

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, 1 September 2016 at 10.30am.

Present:

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

Officials in Attendance:

Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure
Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance
Ms A Clark, Acting Head of Policy, Chief Executive's Office
Ms J Scotson, Business Change Manager, Corporate Improvement
Mr K MacInnes, Principal Economy Officer, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Also in Attendance:

T/Chief Inspector I Graham, Inverness Area Commander, Police Scotland
Ms H Mackay, Chair of Inverness Fair Trade Group

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

Prior to commencement of the formal business tribute was paid to the late Mr John Ford during which Members referred to his great knowledge, integrity and helpfulness. He was well known for his professionalism and had, during his lifetime, been an active trade unionist. A Councillor who had served his community well, he was also a proud family man and the Committee **AGREED** that the Provost and City Leader write a letter of condolence to the family of John Ford on behalf of the Committee.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie, Mrs G Sinclair and Mr H Wood.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

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

Item 5 – Mr K Gowans (financial)

Item 7 – Mr K Gowans (non-financial)

Item 9 – Mr I Brown and Mr T Prag (non-financial)

Item 13 – Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Duffy, Mr G Ross and Mrs J Slater (non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial)

**3. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaìdh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2016 had not been exercised in relation to the business of this Committee.

**4. Presentation of Fair Trade Certificate
Toirt Seachad Teisteanas Malairt Chothromaich**

The City of Inverness had Fair Trade status which was a prestigious award confirming that a significant number of City retail businesses sold products which had been sourced from producers who acted to ensure that workers involved in the production process were treated fairly.

In this regard, Ms Mackay awarded a new Certificate to the City to renew its status as a Fair Trade City. Addressing Members she emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum, bringing new local businesses on board and increasing the understanding, and commitment, of Fair Trade across the area. To achieve this, it was important Fair Trade was evident and visible and to do this the support of Highland Council was vital. Examples of Fair Trade organisations having an impact on communities were provided as was the benefit Fair Trade had on workers and suppliers in developing countries.

Having acknowledged the excellent quality of products and the considerable benefit of Fair Trade, the Committee **NOTED** the award.

**5. Developing Local Priorities for the City of Inverness and Area
Prìomhachasan Sgìre**

Declaration of Interest - Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest as an employee of UHI 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 him from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/34/16 dated 18 August 2016 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which provided an update on the local strategic priorities for the City of Inverness and Area.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the various developments taking place in Inverness were welcomed and the positive effect this progress would have on the local economy was recognised;
- confirmation was sought as to when Members would get sight of the outline business case for the Regional Sports Facility project. The proposed sports hub would bring excellent sport facilities to Inverness and to its athletes and it was hoped that the excellent coaching which already took place, judo cited as a specific example, could be developed and devolved into other smaller communities. However in welcoming the provision of such a hub it was important to recognise that this was not a substitute for local sports facilities;
- the Council had a role to play in helping communities explore their aspirations for sport facilities;
- given the expansion locally, consideration of some degree of sport provision in the east of Inverness was requested. This could be centred around the UHI campus;
- sport pitch provision had to be accessible to local communities. Reference was made to the land available at Inverness High School which could provide pitches for the entire Associated School Group. This would benefit those schools with little or no open space and relieve the pressure on the Northern Meeting Park. A similar approach could be adopted elsewhere, given that Secondary Schools generally had more land available to develop sports facilities than Primary Schools;
- there needed to be an equality of approach, especially in relation to local football clubs;
- information was sought, and received, as to the plans for the A9-A96 link road and the provision of three lanes over the Inshes overbridge in light of recent proposals from Transport Scotland to make this four lanes. It was important, however, to bear in mind the impact this would have on the Inshes roundabout. In this regard, any proposals for the roundabout should involve Drakies Community Council;
- the A9-A96 link road would also have implications for a number of Wards. This project had been delayed for some time by Transport Scotland and it was important meantime that the Council pressed ahead with improvements;
- a Members' briefing regarding transport modelling for the East Link and how it would impact on the Inshes roundabout, A96, A9 and the West Link would be useful;
- two events were planned for Inverness in the coming months. One would concentrate on Poverty, Social Inclusion and Welfare Reform and would address how more people could benefit from the economic opportunities which existed while the second event was regarding the concept of Magnet Cities. However, for the latter to succeed the backing of everyone was required and therefore it was vital that capital investment was made into SIMD areas such as Merkinch;
- information was sought as to why it had taken 3 years to deliver a 20mph zone scheme in Merkinch. In this regard, disappointment was expressed

that it had not been possible to extend this into other areas as well and it was suggested that a blanket approach be considered across the built areas of the City;

