

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 9 October 2023 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr C Ballance

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (remote)

Mr A Graham (Chair)

Mrs B McAllister

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager

Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Environment, Infrastructure and Economy Service

Ms F Hepburn, Project Officer – Community Regeneration, Environment, Infrastructure and Economy Service

Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Inverness City Area Manager's Office

Miss M Murray, Principal 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 Mr C Aitken, Mr M Cameron, Mrs I MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs M Reid and Mr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statement:-

Item 4: Mr A Graham

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 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.

4. Community Regeneration Funding

There had been circulated a Members' Briefing Note which set out the background to Community Regeneration Funding (CRF), the funding available in 2023/24, the approach being taken and the proposed timeline.

CRF had a two-stage process, the first being to submit an Expression of Interest which, if supported by the Sub-Committee, would lead to a full application being invited. Copies of the Expressions of Interest and a summary thereof had been circulated.

The Project Officer – Community Regeneration having summarised the process to be followed, detailed discussion took place on the merits or otherwise of each Expression of Interest during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points.

The Sub-Committee determined the Expression of Interest as follows:-

Ref: 2148

Organisation: Aird Community Trust

Project title: Kirkhill Community Centre Energy Works

Grant requested: £11,716.35

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application subject to the provision of information on connection costs.

Ref: 2149

Organisation: Free North Church

Project title: Restoration Project

Grant requested: £30,000.00

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

Ref: 2163

Organisation: Beaully Shinty Club

Project title: Fencing at Braeview Park

Grant requested: £20,590.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application subject to guaranteed use of the pitch, free of charge, by Beaully Primary School.

Ref: 2175

Organisation: Glen Urquhart Men's Shed Group

Project title: Workshop and Office Refurbishment

Grant requested: £10,000.00

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

Ref: 2181

Organisation: 2nd Inverness Scout Group

Project title: Hall Insulation Project

Grant requested: £13,500.00

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

Ref: 2216

Organisation: Culduthel Woods Group

Project title: Culduthel Woods Path Restoration Project

Grant requested: £12,000.00

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

Ref: 2224

Organisation: Beaully Community Council

Project title: Christmas Lights

Grant requested: £6,196.00

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

Transparency Statement: Mr A Graham made a Transparency Statement in respect of the following application on the basis that he was an Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club season ticket holder. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Ref: 2250

Organisation: Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Development

Project title: Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Hub

Grant requested: £50,000.00

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

Ref: 2265

Organisation: Knochnagael Ltd

Project title: Knochnagael Green Hub

Grant requested: £75,000.00

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

Ref: 2281

Organisation: The Ledge SCIO

Project title: Clean Air/Warm Air

Grant requested: £63,000.00

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

Ref: 2282

Organisation: Cultarlann Inbhir Nis

Project title: Insulating the East Church

Grant requested: £55,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application for the capital costs only.

Ref: 2137

Organisation: Merkinch Partnership

Project title: One Stop Shop Advice Service

Grant requested: £25,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application subject to further information being sought by the Project Officer – Community Regeneration on the potential overlap with the services provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Council's Welfare Support Team.

Ref: 2126

Organisation: Inverness Wheeled Sports Club

Project title: Inverness City Wheeled Sports Feasibility Study and Strategy

Grant requested: £36,000.00

Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application for the first phase of the project only – ie the Site Options Appraisal or Community Engagement.

Ref: 2138

Organisation: Friends of Merkinch Local Nature Reserve SCIO

Project title: Volunteer Support Project

Grant requested: £16,200.00

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

Ref: 2161

Organisation: Safe Space Inverness
Project title: Safe Space Inverness
Grant requested: £45,400.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application for the capital costs only, and that clarification be sought as to the premises.

Ref: 2164

Organisation: Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop
Project title: Merkinch and Hilton Reuse, Repair and Active Travel
Grant requested: £7,980.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 2173

Organisation: Inverness Sea Cadets Unit – TS BRITON
Project title: Feasibility Study for future of Inverness Sea Cadets Buildings
Grant requested: £25,200.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

Ref: 2196

Organisation: LGBT Youth Scotland
Project title: LGBTYS Highlands
Grant requested: £9,975.00
Decision: **AGREED** to invite a full application.

