	Mr D Macpherson
Ms H Crawford	Mrs B McAllister
Mr D Fraser	Mrs M Reid
Mr K Gowans	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Graham	Mr A Sinclair
Mr D Gregg	

### Officials in Attendance:

Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place  
Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Economy & Environment  
Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support, Contact and Engagement, Communities and Place  
Ms N Wallace, Service Lead, Environment, Development Active Travel, Infrastructure, Economy & Environment  
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr M Gregg, Ward Manager, Communities and Place  
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy  
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy  
Mr N Young, Project Manager (Active Travel), Infrastructure, Environment & Economy  
Mr B Dougan, Project Officer, Inverness City Active Travel Network  
Ms J Vivers, Housing Manager, Housing and Property Service  
Mr E Marsh, Principal Repairs Officer, Housing and Property Service  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Mr A McInnes, Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

### Also in Attendance:-

Mr R MacDougal, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Mr S Cameron, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.**

**Mr I Brown in the Chair**

### Preliminaries

The Committee **NOTED** the following:-

- condolences were expressed on behalf of the Committee to the family and friends of the late Councillor, John Holden, who passed away on 27 October 2022; and

- the Chair congratulated Lily Kelman on her historic success in becoming the Juvenile World Champion in Highland Dancing.

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

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr D Gregg (am only).

### **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

**The Committee NOTED the following Transparency Statements:-**

Item 4: Mr C Ballance, Mr A Christie, Mr D Fraser

Item 11(c): Mr A Graham

### **3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Area Performance Report Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/25/22 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) staff and volunteers were thanked for their essential work;
- concern was expressed in relation to the availability of fire appliances across the Aird and Loch Ness ward, with reports that there were occasionally no fire pumps available during the day to cover the ward stretch of the A82, where most of the ward-based road traffic accidents occurred. In response, attention was drawn to the station availability at Drumnadrochit Fire Station of 97.35%. An explanation was also provided for issues relating to the frequency required for incident command competency assessments, which it was hoped would be resolved as early as possible to ensure competency assessments undertaken in 2021 remained valid until 2024, and not early 2023, as had been suggested, and which could result in the loss of two experienced incident commanders if the situation was not rectified, and affect station availability;
- attention was drawn to the reported increase of 40% in road traffic collisions in the first six months of 2022, compared to data from pre-Covid, and Members asked if the collision figures for the A82 and for minor roads could be separated;
- information was sought, and provided, on the support provided to fire fighters after attending traumatic incidents;
- the SFRS was thanked for their investment in new road traffic accident equipment for Drumnadrochit and Fort Augustus, and a summary was provided of their uses, and of the mobilisation and debrief processes for them;
- it was clarified that the policy was for the new, smaller appliances to only be mobilised with a crew of four, and the reasons for this were summarised;
- it was confirmed there were no known plans at this time for a substation in Inverness East;

- it was pointed out that some remote and rural appliances were as much as 18 years old; and
- congratulations were extended to all SFRS staff who had received long service awards at a recent awards ceremony.

Thereafter, the Committee thanked the Group Manager for his presentation and **NOTED** the Area Performance Report.

#### **4. Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan 2**

##### **Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail ga Mholadh airson Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh 2**

**Transparency Statements: Mr C Ballance and Mr D Fraser made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a Trustee of Glenurquhart Rural Community Association which had made comments on the plan. However, having applied the objective test, in relation to the item and their personal connection, they did not consider that they had an interest to declare. This was because this was a voluntary non-rewarded charity board position.**

**Cllr Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non-executive director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and his personal connection, he does not consider that he has an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/27/22 dated 10 November 2022 by Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

A presentation was provided summarising the process, responses received, recommended adjustments, and the next steps for the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP).

