

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the 2nd Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Friday, 18 November 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Highland Council:

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair } Working Group Members
Mrs J Hendry }
Mr R Mackintosh }
Mrs M Reid (in the Chair) }

Ms K MacLean } Non Working Group Member
Mr D Fraser }

Other Representatives:

Ms J Cuddy, Manager, Eastgate Shopping Centre

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr L Christie, Funding and Sponsorship Manager, High life Highland
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies from Working Group Members.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Members **RESOLVED** 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 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There are circulated and were **NOTED** the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 26 October 2022.

5. Presentation

A presentation was provided by the Funding and Sponsorship Manager, High life Highland, and the Inverness City Area Manager, reporting on various recent and future event. For each event issues covered included audience, nightly totals, running order, times, parking, welfare, infrastructure, attractions, vendors, set-up, risks, communications, security, staff & volunteers, and a budget overview.

During discussion of each event, the following issues were raised:

Night of the Bootanics 26-30 October 2022

- 6,000 tickets had been issued, with a drop-off rate of around 20% and a waiting list of over 5,000;
- wheelchair accessibility could be improved for future events;
- the stewards had been helpful and welcoming;
- covid issues had resulted in fewer performers being available and it was hoped this would be improved for future years; and
- concern was expressed at increase in young people behaving in an anti-social manner.

Bonfire Night

- the high number of attendees was welcomed, and the appeal of the event for all age groups was emphasised, with positive feedback from attendees and local residents, who had appreciated additional efforts to marshal participants and manage traffic;
- additional last minute security had caused the budget variance;
- there were fewer fairground rides than previous years and some families welcomed there being fewer opportunities to spend money. This would be reconsidered for future years;
- the five food vendors had been busy, with queues for most stalls;
- information was sought and provided on the logistics of the firework firing zone and the importance of avoiding damage to the shinty pitch, disruption to nearby residents, and the need to have safe exit zones for the audience. It was requested that consideration be given to reviewing this for future years to avoid the trees spoiling the view; and
- it was suggested by Mr R MacKintosh that the music for the fireworks was not ideal, and it was clarified that he could suggest improvements.

Red Hot Highland Fling

- information was sought and provided on the rationale for the ticketing policy;
- information was sought on the possibility of hosting over-flow in the Northern Meeting Park, however issues included the soft ground and the firework firing zone;
- it was clarified that there would be waiting lists for tickets, but that people would be urged not to attend without a ticket;
- information was sought and provided on the likely attendance logistics, noting that people would not be able to come and go freely as they had been able to in previous years, and were likely to be there for much longer period of time. This might require additional catering and licensed vendor provision. Consideration was given to possible locations for this;
- 5069 was the official maximum number of attendees and there would be a clicker system to monitor people leaving;
- it was hoped there would be a piper and / or drums at the start of the event, with ideas sought for early evening entertainment;
- even though tickets would be free, this would raise attendees' expectations;
- consideration was given to the pros and cons of asking for donations to

- the event on the night;
- it was hoped there would be capacity as the event progressed to issue further tickets if attendance was low, or people had left early;
 - there remained some branded merchandise that could be sold, and a free stall in the Eastgate Centre was offered; and
 - discussion took place on whether tickets should be charged in future years. Ideas included a 'pay what you are able to' or an 'add a donation' option.

Members **NOTED** the progress of the event planning.

6. Budget – Update – 2022/23

A presentation was provided updating Members on the expenditure to date and confirming the allocated budgets of the agreed events programme by the Funding and Sponsorship Manager, High life Highland, and the Inverness City Area Manager

Members **NOTED** the information provided.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Members **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 15 December at 3pm.

The meeting ended at 3.20pm.

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held remotely on Thursday, 15 December 2022 at 3pm.

Highland Council:

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair } Working Group Members
Mrs J Hendry }
Mrs M Reid }

Ms K MacLean } Non Working Group Member
Mr D MacPherson }

Other Representatives:

Mr M Golding, Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd
Mr M Smith, Inverness BID

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr L Christie, Funding and Sponsorship Manager, High life Highland
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator

Mrs Campbell-Sinclair in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Members **RESOLVED** 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 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.,

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 18 November 2022.