During further discussion, information was sought, and provided, as to what would happen in the event there was capital funding remaining following determination of the full applications. In relation to revenue funding, it was suggested that applicants be advised that demand was very high. It having been queried whether any grants awarded in 2022/23 were not going to be spent within the specified timescale, the current status of last year's projects was set out in the Members' Briefing Note, and it was confirmed that any underspend would be included in the next CRF paper.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to determine the Expressions of Interest as detailed above, and that feedback be provided to the applicants as discussed;
- ii. **NOTED** that full applications would be considered at a future meeting of the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee with recommendations made to the City of Inverness Area Committee on selection of projects for approval and value of grants awards to be made; and
- iii. **NOTED** that any CRF underspend in 2022/23 would be included in the next paper presented to the Sub-Committee.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 30 October 2023 at 10.00 am.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee** held in Committee Room 3, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 30 October 2023 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken (remote)

Mr C Ballance

Mr M Cameron (remote)

Mr A Graham (Chair)

Mrs I MacKenzie (remote)

Ms K MacLean (remote)

Mrs E McAllister

Mrs M Reid

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager

Mr M Greig, Ward Manager

Mr S Taylor, Civic and Facilities Team Leader

Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Inverness City Area Manager's Office

Miss M Murray, Principal 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 G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Macpherson and Mr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following:-

Item 4: Mr A Graham (Transparency Statement) and Mrs M Reid (Declaration of Interest)

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.

At this stage, Members expressed concern that the agenda and papers for today's meeting had not been received 10 days in advance, in accordance with Standing Order 2.

The Inverness City Area Manager apologised and confirmed that every effort would be made to meet the specified timescale in future.

Members also expressed thanks for the improvements that had been made to the format of the electronic papers which had made them much easier to navigate.

The Chair then advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 8, he had agreed to accept the following urgent additional item of business. It was explained that the reason for the urgency was to allow the Sub-Committee to have sight of additional information, prior to consideration of the application by the City of Inverness Area Committee on 20 November, which had not been available when the agenda and papers had been published and which supported the original decision by the Sub-Committee to recommend approval of the application for £150,000 towards the redevelopment of Whin Park.

3a. Urgent Additional Item: Internal Application – Whin Park

A revised application was tabled which included additional information on the vision and sustainability of the project alongside detail on funding.

Following discussion, during which information was sought, and provided, on the proposed toilet block refurbishment and whether consideration had been given to installing CCTV to deter vandals, the Sub-Committee **NOTED** the additional information provided in the revised application.

4. Requests for Financial Assistance 2023/24

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/16/23 dated 13 October 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager. Copies of the applications and supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint.

Appendix 2 of the report, which it had been indicated would follow, was tabled. The Inverness City Area Manager apologised for the late distribution and explained that this had been to ensure that the financial information was completely up-to-date. He went on to summarise the financial position, explaining that, for the first time, the sum of the applications before the Sub-Committee exceeded the budget available. There was £55,231 remaining in the Poverty and Inequality budget but the applications in that category exceeded that. There were also several applications in the Other Grants category but only £125 remained in the budget. The City Vibrancy budget, which comprised a number of budget headings including Partnership Working, was overspent by £22,951k due to a combination of the volatility of the costs associated with hospitality and non-negotiable additional costs which had arisen, details of which were provided. The City and Facilities Team Leader had been doing a considerable amount of work to try to manage the costs associated with civic events and a procurement exercise was being undertaken which would perhaps provide a more stable framework but at present the situation was extremely challenging.

Detailed discussion ensued on the financial position and the options available, following which a consensus was reached not to exercise the Sub-Committee's delegated powers to approve applications for up to and including £10,000 and instead make recommendations to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 20 November 2023, to enable the parent committee to consider the financial position in the round.

Discussion also took place on the various appendices to the report, during which clarification was sought and provided on a number of points, and the Inverness City Area Manager confirmed he was happy to meet with Members outwith the meeting to discuss the information provided and whether improvements could be made.

It having been commented that it would be helpful to have an overview of how successful the projects supported by the Sub-Committee had been, it was confirmed that a Members' briefing/workshop could be arranged to discuss in more detail the Evaluation Forms submitted by applicants on completion of their projects.