The Committee thanked the Development Plan Team for their work on the IMFLDP, and considered each area detailed in the report, with comments made on particular areas as follows:

##### **Beauly**

- in relation to the Fraser Street Allotments, it was important that any new allotments were provided in a useable condition, and that this be included as an amendment to the recommendations;
- support was voiced for the deletion, proposed by Susi Moore, of care home allocation on the Fraser Street site, although it was important that landowners and allotment users were given a further chance to respond to any proposed adjustments;
- the importance of allotments in terms of sustainability, carbon reduction, health and wellbeing, and reduction in food miles was summarised; and
- it was proposed that the response to Susi Moore be adjusted to read: "From ...low traffic generation use. Officers recognise the importance in both Council and Scottish Government policies of encouraging local food growing for health, reduction of food miles and carbon reduction, and community wealth building. Allotments can have biodiversity value depending on the number of trees and flower species present and whether organic cultivation methods are used. They reduce pressures on drainage systems during high

rainfall events, when compared to building, roads and construction. Officers therefore accept the representation 1323273 from Susie Moore. However Officers are aware that the landlord would prefer to develop the land as per the original draft plan, and recommend that the Reporter may wish to take further representations from the landlord and other interested parties”, and that the Committee agree the request to delete allocation reference to a care home. This was supported subject to the inclusion that the allotments be provided in a usable condition.

## **Croy**

Members felt it was important there was no further development until the school situation was resolved and pointed out that the roads infrastructure was inadequate. In response, the current situation with regard to planning permission for housing developments was summarised, and attention drawn to place-making priorities in relation to infrastructure requirements.

Mr I Brown, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, **MOVED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

Mrs T Robertson, seconded by Mr A Christie, moved as an **AMENDMENT**, that there be no further development in Croy (CR2) until the school issue was resolved.

On a vote being taken, the motion received 8 votes, and the amendment received 10, with 2 abstentions, therefore the **AMENDMENT** was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:

### **For the motion:**

Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr K Gowans, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Ms K MacLean.

### **For the amendment:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr D Fraser Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson, Mr A Sinclair.

### **Absentions:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr R MacKintosh.

## **Dores**

Mr D Fraser expressed disappointment that, in relation to DO01 Land South of Dores Hall, the request for an indicative housing capacity of 24 units for the whole site and the formation of a community woodland between the two development sites was not being taken forward.

## **Drumnadrochit**

In relation to the site of the former retail units on the A82, Mr D Fraser expressed disappointment that the community's wishes not to have housing on this site were not being upheld. It was explained that although permission for 15 housing units on the site had been refused, the principle of housing there was likely to be upheld.

## **West Inverness**

- it was important the Beauly to Inverness active travel route was included even though no definitive route had yet been decided. Officers agreed to include reference to this route as an additional Placemaking Priority for West Inverness;
- it was disappointing that an area of land at Stornoway Drive did not meet the changed criteria for green space, and an explanation for this was sought and provided. It was explained the area could have green network notation, which would offer some protection against development, in addition to the poor road access to that area;
- information was sought and provided on developer requirements for the Stornoway Drive site, which addressed the issues raised during the consultation, and this included the requirement for Development Briefs in consultation with the community. Assurance was sought that there was sufficient capacity at Kinmylies Primary School and Charleston Academy to support the planned housing, and it was clarified that developer contributions could be sought to expand school capacity, as appropriate; and
- recent activity and possible development at Merkinch Shore was queried and constraints on the site were highlighted, along with the need for issues raised to be considered if a detailed planning application was made.

