

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 2 June 2016 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mrs H Carmichael	Mr A Graham
Mr I Brown	Mr D Kerr
Mr R Balfour	Mr R Laird
Mrs C Caddick	Mrs B McAllister
Miss J Campbell	Mr K MacLeod
Mr A Christie	Mr F Parr
Mr J Crawford	Mr T Prag
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G Ross
Dr J Davis	Ms J Slater
Mr J Ford	Mrs K Stephen
Mr K Gowans	Mr H Wood

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport
Ms A Clark, Acting Head of Policy
Mr H Gardner, Assistant Area Community Services Manager (Inverness Area), Community Services
Mr J Taylor, Assistant Area Manager, Community Services
Mr C Simpson, Principal Tourism and Film Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
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.

Mrs H Carmichael in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Duffy, Mr N Donald, Mr J Gray and Mrs G Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

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

Item 13 – Mr R Balfour, A Christie, Mr K MacLeod (non-financial) and Mr D Kerr (financial)

Item 14(b) – Miss J Campbell and Mr H Wood (non-financial)

Item 15 – Mrs J Slater (non-financial)

Prior to commencement of the formal business, the Chair, on behalf of the City Committee, congratulated the City of Inverness Pipe Band (which had been formed by Scott Taylor and Jason Kelman) on their recent successes at the North of Scotland Branch Competition and the British Championships where they had been awarded the title of British Champions.

The City Committee was also advised that the Inverness Music Festival were seeking new members and specifically a new Administrator following the retirement of the previous post holder.

Finally, thanks were conveyed to the Civic Officer team for their considerable work over the past months within the Town House and particularly for work within the Chamber which had enabled this meeting to take place.

2A. Special Meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee

In terms of Standing Order 17.2, the Chair agreed that this item be considered as an Urgent Additional Item of Business given the public interest generated by the Inverness City Arts Project Programme.

In this regard, it was proposed that a Special Meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee should be arranged to allow Members to be advised of the progress of the projects to date and to have an opportunity to consider the Programme.

It was **AGREED** that a Special Meeting of the City of Inverness Area should be held as soon as possible, ideally prior to the Summer Recess.

It was also **AGREED** that, in advance of the Special Meeting, written clarification on planning/governance in regard to the issues to be considered at that meeting should be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report for 2015/16

Aithisg Coileanaidh Comataidh Sgìreil Smàlaidh agus Teasairginn na h-Alba airson 2015/16

There had been circulated Report No CIA/20/16 dated 18 May 2016 by the Local Senior Officer for Highland which provided an update on progress against the priorities outlined in the Area Plan for the City of Inverness 2015/16.

In this regard, it was confirmed that priority areas had been identified through a range of Intervention, Prevention and Protection activities delivered in partnership to reduce risk to the communities of the City of Inverness.

The report also contained previously agreed information and performance as requested by the Committee.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the recruitment of staff to the Cannich Station was welcomed in light of the difficulties which had previously been encountered in this area. However, there was disappointment that recruitment to other rural areas had not yet taken place;
- there was concern that the initial two week training block was still in place as it was felt that this was particularly onerous on employers/employees and could deter many potential recruits. As such, the ideal would be for training to take place locally wherever possible;
- there was a need for further information on the current position in regard to whole time fire fighters given the positive economic impact which these posts brought to an area;
- the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service should be commended for the improvements in the decreasing number of fire casualties and serious fires in the area and also for the crucial support provided during emergencies, such as instances of severe weather in the area;
- it was noted that Members had a role in ensuring the promotion of smoke alarms in their respective Wards, particularly in relation to vulnerable constituents, and it was hoped that housing associations would adopt a similar approach;
- it had been highlighted that a significant number of equipment failures occurred in communal stairways within blocks of flats and this caused considerable disturbance for tenants. It was therefore hoped that both a ban on smoking in these areas and the installation of 'no smoking' signs would help to eradicate this problem; and
- further information would be helpful in future reports in relation to the time taken from an emergency call being received to an appliance attending an incident.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Area Performance Report as presented.

