

Agenda Item	6
Report No	CIA/3/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **City of Inverness Area Committee**

Date: **22 February 2018**

Report Title: **Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT)
Reporting of Company Activity to Council**

Report By: **Inverness City Manager and City Heritage Trust Officer**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Members on the work of Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT) during the financial year 2016/17. Particular attention is given to the total grant allocation to projects in Inverness Riverside Conservation Areas to date and during 2016-17. Members are asked to note the work of the Trust in partnership with Inverness College (UHI) and Historic Environment Scotland with regard to raising awareness of traditional building skills and materials amongst professionals, practitioners, local contractors and property owners. Members are also asked to note the work of the Trust with The Highland Council with regards to the Academy Street Townscape Heritage (TH) Project.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. the contributions made by the Inverness City Heritage Trust in delivering a programme of conservation work funded by grant assistance in Inverness since 2005;
 - ii. the work carried out in partnership with the Traditional Building Forum for the Highlands and Islands to deliver conferences for building professionals/practitioners. Also the work with other building professionals to try and find realistic options for retention and repair of important city buildings and features;
 - iii. the current situation with regard to future funding from Historic Environment Scotland for Inverness City Heritage Trust.

3. Background

- 3.1 Inverness City Heritage Trust is an independent charitable company limited by guarantee which was incorporated on 16 June 2004. The Trust was initially set up by the Highland Council and Historic Environment Scotland to take a strategic view of the repair and maintenance needs of the buildings forming the historic core of the city and to co-ordinate a programme of conservation work funded by grant assistance. The Trust was formally launched in May 2005 and on 03 June 2008 Inverness City Heritage Trust was designated as a Conservation Body by Scottish Ministers.
- 3.2 The Trust also gives advice to building owners, produces publications and helps to organise events and exhibitions for people interested in the history of buildings and architecture in Inverness.
- 3.3 The Trust works closely with partner organisations around Scotland namely: Aberdeen City Heritage Trust, Dundee Historic Environment Trust, Edinburgh World Heritage, Glasgow City Heritage Trust, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust and Stirling City Heritage Trust. The Trust has also established good partnership working with a number of like-minded organisations within Inverness, to the benefit of mutual strategic objectives.

4. Funding and Company Review

- 4.1 Following a review of the work and performance of the trust in 2010/11 and a scored and ranked application process for future funding in 2014, the trust was given a firm offer of further funding from Historic Environment Scotland for five years to the end of March 2020 (£1.25M). The level of funding for this period is £250,000 per annum. This amount is split into two main project areas, £946,841 has been allocated and ring fenced against the Academy Street Townscape Heritage (TH) project with the remaining funds to be used for projects in the city centre that can demonstrate economic benefit outcomes for the area.
- 4.2 Inverness City Heritage Trust has a voluntary Board of 10 trustees. Three of the Trustees are nominated representatives of The Highland Council, and there is one representative from each of the following organisations: Inverness Architectural Association, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Inverness Civic Trust and The Inverness Chapter of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. In addition there are three individual trustees. Trustees currently representing the Highland Council are as follows:
- Cllr. James Gray (Chair)
 - Cllr. Janet Campbell
 - Cllr. Ronald MacWilliam
- 4.3 The Trust has one part time employee, the Project Officer. The role of the Project Officer is to carry out the day to day management of the Inverness City Heritage Trust, together with the delivery of the Project's main aims.

5. Achievements and Performance 2016-17

- 5.1 Over the period 2009-15, the trust awarded grants of over £1.7M to 176 projects. The Trust's grant assisted projects have helped to keep alive and raise awareness of traditional building skills and materials amongst local contractors and property owners.