- disappointment was expressed that, despite targeted marketing, no shared apprenticeships had taken place in the most SIMD areas in Inverness in 2015/16, especially in Merkinch which had the highest level of youth unemployment in the Highlands. It was suggested that discussions take place with Inverness High School and Skills Development Scotland. If employment opportunities were to be provided for young people in these communities then this had to be actioned and delivered successfully;
- disappointment was also expressed at the lack of projects detailed under the Social Equality heading. More work needed to take place if real outcomes and improvements in addressing inequality was to be achieved;
- despite the considerable amount of money that had been invested in Merkinch it was disappointing that more progress had not been achieved;
- while high level infrastructure and cultural projects were to be applauded, many individuals wanted the Council to carry out day-to-day matters and provide basic services, such as filling potholes, carrying out repairs etc;
- projects benefiting the economy of the whole City would also lift up SIMD areas;
- it was important to recognise the benefit of green spaces and recreational facilities to Inverness. In particular, it was felt that Inverness did not make enough use of its beautiful coastline with the land on the east of Inverness, running alongside the old Nairn Road and the Firth, cited as an example;
- the development of Torvean Quarry and part of the golf course to provide additional recreational space merited consideration. However, it was highlighted that Torvean Quarry had been earmarked as a Travelling Persons site although there had been no progress made with this proposal;
- whilst delivering city centre wi-fi was welcomed, there were some areas of Inverness where broadband provision was still very poor and this too needed to be taken into account;
- the City needed to plan strategically for another major cemetery in Inverness for the long term;
- while each of the priorities detailed in the report was important, Members had to be aware of the strategic needs of Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth area when making decisions;
- Members would have an opportunity to look at the performance measures at a future Council meeting;
- no mention had been made of Inverness BID in the Business Vibrancy section. It was important that empty shops were filled and improvements made to the City centre;
- the lack of progress in improving Academy Street was disappointing. A plan to take this forward was required and the longer it was delayed the more work would be required;
- the involvement of Ward Members with projects was paramount;
- it was disappointing so much compensation had been paid out to local businesses as a result of the River Ness Flood Alleviation works and it was important that lessons were learnt from this;
- tourism should be seen as a priority and consideration needed to be given

- as to how to make visiting Inverness a better experience for tourists. This might involve cleaning the City centre up and seeking improvements from owners of neglected buildings;
- the issues surrounding the Longman Roundabout needed to be addressed given the detrimental impact that traffic tailbacks had on the rest of the City; and
 - the lack of adequate public transport in some areas had a negative impact on social equality. In particular, calls were made for the upgrading of the road between the former Craig Dunain Hospital and Kilvean Cemetery/A82 as this would allow bus services to do a circular route rather than, at present, requiring to turn.

Having acknowledged local priorities for their own Ward, priorities that were common throughout the City and area and priorities that reflected the geographical diversity of the City and area, the Committee otherwise:-

- i. **NOTED** the updates provided for each Highland First priority; and
- ii. **AGREED** to arrange a Members' briefing with Transport Scotland on A96/A9 East Link and Inshes Roundabout.

6. Taking Forward Community Partnerships Com-pàirteachasan Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No CIA/35/16 dated 22 August 2016 by the Acting Head of Policy which provided Members with an update on the next steps for establishing a Community Partnership for Inverness.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- Councillors would be the only elected representatives on the Partnership, with the other partners represented by officers and therefore there was a need for careful consideration of how Councillors would work within the new partnership. In this regard, there was a concern that because all 26 Councillors would be members of the Community Partnership, there would be a need to ensure consistent engagement and it was suggested that a core group of Councillors attend every meeting;
- it was requested that the agenda be task or action focussed so that the Community Partnership would mean and achieve something and would not become a 'talking shop';
- there was concern that the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP) was telling local CPs what to do, particularly in terms of the identification of areas for locality plans, instead of local CPs deciding for themselves. In this regard, assurances were given that the areas identified for locality planning were a guide for partnerships and Mrs M Davidson in her capacity as the Chair of the Highland CPP provided reassurance that only the generalities had been agreed as a starting point and that the Highland CPP would be receptive of feedback from the Inverness CP once it had met;
- it was important that the Community Partnership be enabled to develop and identify their priorities. Local Member involvement in the Partnership would be important alongside ensuring that lessons were learnt from previous and other partnership bodies;
- it was suggested that an additional workshop with all Inverness