4. Exclusion of the Public Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

It was **AGREED** that discussion of the following item should be undertaken in public – on the basis that no mention could be made during that discussion of the confidential financial information contained within the report.

If there was to be discussion of the financial information, then the meeting would go into private at that point.

5. Webcasting Craoladh-lìn

At the meeting on 3 March 2016, it had been agreed to defer this item to allow a further more detailed and updated report to be brought back to the next meeting on the specific costs of webcasting future meetings of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

In this regard, there had been circulated to Members only Report No CIA/21/16 dated 23 May 2016 by the Director of Finance which sought a decision on

whether the City of Inverness Area Committee meetings should be webcast and, if so, the funding source/s of the additional costs which webcasting would incur.

In terms of the Options available, information was provided as follows:-

Option 1 – Mobile Unit – Purchase

Option 2 – Mobile Unit – Lease

Option 3 – Video Conference to Webcast from HQ (only available from December 2016/early 2017)

Option 4 – Do not webcast meetings scheduled for September and December 2016 but webcast via Option 3 from 2017

Option 5 – hold the September and December 2016 meetings at HQ and webcast direct from there via the fixed system and then from 2017 meetings to be held in the Town House and webcast following Option 3

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the webcasting of meetings delivered accessibility, transparency and openness in the way that the Council conducted business and as a point of principle it required to be maintained;
- on any webcasting system, there was a need for speakers to be easily identifiable and for the sound to be clear and easily understood by those viewing meetings in this way;
- webcasting was currently highly valued by those who used it and to remove it would have the effect of removing a form of democracy and communication and as such would be a backward step for the Committee and for the Council;
- the Council's aim should always be to improve communication with the public, to convey messages clearly and to involve others in the process and webcasting of meetings helped to achieve that aim;
- consideration should perhaps be given as to whether the mobile unit could be used/leased by other organisations when not in use by the Council;
- it was clear that the public were not in favour of 'closed door' meetings and webcasting offered a cost effective solution by enabling access at all times and from all locations to public meetings;
- there was concern that the viewing figures and associated costs did not support continuing with the webcasting of meetings in the current financial climate;
- the focus should be on ensuring that City Committee meetings remained within the Town House and not on whether to continue to webcast;
- it was clear that many individuals and organisations referenced webcasts, both at the time of meetings and through the archive system, and were therefore able to access information on specific issues quickly and easily;
- most people could not attend meetings during the day due to work commitments and therefore relied on the webcasting archive system if they wished to view the debate and decisions taken at meetings;

- in terms of seeking efficiencies, it was considered that there were other options which could be pursued as opposed to focusing on the ceasing of webcasting;
- it should be highlighted that the webcast of a meeting also enabled Officers to only attend that meeting at the point at which they were required as opposed to having to sit through the whole meeting which was extremely unproductive, both for them and the Council;
- despite what had been said in favour of continuing with webcasts, there was a feeling that the City Committee should follow other Local Committees and end webcasts now;
- it would perhaps be appropriate for the City Committee to continue webcasting meetings until next May and then let the new Committee in 2017 decide on future action in this regard; and
- in terms of Option 1, it had been stated that if a request to the Resources Committee for the approval of capital funding was unsuccessful, the Area Ward Discretionary Budgets would be required to meet the one-off cost for this particular option. In this respect, it was suggested that this would not be appropriate and that this should be at the discretion of each Ward.

At this point, Mrs H Carmichael, seconded by Mr J Crawford, **MOVED** that the meeting should now go into private to discuss the confidential information which had been contained within the report in relation to the costs of the various webcasting options.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr R Laird, seconded by Mr I Brown, moved that the meeting should remain in public to allow the Committee to decide whether to continue with the webcasting of meetings and then, if necessary, to go into private thereafter to discuss the costs of the various options.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 8 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 13 votes and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes cast having been as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs H Carmichael; Mrs B McAllister; Mr R Balfour; Miss J Campbell; Mr J Crawford; Mrs M Davidson; Mr J Ford and Mr G Ross.

For the Amendment:

Ms J Slater; Mr I Brown; Mrs C Caddick; Mr A Christie; Dr J Davis; Mr K Gowans; Mr A Graham; Mr D Kerr; Mr R Laird; Mr K MacLeod; Mr F Parr; Mr T Prag and Ms K Stephen.

Thereafter, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr R Laird, **MOVED** that the webcasting of the City Committee meetings should continue.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr J Crawford, seconded by Miss J Campbell, moved that webcasting of meetings should now cease.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 8 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 13 votes and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes cast having been as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs B McAllister; Ms J Slater; Mr I Brown; Mrs C Caddick; Mr A Christie; Dr J Davis; Mr K Gowans; Mr A Graham; Mr R Laird; Mr K MacLeod; Mr F Parr; Mr T Prag and Mr H Wood.

For the Amendment:

Mrs H Carmichael; Mr R Balfour; Miss J Campbell; Mr J Crawford; Mrs M Davidson; Mr J Ford, Mr D Kerr and Mr G Ross.

Following further discussion, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr A Graham, **MOVED** approval of Option 1 within the report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mrs H Carmichael, seconded by Mr J Crawford, moved approval of Option 5 within the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 4 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 16 votes, with 1 abstention, and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes cast having been as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr A Christie; Mr A Graham; Mr K MacLeod and Mr H Wood.

For the Amendment:

Mrs H Carmichael; Mrs B McAllister; Ms J Slater; Mr R Balfour; Mr I Brown; Mrs C Caddick; Miss J Campbell; Mr J Crawford; Mrs M Davidson; Dr J Davis; Mr J Ford; Mr K Gowans; Mr R Laird; Mr F Parr; Mr T Prag and Mr G Ross.

Abstention:

Mr D Kerr

The Committee therefore **AGREED** that meetings should continue to be webcast in line with Option 5 in the report, namely to hold the September and December 2016 meetings at HQ and webcast direct from there – with meetings from 2017 returning to the Town House with video conference to webcast from HQ.

**6. Taking Forward Local Community Planning
Dealbhadh Coimhearsnachd**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/22/16 dated 23 May 2016 by the Acting Head of Policy and Reform which considered the discussions held to date around developing local community planning arrangements within the context of the new duties contained within the Empowerment Act but also other local planning responsibilities contained within the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

The report also outlined the options for local partnership geography for Inverness and asked Members to confirm their views on the preferred local partnership geography for the City of Inverness area.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in considering which of the four options would be the most suitable, it would be important to bear in mind the geographical nature of Inverness and to ensure there was proper governance in place;
- community representation and involvement was a key issue and as such it was essential that engagement in this respect was undertaken at an early stage;
- a different approach to community planning generally was now required with a focus on action as a priority;
- it was essential that the terminology being used in communication was clear and not overly complicated;
- it should be acknowledged that the new Council in 2017 might choose an alternative option;
- there was a role for all Members of the City Committee in community planning;
- there was a feeling that the success of District Partnerships had been limited in some areas and it was therefore considered that that particular option within the report was not viable;
- Locality Plans were an important part of community planning and this needed to be highlighted;
- there was some support for the option of dividing Inverness by urban and rural areas but it was felt that there was a danger that the different demands of the urban and rural areas would conflict with each other;
- the option of using the City of Inverness geography would be challenging but it was suggested that this could be addressed by having two meetings per year and focusing on strategic issues whilst allowing the day-to-day work to be carried out by Sub Groups. If this option was to be pursued, it would be important to identify priorities at an early stage and in this regard a workshop to explore how Sub Groups might operate would be helpful;
- the recent Members' Briefing on community planning had been useful and had generated good engagement; and
- community planning could help in enabling the Council to influence other public agencies in terms of resource allocation and input into the development of strategies.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the new duties for community planning contained within the Empowerment Act and also other local planning responsibilities contained within the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013; and
- AGREED** that Option 4 (Using the City of Inverness Geography) should be the preferred local partnership geography for the City of Inverness area.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.00pm and resumed at 1.30pm.