## **South Inverness**

- Mr A Christie explained that the land at INS18 Knocknagael, which was owned by the Scottish Government, had been subject to a community asset transfer request which had been refused and was now being independently reviewed. He summarised the benefits of keeping the land in question for community and agricultural use, citing the loss of valuable green space between large areas of housing development, the benefits to the community of allotments, expected over-capacity at the Inverness Royal Academy by 2027 when the land was likely to become available, and the importance of listening to the community's wishes. In response, the rationale behind the need to balance the requirement for affordable housing on the land in addition to allotments was summarised. The final number of housing units could be considered as the development brief stage, when evidence had been presented on the demand for allotments;
- assurance was sought and provided that the £4m allocated to the Council by the Scottish Government for the provision of a second Gaelic Medium Education Primary School was ringfenced and it was explained that a process was underway for a feasibility study;
- concern was expressed about housing being built above the snow line and the need for additional winter maintenance as a result, and about social housing having higher standards in certain respects than private housing;
- it was requested, in relation to INE01 Easterfield, that there be no extension to the boundary;
- it was welcomed that the proposed IMFLDP provided protection of green spaces and recognised the need for additional infrastructure;
- it was queried whether there was current sufficient additional school capacity and it was clarified that the implications of the Plan would be considered on a case by case basis; and
- the need to balance the importance of local food growing and community wide food growing projects with the need for affordable housing was emphasised, and the need for flexibility for the future was highlighted.

Mr I Brown, seconded by Mr K Gowans, **MOVED** the recommendations in the report, subject to the following amendments:

- there should be no extension to the boundary for Easterfield; and
- to change the housing allocation from 200 houses to: total housing numbers to be determined through the Development Brief that must be prepared to progress the site but limited to less than 100, and adjust the officer response to numerous responses, and to delete paragraph 3 and replace with: 'In reply to the numerous individual objections, the Council accepted that the irreversible loss of prime agricultural land should be minimised, and noted national and local policies to encourage local food growing in order to reduce food miles; to alleviate the climate emergency declared by the Council in 2019; improve health; and help community wealth building. Whilst accepting that there was a need for social housing in the Council area, the total quantity of these shall be determined through the Development Brief that must be prepared to progress the site. The Brief process should also better test the proven demand for allotments and community food growing initiatives, in consultation with the Council's Allotments Officer, Knocknagael Ltd, and other interested parties. The Council noted that the area initially set aside for community food growing could be reduced in future if the expected public demand for it was not realised.'

Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr A MacKintosh, moved as an **AMENDMENT**, that INS18 Knocknagael be designated as a community and agricultural site.

On a vote being taken, the motion received 12 votes and the amendment received 10 votes, with no abstentions, making the **MOTION** the decision of the Committee, the votes having been cast as follows:

**For the motion:**

Mr C Balance, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K MacLean, Mrs M Reid.

**For the amendment:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson, Mr A Sinclair.

There were no additional comments for Central Inverness, East Inverness, Kiltarlity, Kirkhill, Tomatin, Tornagrain, and Dalcross & Fort George.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the recommended Council response to the place-specific issues relevant to this Committee area raised in representations received on the Proposed Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, subject to the following amendments:

**In relation to Beauly:**

- a. adjust the response to Susi Moore to read: "From ...low traffic generation use. Officers recognise the importance in both Council and Scottish Government policies of encouraging local food growing for health, reduction of food miles and carbon reduction, and community wealth building. Allotments can have biodiversity value depending on

the number of trees and flower species present and whether organic cultivation methods are used. They reduce pressures on drainage systems during high rainfall events, when compared to building, roads and construction. Officers therefore accept the representation 1323273 from Susie Moore. However Officers are aware that the landlord would prefer to develop the land as per the original draft plan, and recommend that the Reporter may wish to take further representations from the landlord and other interested parties”;

- b. agree the request to delete allocation reference to Care Home; and
- c. to add that if the allotments were moved, they were provided in a usable condition.

**In relation to Croy:**

- d. that there be no further development in Croy (CR2) until the school issue was resolved.

**In relation to West Inverness:**

- e. The planned Beauly to Inverness active travel route would pass through this area and appropriate space would be allocated for it although no definitive route had yet been determined.

