

**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, 27 March 2015, at 11.30 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, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service
Ms C Shankland, Project Manager, High Life Highland
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Items 6 and 7 – Mr G Ross (non financial)

3. 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.

4. Minutes

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Working Group held on 23 January 2015, which had been approved at the meeting of the City of Inverness and Area Committee on 5 March 2015.

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:

- A progress meeting was to be held next week with the Contractor. The Contractor was estimating completion of Phase 1 by end May, 2015. Discussions at the progress meeting with the Contractor would include whether the closure of Bank Street was still necessary, given that works were nearing completion, and the detrimental impact this road closure was having on the City Centre. Currently this road closure was planned to continue until the end of the contract.

- there was still work to be done on Phase 2 and this would likely take longer to complete. This had previously been estimated for completion by the end of April, 2015.
- There was continued liaison with the River Connections Project Programme.
- There had been tremendous public support to the construction team during the Phase 2 works.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

6. River Connections Public 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 04/15 dated 19 March 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform, highlighting the progress made since the last meeting and updating Members on the Launch event and Private Members' Briefing.

It was advised that the project was on target in terms of its structure and the delivery of it. Creative Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highland Council remained very confident in the way the project had been managed.

Project management support was to be developed as there was a need to co-ordinate the artworks with the construction works further noting that we are moving into the delivery phase of the Programme. Discussion had been held with the Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service in order to provide this support from within his team. There would be cost implications for this staffing resource, but at a minimum hourly rate. This would be monitored and developed as the project progressed. Members supported this proposal.

An update on progress in relation to the five main commissions was provided during which it was advised that:-

River Connections – Mary Bourne had been liaising with the Flood Team regarding production and installation of her artwork. Flagstones for the threshold in Bank Lane which leads to the river had been inlaid with silhouettes depicting salmon in different forms moving up and down the river. Mary had also been working on the Workers Memorial and a proposed image of what it would look like was tabled at the meeting. Mary had also been developing a Community Engagement Project with Arts in Merkinch which would form part of the Public Art Project Programme.

Sculptural Destination – Annie Cattrell was developing her proposals for the launch, where she would present her ideas to begin the community consultation. There was a geological fault that ran down the River Ness with different types of stone on either side and Annie was creating a proposal based on this. The location of the work would depend on what the artwork

would look like.

The Gathering Place – it was advised that of the four sites originally suggested two had been eliminated in consultation with the Flood Team for structural reasons. The remaining two sites were Friar's Shott and the junction of Ness Walk and Ardross Street, near the Cathedral. Planning permission and a building warrant would be required for the work. Direction from the Working Group as to the preferred siting of this work was sought.

In discussion the following points were raised:-

- The Cathedral site while outside the geographical boundary of the project, was worth exploring and early discussions with the Cathedral representatives should be held. This area was popular with tourists and the siting of the work there would be beneficial to the Cathedral.
- Given the considerable disruption that the flood prevention works had caused to residents and businesses in the Huntly Street/Bank Street areas of the City centre, and the fact that they had been informed that they would get something good and iconic, this work should be sited in this area. This would draw people to the Huntly street area.
- It was felt that locating the Gathering Place work at the Cathedral would block the view up the river and would therefore be detrimental to that area. There was also a Salmon pool called the Castle Pool in this area, which was a very productive Salmon pool and there may be issues to be resolved with the Angling Club and SEPA. The river was also a Common Good Fund asset with the Council managing it on behalf of the Common Good Fund, and the siting of the work in this area would have a detrimental effect on the value of that part of the river. There would be an effect on the value if the Friar's Shott location was chosen, but as this was more of a Sea Trout pool it was not so well used.
- The original purpose of the project was to use the opportunity of the flood works to enhance the riverside and to use the riverside as a whole and to attract people to use all of it. The view was expressed that the Friar's Shott location was the preferred location for the Gathering Place work as it would attract people to the Huntly Street area. Friar's Shott would also get other works as it was known that Artist's did like this site. There should also be public consultation on locating the Gathering Place at this and any other suggested location. There were other things that could be done around the Cathedral area to improve it.
- The Gathering Place work was very ambitious and challenging and the most important issue was to find a location that was technically possible to make it work. There was comfort in the knowledge that two locations had been found. Friar's Shott was the obvious location for it and there was no technical reason why it could not be located there. However the issue with Friar's Shott was that it was tidal. Therefore if you walked out onto a viewing platform and the ground underneath was dry, what views were you going to see. Both the Cathedral and Friar's Shott locations were technically feasible, but they both had their own challenges. There should be consultation with a view to delivering all the things the Working Group aspire to.
- There was a proposal to put an observation tower on the Castle, so this was another reason for locating the Gathering place at Friar's

Shott.

- The Friar's Shott location was the preferred location for the Gathering Place if it was technically possible, but that the Cathedral was a 2nd option if not. However at present there were no visualisations of what the work would look like in these areas, nor had the views of the lead artist been heard.
- There was a need to look at all the Artworks and where they were going to be located.
- There was recognition that every part of the project area required to have an attraction and a reason to visit and no area was being ignored. Therefore there were a number of things that were likely to happen around the Huntly Street area. The Gathering Place commission was at a very early stage of initial investigation and for technical reasons there were few locations that could handle the type and size of this structure. There was a process to be worked through to consider the location. Members comments about the advantages and disadvantages of locations were being taken on board as part of the process. A final proposal for a location would be submitted for Members consideration.
- It was queried how this would affect our work with Creative Scotland given that this work was outwith the original project for which the funding award was based on. Clarification would need to be sought from Creative Scotland on this point.
- There would be a presentation on all the different aspects of the Project at a future meeting.
- There were certain concerns with the Cathedral site and these were noted. This was a technical option for the location of the Gathering Place, but the preferred option was the Huntly Street side of the river with preference for the Friar's Shott site. Discussions would be held with the Artist to see how the concept could be developed to fit possible locations on that side. If there were other locations where it was technically possible to locate this work these should be considered also.