7. Approaching Inverness Project Prìomh Phròiseactan a' Buntainn ri Meadhan a' Bhaile

There had been circulated Report No CIA/23/16 dated 13 May 2016 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided an update on the

Approaching Inverness Project and sought approval to proceed with the recommended demonstration projects.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in relation to the City Gateway structures, the opportunity to reinforce the historic village of Clachnaharry rather than to develop a structure for the City of Inverness had been emphasised at the Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief Charette and it was important to incorporate these aspirations within the proposals;
- the improvements at Clachnaharry, including the cycle lanes and footway to the monument, were welcomed although there was uncertainty regarding the need for traffic calming due to the narrowness of the road;
- there was concern at the number of signs on the approach to Clachnaharry;
- the Gateway locations needed to take into consideration the future expansion of the City;
- the map of the Shore Street Roundabout had been incorrectly labelled as Telford Roundabout in the report and larger and easier to read copies of all maps were sought in future;
- it was suggested that sponsorship for the improvements to roundabouts be sought from commercial companies to reduce costs;
- with future revenue implications and the difficulty maintaining trees and shrubs in the central reservations on Longman Road and Millburn Road in mind, it was essential that a maintenance plan was in place for the upkeep of the green areas and a firm commitment was sought from Transport Scotland to maintain these areas;
- it should be noted that the woodland, scrub and grassland area by the A9 Longman arrival was a good refuge for wildlife;
- any improvements which were sympathetic to the Longman approach were welcomed but avenue trees would be preferred instead of tree planting on the central reservation if there were no cost implications or land owner issues;
- the A82 approach by the Torvean Golf Course was an example of an attractive approach and as such this area should be kept as a park after the completion of the West Link Road if possible;
- consideration of the readability, legibility and direction of the typography and the contrast with the material on the Gateway features was encouraged as well as consideration of a crest on the broader Gateway feature;
- a stone Gateway feature which reflected the natural beauty of the Highlands was preferred;
- concern was expressed that the budget allocated was not sufficient to meet the proposals; and
- local businesses in the Longman area should be invited to participate in the 'greening' of Inverness by contributing to the planting of trees in that area.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the demonstration projects as detailed in Paragraph 3.1 of the report for implementation and that the draft Strategy should be issued for public comment.

It was also **AGREED** that local businesses in the Longman area should be invited to participate in the 'greening' of Inverness by contributing to the planting of trees in that area.

8. **Active Travel – Community Links PLUS Funding Bid Update** **Frith-rathad Rothaireachd**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/24/16 dated 17 May 2016 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided an update to Committee for the Community Links PLUS funding bid for the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- encouraging the behaviour change of all road users required more imaginative measures in addition to appropriate signage and in this regard there was concern about the behaviour of some cyclists in view of recent incidents which had caused problems for pedestrians;
- assurance was sought that the Cycle Counter on Millburn Road was accurate;
- a report had previously been requested on the e-bike initiative but it was noted that this was still outstanding;
- it was important to utilise the existing off road network of canal towpaths as part of the active travel network;
- further information from Community Links PLUS on the percentage of match funding required had had a significant bearing on the progress of the project;
- there was support for the active travel tunnel on Harbour Road to safely separate cyclists and pedestrians from larger vehicles and also for the active travel bridge beside the UHI Campus which would create an important circular route;
- a plea was made to consider a 20mph limit across the City and especially in key residential areas in line with the consultation responses which had been received;
- encouraging more people to cycle had many benefits, including improving health and reducing the burden on the NHS;
- route three on the City Active Travel Network Plan included a new crossing over the Canal and more information was required in this regard; and
- Stephens Brae, High Street and the Infirmary Bridge were on the Core Paths Network which allowed cyclists and therefore the bollards and white paint were not enforceable.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- iii. **NOTED** the progress so far with the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project bid;
- iv. **NOTED** the consultation responses received at the Cycling Inverness event held at UHI Inverness College;
- v. **APPROVED** the use of the Cycling Advocacy document to support funding bids towards enhanced cycling and walking infrastructure;

- vi. **AGREED** to support the overall aim to double the level of cycling across Inverness by 2020; and
- vii. **AGREED** to support the Community Links PLUS funding bid, to be submitted by the end of June 2016.

9. Active Travel – Road Traffic Regulation Orders and Temporary Informative Signs
Foillseachadh Òrdughan Rathaid

There had been circulated Report No CIA/25/16 dated 17 May 2016 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which proposed a series of Road Traffic Regulation Orders to support the development of the Inverness City Active Travel Network at key locations in Inverness.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was not easy to change the problematic behaviour of road users and it was necessary therefore in some circumstances to contact Police Scotland;
- the proposal for a contraflow on Cavell Gardens was sensible and assurance was sought that appropriate signs would be in place to ensure motorists were aware of the one way system at the junction. This proposal would also allow the opportunity to consider issues relating to the narrow pavements and shared access on the Infirmary Bridge and Ness Walk; and
- in relation to not signposting a shared use cycle track at the time of opening the Eastgate development, or providing appropriate signage on Ness Walk by the Columba Hotel, further information was required in respect of the Officers who had a remit in relation to active travel.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the preparation and advertising of Draft Road Traffic Regulation Orders for Redetermination (Millburn Road/Academy Street) and One Way with Exemption Order (Cavell Gardens);
- ii. **NOTED** that if objections were received they would be referred back to the Committee for consideration; and
- iii. **AGREED** to delegate to the Head of Planning and Environment, in consultation with Local Members and Community Services staff, to take forward the erection of a series of temporary informative signs (up to 10 signs) across the City Centre.

10. Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report – Early Season Update
Aithisg Sgrùdadh Dèanadais a thaobh Cumail Suas Làraich

There had been circulated Report No CIA/26/16 dated 18 May 2016 by the Director of Community Services which provided details of performance management information of the Grounds Maintenance Service for the period 1 April to 18 May 2016.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the number of inspections carried out in proportion to the asset quantity for contracted grass, retained grass and Service Level Agreement non-grass cutting was uneven and affected the pass rate;
- clarification was sought on whether the notices completed within time for validation inspections related to remedial or default notices;
- several complaints had been received regarding the quality of the contracted grass cutting and there had been a lack of grass cutting on the river banks;
- the philosophy of the Highland wide contract for grass cutting was questioned given the issues with performance, particularly in rural Burial Grounds which had been given a lower priority;
- as a way of potentially improving performance, it was suggested that the Leader should take forward discussion with housing developers regarding the possibility of works being undertaken by the Council's in-house team;
- it was of concern that default notices had been issued but that financial penalties did not appear to have been issued as a consequence; and
- inspection and monitoring of contracted grass cutting was very time consuming and costly and consideration had to be given as to how this could be mitigated, not least in terms of the issue of fines.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the performance management and remedial action information provided on the Grounds Maintenance Service and the management action taken to address the performance issues identified.

11. Area Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges Prògram Gleidhidh airson Rathaidean agus Dhrochaidean

There had been circulated Report No CIA/27/16 dated 18 May 2016 2016 by the Director of Community Services which invited approval of the Maintenance Programme for Roads and Bridges for the City of Inverness Area for 2016/17.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- in relation to bridge maintenance for 2016/17, and specifically work on the retaining wall replacement at Torbreck Bridge, it would be helpful if this work could be done in conjunction with the Safer Routes to School works in the same area in order to avoid duplication;
- in terms of the surface dressing of roads for 2016/17, and specifically the roads identified within the Central Ward, there was concern that these had not been the roads which had been highlighted as most in need of repair during discussion with Local Members and further information was therefore required in this regard;
- further information was also needed on the specific responsibilities of the Council in relation to cyclic maintenance and particularly verge maintenance;
- in regard to other works during 2016/17, and specifically the identified works for Ward 15, it should be noted that parts of Academy Street/Queensgate/Post Office Avenue were also in urgent need of repair;
- the repainting of yellow lines throughout the area had not been successful in all instances in that some lines had been painted across debris on the roadside and had already begun to disappear. As such, it

was suggested that this should be raised with the contractor in order to identify areas where repainting was now needed;

- there was now an urgent need to inspect and repair the Greig Street Bridge and this should be taken forward as a priority;
- clarification was required on how and when decisions had been made on the allocation of the roads budget between Wards as it was not felt that determination on the basis of road length represented a fair and equitable distribution.