5. Presentation

A presentation was given by a representative from High Life Highland and Inverness City Manager reporting on the plans for delivery of the Red Hot Highland Fling.

During discussion, some Members expressed concern that only 5,000 tickets were being issued for the event, pointing out that up to 15,000 people had attended the event prior to 2020. A large number of locals and visitors were expected this year, and many might be unaware of the new ticketing system. An explanation was provided for the change in policy to a ticketed event at which numbers entering the arena could be controlled, this having been on the advice of the Safety Advisory Group, which included the emergency services. The proposed system to count people in and out was also summarised, noting that tickets would only be valid until 9.30pm, and thereafter people queuing outside could be allowed to enter, if people with tickets had left, and the Event Manager and Event Safety Officer deemed there to be sufficient space. The Provost expressed discontent with the proposed system, the low number of tickets being issued, and with the advice from the Safety Advisory Group in that regard. She sought further assurance that any space within the arena would be filled on the night, to avoid discontent amongst people queuing outside and to prevent reputational damage in relation to the event. Other points raised during discussion included the following:

- entertainment should be provided to people queuing;
- Michael Golding suggested that Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd could assist on the night to redirect people unable to gain entry to other venues in the city centre which had capacity;
- information was sought and provided on plans to deal with any over-crowding or emergency incidents within the arena;
- an explanation was provided for the proposed location of the bar within the arena;
- information was sought and provided on the number of people who had applied for free tickets, the numbers on the waiting list, and planned publicity to request the return of tickets that were no longer required;
- the risks of overfilling the arena were highlighted;
- discussion took place on the merits of charging for tickets in future years noting that this was the remit for the City Area Committee and not the Working Group;
- the communications plans for before and during the event were summarised;
- it was queried whether Health & Safety legislation had changed since 2019 to cause the limit in numbers to around 5,000, and a summary was provided of the Safety Advisory Group's decision in that respect. Some Members expressed discontent with the decision of the SAG to limit numbers to 5,000;
- the Provost reiterated her concerns that the requirements for every attendee to have 1m of space around them, which had resulted in the capacity calculation of 5,000, was overly cautious;
- clear messaging around the need for ticket holders to be inside the venue by 9.30pm was vital;
- a further Safety Advisory Group meeting was due to take place on 20 December and an email update would be provided to Members. A briefing could be arranged for 22 December if required;
- disappointment was expressed that some people might attempt to sell tickets

that were issued free of charge;

- in response to some Members asking that the capacity of the arena be increased, Michael Golding referred to the importance of adhering to legal capacity requirements and asked that his dissension from the request to increase the arena capacity be minuted. He also asked that no undue pressure be put on the responsible people at the event to allow more people into the venue than was permitted by the event's licence; and
- it was pointed out that the higher the number of people able to benefit from the event, the lower the cost per person was.

The Provost left the meeting at this point, leaving the Working Group no longer quorate.

Members otherwise **NOTED** the presentation.

6. Budget – Update – 2022/23

Information was provided giving an update on the expenditure to date and confirming the allocated budgets of the agreed events programme by a representative from High Life Highland and Inverness City Manager.

Members **NOTED** the information provided.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Members **NOTED** the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 16 February 2023 at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 4.30pm

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:-

- 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:

- 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 repossessions 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.

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness East Sports Facilities Working Group** held in Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday, 15 December 2022 at 1.30 pm.

Present:

Highland Council:

Mr I Brown
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair
Mr K Gowans
Mr D Macpherson (remote)
Mrs M Reid

Non Member in attendance:-

Mr A Graham (remote)

Officials in Attendance:

Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Communities and Place
Mr A MacInnes, Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

Also in Attendance:

Mr A Jones) alan jones associates
Mr J Humphries)

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr D Gregg.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There were circulated the Minutes of the last meeting of the Working Group held on 17 November, 2022, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

4. Exclusion of the Public

The Working Group **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

5. Feasibility Study Update

There was a presentation by Mr Alan Jones, who had been commissioned to prepare a feasibility study relating to the potential for new sports facilities in Inverness East and who updated the Group on the preparation of the study based on the terms of reference. This included a site option appraisal for sports facilities. There would be a report back to the next meeting of the Working Group with a further update and draft recommendations.

The types of facilities that could be provided for community use were discussed and there was a need to assess what facilities were in demand. There was an aspiration for high quality regional sports facilities to enhance the current facilities in Inverness. There was a need for a sports facilities strategy and partnership working would need to be looked at to deliver this. Funding of facilities would be challenging and opportunities for potential funding from both public and private sectors may require to be explored once the vision for sports facilities that was deliverable and realistic were finalised. Given the cost of living crisis there would be a need to provide facilities that people could afford.

In order to inform the vision of what facilities the community wanted, there was a need to make use of previous community consultations on facilities at the Bught Park and Northern Meeting Park for example and to work with the Inverness Partnership on the work they had done on forming a locality plan for the City of Inverness, particularly the strategic objectives of the plan on health and wellbeing and in consulting on community aspirations for facilities.

The Working Group thanked Mr Jones for his presentation and **NOTED** that a further update report would be submitted to the next meeting.

6. AOB and Schedule of Meetings in 2023

The Working Group **AGREED** the following dates for meetings of the Group in 2023:-

Thursday, 23 February
Thursday, 27 April
Thursday, 22 June
Thursday, 10 August
Thursday, 5 October
Thursday, 7 December

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee** held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 23 January 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:

Mr C Aitken (Teams)	Mr A Graham
Mr C Ballance	Mrs K MacLean
Mr M Cameron (Teams)	Mrs E McAllister
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (Teams)	Mrs M Reid

Non-Members also present:

Mr D Fraser	Ms E Knox
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In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Environment, Infrastructure and Economy Service
Ms F Hepburn, Development Officer, Environment, Infrastructure and Economy Service
Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, City Area Manager's Office
Miss M Murray, Senior Committee Officer, Performance and Governance Service

Mr A Graham in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson and Mr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Declarations of Interest:-

Item 5: Mr A Graham and Mrs E McAllister

and the following Transparency Statements:-

Item 4: Mr C Ballance, Mrs K MacLean and Mrs E McAllister

Item 5: Mr C Ballance

3. Exclusion of the Public

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** 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 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. Community Regeneration Funding

There had been circulated a Members' Briefing Note which set out the background to the Community Regeneration Fund and the two-stage application process, the first stage being to submit an Expression of Interest. Copies of the Expressions of Interest and a summary thereof had been made available via SharePoint.

The Inverness City Area Manager explained that, for the purposes of expediency and to ensure good governance, City of Inverness Area Committee Members had acquiesced to the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee reviewing the Expressions of Interest to decide whether the applicants should be invited to make a full application which would then be placed before the City of Inverness Area Committee for determination.

The Programme Manager and Project Officer summarised the funding available and the RAG assessment undertaken by the Community Regeneration Team to assist Members in their decision-making.

Following detailed discussion on the merits or otherwise of each Expression of Interest, the Sub-Committee determined them as follows:-

Transparency Statements: Mrs K MacLean and Mrs E McAllister made Transparency Statements in respect of the following application on the basis that they were Trustees of Merkinch Partnership Board. However, they had not been directly involved in the preparation of the application and, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare.

Ref: 1024

Organisation: Merkinch Partnership

Project title: Local Solutions for Local People

Grant requested: £40,000.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

It was **AGREED** that the Inverness City Area Manager liaise with the applicant regarding potential alternative funding streams.

Ref: 1030

Organisation: Steven Murray

Project title: Fasnakyle Church Restoration and Glass Eye Gallery

Grant requested: £300,000.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds of insufficient community benefit and lack of match funding.

Ref: 1032

Organisation: The Ledge SCIO

Project title: The Ledge

Grant requested: £100,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application on the basis that it be restricted to the capital element of the project.