- Councillors be arranged to discuss the sub-group structure that was required and the most effective method of community involvement; and
- confirmation was sought, and received, that it was proposed the Partnership would meet four times per year however, given the size of the Inverness CP, the frequency of meetings may be something the Partnership wished to discuss.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the next steps to taking forward a local Community Partnership for the City of Inverness Area; and
- AGREED** the Provost chair the first meeting as an interim measure, prior to this Committee being enabled to appoint a chair at the meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee in December.

7. Digital Inclusion Com-pàirteachadh Didseatach

Declaration of Interest – Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland 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 presentation was undertaken at the meeting on Digital First and Digital Inclusion projects by Ms Jenny Scotson, Business Change Manager from Corporate Improvement. In particular, she highlighted the benefits which allowed customers access to Council Services anytime, anywhere on any device. To date, nearly 16.5k customers had signed up to “myaccount” to use this facility and this generated savings not only in staff time but also improvements to process times. 91 forms were now available online and the range of activities these covered were detailed. To help customers to use the system a variety of training and courses were available, the details of those taking place in Inverness being provided to Members.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- the success of the Digital Inclusion project would be based on the Council's ability to manage the change and transition which included ensuring that people who could not access online services were not excluded and Members were able to provide feedback to improve the system;
- frustration was expressed in relation to the usability of the online application form for parking permits and also the processing of reporting faults online;
- it was pleasing to see the partnership work being undertaken, particularly with High Life Highland who were essential to the project in terms of providing access points in libraries. In this regard, there could be an opportunity to increase access points in other public buildings such as schools, police stations or hospitals;
- using online services was convenient, instant and available anytime and anywhere on any device without needing an appointment;
- in terms of customer experience, the immediate acknowledgement of

- forms received and payments received was welcomed and consideration was given to evaluating the process by gathering customer feedback;
- in view of the perception and reputation of online services there was a need for Service Point staff to be Digital Champions and to consider practical issues such as automatically resizing high resolution photos;
 - more could be done to increase the awareness of the amount of services that were available online;
 - the Digital Skills courses in community centres were welcomed and would also be welcomed in the Charleston Community Complex in the future once the broadband service was improved in Kinmylies which was expected by March 2017;
 - reassurance was sought that departments were using the information uploaded by customers to their “myaccount” so that they only had to apply once;
 - information was sought on the time taken for departments to action customer online requests;
 - it was a problem for people who regularly changed their vehicles that parking permits stipulated one vehicle registration number; and
 - it was suggested that the community had the opportunity to apply for the surplus laptops from schools which were being replaced so that Digital Skills courses could be run in the James Cameron Community Centre.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.00pm and resumed at 1.50pm.

8. Police – Area Performance Summary

Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas mu Choileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No CIA/36/16 dated 17 August 2016 by the Inverness Area Commander (Highland and Islands Division, Police Scotland) which provided a local summary update to Committee Members on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-2017 Policing Plan.

Following a detailed presentation, during which it was highlighted that a Wildlife Crime officer would attend a future meeting of the Committee, Members made the following comments:-

- the proportionate response of Police Scotland to specific reports of Wildlife Crime was questioned and a standardised approach was requested. In this regard, specific information was requested as to the occurrence of poaching on the River Ness;
- in regard to Child Sexual Exploitation, confirmation was sought, and received, that Police officers visited secondary schools to warn against the dangers of “selfies” and the use of social media;
- more information was requested about Psychoactive Substances;
- statistical information over a longer period of time would allow better analysis of progress;
- information on detection rates was requested;
- the problems of anti-social behaviour on Inverness High Street was well recognised and this had a detrimental effect on how people viewed the city centre. If this was ever to be resolved a multi-agency approach was

