

## **The Highland Council**

### **CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE – 2 SEPTEMBER 2014**

Agenda Item	22a
Report No	CIA/50/14

## **Reporting of Company Activity to Council**

### **Joint Report by Inverness City Manager and City Heritage Trust Officer**

#### **Summary**

This report informs Members on the work of Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT) during the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14. Particular attention is given to the total grant allocation to properties in Inverness Riverside and Crown Conservation Areas to date. Members are asked to note the work of the Trust in partnership with Inverness College (UHI) and Historic Scotland with regard to raising awareness of traditional building skills and materials amongst professionals, practitioners, local contractors and property owners. Members are also asked to note the work of the Trust with The Highland Council with regards to the Empty Homes Initiative and the Regenerating Inverness City Centre project.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Inverness City Heritage Trust is an independent charitable company limited by guarantee which was incorporated on 16 June 2004. The Trust was initially set up by the Highland Council and Historic Scotland 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. The Trust was formally launched in May 2005 and on 03 June 2008 Inverness City Heritage Trust was designated as a Conservation Body by Scottish Ministers.
- 1.2 The Trust also gives advice to building owners, produces publications and helps to organise events and exhibitions for people interested in the history of buildings and architecture in Inverness.
- 1.3 The Trust works closely with partner organisations around Scotland namely: Aberdeen City Heritage Trust, Dundee Historic Environment Trust, Edinburgh World Heritage, Glasgow City Heritage Trust and Stirling City Heritage Trust. The Trust has also established good partnership working with a number of like-minded organisations within Inverness, to the benefit of mutual strategic objectives.

## **2. Funding and Company Review**

- 2.1 The Trust has committed funding from the Scottish Executive through Historic

Scotland for the period 2012-15. The Trust has been allocated £600,000 for its capital grant scheme and £150,000 for revenue costs.

- 2.2 Inverness City Heritage Trust has a voluntary Board of 10 trustees. Three of the Trustees are nominated representatives of The Highland Council, and there is one representative from each of the following organisations: Inverness Architectural Association, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Inverness Civic Trust and The Inverness Chapter of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. In addition there are three individual trustees. Trustees currently representing the Highland Council are as follows:

- Cllr. James Gray (Chair)
- Cllr. Kenneth MacLeod
- Cllr. Donald Kerr

- 2.3 The Trust has one part time employee, the Project Officer. The role of the Project Officer is to carry out the day to day management of the Inverness City Heritage Trust, together with the delivery of the Project's main aims.

### **3. Achievements and Performance 2012-14**

- 3.1 Since 2005 the Trust has awarded grants totalling over £2.1 Million (£2,190,327) to 191 projects in the Inverness Riverside and Crown Conservation Areas. The Trust's grant assisted projects have helped to keep alive and raise awareness of traditional building skills and materials amongst local contractors and property owners.
- 3.2 In 2012-14 the Trust supported 33 projects totalling £291,164. The Trust offers a percentage grant to owners therefore the real project costs for these projects was in the region of £850K.
- 3.3 In 2012-14 a total of £61,260 was spent on management/ running of the Trust.
- 3.4 The Historic Scotland grant to ICHT covers 100% of the annual income and annual expenditure. The Highland Council does not give a grant to Inverness City Heritage Trust in monetary terms; the Trust receives support in kind in the form of office accommodation and related administrative facilities.
- 3.5 The Trust has been working with The Highland Council through their Empty Homes Initiative. In April 2014, the Trust was asked to make a presentation to the Shelter Scotland Empty Homes Officer Network Seminar on the work done to date here in Inverness. The representatives at the event from the Scottish Government were extremely pleased to see that the Trust and The Highland Council were working together on projects in Inverness and remarked that this showed exactly the kind of linked working that they were looking for. Two grants have been awarded to date: 17 Tomnahurich Street - £20,431 and 112 Academy Street (not yet on site) - £25,630.
- 3.6 In December 2011, Inverness City Heritage Trust commissioned Neil Sutherland Architects to undertake a study to look at Academy Street and how it could be improved for the future. The study, completed in March 2012,

looked at the development of the street, how it is used today and gave consideration to possible opportunities for improvement in the street as a whole. This study has been used as the basis for the Highland Council “Regenerating Inverness City Centre” (RICC) Townscape Heritage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (Stage 1 pass January 2014).