**In relation to South Inverness:**

- f. no extension to the boundary for Easterfield (INE01);
- g. to change the Housing allocation from 200 houses to: Total Housing numbers to be determined through the Development Brief that must be prepared to progress the site but limited to less than 100, and Adjust the officer response to numerous responses, to delete paragraph 3 and replace with: “In reply to the numerous individual objections, The Council accepts that the irreversible loss of prime agricultural land should be minimised, and notes national and local policies to encourage local food growing in order to reduce food miles; to alleviate the climate emergency declared by the Council in 2019; improve health; and help community wealth building. Whilst accepting that there is a need for social housing in the Council area, the total quantity of these shall be determined through the Development Brief that must be prepared to progress the site. The Brief process should also better test the proven demand for allotments and community food growing initiatives, in consultation with the Council’s Allotments Officer, Knocknagael Ltd, and other interested parties. The Council notes that the area initially set aside for community food growing could be reduced in future if the expected public demand for it is not realised.”

- ii. **NOTED** the issues raised in representations as they relate to strategic matters that might have implications for this Committee area and the working draft response to these issues as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- iii. **AGREED** to authorise officers to undertake the statutory and other procedures required to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers and to progress the Plan through its examination up to but excluding the Plan’s adoption; and
- iv. **AGREED** the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy, in consultation with the chair of this Committee, be authorised to make any necessary Habitats Regulations Appraisal, factual or other non-material changes to Appendix 1 of the report prior to its submission to Scottish Government.

## **5. Academy Street Proposals – Next Steps**

### **Molaidhean Sràid na h-Acadamaidh – Ath Cheumannan**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/28/22 dated 14 November 2022 by Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

A presentation was provided of the proposals, relevant policies, and summaries of the options detailed in the report.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Academy Street was considered to be one of the top ten most polluted streets in Scotland and Option B presented an opportunity to minimise traffic and provide a safer, healthier environment for local residents and visitors, building on earlier work to make the city centre more accessible;
- the proposals contained in Option B had received considerable public support and represented an important opportunity to make a much needed, radical change to transform the city centre into a cleaner, quieter environment. The reduction in traffic on Academy Street was welcomed but required good public transport, and park and ride facilities;
- Option B supported climate change action, active travel and accessibility aspirations for the city centre;
- with reference to late communications from Inverness BID expressing economic concerns about the proposals in Option B, examples were provided of growing evidence from other UK cities that increased pedestrianisation of city centres brought economic benefits, with studies showing that pedestrians and cyclists tended to spend more on retail and catering than people travelling through city centres in vehicles. There was a tendency for retailers to over-estimate the positive impact of vehicle users, and reference was made to a speech made in July 2020 by the then Secretary of State for Transport outlining the once in a lifetime opportunity to create a shift in attitudes to get more people choosing to cycle or walk as part of their daily routine, and that making the streets safer for walking and cycling was good for businesses, retailers and the economy. The question was asked whether priority should be given to car drivers, or to retailers, pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities, and active travellers;
- Mrs J Hendry proposed that the Chair write to Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth on behalf of the Committee to highlight the decision made about Academy Street to emphasise the ambition of the organisation to positively transform this important city centre street and to encourage Scottish Government to prioritise its early funding, and asked that this be included in the Committee's decision;
- reference was made to the commitment outlined in the Inverness 2035 vision to reduce carbon and air pollution;
- in response to concerns expressed about the air and noise pollution created by buses, and to suggestions for changing road layouts around Farraline Park to restrict bus usage on Academy Street, officers pointed out that stagecoach had plans to introduce electric buses into the city centre from January 2024, and that Scottish Government funding was not available for schemes which facilitated more vehicles moving in an unconstrained manner;



- some Members felt that an outdoor café culture was unlikely on Academy Street due to the lack of sunlight and northern weather temperatures, while others referred to night-time out-door culture that did not require sunshine or warm temperatures;
- some Members asked for further consultation with local businesses on Option B, which had been developed as a result of the consultation on Option A. Clarification was provided on the further traffic order consultation that would be required if Option B was approved;
- assurance was sought, and provided, that any infrastructure put in place in Academy Street to restrict traffic flow would be future-proofed to facilitate further amendments;
- concern was expressed that if the vehicle movements on Academy Street were reduced from around 9,000 per day to 2,000 per day, the other 7,000 vehicles would use alternative routes and cause congestion elsewhere in the city, with particular reference made to existing problems at Inshes roundabout and Harbour Road;
- a trial restriction of through-traffic on Academy Street for one month was proposed, to be recommended to the Council to be funded from unearmarked reserves. The trial would provide information on the unknown consequences of the proposals detailed in Option B. In response, it was pointed out that the data obtained from only one month would not be sufficient and that a trial would require considerable temporary road infrastructure and signage;
- concern was expressed that insufficient engagement had been undertaken with the Inverness BID businesses, noting that around 11% of all Highland non-domestic business rate income came from organisations in Inverness city centre. The importance of listening to and supporting the business sector was emphasised. Officers clarified that at this stage of the process, agreement was being sought to design a scheme which would be the subject of further consultation and reported to the Committee. A decision was required at present to demonstrate political support in order to seek funding;
- Option B should be thought of as opening up Academy Street to active travellers, making it a healthier place with clean air and green space, as part of a long term vision for the city. The improvements intended as part of Option B could not be demonstrated by one month trial. Attention was drawn to the 4,500 parking spaces within a five minute walk of Academy Street; and
- it was considered simplistic to assume people could easily switch from car usage to walking or cycling, and attention was drawn to the variety of reasons people required to use their cars, including accessing the three hotels in the area.

The Committee **AGREED** the Chair write to Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth on behalf of the Committee to highlight the decision made about Academy Street to emphasise the ambition of the organisation to positively transform this important city centre street and to encourage Scottish Government to prioritise its early funding

Turning to the remaining proposals, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mrs H Crawford, **MOVED** the recommendations as detailed in the report, plus the following:

- i. the Council trial the Option B proposal for a full month, to be selected by officers, this to be funded from non-earmarked reserves; and

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, seconded by Mr K Gowans, moved as an **AMENDMENT** the recommendations as detailed in the report,

On a vote being taken, the motion received 10 votes and the amendment received 12 votes, with no abstentions, and the **AMENDMENT** was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:

**For the motion:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson, Mr A Sinclair

**For the amendment:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Ms K MacLean, Mr R MacKintosh, Mrs M Reid

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the feedback from the consultation including the ambition to improve the environment in Academy Street for all users;
- ii. **AGREED** for Officers to proceed with the design development of Option B outlined in Section 8 of the report, ensuring the best opportunity to attract external construction funding by promoting an ambitious vision for the city centre;
- iii. **AGREED** for Officers to continue public consultation on the development of Option B of the report including the detail of any traffic orders; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Chair write to Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth on behalf of the Committee to highlight the decision made about Academy Street to emphasise the ambition of the organisation to positively transform this important city centre street and to encourage Scottish Government to prioritise its early funding.

## **6. Inverness City Active Travel Network – Progress and Next Steps Lionra Siubhal Gníomhach Cathair-bhaile Inbhir Nis – Adhartas agus Cheumannan**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/29/22 dated 9 November 2022 by Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an assurance was sought, and provided, that discussions were ongoing with the Inverness Angling Club to ensure they retained the ability to park in the Fisherman's car park without charge;
- the level of consultation undertaken to date was encouraging and officers were commended on the wide ranging design proposals and the contribution this would make to promoting more active travel in the City;
- the importance of ongoing consultation with local businesses and residents in respect of the Riverside Way proposals and that any changes or mitigation required be made at an early stage was emphasised;
- every effort needed to be made to find a solution in response to the current issues with displaced traffic at Ballifeary Lane for the benefit of local residents;
- it was important to maintain casual public access to the Ness Islands, this being one of the City's premier recreational areas;
- the area around Whin Park and the River Ness Hydro Scheme would become a multiple destination for tourists and the importance of maintaining visitor access to these attractions was paramount;
- an assurance was sought, and provided, there would continue to be public consultation and engagement as the design work was progressed and prior to the construction stage;
- there was concern that the single cycle lane was being misused and at the associated safety issues and the need to improve the directional signage in consultation with users was needed. It was confirmed that the current signage was temporary and the proposal was to have kerbed segregation between the carriageway and the cycle lane. It was not possible to widen the cycle lane due to the impact on the Bught area, including on trees;
- in terms of public convenience provision, the potential to introduce a comfort scheme at the Inverness Ice Centre was suggested;
- clarification was sought, and provided, that improvements to the structural integrity of the Infirmary Bridge was being considered by Roads officials with a view to it been opened for specific events;
- representations had been received from local businesses on the proposals for Riverside Way and the detrimental effect the changes in the available parking spaces would have on their trade and the surrounding facilities. On busy weekends this would result unsafe parking due to the pressure on spaces. Double yellow lines were marked on the drawings as dropped kerbs which was misleading. It was disappointing that local businesses felt disenfranchised by the consultation process;
- in regard to the above, it was explained that local businesses had been contacted as part of the consultation process, the engagement document provided to stakeholders had indicated the double yellow lines and that officers were willing to have further engagement with local businesses;
- clarification was sought, and provided, on the proposals for formalised car parking arrangements along the Riverside Way which it was explained

- had been designed to improve safety. No car parking charges would be introduced without Committee approval; and
- the proposals for the Raigmore interchange would make the crossing safer and encourage pedestrian access and was supported by local Members and the community council.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** feedback from developed design, public consultation and engagement for Riverside Way and Raigmore Interchange; and
- ii. **AGREED** to progress Developed Designs for Raigmore Interchange and Riverside Way to Technical Design and Construction in early 2023.

**7. Inshes Junction Improvements – Stopping Up of U4403 Beechwood House Road**  
**Leasachaidhean Ceangal-rathaid nan Innseagan – Stadadh Suas U4403 Rathad Taigh na Coille Faidhbhile**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/30/22 dated 4 October 2022 by Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the background to the making of the Stopping Up Order at the U4403 Beechwood House Road; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the making of the Stopping Up Order at the U4403 Beechwood House Road as in Appendix 1 of the report.

**8. Whin Park Redevelopment Update**  
**Cunntas às Ùr mu Ath-leasachadh Pàirc a' Chonaisg**

There had been circulated joint Report No. CIA/31/22 dated 3 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- Whin Park was of strategic importance as a visitor destination and community facility given its location in an area of significant investment including the Riverside Way, River Ness Hydro Scheme and leisure facilities;
- it was a popular and much valued site for a range of users and Members looked forward to its redevelopment and the potential to hold events thereafter;
- public convenience provision at the Park needed to be considered as a priority;
- clarification was sought, and provided, that it was essential to progress the feasibility study and through public consultation establish the improvements users and others would wish to be delivered. An assurance was provided that work to deliver the study would be done at pace. Early works had already commenced on the pond and there was the potential to accelerate works in relation to the toilet refurbishment; and
- an explanation was sought, and provided, that the Park had always had an ongoing maintenance programme within the resources available and

over a period of time had received significant injections of investment to upgrade the facilities. Further investment was again being considered in terms of the report recommendations, including the potential to secure third party sources of funding.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the proposal for a feasibility study to be undertaken to scope the necessary works and associated costs of refurbishing the Whin Park Play area;
- ii. **NOTED** that the feasibility study and accompanying consultation is expected to take 3 months and that the study will look at identifying funding streams available for the full redevelopment costs;
- iii. **NOTED** the risks and benefits of the redevelopment of the site and that if no action is taken it is anticipated that park equipment will require to be removed incrementally reducing the play areas left within the park; and
- iv. **AGREED** the contribution of £5,000 of Common Good Funds towards the costs of the feasibility study.

**9. Inverness Wards Repurposing COVID-19 Fund and Place Based Investment  
Fund Proposals  
Ath-adhbharachadh Maoin COVID-19 agus Tasgadh Stèidhichte air  
Airgead Uàrdan Inbhir NisMolaidhean Maoin**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/32/22 dated 8 November 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

The Committee **AGREED** the repurposing of the following COVID-19 funds:

**i. Ward 13 – Inverness West**

£1,250 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support the feasibility study.

**ii. Ward 14 – Inverness Central**

£1,250 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support the feasibility study.

**iii. Ward 15 – Inverness Ness-side**

£1,250 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support the feasibility study.

**iv. Ward 16 – Inverness Millburn**

£1,250 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support the feasibility study

**10. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2022 – 30 September 2022  
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2022 – 30 Sultain 2022**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/33/22 dated 24 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the Service were commended on the figures for emergency repairs given the current issues with the availability of trades to undertake works and challenges with recruiting in-house staff;
- the resource required were recognised to improve the figures for re-let days which in turn would reduce the time people spent in emergency accommodation and the void figures and the opportunities to consider best practice in other local authorities;
- the mechanism to inspect properties prior to them being vacated was explained so that materials could be pre-ordered and repairs carried out as soon as the tenant moved out;
- the current position with rent arrears was likely to escalate and confirmation was sought, and provided, that a graphical illustration would be included in future reports showing how many weeks tenants were in arrears to give a better understanding of the length of time involved;
- the issues impacting the mortgage market was likely to result in more reposessions in future and the pressure this would place on homeless presentations and emergency accommodation. It would be helpful in future reports to have the demographic of those in homeless accommodation, to help target resources;
- a workshop for Committee Members was requested to explore areas of concern, particularly re-let times, rent arrears, homelessness, concerns around the working poor not in receipt of benefits and discuss what further action could be taken;
- there was a need to be smarter in terms of enabling tenants to downsize and the opportunities for the Council to build smaller bungalows in response to the ageing demographic of the area;
- further information was sought, and provided, on the houses the Council was purchasing in terms of numbers, valuations, and the impact on the market in some areas; and
- confirmation was sought, and provided, that performance in terms of average repairs figures included the time taken to assess repairs.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022; and
- ii **AGREED** that a workshop for City of Inverness Area Committee Members be held to explore concerns.

## 11. **Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis**

### a) **Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/33/22 dated 18 November 2022 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- an explanation was sought, and provided, in relation to the proposed capacity for this year's Hogmanay event compared to the previous events;
- there was support for the proposal that workshops be held to consider the budget for 2023/24, the priorities for the Common Good Fund and key areas of spend;

- the Redesign Board's proposal in relation to a change of approach to the use of Town House as Council offices and the risk this represented to the Fund was highlighted; and
- a report be brought back to Committee on the risk and exposures to the Inverness Common Good Fund with a view to developing a risk register for the Inverness Common Good Fund.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 October 2022 and that overall expenditure is within agreed budgets excepting the estimated outturns detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report; and
- AGREED** that a report be brought back to Committee on the risk and exposures to the Inverness Common Good Fund.

**b) Capital Projects Update Report**  
**Aithisg às Ùr mu Phròiseactan Calpa**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/34/22 dated 9 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer, Housing & Property.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

- current status of capital projects; and
- adjustments being made to the allocations within the Victorian Market, Market Hall and Fish Market Refurbishment project.

**c) Grant Applications over £10,000**  
**Iarrtasan Tabhartais thar £10,000**

**Transparency Statement: Mr A Graham had a connection to Item 11.c as a family member was a volunteer at Blythswood. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider he had an interest to declare.**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/35/22 dated 10 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

In this connection, there had been circulated separately a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

The Committee determined the following applications for funding:-

- Blythswood Care: APPROVED** a grant of £20,000 towards the Highland Foodbank 2023
- Apex Scotland: APPROVED** a grant of £14,342 towards the Highland Challenge Team.
- GOYA Events Ltd: DEFERRED** this application until it was established if GOYA Events Ltd.'s application to Event Scotland was successful.