- required;
- in an attempt to address anti-social behaviour a number of benches had been removed from the High Street for a trial period. However, it appeared that this had only managed to displace the problem and some elderly pedestrians had requested that the benches be reinstated. In this regard, information was sought as to whether or not the removal of the benches had had any positive impact and this would be reported back to Central Ward Members in October;
 - publicity surrounding increased activity in detecting drug dealers could also have the additional benefit of acting as a deterrent;
 - the increase in the number of sexual crimes/incidents reported could be the result of individuals having more confidence in the process, particularly in light of recent high profile cases;
 - some Members expressed disappointment about seeing armed police officers patrolling in Inverness. However other Members suggested that this reflected changing world circumstances and was an issue which would need to be revisited;
 - assurances were sought that Community Police Officers (CPOs) were only used for duties elsewhere under exceptional circumstances. CPOs often acted as a deterrent, particularly during the winter months. In this regard, an assurance was provided that the team was now at full strength and contact details of CPOs would be provided to Community Councils;
 - it was suggested that police using bicycles would be more effective in some housing estates where vehicle access was an issue;
 - in addressing anti-social behaviour and underage drinking, it was important to involve the parents and ensure that they were made aware of their responsibilities;
 - in regard to the drop in road traffic offences, it was queried if the number of inspections had also decreased;
 - the success of the Driving Ambitions and Rock Challenge initiatives was welcomed;
 - the ratio of drink to drug driving offences was requested. In addition, information regarding the use of roadside testing of drivers suspected of using drugs, similar to the approach adopted in England, was sought; and
 - assurances were sought, and received, that there was no overtime ban in place which detrimentally impacted criminal detection or investigations.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress report and updates in relation to the 5 Priorities; Road Safety, Drug/Alcohol Misuse, Antisocial Behaviour, Dishonesty and Public Protection; and
- ii. **AGREED** that contact details of Community Police Officers be sent to Community Councils.

9. Business Development: Inverness Update

Leasachadh Gnothachais: A' Fàs ar N-Eaconamaidh

Declarations of Interest – As Directors of the Board of Highland Opportunity Ltd and Highland Opportunity Investments Ltd, Mr I Brown and Mr T Prag each declared a non-financial interest in this item but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the

Councillors' Code of Conduct, each concluded that their interest did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion.

There is circulated Report No CIA/37/16 dated 12 August 2016 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided an update on the performance of the Council's business development services in Inverness. It summarised the delivery of the Business Gateway over the first quarter of 2016 and informed Members on progress with Council involvement in local business development activity in Inverness during the first quarter of 2016/17.

During discussion, the importance of tourism development was acknowledged and the recognition of this in the report was welcomed. The report also highlighted various positive initiatives and the increase in the number of businesses was to be applauded.

The Committee **NOTED** Business Development Service performance in the City of Inverness for the first quarter of 2016/17.

10. City Centre Development Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Leasachadh Meadhan a' Bhaile

There had been circulated Report No CIA/38/16 dated 17 August 2016 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which highlighted ongoing investment, fund-raising and activity to address key priorities identified through recent public consultation on regeneration priorities in Inverness City Centre including the development of tourism and cultural facilities, improvements to City Centre access and connections and the regeneration of Academy Street.

The report also highlighted progress in updating the Inverness City Centre Development Brief and, following a request from the Provost, an update was provided to Members of developments surrounding Inverness Castle.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the ongoing positive work in redeveloping key sites in Inverness was recognised;
- in welcoming the proposal to transform Inverness Castle into a substantial new visitor/cultural attraction, Members asked that consideration be given to imaginative proposals;
- the redevelopment of the Midmills Campus was also welcomed and it was pleasing to see that this property had not lain empty for any length of time;
- the proposed new residential development at the Raining's Stairs would result in what had been previously an eye-sore being tidied up;
- Mr I Brown requested an update in relation to the letting of the remaining two upper floors of 1-5 Church Street;
- Academy Street was in desperate need of resurfacing. This was one of the oldest streets in Inverness and occupied a strategic position in the city network;
- the closure of a business on Academy Street provided an opportunity for that particular site to be redeveloped. There were also other sites along the road which, it was hoped, the owners would tidy up and which would improve the appearance of the street. Recent renovations of some buildings had highlighted the neglected state of others;

- there was a disappointing number of empty shop premises on the High Street and every effort should be made to have them occupied; and
- although some retailers had renovated their properties and their efforts commended, others were neglected and often leased on a short term basis.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** progress in address city centre priorities detailed in Sections 2-5, which identified current or planned initiatives to improve access and connections, create new visitor and cultural attractions and regenerate Academy Street and its surroundings; and
- AGREED** to the preparation of a draft Inverness City Centre Development Brief by December 2016, involving consultation with sectoral interest groups.

11. Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID: Progress Report Roinn Leasachaidh Gnothachais Turasachd Inbhir Nis agus Loch Nis: Aithisg Adhartais

There had been circulated Joint Report No CIA/39/16 dated 15 August 2016 by the Inverness City Area Manager and Tourism BID Chief Executive which described the progress for the period September 2015 - September 2016 with particular reference to the project activity undertaken.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was good to note HIE's interest in developing Loch Ness, given that Loch Ness was one of the major attractions in the Highlands and this would help address issues, including access to the Loch;
- recent planning gain had enabled a walking/cycle/horse-riding route around Loch Ness to be provided and which would be in place within the next 6-8 months;
- the use of community benefit funds was welcomed and it was hoped that Community Councils could also be encouraged to contribute; and
- there were other major tourist attractions to the east of Inverness, Fort George and Culloden Battlefield cited as specific examples, and these should not be overlooked when actively promoting the area as an integrated unit to visitors. Many visitors based themselves in Inverness and travelled to the area's attractions.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** to endorse the continuing work and activities of the Tourism BID.

12. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 30 June 2016 Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean to 30 Òg mhios 2016

There is circulated Report No CIA/40/16 dated 23 August 2016 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 June 2016.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- although it had been reported that rent arrears had decreased, in some Wards, Inverness Central in particular, rent arrears had significantly increased over recent years and it was vital that this was addressed. It was suggested that this could partly be attributable to the roll out of Universal Credit;
- in relation to the recent abolition of Council tenants' right to buy and the increase in applications prior to the deadline, information was requested as to how this would impact on the Council's income stream, what capital costs would be generated and if this money could then be used for house building;
- information was sought, and received, as to the reasons for the high number of housing applications cancelled. In this vein, it was disappointing that out of 2,521 housing applications received only 300 had been housed;
- whilst every effort was made to avoid evictions, it was acknowledged that, in some cases, this was inevitable. It was therefore pleasing to see that out of 35 evictions in 2015/16, 23 of these were classed as "technical", leaving the tenant "in situ", of which 9 had been able to convert to secure tenancies with satisfactory rent accounts; and
- clarification was sought, and received, as to why the number of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases being reported and resolved was so low. ASB had serious detrimental effects on individuals and it was important that the Housing Service had measures in place to address it, bearing in mind the diminishing resources of the team.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April to 30 June 2016.

13. Augsburg Twinning Links: Economic Opportunities Augsburg

Declarations of Interest

Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest as an employee of UHI 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 him from taking part in the discussion.

Mrs H Carmichael, Mr A Duffy, Mr G Ross and Mrs J Slater declared non-financial interests in this item as members of the Inverness Town Twinning Committee 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/41/16 dated 3 August 2016 by the Inverness City Area Manager which provided an update on the recent visit to Augsburg by the Provost and the Civic and Facilities Team Leader, accompanied by the Principal Economy Officer from the Development and Infrastructure Service.

During discussion, it was hoped that the development of economic opportunities would continue to form links, especially with business and

educational aspects, but it was hoped, that these organisations would also consider contributing towards the costs involved.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the commitment of a maximum of £5,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Town Twinning Budget towards the costs of additional work to develop economic links between the cities of Augsburg and Inverness;
- ii. **NOTED** the detail of the initial meeting in Augsburg between the Council and its partners, the Centre for Health Science and the University of the Highlands and Islands, with the Klinikum Augsburg, as well as the proposals for further meetings in September in Inverness; and
- iii. **NOTED** also the shared interest in Blended Learning and in Collaborative working that had been developing between educational institutions in both cities, and the opportunity they presented for future economic development opportunities.

14. Inverness Common Good Fund Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

(a) Financial Monitoring Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No CIA/42/16 dated 19 August 2016 by the Inverness City Area Manager which presented the expenditure monitoring position for the Inverness Common Good Fund as at 31 July 2016 and the projected year end position.

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

(b) Grants and Capital Projects Pròiseactan Tabhartais agus Calpa

There had been circulated Report No CIA/43/16 dated 17 August 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.

The Committee **NOTED** the current funds available for allocation and the current status of capital projects.

