

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

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness City Arts Working Group** held in the Chamber, Town House, Inverness, on Friday, 23 January 2015, at 9.00 a.m.

Present:

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

Also in attendance:

Mr S Blair, Creative Scotland

Officials in attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service
Ms C Shankland, Project Manager, High Life Highland
Ms L Lee, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs B McAllister.

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 10 - Mr G Ross (non-financial).

4. Minutes

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Working Group held on 17 October 2014, which had been approved at the meeting of the City of Inverness and Area Committee on 2 December 2014.

5. Flood Alleviation Scheme – Project Update

The Head of Infrastructure gave a verbal update on the delivery of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme, including that:

- Mary Bourne's work was being co-ordinated with the flood alleviation works; installation of the coping stones would be held back until engineering works were complete, to avoid risk of damage; retro-fitting

of the art work was allowing the engineering works to progress more rapidly

- the contractor was confident that Phase 1 works would be completed on schedule in mid-May; Phase 2 works were also progressing well and were slightly ahead of schedule
- side roads would be re-opened as sections were finished (Fraser Street was expected to be completed in February); Bank Street and Huntly Street were likely to be affected by traffic management until the whole of Phase 1 was completed, with Bank Street programmed to be closed to through traffic in February to allow outstanding works to be undertaken
- input would be sought from the Corporate Communications team on publicising the road closures/re-openings, and the progress of the art works.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

6. Website

The City Manager had held discussions with the Council's Corporate Communication Office on options available for a Web Site for the project, either by setting up a page within the Council's website, or by creating a micro-site specifically for the project. Benefits of the web page were that it would be free, but the micro-site would be more flexible and could use its own branding/style.

In discussion, Members gave consideration to the costs and capabilities of the different options available and the readiness of the material to go on the website, and suggested that the views of Highland Opportunity Ltd (HOL) be sought - it was understood they had previously considered locating on the Council's website.

The Working Group **AGREED** that:

- i. a page on the Council's website be set up meantime, with the micro-site option being reviewed as the project progressed and more material for the website became available;
- ii. HOL be asked for feedback on the factors they took into consideration with regard to locating their web site; and
- iii. a report be brought to a future meeting, recommending the way forward.

7. Project Management (Ramada Commission)

The City Manager reported that he and the Project manager had discussed steps to be taken regarding potential projects at the Ramada / Mercure Hotel. These included:

- ascertaining whether the grant allocated to the project by Creative Scotland was still available, and if so, the terms of the funding;
- if the funding was available, working with the Development and Infrastructure Service on linking the flood alleviation project artwork with other city centre improvements; and

- liaising with the Mercure as to what their future plans might be with regard to the appearance of the building, with a view to working with them in this regard.

It was expected that there would be good progress with these actions over the coming weeks.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position and that an update would be provided to the next meeting.

8. Media Relations

A draft Communications Strategy, which had previously been emailed to Members, was tabled.

The draft Strategy was a standard document which provided a broad overview of events and timescales, allowing flexibility as to when and where events would take place. The requirement to liaise with project funders (Creative Scotland (CS) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)) would be built in to the Strategy. Mr Blair requested that a copy of the finalised document be sent to him, and that CS be made aware of any Council press releases etc. so that CS could comment and/or provide additional input.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position and **AGREED** that:

- i. a copy of the finalised Communications Strategy be forwarded to Creative Scotland (CS); and
- ii. the Communications Office provide CS with early sight of any press releases etc. to allow CS to input to these.

9. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No ICARTS 01/15 dated 13 January 2015 by the Inverness City Manager setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 December 2014 and showing actual expenditure to date.

Members were informed that a further £40,000 funding had been received from the Development and Infrastructure Service capital allocation for visitor management as a contribution towards the River Connections Project Programme.

The Working Group **NOTED** the report and welcomed the additional funding from the Development and Infrastructure Service.

10. 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 02/15 dated 13 January 2015 by the Inverness City Manager. The report highlighted progress since the last meeting, presented the Evaluation Panel's recommendations for the Gathering Place, suggested proposals for a Children's Feature, and provided an update on progress being made on the Communications Plan and webpage/microsite.

An update on progress was given by the Project Manager:

River Connections – the stone had been delivered and Mary Bourne was working in her studio; (see Item 5 above)

Sculptural Destination – Annie Cattrell was currently working on other commitments but would begin work on the Inverness project in the near future.

The Trail – the artist was keen to start work, but had been asked to wait until all the artists were in place so that all could work together and hopefully generate synergies. The Planning Service had confirmed that neither planning permission nor building warrant were required for the Trail works.