Thereafter, following detailed discussion on the appropriate budget category and the merits or otherwise of each application, during which clarification was sought and provided on a number of points, the Sub-Committee determined the applications for financial assistance as follows:-

Applications up to £5,000

Applicant: Chamber Music Tours Scotland

Project/activity: Inverness Piano Recitals – Autumn 2024 to Spring 2025

Amount requested: £4,320.00

Decision: Following a vote, **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of a partial award of £3240.00 (Other Grants).

Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mrs E McAllister, **moved** that the Sub-Committee recommend a partial award of £3240.00.

As an **amendment**, Mrs M Reid, seconded by Mr M Cameron, moved that the Sub-Committee recommend a partial award of £1800.00.

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

For the Motion:

Mr C Aitken, Mr C Ballance, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mrs E McAllister.

For the Amendment:

Mr M Cameron, Ms K MacLean, Mrs M Reid.

Applicant: Dopamine Dolls

Project/activity: Start up and general running costs for year one

Amount requested: £2,385.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of a partial award of £2185.00 (Poverty and Inequality).

It was further **AGREED** that the Inverness City Area Manager write to the applicant to seek further information on the sustainability of the initiative and how many people it was supporting, and link in with NHS Highland, via the Inverness Partnership, regarding existing provision for those living with ADHD, particularly women and non-binary individuals.

Applicant: Inverness Military Wives Choir
Project/activity: Remembrance Concerts
Amount requested: £924.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (City Vibrancy).

Applicant: SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity
Project/activity: Annual fundraising and caseworking expenses
Amount requested: £2,000.00
Decision: **DECLINED**

Whilst supportive of the work undertaken by the SSAFA, Members declined this application on the grounds of insufficient benefit to the City of Inverness.

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness
Project/activity: Active Travel Officer
Amount requested: £5,000.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Other Grants).

Applications £5,001 to £10,000

Applicant: Merkinch Community Shop
Project/activity: Community Food Project
Amount requested: £9,200.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

Applicant: Highland One World SCIO
Project/activity: Supporting anti-racist education in nurseries and primary schools in Inverness
Amount requested: £8,493.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

Applicant: Charleston Academy
Project/activity: Charleston Academy universal breakfast provision
Amount requested: £10,000.00
Decision: **DECLINED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Members declined this application on the grounds of insufficient targeting and that granting the request would set a precedent that could not be sustained.

It was further **AGREED** that the Inverness City Area Manager liaise with the Head of Revenues and Customer Services regarding potential alternative sources of funding.

Declaration of Interest: Mrs M Reid declared an interest in the following application on the basis that her daughter participated in the Highland Drama Company and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Applicant: TFX Performing Arts Community CIC

Project/activity: The Highland Drama Company
Amount requested: £9,500.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of a partial award of £4750.00 (Other Grants).

Applicant: Highland Rugby Football Club (SCIO)
Project/activity: Community Rugby Development Programme
Amount requested: £9,500.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

Applicant: Edinburgh Science Foundation Ltd
Project/activity: Generation Science in Inverness 2024
Amount requested: £6,550.00
Decision: **DEFERRED**

Members deferred this application to allow the Inverness City Area Manager to seek more specific information from the Education and Learning Service.

Applicant: Calman Trust
Project/activity: Club Artysans
Amount requested: £9,370.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

Applications over £10,000

Transparency Statement: Mr A Graham declared a connection to the following application on the basis that a family member was a volunteer for Blythswood Care. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Applicant: Blythswood Care
Project/activity: Highland Foodbank – Inverness 2024
Amount requested: £25,000.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

Mrs M Reid clarified that, whilst she had spoken to SNAP staff in the wider context, the following application had not been discussed with her as indicated in the application form.

Applicant: Special Needs Action Project (SNAP)
Project/activity: Setup costs – expansion of services to the Haven Centre
Amount requested: £30,000.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

It was further **AGREED** that the Inverness City Area Manager write to the applicant to seek further information on the sustainability of the services provided by SNAP and whether the expansion into the Haven Centre was a true expansion or a relocation of services from other premises.

Partnership Working

Applicant: Inverness BID

Project/activity: Smart Scape

Amount requested: £8,484.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Partnership Working).