The Trail – it was proposed that a Gaelic element be developed as part of the Trail – either a separate Gaelic Trail or a bi-lingual option. In this respect Ruairidh MacLean would attend the next meeting of this Group to discuss some ideas.

Rest Spaces – this work was going ahead as planned and all the sites that were presented to the Group were still options apart from one where Mary Bourne had plans. A map would be presented at the launch of this project showing where everything would be located in order to get feedback.

Anderson Street Play Park Hoardings – this project had now been concluded.

Project Launch and Private Members Briefing – it was proposed to postpone this until after the General Election. It was intended that representatives of the Development and Infrastructure Service would also be present at the launch.

Thereafter, the Working Group:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress made since the last meeting across the five commissioned projects and the Anderson Street Play Park Hoardings;
- ii. **NOTED** the implications highlighted in the report;
- iii. **NOTED** that further work would be done to consider the financial implications for maintaining the installations after the initial 3 year period;
- iv. **AGREED** that in terms of the siting of the Gathering Place installation, there were certain concerns with the Cathedral site, but this was still a technical option for the location of the Gathering Place. The preferred option was the Huntly Street side of the river with preference for the Friar's Shott site. Discussions would be held with the Artist to see how the concept could be developed to fit possible locations on that side of the river. If there were other locations where it was technically possible to locate this installation these should be considered also.
- v. **AGREED** the additional Project management Support for the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Project from within the Development and Infrastructure Service.

The Working Group also **NOTED** that a date after the General Election in May would be set for the public launch of the project and **AGREED** that the launch should be to introduce the artists, rather than the designs, as these might change over the research and the consultation period, albeit noting that some visualisations, if available, would be helpful.

7. Children's Riverside Feature

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 was circulated document which showed a proposed approach for developing a Children's Riverside Feature.

The document highlighted the aims of the artwork and that it was proposed that the project would be informed by young people for young people. Proposals for the participation of young people in the Feature had been developed in this respect. To enable the participation of the nominated pupils from 5 schools, it was proposed that an Education Co-ordinator be appointed to facilitate the project on a part time basis.

In terms of the selection of the Artist, there were 2 options affecting the involvement of young people in selecting the Artist – Option 1 – Artist to be selected and recommended by Pupil Panel or Option 2 – Artist to be selected and recommended by an Evaluation Panel. The advantages and disadvantages of each option were detailed in the document. Members favoured Option 2, but with pupil representatives on the Evaluation Panel as observers, with the suggestion that Pupil Ambassadors for school and community engagement could fulfil this role. It was felt that the Education Co-ordinator in liaison with the PM (Curatorial) and Lead Artist should work

with schools to identify the appropriate number and pupils to be nominated as observers on the Evaluation Panel.

The comment was made that the indicative budget for this project would require to be kept under review, given the numbers of pupils involved.

The Working Group **NOTED** the benefits of engaging young people in the Riverside Arts Feature, and **AGREED:-**

- i the aims of the artwork as set out in the document;
- ii the approach to pupil engagement;
- iii the appointment of an Education Co-ordinator from schools to support pupil engagement and with the duties listed in the document;
- iv option 2 – Artist to be selected and recommended by Evaluation Panel, with the Education Co-ordinator in liaison with the PM (Curatorial) and Lead Artist to work with schools to identify the appropriate number and pupils to be nominated as observers on the Evaluation Panel.
- v that work begins to enable the selection of the Pupil Panel in early June, 2015.

At this point Mr G Ross and Mr C Howell left the meeting.

8. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No ICArts 03/15 dated 9 March 2015 by the Inverness City Manager setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 28 February 2015 and showing actual expenditure to date.

The Working Group were advised that the budget was on target and spending was going to plan

The Working Group **NOTED** the report.

9. AOCB

Ramada Project

The City Area Manager reported that the Working Group had requested options for this project based on discussions with Creative Scotland. These discussions had been successful in that that the monies allocated previously by Creative Scotland for various riverside art projects of £100k was still available. So far £60k had been claimed. An outstanding account of approximately £16k against the existing Ramada project was claimable and an application was being drawn up for submission to Creative Scotland. There was a small balance left out of the £100k Creative Scotland funding of approximately £20k and this together with the £16k that was claimable from the Creative Scotland funding, meant that £36k could potentially be put towards the Ramada project. Approval was sought from the Working Group for discussions to be held with Ramada, the owners of the Mercure Hotel, to see if this sum could be the basis of a collaborative effort and identify additional funding sources.

This potential project could be integrated with other works such as the proposals to improve Station Square and Academy Street and it was suggested that discussions on this should be held with the Development and Infrastructure Service, Town Scape Heritage and the Inverness Business Improvement District. The City Area Manager with support from the Project Manager (Curatorial) would lead on this project.

The Working Group:-

- i **NOTED** the position;
- ii **AGREED** that the City Area Manager would discuss with Ramada improving the Mercure Hotel's appearance with funding currently available and any additional funding sources that could be identified. Discussions would also be held with the Development and Infrastructure Service, Town Scape Heritage and the Inverness Business Improvement District as to how this potential project could be integrated with other proposals to improve the Station Square and Academy Street areas.
- iii **NOTED** that an update on progress would be brought to a future meeting.

Crown Road Wall Illustration

It was **Noted** that the Crown Wall illustration was deteriorating. In this respect, the Artist Mike Inglis would be informed and asked what was required to maintain it. It was understood the Council was responsible for its maintenance, but this would be checked.

The meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.

Date of next Meeting - Friday 29th May 2015 at 11.30am