

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 13 February 2023 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken	Mr D Gregg
Mr C Ballance	Mrs J Hendry
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
Mr D Fraser	Mrs B McAllister
Mr K Gowans	Mrs M Reid
Mr A Graham	Mrs T Robertson

Officials in Attendance:

Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Ms A Clark, Head of Community Support and Engagement, Communities and Place
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Infrastructure
Mrs S McKandie, Interim Head of Revenues and Business Support
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Communities and Place
Mr M Greig, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr M MacKay, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates Management)
Mr J Taylor, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Mr S Grant, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Ms A Wasko, Principal Housing Officer, Housing and Property Service
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager, Performance and Governance
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

Also in Attendance:-

Chief Inspector J Hill, Area Commander (Inverness Area Command), Police Scotland

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

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair made the following announcements in relation to the New Year Honours List:-

- Dr Malcolm Monteith Steven, a founder and Trustee of the Puffin Hyrdotherapy Pool charity, had been awarded an MBE for his services to the community in the Highlands and Islands; and
- Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Andrew Kent, Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon, Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, had been awarded an OBE for services to UK health support overseas, particularly in Ukraine and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee **NOTED** the position and congratulated the recipients.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms H Crawford, Ms E Knox and Mr A Sinclair.

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

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

Item 3: Mr A Christie and Mr D Gregg

Item 8.d: Mr A Christie, Mr D Gregg and Mr K Gowans

**3. Police – Area Performance Report
Poileas – Geàrr-aithisg Coileanadh Sgìreil**

Transparency Statements: The undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test and reviewed their position in relation to the item and any personal connection, they did not consider they had an interest to declare:-

**Mr A Christie – as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland
Mr D Gregg – as an employee of NHS Highland**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/1/23 dated 3 February 2023 by the Inverness Area Commander.

During discussion, the following issues were raised and responded to:-

- it was queried whether the number of Police officers assigned to schools could be increased;
- reference was made to the low turnout at some “Coffee with a Cop” events, and it was suggested that Community Beat Officer attendance at Community Council meetings, which were well attended, would be more beneficial. It was also suggested that consideration be given to evening “Coffee with a Cop” events to accommodate those who worked during the day;
- there were high rates of crime detection in Highland as a result of the interaction between local Police and the public, and the importance of continuing to connect with communities was emphasised;
- concern having been expressed regarding the length of time taken to answer 101 calls, Chief Inspector Hill confirmed that she had asked an officer from the relevant division to come to a future Members’ Briefing to provide an opportunity for Members to raise concerns directly;
- it was important to recognise that the Police had finite resources and were trying to make the best use of what was available;
- public meetings did not always make the best use of time, and information was sought as to the format of the proposed engagement sessions;
- the Inverness Community Council Forum, which had been active prior to the pandemic, might be a useful platform for engaging with Community Councils. The Inverness City Area Manager concurred that this was an avenue worth exploring and undertook to liaise with Chief Inspector Hill in that regard;

- concern was expressed regarding anti-social behaviour by young people, and information was sought as to the message that was going out to young people about such behaviour and the platform for the voice of the older people who were being targeted;
- Community Beats Teams were commended for their helpful and supportive manner when responding to incidents;
- it would be useful to provide statistics for 2017/18 and 2018/19, pre-Covid, for the purposes of comparison;
- the figures appeared to indicate that a number of crimes had increased significantly, particularly carrying an offensive weapon, and further information was sought in that regard;
- many issues that Community Councils wanted to discuss could be addressed by any experienced Police officer, not just Community Beat Officers;
- in relation to theft by shoplifting, it would be useful to see a breakdown of what was being stolen – e.g. high value items to buy drugs, or food, milk etc in order to survive the cost of living crisis;
- in relation to the proposed expansion of 20mph zones, it was questioned how the Police were going to enforce the speed limit and educate people given their limited resources;
- drivers failing to stop at red lights at the Kingsmills junction had caused distress to residents, and thanks were expressed to Police officers for their response in that regard. It was added that residents had been asked to report licence plates when such incidents occurred, and it was queried what happened thereafter. Chief Inspector Hill undertook to revert to Members in that regard;
- thanks were expressed for the work on Operation Respect and the Harm Reduction Vehicle which helped to reduce the demands of Raigmore Hospital;
- Police officers carrying Naloxone would save lives and was welcomed;
- the rise in fraud was concerning, and it was queried what approaches were being adopted and whether the way the Police and Trading Standards worked together could be changed to improve detection rates;
- previous discussions had taken place about an online portal where dashcam and cycle camera footage could be uploaded to assist the Police in detecting crime, and an update was sought in that regard. It was added that the Bute House Agreement stated that Transport Scotland would work with Police Scotland on a pilot project to develop an online reporting system for anyone to upload camera footage of dangerous driving;
- it was questioned why some detection rates were more than 100%; and
- information was sought as to whether the Police paid for the use of office space within the Town House and what would happen when the building was vacated.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2020-2023 Year 3, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022; and
- AGREED** that the Inverness City Area Manager explore the possibility of reinstating Inverness Community Council Forum and liaise with Chief Inspector Hill regarding Police attendance thereat.

4. **Area Roads Capital Programme 2023/24** **Prògram Calpa Rathaidean na Sgìre 2023/24**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/2/23 dated 25 January 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- reference having been made to recent damage to Barn Church Road near the junction with the A96, it was confirmed that work had been and would continue to be undertaken in that area;
- information was sought, and provided, as to how Active Travel projects such as Academy Street and Riverside Way were coordinated with the Area Roads Capital Programme. In addition, it was suggested that consideration should be given to whether Active Travel projects should be reported to the City of Inverness Area Committee, not just as project proposals but as a Capital Programme;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding damage to roads by utility companies and whether the Council always had the resources to follow up and ensure any temporary repairs were made good. In addition, reference was made to instances of the Council not having been informed of utility works, and it was suggested there was a need for a joined-up app;
- concern was expressed that nearly 50% of the budget allocation for surface dressing was to be spent in Ward 12, which was not within the City of Inverness. The need for fairness and equity was emphasised, and it was suggested it was necessary to consider the formula used to allocate funding. It was added that it was perhaps time to think about having a City Committee rather than a City and Area Committee, and a wider debate was needed in that regard. The Chair emphasised that any proposed change to the formula or the Area Committee would be a matter for full Council;
- disappointment was expressed that only two short sections of road in Ward 19 were included in the Programme. Reference having been made to damage to road edges at tourist hotspots, it was confirmed that tourism funding had been awarded for Clava Cairns and it was a matter of getting a contractor to do the works;
- information was sought, and provided, as to whether the Council was proactive or reactive in terms of road repairs, and whether members of the public had any recourse when they damaged their vehicle only to be told they were the first person to report a pothole;
- it was queried whether maximum efficiency was being achieved and if there was sufficient manpower to deliver the Programme;
- Inverness was the most densely populated area of the Highlands therefore had the highest number of road users;
- it was queried how Members could make a case for road improvements in their ward;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the number of Pothole Pro machines in operation;
- road repairs were an uphill battle in Highland due to the large geographical area;
- it was necessary to be more innovative and use new technology, and it was queried whether officers looked at what other local authorities were doing in that regard;
- the need to generate income was emphasised and, reference having been made to the significant number of tourist coaches that visited Highland, it was suggested that the Council should be considering a levy;
- Transport Scotland had machinery and manpower, and it was queried whether there was scope to coordinate projects and share resources;
- it was questioned whether the forthcoming improvements to Inshes junction were going to be sufficient;

- many businesses were being affected by the state of the roads and were asking Members what was going to be done;
- some constituents paid over £3k a year in Council Tax and were questioning what they were getting for that. Particular reference was made to the Crown area, which had an increasing number of potholes. Other Members added that paying more in Council Tax should not buy any kind of priority;
- it would be helpful to look at how the budget was allocated over a three or five-year period rather than on an annual basis;
- the issues with the roads in Highland were the result of a lack of investment over many years;
- it was disappointing that a £43m application to the Levelling Up Fund in respect of the NC500 had been refused by the UK Government as this could have freed up additional money that could have been utilised throughout Highland. It was added that having to compete against other local authorities for pots of money, spending valuable officer time on applications that went nowhere, was not acceptable and the need for consistent funding formulas from the Scottish and UK governments was emphasised;
- thanks were expressed to officers, who were doing the best they could with a limited budget, for their efforts and helpful approach when responding to Members' queries;
- the inclusion of Wade Road and Henderson Drive in the Programme was welcomed;
- clarification was sought, and provided, as to what residents should do if they were concerned about the condition of a particular road or pavement;
- there were defects on the A9 at the Raigmore interchange that had not been repaired by the Trunk Roads Authority, and it was queried how to ensure such issues were addressed; and
- a Special Meeting of the Committee or a Members' workshop was called for to discuss the A9 following the recent disappointing announcement that it would not be dualled. However, the Chair explained that this was a matter for the Full Council.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2023/24 Area Roads Capital Programme for the City of Inverness and Area.

5. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2023/24 Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2023/24

There had been circulated Report No CIA/3/23 dated 2 February 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

During discussion, Members raised the following main points:-

- the impact of garage rent increases on the HRA was marginal and proposing the rents be increased by 4%, the same level of increase that had been applied to Council house rents;
- an increase of 10% in garage rents would allow for more investment in their repair and maintenance;
- concern at the current level of voids for garages and the potential to advertise their availability to the public, reference being made to the higher cost of self-storage units;
- concern that the Committee was being asked to make a decision on this item when there was uncertainty on the actual number of voids;

- the need to reflect throughout future reports the actual rent that would be charged to non-Council tenants who paid a higher rent due to the application of VAT;
- the primary focus should be on bringing void garages back into use and on developing a strategy based on the actual footprint of Council garages and garage sites. This should include the potential to market them for alternative uses and on managing the garage estate to create vacant sites for housing development;
- the potential to contact those tenants not using their garages to invite them to give up their tenancy, noting there was a current waiting list for garages in the area;
- an explanation was sought around the fact the income from garage rents was well in excess of the area repairs budget. In response, it was suggested that the opportunities to increase the repairs budget was a matter for consideration by the Housing and Property Committee;
- confirmation was sought and provided on the historic reasons as to why Inverness garage rents were well below the Highland average. It was also noted rents were well below the Scottish average; and
- confirmation was sought and provided that information on the current level of outstanding repairs to garages would be provided to Members outwith the meeting.

Thereafter, Mr I Brown seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair **MOVED** that a 10% increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites.

Mr A Graham seconded by Mr D Greig moved as an **AMENDMENT** that a 4% increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites.

On a vote being taken, there were 11 votes for the motion, 7 for the amendment and 2 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the motion:

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, Mr R MacIntosh, Mrs K MacLean, Mrs M Reid

For the amendment:

Mr C Aitken, Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr A MacIntosh, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson,

Abstentions:

Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson

Decision

The Committee **AGREED** that a 10% increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites.

**6. Inverness Wards Repurposing COVID-19 Fund
Maoin Ath-adhbharachaidh COVID-19 Uàrdan Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/4/23 dated 26 January 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

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

- **Ward 13 – Inverness West**

£6,285 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Muirtown Growing Project

- **Ward 17 – Culloden & Ardersier**

£21,00 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Ardroy Road, Croy - Playpark

7. Ward 12 Aird & Loch Ness - Repurposing Place Based Investment Funding Allocation

Uàrd 12 na h-Àirde agus Loch Nis – Ag Ath-adhbharachadh Riarachadh Maoin eachadh Tasgaidh Stèidhichte air Àite

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/5/23 dated 26 January 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place.

During discussion, it was clarified that the Community Led budget had been reallocated towards the Inverness/Kiltarlity public bus service due to the urgency of the situation.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to repurpose £46,800 of Place Based Investment Funds for Ward 12 to support the re-instatement, for 12 months, of the Inverness to Kiltarlity / Kiltarlity to Inverness early morning and evening public bus services; and
- ii. the remaining unspent Place Based Investment Funds of £6,625, be allocated for play parks across the ward.

**8. Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF)
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis**

**a) Inverness Common Good Fund Annual Report 2021/22
Aithisg Bhliadhnail Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis 2021/22**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/6/23 dated 2 February 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Head of Corporate Governance.

The Committee **NOTED** the final monitoring report and Statement of Accounts for the Inverness Common Good Fund for the year ended 31 March 2022.

**b) Financial Monitoring
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/7/23 dated 7 February 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Head of Corporate Finance.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 December 2022 and the projected outturns detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report and the impact on the Fund's reserves.

c) Capital Projects Update Report
Aithisg às Ur mu Phròiseactan Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/8/23 dated 30 January 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing & Property.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

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

d) Grants Applications over £10,000
Iarrtasan Tabhartais thar £10,000

Transparency Statements: The undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test and reviewed their position in relation to the item and any personal connection, did not consider they had an interest to declare:-

Mr A Christie – as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland

Mr D Gregg – as an employee of NHS Highland

Mr K Gowans declared a connection to the application by Inverness UHI as an employee of UHI. However, he had not been part of the application, which was for the student cohort and would be of no benefit to him personally, and therefore did not consider he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/9/23 dated 10 November 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place, and there had been circulated separately a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

Applications were considered and determined as follows:

1. Inverness College UHI - £44,600, requested

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- many students had been unable to work during the Covid crisis, therefore had fewer savings and many were struggling financially due to the cost of living crisis; and
- although Members felt this was a worthwhile project and should be supported, some Members felt the project should be open to members of the public in addition to students, to ensure common good funds were distributed fairly. It was not known if this would be possible with regard to security at the campus. It was clarified that the application was competent even if restricted to UHI students, and that there were not sufficient funds available to fulfil the full request of £44,600.

Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, **MOVED** to provide £22,300, which was 50% of the grant requested, for one year only, and to discuss with the applicant whether it was possible to extend the project to include members of the public.

Mr A Christie, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, moved as an **AMENDMENT** to provide £22,300, which was 50% of the grant requested, for one year only, subject to the applicant extending the project to include members of the public.

There were 12 votes for the motion and 8 for the amendment, and the **MOTION** was carried, 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, Mr D Gregg, Mrs J Hendry, Mr R MacKintosh, Mrs K MacLean, Mrs M Reid

For the amendment: Mr C Aitkin, Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson

Decision:

The Committee **APPROVED** £22,300 for Inverness College UHI, which was 50% of the grant requested, for one year only, and **AGREED** to discuss with the applicant whether it was possible to extend the project to include members of the public

2. Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of £20,000.

3. Merkinch Community Centre

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of £6,000.

4. Inverness BID Applications

The Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee had made recommendations regarding the applications submitted by Inverness BID and these were considered as follows:

4.1 The City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays 2023

A reduced grant of £64,150 had been recommended by the Sub-Committee.

Some Members expressed concern at the reduction in grant and felt the full amount should be awarded to ensure the city remained smart and attractive to residents and visitors. Other Members pointed out that it was not in effect a reduction as the requested project included a number of additional Display Baskets. Noting that the Common Good Fund was likely to lose further income as a result of the Council office staff vacating the Town House, it was important to make savings where possible.

Mr A Graham, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** to approve a grant of £69,378, which was a further £5,228 from 2022/23 surplus on the Common Good Fund.

Mr C Balance, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, moved as an **AMENDMENT** to provide a reduced grant of £64,150 as recommended.

There were 7 votes for the motion and 12 for the amendment, and the **AMENDMENT** was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the motion: Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson.

For the amendment: Mr C Aitkin, Mr C Ballance, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mr D Gregg, Mrs J Hendry, Mr R MacIntosh, Mrs K MacLean, Mrs M Reid.

Decision:

The Committee **APPROVED** a reduced grant of £64,150.

4.2 Operation Respect Easter/Summer/Autumn 2023

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of **£11,596**

4.3 Inverness Gull Project 2023

The Sub-Committee had recommended refusal of the £12,839 grant.

Some Members pointed out that gulls in the city centre were a pest and liable to spread infection, noting the risk of cross infection of avian flu from birds to humans or other animals. The gull project had been successful for many years, with a cumulative effect which would be lost if the project ceased for a year, as proposed. It was acknowledged that the preservation of gulls was important but felt they should be discouraged from city centres as this was not their natural habitat, and they created mess and, at times, fear. It was pointed out that even if the project was approved, a licence would have to be sought from NatureScot prior to the commencement of any work.

Other Members referred to the impact of avian flu on the overall bird population, and the importance of allowing this protected species to recover in numbers for one year and thereafter recommence the gull project if deemed necessary.

Mr A Christie, seconded by Mrs I MacKenzie, **MOVED** to approve the application for £12,839.

Mrs Glynis Campbell-Sinclair, seconded by Mrs K MacLean, moved as an **AMENDMENT**, to refuse the application as recommended by the Sub-Committee.

There were 13 votes for the motion, 6 for the amendment, and one abstention, and the **MOTION** was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the motion: Mr C Aitkin, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr A Christie, Mr D Fraser, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mrs J Hendry, Mr A MacIntosh, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson.

For the amendment: Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr K Gowans, Ms K MacLean, Mr R MacIntosh.

Abstention: Mrs M Reid

Decision:

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of £12,839 for the Inverness Gull Project.

4.4 Inverness Community Safety Partnership 2023

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of **£9,700**.

4.5 Coach Friendly Project 2023

The Committee **APPROVED** a grant of **£12,987**.

e) ICGF Budget Setting for 2023/24 and Capital Programme Suidheachadh Buidseit Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis airson 2023/24 agus Prògram Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/10/23 dated 1 February 2023 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and Head of Corporate Finance.

During discussion the following main points were raised:-

- some Members reported that the Red Hot Highland Fling, at Hogmanay 2022-23 had only been attended by 2,500-3,000 people and felt that, at a cost of £150k, did not represent a fair use of Common Good Funds, especially during a cost of living crisis. It was asked that any similar event in future be put to the full Committee for approval and the City Area Manager explained that the Committee had delegated powers to the Events and Festivals Working Group to decide on the events programme and that it was within the powers of the Committee to change this arrangement, should they so wish;
- other Members reported that up to 8,000 people had attended the Red Hot Highland Fling over the course of the evening, and spoke in favour of leaving the arrangements of events with the Working Group, noting that any member of the Committee was entitled to attend the meetings;
- it was suggested that attendance statistics for the Red Hot Highland Fling 2022-23 be made public;
- it was disappointing that during a climate emergency, a large bonfire was being burned for Guy Fawkes night;
- many events, such as the Botanics, had proved successful, popular, and well attended, and all events had brought economic benefit to the city, as well as pleasure for local residents, which was particularly relevant as part of covid recovery;
- in response to comments about hotels being booked out over Hogmanay, it was pointed out that many hotels put on their own entertainment for guests and it was not all down to the Red Hot Highland Fling;
- the debate about whether events should be ticketed or not, or chargeable or not, was ongoing, and sometimes events were ticketed for Health & Safety reasons, to avoid the danger of over-crowding. Ticketing events risked people taking free tickets but not using them;
- in relation to the Inverness Town House Car Park Income, there was a preference to operate the site as a permanent public car park;
- it was requested that progress with future planning for the Inverness Town House be reported back to the Committee;
- assurance was sought and provided that proposals for the 2023-24 winter payments would be presented to the Committee in June 2023. The welfare

team were thanked for their work in administering the 2022-23 winter payments successfully;

- in response to a question, it was explained that a budget allocation of £145k to the Victorian Market was to cover the cost of the service charge for empty units and this would reduce as the units were filled;
- it was hoped the marketing allocation for the Victorian Market would not be recurring given it was populated by private businesses and to avoid unfair competition for the businesses in the Eastgate centre;
- the value to the local economy of the Lochness marathon was pointed out and it was suggested they should be funded in some way;
- information was sought and provided on progress with the roll out of digital CCTV, which had been the subject of a recent Members' visit. The Common Good Fund provided funding but the project was being managed by the Council. Any reduction in funding would reduce the amount of time CCTV could be monitored; and
- the Events and Festivals team, including High Life Highland representatives, were thanked for their work on the events, including the Red Hot Highland Fling.

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

Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr D Macpherson, moved as an **AMENDMENT** for the Events and Festivals Working Group to make recommendations to this Committee on an appropriate event for the 31 December 2023 prior to committing to delivering said event.

There were 11 votes for the motion and 9 for the amendment, and the **MOTION** was carried, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the motion: 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, Mrs K MacLean, Mr R MacIntosh, Mrs M Reid.

For the amendment: Mr C Aitkin, Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Mr D Gregg, Mr A MacIntosh, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs B McAllister, Mrs T Robertson.

Decision:

The Committee **AGREED:**

- i. the Common Good Fund budget for 2023/24 as detailed within the report and Appendices; and
- ii. Option 1 (Public Car Park) in relation to the Town House Car Park.

9. Inverness Community Partnership Com-pàirteachas Coimhearsnachd Inbhir Nis

The Committee **AGREED** that Mr Chris Ballance assume the position of Chair of the Inverness Community Partnership noting that this was with the consent of City Leader, Mr Ian Brown.

Mr Christie, while not objecting to Mr Ballance's appointment, added that it was disappointing the Administration had not nominated an Inverness-based Councillor for this organisation. He felt insufficient precedence was given to this group and its activities, and it was of concern that various meetings had been rescheduled. Consideration should be given to how the Committee could scrutinise and support the activities of this group to a greater extent. Mr Ballance explained two meetings had been postponed due to poor weather. Mr Brown added that although the meetings were well attended, this tended not to be by members of the public.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

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

- i. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 18 November 2022 and 15 December 2022 - **APPROVED**;
- ii. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 24 November 2022 - **NOTED**;
- iii. Inverness East Sports Facilities Working Group held on 15 December 2022 - **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 23 January 2023 - **APPROVED**.

11. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

12. Inverness Common Good Fund – Sites and Premises Transaction Report Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis – Aithisg Gnothachais Làraich is Thogalaichean

There had been circulated to Members only Joint Report No CIA/11/23 dated 1 February 2023 by the Head of Development and Regeneration and the Property Manager (Estates).

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 3.10pm.