Applicant: Inverness BID

Project/activity: Operation Respect – Festive 2023

Amount requested: £9,845.00

Decision: **NOTED** that this application was the subject of a separate report at item 5 on the agenda.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED**, other than where applications were declined or deferred, not to exercise its delegated powers to determine the applications for up to and including £10,000 and instead make recommendations, as detailed above, to the City of Inverness Area Committee at its meeting on 20 November 2023;
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 20 November 2023, that the applications for more than £10,000 be determined as detailed above; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the Inverness City Area Manager liaise with colleagues in Corporate Communications regarding promoting the good work supported by the Inverness Common Good Fund.

5. Operation Respect Festive 2023 – Inverness and Area

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/17/23 dated 6 October 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the targeting of objectives for Operation Respect Festive 2023 on providing added community safety and public reassurance whilst supporting measures to reduce the continuing impact of the pandemic and the emerging issues associated with the cost-of-living crisis on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- ii. **NOTED** that the total funding package directed towards Operation Respect Festive 2023 included substantial direct staffing and resource contributions from partners at Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Highland and, of course, City Centre businesses via Inverness BID who were funded through a mandatory levy on Business Rates;
- iii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of funding of £9845 for Operation Respect Festive (Winter) 2023 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Partnership Working Budget.

6. Homologation Requests

The following applications 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:-

a. Highland Action for Little Ones

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the approval of a grant of £8,000 to Highland Action for Little Ones for assistance towards the Bright Futures Initiative. It was **NOTED** that this grant had been awarded from the Poverty and Inequalities Budget.

b. The Clay Studio

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the approval of a grant of £5,000 to The Clay Studio for assistance towards Summer and Autumn activities. It was **NOTED** that this grant had been awarded from the Poverty and Inequalities Budget.

7. Extensions to Grant Period

a. Relationships Scotland – Counselling Highlands

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to approve an extension to the grant period of the grant awarded to Relationships Scotland – Counselling Highlands to the end of February 2024.

b. Ness District Salmon Fishery Board

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to extend the grant period of the grant awarded to the Ness District Salmon Fisheries Board to the end of 2023 to enable the Netting Buyout to be concluded.

8. Evaluation Forms

There had been circulated Evaluation Forms submitted by applicants on completion of their projects.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the Evaluation Forms; and
- ii. **AGREED**, as discussed under item 4, that a Members' briefing/workshop to discuss Evaluation Forms in more detail take place following the February 2024 meeting.

9. Civic Hospitality Requests

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/18/23 dated 11 October 2023 by the Inverness City Area Manager. Copies of the applications and any supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint.

Following discussion on the merits or otherwise of each application, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points, the Sub-Committee determined the applications for Civic Hospitality as follows:-

Organisation: Inverness Burns Club

Event: A Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Inverness Burns Club

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)

Cost: £3,463.30

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

One Member expressed concern regarding the cost of a civic dinner compared to the cost of a civic buffet and emphasised the need for restraint given the budget position.

Organisation: Inverness Branch, Royal British Legion Scotland

Event: Remembrance Day Parade

Venue: British Legion Club, Inverness

Cost: Request for a financial contribution

Decision: **APPROVED** a contribution of £1000.00, noting that the event was on the list of recurring annual events.

Organisation: Inverness Hospital Radio

Event: Inverness Hospital Radio – 50+ Years Celebration

Venue: Town House (Civic Buffet)

Cost: £3,654.30

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **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. Homologation of Civic Hospitality Requests

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

- St Valery Visit – Civic Dinner - £500
- St Valery Visit – Accommodation - £4,500
- 19th Regiment Royal Artillery (St Andrew's Dinner) – Return flights from Inverness - £282.88

11. Free Hall Lets

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Free Hall Lets:-

- Ukraine Concert – Monday 8 January 2024 - £360

- Celebration of the Tapestry of the Highlands & Islands – Offer of Free Hall Let declined.

12. Civic Lighting Requests

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Civic Lighting requests:-

- International Overdose Awareness Day
- Mikeysline Suicide Prevention Day Awareness
- Organ Donation
- Meningitis
- Trigeminal Neuralgia
- Metastatic Breast Cancer
- Baby Loss Awareness
- National Care Leavers Week

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the dates of the 2024 meetings would be scheduled to coincide with the City of Inverness Area Committee meetings and would be circulated in due course.

The meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.