(c) City Events and Festivals – Review of 2016/17 Events and Festivals Programme and Proposals 2017/18 Tachartasan agus Fèisean a’ Bhaile – Lèirmheas de Thachartasan is Fhèisean 2016/17 agus Prògram is Molaidhean 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No CIA/44/16 dated 5 August 2016 by the Inverness City Area Manager which provided an update on the 2016/17 Events and Festivals Programme and sought approval of the proposed 2017/18 Events and Festivals Programme at a cost of £320,000.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- appreciation was expressed to Ms G Sinclair for her participation with the Events and Festivals Working Group;
- disappointment was expressed that, despite a request being made for £320,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund, no Inverness businesses were contributing towards the cost of holding these events. This had been raised many times before and, although it was reported that efforts were being made to test the market for a commercial sponsor, no monies had been ever been forthcoming. Inverness businesses benefitted considerably from these events and they should therefore contribute. Accordingly, a report was requested on how best to achieve public sponsorship of such events;
- clarification was called for regarding the definition of community benefit;
- consideration should be given to admission charges for some events to help off-set costs;
- the changes made to the Inverness Highland Games were acknowledged as being necessary if the Games were to continue to evolve;
- attracting sponsorship and/or imposing admission charges would provide an opportunity for even better events to be provided. However, it was pointed out that the Common Good Fund was being used to provide successful safe accessible community events to promote social inclusion and many families were not in a position to pay admission charges;
- a number of local charities also run events to raise money and it was suggested consideration be given for them taking over some of the Council run events. They might also be in a better position to develop events and attract funding from elsewhere;
- caution was urged, when considering sponsorship, that events did not become too commercial;
- the events organised by the Working Group were well appreciated in Inverness and were of benefit to the community. Over the year, it represented value for money;
- there were practical issues which would be encountered if admission charges were made;
- many of the events were well attended, gave Inverness a huge amount of prominence and attracted visitors from outwith the area;
- the events, particularly those held during the winter months, provided additional business for hotels and, consequently, generated employment; and
- in relation to the Working Group's Action Plan as it related to commercial events, it was requested that Ness Islands and Whin Park be included in the areas where opportunities were being explored as bases for bringing events to the City.

At this juncture, the officers having replied to specific points raised, the Committee adjourned from 4.10 pm to 4.15 pm to consider revised recommendations.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the proposed 2017/18 programme at a cost of

£320,000 and the allocation of a budget in the sum of £320,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Budget for 2017/18 and the proposed 2017/18 Action Plan on the basis that a report was brought back to future meeting within the year on how external business support or sponsorship could be attracted for events to reduce the burden placed on the Inverness Common Good Fund of 100% funding of events; and

- ii. **NOTED** the Stakeholder Feedback.

15. Street Naming – New Development at Cradlehall, Inverness
Ainmeachadh Sràide – Leasachadh Ùr ann an Cradlehall, Inbhir Nis

There had been circulated Report No CIA/45/16 dated 24 June 2016 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which invites Members to homologate a decision by the Cradlehall and Westhill Community Council, supported by the Local Members, to name a street at Cradlehall that already has built units as ‘Scretan Burn Place (Ceàrn Allt an Sgrìodain).’

The Committee **AGREED TO HOMOLOGATE** the naming of the street at Cradlehall as Scretan Burn Place (Ceàrn Allt an Sgrìodain).

16. Appointments to Working Groups and Outside Bodies
Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean-Obrach agus Buidhnean bhon Taobh A-Muigh

(a) Inverness Women’s Aid
Cobhair Bhoireannach Inbhir Nis

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Dr J Davis to replace Miss J Campbell as a Director of Inverness Women’s Aid.

(b) Events and Festivals Working Group
Buidheann-Obrach Thachartasan is Fhèisean

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mr I Brown to replace Mrs G Sinclair as a member of the Events and Festivals Working Group.

17. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

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

- i. City of Inverness Area Committee held on 2 June 2016 and the Special Meeting held on 1 July 2016 – **NOTED**;
- ii. Events and Festivals Working Group held on 26 July 2016 – **APPROVED**;
- iii. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee held on 8 August 2016 – **APPROVED**; and
- iv. Inverness City Arts Working Group held on 19 August 2016 – **APPROVED**.

Arising from the Inverness City Arts Working Group minute, a request was made that when a programme to replace the Tilting Bridge was formulated by this Working Group the details should also be submitted to the City of Inverness

Area Committee to discuss at an early stage. However, the Inverness City Area Manager explained that this Working Group had full delegated powers but he indicated his willingness to meet with Mr Kerr to discuss particular concerns.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm.