

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, Inverness on Tuesday, 2 June 2015 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr I Brown	Mr K Gowans
Mr A Graham	Mr J Gray
Mr R Balfour	Mr D Kerr
Mrs C Caddick	Mr R Laird
Miss J Campbell	Mrs E McAllister
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr K MacLeod
Mr A Christie	Mr F Parr
Mrs M Davidson	Mr T Prag
Mr N Donald	Mr G Ross
Mr A Duffy	Mrs J Slater
Mr J Ford	Mr H Wood

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure
Ms T Urry, Area Community Services Manager (Inverness)
Ms D Sutton, Assistant Area Manager, Community Services
Mr J Taylor, Assistant Area Manager, Community Services
Mr P Finlayson, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Care and Learning
Ms K Hawthorne, Conservation Officer, Development and Infrastructure
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Development Service

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.

Mr I Brown in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the City Leader and the Provost, on behalf of the Committee, paid tribute to the late Charles Kennedy and expressed their shock and sadness at his sudden passing. In conveying condolences to his family, a minute's silence was held at the meeting as a mark of respect.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Crawford, Mr D Hendry, Mrs G Sinclair and Ms K Stephen.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

- Item 3 – Mr K Gowans (non-financial)
- Item 4 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)
- Item 9 – Mr J Gray and Mr D Kerr (both non-financial)
- Item 11 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)
- Item 13 – Mr K MacLeod (non-financial)

3. Inverness and Highland City / Region Deal Cunradh Baile/Roinn Inbhir Nis agus na Gàidhealtachd

Declaration of Interest - Mr K Gowans declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Director of High Life Highland and also on the basis of a family member being employed by the organisation but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interests did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/22/15 dated 19 May 2015 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided an update on progress with the development of a City/Region deal for Inverness and the Highlands and recommended approval of two projects to the value of £3m as part of an initial allocation for the City Centre by HM Treasury.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the terms of the report were welcomed and it was essential that the best possible use was made of the money available;
- further works would be undertaken to the Ness Bridge and this was also welcomed;
- consideration needed to be given to the connectivity issues for those areas outwith the City Centre, perhaps through a mapping exercise in rural areas;
- there was a need for Briefings to be undertaken for Members at an early date in order that they could be updated on recent developments;
- maintenance of the area surrounding the Castle had to remain a priority in view of its importance to the area, with particular emphasis on the upkeep of the trees and shrubs;
- in regard to connectivity issues, it was important that this project did not undermine the City Centre businesses who were currently providing free wi-fi for their customers;
- it was important to gain assurance that the existing toilet block on Castle Wynd was not be demolished prior to any works being undertaken in respect of re-cladding and re-roofing;
- all opportunities needed to be taken to create a cultural hub in the area; and
- it was vitally important to continue the focus on transport management issues in the City Centre.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress with developing a City/Region deal for Inverness and the Highlands;
- ii. **AGREED** to develop a business case for public realm works in proximity to Inverness Castle at a cost of up to £2m for submission to HM Treasury for approval; and
- iii. **AGREED** to develop a business case for a city centre public access Wi-Fi project at a cost of up to £1m for submission to HM Treasury for approval.

4. Deprived Area Fund 2015/16 Maoin Sgìre Bhoichd 2015/16

Declaration of Interest - Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being the General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau 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 Joint Report No. CIA/23/15 dated 28 April 2015 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager which confirmed the decisions taken on the Deprived Area Fund for 2015/16 using the authority delegated to the Inverness City Manager at the City of Inverness Area Committee meeting on 5 March 2015 and which fully expended the funding available in 2015/16.

The Committee **NOTED** the decisions made using delegated powers and the final distribution of the Deprived Area Funds for 2015/16 as detailed in the report.

5. Inverness Common Good Fund Scheme for Winter Payments 2015/16 Sgeama Pàighidhean Geamhraidh Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis 2015/16

There had been circulated Joint Report No. CIA/24/15 dated 19 May 2015 by the Director of Finance and the Inverness City Area Manager which followed on from the effective revision of the Winter Payment Scheme for 2014/15 and proposed to maintain similar arrangements for the Winter Payment Scheme for 2015/16.

During discussion, it was confirmed that in future the award to Blythswood Care would be dealt with separately from the Winter Payments scheme.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. that criteria utilised for the 2014/15 scheme as set out in Paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 in the report should be used as the basis for the 2015/16 scheme;
- ii. that the scheme should be made available to residents in the City of Inverness and the Landward areas of the seven City Wards;
- iii. that a single tier payment of £79 should be made to those applicants who satisfied the eligibility criteria for the 2015/16 scheme; and
- iv. an award of £20,000 to Blythswood Care, for the residents of Inverness City, in principle with power to confirm the award being delegated to the

Inverness City Area Manager in consultation with the Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee.