Ref: 1038

Organisation: The Highland Council
Project title: Whin Park Refurbishment
Grant requested: £150,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application on the basis that it be suggested that the application should prioritise the public conveniences element of the project.

Ref: 1049

Organisation: Rokzkool Academy (SCIO)
Project title: Rokzkool Skill Share
Grant requested: Not specified

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1050

Organisation: South Kessock Residents Association
Project title: South Kessock Play Park Phase 1
Grant requested: £55,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1051

Organisation: Friends of Merkinch Local Nature Reserve (SCIO)
Project title: Maintaining Natural Space
Grant requested: £25,282.50

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1054

Organisation: The Highland Council
Project title: Amenities Plant and Machinery
Grant requested: £325,000.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that the project was not aligned with the Place-Based Investment Programme goals.

Ref: 1058

Organisation: Hawthorn Allotments Association
Project title: Community Growing
Grant requested: £70,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1072

Organisation: Inverness High School
Project title: Breakfast Club, Business Breakfasts, Community Breakfasts
Grant requested: £420.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application on the basis that the applicant be advised of the work involved and potential alternative funding streams.

Ref: 1074

Organisation: Clachworks

Project title: Tool Library start-up project

Grant requested: £39,337.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1079

Organisation: Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust

Project title: Community Housing and Playpark Development

Grant requested: £60,000.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds of insufficient clarity as to the project's objectives.

Ref: 1097

Organisation: Inverness YMCA

Project title: Wheelchair Lift

Grant requested: £17,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1114

Organisation: Creative Inverness Limited

Project title: Circus Artspace

Grant requested: £100,000.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1130

Organisation: The Elsie Normington Foundation

Project title: The Haven Centre Project

Grant requested: £81,600.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1132

Organisation: Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop

Project title: Mums on Wheels Inverness

Grant requested: £7610.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1134

Organisation: Community Action Raigmore Estate

Project title: Purchase of shack

Grant requested: £15,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1135

Organisation: New Start Highland

Project title: Food meets Furniture

Grant requested: £314,732.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds of insufficient community benefit and lack of match funding.

Ref: 1138

Organisation: Dalneigh Play Park Project

Project title: Dalneigh Play Park Project
Grant requested: £53,820.79
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1163
Organisation: SNAP (Special Needs Action Group)
Project title: No title
Grant requested: £150,000.00
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1166
Organisation: Autism Initiatives (UK)
Project title: Highland One Stop Shop Core Costs Shortfall Project
Grant requested: £12,382.00
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds of concerns that the project was to cover a shortfall in running costs.

Ref: 1167
Organisation: Beaully Shinty Club
Project title: Feasibility study for Clubhouse expansion
Grant requested: £20,000.00
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1168
Organisation: Free North Church
Project title: Platform and sound upgrade
Grant requested: £17,250.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application subject to officer confirmation that the sound stage was classed as a fixed capital asset and, if so, clarity being provided, at the full application stage, as to the accessibility of the facilities to other denominations and groups.

Ref: 1179
Organisation: The Highland Council
Project title: Inverness Campus Pitch Project
Grant requested: £200,000.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

On the point being raised, it was confirmed that match funding being in place was one of the key elements of the technical assessment at the full application stage.

Ref: 1180
Organisation: Inshes Community Association
Project title: Cycling for fun
Grant requested: £225,600.00
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that the percentage of the project costs requested was too high.

Ref: 1183
Organisation: Crown Connects SCIO

Project title: Crown Connects with Ukraine
Grant requested: £11,130.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

It was further **AGREED** that officers highlight to the applicant the total amount of revenue funding available to disburse.

Ref: 1184
Organisation: Lovat Shinty Club
Project title: Create a new community area
Grant requested: £200,000.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application subject to clarity being provided, at the full application stage, in terms of land ownership and responsibility for maintenance.

Ref: 1188
Organisation: The Boleskine House Foundation SCIO
Project title: Boleskine House Redevelopment
Grant requested: £239,126.00
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds of insufficient community benefit for the size of the grant requested.