Thereafter, Mr R Laird, seconded by Miss J Campbell, **MOVED** that the surface dressing budget should be allocated equally between the 7 Wards and that determination of the final list of roads should be delegated to the Head of Roads & Transport in consultation with Local Members.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mrs H Carmichael, seconded by Mrs M Davidson, moved the recommendation as detailed in the report.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 6 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 9 votes and the **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes cast having been as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs B McAllister; Ms J Slater; Miss J Campbell; Mr K Gowans; Mr D Kerr and Mr R Laird.

For the Amendment:

Mrs H Carmichael; Mrs C Caddick; Mrs M Davidson; Dr J Davis; Mr J Ford; Mr K MacLeod; Mr T Prag; Mr G Ross and Mr H Wood.

The Committee therefore **APPROVED** the Maintenance Programmes for Roads and Bridges for the City of Inverness Area for 2016/17 as detailed in the report.

12. Burial Grounds Commutation Fund Work Programme 2016/17 Maoin Co-iomlaid nan Cladhan 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No CIA/28/13 dated 17 May 2016 by the Director of Community Services which provided details of the proposed work programme for the City of Inverness and Area Burial Grounds to be funded from the Burial Ground Commutation Fund for 2016/17.

In this regard, the report invited approval of the list of proposed projects totalling £100,346.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need to consider re-prioritisation of the works at Kilchuimen as the road leading into the Burial Ground was in urgent need of repair;
- thanks should be conveyed to Officers for the improvement works which had been undertaken at both Tomnahurich Cemetery and Kilvean Cemetery ;
- further information was required on the works which had been carried out at the Chapel Yard as it did not appear that any action had been

taken in relation to the external wall rebuild. It was also highlighted that trees had fallen during the recent storm and further damage had now been caused to the wall;

- there was also a need to ensure that the correct guidelines were followed in relation to the cutting of holly trees in the Chapel Yard as this had not been undertaken correctly in the past and as a result these trees had grown again;
- in relation to the Forbes Mausoleum, there was a requirement for further detail on the works which had been planned as it was understood that only a bat survey had been undertaken to date;
- costings should be identified and submitted in a future report in regard to the possibility of replacing the current railings at the Chapel Yard and restoring them to their original design;
- the historic Burial Grounds in the City had the potential to stimulate a high level of public and tourist interest and it was therefore essential that they were maintained to a satisfactory standard; and
- further details of the other budgets available within Community Services, in addition to the Commutation Fund, which could be used to undertake works in Burial Grounds should be highlighted in future reports.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress of the 2013-16 Programme and **APPROVED** the proposed work programme for 2016/17 as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

13. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2015 gu 31 Màrt 2016

Declarations of Interest – Mr R Balfour and Mr K MacLeod as Directors of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau and Mr A Christie as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau declared non-financial interests in this item 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 them from taking part in the discussion.