**6. Inverness City Area Secondary Schools' Attainment
Aithisg Buileachaidh Sgoiltean Sgìre Baile Inbhir Nis**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/25/15 dated 12 May 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an overview of the Inverness City Area Secondary Schools' Attainment for Session 2014/15.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in terms of overall attainment, there was a need to ensure as a priority that the ambitions and expectations of pupils across the area were met wherever possible;
- every area across the Highlands had to represent a position of equal opportunities for all;
- the detail of this report should be discussed in the first instance at Ward Business Meetings;
- the links with health had to be recognised as it was acknowledged that this impacted on educational attainment;
- there was a need to focus on performance within Schools in deprived areas as too many of these Schools were not performing satisfactorily;
- it was hoped that arrangements within Inverness High School would continue to improve for the benefit of all;
- there had to be a focus on primary education as a priority;
- future reports should be provided in more easily readable format if possible; and
- training would be provided for Members on the issues contained within the report and it was hoped that this training session would be well attended.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

**7. Area Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges
Prògram Cumail Suas Sgìreil airson Rathaidean is Dhrochaidean**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/26/15 dated 18 May 2015 by the Director of Community Services which sought approval for the Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges for the City of Inverness Area for 2015/16.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- thanks should be conveyed to the Officers in terms of the work which had been undertaken;
- it was especially important to ensure that preparations were in place to make use of any additional funding should it become available at any point in the future; and
- there had to be close monitoring and action taken where necessary in regard to the surfacing of roads, particularly busy and heavily used roads, and in relation to road markings.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Maintenance Programmes for Roads and Bridges for the City of Inverness Area for 2015/16 as detailed in the report.

8. Ness Islands Management Plan Plana Stiùiridh Eileanan Nis

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/27/15 dated 18 May 2015 by the Director of Community Services which provided details of the requirement for a Ness Islands Management Plan and identified the additional resource implications for the Common Good Fund in supporting this Plan.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- this was an extremely important asset for the area and as such there was a need to ensure that regular maintenance was undertaken in regard to the Ness Islands, including tree and bridge maintenance and in terms of ensuring that the sculptures and art work were kept in a satisfactory condition;
- there was a need to consider other income opportunities wherever possible and feasible;
- more promotion and publicity for the Ness Islands was necessary;
- consideration should be given to the setting up of a volunteer programme to encourage and enable members of the general public to become involved in the upkeep of this area if they so wished; and
- the report had highlighted that this was an excellent value for money project and as such this should be acknowledged.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the Ness Islands Management Plan;
- ii. **AGREED** the sum of £35,000 from the Common Good Fund for on-going management and maintenance of the Ness Islands; and
- iii. **NOTED** that a further report would be brought back to the Committee should additional resources be required for remedial works to bridges identified by the Inspection Survey.

9. Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan Plana Stiùiridh Sgìre Glèidhteachais Seann Bhaile Inbhir Nis

Declarations of Interest - Mr J Gray and Mr D Kerr declared non-financial interests in relation to this item on the grounds of being Board members of Inverness City Heritage Trust but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/28/15 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which presented the proposed final version of the Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan with a recommendation for approval and adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- Burial Grounds within the area were considered to be an asset and as such it was of extreme importance that they were maintained and kept to a very high standard;
- in relation to litter enforcement, there were still concerns surrounding the storage of bins in the City Centre in particular and these should be addressed as a matter of urgency;
- there was a perceived deterioration in the standard of some of the frontages of buildings in the City Centre and the owners of such buildings should perhaps be reminded of their responsibilities in this regard, with associated enforcement by Planning Officers of any conditions related to this issue;
- a more comprehensive Contents Summary would have been helpful for the Plan;
- there was a need for more information on the conditions related to internal works to be undertaken on Listed Buildings; and
- further detail would be helpful in terms of the requirements regarding the painting and upkeep of shop fronts across the City.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan as circulated as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

**10. Burial Ground Commutation Fund: Work Programme 2013-16
Maoin Co-iomraid nan Cladhan: Prògram Obrach 2013-16**

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/29/15 dated 18 May 2015 by the Area Community Services Manager which provided an annual progress report on the Burial Ground Commutation Fund Work Programme and detailed the work done during the second year of this three-year Programme.

During discussion, it was highlighted that the Burial Grounds in the area were considered to be an asset and as such there was a need to ensure that all necessary works were undertaken to ensure that they remained in the best condition possible, including works to repair storm damage, regular maintenance to trees and the upkeep of gravestones.

It was also suggested that thanks should be conveyed to the Officers who had been involved in the recent works which had been undertaken at Kilvean Cemetery, Inverness.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress made during 2014/15 and **APPROVED** the rescheduled Work Programme for 2015/16 as detailed in the report.