In discussion, a point was raised that Members should be mindful the applicant was a private limited company in terms of awarding common good funding. It was confirmed that further information was being sought in terms of the economic benefit this would deliver and discussions were ongoing with Visit Inverness Loch Ness on the application.

iv. **Inverness City Centre Business Improvement District:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee recommend approval of the following applications totalling £25,847 which would be awarded from the Grants Budget:

- a. Smart Scape – **APPROVED** a grant of £9,997.
- b. Inverness Loves Local – Especially at Christmas - £5,900

In discussion, Members commented that:-

- while supportive of the campaign, funding had already been received from the Council and Scottish Government and now an additional amount was being sought for marketing. The applicant was already receiving a significant allocation of funding for projects from the Common Good Fund; and
- for clarity, it should be noted that funding was awarded to the Inverness City Centre BID to help them deliver a project or activity that was felt to be worthy of support. The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub Committee had looked at the application in detail and had agreed it should be supported.

Thereafter, Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mr R Mackintosh, **MOVED** that the application be rejected.

Mr I Brown, seconded by Mr A Graham, moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the application be approved.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 2 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 19 votes, with no abstentions and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows

**For the motion:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr R MacKintosh

**For the amendment:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr D Fraser, Mr A Graham, Mr K Gowans, Mr D Gregg, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Ms K MacLean, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs M Reid, Mrs T Robertson, Mr A Sinclair

**Decision**

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of £5,900 Inverness Loves Local – Especially at Christmas.

- c. Festive Parking - £9,950

During discussion, a point was raised that approval would encourage people to drive into the City Centre at a time when more active travel should be promoted. The Common Good Fund would be the sole funder of this application when there would be other beneficiaries such as the business community as owners of larger car parks.



Thereafter, Mr I Brown, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** that the application be approved.

Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mr R Mackintosh moved as an **AMENDMENT** that the application be rejected.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 13 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 4 votes, with 4 abstentions and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows

**For the motion:**

Mr C Aitken, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mr A Christie, Mrs H Crawford, Mr D Fraser, Mr A Graham, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs M Reid, Mr A Sinclair

**For the amendment:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr D Gregg, Mr R MacKintosh, Mrs T Robertson

**Abstentions:**

Mr B Boyd, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr K MacLean

**Decision**

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of £9,950 for Festive Parking.

- v. **Operation Respect Festive 2022 – Inverness and Area:** The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee approval of match funding of **£12,447** for Operation Respect 2022/23 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Partnership Working Budget.

Following further discussion the Committee **AGREED** that discussions take place with businesses benefiting from the night time economy on contributing towards Operation Respect 2023.

**12. Appointments to Outside Bodies**  
**Suidheachadh Dhreuchdan gu Buidhnean on Taobh A-muigh**

**Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT)**  
**Urras Dualchais Cathair-bhaile Inbhir Nis**

The Inverness City Heritage Trust was an independent charity based in Inverness. The Trust's main aim was to take a strategic view of the repair and maintenance needs of the buildings forming the historic core of the city and to co-ordinate a programme of conservation work funded by grant assistance. It also gave advice to building owners, produced publications and helped to organise events and exhibitions for people interested in the history of buildings and architecture in Inverness.

The built heritage was crucial to the wellbeing of our community, our tourism industry and in attracting economic investment to the Highlands. We want the Inverness City Heritage Trust to stimulate a dynamic urban environment where traditional and contemporary co-exist: a confident and creative Inverness, where cultural heritage was appreciated and enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mrs M Reid and Mr A MacKintosh to the Inverness City Heritage Trust Board.

**13. Appointments to Events and Festivals Working Group**  
**Suidheachadh Dhreuchdan gu Buidheann-obrach nan Tachartasan is nam Fèisean**

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Ms K MacLean to replace Mrs I MacKenzie on the Events and Festivals Working Group.

**14. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. **NOTED** the City of Inverness Area Committee held on 26 September 2022 and 4 November 2022
- ii. **APPROVED** the Events and Festivals Working Group on 26 October 2022 and 18 November 2022;
- iii. **APPROVED** the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub Committee on 7 November 2022; and
- iv. **APPROVED** the Inverness East Sports Facilities Working Group on 17 November 2022.

The meeting ended at 5.15pm.