Some concern was expressed that several artists were understood to be all considering locating their work at Friar's Shott. The siting of works would be agreed through discussion once the lead artist was appointed.

Communications Plan – (see Item 8 above). The lead artist would be appointed once the Gathering Place project was awarded.

Maintenance – It was a condition of the funding award from CS that the works be properly maintained, but Community Services had no budget for this. A maintenance plan would therefore be developed and brought to the Working Group in due course. In discussion, Members underlined that maintenance had been a factor taken into consideration during the project selection process; as a last resort, similar arrangements to the maintenance of the Church Street streetscape, through the Common Good Fund, could be considered.

Children's Feature – the Chair had suggested that an additional Children's Feature be included as part of the artwork on the River. The idea fitted with the overall project definition, in particular the educational elements. £40,000 could be found within the project management contingency budget without detriment to other projects.

The Project Manager outlined a process for taking the project forward, including involvement of children with the artists in coming up with ideas, the use of current procedures for advertising and shortlisting projects, and the children making the final decision. A panel of S1 pupils could be drawn from the City's five secondary schools, with involvement lasting perhaps three years. Support had been offered by the Head Teacher of Culloden Academy.

Mr Blair welcomed the project and intimated that CS would be agreeable to funding being utilised in this way. He requested that CS be kept informed of developments.

In response to questions raised, Members were given an assurance that sufficient contingency budget would remain; and advised that applying to educational Trusts for funding, whilst possible, would build in a delay – it was hoped that the project could go forward as soon as possible.

Members strongly supported the development of a Children's Feature, and, whilst not wishing to go beyond the £40,000 budget, indicated that consideration could be given to additional funding should this be required for a particularly inspirational idea.

Gathering Place – Members were advised that the Evaluation Panel had identified a recommended artist for the Gathering Place project. The Working Group was invited to approve the recommendation.

A presentation showing examples of the artists' previous work was given to the Working Group, together with an outline of the creative process undertaken by the artists, including the findings of their research into the way people engaged with the River, and examples of water-linked architecture. A location for the project had yet to be agreed.

Members were very enthusiastic about the project, commenting that it was exciting, dramatic, iconic and fun, and would promote the city. In response to questions, assurances were given that the project would be delivered within budget, and information was provided on accessibility, health and safety, and the dimensions of the structure. Mr Blair commented that it was a stunning concept, with potential for use as a performance space; however, a number of practical issues would need to be resolved – visualisations of the location options would be useful.

Various aspects of the project were discussed, including location, public involvement, materials, lighting, pedestrian flow and the potential for sponsorship. It would be important to liaise with the Corporate Communications office to ensure the overall package was promoted as a cohesive whole, and that the Gathering Place did not outshine the other artworks.

Next steps – discussions with Corporate Communications would take place with regard to the launch and associated civic reception; the post of lead artist would be open to all the artists appointed to lead on any part of the project programme. There would be engagement with stakeholders and the City of Inverness and Area Committee with regard to the progress being made on the project programme. The possibility of match funding could also be explored to extend budgets where practicable. There was a sense of urgency in moving forward.

The Working Group **NOTED** the information given, and:

- i. **APPROVED** the addition of a riverside Children's Feature to the list of projects subject to funding being identified; and in this regard:
 - o **agreed** in principle a budget of £40,000 from the contingency/management budget, with the proviso that an additional £10,000 might be allocated at a later date;
 - o **agreed** in principle the proposed process for taking the project forward, involving children, as set out above;

- **agreed** that an early start be made on the development of a project brief and that the draft brief to be passed to Members and Creative Scotland for consideration in advance of the next meeting; and
- **noted** that should additional funding be required, consideration could be given to applying to educational Trusts;
- ii. **APPROVED** the recommendation of the Evaluation Panel for an artist for the Gathering Place; and in this regard:
 - **noted** that a range of competent locations would be brought to the Working Group, and that visualisations for each location would be requested from the artist;
- iii. **AGREED** that officers proceed to let contracts for the delivery of the River Connections Project programme, including a Lead Artist, as appropriate;
- iv. **APPROVED** the plans for the Internet profile (see also Item 6 above); and
- v. **NOTED** that a maintenance plan for the artworks would be drawn up in due course and brought to a future meeting.

11. Date of next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** dates for meetings in 2015 as follows:

Friday 27 March
 Friday 29 May
 Friday 21 August
 Friday 23 October
 Friday 18 December;

and that the meeting to be held on 27 March would commence at 9.00 a.m.

The meeting ended at 11.00 a.m.