Additional Items – the following additional items were considered at this point in the meeting and prior to the break for lunch -

Mr Drew Hendry - the congratulations of the Committee were conveyed to Mr Drew Hendry on his recent election as the Member of Parliament for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey.

Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club – the Committee welcomed the Chairman and Officials from Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club (with the Scottish Cup) to the meeting and warmly congratulated them on their tremendous achievement of winning the Scottish Cup Final and bringing the Cup back to the Highlands.

11. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015
Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2014 gu 31 Màrt 2015

Declaration of Interest - Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being the General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau 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. CIA/30/15 date 18 May 2015 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section had performed in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators during 2014/15.

During discussion, Members queried the current statistics in relation to rent arrears and homelessness. In this latter regard, it was suggested that there was a need to closely monitor homelessness figures in order to assess how many people from outwith the area were presenting as homeless.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on performance in the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

12. Street Naming – New Development at Kirkhill, Kiltarlity and Milton of Leys, Inverness
Ainmeachadh-Sràide – Leasachadh Ùr aig Cnoc Mhoire, Cill Taraglain agus Baile Mhuilinn an Leighis, Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/31/15 dated 8 April 2015 by the Inverness Ward Manager which sought homologation of decisions made by Community Councils, supported by Local Members, to name two distributor roads and two residential streets at Milton of Leys, one street in Kiltarlity which currently had built units and two streets in Kirkhill which currently had built units.

The Committee **HOMOLOGATED** the naming of the streets as follows:-

1. Two distributor roads at Milton of Leys:
 - Milton of Leys Road (Rathad Bhaile Mhuilinn an Leighis)
 - Braes of Balvonie Road (Rathad Bràigh Bhaile a' Mhonaidh)
2. Two residential streets at Milton of Leys:
 - Silver Birches (Beithean Geala)
 - Copperwood Drive (Dràibh na Coille Copair)
3. One street in Kiltarlity which currently had built units:
 - Old Mill Road (Rathad an t-Seann Mhuilinn); and

4. Two streets in Kirkhill which currently had built units:
 - Aird View (Sealladh na h-Àirde)
 - Aird Crescent (Corran na h-Àirde)

13. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

Declaration of Interest - Mr K MacLeod declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item on the grounds of being a Board Member of Merkinch Enterprise 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.

a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/32/15 dated 19 May 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Inverness Common Good Fund as of 30 April 2015 and the projected year end position.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report as presented.

b) Grants and Capital Projects Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/33/15 dated 18 May 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager which set out the current applications for funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

In this connection, there had also been circulated a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

During discussion, and in relation to the conservation of the external fabric of the Town House, it was confirmed that works had commenced on 23 February and were expected to be completed on 19 February 2016. In this regard, it was also advised the building wrap design had now been agreed and it was anticipated that this would be in place in the next couple of weeks.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED TO DEFER** the Highland Council – Inverness Car Club application;
- ii. **APPROVED** the Uniqueness Tourism BID Ltd application - £20,000; and
- iii. **NOTED** the current status of capital projects as detailed in the report.

14. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 5 March 2015 – **NOTED**
- ii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 23 January and 27 March 2015 – **APPROVED**;
- iii. Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 23 April 2015 – **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 11 May 2015 – **APPROVED** – subject to the following amendments –

Page 128 – Item 5 – Requests for Financial Assistance – Royal British Legion Scotland Inverness Branch (National Armed Forces Day 2015) – deletion of the following wording – “given the increased sum sought this year (previous applications had been for £3-4000)”; and

Page 131 – Item 7 – Civic Hospitality Requests – Second Paragraph – inclusion of the following sentence – “It was suggested that a single event to celebrate all volunteering activity might be held”.

15. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a’ Phobail

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting for 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.

16. Inverness Common Good Account Sites and Premises Transaction Report Làraich Chunntasan agus Aithisg Gnothachais Maoin Math Choitcheann Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. CIA/34/15 dated 18 May 2015 by the Head of Property Partnerships which summarised the property transactions recently approved by the Head of Property Partnerships, under the Highland Council’s Scheme of Delegation, after consultation with Local Members as appropriate and in accordance with policy, together with a statement on the current position in respect of Inverness Common Good fund rents and tenant arrears, if any.

The Committee **NOTED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

17. Victorian Market, Inverness – Action Plan Am Margadh Bhictòrianach

There had been circulated to Members only Joint Report No. CIA/35/15 dated 14 May 2015 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Inverness City Area Manager which confirmed the status of the Victorian

Market (the Market) as a principal City asset and provided an update on the preparation and initial implementation of an Action Plan which focused on improving trading conditions for the Market and the City centre.

Following confidential discussion, the Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 2.30pm.