

**The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness City Arts Working Group** held in the Second Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness, on Friday, 22 August 2014, at 8.30 a.m.

Present:

Mr K Gowans (Chair)	Mr T Prag
Mr I Brown	Mr G Ross
Mrs B McAllister	

Officials in attendance:

Mr D Haas, Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement
 Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Community Services
 Ms C Shankland, Project Manager, High Life Highland
 Mrs R Moir, Principal Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr S Blair, Creative Scotland.

2. Exclusion of the Public

The Working Group **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

Item 5 - Mr G Ross (non-financial).

4. Minutes

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Working Group held on 20 June 2014.

5. River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Project

Declaration of Interest – Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a close relative who was a local artist, but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ICArts 07/14 dated 22 August 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement inviting Members to consider the recommendations of the Evaluation Panel for the

procurement of an artist/s for the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme public art commission “The Gathering Place” and to reach a decision regarding the next steps. The report also outlined the different stages of the evaluation process which had led to these recommendations, including: the tender requirements published; the shortlisting by the Evaluation Panel; the Limited Design Competition for the shortlisted artists; and the weighting given to the various evaluation criteria when assessing the tenders/presentations.

The report reminded Members that the award of all outstanding artist commissions was dependent on the Stage 2 funding application to Creative Scotland being successful. Given the timescales involved, approval of successful tenders could therefore not be formally confirmed until September 2014 at the earliest.

The Gathering Place

At its meeting held on 20 June 2014, the Working Group had agreed to defer consideration of this project, given that the Limited Design Competition in relation to the Gathering Place had been unavoidably delayed due to personal circumstances affecting a particular shortlisted artist.

The Working Group was advised that the Evaluation Panel had now assessed all tenders against the evaluation criteria and had identified the highest-scoring artist/s for the Gathering Place project. Whilst this tender had met the brief more fully than had the others, the Panel had retained some reservations. Accordingly, it had not made an unqualified recommendation, but had acknowledged that the Working Group had a range of options:

- award the commission to the highest-scoring artist/s and negotiate to develop the proposals
- undertake a further procurement process
- invite the Evaluation Panel, through consultation, to identify and approach three artists who would be invited to bid for the commission.

Extracts from the highest-scoring presentation made to the Evaluation Panel were shown to the Working Group and further comment made on specific elements of the proposal. It was clear that considerable thought had been given to the proposed design and to its technical and engineering aspects. However, after a full discussion, Members generally concluded that, whilst it might work very effectively in a different setting, it did not fully meet the project brief and was not sufficiently sympathetic to the overall River Ness scheme. There were also some concerns as to potential uncertainty in relation to technical viability and longer-term maintenance costs.

When considering the options presented, there was a general view among Members that the proposal did not to any significant degree lend itself to negotiation. Also, as the project brief had already been advertised twice, it was highly unlikely that a further procurement process would bring any greater response. Members sought and were given assurance that, as they could clearly evidence their use of the public procurement route, ultimately without success, the third option presented would meet governance requirements.

Members also took the view that a further deferral in awarding this

commission should not delay any public announcement of other successful artist appointments once the outcome of the Stage 2 application to Creative Scotland was announced. This was expected in September 2014. At that time the public could be reassured of the care being taken to find the best design possible for what would be a prominent and important feature for Inverness.

Accordingly, the Working Group **AGREED**:

- i. to invite the Evaluation Panel, through consultation, to identify and approach three artists who would be invited to bid for the Gathering Place commission;
- ii. to delegate authority to the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement, in consultation with the Chairman, to agree any additional costs arising from this process, details to be copied to other Working Group Members for information; and
- iii. that the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement draw up a revised timetable for this process, for circulation to Members for their information.

Coordinating Artist

At its meeting held on 20 June, the Working Group had noted that officers would assess the various appointed artists with a view to selecting which would be given the overall Project coordination brief.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that this would not be confirmed until the Gathering Place artist(s) had been identified.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

Workers Memorial

At its meeting held on 24 January 2014, the Working Group had approved the integration of a proposed Workers Memorial with the River Connections commission.