- 5.2 In accordance with the new grant offer from Historic Environment Scotland, accepted on 07 April 2015, future grant allocation gives priority to projects in the Academy Street TH project which contribute to wider urban regeneration, with the overall priority being to bring disused buildings back into economic use as businesses or to be used as affordable accommodation. The second priority is to bring dilapidated buildings back up to an acceptable standard, with deprived areas of the city remaining a priority for assistance. The grant is offered to promote, preserve and enhance a conservation area. The reinstatement of lost architectural details will no longer attract grants from this source of Inverness City Heritage Trust funding.
- 5.3 In 2016/17, £238,443 was allocated to 2 projects in the city. The Trust offers a percentage grant to owners therefore the real project costs for the grant eligible items of these 2 projects was £484,522. These costs include a grant of £233,772 to WASPS for repairs to the former Midmills College Building.
- 5.4 In 2016/17 a total of £41,941 was spent on management/ running of the Trust. This figure was up slightly on the 2015/16 figure (£40,689)
- 5.5 The Historic Environment Scotland grant to ICHT covers 100% of the annual income and annual expenditure. The Highland Council does not give a grant to Inverness City Heritage Trust in monetary terms; the Trust receives support in kind in the form of office accommodation. The Highland Council provides administrative support at Trust board meetings – full recovery of the cost of this service is met by ICHT on a quarterly basis.
- 5.6 Over the past 11 years, the trust has established a profile within Inverness as a source of advice and funding for historic buildings and the trust's grant assisted projects have contributed to initiatives to raise awareness of traditional building skills and materials amongst local contractors and property owners. Although very few grants were awarded this year the trust has been working with the TH project team and local building owners to work up grant eligible projects for the TH and general ICHT projects.
- 5.7 The main focus of work has been on commercial properties in the city centre, many of which have multiple owners and therefore take a considerable length of time to put in place
- 5.8 In 2015/16, the trust worked with Historic Environment Scotland, Inverness College (UHI), NTS, Inverness Architectural Association and the AHSS and contributed financial help and advice to deliver a one day Conservation Master Class conference for building professionals and practitioners. In 2016, we held a one day conference event entitled "The Burning Question" on 07 October 2016. This event was very well received and attracted over 100 delegates from across the UK.
- 5.9 In 2016/17 the trust has continued our discussions with the Scottish Traditional Building Forum (STBF) with regard to setting up a Traditional Buildings Forum for the Highlands with the masterclass committee above. We have now formed this group and we are collectively known as the *"Traditional Building Forum for the Highlands and Islands"*. We will continue to organise and deliver our one day conservation conference/masterclass and it is hoped that the remit of this group can be built upon in the coming years through links with colleagues and other forums around the country.
- 5.10 The Trust is represented on the Inverness Design Review Panel, an independent body set up by The Highland Council to review high profile planning applications and development proposals at pre application stage to encourage high quality development

in the Highlands.

- 5.11 The Trust has produced a Historic Trail for Inverness and is also responsible for the commissioning of “Blue Plaques” for the city. The Trail has proved to be extremely popular and has been widely distributed in the Highland area and beyond. In 2016/17, it is hoped to add a further plaque to mark the offices of Alexander Ross, Highland architect (1834-1925) and a plaque to mark the former offices of the Inverness Courier newspaper (Bank Street) for their 200th anniversary year.