- 3.7 The Trust has established a profile within Inverness as a source of advice and funding for historic buildings. Since 2010, the Trust has worked with Historic Scotland and Inverness College (UHI) and contributed financial help and advice to deliver the Conservation Master Class series for building professionals and practitioners. In 2014, the evening lecture series was condensed into a one day conference event entitled “The adaptive re-use of historic buildings” which was held on 09 May 2014. The event was oversubscribed before the date and was extremely well received. Preparations are now underway for the 2015 event which will focus on traditional skills. The Trust was also a major sponsor of the 2013 RTPI Highlands and Islands Chapter Annual conference in Inverness entitled “Delivering better town centres”.
- 3.8 The Trust has produced a Historic Trail for Inverness and is also responsible for the commissioning of “Blue Plaques” for the city. The Trail has proved to be extremely popular and has been widely distributed in the Highland area and beyond. Blue plaques are now in place at 5 locations in the city and further plaques are planned for the future.

#### **4.0 The Future of Inverness City Heritage Trust**

- 4.1 The Trust has confirmed funding from Historic Scotland until 31 March 2015. The Trust has applied for and has been verbally informed that it has secured £1.5M of future funding for the period 2015-20. This money is dependent on the Trust and The Highland Council being partners in the RICC Townscape Heritage scheme (approximately 62% of the £1.5M budget to be directly invested in the Academy Street scheme). The remainder of the budget shall be invested in other city centre properties.
- 4.2 All future funding from the Trust will be used to encourage the appropriate repair and restoration of Inverness’s historic central core focusing on those buildings where their regeneration\* will have the greatest impact on the environment within which they sit.  
\*Regeneration in terms of the Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy and what we aim to work towards is defined as:  
*“The holistic process of reversing the economic, physical and social decline of places where market forces alone won’t suffice”*
- 4.3 The Trust aims to develop and provide an effective service and will continue to explore opportunities for partnership with other organisations for capital and revenue funding.

#### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Resources –Inverness City Heritage Trust is entirely funded by Historic Scotland. The Highland Council provides in kind support but all staffing and administration costs are recharged to the Trust by The Highland Council.

Applications for grant are considered quarterly and any award of grant and the percentage offered are made at the discretion of the Board of Directors subject to available funds and eligibility criteria being met.

If around 60% of the available funding going forward for the period 2015-20 is diverted on to the RICC Townscape Heritage scheme for Academy Street, there will be less money available for other city centre properties. In these cases, we would look to work on jointly funded schemes with other agencies to maximise impact in the rest of the city centre.

- 5.2 Legal – Inverness City Heritage Trust has its own legal advisors at Macleod & MacCallum. Inverness City Heritage Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee therefore all of the Trust Directors are registered under the Trust name at Companies House. The Trust is a registered Conservation Body with the Scottish Government which allows us to place legal burdens on grant aided property for up to 10 years to protect the investment from public funds.
- 5.3 Equalities – Applications are based on the property they relate to rather than the applicant therefore the grant scheme is open to all to apply. Grants are not means tested.
- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – Repairs to the existing built fabric are, by their nature, more environmentally sustainable than using new source materials. The grant scheme aims to cover the difference in cost of using a traditional material such as slate from a local source e.g. second hand slate rather than importing new material from central Europe, North America or Asia.
- 5.5 Risk – Over the past few years we have seen a slowing in the uptake of grant due to the lack of available additional finance for owners wishing to carry out repair work (to fund the owners % of the cost). To counter this, the funding allocation for Inverness City Heritage Trust was given over a 3 year period rather than having a specific annual budget. This has allowed us to work up schemes over a longer period of time.

We are also working with owners to try and identify other sources of funding available to them and also working internally with The Highland Council, Empty Homes Initiative, Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund to pull together a combined funding source that can offer applicants an enhanced grant percentage rate in the City Centre.

**Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to Comment and Note:

1. the contributions made by the Inverness City Heritage Trust in delivering a programme of conservation work funded by grant assistance in Inverness since 2005;
2. the work carried out in partnership with Inverness College, Historic Scotland and the RTPi to deliver two separate conferences for building professionals/practitioners and home owners. Also the work with The Highland Council on their Empty Homes Initiative; and
3. the current situation with regard to future funding from Historic Scotland for Inverness City Heritage Trust.

Report Prepared by: Alison Tanner – 01463 785004

Designation: Inverness City Heritage Trust Project Officer

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Background Papers: n/a