Ref: 1192
Organisation: Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust
Project title: Placemaking & Green Infrastructure Project
Grant requested: £50,000
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application on the basis that it be restricted to the capital element of the project.

Transparency Statement: Mr C Ballance made a Transparency Statement in respect of the following application on the basis that he was an unremunerated Trustee of Glenurquhart Rural Community Association. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Ref: 1193
Organisation: Glenurquhart Rural Community Association (GURCA)
Project title: Public Hall Redevelopment
Grant requested: Not specified
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that project costings were not available.

Ref: 1210
Organisation: Geotone CIC
Project title: Geolocative Audio Headset Development Phase 2
Grant requested: £50,017.00
Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1220
Organisation: Calman Trust
Project title: The HasAnswers Network
Grant requested: £47,617.00

Decision: **DECLINED** to invite a full application on the grounds that there were insufficient local funds to support the revenue costs.

Ref: 1236

Organisation: Inverness City Badminton Club

Project title: Access to sports for children

Grant requested: £5,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 1253

Organisation: Merkinch Primary School

Project title: Breakfast Club and Warm Space

Grant requested: £3,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application on the basis that the applicant be advised of the work involved and potential alternative funding streams.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to determine the Expressions of Interest as detailed above; and
- ii. **NOTED** that full applications would be considered at a future meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

5. Requests for Financial Assistance 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/01/23 dated 12 January 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager. Copies of the applications and supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint.

Discussion took place on the funds committed in 2022/23, during which information was sought, and provided, in respect of the grants to Inverness BID. It was confirmed that further detail could be provided to Mr C Ballance outwith the meeting.

Following discussion on the merits or otherwise of each application, the Sub-Committee determined the applications for financial assistance as follows:-

Booklet A – Applications under £5,000

Mrs E McAllister declared an interest in the following application as a Trustee of Highland Senior Citizens Network and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Applicant: Highland Senior Citizens Network

Project/activity: Annual Senior Citizens Conference to be held in September at the Kingsmill Hotel, Inverness

Total amount applied for: £1,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: Charleston Academy

Project/activity: Ocean Youth Trust Employability Voyage

Total amount applied for: £1,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: 4th Inverness Rangers
Project/activity: Trip to London
Total amount applied for: £1,445.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: The Libertie Project Limited
Project/activity: Digital Inclusion Service for People in Crisis – provision of refurbished digital services
Total amount applied for: £5,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: The Mahler Players
Project/activity: Performance in Inverness Cathedral in May 2023
Total amount applied for: £4,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: Rokzkool Academy
Project/activity: Merkinch Skill Share
Total amount applied for: £4,946.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Booklet B – Applications £5,001 - £10,000

Applicant: Inverness High School
Project/activity: S1 Outdoor Transition Project 2023
Total amount applied for: £9,944.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: The Oxygen Works (previously the MS Therapy Centre)
Project/activity: Waiving of annual rent
Total amount applied for: £5,200.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: Merkinch Community Centre
Project/activity: Renew lighting desk and lamps
Total amount applied for: £6,000.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED**.

During discussion, it was explained that Merkinch Community Centre had previously been awarded £6,000.00 and the above was a second application for the same project which would take the total requested to £12,000.00, making the decision a recommendation to the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Applicant: Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, High Life Highland
Project/activity: Conservation treatment to “Battle of Culloden” by Peel Ross
Total amount applied for: £9,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** a partial grant of £6,000.00

Whilst the historical value of the painting was recognised, there were other funding streams available for the restoration of art. It having been confirmed that the painting was a Council asset, it was suggested that there might be other budgets available within

the Council or High Life Highland which could meet the remaining costs if the Sub-Committee was to award a partial grant.

Transparency Statement: Mr C Ballance made a Transparency Statement in respect of the following application on the basis that he was the Council's representative on the Ness River Salmon Fisheries Board. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Applicant: Inverness Angling Club

Project/activity: Support for the management and maintenance of the ICGF River Ness Fishings

Total amount applied for: £9,500.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Food and beverage tourism

Total amount applied for: £10,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

On the point being raised, the Inverness City Area Manager clarified that the Partnership Working budget had been established solely based on Inverness City Centre BID projects and did not include Visit Inverness Loch Ness.