6. The Future of Inverness City Heritage Trust

- 6.1 Following an application for future funding to Historic Environment Scotland in March 2014, the trust was successful in securing £1.25M of future funding for the period 2015-20. This money is dependent on the trust and The Highland Council being partners in the Academy Street Townscape Heritage scheme (75% of the £1.25M budget to be directly invested in the Academy Street scheme). The remainder of the budget shall be invested in other city centre properties.
- 6.2 The Trust hopes to build on this partnership with The Highland Council by involving the local community, Inverness BID and other key city agencies in bringing forward a scheme of real change in this part of the city centre.
- 6.3 The trust is committed to a continued relationship with the Traditional Building Forum for the Highlands and Islands to deliver conservation masterclasses/ one day conference activities in Inverness. The Masterclass for 2017 will be entitled “Traditional Buildings – Fit for Energy Efficiency?” and will take place on Friday 11 August 2017. (The 2018 event is on Friday 21 September. The working title for the event is ‘Traditional Buildings – Materials and Skills’. The format is to be short presentations covering the following topics (Glass, Lead work, Mortar & Lime, Stonework and Metalwork) followed by a case study on the Town House in Inverness).
- 6.4 One of the key roles on the Trust in helping to deliver the Academy Street Townscape Heritage project is the commitment to organise and deliver a series of traditional building skills training for both professionals and homeowners. This will focus on traditional building materials and methods and will also provide information and advice on general repairs and maintenance. It is also proposed to link with partner agencies (DYW, SDS etc.) to deliver traditional skills taster events for secondary aged school children in Inverness.
- 6.5 In 2016/17, the trust will also take on the running of the annual Doors Open Day event held across the Highlands in the month of September. This was previously organised by The Highland Council but due to budget cuts, this event was dropped from the annual programme of events.
- 6.6 The Trust maintains an interest in Viewhill House, the Eastgate Hostel and a number of other buildings at risk in Inverness; recognising their architectural heritage and historical significance despite their perilous condition. These projects and the commitment of the Trust to focus continued attention on the city centre align with the priority of regeneration as per the 2015-20 Historic Environment Scotland grant offer to ICHT.
- 6.7 The Trust aims to develop and provide an effective service and will continue to explore opportunities for partnership with other organisations for capital and revenue funding.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Resource - Inverness City Heritage Trust is entirely funded by Historic Environment Scotland. The Highland Council provides in kind support but all staffing and administration costs are recharged to the Trust by The Highland Council.

Applications for grant are considered quarterly and any award of grant and the percentage offered are made at the discretion of the Board of Directors subject to available funds and eligibility criteria being met.

In recognition of new priorities in terms of regeneration, the Trust has taken the hard decision to suspend the residential grants scheme until at least 2018. The Trust will therefore not be accepting any grant applications for residential properties for at least the next year. The remaining 25% of the Trust's budget will be used to support other projects within the city centre that can demonstrate an economic focus or contribute to the wider regeneration of Inverness.

- 7.2 Legal - Inverness City Heritage Trust has its own legal advisors at Macleod & MacCallum. Inverness City Heritage Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee therefore all of the Trust Directors are registered under the Trust name at Companies House. The Trust is a registered Conservation Body with the Scottish Government which allows us to place legal burdens on grant aided property for up to 10 years to protect the investment from public funds.
- 7.3 Financial - Inverness City Heritage Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee therefore our accounts are independently audited annually and a copy of this report is lodged at Companies House and with OSCR. The day to day bookkeeping for the Trust is carried out by an independent bookkeeper, Leslie Watson and the Trust's auditors are Frame Kennedy.
- 7.4 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - Applications for grant are based on the property they relate to rather than the applicant therefore the grant scheme is open to all to apply. Grants are not means tested.
- 7.5 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - Repairs to the existing built fabric are, by their nature, more environmentally sustainable than using new source materials. The grant scheme aims to cover the difference in cost of using a traditional material such as slate from a local source e.g. second hand slate rather than importing new material from central Europe, North America or Asia.
- 7.6 Risk - Over the past few years the Trust has seen a slowing in the uptake of grant due to the lack of available additional finance for owners wishing to carry out repair work (to fund the owners % of the cost). To counter this, the funding allocation for Inverness City Heritage Trust is given over a 5 year period rather than having a specific annual budget. This will allow us to work up schemes over a longer period of time.

We are also working with owners to try and identify other sources of funding available to them and also working internally with The Highland Council, Empty Homes Initiative, Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund to pull together a combined funding source that can offer applicants an enhanced grant percentage rate in the City Centre.

- 7.7 Gaelic – Inverness City Heritage Trust is an independent charitable organisation, it does not currently have a requirement to produce printed or electronic material in Gaelic.

Designation: Inverness City Heritage Trust Project Officer

Date: 30 January 2018

Author: Alison Tanner – 01463 785004

Background Papers: N/A