In response to a question, the Working Group was advised that the group promoting the Memorial had hoped to have something in place by April 2015. Whilst it could not be guaranteed that the overall project would be sufficiently advanced for the completed Memorial to be in place by then, possible alternative, interim solutions were under discussion.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

6. Flood Alleviation Scheme – Project Update

The Head of Infrastructure gave a verbal update on the delivery of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme, particularly pertaining to its effect on the art works. He confirmed that monthly project updates were being produced and that it was anticipated that Phases 1 and 2 of the Scheme would be completed by April 2015. In the meantime, the Flood Alleviation project team were cooperating well with Mary Bourne, the artist awarded the River Connections commission. Good relations had been established and every

effort was being made to ensure seamless progress on installation of the art elements of the project. Whilst it was recognised that timescales were such that the other art commissions would require a retro-fit, it was not anticipated that these would require significant disruption of completed works.

He reported that discussions continued on the issue of parking spaces in Huntly Street and that a report on this would be brought to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 September 2014. It was not expected that any eventual outcome would impact on delivery of the Art Project.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

7. Website

At its meeting held on 24 January 2014, the Working Group had noted that there might be an opportunity to have a dedicated micro-website for the River Connections Project Programme within the Highland Council website, once the latter had been redesigned and re-launched.

The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement confirmed that he had raised this issue with the Council's Webmaster, who was keen to assist. It might be appropriate to launch the micro-site alongside any wider project launch held later in the year (item 9 below refers), once the outcome of the Stage 2 application to Creative Scotland was known. The site was currently under design and Members were encouraged to submit ideas to the Project Manager. Initial thoughts expressed included: regular updates on project progress; links to artists' websites; links to local events and festivities; a blog.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

8. Project Management (Ramada/Mercure Commission)

At its meeting held on 6 March 2014, the Working Group had noted an update by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement on progress in relation to the potential joint project to improve the appearance of the Mercure Hotel on Church Street, which stood opposite the end of Union Street and had a significant impact on the streetscape in Inverness. The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement had advised Members then that, while preliminary contact with the new hotel owners had been positive, the Project Manager had not been in a position to take the matter further at that time. He had also advised that, should the project not proceed, recovery of the grant previously awarded would be pursued.

The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement now confirmed that, while the Project Manager had in the interim continued to be fully engaged on the procurement process for the various riverside art projects, it was hoped that she could soon give attention to drawing up options with which to approach the hotel owners, with a view to confirming their cooperation. The Chair and the City Leader would be kept informed of progress.

There was general support among Members for early progress to be made on this matter, which would have a positive impact on Church Street and the

approach to the river generally. The Director of Development and Infrastructure would also be kept advised, given the possible tie-in with the City Centre Development Brief and the Inverness City Vision.

Also in relation to Church Street, it was confirmed that signs carrying information on the flood alleviation scheme and the Public Arts Project were being prepared for installation in the windows of empty premises at the north end of the street. These were expected to be in place in the near future.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

9. Media Relations

At its meeting held on 24 January 2014, the Working Group had agreed a Communications Protocol proposed by the then Public Relations Manager setting out potential opportunities for publicising the River Connections Project.

The Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement advised Members that he had met with the new Public Relations Manager, who was keen to meet Members and those involved in delivering the project, with a view to being of assistance on media issues, particularly in relation to online engagement. Whilst recognising the constraints on public comment until the outcome of the Stage 2 application to Creative Scotland was known, Members emphasised the importance thereafter of organising and promoting a positive and effective public relations launch event in September 2014, to introduce those artists whose appointment had been agreed, pending the Creative Scotland response, and perhaps involving direct interaction between the artists and the public.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position and **AGREED** that plans be drawn up for a potential September launch event.

10. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No IC Arts 08/14 dated 15 August 2014 by the Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 June 2014 and showing the actual expenditure to date.

The report confirmed that the allocated budget from the Inverness Common Good Fund for the Inverness City Arts Project for 2014/15 was £225,000. £60,000 of this had been released by the City of Inverness Area Committee for the River Connections project. £25,000 had been received from Creative Scotland as a contribution to project development costs. The report also advised that project spend was within allocated resources. A budget summary was provided for information, showing how the project development costs had been allocated and setting out actual project delivery costs to date.

The report further advised that the revenue monitoring statement as at 30 June 2014 would be presented to the City of Inverness Area Committee for scrutiny at its meeting on 2 September 2014.

Having received clarification on some points of detail as to how the statements were laid out, the Working Group **NOTED** the position.

11. Date of next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that a date and time for the next meeting, anticipated to be in late September, would be intimated as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 10.15 a.m.