Applicant: Aban Outdoor

Project/activity: Aban Outdoor business costs

Total amount applied for: £6,714.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared an interest in the following application having been previously professionally involved with the Hall Association and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed. Mrs E McAllister took the Chair in his place.

Applicant: Culcabock and Drakies Community Hall Association

Project/activity: Essential repairs to the hall

Total amount applied for: £9,995.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

Booklet C – Applications over £10,000

Applicant: Inverness College UHI

Project/activity: Provision of free breakfast/lunch initiative for students to support positive outcomes

Total amount applied for: £44,600.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **DECLINED**.

Members were of the view that this application should be declined on the grounds that there were other funding streams available and acceding to the request would set a precedent which could create a burden that the Common Good Fund could not sustain

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Support to sales team promoting Inverness for business tourism

Total amount applied for: £20,000.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** and that the Inverness City Area Manager liaise with Jo Page, Visit Inverness Loch Ness, regarding promoting the Town House as a venue.

Booklet D – Applications for Conference Support

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared an interest in the following application as a former employee of Bord na Gaidhlig, which was a funding body for An Comunn Gaidhealach, and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed. Mrs E McAllister took the Chair in his place.

Applicant: An Comunn Gaidhealach – Inverness Branch (Meur Inbhirnis)

Project/activity: Inverness Provincial Mod 2023

Total amount applied for: £7,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

Applicant: World Ultra Corporation Limited

Project/activity: Ultra X Scotland

Total amount applied for: £9,999.00

Decision: **DECLINED**

Members declined this application on the grounds that the applicant had not demonstrated added value from the Common Good Fund contribution.

Applicant: Northern Meeting Charitable Piping Trust

Project/activity: Northern Meeting Solo Piping Competition 2023

Total amount applied for: £9,800.00

Decision: **APPROVED**

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to determine the applications for up to and including £10,000 as detailed above;
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 13 February 2023, that the applications for more than £10,000 be determined as detailed above; and
- iii. **NOTED** the allocations made from the small grants budget of £75,000 and the larger grants budget of £200,000.

6. Inverness BID Ltd

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/02/23 dated 11 January 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager which invited Members to consider applications from Inverness BID.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 13 February 2023, that the applications for funding, as detailed in the appendices to the report, be determined as follows:-

i. Floral Displays 2023

Detailed discussion took place on the merits or otherwise of the application, during which the need to be mindful of the cost of living crisis and the financial outlook of the Common Good Fund was emphasised.

Mr A Graham, seconded by Mrs E McAllister, **moved** that the application be approved.

As an **amendment**, Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mrs K MacLean, moved that the same amount be awarded in 2023 as had been awarded in 2022, and that the same level of display as last year be provided.

On a vote being taken, there were two votes for the **motion** and five votes for the **amendment**, with no abstentions. The **amendment** was therefore **carried**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr A Graham, Mrs E McAllister.

For the Amendment:

Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs K MacLean, Mrs M Reid.

Decision:

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the same amount be awarded in 2023 as had been awarded in 2022, and that the same level of display as last year be provided.

ii. Operation Respect Easter/Summer/Autumn 2023

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application for funding amounting to £11,596.00 be **APPROVED**.

iii. Inverness Gull Project 2023

Detailed discussion took place during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points and the Inverness City Area Manager provided further detail on the Gull Project.

Some Members expressed concern that gulls were a protected species, particularly the Herring Gull which was on the Red List meaning it was in imminent danger of extinction. Given that the Council had declared a climate and ecological emergency, it was suggested it was necessary to look at an alternative solution rather than removing eggs, which appeared not to reduce the population but only stop it increasing. In addition, it was necessary to consider the impact Avian Flu had had on the seabird population, and it was suggested that the project be paused for a year to establish whether there was an increase in gull numbers in the city centre.