Mr D Kerr declared a financial interest in this item as a Council House tenant but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/29/16 dated 18 May 2016 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 up to 31 March 2016.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it would be helpful if information could be provided on the current situation with regard to families presenting as homeless and specifically any legal obligations on the Council in this regard;
- future reports should include statistics in relation to how many people had joined the housing register during the period since the last meeting;
- it was assumed that the variations in the number of homeless presentations which had been detailed in the report were as a

consequence of the welfare reform legislation but it would be helpful if any other factors could be highlighted;

- thanks should be conveyed to the Officers in terms of the improvements which had been made in re-let timescales in the Inverness West area;
- there was concern in regard to the increasing levels of rent arrears which had been detailed, particularly in relation to areas which had a comparatively small number of houses, and further detail was required on this aspect of the report;
- an indication of trends and issues in regard to the number of eviction notices received should be included in future reports, together with details of action which could be taken by the Council in cases of anti-social behaviour and specifically drug/alcohol related issues;
- consideration should be given as to whether council tax arrears could be treated as tenancy related debt, particularly in respect of applications for transfers; and
- there had been recent press coverage in regard to empty properties owned by the Ministry of Defence in the area and the possibility of use being made by the Council of these properties should be investigated.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 as detailed in the report.

14. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

(a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No CIA/30/16 dated 19 May 2016 by the Inverness City Area Manager which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Inverness Common Good Fund as at 30 April 2016 and the projected year end position.

In this regard, and following a query as to expenditure on the ICARTS Programme, it was confirmed that this had been omitted from the report in error but that expenditure to date had been minimal.

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

(b) Grants and Capital Projects Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

Declarations of Interest – Miss J Campbell and Mr H Wood declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of Partnership for Wellbeing 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 them from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/31/16 dated 20 May 2016 by the Inverness City Area Manager which set out the current applications for grant funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the current status of capital projects as detailed in the report and **AGREED** as follows:-

Raigmore Primary School – to reject the application for grant of £18,500 towards an outdoor classroom and gym

Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd – to agree a grant of £20,000 towards promoting Inverness for business tourism

Partnerships for Wellbeing – to agree a grant of £10,466 towards the Inverness Voluntary Transport Scheme

Visit Inverness Loch Ness – to agree a grant of £21,600 towards three Conferences in Inverness

Visit Inverness Loch Ness – to agree a grant of £1,800 towards the Golf Course Architects International Conference to be held in Inverness in October 2016.

It was also **AGREED** that in future references should be made to the 'Conference Grant' and not the 'Subvention Grant' as had been detailed in the report.

**(c) Scheme for Winter Payments 2016/17
Molaidhean Sgeama Phàighidhean Geamhraidh 2016/17**

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/32/16 dated 23 May 2016 by the Director of Finance and the Inverness City Area Manager which followed on from the effective revision of the Winter Payment Scheme for 2015/16 and proposed to maintain similar arrangements for the Winter Payments Scheme for 2016/17.

The Committee **AGREED** the following recommendations for the 2016/17 Winter Payment Scheme:-

- (i) that criteria utilised for the 2015/16 Scheme as set out in Paragraphs 2.1 to 2.9 should be used as the basis for the 2016/17 Scheme;
- (ii) that the Scheme be made available to residents in the City of Inverness and the Landward areas of the seven City Wards; and
- (iii) that a single tier payment of £79 should be made to those applicants who satisfied the eligibility criteria for the 2016/17 Scheme.

**15. Inverness Festivals Association
Inbhir Nis**

Declaration of Interest – Ms J Slater declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Committee member of the Inverness Festivals Association but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the discussion.

The Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of Provost Helen Carmichael to the position of Honorary President of Inverness Festivals Association.

**16. Community Council Name Change
Comhairlean Coimhearsnachd**

It was advised that Westhill Community Council had made a representation to amend the name of their Community Council to 'Cradlehall and Westhill' in order to better reflect the geography and communities that they cover. In this regard, it was confirmed that the Local Members had discussed and were supportive of the proposal.

The Committee **AGREED** the name change of 'Westhill' Community Council to 'Cradlehall and Westhill' Community Council.

**17. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

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

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 3 March 2016 – **NOTED**;
- ii. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 14 April, 28 April and 13 May 2016 – **NOTED** - pending the Special Meeting of the Committee and on the basis that the City Manager would continue to meet the Council's obligations in respect of matters relating to contracts in the meantime;
- iii. Events and Festivals Working Group held on 19 April 2016 – **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 9 May 2016 – **APPROVED**.

The meeting ended at 4.40pm.