

## INVERNESS PARTNERSHIP

### Note of Meeting held in the Chamber, Town House 19 November 2009 at 3.00pm

#### Present

|                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Cllr Jimmy Gray (JG)                | Provost, THC                          |
| David Haas (DH)                     | Inverness City Manager, THC           |
| Cllr Thomas Prag (TP)               | THC                                   |
| Cllr Donnie Kerr (DK)               | THC                                   |
| Anne Sutherland (AS)                | Merkinch Partnership                  |
| Anne Angus (AA)                     | CVS Inverness                         |
| Graeme Ambrose (GA)                 | Destination Loch Ness                 |
| Julie Inglis (JI)                   | Visit Scotland                        |
| Chief Inspector Andrew MacLean (AM) | Area Commander, Northern Constabulary |
| George Hogg (GH)                    | SNH                                   |
| Jim McCreath (JM)                   | Inverness & Nairn Transport Forum     |
| Garek Begg (GB)                     | Inverness BID                         |
| Pat Hayden                          | Community Council Forum               |

#### In Attendance

|                     |                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Paul Brown (PB)     | Housing & Development Manager, THC   |
| Bob MacKinnon (BM)  | Fairer Scotland Fund, THC            |
| Morven MacLeod (MM) | Senior Administrative Assistant, THC |

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made by those present.

### 2. Apologies

|                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| William Gilfillan (WG) | Corporate Manager, INBS, THC  |
| Cllr Margaret Davidson | THC                           |
| Cllr John Finnie       | THC                           |
| Ian Arnott             | Northern Constabulary         |
| Scott Armstrong        | Visit Scotland                |
| Molly Doyle            | Community Council rep         |
| Stewart Nicol          | Inverness Chamber of Commerce |
| Jean Ramsay Smith      | Inverness Chamber of Commerce |
| John Spencer           | Inverness College             |
| Marie Mackintosh       | HIE                           |
| Martin Wright          | UHI                           |
| Nigel Small            | NHS Highland                  |

### 3. Minute of Previous Meeting on 1 September 2009

The minute had been approved at the City Committee meeting on 21 September, 2009.

#### 4. Budgets – The Big Picture

As WG had been unable to attend the meeting this item was postponed until a future Partnership meeting.

WG

#### 5. Matters Arising from 1 September meeting

##### 5.1 Rural Inverness LEADER

DH confirmed that Project Group was moving forward with a proposal for the application to LEADER.

DH

DH confirmed that LEADER funding had been allocated to 3 projects to date, including funding to Destination Loch Ness towards a new trail.

WG had convened a meeting with JM and GH to review potential strategic projects that the Rural Inverness Local Action Group could propose and the progress of this group would be reported back to future meetings.

WG/JM/GH

##### 5.2 Executive Magazine – Article on Inverness Partnership

DH confirmed that the circulated article had now been published in the Executive Magazine.

##### 5.3 Progressing Employability Services

BM informed members that a meeting of the Short Life Project Group looking at employability services had been held on 14th November. The remit of the group was to look at measures which:-

- improve joint working between partner employment services
- provide services for people experiencing barriers to employment
- assist community and social enterprises to create jobs and training
- provide community based facilities for training and employment preparation

Various agencies had been invited but the meeting had not been well attended. However, a useful discussion had taken place and the key issues for the Inverness Partnership was how to progress:

- **Needs Assessment** - The recent publication of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2009) and more detailed unemployment data (including rising numbers of 16 – 18's and under 25's not in employment, education or training.);
- **Local Economic Strategy** -The engagement of Employers and Sector led opportunities e.g. Retail Academy; Hospitality Industry; Service Centres etc
- **Use of Existing Resources** - The direction and priorities for existing partner services (Job Centre Plus - New Deal; Skills Development Scotland and Council sponsored Programmes); and
- **Developing Responses** - The development and appraisal of reformed or

new projects in response to changing circumstances – e.g. Measures directed at young people; Future Jobs Fund; pre-employment support for particular disadvantaged groups.

Members commented that it would be useful to compare data from 2006 on areas of deprivation within the City Centre with current date so that money could be spent in the right area.

It was agreed to report back to the Partnership when more information became available. **BM**

## **6. Project Group Updates**

**Update reports had been circulated and members commented as follows:**

### **6.1 Loch Ness Piers and Jetties**

JM confirmed that Option 2 would create more of an impact and that discussions had taken place with the private sector with a view to increasing access for the local community and tourism purposes.

**Action:** Decision urgently needed on which options to progress in partnership with private sector, if feasible. **RT/DH**

### **6.2 Vibrant City Centre**

GB commented that traders would like to see more emphasis placed on encouraging office development in the City Centre. Developments outwith the Centre had a negative impact on existing businesses.

DK also felt that there was scope for providing additional accommodation in the City Centre.

**Action:** Provide BID with Transerve's signage strategy for finger posting and identify options for utilising first floor accommodation in City Centre. **DH**

### **6.3 Improved Marketing of Inverness and Area.**

TP encouraged members of the Partnership to make use of and actively promote the existing Inverness branding. The Group did not have a lot of resources and would be looking at imaginative and clever ways to make use of e-marketing.

The Group had currently restricted itself to looking at Inverness City but agreed that it was essential to work with existing rural initiatives which impacted on the City eg. Loch Ness, Culloden.

**Action:** Consider projects that can access available capital funding. **TP**

### **6.4 Affordable Housing**

PB notified members that there had been 25 expressions of interest in Huntly House but there was currently no closing date.

**Action:** Ensure that activity is co-ordinated to make best use of opportunities for housing provision.

### **6.5 Reduce Crime and the Fear of Crime.**

AM informed members that a recent Northern Constabulary survey had shown that over 96% of people in Inverness felt safe. Members agreed that the fear of crime could be as damaging as crime itself and that it was important to take a balanced approach to highlighting crimes in the City.

**Action:** Formulate proposals for co-ordination of community safety initiatives. **DH**

### **6.6 Cleaner and Safer City Centre**

DH confirmed that this group was working closely with BID, focussing on Operation Respect.

**Action:** Increase profile of enforcement work being carried out to reduce littering and co-ordinate waste management arrangements in partnership with public and private sector. **DH/GB**

### **6.7 Facilities and Services for Young People**

AA and DW were continuing to review the facilities and provision in Inverness and noted requests to ensure the inclusion of the Spectrum Centre and the Cameron Centre.

AS expressed her wish to be involved with the work this group was carrying out.

**Action:** Complete review of facilities and provision. **AA/DW**

## **7. Business Gateway**

MP updated the Partnership members with a brief overview on the first six months of Business Gateway as follows:

- Business Gateway provides free advice and signposting to local businesses and supports entrepreneurial ideas;
- there were 10 local advisers;
- there had been 232 contacts in past 6 months in Inverness, providing advice to 46 start up businesses;
- businesses had access to finance and grant advice through Highland Opportunities; and
- working towards becoming a one-stop-shop for business advice in the Highlands.

## **8. Partnership Minutes for Approval**

### **8.1 Merkinch Partnership**

- **28 September, 2009 – APPROVED**

### **8.2 GreenInverness Partnership**

- **19 September, 2009 – APPROVED**

## **9. AOB**

There was no other business.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The dates of the 2010 meetings were agreed as follows:

Tuesday 23 March – 10.00am

Tuesday 29 June – 10.00am

Thursday 2 September – 10.00am

Friday 3 December – 10.00am

**WG**