Other Members commented that gulls were a hazard to health and people, and the project had been a success, the number of gulls in the city centre being a fraction of what it had been previously. In addition, concern was expressed that pausing the project would negate the progress that had been made.

Following discussion, Mr A Graham, seconded by Mrs E McAllister, **moved** that the Gull Project continue to be funded as per the paper which had been circulated.

As an **amendment**, Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mrs K MacLean, moved that, due to Avian Flu, the Gull Project be suspended for this year.

On a vote being taken, there were two votes for the **motion** and three votes for the **amendment**, with two abstentions. The **amendment** was therefore **carried**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr A Graham, Mrs E McAllister.

For the Amendment:

Mr C Ballance, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs K MacLean.

Abstentions:

Mr M Cameron, Mrs M Reid.

Decision:

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee that, due to Avian Flu, the Gull Project be suspended for this year.

iv. Inverness Community Safety Partnership 2023

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee that the application for funding amounting to £9,700.00 be **APPROVED**.

v. Coach Friendly Project 2023

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee that the application for funding amounting to £12,987.00 be **APPROVED**.

7. Homologation Requests

The following application had been approved by the Inverness City Area Manager in consultation with the Sub-Committee, subject to homologation at the next available Sub-Committee Meeting:-

Whin Park

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to award £5,000 from the Other Properties Budget towards a feasibility study for the redevelopment of Whin Park.

8. Evaluation Forms

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the Evaluation Forms submitted by applicants on completion of their projects.

The Chair requested that the narrative on the agenda be updated for the next meeting, with the reference to hard copy format being removed. This was **AGREED**.

9. Civic Hospitality Requests

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/03/23 dated 13 January 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager which listed the applications received for Civic Hospitality from the Inverness Common Good Fund. Copies of the applications and any supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee determined the requests for Civic Hospitality as follows:-

Organisation: Inverness Samaritans
Event: Inverness Samaritans 50th Anniversary Celebration
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)
Cost: £6,157.35
Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: Forestry and Land Scotland
Event: EUSTAFOR 2023
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)
Cost: £4,057.15
Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: Befrienders Highland
Event: Befrienders Highland 30th Anniversary
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)
Cost: £3,532.88
Decision: **APPROVED**

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that successful applicants would be responsible for their own costs and might be held liable for the whole costs of the event if it was cancelled due to their own act or omission;
- ii. **NOTED** that costs of Civic Events continued to increase beyond expected levels and decisions might need to be taken regarding the prioritisation of events to be supported; and
- iii. **AGREED** to determine the applications for Civic Hospitality as detailed above.

10. Recurring Events

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/04/23 dated 16 January 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager which invited the Sub-Committee to consider approval in principle for recurring annual events.

Detailed discussion took place, during which Members emphasised the need to be mindful of increasing costs and the financial pressures facing the Common Good Fund when considering requests for funding, particularly for Civic Events. It was questioned whether it was appropriate to consider the list of recurring events when the budget for 2023/24 had not yet been set, and to continue to facilitate recurring events.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to defer the list of recurring events to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee to allow the Inverness Common Good Fund Budget for 2023/24 to be set.

11. Homologation of Civic Hospitality Requests

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decisions to approve the following Civic Hospitality requests:-

- Best Bar None Awards - £750.00 Financial Contribution
- Community Celebration Event - £3,271.38
- Armistice Day - £1,352.00
- Remembrance Day - £1,000 Financial Contribution
- Scottish Highlands & Islands and Moray Chinese Association - £4,917.36

The Sub-Committee also **NOTED** that £250.00 had been awarded to Highland Disability Sport.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 15 May 2023 at 10.00 am.

It having been queried whether the way the Sub-Committee papers were presented could be improved, the Inverness City Area Manager invited Members to contact him with a view to resolving any issues in that regard.

The Chair commented that there had been an exceptional amount of business at today's meeting, and he thanked all officers involved for their assistance.

The meeting concluded at 2.00 pm.